

AFFERENT DRAMA / EFFERENT CINEMA:

THE STRUCTURE OF MODERN CANADIAN AND QUÉBÉCOIS

FILM-MEDIATED DRAMA FROM 1972 TO 1992

by

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ABSTRACT

The great majority of the Canadian and Québécois plays that have been made into films between 1972 and 1992 are neither popular hits nor critically acclaimed works. The question that this dissertation poses is thus why were these rather marginal works adapted for the cinema? The suggested answer is that, beyond the critical or popular success of the plays (or lack thereof), it is their dialectical structure that gives coherence, through recursive symmetry, to the corpus of Canadian/Québécois film-mediated drama.

To buttress this claim, I conduct a tripartite analysis of the plays and films of the corpus: the first section is devoted to the dramas; the second scrutinizes the process of film-mediation; and the third evaluates the significance of the corpus in relation to various theoretical and cultural discourses. I examine four texts *in detail*: William Fruet's Wedding in White (film: Fruet); Marcel Dubé's Les Beaux Dimanches (film: Richard Martin); Carol Bolt's One Night Stand (film: Allan W. King); and René-Daniel Dubois's Being at Home with Claude, (film: Jean Beaudin). Subsequently, a brief survey of other works shows that the conclusions drawn from these case studies also apply to the corpus as a whole. To realize this analysis, I follow the structuralist methodology proposed by Thomas Price in Dramatic Structure and Meaning in Theatrical Productions (1992), which explicates dramas and films in terms of the dialectical conflicts that they display.

The first phase of inquiry shows that the plays exhibit an

afferent-withdrawal/efferent-escape dialectic, that is, a tension between a coercive inward pressure and an explosive outward force. The second part argues that this tension finds further expression in the cinematic adaptations, as the closed dramas are "opened up" through the addition of outward filmic imagery. The final part suggests that this tension constitutes a key characteristic of film-mediated drama *as a genre*, for it embodies the clash between a *dramatic* concentration on a nucleus of characters (afferent drama), and a *filmic* tendency to explode this nucleus (efferent cinema). Part III evidences as well that the *afferent-withdrawal/efferent-escape* dialectic relates to a prototypical expression of the Canadian/Québécois imagination as defined by Canadian studies scholars such as Gaile McGregor.

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INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER I. HYPOTHESIS AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Concurrently, during the 1960s, francophone and anglophone audiences witnessed the beginning of a new stage in the evolution of cinematic and theatrical practice in Canada. This renaissance in film and drama, as in other fields, ensued from a favourable conjunction of demographic, economic, social, and political factors that allowed a young generation of English Canadian and Québécois artists to emerge all at once on the national scene, wielding a decidedly modern iconoclasm in the face of their elders.¹ With the landmark productions of Gilles Groulx's Le Chat dans le sac and Don Owen's Nobody Waved Goodbye, in 1964, the documentarists of the English and French units of the National Film Board effected in concert a seminal passage from "direct cinema" to fiction, thus inaugurating one of the most influential trends in Canadian film history.² A few years later, the dramaturgies of Canada and Québec were also revived almost simultaneously. George Ryga's The Ecstasy of Rita Joe, first staged in Vancouver in November 1967, and Michel Tremblay's Les Belles-Soeurs, which premiered the following summer in Montréal, captured the imagination of both linguistic communities at virtually the same time, and heralded an era of unprecedented growth in theatrical activity across the country.³

But despite these synchronous watersheds, theatre and film in Québec have developed, over the last thirty years, along lines significantly different from those followed by their

English Canadian counterparts. As Canadian drama critic Robert Wallace explains, "the historical and political contexts that frame the stage in Montréal are different from those at work in Toronto, and continue to condition distinctly different forms of theatrical practice."⁴ This discrepancy between the theatrical practices of the two cities might explain why, for instance, Jean-Pierre Ronfard's Vie et mort du roi Boiteux (1981-2), one of the most important theatrical events ever produced in Montréal, was never brought to Toronto, and why hit plays from Toronto, like those of George F. Walker, have rarely attracted much attention in Montreal's French-speaking theatre community.⁵

Wallace's comment also applies to the film industry, as Sylvain Garel confirms in his introduction to Les Cinémas du Canada (1992): "l'histoire du cinéma québécois est très largement indépendante de celle du Canada anglais et fonctionne selon un mystérieux système de vases (non) communicants."⁶ In fact, the cinematic traditions of English Canada and Québec differ so markedly that film historian Pierre Véronneau admits that, even in the 1990s, "peu de Québécois ont une connaissance correcte du cinéma canadien [et] se sentent spontanément habilités à écrire sur le cinéma canadien alors que plusieurs le seraient sur le cinéma français ou américain."⁷

Few critics would deny that, in the sphere of film and theatre production, the contrasts between Québec and English Canada outweigh, by far, the affinities. There is, however, a closely related field that presents surprising similarities, namely, modern Canadian and Québécois film-mediated drama. The

purpose of this study is to examine a number of Canadian and Québécois plays that have been made into feature films since the 1960s, in an attempt to demonstrate that these similarities, far from being superficial, actually partake of a complex system of parallelism between modern Canadian and Québécois film-mediated drama.

The most striking similitude is, ironically, the lack of interest that filmmakers working in both Canada and Québec since the 1960s have shown in indigenous stage plays as valuable sources for cinematographic production. From 1972 to 1992, the period that this dissertation will cover in most detail, fewer than twenty original Canadian and Québécois plays have been made into feature films, out of which only a dozen are published texts. These plays are: Marcel Dubé's Les Beaux Dimanches (1965); William Fruet's Wedding in White (1972); Jack Cunningham's See No Evil, Hear... (1972, not published); Me? (1973) by Martin Kinch; Metal Messiah (1975, not published) by Stephan Zoller; Les Célébrations (1976) by Michel Garneau; Gapi (1976) by Antonine Maillet; Carol Bolt's One Night Stand (1977); Une amie d'enfance (1977) by Louise Roy and Louis Saïa; Walls (1978) by Christian Bruyere; Hank Williams "The Show He Never Gave" (1979, not published) by Maynard Collins; Cold Comfort (1981) by Jim Garrard; Du poil aux pattes comme les CWAC's (1982) by Maryse Pelletier; The Mark of Cain (1984, not published) by Peter Colley; Blue City Slammers (1985, not published) by Layne Coleman; René-Daniel Dubois's Being at Home with Claude (1985); Borderdown Café (1987) by Kelly Rebar and

Memoirs of Johnny Daze (not published)⁸ by John Beckett Wimbs (for more details see Appendix 1). As this list attests, the majority of these plays, both from Québec and Canada, are not among the most critically acclaimed works of the conventional canon.

Unlike their American counterparts, it appears that Canadian and Québécois filmmakers have elected not to adapt the great landmarks of the canon, choosing instead somewhat less significant pieces.⁹ Acknowledged master works such as Dubé's Au retour des oies blanches (1966), Françoise Loranger's Encore cinq minutes (1967), Tremblay's Les Belles-soeurs (1968), David French's Leaving Home (1972), John Murrell's Waiting for the Parade (1977) and David Fennario's Balconville (1979) have all been turned into television shows rather than feature films, leaving the big screen for improbable works like Roy's and Saia's Une amie d'enfance, and Colley's The Mark of Cain.¹⁰ As film critic Martin Knelman observes,

Canadian playwrights have generally fared even worse on the screen than Canadian actors. Among those who might have expected to make a mark in films, but haven't, are John Murrell, David French, George F. Walker, Michel Tremblay, Sharon Pollock, Erika Ritter and Larry Fineberg. How many times have memorable evenings of Canadian theatre been turned into dead, well-meaning TV events?¹¹

Many reasons can explain the predicament described by Knelman. Conflict of vision between dramatist and director, for instance, might result in the failure of a film adaptation project, as occurred when Erika Ritter and Norman Jewison battled over the screenplay version of her hit comedy Automatic

Pilot (1980).¹² Financial difficulties and other production impediments might also explain why some major plays were never filmed. Daryl Duke's frustrated attempt to film Ryga's Rita Joe (1967) is a case in point.¹³ But regardless of the conjunctures that might hinder the realisation of any movie, the fact remains that most of the plays that have made it to the big screen are not among the works that have marked the history of theatre in Canada.

Modern Canadian and Québécois film-mediated drama thus constitutes a rare corpus within which the francophone and anglophone practices share a common ground, at least insofar as film-mediated drama occupies a comparable position of marginality in the cinematic production of both linguistic communities. It does not come as a surprise, therefore, that, apart from one or two odd historical surveys, not a single scholarly work, in either French or English, has been devoted to the analysis of this corpus. The present study seeks to remedy this situation.

Interestingly enough, while film-mediated drama is characterized by the scantiness of the corpus, and the relative marginality of the works that compose it, the same is not true of film adaptations of anglophone and francophone Canadian novels. Novels such as Gabrielle Roy's Bonheur d'Occasion (1945), Hugh MacLennan's Two Solitudes (1945), Roger Lemelin's Les Plouffe (1948), Mordecai Richler's The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz (1959), Anne Hébert's Kamouraska (1970), Margaret Atwood's Surfacing (1972), Timothy Findley's The Wars (1977), and Yves Beauchemin's Le Matou (1981) are all central works of

the Canadian literary canon that have been made into feature films since the 1960s. Apart from these significant entries, more than thirty other prose fiction works have also been adapted over the same period (Appendix 2).

A variety of hypotheses can be advanced to account for the quantitative and qualitative imbalance between film adaptations of novels and film-mediated drama, the most commonplace of which is probably that "novel and film," as Joy Gould Boyum puts it, "are closer than play and film in both form and function."¹⁴ It could also be argued that the best Canadian plays, unlike our best novels, do not lend themselves easily to the process of film-mediation, being too "theatrical" to translate successfully into cinematic terms. But this argument is hardly convincing since many of the plays that have been adapted respect rigorously the three unities of classical drama and display none of the "cinematic" qualities (numerous scenes, several locations, sense of expansive landscape etc.) found in other, far more successful plays, like Walker's Zastrozzi (1977) and Ronfard's Vie et mort du Roi Boiteux, that have not been transposed for the screen.

However, there is a rationale, stemming from the historical specificity of Canadian and Québécois cinema, that does explain the disparity between literary adaptations and film-mediated drama. The renaissance of fiction film-making in Canada and Québec, in the 1960s, coincided with the culmination of the New Wave movement in European cinema. The first generation of modern Canadian and Québécois fiction filmmakers, emerging from the documentary tradition, adopted whole-heartedly the precepts of

this movement, which favoured the combination of auteuristic subjectivity with a documentarian approach to socio-political issues. The fact that, in the 1960s, there was this "desire among Canadians to make `their own kind of films,'" as Peter Harcourt notes, had a profound and lasting influence on the cineastes' practice of adaptation.¹⁵ Indeed, as Pierre Véronneau explains, over the decade, "les cinéastes s'affirment davantage comme des `auteurs' capables de pondre leurs propres scénarios."¹⁶ But whereas, during the heyday of *auteurism*, Canadian and Québécois novels were still being adapted, indigenous play-scripts were systematically rejected by the film industry.¹⁷ Only in the 1970s did film-mediated drama eventually appear – though always as a marginal practice.

This ensues from a fundamental difference between prose fiction and drama, a difference that renders the former more compatible than the latter with the auteurist aspirations of filmmakers. The novel, unlike the play-script, never functions as a fixed, authoritative text imposed upon the director. There is an essential dissimilarity between the exclusively digital medium of the novel, that is, a form limited in its description of the world to abstract written symbols, and the analogic medium of film, which can offer a mimetic depiction of the environment through presentative images and sounds.¹⁸ Consequently, the cinematic treatment of prose fiction always entails a complete transmutation of the original scripturally narrated material into an essentially perceptual construct to be shown on screen – even if the film attempts to be "faithful" to

the novel. While this process does not insure the full *auteur*-ship of the cineaste, it doubtlessly undermines the supremacy of the literary author, whose written descriptions vanish behind sound and images. Adaptations of novels thus provide a convenient compromise between the *auteurist* ambitions of filmmakers and the commercial demands of a movie industry always seeking to capitalize on the success of pre-existing material.

A similar process of re-writing is certainly not impossible in the case of cinematic adaptations of drama. But a "faithful" adaptation of a play does not demand a radical transformation of the original text, because a dramatic piece is primarily written for the analogic or mimetic medium of the theatre. The only sections of the play-script that must yield to visualization are the descriptive *didascalie* whose written information is translated into actual objects and actions. For its part, the dramatic language of the playwright, the dialogue – or what Roman Ingarden called "Haupttext" (primary text) as opposed to the "Nebentext" (secondary text) of the stage directions¹⁹ – can be carried over into the film in its near-integrity, irrespective of cinematization. A case in point is Yves Simoneau's 1979 adaptation of Les Célébrations, which was shot "tel quel, sauf pour un monologue intérieur que [Simoneau a] supprimé."²⁰

The role of the cineaste adapting a play is thus often more akin to that of a stage director interpreting the dialogue of the author, than to that of an inspired *auteur* appropriating a narrative line and transmuting it to correspond to her or his own vision. Therefore, it is not surprising that within a filmic

"tradition qui doit en bonne partie au documentaire et au cinéma d'auteur," as Véronneau remarks, "le cinéma délaisse aujourd'hui le théâtre," but conserves its interest in prose fiction.²¹ As a matter of fact, in the filmic tradition of Québec, which has shown a greater and more consistent proclivity for *auteurism* than its Canadian counterpart, the imbalance between adaptations of novels and adaptations of plays is even more pronounced than in the anglophone tradition.²²

The marginal character of film-mediated drama in the cinematic tradition of the past three decades thus results, at least in part, from the fact that this mode of production goes against the grain of the Québécois and Canadian cineastes.²³ This leads me to suggest that, in the rare cases when plays have been brought to the big screen, the success of the pieces on stage did not constitute the principal criterion for the filmmakers' choice of sources. By this I do not imply that filmmakers purposefully choose to adapt obscure or bad plays. Rather, I wish to propose that, beyond the critical or popular success of the plays (or lack thereof), it is the structure of these works that gives coherence to the corpus of film-mediated drama. I would thus argue that, although adapting plays represents something of an unnatural act for Canadian and Québécois cineastes, it nonetheless affords them a unique means to explore specific issues.

To buttress this claim, I will conduct an analysis of the plays and films that comprise the corpus of modern Canadian and Québécois film-mediated drama. This inquiry will follow a

tripartite organisation: the first section will be devoted to the dramatic texts; the second will scrutinize the process of film-mediation; and the final part will evaluate the broader significance of the corpus in relation to various theoretical and cultural discourses. To insure the manageability of this enterprise, I will examine in detail only the four most notable works of the corpus: Fruet's Wedding in White (film by Fruet, 1972); Dubé's Les Beaux Dimanches (film by Richard Martin, 1974); Bolt's One Night Stand (film by Allan W. King, 1978); and Dubois's Being at Home with Claude (film by Jean Beaudin, 1992). However, on the basis of the conclusions drawn from these four case studies, I will subsequently attempt to elaborate a comprehensive explication of the corpus through a survey of all the published Canadian and Québécois plays that have been made into indigenous feature films between 1972 and 1992.²⁴ The methodology employed for this analysis will follow the structuralist principles expounded by Thomas Price in his book Dramatic Structure and Meaning in Theatrical Productions (1992), which offers a practical paradigm for the explication of standard plays and films.²⁵

This methodology was chosen primarily because the published texts of the corpus *all* adopt conventional dramatic forms that lend themselves quite cogently to the type of structuralist reading that Price proposes in his treatise. Indeed, an overview of the corpus reveals that, besides being on the fringe of the canon, the works share a number of strikingly orthodox dramatic properties. As pointed out above, many of them observe the three

unities of classical drama. Les Beaux Dimanches, Me?, One Night Stand, Une amie d'enfance, Cold Comfort, Being at Home with Claude and Bordertown Café are all plays that strictly respect the unities of time, place and action. They all unfold in circumscribed locations; they cover a period of roughly twenty-four hours, or less; and they concentrate on single dialectical conflicts between well-defined opponents.

Even the plays that do not rigidly abide by the rules of time and place, like Wedding in White, Les Célébrations, Gapi, Walls, and Du poil aux pattes comme les CWAC's, nevertheless trace clear through-lines of action, and use explicitly framed and situated scenes to operate obvious manoeuvres through time and space. None of the published dramas of the corpus replicate the complex intermingling of past and present, here and elsewhere, found in more stylistically daring Canadian works like Ryga's Rita Joe, Sharon Pollock's Doc (1984) and Tremblay's Albertine, en cinq temps (1984), in which the changes of locale and epoch are obliquely evoked rather than directly stated. At the level of dramatic construction, therefore, the plays of the corpus by no means subvert established practices.

Similarly, the personages that people these plays do not challenge accepted notions of theatrical characterization, for they all function as unified subjects, hypostatized with personal attributes that remain consistent throughout the dramas. Unlike, for instance, the intangible, postmodern²⁶ creatures of Walker's Ramona and the White Slaves (1976), whose elusive identities disconcertingly merge into one another during

the play, the personages of the corpus are realistic depictions of individuated subjects, whose actions can be understood in terms of typical human behaviour. As a matter of fact, none of the men and women encountered in our collection of texts even exhibits the Pirandellian intricacies of Tremblay's drag queens, especially the Duchesse de Langeais and Hosanna, who wear so many layers of masks that it becomes almost impossible to tell the imaginary character from the "real" person.

The corpus does count two prominent homosexual figures, namely, Oliver from Me? and Yves from Being at Home with Claude, who depart slightly from the norm. But neither Oliver nor Yves falls into the spiral of imaginary personas displayed in certain Québécois and Canadian dramas probing gay issues. Here, I am not only referring to Tremblay's pieces, but also to other well-known titles like Normand Charette's Provincetown Playhouse, juillet 1919, j'avais 19 ans (1981), Pollock's Blood Relations (1981) and Michel-Marc Bouchard's Les Feluettes ou la Répétition d'un drame romantique (1987), in which the gay characters undermine the concept of a stable subject position by fabricating multiple images of themselves through mise-en-abyme performances of their own convoluted dramas.²⁷ The fact that Being at Home with Claude and the other plays of the corpus do not expose the vicissitudes of the postmodern subject in such daedal terms does not entail that these are simplistic plays – far from it. However, it does suggest that, unlike other recent works, the texts of the corpus are not primarily concerned with the postmodern condition.

Another conspicuously conventional characteristic of the corpus is the fact that the four plays written by women do not drastically resist the predominantly phallo-centric principles of dramatic composition. Although these texts concentrate on female characters – except for Gapi, which focuses on two men – they still resort to the kind of linear dialectical progression emblematic of masculine writing, rather than employing the elusive *écriture féminine* prevailing in feminist dramas like Jovette Marchessault's La Saga des poules mouillées (1981).²⁸ Furthermore, the overwhelming majority of characters in the published plays of the corpus carry a Western European heritage. In the dozen texts with which we are dealing, there is not a single immigrant from Asia, and only one Native person and one individual of African descent, both cast in the stereotypical roles of convicted criminals in Bruyere's Walls. Thus, the Euro-centric norms and prejudices that are seriously called into question in such plays as Dry Lips Oughta Move to Kapuskasing (1989) by Amerindian author Tomson Highway, and Afrika Solo (1990) from African-Canadian performer Djanet Sears, seem to be accepted at face value in the works of the corpus.

In many respects, therefore, the works that compose the corpus of modern Canadian and Québécois film-mediated drama manifest a kind of orthodoxy that is more germanely investigated through structuralism than through current practices such as post-colonialism, feminist criticism and queer theory. As a matter of fact, such conventionality seems surprising, for some of the playwrights associated with the corpus are famous (if not

infamous) for the iconoclastic edge of their artistic practices. For example, as artistic director of Toronto Free Theatre in the 1970s, Martin Kinch earned the nickname "Mr. Sex-and-Violence" because of his proclivity for gruesome and graphically carnal spectacles, which relentlessly attacked the puritanical façade of English Canadian society.²⁹ His play, Me?, however, bears little evidence of this insurgent fascination with sex and violence, especially when compared with a truly radical play like Michael Hollingsworth's orgiastic Clear Light (1973), which Kinch directed with such caustic irreverence that it was banned by the Toronto morality squad.³⁰

Although in a very different manner, René-Daniel Dubois has also acquired the reputation of being a brilliantly provocative nonconformist, primarily on the basis of his award-winning drama Ne blâmez jamais les Bédouins (1984), which depicts, in half-a-dozen languages, the frantic last seconds before a frontal collision between two military trains. As Paul Lefebvre says, Dubois "plays so daringly and flamboyantly with space, time, language and the prevailing conventions of playwriting that his work often is compared to poetic frenzy – marvellous torrents of images to some, and mere empty verbosity to others."³¹ But Being at Home with Claude, the only play by Dubois to have been adapted for film, is also one of the least representative works of his explosively flamboyant dramaturgy. Realistic and sober in its depiction of a police interrogation, Being at Home with Claude is closer, in style and perhaps even in theme, to a classic like Dubé's Zone (1953), for instance, than to Dubois's

own works of the early 1980s.

My purpose in foregrounding the stylistic orthodoxy of Being at Home with Claude and the other published plays of the corpus is not to speculate on why these dramatists chose to ignore the various postmodernist techniques available and resorted, instead, to less formally challenging modes of composition. Rather my point is to stress the fact that the works of the corpus do construct their meanings through the use of conventional dramatic structures. It appears, therefore, that the most appropriate way to approach these plays is to adopt an analytical strategy adapted to this recurrent dramatic style. Consequently, Price's structuralist paradigm appears as a most pertinent methodology to analyze the works of the corpus, for its primary function is, expressly, to explicate the ways in which conventional drama generates its meaning.

There is certainly no shortage of methodologies comparable to Price's, but they are not equally suitable for the task at hand. Several theoretical treatises, from Anne Ubersfeld's influential Lire le théâtre (1978) to Thomas John Donahue's little-known Structures of Meaning: A Semiotic Approach to the Play Text (1993), develop useful models for the interpretation of the mechanisms engendering meaning in orthodox play-scripts. But most of these hermeneutical systems do not afford a perspective on a central aspect of the present study, namely, the cinematic treatment of drama. Other manuals, such as Martin Esslin's The Field of Drama: How the Signs of Drama create Meaning on Stage and Screen (1987), do incorporate comments on

cinema. But, as is the case with Esslin's book, these works often tend only to describe, or even merely enumerate,³² the encoding devices that theatre and film have at their disposal to construct meaning, without offering any methodological pointers on how to decipher these generated codes in order to elucidate the intricacies of given dramatic texts. Even Roy Armes's 1994 study, Action and Image: Dramatic Structure in Cinema, which articulates a valuable definition of the dramatic patterns that underlie most playscripts and film scenarios, does not provide us with what is required for our purpose, to wit, a systematic methodology that can guide us in our attempt to interpret the signifying structures of theatrical texts and their cinematic adaptations.³³ However, Price's Dramatic Structure and Meaning in Theatrical Productions does afford such a methodology, hence its use throughout this dissertation. I will refer occasionally to other theories such as Stanley D. Wilson's psychological inquiry into the roots of shame, Julia Kristeva's reflections on the abject and Leslie Kane's interpretation of silence in modern drama, to *confirm and expand* the conclusions already drawn via Price's approach.³⁴ But I will always keep these temporary digressions within the broader schema proposed by Price, so as to insure that the same analytical criteria are applied to all the texts studied.

Obviously, a new publication like Price's has not been thoroughly assessed yet. In this sense, resorting to this methodology entails a certain risk, for its potential defects have not been identified. (As a matter of fact, the present

study might very well serve as an initial testing ground for Price's system). However, his approach affords the double advantage of stemming from a well-established tradition of dramatic criticism based on Hegelian dialectics, while also incorporating current critical practices such as reader-response theory and deconstruction (Price xiv). Moreover, the seven case studies that Price submits to demonstrate the practical application of his method, the countless peripheral examples that he provides throughout his book, as well as the enlightening results obtained by employing this framework to scrutinize the corpus of film-mediated drama, have persuaded me of the overall validity of his system of textual inquiry. To familiarize the reader with the general terms of this approach, it will prove useful, here, to outline the elementary principles of Price's methodology. The details of his argument will be explained later, in the course of the analysis proper.

In a nutshell, Price's system is based on a three-stage procedure. The first stage is concerned with the structure of action in drama (dialectic of action). The second addresses the semiotic material, that is, the supporting visual and verbal imagery (dialectic of imagery). And the third seeks to abstract a qualitative description of the parallel structures of action and imagery by highlighting the quintessential attributes of each side of the dialectic (implicational dialect) (Price 5-6).

The dialectic of action follows the Hegelian postulate that drama "is essentially binary in structure, expressing the tension between opposing yet complementary mental functions"

(Price 7). This assumption, as Price demonstrates, even stands the test of Chekhovian dramaturgy (Price 192-222). But Price also recognizes that not all theatrical or filmic productions conform to the paradigm. Buñuel's disjointed film Le Charme discret de la bourgeoisie (1972), for instance, is one such work, whose separate parts do not coalesce into a unified dialectical structure (Price, 17). But this qualification does not diminish the relevance of Price's approach in the context of this study, for, as shown above, the works with which we are involved do not challenge customary dramatic construction.

With this reservation in mind, Price further argues that the differentiated personalities that move on stage function as the embodied fragments of one of the two disputing agencies (Price 13-4). Certain dramas contain only one agency involved in a struggle against a "hidden player" (Price 28-36). Godot, in Beckett's text, is a famous representative of the hidden player, and Sandra, in Tremblay's Hosanna (1973), plays a similar role. Other works include a third conglomerate character, located at a "disengaged apex position" (Price 46). This is the typical structure of the triangular love-comedy, in which a character personifies the desired object of the two opposing forces.

During the course of the drama, Price argues,

[...] one side of the argument eventually asserts its dominance over the other. [...] Those characters of the drama who are permitted to achieve their overriding wish make up the fantasy's dominant function; those who are not allowed to attain their overriding objective comprise its recessive function. The former are here designated as "protagonists," the latter as "antagonists" (Price 7).

The task of the analyst thus involves determining whether the actions performed by the characters lead to their victory or their failure. Consequently, the function of a character, though often pervading the play or film, emerges definitely only at the closure of the drama (Price 18).

It could be argued that Price's strategy is not applicable to modern drama, for many plays and films produced over the last few decades do not confer victory to anyone, leaving the characters hanging in a state of utter irresolution. Price responds to such reservations by demonstrating that many recent texts, as varied as Sam Shepard's True West (1980), John Carpenter's Escape from New York (1981) and Federico Fellini's City of Women (1980) (Price 312, 314), display what he calls a "synthetic-implied" structure, which

develops an oppressive conflict between two equally dysfunctional forces – often rationalized as discordant political systems – and leaves the struggle either stalemated or so unhappily concluded that, in either case, the auditor is drawn to supply in his own mind an acceptable alternative. [...These texts bring] down the curtain on an inconclusive war where victory and defeat have utterly lost significance [...] (Price 309).

This type of dramatic structure will be further discussed later. At this point, it should only be added that the texts belonging in the synthetic-implied category, although highly ironic, frequently pessimistic and often rejecting closure, still function within Price's dialectical framework.³⁵ Unlike other dramas, however, these texts focus on internecine conflicts on the losing side of the debate, relegating the winning agent to

a position of marginality or even silencing it altogether. The winning camp being eclipsed by the self-destructive strife of its more conspicuous opponents, "it makes no difference at all which of the initial adversaries we designate as 'protagonist' or 'antagonist' [...for they are] belatedly understood to be antagonists unwittingly locked in an internal war" (Price 311).

Price also makes clear that the terms protagonist and antagonist do not necessarily refer to the "hero," on the one hand, and the "villain," on the other hand. The most detestable of characters can be labelled protagonists if they are the victors in the drama, as the most engaging personages become antagonists if they lose the battle (Price 14-6). In Walker's The Art of War (1983), for example, the evil neo-fascist arms dealer John Hackman is indisputably the protagonist of the play, for he remains, to the end, in complete control of his circumstances. The honest liberal-humanist private investigator, Tyrone M. Power, on the other hand, despite his good intentions, fails miserably in his attempt to stop Hackman, and thus stumbles his way into the antagonistic category. In such a case, the drama belongs to the ironic mode (Price 20-1).

Dialectical shifts, in the course of a drama, are not excluded. A character can move from the protagonist's camp to that of the antagonist, or vice versa, or can actually evade the dialectic all together and adopt a neutral position. But in all cases, the movement is always unidirectional (Price 41-50). As Price demonstrates at length, using numerous examples to support his claim, characters in a play "always move in a parallel

course to the same goal. Their shifts may occur at different moments during the action, but never in different directions" (Price 42) Thus, if a character moves from the protagonist side to the side of the antagonist, all the other characters in the play will either remain in their initial position, or also move towards the antagonistic function. Keeping in mind his earlier qualification concerning certain heterodox types of drama, Price goes on to assert that "there are only seven basic movement-patterns, and that every dramatic conflict will conform to the dynamic tendencies of one or another of these seven classes" (Price 69). "A drama's whole tone," he adds, "and sometimes even its purport, depend [sic] to a large degree upon the direction in which its characters move" (Price 42).

The second stage of analysis concerns the dialectic of imagery. At this stage, the student of dramatic texts must discern the various signs – sounds, images, objects, words – assigned to each side of the bipolar structure to qualify the characters' actions and identify the nature of their wish. Just as the actions of the protagonists and antagonists collide, their rhetoric and material entourage also clash, thus providing "emotional heightening and definition for the struggle between the dominant and recessive camps of belligerents" (Price 51). In René Gingras's triangular drama Syncope (1983), for instance, the battle between François, an emotional punk, and Dupuis, a level-headed businessman, to control the destiny of Pete, a paradoxically rational artist, is manifested in the conflicting physical appearance and linguistic usage of the two opponents.

Pete, as the object of François's and Dupuis's dispute, stands at the apex position in terms of both action and imagery.

It is at this level of inquiry that Price's exegetical technique proves most pertinent to the analysis of filmic adaptations of plays. Indeed, since his approach considers visual and verbal signs as a complementary instrument in the definition of the dialectic of action that forms the core of a drama, the process of film-mediation can be interpreted, within this methodological framework, as a superimposition of *cinematic* imagery upon an underlying *dramatic* structure, at least in the cases where the film retains the basic dialectical configuration of the original play. The task of elucidating the transpositional procedure thus amounts, in many instances, to identifying alterations in the semiotic material that lends symbolic resonance to the dialectic of action.

Finally, the third stage of analysis, dealing with the implicational dialectic, entails a qualitative description of the action and counter-action of the drama. This procedure affords the identification of the values championed by the text. In a congruous drama, words such as "freedom," "love," and "justice" can be used as descriptions of the ethos of the protagonists, while the antagonists' ethos is described by their antonyms (Price 59-60). For instance, François Truffaut's film Jules et Jim (1961) is organized around the implicational opposites Civility/Anarchy, Responsibility/Irresponsibility, Contentment/Discontent etc., with the protagonist, Jules, defined by the first term of each doublet (Price 266). In an

ironic drama, on the other hand, the protagonists' motivations are associated with "terms that are conventionally negative in character" and the antagonists fail to realize the positive ambitions that inspire them (Price 62).

Although the implicational dialectic might appear to be a reductive practice, for it seeks to summarize complex dramatic conflicts in sets of simple antonyms, it can nevertheless prove to be a very valuable analytical instrument. As a matter of fact, the eminent film scholar David Bordwell writes in his book Making Meaning (1989) that,

since the 1970s, the semantic doublet has become an almost indispensable interpretative tool. Laura Mulvey's "visual pleasure" argument depends upon the psychoanalytic doublet voyeurism/fetishism. [...] Kracauer's From Caligari to Hitler treated German cinema as torn between tyranny and chaos. For Jacques Rivette, Hitchcock's films revealed a duality of external appearances and hidden secrets.³⁶

In the context of the present study, semantic antinomies are particularly useful inasmuch as they enable us to highlight, in the condensed form of implicational pairings, central aspects of the dialectics at work in each text and, subsequently, to identify recurrent patterns throughout the corpus on the basis of the salient clues that the doublets provide. Of course, to be genuinely conducive to a thorough understanding of the corpus, the implicational dialectic must not limit itself to universal opposites like life/death or female/male, which are shared by innumerable dramatic works. Rather, the doublets must be as specific as possible to mobilize abstractions expressly indicative of the distinct characteristics of the dramas, so that com-

parison between the texts will divulge *consequential* similarities within the corpus.

Price's three stages of analysis will not only guide the examination of the individual plays of the corpus; they will also shape the overarching design of the present study, which, as pointed out above, will deal successively with the plays, the process of film-mediation, and the broader significance of film-mediated drama vis-à-vis theoretical approaches to film and theatre, and within the Canadian and Québécois cultural contexts.

It will emerge from the first phase of inquiry conducted in the light of Price's theory that an overwhelming majority of the plays analyzed below present a dialectical composition that pits the coercive pressures exerted by a threatening exterior against the explosive forces discharged by a claustrophobic interior. The dramatic conflicts, in these texts, thus revolve around a tension between an inward restraint and an outward drive, that is, an afferent-withdrawal/efferent-escape³⁷ dialectic that racks the central characters located at the threshold, as they seek to remain inside or make it to the outside. In most plays, the central characters end up in the antagonistic position at the closure of the drama. In the few cases in which the central characters occupy the protagonist's function, their victory is usually tainted with irony. However, in all the dramas exhibiting the afferent-withdrawal/efferent-escape implicational dialectic, the antagonist or ironic protagonist ultimately remains entrapped inside.

As will be demonstrated in Chapters III to VII, this structure is manifest in several works of the corpus such as Fruet's Wedding in White and Dubé's Les Beaux Dimanches. In both plays, the main female character (Jeanie in the former and Hélène in the latter) attempts to escape the constrictive environment in which she is detained by a male figure, but eventually renounces her desire to flee because of the dread that she feels before the unknown world "out there." A variation of the same structure underlies Bolt's One Night Stand, in which it is the female character, Daisy, who wants to enclose the efferent energies of her male partner, Rafe. In this play, as in the other ones, the safe, albeit confining, *inside* resists the pressures of the *outside*. But to preserve this internal integrity, Daisy must literally kill the embodiment of the external threat that Rafe represents. Similarly, in Dubois's Being at Home with Claude, the central character, Yves, must murder his lover to preserve the cloistered universe that they have constructed around their idyllic love. Bruyere's Walls and Garrard's Cold Comfort also show the preservation of a secluded milieu through the use of extreme violence. Other works of the corpus, like Garneau's Les Célébrations, Kinch's Me? and Rebar's Bordertown Café, also exhibit a similar tension. But in these works, the victory of the afferent force is conferred a somewhat positive value, as it results from the protagonists' own choice to remain within the borders of their restricted quarters rather than breaking away from them.

After having described this recurrent configuration in the

dramas, I will further argue in Chapters VIII and IX that the dialectic of imagery which defines the struggle semiotically, finds a concrete expression in the structure of the cinematic adaptations of the plays. Indeed, in the process of film-mediation, the closed structure of these orthodox plays is "opened up" through the addition of outward imagery, thus emphasizing the tension between the closed world in which the characters find themselves entrapped, and the open world that they dread to confront. It will be demonstrated that the visual and verbal imagery generated in the process of film-mediation serves to locate the play in a broader context by shifting the focus of the drama from the characters to the set of circumstances that surround them, thus accentuating the tension between the threatening exterior and the secluded interior. In Jean Beaudin's adaptation of Being at Home with Claude, for instance, the filmmaker adds scenes to Dubois's strictly closed drama that illustrate the chaotic external world that caused Yves to seek permanent shelter, beyond death, in his lover's abode.

In the third and final part of this study, I will extrapolate from the close reading of the works to suggest that this tension constitutes a key characteristic of film-mediated drama as a *genre*, for film-mediated drama embodies the clash between the *dramatic* concentration on the nucleus of human interactions, and the *filmic* tendency to explode the nucleus and force it out in the open. Decades ago, film critic André Bazin made an analogous point when he contrasted the centrifugal space of the

screen to the centripetal *locus dramaticus* of the stage,³⁸ and as Chapter X will attest, many other film and theatre theorists, from Erwin Panovsky to Steven Shaviro, concur with Bazin. Being torn, as it were, between *afferent drama* and *efferent cinema*, film-mediated drama thus provides a uniquely appropriate way to give form to the structure of the plays considered in this study.

It will also be argued in Chapter X that the afferent-withdrawal/efferent-escape dichotomy relates to a prototypical expression of the Canadian and Québécois imagination as it is identified by several Canadian studies specialists such as Gaile McGregor. In her monumental study, The Wacousta Syndrome: Explorations in the Canadian Langscape (1985), McGregor singles out, as one of the central symbols of anglophone and francophone art in Canada, the House, which connotes either protection against a threatening exterior or imprisonment in a claustrophobic interior. "In Canadian literature," McGregor argues, "even when the demonic aspect of the house is evoked, the wish to escape tends to be undercut by a persistent fear of what is 'out there'."³⁹

In her book, Le Roman québécois: reflet d'une société (1985), Monique Lafortune discerns a similar tension in Québec society between a desire to escape a closed space and an urge to return to this safe abode. According to Lafortune, however, the closed space in French Canadian literature is not limited to the house, but can include the territory of Québec as a whole. Often, in post-1960 novels, like Hélène Ouvreard's Le coeur

sauvage (1967), the Québécois village "est décrit comme un univers fermé, réfractaire à la marginalité. Peu de place y est laissée à l'individu; c'est la loi de la répression qui a cours, rejetant tout ce qui n'est pas conforme à la norme."⁴⁰ Similarly, the city (usually Montréal), in works such as Laurent Girouard's La ville inhumaine (1964), appears as a closed space, in which the protagonist "se sent prisonnier de cet univers insupportable, de 'ce monde de ferraille' où la vie devient impossible."⁴¹ Yet when characters manage to flee the claustrophobic space of Québec, often towards the United States, their escape is usually temporary and they eventually return to the fold. "En effet, après une escapade hors des frontières [québécoises], les héros rentrent bien vite chez eux [...] dans la plupart des romans, la fuite vers le Sud n'est pas une réussite [et] elle n'est pas présentée comme une solution aux problèmes des personnages en cause."⁴²

McGregor's and Lafortune's points, although quite different in their respective approach to the Canadian/Québécois imagination, nevertheless refer to a tension corresponding to the dialectic structure of the adapted plays and the combination of media entailed by the process of cinematic transposition. Chapter X will show that several Canadian/Québécois cultural theorists, from various and often diametrically opposed ideological backgrounds, describe the national ethos in terms suggesting that film-mediated drama, despite its marginality in the national filmic tradition, constitutes a unique means of voicing the Canadian and Québécois experience, for it connotes an im-

plicational dialectic (i.e. a set of opposing abstractions that epitomize the concerns of the disputing factions [Price 59]) that translates a preoccupation often seen as a fundamental trait of the peoples inhabiting Canada. In the final analysis, it could even be argued that the very marginality of film-mediated drama actually intensifies its representativeness of the national experience, for, as critic Robert Nunn submits, "history has conditioned Canadians to see themselves and their culture as marginal."⁴³ And film-mediated drama has been, over the last thirty years, among the most marginal activities in our marginal culture.

The overall aim of the present study is thus to demonstrate that the corpus of film-mediated drama weaves a network of correspondences, or a "recursive symmetry," to borrow a term from chaos theory, that extends from the dialectical structure of the plays, to the process of film-mediation and, ultimately, to a paradigmatic representation of Canadian/Québécois culture. Before undertaking the analysis proper, however, it will prove useful to trace a brief history of film-mediated drama in Québec and Canada in order to get a sense of the fabric of the corpus.

NOTES

¹. On the socio-political context of Canada in the 1960s see, for instance, Desmond Morton, "Strains of Affluence 1945-1987," The Illustrated History of Canada, ed. Craig Brown (Toronto: Lester Publishing, 1991) 496-522. "Never had so many Canadians come of age at a single time and never had they been so affluent. By the late 1960s, Canada was dominated, as never before, by its young" (p.503). "Federal-government income doubled between 1957 and 1967 ... the new money supported scores of programs [...] The millions of dollars poured into the coffers of arts organizations, universities, orchestras, publishers, and the CBC generated far more talent than Canadians had ever believed they possessed" (p.503, 508).

². See, for instance, Peter Harcourt's comparative analysis of Le Chat dans le sac and Nobody Waved Goodbye in Peter Harcourt, "1964: The Beginning of a Beginning," Self Portrait: Essays on the Canadian and Québec Cinemas, eds. Pierre Véronneau and Piers Handling (Ottawa: Canadian Film Institute, 1980) 64-76. See also Gary Evans, In the National Interest: A Chronicle of the National Film Board of Canada from 1949 to 1989 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991) 94-105. "Nobody Waved Goodbye and Le Chat dans le sac were the models to emulate" (p.105). See also Robert Daudelin, "La Rencontre direct-fiction," in Pierre Véronneau et al., Les Cinémas canadiens (Montréal: Cinémathèque québécoise; Paris: Pierre Lhermier Éditeur, 1978) 107-21. "En un mot, une partie importante du cinéma de fiction québécois a vécu pendant près de quinze ans sous l'influence, à des degrés divers, du cinéma direct" (p.108). "Après bientôt quinze ans, ce film [Le chat dans le sac] demeure toujours le point de repère essentiel à toute analyse de l'histoire récente du cinéma québécois" (p.113). See also David Clandfield, Canadian Film (Toronto: Oxford UP, 1987) 89-96. "Don Owen's Nobody Waved Goodbye is usually singled out as the groundbreaker" (p.89). See also Gerald Pratley, Torn Sprockets: The Uncertain Projection of the Canadian Film (Newark: University of Delaware Press; London and Toronto: Associated UP, 1987) 93. "The National Film Board made 1964 a memorable year with two documentary-like features, Le Chat dans le sac in French by Gilles Groulx ... and Nobody Waved Goodbye in English, the first feature directed by Don Owen."

³. On The Ecstasy of Rita Joe, see Jerry Wasserman, "Introduction," Modern Canadian Plays (Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1986) 9-23. "... the play that finally touched the nerve of English Canada. The Ecstasy of Rita Joe premiered at the Vancouver Playhouse on November 23, 1967, in a landmark production that was remounted for the opening of the National Arts Centre in 1969. That year the play was also broadcast on CBC-TV and

produced in a French translation by Gratien Gélinas in Montreal, as Rita Joe reverberated through the nation's collective consciousness" (p.14). On Les Belles-soeurs, see, for instance, Gilbert David, "Un nouveau territoire théâtral 1965-1980," in Renée Legris, et al. Le Théâtre au Québec 1825-1980 (Montréal: VLB Éditeur, 1988) 141-64. "La création des Belles-Soeurs de Michel Tremblay au Théâtre du Rideau Vert en août 1968 vient en quelque sorte cristalliser une prise de conscience ... La dramaturgie de Tremblay sert alors de détonateur à une prise en charge inédite de la réalité sociale et culturelle..." (p.153).

4. Robert Wallace, Producing Marginality: Theatre and Criticism in Canada (Saskatoon: Fifth House Publishers, 1990) 39.

5. To my knowledge, the only Walker play that has been translated for a production in Québec is Zastrozzi: The Master of Discipline (1977). Zastrozzi, maître de discipline [1986, trans. René Gingras] received public readings in Montréal, Toronto and Ottawa in 1986. See Théâtre québécois: ses auteurs, ses pièces: Répertoire du Centre d'essai des auteurs dramatiques (Outremont: VLB Éditeur, 1990) 125. To be fair, it must be pointed out that the situation seems to be changing slowly, as is suggested by the title of Robert Nunn's article "Canada Incognita: Has Québec Theatre Discovered English Canadian Plays" (Theatrum 24 [June/July/August 1991]: 14-19). But the success in Québec of English Canadian plays, such as Judith Thompson's I Am Yours (1987) and especially Brad Fraser's Unidentified Human Remains and the True Nature of Love (1989), is still very much an exception to the rule.

6. Sylvain Garel, "Un cinéma dans tous ses états," Les Cinémas du Canada, eds. Sylvain Garel and André Pâquet (Paris: Éditions du Centre Pompidou, 1992) 9.

7. Pierre Véronneau, "Présentation," in Pierre Véronneau et al., A la recherche d'une identité : renaissance du cinéma d'auteur canadien-anglais (Montréal: Cinémathèque québécoise, 1991) 7.

8. I have not been able to find any information about the production history of Wimbs's Memoirs of Johnny Daze. Although D.J. Turner in Canadian Feature Film Index / Index des films canadiens de long métrage 1913-1985 (Ottawa: Public Archives, 1987, p. 430) and Copie Zéro (no 24, p.31) refer explicitly to the play as the source for Bachar Shbib's Memoirs (1984), records of Canadian stage productions, such as Canada on Stage (1974-1988), do not refer to this work. The archivists of the Playwrights Union of Canada do not know of the play either.

9. The practice in the United States has long been to film virtually every play that has enjoyed popular and/or critical success on stage. Besides the obligatory "masterpieces" of Eugene O'Neill (The Iceman Cometh [play: 1946/film: 1973]; Long Day's Journey Into Night [1956/1962]), Arthur Miller (All My Sons [1947/1948]; Death of a Salesman [1949/1951]) and Tennessee Williams (The Glass Menagerie [1945/1950]; A Streetcar Named Desire [1947/1951]; Cat on a Hot Tin Roof [1955/1958]; Orpheus Descending [1958/1959] etc.), which have all been made into movies (more than once in certain cases), literally dozens of other Broadway plays have been adapted by Hollywood. Ranging from 1960s classics like Edward Albee's Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf (1962/1966), Mart Crowley's The Boys in the Band (1967/-1970) and several comedies by Neil Simon (The Odd Couple [1965/-1968] being only the best-known among them) to 1980s hits like Beth Henley's Crimes of the Heart (1981/1986), Marsha Norman's Night Mother (1983/1986), Sam Shepard's Fool for Love (1984/1985) and David Mamet's Glengarry Glen Ross (1984/1992), the list of famous works that comprise the corpus of American film-mediated drama is far too long to be reproduced here. Rather, I will refer readers to Tom Costello, ed. International Guide to Literature on Film (London: Bowker-Saur, 1994), in which there are hundreds of titles of American plays brought to the screen. Interestingly, Costello's book does not refer to a single Canadian play made into a film, which attests to the marginality of this practice in Canada.

A simple, non-scientific survey also shows clearly the difference between the attitude of Canadian/Québécois filmmakers and that of the Americans regarding the adaptation of famous plays. Of the more than thirty post-1960 Canadian and Québécois plays that are considered notable enough to be given a separate entry in The Oxford Companion to Canadian Theatre, (ed. Eugene Benson and L.W. Conolly, Toronto: Oxford UP, 1989) only one has been made into a feature film: Fortune and Men's Eyes (1967), co-produced by the American major, MGM. By contrast, well over half of the eighty-five post-1960 American plays that have their own entry in The Concise Oxford Companion to American Theatre (Gerald Bordman, New York: Oxford UP, 1987) have been made into feature films.

Another wholly non-scientific survey can be adduced as well to support this point. A 1988 poll conducted by Gilbert David and published in Cahiers de théâtre jeu 47, attests to the fact that most of the Québécois plays that have been made into films are generally not considered as "landmarks." In this survey, ten drama critics offer their top-ten lists of the best plays of the "répertoire théâtral québécois." Normand Chaurette's Provincetown Playhouse, juillet 1919, j'avais 19 ans (1981) appears on eight of the ten lists; Réjean Ducharme's Ha ha! (1979) on seven; and Jean-Pierre Ronfard's Vie et mort du roi Boiteux (1981-2) on six. Other plays like Gratien Gélinas's Bousille et les justes (1959), Michel Tremblay's Les Belles-Soeurs (1968), A toi, pour toujours, ta Marie-Lou (1971) and Albertine, en cinq temps (1984), Jeanne-Mance Delisle's Une reel ben beau, ben triste (1979), Marcel Dubé's Au retour des oies blanches (1966),

and René-Daniel Dubois's Ne blâmez jamais les Bédouins (1984) are all mentioned four or five times in the survey. Dubois's Being at Home with Claude (1985), however, appears on only one of the ten lists (p.135), and the other Québécois film-mediated plays, including Dubé's Les Beaux Dimanches (1965), are not mentioned at all in the survey. As indicated above, these numbers have little scientific bearing, but they do indicate the position of marginality that the dramas adapted for the big screen occupy in the canon.

¹⁰. For comments on television adaptations of plays see Mary Jane Miller, "Television Drama in English," and Renée Legris, "Television Drama in Quebec," The Oxford Companion to Canadian Theatre, 519-22, 522-4. See also Renée Legris and Pierre Pagé, Répertoire des dramatiques québécoises à la télévision, 1952-1977 : vingt-cinq ans de télévision à Radio-Canada : télé-théâtres, feuilletons, dramatiques pour enfants (Montréal: Fides, 1977). Lorraine Duchesnay et al., Vingt-cinq ans de dramatiques à la télévision de Radio-Canada : 1952-1977 (Montréal: Société Radio-Canada, 1978). Mary Jane Miller, Turn Up the Contrast : CBC Television Drama since 1952 (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1987).

The basic plot-line of Les Belles-Soeurs was put on film in 1973, when André Brassard directed a movie called Il était une fois dans l'Est, which brings together characters from half a dozen of Michel Tremblay's early plays. But most of the lines and dramatic events of the original text are excluded from the film.

¹¹. Martin Knelman, Home Movies: Tales From the Canadian Film World (Toronto: Key Porter Books, 1987) 172-3.

¹². Knelman, 20.

¹³. See Take One 3.5 (May/June 1971, pub. July 1972): 26; Take One 3.6 (July/Aug. 1971, pub. Oct. 1972): 39. See also Martin Knelman, This Is Where We Came In: The Career and Character of Canadian Film (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1977) 137.

¹⁴. Joy Gould Boyum, Double Exposure: Fiction into Film (New York: New American Library, 1985) 40.

¹⁵. Peter Harcourt, Movies and Mythologies: Towards a National Cinema (Toronto: CBC Publications, 1977) 152.

16. Pierre Véronneau, "Du théâtre au cinéma au Québec: bref historique," Canadian Drama / L'Art dramatique canadien 5 (1979): 29.

17. Brian Moore's novel The Luck of Ginger Coffey (1960), for instance, was made into a film in 1964, by Irvin Kershner. The same year, Claude Jasmin's book La Corde au cou (1960) was adapted by Pierre Patry; and André Langevin's novel Poussière sur la ville (1953) was also produced by Patry, and directed by Arthur Lamothe in 1965. But, during the 1960s, not a single Canadian or Québécois play was adapted. See Turner, 50-60.

18. The distinction between the novel as a digital medium and film as an analogic medium is suggested in Harris Ross, "Introduction," Film as Literature, Literature as Film (New York: Greenwood Press, 1987) 27.

19. Roman Ingarden, Das Literarische Kunstwerk, 2nd ed. (Tübingen, 1960) 120. See comments on Ingarden in Egil Törnqvist, Transposing Drama: Studies in Representation (Houndmills, Hampshire and London: MacMillan, 1991) 9.

20. Léo Bonneville, "Entretien avec Yves Simoneau," Séquences 124 (Apr. 1986): 6.

21. Véronneau, "Du théâtre au cinéma," 31.

22. Unlike in Québec, *auteurism* in English Canada completely died out in the second half of the 1970s. As Québec's *auteur par excellence*, Jean-Pierre Lefebvre, suggests in his essay, "Les cinémas canadiens : d'une image à l'autre" (A la recherche d'une Identité, 23-43), the numerous English Canadian filmmakers who made *auteur* films in the 1960s and 1970s, such as Paul Almond, William Fruet, Don Shebib, and Don Owen, "n'ont ... engendré aucune continuité, n'ont provoqué aucune relève." (p.36) It is only since the mid-1980s, with Atom Egoyan, William MacGillivray, Guy Maddin, Peter Mettler, Patricia Rozema, Giles Walker, Anne Wheeler, Sandy Wilson and others, that we have witnessed the "Renaissance du cinéma d'auteur canadien-anglais."

23. It is worth mentioning, here, that Costello's International Guide to Literature on Film does not mention any instance of Canadian/Québécois film-mediated drama. But it does itemize a great number of film adaptations of plays from a variety of countries, thus attesting to the fact that most national cinemas, *unlike Canadian cinema*, rely heavily on their drama-

turgies for inspiration. For instance, in addition to several adaptations of Shakespeare's, Oscar Wilde's and George Bernard Shaw's plays, British filmmakers have also filmed landmarks of their contemporary repertory such as John Osborne's Look Back in Anger (1956/1958), Harold Pinter's The Caretaker (1960/1963), and The Homecoming (1965/1973), Peter Shaffer's Egus (1973/1977) and Tom Stoppard's Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead (1967/1990). Similarly, French cineastes have adapted both the classics of their theatre, such as Molière's Tartuffe (1669/1963), Racine's Phèdre (1677/1968) and Victor Hugo's Ruy Blas (1838/1948), and twentieth century works such as Françoise Sagan's Château de Suède (1960/1963), Jean-Paul Sartre's Les Mains Sales (1948/1951) and several comedies by André Roussin including his popular Lorseque l'enfant paraît (1952/1956). And of course, Marcel Pagnol has adapted several of his own plays for the cinema (ex: Marius [1931/1931]; Topaze [1930/1951], etc.). The Germans have cinematized plays by J.W. Goethe (Faust [1808/1960]; Götz von Berlichingen [1773/1979]) and Heinrich von Kleist (Penthesilea [1808/1983]), as well as dramas by Friedrich Dürrenmatt (Der Besuch der alten Dame [1956/1964]), F.X. Kroetz (Wildwechsel [1968/1972]) and Botho Strauß (Gross und Klein [1980/1980]). And Japanese directors have brought to the big screen the plays of Chikamatsu Monzaemon (Sonezaki shinju [1703/1978]) as well as those of Mishima Yukido (Kurotokage [1962/1968]). Younger nations have also transposed their theatrical traditions onto the screen. Athol Fugard's well-known Boesman and Lena (1969/1973) was made into a film in South Africa. Brazilian playwright Nelson Rodrigues has seen seven or eight of his texts filmed since the 1960s (Bôca de ouro [1959/1962]; Obeijo no asfalto [1961/1981]; Bonitinha, mas ordinária [1961/1981] etc.). And half a dozen plays by Australian dramatist David Williamson have been cinematized (ex. The Club [1978/1980]; Don's Party [1973/1976] etc.). All these titles indicate rather clearly that Canadian filmmakers, in their lack of interest in the national dramatic canon, are the exception rather than the rule. For a brief history of cinema's interaction with theatre in Europe and America (but not in Canada!), see also Gregory Waller, "Film and Theatre," Film and the Arts in Symbiosis, ed. Gary R. Edgerton (New York, Westport, Connecticut and London: Greenwood Press, 1988) 135-63.

²⁴. In the forthcoming analysis, I will limit myself to the published plays of the corpus to avoid discussing texts that are simply not available to the public. The historical survey conducted in Chapter Two will make mention of the unpublished plays. See Appendix 1.

Here, the term "indigenous" excludes from this group Harvey Hart's film version of John Herbert's play Fortune and Men's Eyes (1967), which was produced by the American major, MGM. See Chapter Two on this matter. The rationale behind the 1972-1992 periodization is broached in Chapter Two.

25. For instance, Price applies his analytical tools to both François Truffaut's film Jules et Jim (1961) and Bertolt Brecht's play Mother Courage and Her Children (1941) with equally enlightening results. See Thomas Price, Dramatic Structure and Meaning in Theatrical Productions (San Francisco: Edwin Mellen Press, 1992) 231-68, 318-49. Subsequent references to this work in this chapter will appear within parentheses in the text.

26. The postmodern credo calls into question the notion of a unified, autonomous subject on the basis of Lacanian psychoanalysis, which argues that the formation of the unified "I" results from an imaginary misrecognition of the self as whole through the perception of external images of a unified self. In other words, what is (mis)recognized as Self is always already Other, hence the unstable subject position characteristic of postmodernist literature. This misrecognition originates in what Lacan labels the "mirror stage" of infancy. See Jacques Lacan, "The mirror stage as formative of the function of the I as revealed in psychoanalytic experience," Écrits: A Selection, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: W.W. Norton, 1977) 1-7.

It must be pointed out, however, that since the late 1980s the relevance of Lacan's theory, especially as appropriated by film studies, has in turn been called into question by critics such as Noël Carroll, who finds Lacan's generalizations scientifically dubious. See Carroll, "Marxism and Psychoanalysis: The Althusserian-Lacanian Paradigm," Mystifying Movies : Fads and Fallacies in Contemporary Film Theory (New York: Columbia UP, 1988) 53-88.

27. On the stylistic implications of the homosexual metaphor in Provincetown Playhouse ... and Blood Relations, see André Loiselle, "Paradigms of 1980s Québécois and Canadian Drama: Normand Charette's Provincetown Playhouse, juillet 1919, j'avais 19 ans and Sharon Pollock's Blood Relations," Québec Studies 14 (spring/summer 1992): 93-104.

28. The distinction made here between masculine writing and *écriture féminine* is aligned with the position taken by feminist critics like Patricia Smart, who writes: "L'écriture des hommes a tendance à privilégier la linéarité, la logique et une conception de l'identité qui est close, distanciée, et rassurée par la présence de frontières, c'est-à-dire qu'elle se déploie dans un rapport de proximité (de Même) avec la Loi. Dans l'écriture des femmes, c'est davantage la texture qui domine - la densité de ce qui résiste à la clôture à l'intérieur du signe; les gestes, les rythmes et les silences qui sous-tendent le langage et qui parlent dans les brèches entre les mots." See Patricia Smart, Écrire dans la maison du père : l'émergence du féminin dans la tradition littéraire du Québec (Montréal:

Éditions Québec/Amérique, 1988) 26.

²⁹. Denis Johnston, Up the Mainstream: The Rise of Toronto's Alternative Theatres (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991) 172.

³⁰. Johnston, 189.

³¹. Paul Lefebvre, "Introduction," Quebec Voices: Three Plays, ed. Robert Wallace (Toronto: Coach House Press, 1986) 12.

³². See, for instance, André Helbo et al., "Le théâtre et les médias: spécificité et interférences," Théâtre : Modes d'approche (Bruxelles: Editions Labor, 1987) 33-62. In this text, the authors literally give us graphics and point-form enumerations of the various modes of semiotic production characteristic of theatre, cinema, television, radio and video. Esslin goes beyond mere enumeration and explains at some length the functioning of the various "Signs of Drama," as he entitles six of his fourteen chapters. But his descriptions never coalesce into a systematic methodology for the analysis of drama. Rather, his exploration of "The Field of Drama" serves only to re-inforce the humanist notion that "the ability and the power of drama to create an emotional experience of the utmost intensity, akin to religious or mystical ecstasy, an experience that may become a climactic turning point in an individual's life, and transform that individual, or conversely a deeply unsettling experience like that which Hamlet inflicted upon his uncle, is the true measure of its importance in the fabric of our lives, our society and our culture, the true extent of the 'very cunning of the scene'." See Martin Esslin, The Field of Drama: How the Signs of Drama Create Meaning on Stage and Screen (London: Methuen Drama, 1987) 177-8.

³³. Armes identifies four types of dramatic plots common to most theatrical and filmic pieces (the closed plot; the open plot; the mixture of plot and narration; and the refusal of plot), and four kinds of protagonists (the individual as protagonist; the protagonist governed by "the hand of God"; the group as protagonist; and the disintegration of the protagonist). Although his general postulates on the basic three-act morphology of stage and screen drama might prove useful at times, Armes's approach is not rigorous enough to serve as a model for this dissertation. The author usually offers only one example for each category without referring to other films of the same type, and rarely tries to account for variations within each structural group. See Roy Armes, Action and Image: Dramatic Structure in Cinema (Manchester: Manchester UP, 1994) 63-185.

34. Although Price's methodology *always* proves adequate for the analysis of the works of the corpus, citing other theories re-asserts the value of our conclusions as it corroborates the results through various approaches. The works referred to here are Stanley D. Wilson, Rising Above Shame: Healing Family Wounds to Self Esteem (Rockville: Launch Press, 1991); Julia Kristeva, Pouvoirs de l'horror : Essai sur l'abjection (Paris: Éditions du seuil, 1980); Leslie Kane, The Language of Silence: On the Unspoken and the Unspeakable in Modern Drama (London and Toronto: Associated UP, 1984).

35. The fact that this type of drama is very common nowadays could be attributed to the widespread cynicism that characterizes many Western societies in the late twentieth century.

36. David Bordwell, Making Meaning: Inference and Rhetoric in the Interpretation of Cinema (Cambridge [Mass.]: Harvard UP, 1989) 117. To put Bordwell's statement in its proper context, I must add that while he recognizes the importance of the semantic doublet in the practice of interpretation, the point of his book is, precisely, that "we should stop doing interpretation" (p.128).

37. Here, I use the words "afferent" and "efferent" in the broader sense of the terms given in The Oxford English Dictionary, respectively, "bringing or conducting inwards," and "conveying outwards, discharging." The compounds "afferent-withdrawal" and "efferent-escape" are employed to give a sense of movement to the opposite reactions of withdrawal and escape. The term "withdrawal" used by itself could connote both internal recoil and external departure. The term "afferent-withdrawal," on the other hand, translates clearly the inward motion of seclusive retreat. Conversely, the term "efferent-escape" suggests the discharging function of outward flight.

38. André Bazin, "Theatre and Cinema - Part Two," in What is Cinema? Vol 1, trans. Hugh Gray (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967) 95-124 (especially 102-8).

39. Gaile McGregor, The Wacousta Syndrome: Explorations in the Canadian Langscape[sic], (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1985) 102.

40. Monique Lafortune, Le Roman québécois: reflet d'une société, (Laval: Mondia, 1985) 225.

⁴¹. Lafortune, 226.

⁴². Lafortune, 228, 230.

⁴³. Robert Nunn, "Marginality and English-Canadian Theatre," Theatre Research International 17.3 (Autumn 1992): 217. Similarly, Linda Hutcheon argues that "the periphery or the margin might also describe Canada's perceived position in international terms." See Linda Hutcheon, The Canadian Postmodern: A Study of Contemporary English-Canadian Fiction (Toronto: Oxford UP, 1988) 3.

CHAPTER II. A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE CORPUS

Prior to the renaissance of Canadian and Québécois cinema initiated in the 1960s, film-mediated drama had enjoyed something of a golden age in Québec. Some of the most significant movies produced during the first wave of fiction film-making in Québec, in the 1940s and early 1950s, are based on popular French Canadian plays. The short movie La Dame aux camélias, la vraie (1942), singled out by Ginette Major as the film that marks the inception of "l'aventure du cinéma québécois de fiction," also represents the first attempt to use theatrical material as a source for a talking motion picture.¹ This parody of the well-known Dumas play, which criticizes the cultural hegemony that France exerts over Québec, was written and filmed by the popular stage actor and director Gratien Gélinas in 1942, and presented as part of his famous annual theatre revue, "Les Fridolinades."²

Ten years later, Gélinas returned to cinema, contributing to the early success of film-mediated drama in Québec with an adaptation of his acclaimed stage play Tit-Cog (1948). Universally recognized as the first major work of the French Canadian national dramaturgy, Tit-Cog was actually conceived, first, as a screenplay. Following a suggestion from film producer Paul L'Anglais to develop a full-fledged screenplay based on the 1946 revue sketch Le Retour du conscrit, Gélinas created the character of the orphan soldier Tit-Cog. After a few weeks of work, however, Gélinas decided to write a play on this subject rather than a film-script.³

The tremendous popular and critical success that the play enjoyed in the late 1940s and early 1950s, not only in Québec but across Canada, convinced L'Anglais and producer Alexandre De Sève of the cinematic potential of Tit-Cog. Thus, in the fall of 1952, Gélinas and co-director René Lacroix commenced work on "une adaptation quasi intégrale de la pièce à succès."⁴ The film opened to rave reviews in February, 1953.⁵ One of the most enthusiastic responses to the film came from René Lévesque who declared, years before becoming Premier of Québec, that with the production of Tit-Cog "le cinéma canadien sort de l'âge des cavernes."⁶

Between La Dame aux camélias, la vraie and Tit-Cog, the marriage of theatre and cinema produced a few other memorable films. The first feature-length sound fiction film made in Québec, Jean-Marie Poitevin's A la croisée des chemins (1943), was adapted from Guy Stein's religious drama, La folle Aventure, which had been staged in 1942 as part of the 300th anniversary of the foundation of Montréal. A la croisée des chemins, as narrated by none other than René Lévesque, tells the story of a young man who chooses to become a missionary rather than marry his sweetheart. Although the film was not distributed commercially, its edifying content made it a great favourite in the parallel network of seminarian ciné-clubs, church halls and school auditoria.⁷

The most successful commercial feature film of the time, La petite Aurore, l'enfant martyre (1951), is also an adaptation of a play: Aurore, l'enfant martyre, the best-known melodrama in

Québec theatre.⁸ Written by Léon Petitjean and Henri Rollin, and premiered in January of 1921, Aurore l'enfant martyre presents a dramatized version of the life and death of Aurore Gagnon, a ten year old child who died in 1920 following the grave physical abuse inflicted upon her by her father and step-mother.⁹ The play was an immediate success, and was apparently performed more than four thousand times between 1921 and 1951.¹⁰

In 1951, Alexandre De Sève asked Emile Asselin (a.k.a. Marc Forrez) to write a novel on the basis of both the play and the actual events. De Sève then bought the text for a dollar and "autres valables considérations" and used it as the source for the film that Jean-Yves Bigras directed.¹¹ After a six month delay caused by a lawsuit brought against De Sève and the film's distributor, France Film, by Telesphore Gagnon, Aurore's father, who opposed the cinematic depiction of the violent incident in which he was involved, La petite Aurore l'enfant martyre finally opened to great popular success in April of 1952.¹² La petite Aurore is the only film of that period that remained on the commercial circuit over the years, and actually had an international career, having been shown, apparently, even in Japan.¹³

Shortly after the success of La petite Aurore, and about a year before the premiere of another adaptation of a melodramatic play, Coeur de maman (1953), based on Henry Deyglun's La Mère abandonnée (1925), television came to Québec and gave the final blow to an industry that had already started to falter.¹⁴ It would take ten years for Québécois cineastes to take up fiction film-making again, and yet another decade to see the first

instance of film-mediated drama. But never again would theatre and cinema merge with such tremendous success as during that golden age of the "Canadien-français" (as opposed to "Québécois") film industry.¹⁵

In English Canada, film-mediated drama never experienced such triumphs. The first Canadian play to be made into a motion picture was Hilda Mary Hooke Smith's Here Will I Nest.¹⁶ A dramatized version of the life of Colonel Thomas Talbot, who established a settlement in Western Ontario in the early nineteenth century, the play Here Will I Nest seems to have been a small local success at the London (Ont.) Little Theatre, where it opened on 14 November, 1938.¹⁷ The film version of the play, also known as Talbot of Canada, was directed by Melburn E. Turner around 1940, and is most notable, according to Peter Morris, "as the first Canadian dramatic feature in colour."¹⁸ It received a private screening in 1942 at the Elsie Perrin Williams Memorial Library, in London. A rhapsodic local reviewer announced at the time that "cultural history was made in London last night when the private premiere of the all-talking motion picture Here Will I Nest was presented."¹⁹ But this was the film's only moment of glory. Here Will I Nest was never released commercially, and only fifteen of the original ninety minutes of the movie have survived.²⁰ For the next thirty years, Here Will I Nest would remain the only instance of an original English Canadian play made into a feature film.²¹

As pointed out in the introduction, the renaissance of

Canadian and Québécois cinema coincided with the emergence of the notion of auteurship in film-making. This resulted in the complete disappearance of film-mediated drama during the 1960s. Only at the beginning of the 1970s were the first attempts made to adapt Canadian and Québécois plays for the cinema. In Vancouver, Daryl Duke tried for the longest time to make a film version of Ryga's Rita Joe, but the project kept being postponed until it eventually fell through in the fall of 1972.²² Eric Till's venture to make a feature film based on Roch Carrier's play and novel La Guerre, Yes Sir! (novel: 1968 / play: 1970) met with the same fate.²³ The first feature film adapted from a Canadian play to be completed and released after 1960, in either English or French, was Fortune and Men's Eyes (1971), based on John Herbert's famous prison drama, and directed by Harvey Hart.

Ironically, but perhaps not surprisingly, the project to adapt Herbert's play was initiated by an American filmmaker, Jules Schwerin. Schwerin had acquired the screen rights to Herbert's Fortune and Men's Eyes (1967) immediately upon seeing it performed in New York in 1967, and after having been turned down by most Hollywood studios, he finally secured the financial support of the American major Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer and Cinemex International (Canada).²⁴ Shooting began at the old Prison de Québec in the fall of 1970, but following a dispute over the artistic direction of the film, the producers, Lester Persky and Lewis Allen, fired Schwerin and called Canadian filmmaker Hart back from the United States, where he had been working for more than half a decade, to take up the project. Hart, who agreed to

direct the film without knowing anything about the play, discarded most of Schwerin's footage, and re-shot 90 percent of the material in record time to respect the production deadline.²⁵

The Canadian Film Development Corporation (now Telefilm Canada) applauded the replacement as it increased the official Canadian content of the motion picture.²⁶ But in spite of this addition, the film remained, for some, very much an example of "entertainment à l'américaine."²⁷ Martin Knelman even raised "the touchy question of whether our public funds ought to be invested in a movie distributed and to some extent controlled by a Hollywood company like MGM."²⁸ The fact that the premiere of the film, on 15 June 1971, was in New York, rather than in Toronto or Montréal, attests to the pertinence of this question.²⁹ Admittedly, the play itself, although written in Canada by a Canadian, had been an American success long before becoming a Canadian classic. It premiered off-Broadway in 1967, and, in an American edition, has become the best-selling Canadian play ever published.³⁰ As a matter of fact, at the time the film was being shot in Québec, the play had still not received a full professional production in Canada, although it had brief runs in Vancouver and Winnipeg, and had been staged in French as Aux yeux des hommes at Théâtre de Quat'Sous, under the direction of André Brassard.³¹ Given all these mitigating factors, Fortune and Men's Eyes can hardly be considered the beginning of modern Canadian film-mediated drama.

The first genuinely Canadian instance of modern film-mediated drama dates from 1972, when William Fruet turned his

own play Wedding in White (1972) into a motion picture. Although the film features two foreign actors in leading roles, Donald Pleasence and Carol Kane, the content and production history of Wedding in White make it an unmistakably Canadian work. The plot, based on Fruet's memories of his childhood in Alberta, revolves around a naïve teenage girl who, after having been raped by her brother's army buddy, is forced by her father to marry one of his old friends.³² Set during World War II, the work depicts a dismal English Canadian milieu, in which women are the silent victims of cowardly men who vainly imagine themselves as courageous British loyalists, and find refuge from the mediocrity and uselessness of their displaced existences in the drunken bravado of Legion halls. Unlike Fortune and Men's Eyes, Wedding in White had both its stage and screen premieres in Toronto: the former in February of 1972, and the latter in October of the same year.³³ And also unlike Fortune and Men's Eyes, Wedding in White was filmed without the support of foreign investors.³⁴

Although Fruet's play enjoyed quite a successful first run at the Poor Alex Theatre, it did not arouse an upsurge of critical and popular enthusiasm in any way comparable to that generated by the contemporary performances of David Freeman's Creeps (1971), French's Leaving Home (1972), and Theatre Passe Muraille's The Farm Show (1972).³⁵ Indeed, reviewers were quick to qualify any praise they might have had for Fruet's drama. Kaspars Dzeguze of The Globe and Mail, for one, expressed strong reservations about the play:

It doesn't often happen that a play with as much

competent and even excellent acting — or with as many graceful lines of dialogue or apt observations as has Wedding in White, the play by Bill Fruet that opened last night at the Poor Alex — leaves you feeling so disappointed, cheated and even used. Nor does it often happen that a play whose rudimentary plot is telegraphed early in the first act fails as much as did Fruet's to provide a complication [...] Yet for all these perversities it is hard to find a play that would continue to entertain as consistently as did Wedding in White.³⁶

One of the causes of this ambivalent response is the dramatic composition of the play, which, by relying on a succession of short scenes taking place over a period of several months, favours contextual exposition over rigorous plot construction. Dramatist John Palmer, upon seeing the premiere of the play, suggested that "if Fruet could find a way to fewer, more lengthy scenes, he might ultimately have a more satisfying play."³⁷ But Palmer also pointed out in his comment that the play would "make a smashing film," and in retrospect, a number of critics came to perceive the stage production as having served only as training ground for the film-script. John Hudecki, for instance, attributed the intricate coherence of the film to "the fact that [Fruet] took the sensible step of testing Wedding in White on the stage at the Poor Alex Theatre in Toronto before facing the cameras."³⁸ Fruet himself admitted that the film medium was more appropriate than the stage for the kind of subtle realism he was seeking for the presentation of his prairie drama.³⁹ It is no wonder, then, that the film fared better than the play, at least with the critics.

The positive response that the film of Wedding in White (1972) received from the press in English Canada, Québec and the

United States, its success at the Canadian Film Awards, where it won three prizes including best feature film, and its participation in the 1973 Cannes Film Festival, alongside Claude Jutra's Kamouraska (1973), Gilles Carle's La Mort d'un bûcheron (1973) and Denys Arcand's Réjeanne Padovani (1973), seemed to augur very well for the future of film-mediated drama in Canada.⁴⁰ However, Wedding in White would prove to be the exception rather than the rule. The next adaptation of an original modern Canadian play, Jack Cunningham's film version of his own drama See No Evil, Hear... (1972), was produced just a few months after Fruet's promising beginnings, but experienced a far less prestigious career.

See No Evil, Hear... opened at Bill Glassco's Tarragon Theatre in February 1972 to general indifference, and the film that Cunningham made from it in 1973, entitled Peep, remained on the shelves until 1984, when it was shown in a French translation on Radio-Canada television.⁴¹ Peep, a psychological study of complex relationships in a peculiar "ménage à quatre," is the first in a short series of films made from obscure, unpublished plays, that received very limited release and quickly fell into oblivion. A prime example of this trend is Stephen Zoller's unpublished play Metal Messiah (1975), that Zoller and Tibor Takacs made into a film in the winter of 1976-77 for \$62,000.⁴² This surrealist play about "a silver man who appears from nowhere in the middle of a modern city," was presented at the Bathurst Street Theatre in 1975 by an "almost incestuous repertory company" composed of "victims of the modern age."⁴³

Zoller and Takacs spent two years and virtually all their money turning the play into an artisanal film, which never gained the support of any Canadian distributor.⁴⁴ Metal Messiah (1977) eventually had a screening at the International 16mm Film Festival in Montréal, in April 1978.⁴⁵ Since then, however, the film has vanished from the screens, except perhaps in the circuits of cult following. Maynard Collins's Hank Williams: "The Show He Never Gave" (1979), filmed by David Acoma in 1981, John Beckett Wimbs's Memoirs of Johnny Daze (?), adapted for the screen by Bachar Shbib in 1984 as Memoirs, Peter Colley's The Mark of Cain (1984), transposed by Bruce Pittman in 1985, and Layne Coleman's Blue City Slammers (1985), cinematized by Peter Shatalow in 1987, are other instances of unpublished plays that were made into little-known films.⁴⁶

The first feature film to be adapted from a significant play following the successful release of Wedding in White, and the first cinematization of a dramatic piece from Québec in over twenty years, was Richard Martin's 1974 version of Marcel Dubé's Les Beaux Dimanches (1965).⁴⁷ The play shows a typical Sunday afternoon in the lives of four bourgeois couples who have nothing better to do with their weekends than get drunk and flirt with each other's spouses. It was something of a box-office hit when it was first produced in 1965 at the Comédie Canadienne, attracting, according to one source, 40,000 spectators in its two-month run.⁴⁸ Like Wedding in White, Les Beaux Dimanches, although successful with the public, is generally not considered a central work of the national repertory.⁴⁹ Even

within Dubé's canon, Les Beaux Dimanches does not stand out as his masterpiece. Edwin C. Hamblet, for instance, contends that "Au Retour des oies blanches is far superior to Les Beaux Dimanches in symmetry and structure."⁵⁰

Les Beaux Dimanches, however, is recognized by certain scholars as a pivotal work in the maturation process of Dubé's dramaturgy. Maximilien Laroche, for example, argues that "à partir des Beaux Dimanches, les personnages de Dubé sortent de la tragédie pour entrer désormais dans le monde du drame, de la liberté et de l'espoir. C'est également un passage de l'enfance à l'âge adulte."⁵¹ Laroche actually pinpoints the precise moment in the play where this transition occurs. "Le fameux monologue d'Olivier, dans Les Beaux Dimanches," writes Laroche, "on peut dire qu'il constitue le point tournant de l'oeuvre de Marcel Dubé."⁵² The monologue that Laroche is referring to is a long passage in the first scene of act II, in which Olivier, a medical doctor-cum-philosopher, traces the history of Québec, from Nouvelle-France to the British conquest to the rebellion of 1837 to the present, finding the root of the endemic alienation of the people of Québec in the condition of fear and ignorance in which the Church and the establishment have always kept the "Canadien-français" nation. Olivier in his speech also praises the young separatists who are "prêts à tout, prêts à mourir pour que l'ordre change."⁵³

In the film, however, Olivier's argument is completely elided. Richard Martin claimed that this cut was rendered necessary by the fact that, over the decade that elapsed between

the premiere of the play and the production of the film, things had changed drastically in Québec, and Olivier's political stance had become obsolete. Martin, who had been involved in the original production of the play as both actor and assistant director, explained that he had to work on the screenplay for a year, often with the collaboration of Dubé himself, to clear the film-script of "tout le contenu politique de la pièce qui, à l'époque où elle fut écrite, pouvait avoir un certain impact, mais qui aujourd'hui, n'en avait plus."⁵⁴ But by cutting this material, the co-scenarists deprived Les Beaux Dimanches of its most thought-provoking passage. Talking about the original production of the play, Dubé recalls,

C'était une pièce extraordinaire: après le discours sur la souveraineté, il y avait des gens qui applaudissaient et il y en avait d'autres qui huaient. Le soir où on a supprimé cette partie, la salle est devenue amorphe : on ne riait plus à ce qui était drôle, on ne réagissait plus à quoi que ce soit.⁵⁵

In the light of this comment, one understands why Séquences reviewer Janick Beaulieu left the screening of "Les Beaux Dimanches (1974) avec l'impression d'un film peu réussi."⁵⁶ Jean-Pierre Tadros, who had been a strong advocate of Martin's project in the early stages of production, expressing great confidence in the ability of the all-star cast to convey Dubé's meaning, also had to concede the failure of the movie.⁵⁷ "The film is exceedingly uneven," he stated. "There are moments when the essence of the Dubé play comes to the fore [...] But these moments are few, and what is in between is a futile effort to render the play modern."⁵⁸ Stripped of its political content,

which forms the core of the play, Les Beaux Dimanches as directed by Richard Martin boils down to what Jean Basile has called a "conversation de taverne intellectuelle."⁵⁹

Almost simultaneously with the production of Les Beaux Dimanches, John Palmer brought to the screen Martin Kinch's first play, Me? (1973). Palmer, co-founder with Kinch and Tom Hendry of the controversial Toronto Free Theatre, had already directed the play on stage in the spring of 1973. Although little more than a coterie success, the play "nevertheless is worthwhile," says Robert Wallace, "if only for its carefully drawn portrait of Toronto's artistic community."⁶⁰ Indeed, the milieu of the central character, Terry, bears strong resemblance to Kinch's own environment, although the author refuses to "see a one-to-one correspondence between that character and [him]-self."⁶¹ Terry, a promising young writer, is thwarted in his efforts to complete his latest novel by the demands of his zestful mistress, his estranged wife who returns to reclaim him, and his gay friend who happens to be in love with him — all characters who had real-life counterparts in Kinch's entourage.⁶² In the end, Terry expels the intruders from his apartment, and finds himself alone, in front of his typewriter, unable to write anything but one word: "Me?".

Another intriguing particularity of the original production of Me?, which helped to raise considerable interest among TFT regulars, was the fact that Kinch, an accomplished stage director, now assumed the role of dramatist, leaving the direction of the show to playwright Palmer. In Herbert Whittaker's words,

"the reversal [was] a startling success."⁶³ Some of the excitement spawned by this risky but rewarding experiment seems to have been carried over to the movie set. Not only was it John Palmer's first contact with film-making, it was also a first for the cast, three of them recreating their stage performances before the camera.⁶⁴ Stephen Markle, who played Terry both on stage and on screen, described the exhilarating experience of making the film in these terms:

the openness and straight-forwardness of making the film was such a relief from the theatrical experience. Making a film is so much more outgoing. There's the involvement of the crew, who do so much to make a film, and it becomes a group effort that's very exciting when everyone is together.⁶⁵

Although the enthusiastic cast and crew had the feeling that they were working on a film "that will really have some meaning for Canadian audiences," only a handful of Canadians saw the final product when it had a single showing at the Stratford (Ont.) Film Festival in September, 1975.⁶⁶ The reviewers who recognized in the film the idiosyncrasies of the "Toronto underground," or of any other underground artistic community for that matter, praised the film for its accuracy and sincerity.⁶⁷ Those who had not lived through the effervescent rise of the alternative theatre movement, on the other hand, probably thought, as at least one reviewer did, that "there is a lot of talk, but the characters never come across as anything but boring."⁶⁸ Having failed to find a distributor, Me (1974) has since been relegated to oblivion, whence it emerges from time to time for a sporadic television broadcast.

Over the three years following the production of Les Beaux Dimanches and Me, not a single Canadian or Québécois play of importance was made into a feature film. In 1977, as the Canadian and Québécois film industries were about to enter a period of crisis resulting, in great part, from CFDC's ill-conceived tax-shelter policy, which sold out the industry to sophomoric entrepreneurs, two plays were adapted for the screen: Carol Bolt's One Night Stand (1977), and Louise Roy's and Louis Saia's Une amie d'enfance (1977).⁶⁹ These two works, either as plays or as movies, bear witness to the creative exhaustion that afflicted the whole field of artistic production in Canada at the time.

Carol Bolt once divulged that in One Night Stand "there is no issue." She wrote it "as a technical exercise, to see if [she] could write a play about nothing."⁷⁰ True enough, this thriller about a lonely woman who unwittingly picks up a murderer in a bar and ends up killing him in self-defence, lacks the political import of Bolt's earlier Buffalo Jump (1972), Gabe (1973) and Red Emma (1974). Yet in spite of the absence of a social message, or perhaps because of it, One Night Stand was Bolt's first box office hit, and remains her most popular play.⁷¹ After a successful opening at Tarragon Theatre in April 1977, One Night Stand enjoyed lucrative runs at Theatre New Brunswick, Fredericton, in August, and at the Arts Club Theatre, Vancouver, in October of the same year.⁷² But again, the success of the play with the public was not paralleled by unmitigated praise on the part of the press. John Fraser of The Globe and Mail, who

doubtlessly enjoyed the production, informs the reader early in his review that no one "would claim that One Night Stand is a 'great' piece of stage literature."⁷³ Gina Mallet of The Toronto Star was more critical, finding fault with the logic of the plot: "increasingly, the play becomes a series of improbable coincidences which once perceived unravel the whole cloth. Suddenly it seems we are assessing the plausibility of everything. One clumsiness succeeds another."⁷⁴

The improbabilities spotted by Mallet did not annoy film director Allan King and CBC producer Stanley Colbert who, upon seeing the Tarragon production, expressed interest in making a film based on the play.⁷⁵ King, after having directed a semi-documentary on Martin Kinch's stage production of Bolt's Red Emma in 1976, began shooting a slightly revised version of One Night Stand just weeks following the last performance at Tarragon.⁷⁶ In accordance with the arrangement made with the CBC, which put up 60 percent of the budget, the film was presented first on television, in March 1978, but King retained the rights for theatrical distribution.⁷⁷ The film fared rather well at the Canadian Film Awards, winning three prizes in the category of Non-Feature Craft Awards.⁷⁸ However, when One Night Stand (1977) the movie reached the big screen in New York in 1982, it received, at best, a lukewarm response.⁷⁹ J. Hoberman from The Village Voice found the plot wanting in originality. He wrote: "en route to its predictable denouement, One Night Stand offers a few wan reversals."⁸⁰ As for Janet Maslin of The New York Times, she dismissed King's film as "an unpleasant Canadian

romance-cum-thriller."⁸¹ One Night Stand eventually found its niche in the late-night movie offerings of Canadian television networks, where it still regularly makes an appearance.

The other 1977 production, Une amie d'enfance, takes place in the backyard of a middle-class home in Duvernay, a dormitory town near Montréal, where Angèle and Gaston entertain Angèle's childhood friend Solange and her boyfriend Coco at dinner. The gathering is a pretext for Louise Roy and Louis Saia to expose the campiness, the "kétainerie" of suburbia. By juxtaposing the universe of plastic palm trees and artificial standard French of Angèle and Gaston to Solange's and Coco's happy bohemian lifestyle, the authors caustically denounce the comfortable hypocrisy of the middle-class. The play, which is rarely even mentioned in historical surveys of Québec theatre, is nonetheless typical of the period of de-politicization that immediately followed the accession to power of the Parti québécois in 1976.⁸² Une amie d'enfance demonstrates clearly that, with the institutionalisation of the separatist ideal, the middle-class left the political arena and returned to the comfort and indifference of its living-room — a movement confirmed by the defeat of the *Péquist*e project in the 1980 referendum.

Apart from its topical relevance and some humorous scenes, however, the play has few notable features. Film critic Léo Bonneville justifiably asks, "mais qu'est-ce donc qui a porté Francis Mankiewicz vers Une amie d'enfance?"⁸³ Mankiewicz, who had attracted considerable attention with his first feature, Le Temps d'une chasse (1972), and went on to direct one of the very

best films ever produced in this country, Les bons débarras (1980), admitted that he adapted Une amie d'enfance (1978) with the intent only to produce a neutral screen version of the play that would not mar the humorous quality of the dialogue. The result was, by all accounts, disappointing. Janick Beaulieu even suggested, sarcastically, "on pourrait passer le film tel quel à la radio!"⁸⁴ Une amie d'enfance is a probative example of film's inability to realize a neutral yet cinematically engaging transposition of a dramatic text, especially when the play has little to offer to start with.

As Une amie d'enfance was being released in cinemas in the fall of 1978, Yves Simoneau was shooting the last scenes of his first feature film, an adaptation of Michel Garneau's play Les Célébrations (1976).⁸⁵ The play presents a collection of vignettes from the life of Margo, a psychologist, and her long-time boyfriend Paul-Emile, a professor of philosophy obsessed with death. The play opened at the Théâtre du Horla, St-Bruno, in August of 1976, and was revived in various small venues later that year. Fernand Villemure praised the "agréable impression de complicité et d'intimité" that emanated from the performance.⁸⁶ Others, however, deplored the facile nature of the text. "Ça goûte la salade populaire assaisonnée de pollution," wrote André Dionne, "tout sent le racollage."⁸⁷ Although Les Célébrations, published in 1977 with Adidou Adidouce, was far less successful with the public and the critics than Garneau's Quatre à quatre (1973), it still earned its author the Governor General's award, which he declined because this prize represents "l'idéal de

l'unité canadienne," a notion that he could not endorse.⁸⁸

But the award and Garneau's politics had little to do with Simoneau's decision to adapt the play. Rather it is the humour of the text that first attracted him. "J'étais allé voir Les Célébrations et j'avais ri du début à la fin," Simoneau recalls, "je me suis dit: `Tiens, voilà peut-être la bonne façon de faire un premier long métrage avec des moyens modestes'."⁸⁹ With a budget of less than \$20,000, Simoneau hired the two actors from the original stage production, Léo Munger and Normand Lévesque, and shot most of the film in little over a week, using the house of one of Normand Lévesque's friends as the main location.⁹⁰ The production of the film, which follows the play-script almost word for word, afforded twenty-two-year-old Simoneau a unique opportunity to learn about actors and their craft.⁹¹ The film itself, however, like Une amie d'enfance, met a rather tepid response when it opened in Montréal in June 1979. For Robert-Claude Bérubé, "ce portrait d'un couple dans le vent, faux intellectuels à l'affût des tendances à la vogue, n'apporte guère que du bruit sur du vide."⁹² Les Célébrations (1979), although a collaboration between two important Québec artists, Garneau and Simoneau, is condemned to oblivion, since, for reasons of copyright, it can no longer be shown commercially.⁹³

In the early 1980s, Antonine Maillet's Gapi (1976), another lesser-known work by a celebrated author, was filmed by Paul Blouin for Radio-Canada television.⁹⁴ A spin-off from Maillet's tremendously successful one-woman play La Sagouine (1971), Gapi shows the solitary life of La Sagouine's husband. After his

wife's death, Gapi has become a recluse, living alone on a dune, keeping a lighthouse on the coast of Acadia. One day, his old friend, Sullivan, the globe-trotting sailor, drops by for a visit. Gapi would like his friend to stay with him, and Sullivan would like to bring Gapi along on his trips around the world. But Gapi cannot leave his lighthouse any more than Sullivan can relinquish the sea.

When it opened at Théâtre du Rideau Vert in 1976, Gapi was inevitably compared with La Sagouine, always at the disadvantage of the former. Jean-Cléo Godin, for instance, found that Gapi's "témoignage est touchant, et la pièce s'écoute avec plaisir. Mais à l'un et à l'autre, il manque ce qui fait la grandeur de la Sagouine : l'éclat d'une secrète sagesse, la profondeur."⁹⁵ André Dionne, for his part, contended that Gapi "n'est que le carbone de la Sagouine [...] mais l'exotisme n'y est pas."⁹⁶ Still the text was considered worthy of an adaptation by Radio-Canada producers. Unlike One Night Stand, Gapi (1981) was initially intended only for television broadcast, but the producers elected to show it in competition at the 1982 Festival des Films du Monde in Montréal.⁹⁷ Paul Blouin unsuccessfully opposed the theatrical screening, well-aware that the staginess of the film, acceptable on television, could not pass the test of the big screen.⁹⁸ And to be sure, the film was received rather negatively.⁹⁹ One reviewer, validating Blouin's reservations, wrote that "the inclusion of the film in Montréal's competition section is puzzling for even the partisan audience found the stagebound offering unconvincing."¹⁰⁰

Four years after the failure of Gapi at the Festival, another film adaptation of a Québécois play made for television received a theatrical screening, when Daniel Roussel's version of Maryse Pelletier's Du poil aux pattes comme les CWAC's (1982) was shown at the Cinémathèque québécoise as part of the Rendez-vous du cinéma québécois.¹⁰¹ By no means one of Pelletier's best works, this drama about the training of four female army recruits during WW II is in fact so meagre that it has been described as a play "tout bonnement insignifiante."¹⁰² Not surprisingly, the screening of Du poil aux pattes comme les CWAC's (1985) was totally ignored by the press.

The period between Gapi and Du poil aux pattes comme les CWAC's saw very little activity in terms of film-mediated drama. The only instance worthy of mention here is Tom Shandel's film Walls (1984). The production of this movie brought to its conclusion a project initiated half a dozen years earlier when Christian Bruyere wrote Walls (1978) as a play, with the firm intention of eventually making a film on the same subject.¹⁰³ The play, which opened in May 1978 at the Vancouver East Cultural Centre, is a dramatized version of a hostage-taking incident that took place in June 1975 at the B.C. Penitentiary, and resulted in the killing of a classification officer by the prison guards.¹⁰⁴ Most reviewers complimented the raw theatrical power of the production, but disapproved of the "one-dimensionalism" of the characters, and "the basic good guy-bad guy cliches" pervasive in the text.¹⁰⁵

Georgia Straight drama critic and NFB documentarist Tom

Shandel was the only adamant advocate of Bruyere's play, even comparing it to Ryga's Rita Joe as one of the most "provocatively sensational" plays ever to come out of Vancouver.¹⁰⁶ But Shandel was not the most objective of reviewers. He had a vested interest in the subject of the play, having himself previously tried to produce a documentary on the B.C. Penitentiary events.¹⁰⁷ It is thus the meeting of a writer and a critic determined to make a film on the same issue that led to the production of Walls in 1984. Like most works of the corpus, the film version of Walls had a theatrical release that raised little enthusiasm, and has been seen on television only occasionally.¹⁰⁸

Within the context of a study on film-mediated drama, Walls poses a problem, for not only do the play and the film have significantly different structures, they also present different characters. For instance, Ron Simmons, the liberal lawyer who plays a central role in the film, does not exist in the play. Furthermore, the main female character does not even have the same name in both works; she is called Mary in the play and Joan Tremblay in the film. In fact, there are so many discrepancies between the play and the film that the two works should actually be considered as two distinct fictional versions of the same factual material. Significantly, the opening credits of Walls do not refer to the play at all, indicating only that the film is based upon real events and that Bruyere wrote the screenplay.

Norma Bailey's Bordertown Café (1991) is another example of a film that differs markedly from the play that preceded it. Described by Reg Skene as a "cartoon-like political allegory"

about "Free Trade anxiety," Kelly Rebar's play Bordertown Café (1987) examines the predicament of a young man, Jimmy, who must choose between staying in Alberta with his mother, or following his father to the United States.¹⁰⁹ In the play, all the drama takes place as Jimmy, his mother and his grandparents await the arrival of the estranged father. But the father never shows up, thus basically forcing Jimmy to remain in Alberta. In the film, not only does the father show up, he also takes his son with him to his new home and new bride in Wyoming. Jimmy's drama is thus of an entirely different sort here, as he no longer only resigns himself to staying in Alberta, but wilfully and knowingly decides to reject the material comfort and stability of the U.S. household, and to return home to his mother's small prairie café. However, despite this attempt to flesh out Jimmy's drama, Rebar's film-script failed even more than her play to impress the critics. As George Godwin pointed out in his review, we know

the nature of [the characters'] troubled relationships from the beginning, and nothing more is to be learned as the film slowly makes its way to its predictable crisis. In the end, there is no revelation and the characters' interactions slide into the familiar patterns of potted TV drama and sitcom.¹¹⁰

Vic Sarin's 1989 film version of Jim Garrard's Cold Comfort (1981) also departs from the original text. But whereas Walls and Bordertown Café bring about important alterations to the dramatis personae and the overall structure of the plays, Sarin's film diverges from Garrard's drama almost exclusively at the level of the dialogue. Perceived as either "a fascinating

exercise in bizarre naturalism," or a "Gothic horror tale," Cold Comfort relates the story of a travelling salesman who falls prey to a deranged tow-truck driver and his backward teenage daughter.¹¹¹ At the end of the play, father and daughter leave their home permanently, abandoning the salesman chained to a pipe inside the house. Although labelled "sexist, xenophobic, and condescending" by Janice Dales, Cold Comfort proved successful enough with the public to prompt a number of short runs across the country in the months following its premiere in January, 1981, at Saskatoon's Twenty-Fifth Street Theatre under Garrard's direction.¹¹²

Film producer Ilana Frank saw the first Toronto performance of Cold Comfort in May 1981, and immediately saw some cinematic possibilities in the text. The production of the movie suffered a long delay, however, due to the disbandment of Frank's company, Stratton/Frank Associates, and the unavailability of the film rights to the play, which had been acquired by Moses Znaimer. When Znaimer's option on the property expired, Frank quickly teamed up with Ray Sager to produce the movie. They hired the veteran cinematographer Vic Sarin to shoot and direct the film. For the sake of expediency, Frank and Sager elected to confide the task of writing the script to Richard Beattie and L. Elliott Simms rather than to Garrard, maintaining that the latter was "not adept yet at scriptwriting."¹¹³ Beattie and Simms retained the general structure of the play, but abbreviated and reorganized the dialogue.

Cold Comfort (1989) was something of a sleeper at the 1989

Festival of Festivals in Toronto, but again, as is the case with the overwhelming majority of the films surveyed above, the critics were not impressed. Martin Knelman saw the movie as "a drawn-out telling of an old joke about the travelling salesman," and Martin Girard remarked that "le film souffre de n'être au fond qu'une adaptation d'un texte écrit pour la scène."¹¹⁴ The only redeeming quality of the film, according to these reviewers, was Maury Chaykin's performance as the depraved father. But even Chaykin's skilful histrionics failed to stir Variety reviewer S. Ayscough who charged that in this "misdirected tale [...] acting is weak on all fronts."¹¹⁵

This train of negative critical response to film-mediated drama finally ceased in 1992 with the release of Jean Beaudin's adaptation of René-Daniel Dubois's Being at Home with Claude (1985). Beaudin's film was the first widely acclaimed cinematic treatment of a play since the success of Wedding in White in 1972. For instance, Séquences film critics Janick Beaulieu and Léo Bonneville both voted Being at Home with Claude (1992) one of the ten best movies of 1992, alongside such international hits as James Ivory's Howards End (1992) and Billy August's The Best Intentions (1992).¹¹⁶ Released exactly twenty years after Fruet's movie, Beaudin's version of Being at Home with Claude affords the tentative completion of a first cycle in the history of modern Canadian and Québécois film-mediated drama. Wedding in White and Being at Home with Claude, as well as being the two poles that conveniently limit the corpus chronologically, stand out as two exceptional works whose success frames the relative

failure of the bulk of the corpus. Incidentally, Denys Arcand's adaptation of Brad Fraser's international hit Unidentified Human Remains and the True Nature of Love (1989), released in 1994, seems to mark the inception of another cycle of film-mediated drama.¹¹⁷ I shall elaborate on this speculation in the concluding chapter of the present study.

Dubois's play, which premiered at Théâtre de Quat'Sous on 13 November 1985, is set in the summer of 1967 as a police inspector tries to extract an explanation from a young homosexual prostitute, Yves, who has confessed to killing another young man, Claude, but refuses to say why. Yves eventually reveals that Claude was the only man he ever loved, and that he slit his throat as they were having sex to preserve this moment of ecstatic communion from the sordidness of the outside world. Beyond the anecdotal homosexual melodrama, what enthralled the theatre audiences was the deeply-felt tragedy of an ideal love rendered impossible by a world of mediocrity and ugliness.¹¹⁸ Ironically, in a 1989 publication on Québécois theatre in the 1980s, Diane Pavlovic and Lorraine Camerlain allude to Being at Home with Claude only to illustrate the new gay consciousness voiced in recent theatrical practice, as if, within the space of a few years, a work once praised for the universality of its theme had become of mere topical interest.¹¹⁹

In any case, by the early 1990s, Louise Gendron of the Productions du Cerf had acquired the film rights to the play, and had chosen Jean Beaudin to direct the movie. Beaudin initially hesitated to accept Gendron's offer, for he thought that

adapting this play, which strictly respects the classical unities, "serait un travail épouvantable."¹²⁰ Beaudin eventually solved the problem by splitting the film into two juxtaposed narratives. The first narrative closely follows Dubois's play — except that it situates the action in 1990 — and limits itself almost exclusively to the judge's office in which the interrogation takes place. The other narrative, presenting black-and-white flashbacks, shows Yves's gentle side as he first meets Claude, his ecstasy as they make love, and his anguish immediately following the brutal killing of his lover.

The added scenes doubtlessly succeed in opening up Dubois's closed drama. But by exhibiting the most intimate moments of Yves's life with Claude, Beaudin puts more emphasis on the homosexual nature of the relationship than even Dubois does in the original work. This risky directorial choice could have infuriated the purists. Instead, it delighted them. Film reviewer Elie Castiel praised Beaudin for bringing homosexuality to the fore, "lui retirant ainsi sa marginalité," and creating "une oeuvre profondément humaine sur la réhabilitation de l'être."¹²¹ The popular film critic René Homier-Roy also applauded Being at Home with Claude, claiming that "le plus remarquable, dans cette tragédie amoureuse, c'est qu'elle arrive à dépasser sa spécificité homosexuel."¹²² Only Marie-Claude Loïselle of 24 Images opposed the flow of acclaim for Beaudin's film, criticizing its perverse use of slick music-video aesthetics to hide the emptiness of the discourse. She explains the triumph of the film "par sa coïncidence avec le goût du jour;" a rationale that

might also underlie the success of Dubois's play in 1985.¹²³

As this historical survey shows, a significant number of the plays adapted between 1972 and 1992 are little known, and the films that they have inspired have rarely been successful enough to justify broad distribution. Of the eighteen dramatic texts brought to the screen over that twenty year period only a dozen have been published, and merely four or five movie versions are readily obtainable in video format.¹²⁴ Thus, to avoid scrutinizing texts that are unfamiliar and unavailable to the majority of readers, only the best known works of the corpus will be analyzed in depth. Because of their success on stage, the accessibility of the films, as well as the fact that the cinematic adaptations closely observe the original playscripts, the texts that emerge as the most appropriate choices for our structural inquiry are Wedding in White, Les Beaux Dimanches, One Night Stand and Being at Home with Claude. Since none of the other plays stand out as anything more than minor achievements, the analysis of both the dramas and the film adaptations will focus on these four titles. However, following these few case studies, an additional segment will propose a concise examination of all the other published dramas in order to verify the validity of the conclusions drawn thitherto, and to advance a general interpretation of the corpus as a whole. The next four chapters (III to VI) cover, respectively, the plays Wedding in White, Les Beaux Dimanches, One Night Stand and Being at Home with Claude. Chapter VII will offer a succinct reading of the remaining published plays. The analysis of the film adaptations

will be carried out in Chapters VIII and IX.

NOTES

¹. Ginette Major, Le Cinéma québécois à la recherche d'un public: Bilan d'une décennie: 1970-80 (Montréal: Presses de l'Université de Montréal, 1982) 13. Here, I stipulate "talking" motion picture, because certain sources suggest that as early as 1907, French Canadian dramatist Julien Daoust combined theatre and silent film for the production of his stage play La Fin du monde. See Germain Lacasse, "Vestiges narratifs: les premiers temps du scénario québécois," Études littéraires 26.2 (Fall 1993): 58.

². Léo Bonneville, "Rencontre avec Gratien Gélinas," Séquences 107 (Jan. 1982): 5-7. See also Christiane Tremblay-Daviault, Structures mentales et sociales du cinéma québécois (1942-1953): un cinéma orphelin (Montréal: Québec/Amérique, 1981) 319-22. See also Pierre Véronneau, "Du Théâtre au cinéma au Québec : bref historique," Canadian Drama / L'Art dramatique canadien 5 (1979): 25-6.

³. Bonneville, "Rencontre avec Gratien Gélinas," 7. See also Léo Bonneville, "Rencontre avec Paul L'Anglais," Séquences 106 (Oct. 1981): 11. See also Pierre Véronneau, Cinéma de l'époque duplessiste, Dossiers de la Cinémathèque (Montréal: Cinémathèque québécoise, 1979) 114-5.

⁴. Tremblay-Daviault, 246.

⁵. Véronneau, Cinéma de l'époque duplessiste, 117.

⁶. René Lévesque in L'Autorité 28 Feb. 1953, quoted in Véronneau, Cinéma de l'époque duplessiste, 120.

⁷. Tremblay-Daviault, 89-101.

⁸. Yves Lever, Histoire générale du cinéma au Québec (Montréal: Boréal, 1988) 99-100, 105.

⁹. Alonzo Le Blanc, "L'histoire d'Aurore Gagnon (1909-1920)," and "Création de la pièce Aurore l'enfant martyre (1921)," Aurore, l'enfant martyre by Léon Petitjean and Henri Rollin (Montréal: VLB éditeur, 1982) 15-23, 51-66. There is some confusion concerning the date of creation of this play. Véronneau, in Cinéma de l'époque duplessiste, writes that Aurore l'enfant

martyre premiered in 1928 (p.105). In this, Véronneau follows Edouard G. Rinfret (Le Théâtre canadien d'expression française: répertoire analytique des origines à nos jours tome 3, Leméac, 1975, p.146), and indirectly Jean Béraud (350 ans de théâtre au Canada français, Cercle du livre de France, 1958, p.198). In "Du Théâtre au cinéma au Québec," Véronneau claims that the play was written in 1929 (p.28). Elaine F. Nardocchio in Theatre and Politics in Modern Québec (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1986) also implies that the play premiered in 1929 (p.17). However, the exhaustive study conducted by Le Blanc in his presentation of the dramatic text in the VLB edition demonstrates clearly that the play had its first successful run in the winter of 1921 (p.51-3), and was already a classic by 1929 (p.62-3).

¹⁰. The "four thousand" figure was given by the lawyers representing France-Film, distributor for La Petite Aurore, in the course of a lawsuit started by Téléspore Gagnon, Aurore's father. See Le Blanc, "Le film La petite Aurore l'enfant martyre (1951)," Aurore l'enfant martyre, 92. Le Blanc gives a slightly higher figure in The Oxford Companion to Canadian Theatre (ed. Eugene Benson and L.W. Conolly, Toronto: Oxford UP, 1989), saying that the play was performed "200 times a year from 1921 to 1951" (p.36). Leonard Doucette, in The Cambridge Guide to World Theatre, talks about five thousand performances over the same period. See Doucette, "Canada: 2. French," Cambridge Guide to World Theatre ed. Martin Banham (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1988) 154.

¹¹. Asselin/Forrez quoted in Le Blanc, "Emile Asselin/Marc Forrez (1894-1981)," Aurore l'enfant martyre, 81. Asselin's novel was published as La Petite Aurore (Montréal: Alliance cinématographique canadienne, 1952).

¹². Le Blanc, "Le film La petite Aurore l'enfant martyre," 87-95. See also Véronneau, Cinéma de l'époque duplessiste, 109-10. The fact that the play had already been performed for years, in Québec, Canada and New England, led judge Edouard-Fabre Surveyer to reject Gagnon's argument that the distribution of the film would occasion irreparable damage to his reputation.

¹³. Véronneau, Cinéma de l'époque duplessiste, 113. Asselin/Forrez maintains that the film "fut traduit en plusieurs langues ... et poursuivit sa carrière à l'étranger et jusqu'au Japon." Quoted in Le Blanc "Le film La petite Aurore l'enfant martyre," 95. For an analysis of the sado-masochistic structure of the film, and its relation to the collective unconsciousness prevalent in Québec during the Duplessist "grande noirceur," see Tremblay-Daviault 222-4.

14. Deyglun's La Mère abandonnée, premiered in 1925 and published in 1929, was re-edited as a radio-drama and published in 1936 as Coeur de maman. See Littérature québécoise et cinéma. Revue d'histoire littéraire du Québec et du Canada français 11 (Ottawa: Éditions de l'Université d'Ottawa, 1986) 173. See also Tremblay-Daviault, 261-74; and Louise Blouin and Raymond Pagé, "Biographie d'Henry Deyglun," L'Annuaire théâtral I (1985): 11-12. On the effect of the arrival of television in Québec see, for instance, Clandfield, Canadian Film (Toronto: Oxford UP, 1987) 61. "When television came along and swallowed up the talents spawned by the first Quebec film industry, the two major production companies [Renaissance Films and Québec Productions] had died." See also Major, 14. "L'avènement de la télévision allait d'ailleurs consommer la rupture."

15. On the difference between "Canadien-français" and "Québécois" films see, for instance, Michel Houle, "Du Canadien-français au Québécois," Les Cinémas canadiens (Montréal: Cinémathèque québécoise; Paris: Pierre Lhermier Éditeur, 1978) 145-9.

16. According to the information provided in D.J. Turner, Canadian Feature Film Index / Index des films canadiens de long métrage 1913-1985 (Ottawa: Public Archives, 1987), Here Will I Nest was the first play to serve as a source for a Canadian film (p.24).

17. See announcement of the play's premiere in Curtain Call 10.2 (Nov. 1938): 12. See also the positive anonymous review that the play received in Curtain Call 10.3 (Dec. 1938): 9. "By the writing of Here Will I Nest both the theatre and Canada have been well served." Here Will I Nest was published in Hilda Mary Hooke, One-Act Plays From Canadian History (Toronto: Longmans, 1962) 57-78.

18. Peter Morris, Embattled Shadows: A History of Canadian Cinema 1895-1939 (Montreal: McGill-Queen's UP, 1978) 187. There is some confusion about the date of production of the film. Morris claims that the film was produced the same year as the play, in 1938; Gerald Pratley in Torn Sprockets: The Uncertain Projection of the Canadian Film (Newark: University of Delaware Press; London and Toronto: Associated UP, 1987) gives 1939 as the date of production (p.37-38), and D.J. Turner in the Canadian Feature Film Index writes that the film was shot in the summer of 1941 (p.24).

19. F.B.T., "Film Made by Londoners Has Private Premiere Here," London Free Press 1 Apr. 1942. The author of this review is identified only as F.B.T.

20. Pratley, 38; Turner, 24.

21. The only instances of film-mediated drama in English Canada between 1941 and 1971 involve non-Canadian plays, such as Oedipus Rex, filmed by Tyrone Guthrie in 1956 (Turner, 37), and American filmmaker Arch Oboler's version of his own play Mrs Kingsley's Report, shot in 1960-1 (Turner, 44).

22. See Take One 3.5 (May/June 1971, pub. July 1972): 26; Take One 3.6 (July/Aug. 1971, pub. Oct. 1972): 39. See also Martin Knelman, This Is Where We Came In: The Career and Character of Canadian Film (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1977) 137.

23. See Take One 3.8 (Nov./Dec. 1971, pub. March 1973): 35.

24. John Hofsess, "Fortune And Men's Eyes — a report from the set in a Quebec City prison," MacLean's 83.12 (Dec. 1970): 81.

25. Martin Knelman, "Herbert's Fortune in Quebec jail," Globe and Mail 9 Jan. 1971: 21. See also Martin Malina, "The wheel of Fortune," Montreal Star 13 Feb. 1971: 23.

26. Malina, 23.

27. Richard Gay, "Fortune and Men's Eyes," Cinéma Québec 1.5 (Nov. 1971): 30.

28. Knelman, This Is Where We Came In, 143-4.

29. The film opened at the Trans Lux West, New York, on 15 June, 1971, more than a week before it premiered at Toronto's New Yorker (!) on the 24th (Turner, 115-6).

30. Jerry Wasserman, Modern Canadian Plays (Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1986) 55.

31. Wasserman, 15. Claude Lapointe, André Brassard : stratégies de mise en scène (Outremont (Qué.): VLB Editeur, 1990) 164.

32. See the short biographical note on Fruet in Rolf Kalman ed., A Collection of Canadian Plays, vol.2 (Toronto: Simon & Pierre,

1973) A2-3. See also Fruet's recollection of his childhood memories in George Csaba Koller, "Bill Fruet's Wedding in White," Cinema Canada 2.3 (July/Aug. 1972): 45-6.

³³. Richard Plant in The Penguin Book of Modern Canadian Drama (Markham (Ont.): Penguin Books, 1984) claims that the play opened in 1970 (p.246). All other sources, however, give 2 February, 1972 as the date of the premiere. See L. W. Conolly ed., Canadian Drama and the Critics (Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1987) 82. See also Denis W. Johnston, Up the Mainstream: the Rise of Toronto's Alternative Theatres, 1968-1975 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991) 272. For the premiere of the film see Turner, 136.

³⁴. For production credits see, for instance, Turner, 136. See also Peter Morris, "Wedding in White," The Film Companion (Toronto: Irwin, 1984) 320. Richard Gay, "Wedding in White," Cinema Québec 2.4 (Dec. 1972): 41. "Dermet Production (Toronto) avec l'assistance de la SDICC et d'un groupe de financiers torontois."

³⁵. Kalman writes that Wedding in White "played to packed houses during its eight-week run" (p.A3). Denis Johnston, however, suggests that the play ran for nine weeks (p.272). As an indication of the difference between the local success of Wedding in White, and the nation-wide impact of Creeps, Leaving Home, and The Farm Show, it is interesting to note that Eugene Benson and Leonard W. Conolly, in their English-Canadian Theatre (Toronto: Oxford UP, 1987), write at some length about the critical and popular success of the three latter plays (87-95), but say absolutely nothing of Fruet's work.

³⁶. Kaspars Dzeguze, "Wedding in White perverse but entertaining," Globe and Mail 3 Feb. 1972: 12.

³⁷. John Palmer, Toronto Star 3 Feb. 1972. Quoted in Conolly, 84.

³⁸. John Hudecki, "Wedding in White One," Take One 3.7 (Sept./Oct. 1971, pub. Dec. 1972): 30. See also Robert-Claude Bérubé, "Wedding in White," Séquences 71 (Jan. 1973): 30. "Rodé par une fructueuse présentation sur scène, son texte était prêt."

³⁹. Koller, 44-5.

⁴⁰. See, for instance, Robert-Claude Bérubé. See also Jean-Pierre Tadros, "Wedding in White Two," Take One 3.7: 30-1. See also W.M. Bernard, "Wedding in White," Films in Review 14.4 (Apr. 1973): 244. See also the anonymous "Canadian Film Praised in US," Globe and Mail Tues. 1 May 1973: 17. For information on the Canadian Film Awards see Maria Topalovich, A Pictorial History of The Canadian Film Awards (Toronto: Stoddart, 1984) 98-9. Regarding the Canadian presence at Cannes in 1973 see "Festivals et Prix / Festivals and Awards," Film Canadiana 1973-1974, eds. Louis Valenzuela, Piers Handling and Maynard Collins (Ottawa: Canadian Film Institute / Institut canadien du film, 1974).

⁴¹. See Johnston, 151-2. Turner, 154. The film was shown on TV on 28 April 1984.

⁴². Turner, 231.

⁴³. Lorne Macdonald, "Metal Messiah," Motion 6. 4/5 (Nov. 1977): 37.

⁴⁴. Macdonald, 37-8.

⁴⁵. Turner, 231. Film Canadiana 1977-1978 (Ottawa: Canadian Film Institute, 1978) gives April 1977 as date of the film's premiere (p.39). But in his article, which was published in November 1977, Macdonald does not refer to the April screening. As a matter of fact, the article suggests that, by the time of publication in November, the film had not yet been completed (p.38).

⁴⁶. I have not been able to find any information about the production history of Wimbs's Memoirs of Johnny Daze. Although Turner (p.430) and Copie Zéro (no 24, p.31) refer explicitly to the play as the source for Bachar Shbib's Memoirs (1984), records of Canadian stage productions, such as Canada on Stage (1974-1988), do not refer to this work. The archivists of the Playwrights Union of Canada do not know of the play either. Note that, before 1989, Shbib spelled his name Chbib. Peter Colley's The Mark of Cain, although unpublished, is available in copyscript at the Playwrights Union of Canada.

⁴⁷. I purposefully exclude from this survey André Brassard's Il était une fois dans l'Est (1973), which borrows much material from Michel Tremblay's dramaturgy without transposing systematically any of his original texts onto the screen. See note 7 of Chapter I. See also André Loiselle, "Film-Mediated Drama: André

Brassard's Film Il était une fois dans l'Est as a pivot in Michel Tremblay's Dramaturgy," Essays in Theatre / Études théâtrales 10.2 (May 1992): 165-80.

48. Normand Cloutier, "Marcel Dubé broue du noir...", Le Magazine MacLean Aug. 1966: 10.

49. See survey in Jeu 47 referred to in note 6 of the Introduction.

50. Edwin C. Hamblet, Marcel Dubé and French-Canadian Drama (New York: Exposition Press, 1970) 57. Renate Usmiani also considers Au retour des oies blanches to be Dubé's best play. See Usmiani, "Marcel Dubé," Dictionary of Literary Biography Vol. 53: Canadian Writers Since 1960, First Series, ed. W.H. New (Detroit: Bruccoli Clark Books, 1986) 168. The Oxford Companion to Canadian Theatre has no separate entry for Les Beaux Dimanches, but has one for both Un Simple Soldat, and Au retour des oies blanches.

51. Maximilien Laroche, Marcel Dubé (Montréal: Fides, 1970) 40-1.

52. Laroche, 36. See also Usmiani, 168. "The main interest of [Les Beaux Dimanches] lies in the discussion of important contemporary issues with Olivier, a doctor and cynic, serving as spokesman for the author."

53. Marcel Dubé, Les Beaux Dimanches (Montréal: Leméac, 1968) 100.

54. Richard Martin quoted in Jean-Pierre Tadros, "Les Beaux Dimanches tels qu'ils nous reviennent," Le Jour 27 July 1974: V1.

55. Gérald Gaudet, "Marcel Dubé : la tragédie de l'homme blessé," Lettres québécoises, 46 (summer 1987): 46.

56. Janick Beaulieu, "Les Beaux Dimanches," Séquences 79 (Jan. 1975): 30.

57. See Tadros's enthusiastic report on the shooting of the film in Magog in Jean-Pierre Tadros, "Sous la direction de Richard Martin : Une nouvelle vie cinématographique pour Les Beaux Dimanches de Dubé," Le Jour 27 July 1974: V 1.

58. Jean-Pierre Tadros, "Les Beaux Dimanches (Lovely Sundays)," Variety 276 (30 Oct. 1974): 42.

59. Jean Basile, "Théâtre : Les Beaux Dimanches de Marcel Dubé," Le Devoir 13 Feb. 1965: 11. It should be noted here that in her production of Les Beaux Dimanches premiered at the Théâtre du Nouveau Monde on 19 January 1993, Lorraine Pintal retained Olivier's monologue, arguing that, after almost thirty years, Québécois still have to grapple with the issues raised by Dubé in 1965.

60. Robert Wallace, "Kinch, Martin" The Oxford Companion to Canadian Theatre, 285. Me? had a successful revival in 1977, again at TFT, and then vanished from the professional stage. See Canada on Stage: 1977 ed. Don Rubin (Downsview, Ont.: CTR, 1978) and subsequent issues.

61. Kinch quoted in Robert Wallace and Cynthia Zimmerman, The Work: Conversations With English-Canadian Playwrights (Toronto: Coach House Press, 1982) 351.

62. William Lane, Introduction to Me? by Martin Kinch (Toronto: Coach House, 1975) 7. "Every one of the four major characters of the play were in the audience that night."

63. Herbert Whittaker, "Role switch makes Me? spellbinder," The Globe and Mail 30 Apr. 1973: 14.

64. David McCaughna, "Making Me," Motion Sept./Oct. 1974: 24.

65. McCaughna, 24.

66. Brenda Donohue quoted in McCaughna, 24. The film was shown on 15 September 1975. See S. Adilman, "Me," Variety 280 (1 Oct. 1975): 26.

67. See, for instance, Clive Denton, "John Palmer's Me," Cinema Canada 23 (Nov. 1975): 54. See also Martin Knelman, This is Where we Came in, 153-5.

68. Adilman, 26.

69. See Lever, 290-2. Pratley 113-123. Véronneau, Les Cinémas canadiens, 175.

70. Bolt quoted in Rota Lister, "An Interview With Carol Bolt," World Literature Written in English 17 (Apr. 1978): 151.

71. See Cynthia Diane Zimmerman, "Carol Bolt," Dictionary of Literary Biography, Vol 60: Canadian Writers Since 1960, Second Series, ed. W.H. New (Detroit: Brucoli Clark Layman Books, 1986) 19. See also James Noonan, "Bolt, Carol," The Oxford Companion to Canadian Theatre, 57.

72. For exact dates of production see Canada on Stage: 1977, 18, 174, 289.

73. John Fraser, "One Night Stand: better and better," The Globe and Mail 11 Apr. 1977: 15.

74. Gina Mallet, "New thriller is suitably macabre but improbable," The Toronto Star 11 Apr. 1977: D5.

75. David McCaughna, "Mr. Goodbar rides again," MacLean's 6 Mar. 1978: 65.

76. Peter Harcourt, "Allan King: a celebration of people," Cinema Canada 40 (Sept. 1977): 28. Turner, 246.

77. McCaughna, "Mr. Goodbar rides again," 65.

78. Topalovich, 123.

79. Although McCaughna, in his 1978 article "Mr. Goodbar rides again," suggested that One Night Stand was soon to be released in the theatres, there seems to have been no public screening of the film before 1982. See Turner, 246.

80. J. Hoberman, "Arrested Development," The Village Voice 11 May 1982: 58.

⁸¹. Janet Maslin, "Film: One Night Romance-cum-thriller," New York Times 29 Apr. 1982: C22.

⁸². Nardocchio in Theatre and Politics in Modern Québec pays lip service to Une amie d'enfance (p.94). But there is not a single reference to the play in The Oxford Companion to Canadian Theatre, nor is it acknowledged by either Gilbert David in "Un nouveau territoire théâtral 1965-1980," in Renée Legris, *et al.*, Le Théâtre au Québec 1825-1980 (Montréal: VLB Éditeur, 1988), or Monique Engelbertz in her voluminous Le Théâtre québécois de 1965 à 1980 — un théâtre politique (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1989).

⁸³. Léo Bonneville, Le Cinéma québécois par ceux qui le font (Montréal: Éditions Paulines, 1979) 616.

⁸⁴. Janick Beaulieu, "Une amie d'enfance," Séquences 95 (Jan. 1979): 23. See also Bonneville, Le Cinéma québécois, 617. "Ainsi cette incursion de Francis Mankiewicz du côté du théâtre filmé aura été une expérience peu probante."

⁸⁵. Turner, 249, 281.

⁸⁶. Fernand Villemure, "Les Célébrations," Cahiers de théâtre Jeu 4 (1977): 85.

⁸⁷. André Dionne, "Les Célébrations," Lettres québécoises 4 (Nov. 1976): 20.

⁸⁸. André Dionne, "Michel Garneau et le lieu de la culture," Lettres québécoises 11 (Sept. 1978): 51. See also Renate Usmiani, "Michel Garneau," Dictionary of Literary Biography Vol. 53, 206-7; Louise H. Forsyth, "Garneau, Michel," The Oxford Companion to Canadian Theatre, 220-2.

⁸⁹. Léo Bonneville, "Entretien avec Yves Simoneau," Séquences 124 (Apr. 1986): 6.

⁹⁰. Information given to me by Yves Simoneau in a personal letter sent from Los Angeles, on Monday 24 June, 1991.

⁹¹. Bonneville, "Entretien avec Yves Simoneau," 6.

- ⁹². Robert-Claude Bérubé, "Les Célébrations," Séquences 102 (Oct. 1980): 37.
- ⁹³. Information provided in Simoneau's letter of 24 June, 1991.
- ⁹⁴. Gapi is a revised version of Gapi et Sullivan, published in 1973 but never produced.
- ⁹⁵. Jean-Cléo Godin, "Antonine Maillet : Gapi," Livres et auteurs québécois (1976): 196.
- ⁹⁶. André Dionne, "Gapi," Lettres québécoises 5 (Feb. 1977): 23.
- ⁹⁷. Turner, 366-7. Premiered on 23 August 1982.
- ⁹⁸. In a telephone conversation, 4 September 1991, Paul Blouin told me of his opposition to the inclusion of Gapi in the festival.
- ⁹⁹. See, for instance, Janick Beaulieu, "Gapi," Séquences 110 (oct. 1982): 18. "Le manque de progression dramatique se fait remarquer davantage ici qu'au théâtre. C'est dommage."
- ¹⁰⁰. L. Klady, "Gapi," Variety 308 (1 Sept. 1982): 19.
- ¹⁰¹. See Copie Zéro 28 (June 1986): 23. Premiered on 1 February 1986.
- ¹⁰². Adrien Gruslin, "Quand les textes dramatiques laissent à désirer," Spirale, June 1982: 11.
- ¹⁰³. Erich Hoyt, "A play called Walls — someday to be a film," Westworld 4.3 (May/June 1978): 83-4.
- ¹⁰⁴. Sharon Pollock's One Tiger to a Hill (1981) is loosely based on the same incident.
- ¹⁰⁵. Respectively, Max Wyman, "Andy Bruce/Steinhauser play as raw as a new wound," The Vancouver Sun 8 May 1978: C3; and Bob

Allen, "No answers in Walls, but it's strong theatre," The Province 6 May 1978: 11.

^{106.} Tom Shandel, "Inside Walls," Georgia Straight Apr.28-May 5 1978: 18.

^{107.} Tom Shandel, "Scaling Walls," Georgia Straight May 12-19 1978: 17.

^{108.} Turner, 424. See, for instance, S. Devins, "Walls," Variety 316 (12 Sept. 1984): 20. "The pic[tu]re becomes mired in predictable dialog from the two opposing camps."

^{109.} Reg Skene, "Making the Prairie Connection," Newest Review 13.4 (Dec. 1987): 16.

^{110.} K. George Godwin, "Bordertown Vogue," Border Crossings 10.3 (July 1991): 37.

^{111.} Respectively, Don Rubin "Introduction: Close to the Bone," Canada on Stage 1981-1982 (Toronto: CTR, 1982) 9; and Stephen Weatherbe, "Your mother warned you," British Columbia Report 1.25 (26 Feb. 1990): 31.

^{112.} Janice Dales, "Cold Comfort," NeWest 6.7 (Mar. 1981): 6. See notes on the play's production history in Jim Garrard, Cold Comfort (Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1982) 7. See also Canada on Stage: 1981-1982, 98, 189, and Canada on Stage: 1982-1986 (Toronto: PACT, 1989) 16, 46.

^{113.} Wyndham Paul Wise, "Northern Comfort," Cinema Canada 154 (July/Aug. 1988): 5. Note that the credits of the film ascribe the scenario to Richard Beattie and L. Elliott Simms rather than to Beattie and Lee Siegel, as Wise suggests in his article.

^{114.} Respectively, Martin Knelman, "Cold Comfort," Toronto Life Dec. 1989: 135; and Martin Girard, "Cold Comfort," Séquences 145 (Mar. 1990): 53.

^{115.} S. Ayscough, "Cold Comfort," Variety 336 (6-12 Sept. 1989): 26.

- ^{116.} "Dix meilleurs films de 1992," Séquences 163 (Mar.1993): 26.
- ^{117.} Angela Baldassarre argues, in an article published in March 1994, that "the movie bug's bitten" a number of playwrights like Fraser and Linda Griffiths, who are turning their plays into films. See Angela Baldassarre, "A Different Take," Theatrum 37 (Feb./March 1994): 18.
- ^{118.} See, for instance, Robert Lévesque, "Lothaire Bluteau inoubliable; René-Daniel Dubois livre une pièce majeure," Le Devoir Tue. 19 Nov. 1985: 23. "... le fait divers serait banal. Mais Dubois organise dans cette séance d'aveu un lent processus de confession qui va s'apparenter de plus en plus à une véritable offrande, celle de l'innocence, sans doute de l'amour aussi ... l'amour trop fort ne se préservera que dans la mort. "Lui, après, ne retrouvera pas la laideur du monde." "
- ^{119.} Diane Pavlovic and Lorraine Camerlain, "Le Québec des années 1980: éclectisme et exotisme," Canada on Stage: 1982-1986, xxxi.
- ^{120.} Léo Bonneville, "Interview: Jean Beaudin," Séquences 157 (Mar. 1992): 20.
- ^{121.} Elie Castiel, "Being At Home with Claude," Séquences 157 (Mar. 1992): 53.
- ^{122.} René-Homier Roy, "L'amour qui tue," L'Actualité 17.2 (Feb. 1992): 85.
- ^{123.} Marie-Claude Loisel, "Being at Home with Claude de Jean Beaudin : l'écran vide." 24 Images 60 (spring 1992): 78. A serious contender at the 1992 Genie Awards, Being at Home with Claude lost the best feature-film prize to David Cronenberg's Naked Lunch (1992). The film won a single award for Richard Grégoire's haunting musical score. See Jay Scott, "Naked Lunch top fare at Genies," The Globe and Mail 23 Nov. 1992: A1-2.
- ^{124.} See Appendix 1. As mentioned in note 46, Peter Colley's The Mark of Cain has not actually been published, but cotypescripts are available at the Playwrights Union of Canada. To my knowledge, only Wedding in White, Les Beaux Dimanches, Cold Comfort and Being at Home with Claude are available at video stores, and One Night Stand does appear on television regularly.

PART I. STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS OF THE PLAYS

This section of the study will seek to determine the dramatic structure of the four most noteworthy Canadian and Québécois plays made into films between 1972 and 1992, and elaborate a comprehensive interpretation of the corpus. To accomplish this task, I will rely heavily on the methodological principles set forth in Thomas Price's treatise Dramatic Structure and Meaning in Theatrical Productions.¹ As indicated in the first chapter, the basic precept of Price's theory states that orthodox dramatic conflicts are essentially binary in structure, opposing two conglomerate characters, among whom only one, the protagonist, is allowed to realize its prevailing wish. Certain dramas, Price also asserts, comprise a third character who functions as the object of the other characters' actions rather than as a subject actively involved in the dialectical struggle. In this, Price basically paraphrases earlier structuralist theories such as Algirdas J. Greimas's "actantial" system.²

To these familiar postulates, Price adds the more potentially disputable theorem of "unidirectionality," which holds that "whether characters move toward the protagonists in certain plays, toward the antagonists in others, or toward a dialectically disengaged 'neutral' position in yet others, such shifts are never multidirectional in the same work" (Price 42). Price extends a cogent rationale to elucidate this phenomenon. Without reproducing his demonstration in its entirety, it will prove beneficial to quote him at some length on this issue, and

examine briefly the corollary of this theorem before undertaking the actual analysis of the plays.

Initially, the notion of unidirectionality in drama appears disputable, for countless plays and films seem to present instances of one or many characters moving from success to failure as others rise from misery to fortune. But Price contends that such cross-movements are only specious. His brief analysis of Shakespeare's Macbeth (c.1606) persuasively clarifies this point:

When, for example, Macbeth's fall from power coincides with Macduff's release from the usurper's yoke, these two figures would seem to execute a dialectical countercross, one taking a positive and the other a negative course. But this does not accurately describe the drama's dynamic, for actually Macduff is never in a position to move positively because he and all the other victors are situated in the dominant unit from beginning to end. Whatever sufferings they are forced to endure, the tragedy's protagonists remain steadfast in their loyalty to the institution of the monarchy, to legitimate royal succession, and to the Divinity who assures that right of succession [...] Consequently, the drama's only dialectical shift occurs when Macbeth's violation of the Divine Right of Kings propels him from the camp of the faithful to that of the Ultimate Rebel (Price 45).

Similarly, the rise of the hero coinciding with the fall of the blocking character in traditional triangular love comedies, such as Molière's L'École des femmes (1662), merely has the appearance of a multidirectional manoeuvre. As Price observes, the generic features of comedic drama confine blocking characters in the losing camp from the start by ascribing to them the obvious flaws of dysfunctional "humour" types. "Crippled by their character aberrations," Price writes, "the hero's opponents are

incapacitated for realizing their primary wish and therefore must be counted as losers from beginning to end" (Price 47).

Price originally derived the principle of unidirectionality from inductive generalization rather than deductive reasoning. However, he advances theoretical hypotheses to support his claim. First, he finds an aesthetic explanation for this phenomenon in the commonsensical notions of unity and clarity. "The spectator," he notes, "can only concentrate on one radical alteration of fortune at a time; and the focus is further resolved by pointing any other transformations in the same direction" (Price 42). He also submits a somewhat more intricate justification for unidirectionality by proposing a psychological interpretation of the process of dramatic composition.

Associating the function of drama to that of the dream as expounded in Freudian psychoanalysis, Price posits that in both dream and drama "the opposing characters and images are understood to be metaphors for a conflict that reflects the deepest personal aspirations and fears of the dreamer or dramatist" (Price 11). In keeping with Freud's inference that "what instigates a dream is a wish, and the fulfilment of that wish is the content of the dream," Price then suggests that the primary function of drama, similar to that of the dream, is to allow symbolic gratification to the dramatist's wish (which can actually be a negative, or ironic wish).³ But for this gratification to be realized,

[the drama] must re-establish the complete separation of opposites, thus assuring the integrity of both dominant and recessive functions. A dialectically

misplaced character represents the contamination of one function by its opposite, and such contamination is an irritant that prevents the whole system from operating normally. In order for the dominant function to retain its position of superiority and achieve its overriding wish it must expel any foreign elements, any uncharacteristic tendencies, as it were, and relegate them to the value system of the opposite, shadow side. The same is true, in reverse, for the inferior function (Price 43).

Unidirectional movement, Price consequently deduces, results from the fact "that contaminating elements on both sides would tend to negate each other." If commensurate intruders adulterate equally the value of both the protagonist and the antagonist, "the superior function would then still remain in control, with no immediate need for symbolic reinforcement and no necessity for decontamination" (Price 43).

Price's discovery of a strictly unidirectional dynamic within the binary framework of drama leads him to postulate that all conflicts in conventional plays and screenplays conform to one of only seven basic structures (Price 69). There is, first, the static model which allows no dialectical movement between the protagonists and the antagonists, the members of each side remaining steadfast in their respective camps from beginning to end (Price 75-82). Gratien Gélinas's political drama Hier, les enfants dansaient (1966) belongs to this category. In this play, Gélinas sets in opposition the views of a father and his son regarding the future of Québec. While the elder defends the practice of peaceful negotiation within the federalist system, the younger advocates radical action to effect Québec's independence. The drama closes with both men maintaining their

initial positions, which suggests that the quarrel over Québec's constitutional status is not likely to conclude in a mutually-agreeable compromise. The power of the piece stems primarily from the author's ability to achieve almost perfect balance in his presentation of the polemic, providing each side with convincing arguments. Gélinas ultimately sides with the father, though, according him the moral victory in the debate.

The second possibility, that Price labels "apostatic-positive," is defined by the shift of one or more characters from the negative unit to the positive or winning unit (Price 105-10). This is the standard structure of propagandistic drama tracing the passage of characters from slavery to freedom, from servility to empowerment. One can discern such a structural shift in the celebrated Marxist film Mother (1926), by Vsevolod Pudovkin. The mother is initially a submissive member of the proletariat, resisting the communist ideology. But after having realized that her collaboration with the ruling class has led to her son's arrest, she becomes aware of the injustices that she and her family have suffered. She then decides to join, and even *lead*, the revolutionary movement to overthrow the oppressors.

Although such progression from harmful ignorance to positive awareness and action is most common in this type of drama, it is worth reminding the reader that the term "positive" in "apostatic-positive" does not imply that the winning characters necessarily stand for positive values. As Price points out, "in its ironic phase apostatic-positive drama creates a chilling effect by showing the movement of characters

to a powerful but malign protagonist" (Price 109). The ironic apostatic-positive structure is evident in Ted Kotcheff's Canadian film The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz (1974). At the beginning of the film, Duddy is a somewhat mischievous but nonetheless likeable and generous young man, who values the opinion of his grandfather, develops a loving relationship with a Québécoise and tenders a helping hand to those in need. By the end of the movie, however, he has failed the sage patriarch, abandoned his faithful lover, and betrayed his most loyal friend. Yet, all these contemptible deeds allow him to become financially successful and to fulfil his great wish of being granted credit at the neighbourhood café. As the final credits start rolling, his father recapitulates Duddy's ironic apostatic-positive transformation as he relates his son's rise from the realm of the weak and sensitive to the clan of the powerful and ruthless.

The "apostatic-negative" model presents the opposite movement, that is, the passage of one or several characters from the dominant group to the recessive group (Price 135-41). Macbeth, as pointed out in Price's previous description, is a probative illustration of this structure. Indeed, in its portrayal of the central character's perfidious usurpation of the king's throne, the gradual disintegration of his guilt-ridden conscience, and his brutal death as a result of his own use of violence, Shakespeare's Scottish play narrates in most emphatic terms Macbeth's irrevocable fall from the camp of the righteous, where he once belonged, to the realm of the damned.

The four remaining movement-patterns result from the possible presence of a third character located in a disengaged position. The passage of this third character from its neutral stance to the protagonist's unit constitutes a "metastatic-positive" drama (Price, 185-92). Comedic love triangles generally reproduce this pattern as a disputed personage is eventually won over by the heroic protagonist overthrowing the blocking character. The "metastatic-negative" model inverts the dynamic, showing the apex figure joining the antagonists in their demise (Price 223-30). Henrik Ibsen's intricate Hedda Gabler (1890) is elaborated on the basis of this structure. The contested figure in this text is Lövborg, a brilliant, dionysian visionary, who is sought by two contesting forces: on the one hand, the plain Mrs. Elvsted, who encourages him to be diligent and sober; and on the other hand, the romantic Hedda, who loathes the dull, prosaic environment inhabited by her mediocre husband, Tesman, and Mrs. Elvsted. Hedda manages to draw the contested character to her side, convincing Lövborg to turn his back on temperance and adhere to her idealistic outlook. This movement away from the petty world of Tesman and Elvsted is manifestly negative, for it results in Lövborg's grotesque death and Hedda's ensuing suicide. While much less attractive than Hedda, Tesman and Elvsted emerge from the conflict victorious, for they may be boring and insignificant, but at least, they survive.

The sixth model, the "synthetic-realized" structure, entails the defusing of a conflict through the intervention of

a third party who persuades one or both sides to waive the polemic (Price 269-78). Most commonly, this pattern is associated with the use of the "Deus ex Machina," which provides external, and often artificial, solutions to otherwise irresolvable situations.

Finally, Price describes the "synthetic-implied" structure, alluded to in the introductory chapter, which rejects the use of an external force to settle a deadlock conflict, and leaves it to the audience to supply an alternative to the unresolved circumstances that the drama exposes (Price 309-17). The distinction between the static model and the synthetic-implied structure is that, while the former concedes victory to one of the two belligerents, the latter lays bare an unsustainable predicament that requires a solution foreign to both sides of the battlefield. In the synthetic-implied conflict "victory and defeat have utterly lost significance" (Price 309). David Fennario's Balconville (1978) is an example of synthetic-implied drama, as it stages a pointless strife opposing working-class francophones and anglophones, who argue over trifles and fail to perceive that as proletarians they could unite for a common cause. Unlike in Gélinas's piece, where the debate is presented with great lucidity, allowing one side to advance the more convincing rationale, in Fennario's drama the struggle remains frustratingly inconsequential. The play thus rejects closure, ending with all the characters turning to the audience in panic and asking, "What are we going to do? / Qu'est-ce qu'on va faire?" as their decrepit apartments are about to go up in

flames, demanding that the spectators find a solution.

Price's seven models afford a useful means to detect the thematic purport of dramatic texts, for once the basic structure of a play has been disclosed, it becomes easier to recognize the patterns of imagery recurrent in the drama as they too function on the principle of dialectic opposition. The images attached to the protagonists clash with those of the antagonists; and when characters move from one stance to another their semiotic make-up reflects their apostasy (Price 51-6). The dialectic of imagery thus fleshes out the bare bones of the dialectic of action by assigning connotative meaning to the conflicting units, and endowing each side of the dialectic with metaphorical implications.

The final stage of analysis, the implicational dialectic, consists in selecting conceptual antonyms that summarize the distinctive traits shared by the characters of each contesting group (Price 59-62). As pointed out in the first chapter, the implicational dialectic is mainly useful in the context of the present study insofar as it permits us to isolate into binary terms certain crucial motifs at the core of the dramas, and pinpoint recurring concerns among the texts of the corpus on the basis of the cues offered by these epitomic doublets.

Though the following structural reading of the plays encompasses these three stages, inquiry into the dialectic of imagery will be most extensive in the next part, devoted to the cinematic adaptations, for it is through the analysis of alterations in the deployment of verbal and visual signs that the process of

film-mediation will be primarily elucidated. The implicational dialectic, for its part, will be further considered in the third and final section, which will establish links between the corpus, theories of film and drama, and the Canadian/Québécois imagination. It will emerge from the case studies conducted in this part that, although the plays appraised below belong to various dynamic classes, they all share fundamental properties at the levels of structure and motives. I shall begin the inquiry with the first modern Canadian play to have been made into a genuinely Canadian film, and one of the most intricate texts of the corpus, William Fruet's Wedding in White.

NOTES

¹. Thomas Price, Dramatic Structure and Meaning in Theatrical Productions (San Francisco: Edwin Mellen Press, 1992). Subsequent references to this work in this section will appear within parentheses in the text.

². See Algirdas Julien Greimas, Sémantique structurale : recherche de méthode (Paris: Larousse, 1966).

³. Sigmund Freud, "Lecture VIII: Children's Dreams," Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis, trans. James Strachey (1966; New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1977) 129. Price, 43. On the notion of "negative wish" see Price, 20: "...recognizing irony for what it is, namely, a negative wish." See also Freud, "Lecture XIV: Wish-Fulfilment," Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis, 221: "... a dream is a fulfilled wish or the opposite of one."

CHAPTER III. WEDDING IN WHITE¹

Synopsis:

Location and time: "Somewhere in Western Canada, in a small town, near the end of the Second World War" (Fruet 247).

Act I, scene i: Jim and Mary Dougal, along with their timid daughter, Jeanie, give a hero's welcome to their soldier son, Jimmie, returning home for the weekend with his army buddy, Billy. *Scene ii:* Later in the evening, Billy would like to go out with Jeanie and her buxom friend, Dollie, but Jimmie feels that they should accompany Jim to the Legion Club. *Scene iii:* At the Legion, Jimmie, Billy and Jim are drinking with the latter's old friends, Sandy and his lover, Sarah, when a bully challenges Jimmie to a fight. Petrified, Jimmie dodges the confrontation, thus humiliating his father before the Legion crowd. *Scene iv:* Back at Jim's place, father and son retreat to their bedrooms to mend their wounded pride. When Jeanie and Dollie return from their night out, Billy tries to seduce the latter, but he is spurned. Angry and frustrated, he rapes Jeanie.

Act II, scene i: Three months later, long after Jimmie and Billy have absconded from the scene, Jeanie knows that she is pregnant from the rape. However, as her parents are preparing for a reception at the Legion in Jim's honour, she refrains from divulging her condition. *Scene ii:* After the reception, while Jim and Sandy are drinking in the basement, Jeanie confides in her mother. *Scene iii:* The next morning, Mary reveals the shameful news to Jim, who responds violently by battering his daughter for having dishonoured the family.

Act III, scene i: A week later, Mary tries in vain to dissuade her husband from evicting Jeanie. *Scene ii:* Shortly after, Sandy insinuates to Jim that he could marry Jeanie to restore his friend's honour. Jim is delighted with this prospect. *Scene iii:* Jim's plan to give Jeanie's hand to Sandy is confirmed. Sarah, feeling betrayed, expresses her outrage at Mary, her best friend. But Mary is obliged to condone her husband's arrangement and must thus terminate her life-long relationship with Sarah. *Scene iv:* Jim gathers his drunkard friends in his living room to celebrate the wedding. As the curtain falls, Sandy is seen shoving Jeanie into a bedroom for their nuptial intercourse.

Preliminaries to the Analysis:

This plot summary of William Fruet's Wedding in White already provides some basic indications of the dialectic of action that generates conflict in the play. The central event of the drama is evidently the rape of Jeanie. Although there are other nodal points in the text, such as Jimmie's show of cowardice at the Legion and Sarah's termination of her friendship with Mary, these dramatic occurrences are subordinated to the crisis provoked by the rape and the resulting pregnancy. This crisis, however, is not resolved through poetic justice in the form of a well-deserved punishment for the rapist; as a matter of fact, Billy is never heard of again after the night of the rape. Rather, the dénouement of Wedding in White hinges on the rehabilitation of Jim's honour through the arranged marriage

that somewhat redeems Jeanie's shameful condition.

In this, we recognize at once a particular dramatic configuration. The text does not exhibit a straightforward conflict in which the triumph of the protagonists would ensue directly from vanquishing the antagonists. Instead, Jim's victory, as is clearly manifested by his celebratory mood in the last scene, stems from the (re)admittance into his clan of his daughter, a character who is neither an antagonist nor a protagonist, but only a victim. Indeed, as the synopsis intimates and as will be demonstrated below, Jeanie has no specific desire in the play and, as such, does not actively participate in the dialectic.

Rather, she is the "object" through whom the crisis is triggered by an antagonist — via the rape — and eventually resolved by the protagonists — via the wedding. In both instances, Jeanie is manipulated by others, without having any control over her circumstances. We are thus in the presence of a triangular construction, in which the conflicting forces act upon a third, neutral agency, whose eventual assimilation by the protagonists leads to their victory. In terms of Price's theory, this structure is labelled metastatic-positive drama.

Admittedly, the metastatic-positive organisation of Wedding in White is not as readily recognizable in the comedic love triangles generally associated with this model. This ensues from the fact that we are dealing, here, with an ironic play, as is evidenced by the caustic tone of the work, its dubious resolution through an arranged marriage, and even its title. And ambivalence is common in the ironic phase of the metastatic-

positive configuration. As Price reports, ironic playwrights reproducing this pattern often employ "secretive dramaturgical techniques: hidden players in one or more functional unit (thus obscuring triangular relationships), self-contradiction and denial on the part of the contested females [...] and apparent disinterest of the victorious males."² Like other ironists, Fruet resorts to elaborate strategies to achieve the indirectness indigenous to his chosen mode of composition. Foremost among these strategies is the meek characterisation of Jeanie. As a "contested female," Jeanie should normally occupy a prominent position in the drama, but instead, she is portrayed as a peripheral character who, for most of the play, is ostracized by her father and the other members of the Dougal household. Interestingly enough, certain reviewers have seen Jeanie's characterization as the principal weakness in both the stage version and the film, arguing that her passivity creates a void at the core of the drama. For instance, Peter Crossley, commenting on the production of the play at the Manitoba Theatre Centre, in May 1973, claims that Jeanie, as portrayed by Nancy Beatty, "seemed unreal [...] she was shy, yes, but when she was approached by a young man, she showed no surprise or emotional response."³ Piers Handling, in a concise analysis of the movie, also complains about Jeanie's lack of intensity: "We never really come close to her. She is relatively without energy, almost apathetic in accepting her fate."⁴

But while these reactions were undoubtedly influenced, in part, by factors external to Fruet's text, such as the perfor-

mance of the actresses, Jeanie's impassiveness is also clearly inscribed in the play script itself. For example, one of Fruet's stage directions stipulates that Billy's approach to Jeanie, which prompted Crossley's criticism, "has caught her completely by surprise, and she doesn't respond in any way" (Fruet 279). As pointed out above, this passivity and inhibition actually form an integral part of Jeanie's function in the network of interactions that make up the play; and, as we shall see, her initial exclusion from, and eventual inclusion into, the heart of Jim's camp is the central dialectic of action in Wedding in White.

Dialectic of Action:

From the outset, Fruet diverts attention from Jeanie. The play opens with Jim boisterously welcoming home Jimmie, on short leave from a remote military base. During the first scene, the dialogue revolves entirely around Jimmie, old Jim "hanging on every word his son says" (Fruet 251). Jeanie's entrance in the scene occurs as the conversation is already well under way, and her position on stage, hidden at the top of the stairs whence she descends slowly and timidly, keeps her apart from the action transpiring downstairs. After a brief, albeit affectionate, encounter between brother and sister, Jim, Billy and Mary "all follow Jimmie into the living room leaving Jeanie forgotten" (Fruet 250-1).

Were the play as a whole analogous to this preliminary scene, Jimmie would doubtlessly emerge as the central character of the drama. However, a few scenes after his conspicuous

ingress, Jimmie vanishes from the stage never to be seen again, and the sporadic actions that he performs — his failure to hold his own in the Legion brawl, for instance — although not irrelevant, are of little significance in the general economy of the play (Fruet 268-9). In retrospect, it appears that Jimmie's prominent presence in the first moments of the play serves primarily to accentuate Jeanie's virtual absence from the dramatic event. His unconditional inclusion in the rank of commendable family members contrasts drastically with her exclusion from it. The sleeping arrangements proposed by Jim epitomise Jeanie's predicament: "You [Jimmie] an Bill can have your old room an Mother an me [sic] will take Jeanie's. She can sleep on the chesterfield downstairs" (Fruet 253). Here, as through most of the drama, Jeanie constantly suffers relegation.

Jeanie's segregation from Jim's immediate circle culminates in the scene following his discovery of her pregnancy. Unmoved by his wife's plea, Jim inflicts what he considers to be an apt punishment on his dishonoured daughter: "She is to leave and not set foot back here again, do you hear? I never want to be reminded of the shame she brought in this house" (Fruet 312). Only at the end of the play, once Jim has found an expedient way to rehabilitate his honour, will Jeanie be finally incorporated into the winning unit of the dialectic through the ironic wedding in white that bestows her on a contented Sandy.⁵

Jeanie's passage from a position of disenfranchisement to the domineering faction of Jim and Sandy could be interpreted as a movement from an antagonistic status to a role among the

protagonists. However, as mentioned previously, a perusal of her character establishes that Jeanie never belongs on the side of the antagonists, for she never nourishes any predominant desire that the dénouement of the drama frustrates. She generally remains oblivious to her surroundings. Her marriage to Sandy marks neither the negation of her overriding wish nor the realization of her ambitions; she displays neither resistance against, nor interest in, her betrothal to Sandy.⁶ After a brief moment of panic, stemming from her father's initial decree to evict her, she resumes her nonchalant attitude in the light of Jim's final decision to give her hand to his best friend.⁷ Until the closing scene, when she is literally shoved into the protagonist's room, Jeanie remains effectively absent from the dialectic.

Even the action that seals her fate, the rape, actually denies her presence in the dialectic. Early in the play, Jimmie's buddy, Billy, recognizes Jeanie as easy sexual prey. Feigning interest in her, inquiring about her activities and promising her gifts, he effortlessly gains her confidence (Fruet 253-6). However, his attention rapidly shifts away from Jeanie when her friend, the voluptuous Dollie, walks on stage in Scene Two. Dollie, far more than Jeanie, embodies the object of Billy's desire, as Fruet specifies in a stage direction: "It is Dollie who interests Billy [...] Jeanie is unable to compete, not having Dollie's looks or drive. She is soon a forgotten party as Billy and Dollie engage in their childish game" (Fruet 275).

However, Dollie is not as easily inveigled as Jeanie. She ridicules Billy's seduction act and rejects him violently once the game has ceased to amuse her (Fruet 277). His backtracking toward Jeanie and the rape that follows result directly from his foiled lust for Dollie, and has little to do with Jeanie, who merely stands in for her friend. Significantly, just prior to the rape, Billy attempts to model the callow girl after the more mature paragon, admonishing her to change her hairstyle: "[...] all ya gotta do, is fix it different. I mean more grown up [...] You know? Curl it up like women do" (Fruet 279). Moreover, the rape takes place in complete darkness, hence negating, as it were, Jeanie's presence, erasing her body from the scene.

This treatment of Jeanie as the shadow of Dollie corroborates Fruet's use of ironic indirectness. In his section on the metastatic-positive model, Price notes certain common usages among ironic dramatists. Often, says Price, ironic plays focus "on a misfit or mental runaway whose ultimate possession by the protagonist brings economic or sexual advantage to the latter but often confers a dubious blessing on the contested figure" (Price 186). Other ironic works, he adds, concentrate on "the betrayal of weak and impotent antagonists by fickle women" (Price 192). Although Jeanie and Dollie behave in drastically different ways, they both exhibit characteristics of the apex figure in ironic metastatic-positive drama; they correspond to two facets of the same function. Jeanie personifies the introverted social misfit, largely unaware of her condition, "wandering aimlessly about the house, lost in thought" and blindly

yielding to her father's will (Fruet 285). As for Dollie, she incarnates the fickle woman whose only ambition in life is to toy with boys without ever committing herself.

Dollie does not move as explicitly as Jeanie from the apex position to the winner's side, but a close look at her actions uncovers her adherence to the dynamic. Her most momentous deed in the play is her teasing of Billy, which triggers the latter's brutal behaviour. Although this puerile game exposes Billy's lustful desire, it does not translate any definite longing on Dollie's part; she interrupts her tantalizing performance as abruptly and motivelessly as she commenced it. This accords with her function as an apex figure, for, like Jeanie, Dollie does not express any predominant desire; she only responds to the motions of others.⁸ Halfway through the play, she voices a vague intention to escape her banal prairie life by travelling to Vancouver, where her brother-in-law, with whom she is having an affair, could provide for her (Fruet 286). But she never attempts to realize this project. Her lack of action in this matter not only reflects the inconstancy typical of her role, but also confirms the impossibility of any self-asserting movement for the apex figure within the metastatic-positive framework.

Furthermore, at the end of the play, Dollie sanctions her friend's marriage with Sandy by attending the reception and performing endorsing gestures. She earnestly photographs the newlyweds and their entourage, explains to Jeanie the double-entendre of some crude jokes made by the guests, hence signi-

fying her affinity with Jim's and Sandy's clique, and even advises the naive teenager on her conjugal duty: "Come on, Dougal, you're suppose to dance with him!" (Fruet 326-29). Consequently, Dollie, like Jeanie, also moves from a disengaged position, characterized by her careless attitude and aloof dallying with men, to the protagonists' camp, as she actively partakes in the ritual that marks Jeanie's transition from the questionable freedom of obliviousness to confinement in a marriage of convenience.⁹

The presence of Dollie, however, further obscures the dispute between protagonists and antagonists, for the coveted woman is different for each side. Whereas Dollie arouses the carnal appetite of Billy, Jeanie draws the drunken gaze of Sandy. The drama thus adopts a disjunctive structure that carries out the metastatic dynamic through an out-of-phase conflict. This asynchronous dialectic involves, at first, Billy's aborted overture towards Dollie leading to Jeanie's rape, and subsequently, Sandy's procurement of Jeanie through the mediation of Jim. Although Billy and Sandy never clash directly, they are nevertheless in structural opposition with one another, for the former's failure to acquire the woman he desires (Dollie) obliquely permits the latter to find a wife (Jeanie). The triangular configuration at the core of this ironic metastatic-positive drama, therefore, is composed of Jeanie and Dollie as the dual apex figure, Sandy on the protagonist's side, and Billy in the antagonistic position.

Always soliciting kisses from his best friend's daughter,

Sandy is the only male character in the drama who displays any sort of sustained interest for Jeanie. This interest, however, is not without ambivalence. There is probably a streak of sincerity in Sandy's statement to Jim that "[Jeanie]'s a fine looking girl. (*Snaps his finger*) I'd marry her like that [...] I would, I would! A wee wife and little ones, something I've always wanted" (Fruet 316). But his sincerity is marred by the fact that his advances to the teenage girl always reek of alcohol (Fruet 288-90). Besides, his flirting with Jeanie discloses his callous disregard for the feelings of his faithful girlfriend, Sarah, who understandably construes the wedding as an unforgivable betrayal.

The ambivalence remains unresolved at the end of the play. In the last scene, Sandy behaves as both a likable drunk and a repugnant old lecher. Conscious of his new wife's trepidation at the prospect of spending the night with him, Sandy speaks a few comforting words: "Ohh now don't be frightened of old Sandy." Yet, the following instant, he treats her like a cheap harlot. Fruet describes Sandy's final action as follows:

(Reaching the top of the stairs, his hand slowly slides down her back, and he gently caresses her buttocks ... Suddenly clutching them firmly.)

Sandy: *(Breaking into a loud hoarse laugh.)* That a girl!

(Quickly he pushes her into the bedroom and the door slams shut) (Fruet 332).

That such ambivalent behaviour is attributed to Sandy, who doubtlessly emerges as one of the protagonists of the play since

he fulfils his wish of finding a "wee wife," leaves no doubt as to Fruet's ironical perspective on the state of affairs depicted in his work.

Billy, for his part, must be regarded as an antagonist, or loser, primarily because his overriding wish to seduce Dollie is not fulfilled. But even prior to his resounding failure with Dollie, Billy experiences a number of lesser defeats that adumbrate his function in the dialectic. His very presence at Dougal's home, to start with, is partly against his will. As Jimmie informs his mother, Mary, early in the first scene, "[Billy] didn't have nowheres to go to on his leave, so I brought him home with me! [...] Bloke didn't want to come! So I says look here boy, any pal of mine is always welcome in my folk's home!" (Fruet 249-50). Billy's first attempt to charm Jeanie, still in the introductory scene, also occasions the thwarting of his will as the inopportune appearance of Mary interrupts his ploy (Fruet 256).

In the second scene, after his first meeting with the alluring Dollie, Billy communicates forcefully to Jimmie his unwillingness to waste an evening drinking with old Jim at the Legion Club: "(Angry) Hey look how long we gonna hang around? I don't want to go no friggin Legion tonight!" (Fruet 262). Nonetheless, in the next scene, Billy finds himself at the Legion Club where, *faute de mieux*, he tries to make a pass at Sarah, Sandy's aging girlfriend. But, "when he persists, she makes him release her and waddles indignantly back to the table" (Fruet 265). All these minor frustrations pave the way for

Billy's most humiliating setback before Dollie. From his arrival at the Dougals's to his surreptitious flight with Jimmie the morning after the rape, Billy remains an antagonist.

That Billy elects to run away after having assaulted Jeanie is in keeping with his persona as a loser. However, the fact that Jimmie absconds with Billy seems to contradict the image of the valorous son fabricated by the father. Jimmie's seemingly incongruous behaviour might be read as a negative movement from the winning coalition to the losing party. But a scrutiny of Jimmie's conduct, from a perspective less biased than that of Jim, reveals that the young man does not move from the side of the protagonists to that of the antagonists. Rather, like his friend Billy, Jimmie must be labelled an antagonist from the start.

As remarked above, despite his ostentatious entrance on stage, Jimmie is not among the most consequential characters of the play. He only participates indirectly in the triangular dispute already described, serving mainly to emphasize Jeanie's marginality, and unwittingly introducing her to the rapist. But Jimmie, unlike Jeanie and Dollie, does have a wish that he has sought to realise. As we learn in Act One, scene three, "he's asked for active duty a hundred times now [...] They won't let him off" (Fruet 266).

His inability to fulfil his wish to become a fighting soldier, which puts him in the antagonistic bloc even prior to the beginning of the play, generates a resentment that translates into hostility toward friends and strangers alike at the

Legion Club (Fruet 266-7). Yet, when Jimmie is called upon to defend his father against the assault of a belligerent Legion patron, and thereby given a chance to prove his worth as a serviceman, "he sits frozen in fear" (Fruet 269). Notwithstanding the reasons that Jimmie adduces to rationalise his circumstances, this scene unveils the authentic cause of his failure.¹⁰ Beset with cowardice as his main character trait, Jimmie is irrevocably condemned to be a loser. In the light of the incident at the Legion, which crystallises his military bankruptcy, Jimmie's secretive departure with Billy does not come as a surprise.

Fruet concludes Jimmie's involvement in the drama by relating his function to Billy's antagonistic role in the indirect polemic with Sandy. After having returned home, Jimmie tries to compensate for his lack of courage at the Legion by threatening to fight Sandy, who does not reciprocate but nevertheless takes the gesture as an insult. Before Jimmie can do any physical damage, he collapses under the weight of his intoxication, and crawls up to his room, whence he will not reappear. Jimmie's aborted confrontation with Sandy echoes Billy's broader disjunctive contest with the old man as, in both cases, the conflict averts direct confrontation, and results in the discomfiture of the younger. This scenario concurs with a recurrent pattern in ironic drama "by representing the victory of age over youth" (Price 192).

Joining Billy and Jimmie on the side of the antagonists is Mary, Jim's submissive wife. Having little aspiration in life,

other than to slave for her family, Mary could mistakenly be associated with Jeanie and Dollie as a detached figure eventually appropriated by the winning unit. However, contrary to the younger women, Mary does experience explicit frustration of her modest desires, and this on at least three occasions. First, in Act Three, scene one, after having found out that Jeanie is pregnant, Mary is forced to renounce her dream of organizing a beautiful reception for her daughter's wedding at the King George Hotel (Fruet 307-8). The reception will be held, instead, in her own decrepit living room and, subsequently, at one of Jim's friends' place. A few moments later, in the same scene, Mary suffers another blow before Jim, who has elected to banish Jeanie from his house. Determined to protect her daughter, Mary defies her husband. "I'll not let you send Jeanie away Jim. [...] I've thought about it. After she's had the baby, she could find a job, and I could watch it through the day [...] I'd look after and care for the baby real well" (Fruet 311-2). But, as indicated above, Jim angrily dismisses her suggestion, and Mary must yield to her husband's authority.¹¹

Although, in the next scene, Jim goes back on his ruling, his decision to offer Jeanie in marriage to Sandy does not raise Mary to the status of protagonist. In fact, this gesture leads to yet another bitter ordeal for the old woman, who finds herself compelled to forsake her best friend, Sarah. Angry at her boyfriend for marrying Jeanie, Sarah puts the blame on Mary. "Disgustin cheap people, that's what ya are!!" Sarah tells Mary, who retorts: "Don't ever come back here again, ya hear?! You

don't call us things like that!" (Fruet 322). This feud, which is equally painful for both women, constitutes what Price calls an "internecine conflict," that is, a futile struggle between two characters belonging to the same unit (Price 37). Mary, who loses her soul mate, and Sarah, who sees her long-time lover abandon her, are undeniably located on the losing side of the dialectic.

Although Sarah is a rather minor figure in the play, her function as an antagonist is probably manifested more explicitly and more consistently than that of any other character. Almost every time she appears on stage, Sarah occupies a position of pathetic subordination vis-à-vis Sandy. In her first appearance, at the Legion, she is shown as having to endure Sandy's drunken boasting (Fruet 264). In Act Two, scene two, after the reception in Jim's honour, she is treated with utter contempt by her boyfriend when she tries to stop him from flirting with Jeanie:

Sarah: (*Embarrassed*) Sandy, leave Jeanie be!

(*Sarah pulls at him. Sandy suddenly reels about on her snarling.*)

Sandy: Who the hell you think you're pushin?! Keep your bloody hands to yourself! (Fruet 291.)

Shortly after, in the same scene, she is required to return home from Dougal's place alone on foot, in the cold darkness of the night, because Sandy is too drunk to drive her (Fruet 295-6). Thus her final frustration, following Sandy's marriage arrangement with Jim, hardly comes as a surprise. It only confirms her status as a perpetual loser.

On the other side stands the ironic winner, Jim, who at the closure of the drama not only redeems his threatened honour, but also strengthens his bond with his friend-cum-son-in-law, Sandy. Enraptured by his son's visit at the beginning of the play, and delighted by the nuptial settlement reached at the end, Jim must be regarded as an immobile protagonist even if he undergoes certain setbacks in the course of the drama, such as Jimmie's embarrassment at the Legion and the news of Jeanie's pregnancy. Although these intermediary events might dent Jim's precious reputation momentarily, the conclusion of the drama eradicates the traces of his few disappointments and reinstates him to his original state of contentment.¹²

Around Jim gravitate some minor figures whose roles in the dialectic must also be mentioned. Described in the *dramatis personae* as "assorted soldiers in club" and "sundry wedding guests," characters such as Scotty, Tommie, Art and Bob cohere to the winning unit, all boozing up with Sandy and Jim.¹³ More notable, however, are two secondary personages who belong to the losing camp, Hattie and Barnie. We encounter this old couple in the scene at the Legion Club as they are impudently trying to integrate Dougal's circle of friends. Told by Jim to "shove off," they seek the help of a bellicose soldier who threatens Jim, challenges Jimmie to a fight, and humiliates the latter in front of his father (Fruet 268-9). Yet, this intervention does not allow Hattie and Barnie to join Jim's clan, as they and their bully acolyte are led off by the crowd. Despite the brevity of their presence on stage, these two antagonistic

figures point emphatically toward the larger thematic concern of Fruet's play. Their intrusion in the drama, indeed, exposes Jim's paramount trait, namely, his uncompromising insistence on erecting barriers between his closed circle and the outside world. We will return to this point presently.

The foregoing analysis of the dialectic of action has demonstrated at length that the central movement of this play consists essentially in Jim's initial rejection, and ultimate acceptance, of Jeanie into his commanding unit. Schematically, this triangular drama traces the passage of Jeanie and Dollie from outside the dialectic to inside the protagonists' unit, while leaving the antagonists dangling in discontent. In itself, the identification of this structure only allows us to station the characters on one side or another of the conflict, without actually providing us with sufficient semiotic material to interpret the meaning of the drama. However, the following discussion, concerning the dialectic of imagery, will remedy this situation. By permitting us to discover the rhetorical patterns attached to each unit of the dialectic, the next stage of analysis will unveil the thematic purport of Wedding in White — fleshing out the bare bones of the dialectic of action. This procedure will expound a fundamental dichotomy between, on the one hand, scenic and verbal imagery relating to a guarded interior and, on the other hand, dramaturgical signs alluding to a formidable but attractive exterior.

Dialectic of Imagery:

The first information the reader gathers about any character in Wedding in White concerns Jim's attachment to a specific area of his house. Early in his introductory set descriptions, Fruet details the extreme left of the stage in these terms:

Beneath the stairway another door opens to the cellar. This same corner of the room has become Jim's personal little sanctuary consisting of a large black leather chair, an old gramophone, a small whisky cabinet, a display of shell casings and other war souvenirs. Several army group photos hang beside pictures of King George V and Queen Mary. A Union Jack is draped as a background (Fruet 247).

Thus, even before encountering any of the personages, the reader already knows of Jim's preferred site: an exiguous corner underneath the stairs where all of the old man's universe is enclosed. This is one of the dominant scenic figures affixed to Jim, denoting his physical and mental huddling up in a recess of his house decorated with images of the past and symbols of Great Britain.

Jim's clinging to his British roots, or more precisely, his imaginary (i.e. through images) re-construction of British traditions, intimates his inward resistance against his environment. As James Leach has noticed, "the claustrophobic world of Wedding in White, for example, stems from a rigid adherence to British traditions and an unwillingness to adapt to (or even create) a new environment."¹⁴ Although Leach's comment is concerned with Fruet's film, Jim's impulse to shun his surroundings is equally present in the play. This essential aspect of Jim's persona is reinforced throughout the drama by an accretion of images that emphasize his propensity for secure enclosure and

apprehension of the outside world. For instance, Jim works as a prison guard at a nearby P.O.W. camp, an occupation devoted entirely to the upholding of the barriers that separate the inside from the outside. His claim that the prisoners are treated "like bloody royalty" attests to his favourable prejudice towards life in confinement (Fruet 258, 289). He exercises his profession at home as well, prohibiting Jeanie from moving in and out of the house freely, and training a dog to protect his abode against potential escapees.¹⁵ Jim's inward tendency is evidenced, as well, in the fact that when he wishes to carry on a drinking spree with Sandy, he retreats to the cellar (Fruet 292). Furthermore, the war souvenir which Jim is proudest of is a model ship built inside a whisky bottle: an ironic metaphor that translates Jim's fascination with secluded objects while emphasizing the unequivocal metonymic implications of the container (Fruet 259).

Jim's apprehension of the outside world finds one of its most intricate manifestations in his fear of being ashamed or dishonoured. It is this dread of exposure before the opprobrious gaze of his neighbours that leads him to decree Jeanie's eviction, to dismiss Mary's offer to keep the girl's baby, and to find a convenient cover-up by marrying her to Sandy.¹⁶ My intention, here, is not to embark on a fastidious psychological inquiry into the origins of shame in Fruet's characters. However, in order to understand the link between Jim's inclination toward enclosure and his anxiety concerning disgrace or shame, it will prove useful to look succinctly at the psycho-

logical mechanism that his conduct reproduces.

Of particular interest for our purpose is the fact that Jim's admiration for his son, most ardently voiced at the beginning of the play, and the unbearable shame he later experiences as he witnesses Jimmie's display of cowardice at the Legion, comply with a psychological structure common among shame-based families comprising alcoholic parents.¹⁷ The role of the Hero/Impostor in which Jimmie is cast by his father is typical for the first born child of parents in dire need of self-esteem enhancement.¹⁸ As psychologist Stanley D. Wilson suggests, the heroic achievements assigned to the son seek "to provide a feeling of worth to parents who feel like failures [and] represent an attempt to cure the family of the shame sickness."¹⁹

Consequently, it emerges that Jim's attitude towards Jimmie stems from the former's own embedded sense of shame. Although Fruet does not provide his audience with the characterological background necessary to unearth the roots of the family's mortification, the depiction of Jim's current behaviour leaves little doubt that he is a character gnawed by shame.²⁰ His inclination toward seclusion does not come as a surprise then, for shame is defined as an "experience of feeling exposed [which] results in a compelling need to *hide* [and] causes us to feel psychologically isolated, afraid of further contact, afraid of further exposure [emphasis added]".²¹ Therefore, Jim's fabrication of Jimmie as the honourable heroic son appears as yet another barrier, albeit an ineffective one, that the old man

erects between himself and the world to avoid further exposure.²²

Moreover, Jim establishes a figurative link between Jeanie's shameful pregnancy and the world *out there*. "Aye she's been about more than we imagined," he tells Mary, "a regular little woman of the world [...] I've travelled half the world and I know the kind of women that take up with men the way she did" (Fruet 309). For Jim, the world looms as a wicked environment whose strident shaming attacks must be shut out. It is worth mentioning that this segment of the play, in which Jim's views on the malevolence of the world are brought to bear on Mary, begins with his vehement complaining about the "damn cold wind out there," and ends on his retreating to his cherished corner where he seeks refuge in whisky and a bagpipe tune (Fruet 308-312). The dialectic between the forbidding exterior and the safe interior where one can withdraw from the world is rendered tangible, here, through the contrasting images of the bitter winter wind and the nook. In Chapter X, we will see that this dichotomy is in keeping with a common interpretation of the Canadian imagination, often abridged in the term "garrison mentality," following Northrop Frye's famous phrasing.²³ Incidentally, the fact that Jim comes up with his opportune solution to the drama as he is ensconced in his alcove, where Sandy joins him in the next scene and convinces him of Jeanie's redeemability, suggests an ironic reversal of the Shakespearean process of pastoral rejuvenation, labelled the "green world" by Frye.²⁴ In Wedding in White, it is not a sojourn in the forest that resolves dilemmas but withdrawal into the penetralia of the

house.

The cluster of dramaturgic images and figures associated with Sandy is very similar to that related to Jim, although the former's is much sparser. Like Jim, Sandy works as a prison guard. He too displays a proclivity for segregation, rejecting Hattie and Barnie as he declares, "this is supposed to be a club for servicemen only!" (Fruet 268). He follows Jim to the cellar for his drinking bout, and shares Jim's opinions about honour. For Sandy, as for Jim, the rape of Jeanie, in itself, is not the actual cause of disgrace. Rather, as Sandy says, "the shame's that it could ever happen *in the house* of such a fine honourable man [emphasis added]" — a veritable desecration of Jim's sanctuary (Fruet 315). Most importantly, Sandy proves his allegiance to the figurative constitution of the winner by performing the literal assimilation of Jeanie into the secluding unit, pushing her into the room and slamming the door shut behind them. This image of Jeanie accepting to be made prisoner for the pleasure of Sandy and Jim remains the most potent emblem of Fruet's ironic look at life in the prairies.

In contrast with these images of segregation, inward withdrawal and seclusion, the figures associated with the losing camp betoken frustrated aspirations regarding the external world. This is most evident in the case of Jimmie, whose only dream was to go abroad on active duty. His failed outward yearning is the sole issue that manages to reach the core of his persona beyond the façade of the strong, high-spirited son that he displays to humour his father. Only when mention is made by

a legion patron of his not going overseas does "his clownish mood switch to sober hostility" (Fruet 265). For a short moment, Jimmie tries to maintain the image of the heroic son, even emulating his father's segregationist attitude, telling Hattie and Bernie to "get the hell out of here" (Fruet 268). But, when his confrontation with the bully shatters his guise, he starts speaking in his own words and, thence, turns his banishing command against himself. "Let's get the hell out of here!" he says to put an end to the humiliating situation (Fruet 269). As much as his father wants to hide inside, Jimmie wants to escape outside of this milieu bound by honour.

But his escape from the premises of his discomfiture only magnifies his debasement in the next segment, for he remains entrapped in the role imposed by the father. As pointed out above, Jimmie tries to re-enact the previous scene at home, this time putting himself in the aggressor's role. Again, Jimmie attempts to mirror Jim's behaviour by expelling someone from his realm. But by victimising his father's friend Sandy, whom he orders, "Go-waan, take your beer with you," Jimmie again betrays his inability to satisfy Jim's expectations, and as a result, once again, imposes banishment upon himself. He climbs upstairs, whimpering "soooorry" as he leaves the stage permanently (Fruet 271-2).

Jimmie's running away from Jim's home epitomizes the failure of the character, and operates as a metaphor for his annihilation. As Price argues, in ironic metastatic-positive drama, "for the antagonists, suicide or banishment often ends

the struggle" (Price 192). Significantly, the escapist solution that Jimmie opts for conveys the connotation of ignominious retreat associated with both suicide and banishment. Jimmie's behaviour, perhaps more than that of any other character, bares the two complementary notions that the antagonists attach to the exterior world. On the one hand, it evokes an imaginary universe filled with adventures for the brave. On the other hand, it functions as a nondescript cloak engulfing the escapist coward, whose inability to live in the rule-ridden house of the father propels him outwards without, however, affording the fulfilment of his wish for true freedom.

The embitterment ensuing from Jimmie's inability to go to the front is augmented by the fact that he perceives his "domestic" job in the army-supply stores as a potential object of ridicule (Fruet 266-7). This rather unmanly position, which makes of him "the only guy who knows where the hell anything is in this place" (Fruet 266), draws a clear parallel between him and his mother, who, as the stereotypical woman of the home, is the only person to know where anything is in the household.²⁵ There is much affinity between mother and son. Like Jimmie, Mary is compelled to reproduce the segregationist behaviour of her husband, when she must expel Sarah from her house in the penultimate scene, following the latter's insulting words against the Dougals. But, as is the case for her son, this conduct visibly clashes with her own desire. Immediately after having rejected her friend, "covering her face, [Mary] crosses quickly to the sofa where she sobs quietly [...] The old woman

blows her nose a few times and collects her composure" (Fruet 322-3).

Also like her son, Mary once dreamed of experiencing the outside world. As a young woman, she had fantasized about a first night of love where "there really will be fine music like in the pictures. And everything will be wonderful" (Fruet 311). Instead, her first sexual contact took the form of a rape, as Jim forced himself upon her on her small bed in the house where she worked as a maid. For her daughter she had envisioned a flamboyant wedding reception in a grand hotel. But her husband has decreed otherwise, and she is forbidden from inviting a single guest outside of his closed circle of friends (Fruet 319).

The only modest exposure she savours is "all the clapping and cheers" at a Legion reception organized to award Jim a commemorative plaque. However, this rare moment of societal enjoyment is almost denied her by Jim, as his own fear of exposure leads him to refuse to prepare an acceptance speech (Fruet 282, 293). Ever since their youth, it seems, Jim has rebuffed all of Mary's attempts to discover life outside of his exiguous perimeter. Like Jimmie, Mary is condemned to insure the tidiness of the inside while dreaming of escaping to the outside, the only difference being that Mary does it with more courage.

Initially, Billy's connection to the outside seems less distinct than that of Jimmie and Mary, since all his attention is oriented towards Dollie rather than towards the world out

there. But, in fact, Billy is perhaps more closely linked to the exterior than the other characters, for he is the only *outsider* in this prairie drama, speaking "in a broken harsh Newfoundland accent" (Fruet 248). In the first scene, Billy asserts this connection by displaying or referring to tokens of the outside world, such as the brooches he promises Jeanie and the pornographic pictures he shows Jim (Fruet 254, 257). His immediate interest in the externally attractive Dollie, who "is well developed physically and covered in an array of cheap jewelry," corroborates an attachment to the signs of outward radiance analogous to that of Mary (Fruet 257).

The scenic arrangement of Billy's pivotal approach toward Dollie also provides a figurative enactment of this outward inclination, as he is seen traversing the set to meet her off-stage right, completely opposite Jim's seclusive sanctuary, stage left (Fruet 276-7). But Billy's off-stage encounter with Dolly ends in fiasco and, through the first act, he is compelled to remain within Jim's circle – the house and the Legion Club – though he would much rather go out to meet the girls (Fruet 262). This failure to fulfil his outward attraction aligns him with Jimmie and Mary, and, as is the case for Jimmie, the last image that Billy leaves behind, after his flight, is not that of a hero conquering the world and its women, but that of a recreant vanishing into the indifference of a prairie landscape.

Like the other antagonists, Sarah is futilely drawn outside of Jim's and Sandy's vicinity. In her case, the escapist alternative is offered by memories of her late husband. "If Harry

were still alive he'd not be down there [in the cellar]," she claims. "He was a gentleman." (Fruet 294). But Sarah's nostalgic escape is illusory, for her husband, hardly a gentleman, used to drink and beat her up (Fruet 296). Sarah, like Jimmie and Billy, does not remain trapped inside Jim's quarters. But, like the young men, as well as Hattie and Bernie, her movement towards the exterior is clearly associated with failure. She is seen twice leaving the Dougal house alone, engulfed by the cold night air: once because Sandy is too drunk to drive her home; another time, as she is expelled by Mary, whose forced seclusion is as dreadful as the former's eviction (Fruet 295, 322).

Therefore, the overall image created by the losers is one of dissatisfaction with a narrow, cloistering environment which draws them outwards without affording a positive external substitute. The two apex figures, Jeanie and Dollie, exhibit traits that link them initially to the losers, and ultimately to the winning side. In the first half of the play, Dollie comes across as the embodiment of outwardness. She wears jewellery and excessive make-up, and when she is asked where she will spend the evening she answers, "Could be anywhere..." (Fruet 257, 262). Jeanie, although much more timid and inward than her companion, attempts to copy Dollie. She is delighted at the prospect of having jewellery to compete with her friend, sneaks out of the house to follow Dollie on her nightly spree, and partakes as best she can in the other's teasing act (Fruet 254, 262, 273-7). The rape of Jeanie consummates the mimicry as she is equated to her friend, at least in Billy's perverted mind.

Following the rape, a significant change transpires as it is now Dollie who starts resembling Jeanie. In Act Two, scene one, Dollie enters complaining, for the first time, about her father's restrictive house rules: "God what a time I had getting out tonight! You'd think I was some little kid! [...] My father says if I don't get a job soon, he's kicking me out – yuk yuk!" (Fruet 285-6). Although, in this scene, Dollie still behaves in a far more vigorous way than Jeanie, her relationship with her father clearly echoes and even foreshadows Jeanie's. The metamorphosis is completed in Act Three, scene four, when "Dollie wearing some of her mother's clothes enters" Jim's house for the wedding reception (Fruet 325). Having replaced her flashy clothes and jewellery with ostensibly old-fashion garments, Dollie not only mirrors Jeanie, who is wearing a second-hand wedding dress, but also displays her allegiance to the traditional role of women. The transformation of the imagery associated with Dollie corresponds to the diphasic structure of the play, personifying initially the outward attraction associated with Billy's desire, but ultimately assuming the inward persona of the compliant girl.

A similar transformation, from outbound temptation to inbound resignation, also befalls Jeanie. But in her case, the change occurs at a precise moment. In Act Three, scene one, after Jim has decreed her eviction, Jeanie utters her only wish of the play; a wish which is, in fact, purely negative (or ironic): "I don't ever want to go away" she tells her mother as she bursts into sobs (Fruet 307). After this moment, which marks

the turning point of the ironic metastatic-positive drama, Jeanie resumes her nonchalant behaviour, but now she embraces the convictions of the winners. When she is presented with her soiled white wedding gown, she reacts according to expectations: "Oh, it's beautiful. See mom?" (Fruet 324). And, unlike her mother, she is allowed to invite a friend, Dollie, to the ceremony, for they have both been annexed to Jim's sanctuary.

As we see, there is a manifest opposition between the seclusive and constrictive imagery attached to the protagonists, and the figurative allusions to outward aspirations deployed by the antagonists. The dialectic of imagery thus augments the connotative meaning of a dialectic of action that displays, in almost purely vectorial terms, conflicts between motions seeking to entrap and motions aimed at breaking out. After having deciphered this symbolical structure in Wedding in White, it is now possible to abstract an implicational dialectic that will epitomize in the form of conceptual doublets the tensions at the core of the drama. As Price puts it, "this next task involves searching out the most appropriate antinomies to describe the play's dominant and recessive poles, its wishful and fearful motives" (Price 95).

Implicational Dialectic:

Our primary objective at this stage of analysis is thus to encapsulate in distinctive dichotomic terms the drama's action and counteraction. As indicated in previous sections, this procedure will allow us to identify recurrent patterns in the

corpus of film-mediated drama by spotlighting the basic dialectical structures of the various texts analyzed. To this end, rather than extending an exhaustive inventory of quasi-universal antinomies that would more than likely reappear in countless plays, I will limit the list of implicational dichotomies to those specific doublets whose crucial significance in the drama is clearly evidenced by the previous analysis.

From the outset, it is apparent that such broad dichotomies as *Male/Female*, *Age/Youth*, *Courage/Cowardice* and *Lust/Love* are not particularly helpful in the context of this study, for they embrace too wide a range of dramatic texts. Furthermore, they do not strictly apply in the case of Wedding in White, for characters from both sides share some of these traits. For instance, there are males on both ends of the dialectic, and the notion of age does not accurately discriminate between winners and losers. However, there are some implicational antinomies that do offer accurate and distinctive abstractions of the dialectic of action and imagery diagnosed in the inquiry conducted previously.

I would argue that the most momentous among these dichotomies is the couple *Afferent-withdrawal/Efferent-escape*. This doublet sharply summarizes the central conflict between the inward pull performed by the protagonists and the outward resistance of the antagonists. Indeed, the seclusive actions and imagery that characterize Jim, Sandy and their acolytes find an eloquent abstraction in the term "afferent-withdrawal," for it connotes both the inward movement and the segregationist²⁶ attitude that has been illustrated earlier. On the other hand,

the expression "efferent-escape," by signifying both a discharging drive and an escapist tendency, appropriately qualifies Jimmy's, Mary's and the other antagonists' outward desire that never finds fulfilment. As demonstrated above, the apex figures temporarily oscillate between these two poles, but they eventually surrender to the afferent force that traps them inside.

The compound *Afferent-withdrawal/Efferent-escape* is preferred, here, to the broader semantic doublet Imprisonment/Freedom for many reasons. First, the former antinomy expresses far more precisely than the latter the clashing forces of centripetal recoil and external attraction at work in Wedding in White. Second, and ensuing from this initial point, the *Afferent-withdrawal/Efferent-escape* couple, being more focused in its description of the dialectic than Imprisonment/Freedom, is less likely to reappear in a myriad of works. This makes its potential recurrence in the corpus all the more meaningful. Finally, it could be argued that the personages in Fruet's play all remain somewhat imprisoned and never truly achieve freedom; the difference between the protagonists and antagonists stems from the fact that, while the former value and support this state of imprisonment, the latter wish, but fail, to replace it with a positive external substitute. Again, *Afferent-withdrawal/Efferent-escape* appears as the more appropriate antinomy, for rather than alluding to Freedom, a *fait accompli* that is never actually accomplished, it refers to an escapist motive that does not translate into an achieved goal.

Several other dialectical pairings could be listed to

abridge the conflict of Wedding in White, such as *Stubbornness/Flexibility*, *Intolerance/Tolerance*, *Narrow-mindedness/Open-mindedness*, *Dominance/Submission*, *Firmness/Flaccidity*, *Self-assertion/Self-effacement* and *Authority/Servility*, all of which abbreviate faithfully enough the qualitative features of the drama's bipolarity. For instance, the authority/servility doublet condenses clearly the two poles represented by Jim and Mary, the former constantly imposing his views on the latter, who silently obeys. Similarly, the stubbornness/flexibility dichotomy pointedly describes Jim's and Mary's contrasting responses to Jeanie's pregnancy. But while these general descriptors are potentially indicative of Fruet's perspective on the predicament of his prairie characters,²⁷ they do not translate any particularly consequential aspects of the text, for they apply cogently only to some of the personages. Flexibility, for example, pertains but marginally to Jimmie, who displays this quality only when he agrees to go to the Legion with his father. These doublets, therefore, *reflect* certain facets of the strife, but do not shed much light on the dynamics at work in the play. There are two other qualitative couples, however, that extend valuable insight into the motivational opposition at the core of Wedding in White.

One of them is the binary *Contentment/Discontent*, which captures the essence of the conflicting temperamental inclinations emblematic of each side of the strife. Indeed, while Sandy and Jim are easily contented with their circumscribed existences, all the antagonists hanker for external gratifications that

they cannot achieve. This dichotomy is important to note, for the contentment that distinguishes the protagonists is instrumental in their eventual assimilation of the apex figures. The apex figures, as Price informs us, usually share "qualities that render [them] vulnerable to the functional unit to which [they] finally move [...]" (Price 264). The character traits shared by Jeanie and Dollie being nonchalance, noninvolvement, noncommitment, etc., the two girls are naturally won over by the faction that offers them facile contentment, rather than by the clan perpetually afflicted by the inaccessibility of their ideal "out there". Not surprisingly, following the resolution adopted by Jim and Sandy concerning the wedding, Jeanie's "whole attitude is once again relaxed and lazy" (Fruet 318). As stated before, the panic that overwhelms her immediately prior to the arrangement is converted into heedless contentment as soon as the marriage is settled. Even if this contentment rhymes with confinement, it is still more closely aligned with the trifling disposition of the apex figures than is the frustrated efferent yearning of the discontented antagonists.

The choice of the terms "contentment" and "discontent" for this focal dichotomy could probably be challenged on semantic grounds. The pairing pleasure/displeasure, for instance, might be considered as a more appropriate description of the characters' respective penchants. But regardless of the specific words selected, the opposition implied by this doublet remains a key point of reference in our understanding of the drama, for it affords a condensed rationale for the dialectical shift in terms

of a central affinity between the winners and the apex figures, whom they appropriate in the end.

The other salient doublet is *Defence of honour/Rejection of honour*, which distinguishes emphatically between the attitude of the protagonists and that of the antagonists in terms of their conception of social propriety and acceptable rules of conduct. But, as the preceding analysis evinces, the conventionally positive overtone associated with the word "honour" acquires, here, negative connotations, conveying a sense of repression aimed at protecting the self against exposure. Rather, it is the notion of rejection of honour that stands for life-affirming values. Mary phrases this opposition in evocative terms when she states, "I no understand [sic], I guess. A wee baby ... honour....," abdicating before Jim's intransigence (Fruet 312).

Yet, this same rejection of honour also leads to the rape of Jeanie by Billy. As such, this doublet corroborates Fruet's highly ironic attitude towards his material. On the one hand, it implies that, while Jim's and Sandy's set of principles offers them an effective means of maintaining control over their circumstances, their actions are overdetermined by rigid codes of behaviour that preclude more constructive solutions, and lead them to turn in on themselves rather than envisioning novel alternatives. On the other hand, the rejection of honour peculiar to the antagonists conveys a greater flexibility toward heterodox behaviours, but also connotes the lack of a body of restrictive convictions necessary to dictate a workable substitute for the misguided settlements contrived by the protagon-

ists. This dichotomy effectively translates the social framework that regulates the outcome of the drama.

Therefore, the three main implicational dichotomies singled out here, provide us with the three principal axes that define the specific dialectical composition of Wedding in White. First, the opposite motivating wishes of each side, that is, the unfulfilled desire of the antagonists to realize a positive *efferent-escape* in reaction to the *afferent-withdrawal* successfully managed by the protagonists. Second, the key characteriological attitude of *contentment* that ultimately aligns the protagonists with the apex figures against the *discontented* antagonists. Finally, the social edifice of *honour* defended by the protagonists, which silences the *rejection of honour* of the antagonists, but which also suffers the ironic criticism of the author. As pointed out before, several other doublets could be added. But these are the ones that appear as most representative of Fruet's composition.

Conclusion:

The foregoing analysis has allowed us to funnel the dramaturgical data deployed in Wedding in White into increasingly focused planes of dialectical opposition. From the general structure of action, which determined the broad categories of protagonist, antagonist and apex figure, we moved on to establish a dialectic of imagery ascribing symbolical meaning to the conflicting actions performed by each group, and finally we

isolated epitomic doublets that highlight certain fundamental implications of the drama.

Through this procedure, it has been demonstrated that the actions of the main protagonist, Jim — from his warm welcome of Jimmie *into* his house to his marrying Jeanie to Sandy, which *draws in* the peripheral apex figure — all symbolize his desire to preserve watertight quarters that seclusively contain all that he values and shut out all that he fears and despises. Conversely, the aspirations of the antagonists — from Billy's effort to seduce Dollie to Mary's planning of her daughter's wedding ceremony in a grandiose hotel and Jimmie's longing to be shipped abroad — all translate their attraction toward the external world, but their actions never lead to the fulfilment of their wish. As for the neutral characters, at the top of the triangular configuration, their ambivalent desire leads them first outwards, but soon pulls them back into the cloistered unit of the protagonists.

It has also been shown that, in the concise terms of the implicational dialectic, the conflict of Wedding in White can be described on the basis of three abstract pairings, namely, the fundamental objective that motivates the clashing actions — Afferent-withdrawal/Efferent-escape — the conflicting outlook of the characters facing their circumstances — Contentment/Discontent — and the societal ideology that dictates the end of the drama — Defence of honour/Rejection of honour. The identification of these quintessential aspects of Fruet's play will allow us to discern a central recurrence in the

corpus, as it will be shown that the Afferent-withdrawal/-Efferent-escape antinomy provides a germane qualitative description to epitomize the bipolarities of all the dramas analyzed. Moreover, although the afferent-withdrawal option might involve utterly negative consequences, the efferent-escape alternative appears, in all these plays, as an impossibility for the focal characters. Whether they are like timid Jeanie from Wedding in White or, as we shall observe in the next chapter, like the bold Hélène of Dubé's Les Beaux Dimanches, these personages always yield to the afferent force.

NOTES

1. William Fruet, Wedding in White, in Modern Canadian Drama, ed. Richard Plant (Markham [Ont.]: Penguin Books, 1984) 246-332. Subsequent references to this work in this chapter will appear within parentheses in the text, except when additional comments require notes.
2. Thomas Price, Dramatic Structure and Meaning in Theatrical Productions (San Francisco: Edwin Mellen Press, 1992) 192. Subsequent references to this work in this chapter will appear within parentheses in the text.
3. Peter Crossley, Winnipeg Free Press, 10 May 1973; rpt. in L.W. Conolly ed., Canadian Drama and the Critics (Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1987) 85.
4. Piers Handling, "Bill Fruet: 2 or 3 things...", Cinema Canada 40 (Sept. 1977): 45.
5. The satisfaction that Jim and Sandy draw from the former's opportunistic solution is manifested in the festive mood that concludes the scene in which the decision is made (Fruet 316-7).
6. See, for instance, Fruet 322-3, in which Jeanie's indifference is contrasted to Sarah's sincere attachment to Sandy.
7. Stage direction: "Her whole attitude is once again relaxed and lazy" (Fruet 318).
8. Dollie explains that her role is not to desire but to respond to men's desire. She tells Jeanie that, once you have learned "that all guys want that [,] you just gotta make up your mind who you're givin and who you're not" (Fruet 286).
9. This substantiates Price's observation that "when, as often happens, the apex unit contains several contested figures, the latter all eventually shift to the dominant column" (Price 185).
10. Jimmie explains the authorities' refusal to send him abroad in these terms: "You know what that prick of a sarge tells me? "Dougal, you're the only guy who knows where the hell anything is in this place ..." Sure! [...] That's what I get for doing my

job so well..." (Fruet 266). Jimmie later explains his failure at the Legion as follows: "You wanna know why I didn't kick the crap out of that guy dad? Ca...Cause that's all it would mean ... that's all! Woulda been the end of it! I come home on leave...to see you an mom...an they throw me in the jug. That what you want? Huh?!" (Fruet 272).

¹¹. Fruet states clearly, in a stage direction, Mary's antagonistic position following this argument: "Mary rises, drained of any further fight. It's probably the first time the old woman has stood up to Jim in all the years of their marriage, and she has lost" (Fruet 312).

¹². This is in keeping with Price's notion that "a play's dynamic pattern can only be ascertained by comparing the *initial* and *final* commitments of each character relative to the conflict's bi-polarity [Price's emphasis]," any temporary movement to the opposite side being cancelled by a subsequent return to the starting point (Price 49).

¹³. These characters appear in Act I, sc. iii and Act III, sc. iv.

¹⁴. James Leach, "Second Images: Reflections on the Canadian Cinema(s) in the Seventies," Take Two, ed. Seth Feldman (Toronto: Irwin Publisher, 1984) 109.

¹⁵. On Jim's strictness regarding Jeanie's comings and goings see Fruet 262, 285, 303. For references to the dog see Fruet 260-1.

¹⁶. Fruet, 312-317. See also Jim's own version of the events that led to the wedding: "...one day my Jeanie comes to me and she says 'Dad, I Love Sandy' [...] 'Now Sandy,' I says, 'it's true you're a few years older than my lass, but! I know the man that you are too. I know you'll treat my Jeanie right ... an them's the things that's important to me!'" (p.327-8).

¹⁷. On Jim's shameful experience at the Legion see stage direction page 269: "Jim is unable to hide his shame and disappointment as he just looks to Jimmie." On alcoholic families see Sharon Wegscheider, Another Chance: Hope & Health for the Alcoholic Family (Palo Alto: Science and Behaviour Books, 1981) 104-15.

¹⁸. Sharon Wegscheider uses the word "Hero". Other psychologists, like Stanley D. Wilson, use the term "Impostor" to label the same paradigm. See Wilson, Rising Above Shame: Healing Family

Wounds to Self Esteem (Rockville: Launch Press, 1991) 138-40.

¹⁹. Wilson, 138-9.

²⁰. Unlike other contemporary plays such as Walker's Sacktown Rag (1972) and French's Of the Fields, Lately (1973), in which events of the past are enacted or narrated to illuminate the source of the characters' shame, Wedding in White makes very few significant references to past family experiences.

²¹. Wilson, 7-8. See also Michael Lewis, who writes, in Shame: The Exposed Self (New York: The Free Press/Macmillan, 1992), that "shame represents a global attack on the self," and that "the phenomenological experience of the person having shame is that of a wish to hide, disappear, or die" (p.75).

²². It could be argued that Jimmie's very name attests to Jim's negation of an independent existence for his son, outside of his role as a mask of strength and pride for his father to wear.

²³. Northrop Frye, "Conclusion to a Literary History of Canada," in The Bush Garden: Essays on the Canadian Imagination (Toronto: Anansi, 1971) 225.

²⁴. See, for instance, Northrop Frye, Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays (New Jersey: Princeton UP, 1957) 182-3.

²⁵. For a parallel with Mary's function in the household see Fruet, 281. "Jim: Tip! Where the devil are my medals?? [...] Mary: They're in where they should be! With your cuff links in the top drawer!"

²⁶. According to Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary the verb "segregate" is synonymous with "withdraw."

²⁷. One of the potential functions of the implicational dialectic is to provide a key to discern the author's perspective on his/her material: "Our descriptive reduction of the text's argument therefore constitutes an abstraction of the authorial self and 'anti-self,' the wished-for and dreaded attributes, as these interior adversaries have become reified in the fantasy's action and counteraction" (Price 62).

CHAPTER IV. LES BEAUX DIMANCHES¹

Synopsis:

Location and Time: A sumptuous house in a suburb of Montréal, on a beautiful summery Sunday, in the mid-1960s.

Act I: On the morning following an intemperate party, Hélène Primeau argues with her husband, Victor, about the barrenness of their socialite lifestyle. During the argument, their daughter, Dominique, returns home from a night out with her boyfriend, Étienne. Her presence aggravates the feud between the parents, who blame each other for her unruly behaviour without realizing that she has problems of her own: she is pregnant and, under Étienne's insistence, has agreed to have an abortion. The quarrel ceases when, to Victor's delight and Hélène's dismay, the guests from the previous soirée — Evelyn and her husband, Paul; Omer, Angéline and their son, Rodolphe; Olivier and Muriel — show up to launch another drinking spree. From the outset, it appears that some guests share Hélène's resistance to the idea of another fete. But those who wish to party, mainly Paul, Angéline and Muriel, impose their will on the others.

Act II, scene i: In the afternoon, a lively Victor entertains his petty bourgeois friends, while Hélène partakes begrudgingly in the idle conversations of the group. *Scene ii:* By seven at night, nothing has happened except that the guests have become much drunker, and are now flirting with each other's spouses. Fed up with the boozing and philandering, Hélène leaves Victor's house. But her departure is overshadowed by Angéline,

who performs a strip-tease to Victor's great pleasure.

Act III: By ten o'clock, Victor's temper has changed drastically, for Hélène has not reappeared and he fears that she might be with another man. In their boisterous mood, Muriel, Paul and Angéline go on a search party in the neighbourhood, with the ostensible purpose of finding Hélène. Victor, upset and worried, joins them, but soon returns empty-handed. Upon Hélène's belated arrival home, he brutally questions her on her whereabouts. She admits that she went to see her lover and came back only because she could not find him. Devastated by this confession, Victor promises to redeem their marriage. But Hélène ignores him, and retreats to her bedroom. After having vainly sought comfort with Dominique, Victor withdraws pitifully to the basement.

Preliminaries to the Analysis:

From this overview of Les Beaux Dimanches, we can detect, immediately, the principal conflict of the work, namely, the opposition between the self-made man, Victor, and his weary wife, Hélène, which manifests itself in the squabbles that both open and close Dubé's text. But the fact that through most of the play nothing much happens, other than the flirting and drinking of Victor and his friends, might give the impression that this is a rather non-dramatic piece, deprived of significant dialectical movements, and merely drawing a static picture of a given milieu. Theatre scholar Jean Cléo Godin, for one, has argued that the loosely-knit succession of tableaux

depicting the trivial activities of these blasé professionals amounts to little more than "une fresque sans grande cohérence."² However, if we pay close attention to the dramatic progression of the central male figure, even as abridged in this synopsis, we can recognize a distinct dialectical shift that traverses the apparently static construction of the work. Indeed, Victor's situation in the bipolar organization of Les Beaux Dimanches changes markedly between the two disputes that frame the drama. From the cheerful and carefree mood that he exhibits before his friends in the first two acts, Victor becomes increasingly distressed and agitated in Act Three until, in the end, he collapses before his wife, begging her to stay with him. Therefore, from a state of gratification, Victor moves gradually towards a condition of discomfiture.

Meanwhile, the other characters all remain anchored in their initial position. Although Hélène deserting Victor's house in Act Two is one of the rare meaningful events that occur during the party, it is of no avail for Hélène herself, since, after having wandered in her aseptic neighbourhood for hours, she finally returns home in the penultimate scene to resume her quarrelsome relationship with her husband. Hélène thus lingers in the same dejected unit from beginning to end. Similarly, as we shall see later, Dominique, Olivier, Evelyn and Omer, whose dissatisfaction with their existences parallels Hélène's, also enter the stage in Act One in the same state of malaise as they leave it in Act Three. On the other hand, the rowdy Paul, Muriel and Angéline, whose mirth persists in spite of Victor's fading

spirits, stay in their frolicsome camp throughout the play.

Only Victor passes from one condition to the other. Thus, Les Beaux Dimanches comprises a single movement from the dominant to the recessive side, hence adopting the apostatic-negative configuration.³ To elucidate this structure, we shall approach the dialectic of action by comparing the two conjugal wrangles that delimit Victor's transformation in the drama, for it is between these two extremes that the dynamic of the text is articulated.⁴

Dialectic of Action:

The introductory dispute between Hélène and Victor begins as the former summons the latter to help her tidy up the mess from the previous party. But Victor, busy attempting to cure his hangover with a beer, responds to her request in a typically chauvinistic manner: "c'est pas du travail d'homme" (Dubé 23). The ensuing polemic sets forth the two primary poles of the dialectic, to wit, Hélène's desire to escape the hollow environment in which she feels trapped, and Victor's wish to savour sensual gratification in the sheltered universe that he has created for himself.

At the outset, Victor's sole interest consists in rollicking with his friends during the weekend. "J'aime m'amuser, c'est normal!" he tells his wife, "[...] je suis comme tout le monde, comme Olivier, comme Omer" (Dubé 29). Later in the play, Victor summarizes his hedonistic philosophy in even more transparent terms as he gleefully declares, "quand j'ai de bons

amis autour de moi, que mon bar est bien garni, je suis satisfait, j'en demande pas plus" (Dubé 73). For Hélène, however, her husband's constant flirting and drinking with his buddies reflect the state of moral desolation prevalent among the members of her class and generation. She stigmatizes him and his playmates as

des hommes et des femmes qui peuvent pas supporter leur solitude, qui sont incapables de regarder leur vie en face [...] qui sont pas faits pour vivre ensemble mais qui sont pas assez courageux pour se l'avouer, pour se séparer. Leur seule évasion possible: l'alcool, leurs seuls plaisirs: la danse, les potins, les farces grossières, leurs seuls désirs: les maris ou les femmes des autres entre deux portes, sans jamais se rendre jusqu'au bout [...] (Dubé 29-30).

The crux of the introductory tiff resides in Victor's inability to grasp the source of Hélène's resentment. As far as he is concerned, the lavish lifestyle that they enjoy in their comfortable house should suffice to secure their happiness. "Regarde autour de toi, tout ce que je t'ai donné." he urges Hélène, "[...] qu'est-ce qu'il te faut de plus?" (Dubé 30-1). But for her, their suburban castle has become "un cimetière bien entretenu." It is a place "tellement tranquille que ça devient mortel" (Dubé 42). To Hélène's nostalgic complaint that "le temps passe, je vieillis, les belles années s'en vont, j'enlaidis," Victor automatically retorts, "as-tu pris tes tranquillisants, ce matin?" hence confessing his utter misreading of his wife's lament (Dubé 42).

To be fair to Victor, though, it must also be stressed that, while Hélène ostensibly repudiates her husband's set of

values, she is incapable of conceiving a viable alternative. When Victor queries "qu'est-ce que tu veux d'abord!" she can only reply, "si je le savais! Si seulement je le savais!" (Dubé 46). Nevertheless, this inability to formulate a pragmatic solution to an aggravating situation does not render Hélène a disengaged apex figure deprived of any overriding wish. An extract from a conversation she has in Act One with Paul, who owns a plane, demonstrates that, while Hélène is uncertain of her destination, she still ardently wishes to escape Victor's house:

Paul! Si tu voulais, si tu voulais être gentil, cet après-midi, tu m'emmènerais avec toi [...] pour me faire plaisir à moi, pour que pendant cinq ou six heures, je cesse d'agoniser dans ma maison. On pourrait aller se poser quelque part, sur un lac du nord, où on serait seul, où l'air serait pur [...] Ca m'est égal. Le pays, la ville, le lac, pourvu que ce soit ailleurs (Dubé 57, 58).

Unfortunately, Paul is little more responsive to her needs than Victor. "Un autre dimanche," he answers evasively, "à la prochaine occasion favorable, je t'emmènerai faire quelques heures de vol," leaving Hélène to her own devices (Dubé 60). Her departure, later in the play, asserts her desire to alter her predicament. But her return, at the end, confirms her status as an immobile antagonist, condemned to confinement in Victor's house, while yearning for an "ailleurs" that she cannot reach or even define.⁵

The starting point of the drama thus pits the husband, satisfied with his material comfort and circle of friends, against his wife, who suffocates in this environment and longs

to escape, without knowing where to go.⁶ By the end of the drama, Victor and H el ene's relationship has not improved. However, Victor has drastically changed his disposition toward H el ene's unfulfilled desire to flee. Whereas, in the first scene, Victor had impatiently enjoined H el ene to leave him — "Disparais [...] moi je peux plus te voir" — her actual disappearance, in the middle of the celebration, disturbs him deeply (Dub e 48). Initially down-playing her radical action, blaming it on her menstrual cycle (Dub e 139), he soon begins to worry, for he surmises that she has eloped with Manuel Lacroix, a young and attractive architect (Dub e 150). H el ene's coquetry among friends never annoyed Victor. But her trespassing the boundaries of his domain breaches the rules of the socialite's game. Immediately before departing, H el ene inveighed against this double standard:

C'est pour  a que je te d eteste. Pour la fausse libert e que tu me donnes. Que je te trompe ou que je fasse semblant de te tromper,  a t'es  gal pourvu que ce soit dans ta maison [...] J'aurais une aventure ailleurs, j'aimerais de tout mon coeur ailleurs, tu me le pardonnerais pas, tu pourrais pas le supporter, tu me tuerais plut t (Dub e 138).

And to be sure, upon H el ene's return Victor furiously demands an explanation for her behaviour: "Tu vas me dire ce que t'es all e faire dehors [...] tu vas me le dire ou bien je r eponds plus de moi" (Dub e 170). As H el ene tells him that she went to meet Lacroix, with the firm intention of giving herself to him, Victor finally comprehends the extent of his failure as a husband. Although H el ene's absconding does not accomplish

anything for herself, since the architect was not even home to receive her, it nonetheless signals to Victor that his wife is not one of his possessions, and that she might, one day, leave him for good.⁷

Perceiving in Hélène's return a shade of hope that their relationship might still be salvageable, he implores her to stay with him and give him another chance. "Je voudrais réparer, donne-moi la chance de te demander pardon." he begs her, "[...] Tu t'en iras pas, tu me laisseras pas? [...] Demain, on va recommencer tout en neuf?" — "Comme d'habitude, Victor, comme d'habitude ..." acquiesces Hélène (Dubé 177-8). But, while Hélène has exhausted her drive to resist Victor's ascendancy, she has also lost all concern for her husband. "Ca m'est égal," says the fatigued woman before going to bed. "Souffre tant que tu voudras, meurs en si tu veux, tu m'attendriras pas" (Dubé 178).

It is doubtlessly tempting to construe Hélène's indifference towards Victor, in her last appearance on stage, as "un début de libération," as Paulette Collet phrases it.⁸ Any conjecture as to what Hélène will decide to do the morning after this dreadful Sunday, however, is foreign to the action of the play. All that the drama allows its reader to ascertain is that Hélène has declared, early in the piece, "aujourd'hui, je suis décidée, je vais le laisser pour toujours," but that, in the end, she fails entirely to materialize her project (Dubé 55). Her actions might point towards an *extra-diegetic* victory, yet, within the limits of the drama, Hélène remains a loser.

Along with his recognition of the precariousness of his marriage, Victor also discovers, in the final scene of the play, that Dominique, his teenage daughter, has no faith in him. Abandoned by his friends and ignored by his wife, Victor seeks to establish contact with his child.⁹ He beseeches her to stay with him and converse for a while, in vain. She brushes him aside replying, as she goes off to her bedroom, "c'est pas de ta faute mais tu pourrais pas comprendre [...] c'est impossible de discuter avec toi" (Dubé 182). There is some truth in Edwin C. Hamblet's critique that it is "difficult to accept the treatment that Victor receives from his daughter, Dominique, because an adequate explanation of her contempt for him has not been given earlier in the drama."¹⁰ But, as Alonzo Le Blanc implies in a brief analysis of the play, her impatient dismissal of her father might stem less from her actual relationship with him than from the fact that "[elle] a bien d'autres soucis: elle doit se faire avorter le lendemain."¹¹ Whatever the motivation behind Dominique's behaviour, her rejection of Victor consummates his irreversible downfall. He is left alone, head in hands, crying "qu'est-ce qu'elles ont à me haïr?" as the play closes on what Dubé intended to be the tragic end of a man doomed to live with a mortal wound.¹²

In the course of the play, therefore, Victor comes to understand gradually that his family is composed of women whom he has always misjudged, and who have no affection for him. This new awareness, however, does not lead to a positive resolution, for Victor ends up like Héléne, dissatisfied with his life, yet

unable to effect any constructive change. At the very end of the play, Victor is seen retreating pitifully to his basement, having definitively relinquished his place among the frolicking *victors* of the dialectic, and joining Hélène in the camp of the losers (Dubé 182).

As we see, the central dialectic of action of Les Beaux Dimanches, like that of Wedding in White, displays a tension between a desire to maintain a sheltered coterie, and the urge to escape this seclusive environment. Also like in Fruet's play, the afferent force ultimately succeeds in containing the main characters. Unlike in Wedding in White, however, the central male figure of Les Beaux Dimanches loses control over his circumstances and becomes the victim of his own seclusive propensity. This primary dialectic of action is paralleled by ancillary conflicts taking the form of conjugal discords among the other couples present on stage. These secondary clashes specify the aspirations of each side without, however, reproducing the apostasy of the principal male figure.

Victor's group of friends — Evelyn, Paul, Angéline, Omer, Muriel and Olivier — is divided equally between winners and losers, one member of each couple in each clan. Paul, Muriel, and Angéline emerge as winners from the start. They are true roisterers, initiating the party, constantly seeking new forms of entertainment, and electing to continue the celebration elsewhere when the mood at Victor's has become too gloomy following Hélène's disappearance. Olivier, Evelyn and Omer, on the other hand, are a malcontent trio, contemplating the futility of exis-

tence, especially Olivier and Evelyn, and being ridiculed by the others for their lack of social skills, particularly in the case of Omer.

While the protagonists simply wish to congregate in a comfortable dwelling and regale, the antagonists struggle against this motion, but fail to impose a different system of values. At this level, we can detect a dose of irony in Dubé's writing, for while the losers display a most acute awareness of their condition of alienation, they remain pathetically passive and ineffectual. Contradistinctively, the winners, who are much more shallow and Philistine than their counterparts, do fulfil their prosaic desire to have fun and get drunk together.

Paul, the first guest to arrive after the preliminary dispute, is a fine talker without any substance. His promises to Hélène are as sham as his reservist's uniform, which he wears only on Sundays (Dubé 49). Yet, Paul usually gets what he wants. For instance, he manages to sweet-talk Hélène into joining the rest of the crowd, when the party first begins, although she had previously refused to take part in another of Victor's gatherings.¹³ This small victory deserves mention, for it epitomizes the movement that the play as a whole maps out, namely, the abnegating return of an outward character to the self-centred domain of the protagonists. Paul is also the only one, among the men, to be successful in extending his flirting beyond a mere verbal game. Indeed, while the other men are either resisted by the women they approach, like Olivier, or, like Omer, limit their philandering to benign conversation, Paul unreservedly

engages in heavy petting with Muriel, in the intimacy of Victor's basement.¹⁴

Muriel, as Alain Pontaut observes in his useful introduction to the play, comes across as "légère et vide, un peu méchante, vite comblée, ou étourdie, par le divertissement le plus frivole."¹⁵ In some rare instances, Muriel voices a vague understanding of her condition. "Je me suis servie d'Olivier pour me libérer, sans me douter que j'entrais dans une autre prison," she tells Paul before following him to the basement (Dubé 133). Unlike Hélène and the other antagonists, however, Muriel refuses to let gloomy thoughts erode her mirth. She chases away these fleeting moments of consciousness by relentlessly seeking forms of group amusement to occupy this beautiful Sunday. "Moi, je propose qu'on aille au moins s'asseoir dehors;" "on devrait descendre au sous-sol et jouer aux dards;" "J'ai une autre idée [...] on s'en va tous à Lachine. Charles nous a invités à passer le dimanche sur son bateau;" "[Victor,] tu vas nous projeter le film que tu as tourné ce jour-là," are all among the suggestions that Muriel submits to her friends for their collective recreation (Dubé 70, 74, 79-80, 103). Her concluding proposal to leave Victor's home and continue the party at Gérard's place, received positively by Paul and Angéline, consummates her desire for entertainment. Thus, she exits the stage in a state of bliss, joyfully declaring "debout tout le monde! C'est la guignolée qui arrive" (Dubé 156-7).

Angéline also enjoys fun and games, especially strip-poker

(Dubé 85). In her case though, the aim is not only to entertain herself, but also to provoke the others, particularly her ludicrous husband, Omer. From beginning to end, she continually puts down Omer and her obtuse twenty-two-year-old son, Rodolphe. Her line, "que c'est donc niais, ce que tu viens de dire" (Dubé 64), summarizes her opinion of everything her husband says, and chimes with the instruction she gives Rodolphe before entering Victor's house: "toi, Rodolphe, parle pas trop, fais pas de gaffes" (Dubé 61-2). Her provocative demeanour culminates at the end of Act Two when, as a means to prove that she is still young and attractive, and to humiliate Omer by the same token, she performs a strip-tease (Dubé 142-4). Although this action could prove most humiliating for the forty-four-year-old woman herself, it does not seem to affect her convivial disposition. In Act Three she still has the urge and the energy to party, and happily follows Paul and Muriel to Gérard's house to carry on the fete, claiming that they are going to look for Hélène (Dubé 157-8).

Alongside such a domineering figure as Angéline, her husband can only emerge as a loser. Throughout the play Omer opposes a futile resistance to his wife's will to carouse. In the first act, he ineffectually objects to visiting Victor: "Ca te gêne jamais de déranger les gens, toi? [...] Ils doivent dormir. Viens-t'en. On reviendra plus tard" (Dubé 62). Similarly, at the end, he is reluctant to go to Gérard's home, suggesting instead "on pourrait téléphoner, ça ferait pareil" (Dubé 156). Once more, however, his reticence is ignored, and he

is drawn by the protagonists away from Victor's residence. The most striking evidence of Omer's weakness occurs, of course, when Angéline threatens to undress before Victor and his guests. Down on his knees, almost crying, Omer implores his wife not to go through with her performance. But, as usual, Hélène pays no heed to her spouse, and, as the curtain falls at the end of Act Two, she "commence à donner son strip-tease" (Dubé 144). The strip-tease abases Omer to such a grovelling level that in Act Three he comes across as little more than Angéline's servant. "Ramasse mes choses, quand on aura fini la tournée, on rentrera à la maison . . .," she orders him before leaving Victor's house (Dubé 156-7). Obedient Omer is last seen carrying his wife's dress, on his way to another series of humiliating experiences at Gérard's party. His leaving the stage along with the protagonists, far from representing a change of allegiance on his part, actually confirms his status as a resigned loser, unable to resist the pressure of the dominant unit. Like Hélène's return to her husband's place at the end, Omer's following his wife from one soirée to the next ascertains his failure to propose a practical alternative to the attitude adopted by the governing group.

Like Omer, Olivier and Evelyn belong to the antagonistic unit. Like him, and Hélène for that matter, they resist the festive mood of the others. Olivier tells Muriel, "si vous comptez sur moi pour inventer des jeux, vous frappez à la mauvaise porte" (Dubé 71), and Evelyn entreats her husband not to abuse Hélène's and Victor's hospitality: "Faut rentrer, Paul

[...] pense à Hélène qui nous endure depuis hier" (Dubé 72). But Evelyn and Olivier are both more cynical than Omer, and more detached from the petty world that surrounds them, at least in appearance.

Olivier's first tirade of the play lays bare his morbid perspective on the decadent bourgeoisie to which he belongs. Glancing at the picture of his friends, assembled around their drinks once again, he exclaims:

Extraordinaire! Ce serait une photographie extraordinaire qui aurait aussi bien pu être prise hier soir, que l'an dernier, qu'aujourd'hui. Rien de changé, tout est à la même place, seulement les traits qui sont un peu plus fatigués, seulement les visages qui ont un peu vieilli, seulement les yeux qui ont un peu moins d'éclat. La mort continue de faire son travail. Lentement mais sûrement (Dubé 68).

The same sardonic tone suffuses most of Olivier's lines, including the long monologue alluded to in a previous chapter, in which he tries to unearth "la racine du mal" by tracing the history of French Canada (Dubé 97-101). Although this speech bears witness to Olivier's implacable lucidity and his tacit support of the separatist movement of the 1960s, it falls short of constituting a constructive step towards liberation. For Muriel, her husband's speeches are nothing more than drunken rambling. "Le prophète en lui vient de parler," says the contemptuous woman after his soliloquy, "dans deux ou trois whisky il nous dira des poèmes" (Dubé 101). Maximilien Laroche, in his analysis of the play, gives more credit to Olivier's reflections than Muriel does. But Laroche also recognizes that Olivier's articulation of the problem does not afford a solu-

tion:

[...] alors même qu'à partir des Beaux Dimanches, les personnages prennent une claire conscience du sens de leur destin, en voient parfaitement les causes et en mesurent les conséquences, comme le fait Olivier dans son fameux monologue qui est une sorte d'autocritique puisque cette longue diatribe ne se traduit par aucune action positive, ces personnages sont incapables de se libérer de leur destin.¹⁶

For all his philosophical rationalism and acumen, Olivier is by no means a distant "raisonneur," indifferent to the temptations of the flesh. In fact, he himself aligns his metaphysics with concupiscence. "Pour moi, l'éternité, c'est de désirer une belle femme," he tells Victor at the end of a cogitation on the improbable existence of God (Dubé 154). The "belle femme" he ardently desires is Evelyn, who, like him, projects an image of aloofness.

Early in the play, Evelyn formulates her cynical views on human ventures in these terms: "On vit dans un monde où nos actes nous mènent nulle part. [...] tout est sans conséquence" (Dubé 54). In keeping with her ostensible lack of interest in earthly matters, she resists Olivier's repeated advances for most of the play. At one point, Olivier invites her to stay in the garden with him while the others are retreating inside. "J'aimerais que tu sois près de moi," he confides, to which Evelyn answers with defeatism, "qu'est-ce que ça changerait?" (Dubé 136). However, beneath her cynical guise, Evelyn also hides throbbing emotions. Her very first line of the play, answering Victor's flattering comment to the effect that she is as fresh as a rose, portends from the start Evelyn's recourse to

a concealing public persona. "En apparence seulement," characterizes her entire performance up to the point when she reveals herself, in her final action, as a self-made loser (Dubé 49). Indeed, in her last presence on stage, as Olivier declares, "ce soir, la vie m'accorde le privilège d'être seul avec toi, le privilège merveilleux de pouvoir te tenir dans mes bras," Evelyn finally discloses, through action rather than words, her hopeless love for him (Dubé 163). Dubé indicates in his stage direction:

(Elle se jette subitement sur lui et l'embrasse sur la bouche, passionnément, désespérément. Puis elle se relève très vite et court vers la sortie de la chambre.)

Evelyn: Oublie-moi, Olivier, ce serait trop difficile, ce serait trop difficile! *(Et elle s'enfuit.)*
(Dubé 164).

By fleeing after this bold show of passion, Evelyn seals Olivier's fate as one of the losers, and exposes her cynicism as a mask hiding her deepest fear. Afraid of her own feelings, afraid of being unable to render Olivier happy, Evelyn prefers to deny herself the fulfilment of her desire rather than to assume the risks that are part and parcel of human relationships. Olivier's surmise that Evelyn will run back "probablement chez elle," aligns her, at least conjecturally, with Hélène, for both women, it seems, choose to return home after a momentary burst of courage that permitted them to reach out towards another man, another life (Dubé 165).

While Les Beaux Dimanches deals especially with the neurosis of the middle-aged middle-class, Dubé also draws an

insightful picture of youth — the babyboomers turning twenty in the 1960s. Admittedly, Rodolphe, Omer's backward son who vainly tries to seduce Dominique, is more a caricature of youth than a full-fledged character. Moreover, he vanishes unnoticeably at the entr'acte without having served any determinative purpose in the dialectic, other than to illustrate that some babyboomers can be as moronic as their parents (Dubé 112). However, Dominique and, to a lesser extent, her boyfriend, Étienne, who makes a few appearances at Victor's place in the course of the day, offer a much more complex and paradoxical incarnation of their generation.

In almost all of her appearances on stage, Dominique constructs in her discourse an image of the young as free and undaunted revolutionaries. "Pensez ce que vous voulez, moi je fais ma vie à ma façon," she informs her parents, early in the play, when she returns from her night out with Étienne (Dubé 36). She pronounces phrases coloured by Marxist tenets: "C'est ridicule aujourd'hui de croire en l'amour. C'est de l'opium pour les lâches [...]" (Dubé 32). And romantic notions of separatist martyrdom abound in her speech. "J'ai des camarades qui sont en prison," Dominique imparts to her father's guests before taking off again with Étienne:

[...] J'en ai d'autres qui sont libres, qui ont mon âge, qui ont compris qu'il ne fallait plus compter sur les générations pourries qui nous précèdent. Ils sont plusieurs, ils représentent une force. Ils sont prêts à se sacrifier pour ceux qui n'ont pas eu le courage de le faire avant eux (Dubé 91).

In their actions, however, Dominique and Étienne prove to

be far less heroic than her tirades would lead us to believe. As a matter of fact, the dilemma with which the two young lovers are engrossed has nothing to do with either the separation of Québec or the proletarian struggle. Rather, it is a domestic drama that pits a pregnant woman against a man who unflinchingly refuses to marry her and compromise his future for the sake of raising a child. Étienne cannot conceive of any solution to Dominique's pregnancy other than abortion. As he claims, "on ne se marie pas avant d'avoir vécu, avant de savoir ce que c'est vraiment [...] c'est la seule solution. La société est faite comme ça. Je vois pas d'autre échappée" (Dubé 32, 33). Besides, he finds Dominique's burgeoning maternal filiation with the unborn baby to be "de mauvais goût" (Dubé 111).

For Dominique, there could have been another, more idealistic, solution: "il y en a une autre; celle du sacrifice. C'est celle que j'aurais choisie si je pouvais encore y croire" (Dubé 176). But Dominique's intention to sacrifice herself for the child is out of the question from the beginning. When they first appear on stage, Étienne has already been putting such pressure on the teenage girl that she already contemplates suicide as an alternative: "si je mourais, ce serait aussi une solution" (Dubé 33). This morbid inclination towards self-sacrifice, which echoes her idealistic perception of the separatist cause, communicates the despair that afflicts her from the moment she walks on stage. At the end of the play, despair has given way to grim cynicism. In one of her last remarks to Étienne, after having agreed to go along with the abortion, Dominique assesses

her relationship with the young man and the circumstances surrounding her pregnancy in most bitter terms: "c'est de hasard qu'il s'agit, pas d'amour" (Dubé 177).

Thus, notwithstanding the adolescent defiance that Dominique displays before her elders, her hopeless subjugation to the will of her boyfriend places her, from start to finish, in the losing faction. Étienne, on the other hand, easily achieves his wish to secure his personal wellbeing by getting rid of the nuisance that an infant represents. He is so preoccupied with his own comfort, in fact, that he will not even bother accompanying Dominique to the abortion clinic.¹⁷ As Jocelyne Mathé stresses in her study on Dubé's dramaturgy, "il n'y a pas d'âge pour être lâche. Étienne, l'étudiant dans Les Beaux Dimanches, ne veut pas sacrifier sa liberté et réussit à convaincre Dominique de se faire avorter."¹⁸

As this analysis of the dialectic of action demonstrates, Les Beaux Dimanches focuses on the discord between the protagonists who only want to indulge in petty pleasures within their closed circle — Paul, Muriel, Angéline and even Étienne — and the antagonists who recognize the emptiness and prosaicism of this lifestyle, but fail to escape it — Hélène, Dominique, Olivier, Evelyn, Omer and his young appendage, Rodolphe. Victor passes from the former pole to the latter as he relinquishes his hedonistic oblivion while gradually falling prey to impotent awareness. At curtain fall thus all the members of the Primeau family have either moved to, or remained in, the antagonistic unit. Significantly, the consummation of their respective

failures is denoted by a movement inwards.

Like her mother, Dominique tries to evade her condition by going "loin d'ici" with her lover (Dubé 111). But the motion outwards does not afford a lasting escape. In the end, Dominique, exactly like Hélène, returns home after a circular trip and eventually retires to her room.¹⁹ Similarly, Victor signifies his ultimate entry into the clan of the antagonists by withdrawing into the deepest recess of his house. The closing stage direction of the play is explicit in that respect: "[Victor] se lève, titubant, descend dans le salon, le traverse et disparaît dans l'escalier qui conduit au sous-sol. Rideau" (Dubé 182). The very basement where Victor had enthusiastically led his guests to watch a home-movie in Act Two, now becomes the prison where he is compelled to spend the night, for Hélène refuses to sleep in the same room with him (Dubé 177-8).

There is thus a connection between the main characters' failure and their final retreat inside the house. This is an important point, for as we shall see presently, the dialectic of action, which presents the victory of those characters who only wish to partake in house parties, is assigned broader meaning by a dialectic of imagery that pits signs of seclusive aspirations against images of frustrated outward attraction. And the bankruptcy of the main characters is symbolized by their forced acceptance of the dominant afferent metaphors. This dialectic of imagery is most prominent in the figurative material attached to Hélène and Victor, but is also immanent in the scenic discourse of the other personages.

Dialectic of Imagery:

Victor's very first line of the play immediately brings to the fore his initial attempt to shut out the external world and withdraw inside his house:

Victor: (*Parodiant avec méchanceté le chant des oiseaux*) Twit! Twit! Twit! Twit! Twit! ... Vous fermeriez pas vos p'tites gueules cinq minutes? ... (*Il avale une gorgée de bière.*) Il pourrait pas pleuvoir, des fois, le dimanche matin?

(*Il boit encore puis rentre dans la maison.*) (Dubé 22).

Conversely, from beginning to end, Hélène associates the outside world with freedom and life. Her description of the working-class neighbourhood in which they used to live, for instance, clearly conveys her outward attraction. "Au moins c'était un vrai quartier," she reminisces:

[...] Dans un vrai quartier, il y a de la vie. Pas seulement des p'tits arbres alignés le long des trottoirs, mais des restaurants, des épiceries, des boutiques, des pharmacies aux coins des rues; on a envie de bouger, de se déplacer, on a pas l'impression de vivre en marge des autres (Dubé 41-2).

Movement, space, and even a certain sense of chaos all surface as essential elements of life in Hélène's discourse. Her complaints to Victor also include several references to the outdoors, which her husband keeps her from enjoying. She yearns for the "promenades à la campagne" that Victor promises her but always postpones (Dubé 44). She wants to savour the "beaux dimanches de soleil qui sont à portée de mes mains mais dont je peux jamais profiter" (Dubé 31). Similarly, her appeal to Paul, quoted above, is filled with images of the outside world, of

open space, of the "ailleurs" that she longs for.

Hélène's "ailleurs", however, is not the prosaic "elsewhere" of Muriel, Angéline or Paul, who propose to leave Victor's place merely to go to Charles' boat, or Gérard's house. Those who wish to move the party from one locale to another do not distinguish between another part of town, and another part of the house; playing darts in the basement is ranked at the same level as going to the marina. Following her motion to launch a search for Hélène, Muriel proclaims, "si on la trouve pas chez Gérard, on ira chez Gaston." To which Angéline adds, "ensuite chez Léopold. Il y a longtemps qu'on a pas fait de tournée. On va réveiller tout le quartier" (Dubé 156). From the protagonists' standpoint, gathering at Victor's is equivalent to meeting at Charles's, at Gérard's, at Gaston's, or at Léopold's, for these various quarters all belong to the same closed universe; they are the many gathering stations of a single "tournée".

For Hélène, such internal displacements do not afford the escape she pines for, as she states explicitly when she turns down Muriel's offer to go to Charles's boat: "Je veux changer d'air mais pas retrouver le même qu'ici" (Dubé 82). Montréal, as a whole, from Hélène's perspective, constitutes an extension of Victor's lifeless domain. She solicits Paul to take her "n'importe où! Dans une autre ville qui serait pas Montréal, dans un autre décor qui serait pas celui d'une banlieue vide le dimanche" (Dubé 58). The "vide" that characterizes her neighbourhood is conceived as a life-threatening circumstance in Hélène's

rhetoric. "Le vide se fait autour de moi," she declares in the same dialogue with Paul, "je glisse, je vais tomber au fond du gouffre" (Dubé 56). Previously, Hélène had criticized the uniformity of her suburban environment, claiming that "toutes les maisons, tous les parterres se ressemblent, mais c'est vide comme un cimetière bien entretenu," again linking the community in which she resides to emptiness and, ultimately, death (Dubé 42). In Hélène's figurative tapestry, therefore, touring from Victor's place to Gérard's house or Charles's boat amounts to moving from one grave to the next in a vain attempt to escape the smell of mortality.

Death, it must be stressed, is not only a metaphor for emptiness in Hélène's utterances. Approaching her forties and seeing little hope for improvement in her life, Hélène increasingly dreads the advent of actual death. "J'ai de plus en plus peur de mourir," she confesses to Victor, anticipating a comment by another antagonist, Olivier, who observes "la mort continue de faire son travail. Lentement mais sûrement" (Dubé 42, 68). Again, at the end of the play, Hélène relates her return from her aborted journey to Manuel Lacroix's house to a state of living death: "je suis repartie, j'avais la mort dans l'âme [...] J'ai marché, j'ai marché longtemps avant de me décider à revenir" (Dubé 174).

On a more abstract plane, the omnipresent dread of death transforms Hélène's yearning to escape the closed universe that confines her, be it Victor's house or the necropolis that surrounds it, into a desire to go outside of her own body, to

break the boundary that disconnects her incarcerated self from the world of the living, out there: "Tout ce dont j'ai besoin, c'est de changer de peau. [...] changer d'âme. Changer de cerveau [...] me laisser toucher par un bonheur nouveau" (Dubé 60). Given the impracticality of Hélène's wish, as expressed in this passage, her failure to realize it at the end hardly comes as a surprise, for even Manuel Lacroix, in spite of his messianic name, could not have bridged the gap between her barren life and the transcendental "ailleurs," beyond death, that she seeks.²⁰ We shall return later to the signification of the death metaphor in the discourse of the antagonists, and to its connection with the body and the desire to trespass boundaries.

In the first half of the play, Victor's concerns are far more mundane than the existentialist anxieties of his wife. Accordingly, he construes the notion of "elsewhere" in terms akin to those of Muriel, Angéline and Paul. He even declares, in Act Two, "je me sens aussi bien chez-moi que sur le bateau de Charles," thus equating one gathering site with the other (Dubé 84). Victor's initial misinterpretation of Hélène's desire to go "ailleurs" is most explicitly voiced in the first act as he answers one of Hélène's grievances by saying, "Je t'ai jamais empêchée de sortir. Si tu veux aller dans le jardin vas-y" (Dubé 31). "Sortir," for Victor, means moving from his house to one of its annexes.

Victor's universe, as he envisions it, is contained within strictly delineated boundaries, which he specifies to Hélène in statements such as "regarde autour de toi tout ce que je t'ai

donné [...] qu'est-ce qu'il te faut de plus?" (Dubé 30-1). The milieu that he has manufactured for his family delimits, in his view, the sphere of experience and desire available to him and his entourage. Significantly, Victor visualises his business, which allowed him to build and sustain his comfortable estate, as a fortress comprising his entire existence. "Mais chaque jour, quand je sors du lit," he boasts, "je pense à mes affaires. Toute ma vie, toute notre vie en dépend, c'est notre forteresse, c'est notre roc de Gibraltar" (Dubé 43).

However, when Héléne carries the comparison a step further and transforms the fortress metaphor into an image of the "muraille de Chine" that keeps them apart from one another, Victor betrays his utter obliviousness to his wife's predicament by retorting, "qu'est-ce que les chinois viennent faire dans ça, Héléne?" (Dubé 43). Victor's matter-of-fact response to Héléne's attempt at attributing a metonymic resonance to his fortress allegory attests to the trivial bourgeois doctrine that informs his judgment in the first two acts. Héléne's depiction of their home as a "cimetière bien entretenu," for example, has no existential bearing on Victor. He replies to her morbid animadversion by arguing, "viens pas dire que ta maison est pas plus belle que celle du voisin, je l'ai payée au moins dix mille piastres de plus que lui" (Dubé 42). This line exemplifies Victor's initial conception of his house as the be-all and end-all of human happiness.

In the light of Victor's housebound vision, the fact that Héléne's alleged lover, Manuel Lacroix, is an architect takes on

an unequivocal meaning. As a man who can potentially design original and beautiful houses, the architect presents a serious threat, for he can provide Hélène with a refreshing alternative to Victor's fortress. The emergence of Manuel Lacroix's name in Victor's discourse thus corresponds to the inception of his fall from the winning unit to the side of the antagonists, as it signifies Victor's developing awareness of his own inadequacy.²¹ Accordingly, from this point on, there is an increasing distance between the tone adopted by the host and that of his cavorting guests. For instance, Victor's earnest concern about his wife's escapade clashes with Angéline's frivolous reaction to the news that Hélène might have a lover. "La chanceuse," interjects Angéline, "c'est trop beau pour que ça m'arrive" (Dubé 149).

His shift away from the playful attitude of the protagonists towards the dissatisfaction of the antagonists, as he realizes the failings of his fortress, is evinced as well by the fact that, for the first time in Victor's conversation, movement from one suburban residence to another is not treated lightly as just an internal permutation. Rather, it takes on a gravity unprecedented in the text. "Si j'apprends qu'elle est partie chez Manuel Lacroix, je la tue," he warns his friends (Dubé 150). The appearance of the notion of killing in Victor's language attests to his movement towards the antagonists, for throughout the play only the losers acknowledge the encroaching presence of death. Hélène, Olivier, Dominique, even Evelyn, who displays a cadaverous coldness and predicts "je vais mourir paresseuse," as well as Omer, who condemns the murderous

activities of the F.L.Q., the antagonists recognize the intrusion of death in their lives (Dubé 50, 53, 89). Conversely, the protagonists refuse to acknowledge their mortality and play the game of eternal youth. This denial of death finds its most theatrical manifestation in Angéline's strip-tease, which serves to authenticate youth through a *performance* associated with the youthful body.

In the first two acts of the play, Victor exhibits the same youthful exuberance as Angéline and the other protagonists.²² Nevertheless, his apostasy is already foreshadowed in some of his early comments, which introduce the image of death. For instance, in the first scene of Act Two, he broaches jokingly that "il doit y avoir des corps morts un peu partout" in the country house where they held a party the previous summer (Dubé 75). By the end of the play, however, death is no longer a laughing matter. Indeed, it has advanced to the forefront of Victor's discourse and has become his primary concern; his very last line reads, "Qu'est-ce qu'elles ont à vouloir me tuer tranquillement?" (Dubé 182). Like Hélène, Victor now senses the toll of death.

The morbid imagery that suffuses Victor's speech in the last part of the drama translates into extremely violent behaviour when Hélène eventually returns. He clutches her arm, shakes her aggressively, throws her to the ground, and hurls his glass of whisky in her face (Dubé 168-73). This physical brutality is accompanied by a vehement interrogation concerning her visit to Lacroix's home: "T'arrives de chez-lui. T'es allée lui

rendre visite comme une petite putain?" (Dubé 169). For Victor, as this line evidences, going to the architect's house coincides semiotically with having illicit sex with him; entering a man's domain signifies becoming his.

As pointed out above, Hélène denounced Victor's peculiar logic earlier in the play when she said "[...] que je te trompe ou que je fasse semblant de te tromper, ça t'est égal pourvu que ce soit *dans ta maison* [emphasis added]" (Dubé 138). And it is the same logic that will transform Victor's deportment in the last moments of the drama. His violent questioning tones down to a pathetic attempt to patch things up only after he has learned that Hélène has been denied entry into the other man's house (Dubé 174). In his frame of mind, this implies that she has not crossed the ultimate border that would mark her definitive passage from his domain to that of another man, hence his futile attempt to reclaim her.

Victor's final conversation with Dominique confirms that while he now perceives wide breaches in his stronghold, he is not ready to abandon entirely his hard-earned fortress. On the one hand, he now acknowledges the external world as a possible object of desire. In one of his last tirades of the drama, he asks his daughter, "Qu'est-ce que vous vouliez que je vous donne de plus? Le monde? Les étoiles? La lune?" (Dubé 181), thus admitting the potential for attraction outside the limits of his circumscribed universe. But the very inaccessibility of these external aims also emphasizes his view that the two women have made irrational demands on him and, in the process, have

destroyed the ersatz that he has strived to fabricate for them. "Chaque jour vous essayez de me démolir," he accuses Dominique in the same exchange, "vous essayez de jeter par terre tout ce que j'ai construit" (Dubé 180-1). This allegation illustrates that, even at this late point in the play, Victor still identifies with the milieu he has constructed and puts the blame for its disintegration on those who have insensitively, even spitefully, asked for more than he could provide.

Some of Victor's concluding charges against his daughter and, indirectly, his wife, attest to his morbid feeling of betrayal by taking on almost demonic proportions. "Depuis vingt ans, je nourris deux vipères dans ma maison [emphasis added]", he wails, "[...] t'es aussi méchante que ta mère, plus méchante qu'elle encore parce que t'es plus jeune ... (il la secoue)" (Dubé 181). Comparison of this monstrous imagery with an early line by Angéline to the effect that "Victor! t'es le bon Dieu en personne" (Dubé 65), corroborates Thomas Price's typification of the apostatic-negative structure as "a war between good and evil, whether its principal (offstage) adversaries be God and Satan or the mythically decomposed figures of a purely secular morality projected against the cosmos" (Price 137). Dubé's irony resides, of course, in the fact that God's unit is composed of petty bourgeois who *do* attend church but are only interested in having fun among friends, while the satanic antagonists, who doubt the very existence of a divine being, display greater insight and understanding of the human condition.²³ From this perspective, Victor's ironic hamartia consists in having

jeopardized his bourgeois heaven for the sake of keeping the rebellious angels — his wife and daughter — by his side.

Dominique's figurative affiliation with her mother is not limited, though, to the apocalyptic imagery that they share in Victor's scenic discourse. Indeed, the young woman's determinant condition, her pregnancy, offers a concrete parallel to Hélène's abstract desire to escape her own body. Dominique's desire to sacrifice herself in order to give birth to the child — a being which is at once an extension of the mother's body and a distinct entity — can be interpreted, quite literally in fact, as a desire to break the borders of her own morphology, to relocate herself in another body, exactly as Hélène wishes to do. Both mother and daughter seek to transcend their dreadful existence by trespassing the boundaries that are externally imposed upon them, either in the form of a constrictive suburban fortress or in the person of a selfish boyfriend who contests a woman's sovereignty over her own body.

Yet, Dominique's very presence in the family calls into question the validity of the child as an agent of transcendence, for having a child obviously did not remedy her mother's discontent. The fact that Hélène always refers to Dominique as "ta fille" when talking to Victor, and that Dominique orders her father "compare-moi pas à ma mère," manifests a resentful dissociation between mother and offspring (Dubé 27, 180). Hélène evidently does not consider her child as an extension of herself through whom she may experience freedom vicariously. The bitter internecine argument between daughter and mother in the first

act corroborates this irrevocable severance (Dubé 24, 27, 34-40). Had it been given a chance to live, the infant, like Manuel Lacroix, would probably not have brought salvation to its mother. This last proposition, however, is purely conjectural, since Étienne imperiously denies Dominique the chance to experience this potential transcendence, by forbidding the unborn child ever to *come out* of the womb — alive, that is. Étienne, like Victor, will not allow boundaries to be crossed.

The connection between the ban on crossing boundaries and pregnancy, as well as the earlier comments on the antagonists' reference to death, brings to mind the notion of the abject as theorized by French essayist Julia Kristeva. The abject, in Kristeva's words, "est dehors, hors de l'ensemble dont il ne semble pas reconnaître les règles du jeu;" it is "ce qui perturbe une identité, un système, un ordre. Ce qui ne respecte pas les limites, les places, les règles."²⁴ If, as Kristeva argues, childbirth is conceived as an abjection in the Judeo-Christian tradition for the very reason that it violates the boundary of the body, like leprosy, it does not come as a surprise that Étienne would resist Dominique's insistence on having the child and find it to be "de mauvais goût."²⁵ Furthermore, the fact that the antagonists, who attempt to break the boundaries of the suburban coterie, are also those who acknowledge the encroachment of death upon their lives is germane to Kristeva's definition of the abject, for "le cadavre — vu sans Dieu et hors de la science — est le comble de l'abjection. Il est la mort infestant la vie. Abject."²⁶

As a matter of fact, in addition to the morbidity typical of the losing camp, other images of abjection are also ascribed to the antagonists. As mentioned above, Victor sees his wife and daughter as vile reptiles. Angéline finds her fat husband, Omer, abject, calling him "un infirme" (Dubé 139). Hélène welcomes Victor to the side of the antagonists, at the end of the play, by saying "je me dégoûte autant que tu me dégoûtes" (Dubé 174). Olivier expresses a fascination for the horrific beauty of a "plaie béante" (Dubé 95). Even Evelyn confesses to Olivier her attraction towards the abject, claiming "l'idée me vient de vouloir me défigurer avec de l'acide" (Dubé 146). Thus, breaking the boundary of the harmonious body correlates to the losers' desire to break the boundaries of the insipid middle-class ghetto that confines them. Inversely, Angéline and the other protagonists endeavour to assert the impregnability of the boundaries, and thus obey the Biblical commandment to maintain the "frontrières du corps propre."²⁷

Admittedly Evelyn, unlike the two other female antagonists, does not explicitly state her desire to challenge the borders upheld by the dominant group, for, as mentioned above, she constantly hides her yearnings behind a cynical guise. But Olivier, who sees the truth behind the mask, recognizes her urge for open space and wilderness. He tells her, "tu étais née pour vivre sauvagement, en liberté dans les bois. Au lieu de ça, tu es forcée d'être une personne raisonnable, d'accepter les lois absurdes d'une société qui ne t'apporte rien" (Dubé 160). Contradistinctively, Olivier pictures Paul and Muriel as "un

p'tit rat et une p'tite souris dans une cave," thus drawing an unmistakable distinction between the images of outdoors and freedom attached to the antagonists, and the emblems of gregarious seclusion linked to the protagonists (Dubé 140).

Olivier produces his most intricate definition of the forces at work in the drama in his central soliloquy, which seeks to unearth "la racine du mal" through a brief history of Québec. This ostensible lecture on the vicissitudes of the French Canadian nation actually functions as a repository for the metaphors qualifying the dialectic of action, bringing them together in a typological form through the physician's stream of consciousness. "Le mal a commencé," he proposes, "quand on nous a enlevé le droit de vivre" (Dubé 97). This reference to the conquest of Nouvelle France by the British parallels Dominique's forthcoming abortion. Similarly, Olivier's subsequent account that, soon after the conquest, "les femmes ont commencé à porter dans leur ventre des enfants qui leur étaient faits sans joie, sans amour," foreshadows Dominique's bitter comment that there is no love between Étienne and herself (Dubé 98, 177).

Olivier's disquisition then leads him to relate "la racine du mal," to the affiliation of the Church with the bourgeoisie in the early 19th century. His assertion that "les bourgeois, les curés se sont ligüés ensemble après avoir vite découvert où se trouvait leurs profits [...] Le temporel, le spirituel marchaient main dans la main, parfois les deux ensemble dans la même main" aligns Olivier's historical lecture with the previous deduction that the protagonist's unit, in this apostatic-

negative drama, sides with God, or at least, with Its emblem (Dubé 98). Olivier moves on to argue that the failed rebellion of 1837 was a direct reaction against the state of alienation in which the Church and the bourgeoisie had kept the nation, thus analogizing Hélène's aborted escape.

Olivier then overlooks some one hundred and twenty-five years, to connect the events of 1837 to the F.L.Q. terrorist activities of the 1960s. Identifying his companions as the target in this modern rebellion, he implicitly borrows Victor's fortress allegory to warn his fellow bourgeois that "votre confort, votre sécurité ne seront plus suffisants pour vous protéger. Comme Muriel, vous refusez même d'en parler" (Dubé 100). Violence is the only remedy against humiliation and exasperation, Olivier concludes, and death the only consequence. "Le cancer nous ronge les entrailles mais nous refusons de croire qu'il existe et qu'il est mortel," he concludes on a note that confirms his acknowledgement of looming death (Dubé 101).

Olivier's speech thus recapitulates, under the guise of a historical survey, the dialectic of imagery of Les Beaux Dimanches, opposing on the one side "ceux qui demeurent en place et qui conservent l'assurance des autruches," to the subversives, on the other side, who are "prêts à tout, prêts à mourir pour que l'ordre change [...] pour que ce qu'on appelle la liberté soit vraiment la liberté" (Dubé 100-1). But while images of death are attached to the antagonists, no one actually goes as far as dying in the play. No one dares to trespass the final border to afford the change of order predicted by Olivier.

Hélène eventually gives up her rebellion on the threshold of Lacroix's house. Dominique refuses to sacrifice her comfortable life to keep her unborn child. Victor might presume that he is being killed by the members of his family, but, in the end, he survives, albeit secluded in his basement.

Therefore, those who "demeurent en place," who are associated with the sedentary, self-centred and self-indulgent bourgeois coterie, emerge as the winners. Their victory culminates in the final image of the three members of the Primeau family being absorbed by the overbearing suburban mansion, for the losers, in spite of their fascination with the transgressive potentiality of the abject, must accept life within the former's fortress, regardless of its crumbling foundations. The antagonists in Les Beaux Dimanches, as in most Dubé plays according to Maximilien Laroche, "se résignent, acceptent leur sort, s'avouent vaincus et rentrent dans le rang en acceptant de se compromettre : Dominique dans Les Beaux Dimanches, qui accepte de se faire avorter."²⁸ In other words, after having momentarily dared to run away, they all return home in the end.

Implicational Dialectic:

Following this elucidation of the structures of action and imagery, we can now proceed to infer a few antinomies that will allow us to zero in on the key thematic dualities implied by the dialectical organization of Les Beaux Dimanches. This process will allow us to demonstrate as cogently as possible that the afferent-withdrawal/efferent-escape dichotomy not only recurs

consistently throughout the corpus, but is also the sole semantic doublet that adequately epitomizes the structure of the overwhelming majority of the texts studied. As in the case of Wedding in White, I will limit myself to those doublets that condense determining aspects of the play. Thus, I will not dwell on broad dichotomies such as *Active/Passive*, *Dominance/Submission*, and *Callousness/Sensitivity*, for although these couples offer appropriate abstractions of the combatants' contradictory attitudes, they are not especially revealing of the text's particular complexion.

The same goes for the tandem *Contentment/Discontent*, which would appear as a convenient pairing for our purpose, since it applies to both Wedding in White and Les Beaux Dimanches. Indeed, the protagonists of both plays are generally satisfied with their lot, whereas their opponents are constantly voicing their malaise and yearning for an "ailleurs" that they cannot reach. But while in Wedding in White this doublet is of primary significance because it betokens the essential quality that allows the protagonists to capture the apex figures, in Dubé's text it does not play such a fundamental role. The contentment of the ones and the discontent of the others in Dubé's work are not *instrumental* in the dialectical shift that occurs in the course of the play. They *reflect* Victor's change of mood as he migrates from the clan of the protagonists to that of the antagonists, but they do not *induce* this movement.

To be consistent with the analytical principles laid down earlier, to the effect that only dichotomies central to the

constitution of each drama are truly pertinent in our comparative examination of the corpus, we must thus find an antinomy that focuses more sharply on those aspects of the characters' personality that serve a critical function in the dialectic. Rather than contentment and discontent, the characteriological trait that *precipitates* the fall of the apostatic figure is his growing awareness of the fissures that are eroding his fortress. I would thus submit the doublet *Obliviousness/Awareness* as one of the crucial dialectics implied in the structure of Les Beaux Dimanches, for it is Victor's passage from the cheerful obliviousness of the winners to the bitter awareness of the losers that defines the outcome of the drama. Discontent only derives from awareness.

Allowing, again, for a variety of synonymic possibilities — for instance, the word "awareness" could be replaced by the term "consciousness" — this dichotomy stands out as the most representative abstraction for the conflicting temperamental inclinations exhibited in Les Beaux Dimanches. The two poles defined by the Obliviousness/Awareness pairing are probably best embodied by Paul and Olivier, respectively. While the latter scrutinizes with relentless lucidity the colonized history of French Canada to unearth "la racine du mal," the former heedlessly vaunts the merits of badminton as a sport "bon pour tous les muscles du corps" (Dubé 76).

But the term obliviousness, as a qualifier for the protagonists, does not presuppose that these characters are stupidly unaware of their circumstances. On the contrary, as

insinuated above when discussing Muriel's role in the dialectic of action, the chronic unconsciousness of the winners is, at times, quite deliberate indeed. Muriel refuses to let her thoughts on the lovelessness of her marriage with Olivier affect her good humour (Dubé 133-4), exactly as Angéline denies that she is aging and performs a strip-tease to prove her point (Dubé 140-4). Likewise, Étienne purposefully ignores Dominique's apprehension about the abortion. When she insinuates that their unborn baby has become a part of herself, he dismissively retorts, "ne recommence pas, je t'en prie," and further trivializes the matter by immediately asking his girlfriend, "ça te plairait le cinéma?" (Dubé 111-2).

Olivier's point that the protagonists "conservent l'assurance des autruches" is thus a very apt characterization, for their obliviousness must be conserved and constantly reasserted for them to carry on with their happy existences and remain in the winning camp (Dubé 101). This explains Victor's apostasy. Were obliviousness a permanent condition or the result of some mental defect — as seems to be the case for Jeanie in Wedding in White — there would have been no dialectical shift in the play. But, as a state of mind that must be preserved by an act of the will, obliviousness gives way to awareness when Victor fails to keep his head in the sand. The ironic talent of his festive friends, which allows them to emerge as winners, is thus their ability to resist awareness and emulate the ostrich from beginning to end, with only a few lapses into consciousness along the way.

The awareness of the antagonists could also be traded for obliviousness. At the end of Act Two, scene one, for instance, Dominique attempts to adopt the oblivious stance of her boyfriend, answering his offer to go to the movies by saying, "Ce que tu voudras. Ça m'est égal. Demain aussi, tout me sera égal" (Dubé 112). But on her next appearance on stage, her natural inclination re-emerges in force:

Seulement je ne peux m'empêcher de penser que je suis une femme, que je pourrais si je le voulais accepter de porter l'enfant que tu m'as fait jusqu'au bout même si je sais que tu ne m'épouserai pas. Je pourrais encore accepter la maternité, me débrouiller pour l'élever, pour lui donner les soins et l'amour dont il aurait besoin (Dubé 175).

Too conscious of who she is and what she could do if only she had the courage, Dominique is incapable of relegating her predicament to oblivion. Thus, she remains like her mother and Olivier in the camp of the aware, yet ineffectual, antagonists.

While the dichotomy Obliviousness/Awareness, rather than the doublet Contentment/Discontent, best describes the personality attributes that determine the dialectical shift in Les Beaux Dimanches, the implicational dialectic that epitomizes most faithfully the motivational wishes that prompt the conflicting actions performed on each side of the dispute is the same as in Wedding in White, namely, *Afferent-withdrawal/Efferent-escape*. Here, as in Fruet's play, this compound accurately abstracts the inward desire of the protagonists, who withdraw both intellectually and physically from the challenges of the outside world, and the outward attraction of the antagonists, who explore the

very limits of their territory, without managing to break the ultimate boundaries imposed upon them.

The Afferent-withdrawal/Efferent-escape duality is particularly adequate in its summary of the conflictual motives of Les Beaux Dimanches, for it can denote a tension between concrete opposites like indoors and outdoors, while simultaneously signifying more intangible notions like allegiance to and transgression of boundaries, as discussed above in connection with the concept of abjection. Indeed, the efferent-escape motif translates into aspirations as different as Hélène's dream to fly away to a lake in the country, Olivier's imagining Evelyn as a woman "née pour vivre sauvagement, en liberté dans les bois" (Dubé 160), and Dominique's wish to give birth to her child.

On the other hand, the desire for an afferent-withdrawal, or inward retreat, that typifies the actions of the protagonists finds expression in gestures as plain as Paul and Muriel retiring to the basement to make love away from eavesdroppers, or Angéline *rushing inside the house* from the garden to avoid the stings of mosquitos — which, by the way, do not bother the antagonists, Omer and Evelyn (Dubé 135-6). But the afferent-withdrawal motive is also manifested in more complex behaviours like Étienne's acceptance of the limits imposed by society. Abortion "est la seule solution," he argues, "la société est faite comme ça. Je vois pas d'autre échappée" (Dubé 33). This last line, it is worth mentioning, conveys Étienne's denial of any possible escape, or "échappée," from societal confines.

Expectedly, Victor moves from one pole to the other, as his initial desire to party in his house with his friends (afferent recoil) transforms, in the course of the play, into a longing to reach out toward his wife and daughter (efferent drive). His original perception of his house as the be-all and end-all of human happiness, which is clearly aligned with Paul's, Angéline's and Muriel's conception of their universe in terms of an enclosed "tournée," translates an evident wish on Victor's part to effect an afferent-withdrawal from the external world, which in his view offers nothing more than what his home already comprises. This impulse is certainly in keeping with the attitude of obliviousness that he assumes while residing in the winning camp.

By the end of the drama, however, when he has become aware of the failure of his cloistered lifestyle, he begins to look beyond the boundaries of his self-contained environment to search for a solution to the predicament of his family. In the exchange with Dominique quoted above, he cries, "Qu'est-ce que vous vouliez que je vous donne de plus? Le monde? Les étoiles? La lune? Qu'est-ce que vous vouliez au juste? (*Il la secoue.*) Dis-le, je vais te le donner!" (Dubé 181). This line expresses not only Victor's recognition of the existence of a world outside of his sumptuous mansion, but also his fervent desire to grasp this world.

But the contradiction between his clinging to the fortress mentality and the global scope of his new efferent-escape aspiration, obviously makes it impossible for him to fulfil his

wish. Consequently, Victor collapses under the afferent force, and remains trapped in his house, along with his wife and daughter. As in Wedding in White, although the antagonists' efferent-escape alternative might be associated with more positive values than its counterpart, in the end it must still yield to the inward pressures of the afferent force. As we shall see in subsequent chapters, the same structure recurs throughout the published corpus of film-mediated drama.

After having submitted doublets abstracting the fundamental personality traits of the characters and their opposite motives, one last dichotomy must be identified in order to complete the implicational profile of Dubé's text, that is, an epitomic dialectical description of the social makeup that determines the dénouement of the drama. This is probably the most evident antinomy because it is so pervasive in the play. I am referring, of course, to the clash between the bourgeois prosaicism of the protagonists and the subversive idealism of the antagonists.

The *Bourgeois prosaicism/Subversive idealism* duality of Les Beaux Dimanches finds its most political manifestation in the discussion that Victor and his guests have on the question of Québec's separation in Act Two, scene one. This issue is dealt with in purely idealistic terms by Dominique and Olivier, who ascribe quasi-messianic significance to the revolutionary sacrifice of the young separatists (Dubé 91, 101). But the same topic is reduced to a matter of money by Victor: "Si c'est vrai que le contrôle de notre économie peut nous apporter plus de prospérité, faire monter mon chiffre d'affaires, je suis en

faveur du séparatisme" (Dubé 90).

Olivier's apocalyptic sermon on the imminent overthrow of the federalist bourgeoisie, in which he compares his friends to ostriches, has no effect whatsoever on the protagonists. Muriel belittles her husband's foresight by saying, "le prophète en lui vient de parler. Dans deux ou trois whisky il nous dira des poèmes" (Dubé 101), and Angéline lowers the issue to an even more prosaic plane by declaring, "moi, la Confédération, ça me rappelle qu'on était tous à Old Orchard l'été passé" (Dubé 103). And while Omer is very much conscious of the subversive potential of separatism, which leads "aux bombes, aux meurtres, au désordre social," Paul dismisses the whole movement by paternalistically reproaching the F.L.Q. "de pas avoir les deux pieds sur terre. Tout ce qu'on a de liberté ici, ça nous vient d'Ottawa, ça nous vient des Anglais" (Dubé 89).

Although in less obvious terms, the dichotomy between the bourgeois prosaicism of the protagonists and the subversive idealism of their opponents is also apparent in several other dialogues. In Victor's and Hélène's first argument, for instance, the conflict is already touched upon:

Hélène: Tout ce que tu me donnes c'est de l'argent, c'est pas ça la liberté.

Victor: L'un ou l'autre ça revient au même.

Hélène: Pour toi, peut-être, parce que tu penses que tout s'achète mais tu t'apercevras un jour que c'est pas totalement vrai. (Dubé 25)

The equation that Victor establishes between the concrete bourgeois value of money and the idealistic notion of freedom

evidences his initial allegiance to the protagonists' unit. But his ultimate recognition that what his daughter and wife desire is of the order of the world, the stars and the moon, all things that cannot be consumed by bourgeois discourse, also attests to the transformation that he has experienced during the drama — a transformation foreseen by Hélène in this early exchange.

The dichotomy is also apparent when Hélène talks about flying away with Paul. While Hélène expresses her idealistic desire to escape the insipid universe "des hommes et des femmes qui boivent parce qu'ils ne savent pas quoi faire de leur âme" (Dubé 58), Paul is concerned only with prosaic, albeit socially responsible, matters such as the fact that "après la nuit que j'ai passée, ce serait imprudent de ma part de décoller, je risquerais d'avoir de mauvais réflexes" (Dubé 59-60). This duality between the conformism of bourgeois society and the somewhat subversive alternative proposed by the antagonists also emerges when Étienne tries to defuse Dominique's threats to kill herself and confront her parents with her shameful decision to have an abortion, by claiming "Ça t'avancerait à quoi? [...] La société est faite comme ça" (Dubé 33).

The implicational dialectic thus allows us to identify the three main constituents of each disputing unit, namely, the conflictual objectives that dictate the characters's actions — afferent-withdrawal/efferent-escape — the crucial characteriological attributes that determine the movement of the apostatic figure — obliviousness/awareness — and the clashing social stances adopted by the disputing personages — Bourgeois

prosaicism/Subversive idealism. Other doublets could be added, like *Superficiality/Profundity*, *Liveliness/Morbidness*, *Religiosity/Atheism*,^A which offer fitting descriptions of the two camps. Religiosity/atheism, for example, appropriately denotes the opposing attitudes of Angéline and Olivier with regards to institutional religion. But this dichotomy is ancillary to the main abstractions as it only *derives* from the more fundamental dialectical trait obliviousness/awareness. A similar point can be made for the couple superficiality/profundity, superficiality being only a *symptom* of obliviousness.

Conclusion:

The analysis of Les Beaux Dimanches thus reveals that the actions performed by the protagonists translate an urge to preserve the boundaries of the protective shell that they have fabricated for themselves to indulge in bourgeois obliviousness, while the deeds executed by the antagonists futilely attempt to transcend these limits. This tension, as we have seen, is defined by the dialectic of imagery through signs as concrete as Victor's omnipresent house, as allegorical as Olivier's vision of Evelyn running free in the woods, and as metonymic as the boundaries of the body challenged by childbirth and death.

Keeping in mind the conclusions drawn in the previous chapter, we can already recognize certain parallels between the two plays. For instance, although the doublet *Bourgeois prosaicism/Subversive idealism* singled out in Les Beaux Dimanches connotes a social reality markedly different from that implied

by the corresponding dichotomy *Defence of honour/Rejection of honour* discerned in Wedding in White, both pairings still suggest that those who wish to accomplish an afferent-withdrawal are also those who support the existing social organization. This link will surface in other plays of the corpus, such as in One Night Stand, considered in the following section.

But, as we shall see when appraising Being at Home with Claude in Chapter VI, this nexus does not recur with enough consistency to conclude with certainty that the wish for seclusion always implies respect for social institutions. What we will be able to conclude, however, is that the dialectical structures of these plays *always* revolve around the afferent-withdrawal/efferent-escape bipolarity, and that in all cases the efferent-escape option is foreign to the resolution of the drama. Once the recurrence of this theme throughout the corpus of plays and films will have been illustrated, we shall elaborate, in Chapter X, on the cultural and theoretical significance of this constant pattern.

NOTES

1. Marcel Dubé, Les Beaux Dimanches, Collection Théâtre canadien (Montréal: Leméac, 1969). Subsequent references to this work in this chapter will appear within parentheses in the text, except when additional comments require notes.
2. Jean Cléo Godin, "Le Monde de Marcel Dubé : Mourir sa vie, vivre sa mort," Le Théâtre québécois I, (Montréal: Bibliothèque québécoise, 1988) 148.
3. Thomas Price notes that "although some modern instances of the apostatic-negative assume an ironic tone, such dramas are never truly ironic in the structural sense of permitting negative motives to contaminate the dominant unit of the protagonists." See Price, Dramatic Structure and Meaning in Theatrical Productions (San Francisco: Edwin Mellen Press, 1992) 137. This observation applies to Les Beaux Dimanches, not only because Dubé's play avoids the recondite dramaturgic strategies typical of the ironic structure, but also because the protagonists in this drama, though they are by no means heroic figures, do not display overtly negative attributes such as violent or cruel behaviour. As a matter of fact, it is only once Victor has slid to the side of the antagonists that he resorts to physical violence in an attempt to impose his flagging authority upon his wife (Dubé 168). Subsequent references to Price's work in this chapter will appear within parentheses in the text, except when additional comments require notes.
4. This approach is very much in keeping with Price's theorem that "a play's dynamic pattern can be ascertained only by comparing the *initial* and *final* [original emphasis] commitments of each character relative to the conflict's bi-polarity" (Price 49.)
5. Although Hélène's decision to leave Victor seems to put her in the clan of the winners for a moment, her return to Victor negates her movement towards the protagonists. This follows Price's argument that "a genuine apostasy followed by a back-sliding has absolutely no dialectical significance ... In emphasizing this point one can do no better than to adopt the maxim formulated by G. Spencer-Brown in his *Laws of Form*: 'To cross again is not to cross'." (Price 49)
6. See, for instance, page 43 where Hélène asks Victor, "Où est-ce que c'est l'endroit du monde où chaque jour, je me sentirais pas étouffée?"

7. Hélène tells Victor, before going to bed, "Moi, je pourrai me passer de toi. Un jour, j'y parviendrai peut-être" (Dubé 178). The "peut-être" signifies both Hélène's lack of decisiveness on this issue, and the possibility that she might eventually find enough courage to leave Victor.

8. Paulette Collet, "La quarantaine, âge de l'abdication ou du renouveau pour la femme, dans le théâtre de Marcel Dubé," Canadian Drama / L'Art dramatique canadien 5.1 (1979): 156.

9. See Dubé 167-8, where Victor begs Olivier, in vain, to drink with him.

10. Edwin C. Hamblet, Marcel Dubé and French-Canadian Drama (New York: Exposition Press, 1970) 68.

11. Alonzo Le Blanc, "Les Beaux Dimanches, drame de Marcel Dubé," Dictionnaire des Oeuvres Littéraires du Québec IV 1960-1969 (Montréal: Fidès, 1984) 89.

12. In an interview entitled "Marcel Dubé : la tragédie de l'homme blessé," the dramatist explains that in Les Beaux Dimanches and Bilan (1960) "les personnages ne sont pas assez conscients pour savoir comment se rendre jusqu'au bout. Alors c'est cela qui est tragique; ils sont démunis [...] Les Beaux Dimanches, Pauvre Amour (1968) et Bilan, c'est toujours la fin d'un homme seul et blessé, blessé à mort mais condamné à vivre." See Gérald Gaudet, "Marcel Dubé : la tragédie de l'homme blessé," Lettres québécoises 46 (summer 1987): 43, 44.

13. On page 47, before any of the guests had arrived, Hélène had warned Victor, "si tu l'invites [Olivier], je prends la porte" and had run up to her room soon after to manifest her loathing of Victor's parties. But, by page 65, Paul can claim "Objectif atteint, mission accomplie" as he brings Hélène back to the leaving room where their friends are waiting.

14. See Dubé, pages 135-6, for the contrasting ways in which the women respond to Paul and Olivier. See also page 140 for Dubé's description of Paul and Muriel emerging from the basement after their fornication: "Ils sont un peu décoiffés tous les deux et essaient de se composer une attitude naturelle."

15. Alain Pontaut, "Notes Préliminaires," in Les Beaux Dimanches, 14.

16. Maximilien Laroche, Marcel Dubé (Montréal: Fides, 1970) 58.
17. Étienne's line, "Demain, appelle-moi aussitôt que ce sera fait, j'irai te rencontrer," attests to his intention to be away from Dominique during the operation (Dubé 177).
18. Jocelyne Mathé, "Marcel Dubé," Le Théâtre canadien-français : évolutions, témoignages, bibliographie, eds. Paul Wyczynski et al. (Montréal: Fides, 1976) 504.
19. Following Étienne's departure, Dominique remains a few moments in the garden and finally goes inside the house on page 178.
20. The allusion to Isaiah's Messiah, Emmanuel, in Manuel Lacroix's name is reinforced by the reference to the Cross in his family name. The messianic connotation of Lacroix's name is hinted at in Paulette Collet, "Le théâtre de Marcel Dubé : un univers de portes closes," Incidences (nouvelle série) 6. 1-2 (Jan./Aug. 1982): 48.
21. Victor's mood changes drastically on page 149, and Manuel Lacroix is first mentioned on page 150.
22. In the first act, Victor brags, "A quarante ans, bâti comme je le suis, je peux me pencher encore souvent avant de me donner un tour rein" (p.44). The youthful energy expressed in this line resembles Muriel's in her enthusiastic statement, "Il me reste suffisamment d'énergie pour veiller jusqu'aux petites heures" (p.134). Paul's suggestion to play badminton also conveys a similar childlike animation (p.76). So much so, in fact, that Olivier picks up on the absurdity of Paul's purposefully immature behaviour, and adds sarcastically, "pourquoi pas la cachette ou bien la balle au mur, Paulo?"
23. On the antagonists' relationship with God, see, for example, Hélène's comment, "Depuis le temps qu'on le respecte plus le jour du seigneur!" (p.23); Dominique's confession, "Depuis six mois que je vais pratiquement plus à l'église!" (p.36); and Olivier's tirade on the questionable existence of God on page 154. On the other hand, it should be noted that Paul wears his reservist's uniform because he attended a military mass (p.49), and Angéline admits that she was so thirsty during the mass that she almost drank holy water in replacement of the *spirits* she drinks at Victor's (p.64).

^{24.} See Julia Kristeva, Pouvoirs de l'horreur : Essai sur l'abjection (Paris: Éditions du seuil, 1980) 9, 12.

^{25.} Kristeva, 118-20.

^{26.} Kristeva, 11-2.

^{27.} Kristeva, 120.

^{28.} Laroche, 22.

CHAPTER V. ONE NIGHT STAND¹

Synopsis:

Location and Time: A high-rise apartment in Toronto, in the late 1970s.

Act I: Abandoned on her birthday by her best friend, Sharon, and her married lover, Nick, Daisy picks up a stranger in a bar, Rafe, and brings him home for the night. Rather than engaging immediately in casual sex, as Daisy ostensibly wishes, Rafe decides to organize an intimate birthday party for his hostess. He sings for Daisy and performs somewhat bizarre, but generally entertaining actions, such as decorating a Christmas tree in the middle of March and assuming the persona of movie stars like Tyrone Power. The cheerful mood vanishes completely, however, when Rafe confesses to having killed a woman. Daisy orders him out of her apartment and calls Sharon to her rescue. But as Rafe agrees to leave, Daisy has a change of heart and invites him to stay with her. The romantic atmosphere is then re-established and they start making love.

Act II: After sex, Daisy is taking a shower while Rafe is playing guitar for her and planning their elopement to Peru. When Daisy tries to come out of the washroom, she realizes that Rafe has locked her in, although he pretends that she did it herself. This is the first in a series of troubling actions that Rafe performs throughout the act, such as keeping Daisy from using the phone and forcefully forbidding her from answering when police officers knock at the door. Eventually, Daisy discovers that Sharon, who arrived at the apartment while she

was in the shower, has been slain by Rafe. Terrified, Daisy seeks help from her neighbour, Riva, who ignores her appeal. She then grabs a knife and threatens to use it to protect herself. Playing a tape recording of Sharon's murder, Rafe goads Daisy into stabbing him to death.

Preliminaries to the Analysis:

Looking at the text strictly in terms of tone, we can already detect from this synopsis that Carol Bolt's "play about nothing" undergoes a radical transformation, half-way through the proceedings, from light comedy to macabre tragedy.² Indeed, the drama opens on a joyful note, as the lascivious young woman arrives home with her catch of the night, and becomes increasingly sombre until it closes on the ghastly tableau of Daisy trying to stop the blood pouring out of Rafe's dying body (Bolt 52). As we shall see, this passage "from light into darkness"³ parallels a negative movement in the dialectical placement of Daisy, from a position of independence and control — she picked up a guy to satisfy *her* needs — to a state of utter distress as she is compelled to kill her initial object of desire in order to save her own life. One Night Stand, therefore, like Les Beaux Dimanches, belongs to the apostatic-negative model, for it charts the fall of the central character from happiness to despair.

But unlike Les Beaux Dimanches, which counts a dozen characters, One Night Stand limits its cast to only two personages on stage — excluding Sharon, whose corpse appears in

Act Two. This, however, does not render the play easy to decode. As a matter of fact, the chief impediment in trying to outline the dialectic of action in Bolt's work resides precisely in the *lack* of secondary characters to provide dialectical beacons shedding light on the movement of the apostatic figure. Nick, Sharon, her boyfriend Eddie, and Riva, the oversexed neighbour, are all hidden players constructed exclusively through the intermediary of Daisy and Rafe. Thus, Daisy's shifting position is not obvious, for her overriding wish is never explicitly articulated vis-à-vis speaking and reacting characters. Moreover, the "one-night-stand" scenario also blurs the issues at stake in the play, since a large part of the dialogue is composed of the small-talk typical of the situation. But, although Daisy's discourse concentrates on casual sex — "we're going to bed together, that's all," she informs Rafe (Bolt 31) — her oblique rapport with the hidden players and peculiar relationship with Rafe imply that carnal lust is only the surface expression of a more profound desire.

Dialectic of Action:

The action of the drama stems from an event prior to the beginning of the play. Daisy had prepared a dinner party for her birthday, but Nick, Sharon and Eddie did not show up (Bolt 6). Feeling betrayed by her companions, Daisy elected to respond to their absence from her soirée by inviting over a new acquaintance, Rafe. In the first half of Act One, telephone conversations with these hidden players attest to Daisy's resentment

against her friends, a resentment that results in their virtual banishment from her immediate entourage. This is especially manifest in Daisy's discussion with Nick. "That's right, it's my birthday and I went out and picked up a guy," she tells her boyfriend:

Well, I did call you first, Nicky, but they told me you weren't working late at the office so I wondered where it was you were working late ... That's right. You got it. I don't trust you.

(Daisy hangs up. And bursts into tears [...]) The telephone rings. Daisy reaches for it)

Hello ... I don't care if you're sorry Nicky. I don't care if I should have told you when my birthday was. Is it so hard to remember a birthday? I know your birthday. You were at my party last year, weren't you? It did not conflict with your wife's subscription concert series ... I am not crying.

(Daisy slams the phone down again) (Bolt 13).

Reproaches, disclaimed tears, hanging up the phone only to pick it up again the next instant, all these gestures lay bare Daisy's indignation, and her purport to repay Nick for not coming to her get-together by asserting her independence from him and expelling him, at least momentarily, from her life.

In another phone conversation, Daisy transmits a similar message to Sharon:

You did not forget it was my birthday Sharon. You were born on July 20th and I was born on March 20th [...]. What do you mean, ha? There are lots of people here, Sharon. I can hardly hear what you're saying. [...]. I do have other friends ... What do you mean "who?" [...]. [Rafe]'s a musician ... He's a singer. No, he doesn't want to sing you something. He doesn't even want to talk to you [...]. I don't want to talk to you anymore, I've got better things to do (Bolt 9, 10-1).

Although Daisy does not reject Sharon as patently as she

dismisses Nick, her comments still aim at informing her friend that she has been supplanted. Indeed, her rebuff is supported by prevarications to the effect that she is having a party with a large group of friends to which Sharon does not belong. This passage also corroborates Rafe's function in the drama. Daisy uses his presence as a means to exclude and replace the friend that has forsaken her, by describing him as an entertaining man — a musician and a singer — but insisting that neither he nor herself is interested in Sharon anymore.

It can be inferred as well from Sharon's response to Daisy's pretences that the latter does not have any friends outside of a very limited circle composed only of those who ignored her birthday. Moreover, a subsequent fragment of conversation attests that Sharon understands perfectly well the motivation behind Daisy's bringing Rafe to her place. "I did not pick him up because I was angry with you," Daisy declares, obviously trying to affirm her independence from Sharon. "I don't care that you weren't at my birthday party ..." (Bolt 26). Therefore, through her behaviour towards the hidden players and the indirect information gathered from phone conversations, Daisy comes across as a character who tries to negate her dependence on her friends by punishing them with eviction when they deprive her of their requested presence.

Daisy's dependence on Sharon is most explicitly formulated in a sardonic comment on the latter's career as a duck in the "national tour of Disney on Parade." Daisy recounts to Rafe:

I could always dance better than Sharon could, but I

never had the guts [...] Sharon thinks I'm a pushover. She quit [Disney on Parade] the second time she toured through Buffalo. She took a Greyhound bus to Toronto and moved in with me [...] And I am a pushover. I let her stay, for three weeks in a bachelor apartment. I might have let her stay for ever but she met Eddie. [...] I'm glad she met Eddie even if I sit around till 9:30 looking at a dinner that's supposed to be served at eight and a stupid looking chocolate cake [...] Because what I really wanted tonight was an overpriced drink in a cheap bar and a chance to meet new people.
(Bolt 7).

Daisy, on her own avowal, is a "gutless" character who prefers to live with her friend in a tiny apartment rather than to see her leave. Furthermore, the last part of this passage not only confirms her rancour against Sharon, but also implies a causality, in Daisy's mind, between Sharon's abandoning her, and the necessity "to meet new people." Her main preoccupation, it thus seems, is to secure companionship in the closed milieu she inhabits. Significantly, Daisy's trading Sharon for Rafe is conveyed through the fact that the hospitality once offered to the former is now extended to the latter. "You've got your whole wardrobe. You've got your whole repertoire," Daisy tells Rafe in their introductory conversation. "I picked you up and you may move in for the next six months" (Bolt 2). At the very beginning of the play, Daisy had already signalled, in one of her first actions, her intention to shut out her absent friends and shut in Rafe. "Daisy turns on the light," writes the dramatist in her first stage directions, "pulls him into the apartment, closes the door behind them and bolts it" (Bolt 1).

Daisy's energy is thus directed inwards, towards her immediate environment, either secluding or expelling those who

surround her. It should not come as a surprise, therefore, that her desire for company on her birthday takes the form of an urgent need for sexual intercourse — an utmost realisation of the other's presence *inside*. "Sex is not the only thing in my life," she explains to Rafe, "but it is the only thing now, that's all. I'm very single-minded" (Bolt 19).

In the person of Rafe, however, Daisy does not find a companion imperatively longing to share the intimacy of her apartment. Rather, Rafe wishes to explode the limits of Daisy's narrow existence, and open her eyes to another world; at least, this is what he says.

Rafe: You think making jokes is adventurous. You think if you go somewhere you've never been before ... If you wake up in the morning and you don't know who with, that's an adventure.

Daisy: Yes. I do.

Rafe: It is low level adventure. It's low life.

[...]

I need to get you away from your birthday parties and your bank job.

[...]

I'm going to rescue you. I'm going to tear these sheets in strips and throw you over my shoulder and climb down over the balcony just like in the movies.

(Bolt 18-9, 20).

Rafe plans to escape to Lima, Peru, where Daisy and himself could live as romantic bandits. "Hey Daisy, Nicky's on the phone," says Rafe at the beginning of Act Two. "[...] I told him you're running off with me. I told him you're going to be a bandit queen, is that Okay?" (Bolt 35). Rafe's gaze, therefore, like that of Hélène Primeau in Les Beaux Dimanches, is aligned towards a liberating "ailleurs." Unlike Hélène, however, Rafe is

seriously deranged, and his irrational desire to escape translates into senseless violence.

Daisy first realizes the danger that Rafe represents in Act One, when he divulges, "I just got out of prison [...] I murdered a girl" (Bolt 23). Daisy's immediate reaction to this revelation is eloquent. Rather than calling the police or trying to run away from her apartment, she calls Sharon and urges her to return home: "Sharon? You have to come home right away [...] I am here. Alone. In this apartment with a very weird guy" (Bolt 25). Daisy thus seeks to recapture the sense of gregarious security that Sharon's presence in her bachelor's suite affords. This action, however, entails Daisy's failure to carry through with the process of replacement launched by the initial action of picking up Rafe. Appropriately, once this crisis has been defused, following Rafe's own initiative to call the police and leave, Daisy hastens to re-affirm her inward lust. In a matter of minutes, after the incident that almost caused Rafe's departure, the intimate mood is reestablished, and Daisy reiterates the alleged premise: "We're going to bed together, that's all!"

Correspondingly, Rafe re-assumes his self-ordained role as the rescuer of imprisoned ladies; so much so that when Daisy locks herself in the bathroom, to slip into something more comfortable, he feels compelled to save her, even calling Eddie and Sharon at four in the morning to proclaim his intention: "Hello, Eddie ... Listen my name is Tyrone Power and I'm trying to rescue a friend of yours [...] she locked herself in the

bathroom and the last girl I know did that was taking sleeping pills" (Bolt 31). Parallel to Rafe's reinstatement as the hero, Sharon is cast as the villain once more. "She's going to tear my throat out," says Daisy, following Rafe's annoying phone call, "Sharon is going to kill me" (Bolt 32). But this deadly prospect does not abate the romantic fervour of the characters. As the act comes to an end, "Rafe carries her to bed like Clark Gable carried Vivien Leigh in *Gone with the Wind*" (Bolt 33).

At the beginning of Act Two, they have enjoyed intercourse, and a fulfilled Daisy is singing in the shower, while Rafe is accompanying her on the guitar. As the audience learns later in the play, over the course of the intermission, while Daisy was in the bathroom, Sharon arrived at the apartment and was murdered by Rafe.⁴ When the lights come up on the scene of the murder, the body has been hidden, and Rafe, planning their escape to Peru, shows no sign of panic or remorse. However, his discourse and actions are becoming increasingly nonsensical. For instance, he claims to have phoned Nick's wife to express his concern about Daisy being locked up in the bathroom: "I said you'd been locked in the bathroom for half an hour with a blow dryer and a bottle of Vitabath, but she didn't care." This is in keeping with his role as the hero of captive women. The contradiction, however, is that he, himself, locked Daisy inside the bathroom for no apparent reason (Bolt 35-6). Shortly after, he exhorts Daisy to call Nick to inform him of their plan to escape together. But the phone having been unplugged during his struggle with Sharon, Rafe must stop Daisy from following his

own advice, and draws her out to the balcony where he gives her another one of his spiels about the attractiveness of the outside world: "Look over that way. The sun's going to rise in an hour and a half. [...] Look up, Daisy. Come on. We're supposed to stare off to the future. We're idealistic" (Bolt 38).

For most of the second act, Rafe's lies and eccentricities, although increasingly annoying, do not exasperate Daisy to the point that she would ask him to leave. She simply tells him "shut up," and "stop smiling at me" (Bolt 45). Even his categorical refusal to let her open the door to the police — responding to a complaint about the couple's noisy conduct — does not alarm her inordinately. "I could be evicted, couldn't I?" is the extent of her concern at this point, translating her overarching preoccupation with the inside (Bolt 40). When he does allow her to open, and she catches sight of the cops waiting for the elevator, she elects not to alert them, locks the door behind her, and only says, "I would hate it if Sharon were here," thus ratifying the replacement of Sharon by Rafe as her companion behind closed doors (Bolt 42).

Only when she eventually finds out that the phone has been pulled out of the wall does Daisy start suspecting Rafe very seriously. Her suspicions are shockingly confirmed when Sharon's body is displayed before her (Bolt 47). Again, her first reaction to the threat is to seek refuge with her friends, but for the first time in the play, she realizes that the menace is within, and that she must go outside to evade it.

Daisy: I am getting out of here, right now.

Rafe: Where are you going?

Daisy: I'm going to call Eddie. I'm going to call Nicky (Bolt 48).

Rafe blocking the passage to the door, Daisy runs to the balcony and tries to call her neighbour, Riva, to her rescue; the same neighbour whom she has disparaged all through the play (Bolt 49). But Riva, like most of the other hidden players rejected by Daisy earlier, does not offer any help.

Throughout the drama Daisy has strived to erase the outside world, repudiating the friends who chose to be elsewhere on her birthday, and declaring, "I don't know my neighbours. I hate my neighbours" (Bolt 10). However, until the end, she fails to recognize that in the interim the threat from the outside has infiltrated the inside. Despite his disturbed psychology, Rafe perceived this contradiction early in the play. "You're the kind of loony lady who locks herself in with an axe murderer," he remarked to Daisy in Act One (Bolt 26). This comment is recalled in the climactic scene of Act Two, when Daisy is vainly seeking to escape the murderer. "You know you could get killed out there," says Rafe ironically, "that's why you locked the door, remember" (Bolt 48). Her effort to obliterate the outside, therefore, turns against herself as she is now severed from external succour.

Daisy must thus find means of defence within her closed surroundings. But, in accord with the rest of the play, she still turns towards Sharon for help. Bolt finds an adroit

gimmick to manifest Daisy's dependence on Sharon's presence in the confines of the apartment, by having Rafe play a tape recording of his struggle with the victim. The sounds heard on tape are accompanied by Rafe's description of the action:

Rafe: (*Describing sounds on tape*) And she thought she could run to the kitchen. She's looking through the drawers in there ... She has a knife now.

(*Daisy runs towards the kitchen and rummages through the drawers.*)

[...]

Rafe: I kicked the knife away. Right under the Hide-A-Bed Sofa.

(*Daisy dives for the floor, rummaging around under the sofa*)

Daisy: There is a knife here. Sharon's knife...

(*She produces it*) (Bolt 50).

Daisy's re-enactment of Sharon's motions, as well as her insistence that this is "Sharon's knife," confirms the former's reliance on the latter, and her attempt to find shelter by her friend's side. She fails to realize, however, that Rafe is insinuating himself between Sharon and her through the live commentaries that he adds to the recorded sounds and, by doing so, is actually directing her along Sharon's fatal itinerary.

If Daisy does not meet with Sharon's tragic fate, at the end of the path, it is not because the former profits from the latter's postmortem aid. In fact, the recording of Sharon's agony serves only as part of Rafe's demented game; he even puts the knife in the dead woman's hand, calling her "Tony Perkins' mother" (Bolt 51). Rather, what allows Daisy to survive is the fact that Rafe, in his madness, provokes his own death. Indeed, Daisy's stabbing of Rafe is partly the accomplishment of the

assailant himself, who dares her to jab him. "You won't gut me," says Rafe, impersonating Alan Ladd. "You won't have the guts" (Bolt 51). A moment later, he throws himself onto Daisy's knife. "She stabs him. Once. Twice. Three Times. She tries to stop the blood. He is dying" (Bolt 52). "On tape, the act begins again," reads Bolt's following, and last, stage direction. Daisy's joyful singing voice, recorded at the opening of Act Two, juxtaposed to the bloody spectacle that closes the drama, expresses conclusively the discrepancy between her desire for a presence inside and the disastrous outcome of this desire.

As the foregoing demonstrates, the dialectic of action in One Night Stand pits Daisy's wish for a cloistered entourage against Rafe's urge to break the boundaries of this secluded environment. Within this dialectical framework, Rafe functions as the antagonistic agent of Daisy's fall. He conducts a reductio ad absurdum of her confining disposition, and forces her to break with her ensconced existence by stabbing him, while he, himself, fails to realize his insane dream of escaping to Peru. The dialectic of imagery of the play confirms the contrast between Daisy's housebound inclination and the efferent energy displayed by Rafe.

Dialectic of Imagery:

The very first stage direction of the play foreshadows one of the main issues developed in the text, namely, the infringement of the outside upon the inside. "A highrise apartment. No one home," writes Bolt at the onset of the text. "Light coming

in the balcony window from buildings across the street." The outside world is already present in Daisy's bachelor's suite, when she "turns on the light, pulls him into the apartment, closes the door behind them and bolts it" (Bolt 1). Turning on the light, thus eclipsing illumination from the exterior, and locking the door behind them partake in the same intention to obliterate the outside. Daisy's subsequent banging on the wall to stop the music emanating from Riva's apartment completes the process. The focus is now entirely inwards, centring on Rafe, who takes out his guitar and starts playing.

Immediately, however, tension arises between the two characters, for Rafe plays country and western music and "even if he were good, Daisy would hate it. She isn't comfortable west of Bathurst Street" (Bolt 1). Thus Bolt, in a stage direction admittedly problematic to transpose into concrete theatrical language, explicitly signifies the latent conflict of the drama in terms opposing Daisy's geographical confinement to Rafe's imaginary persona as a wandering cowboy. Rafe, in his third spoken line of the text, picks up on this dichotomy and foretells the outcome of the play with a strong dose of irony: "And you'll be trapped here with a fugitive from Grand Ole Opry" (Bolt 2). Through the rest of the play, much of the figurative material attached to Rafe builds on this notion of the fugitive carrying with him the mythic images of the roaming hero.

The allusions to films that permeate the play are all employed by Rafe to portray himself as the romantic fugitive who rescues captive ladies. From Tyrone Power, in Captain from

Castile (1947), who escapes to the Aztec Empire, to Warren Beatty in Bonnie and Clyde (1967), who is always on the run with his female acolyte, to say nothing of Tony Curtis in The Son of Ali Baba (1952), and Alan Ladd in This Gun for Hire (1942), all the movie characters with whom Rafe identifies, whether outlaw or prince, are heroic figures who challenge the oppressor and break the boundaries imposed upon them.⁵ Even when Rafe does not refer specifically to movie mythology to define himself, his rhetoric still summons personages associated with freedom, rebelliousness and disregard for prescribed confines. For instance, he analogizes the magnitude of his sexual potency in these terms: "I make love like Genghis Khan and the Mongol hordes" (Bolt 43). The image of barbaric nomadism evoked by this allegory contrasts markedly with Daisy's eroticism which, as suggested above, parallels her inward tendency and longing for containment.

On a different plane of discourse, Rafe's verbal representation of his actual milieu also bears witness to his abhorrence of the narrow confines of Daisy's world. His impression of Daisy's bathroom, for instance, speaks volumes on his aversion to closed spaces. "It's safe in there, isn't it?" he comments ironically about the bathroom, "it's secure. It's a minimal sort of environment but a space you can understand. Thoroughly. It's like a bank job" (Bolt 37). In a few words, Rafe thus summarizes Daisy's whole perspective on her existence, her desire for security, and her need to maintain a firm grasp on her minimal environment. "I go crazy," he adds later on, "when I think of

you locked up in the bathroom. When I think you might have killed yourself" (Bolt 45). For Rafe, therefore, the safeness of a closed space, or a stable job for that matter, is linked to death, especially suicide, hence his obsession with rescuing Daisy from the bathroom in Act One. Although we never know if Rafe was actually in prison or if it is just another one of his fantasies, the correlation that he establishes between the bathroom-cum-cell and death would seem to confirm his status as an ex-convict loathing confinement (Bolt 23, 44).

Conversely, Rafe associates open space and nature with life and change, as his description of the northern woods of Kapuskasing and downtown Detroit illustrates:

[...] you can cry all you want to about getting back to the land, but the land is very nutsy when you come right down to it. I don't know if you have ever come right down to it, but you know, you can be out in the bush and the nutsy thing is there is nothing going on out there. Nothing. There are a lot of people who will try to tell you that nothing is peaceful, but don't let them kid you because it's noisy. I mean there is the wind in the trees all the time. [...] The wind in the grass. Of course, there is no wonder that the noise in the country is so omnipresent because of all the stuff going on. Nature. Nature is very busy, of course. There are so many things growing and eating and changing into chlorophyll that it makes the Yonge Street Strip look like the core of downtown Detroit. Have you ever been to Detroit? It can be very quiet there. Just as quiet sometimes as the middle of the northern woods, but you always know the next sound you hear is going to tear your guts out (Bolt 22).

Rafe's conception of nature, with its "things growing and eating," contrasts markedly with his apprehension of the bathroom, where things only die. Similarly, the notion of the minimal environment of the bathroom that one can understand

thoroughly, differs drastically from the "nutsiness" of the land.

But beyond the binary distinction that Rafe establishes between the bathroom and nature, that which communicates most effectively his aspiration to trespass boundaries is the connection that he draws between contradictory notions. Nothingness harbouring the frantic activity of nature, downtown Detroit which is as quiet as the northern woods, sounds that tear your guts out, all these elements, which in logical argument would be kept separate, are linked to one another in Rafe's demented oration. The very irrationalism that Rafe exhibits from beginning to end constitutes an evident sign of his refusal to accept the limitations of Daisy's understandable space.

Indeed, through most of the play, especially in the first act, Daisy requires things to be clear and make sense. She is, of her own avowal, "very single-minded" (Bolt 19). She cannot accept Sharon's excuse that she forgot her birthday, for anyone with a logical mind would remember that they were both born on the 20th of the month (Bolt 9). Similarly, Nick's justification for his absence is not adequate, for he was at the party the previous year, and it did not conflict with his wife's subscription concert series (Bolt 13). In the same manner, Daisy seeks to apply her logic to the one-night-stand situation. "Can we please remember that I picked you up, that's all," she tells Rafe. "We are not supposed to be decorating a Christmas tree" (Bolt 14). For Daisy, every situation entails a set of rules. Actions must lead to precise reactions: "When somebody knocks,

you answer the door" (Bolt 40). Verbal communication is the means to exchange accurate information, thus those who lie all the time are "weird" (Bolt 25). Not surprisingly, Daisy demands an explanation for Rafe's guessing her occupation as a bank clerk and professional relationship with Nick (he is her boss), because such divinatory practices defy logic (Bolt 16, 19-20). Moreover, unlike sexual intercourse in which the presence of the other is regulated, Rafe's mind-reading represents an uncontrollable infringement of the outside upon the inside. It should be pointed out, however, that from the first scene of the play, Daisy's apostasy is already foreshadowed in the fact that she, herself, lies to her phone callers, and plays the mind-reader as well: "It's an act, isn't it? You're all country boy and flannel shirts and aw shucks..." (Bolt 2).

Consequently, Rafe's contradictory discourse and his constant lies are verbal attempts to explode the limits of logical rhetoric. Even his insane fascination with the movies partakes of this endeavour to tear down the walls that separate reality and fiction, truth and lie, the inside and the outside. Referring back to Julia Kristeva's definition of the abject as what breaks boundaries, it can be argued that Rafe is the embodiment of "ce qui ne respect pas les limites, les places, les règles. L'entre-deux, l'ambigu, le mixte. Le traître, le menteur, le criminel à bonne conscience, le voleur sans vergogne, le tueur qui prétend sauver [...]"⁶ Rafe is precisely this abject liar and killer who pretends to save.

In this respect, the appearance of Sharon's corpse in Act

Two marks the turning point of the play, for it epitomizes the encroachment of the external world upon Daisy's protected universe, the limit beyond which there is no possibility of return. Kristeva:

Si l'ordure signifie l'autre coté de la limite, où je ne suis pas et qui me permet d'être, le cadavre, le plus écoeurant des déchets, est une limite qui a tout envahi. [...] Cet ailleurs que j'imagine au-delà du présent, ou que j'allucine pour pouvoir, dans un présent, vous parler, vous penser, est maintenant ici, jeté, abjecté, dans «mon» monde.⁷

Sharon's body is the concrete sign that the outside world has crept into Daisy's "monde." Yet, Daisy is doubly responsible for this invasion, inasmuch as she both allowed Rafe inside her suite and asked Sharon to return home, where she met with death. Daisy's participation in the intrusion of the outside world is encapsulated earlier in the play in a seemingly irrelevant symbol that now acquires significance, namely, the Christmas tree.

The anecdotal premise is that, against building regulations, Daisy smuggled a real tree into her apartment for Christmas, and kept it on her balcony until March (Bolt 14). The image of the dead Christmas tree, that Rafe undertakes to decorate, is revealing, for it connotes both Daisy's attraction towards emblems of the outside world — perhaps a tree from Rafe's northern woods — and her destructive aspiration to confine them. The same attraction led her to pick up Rafe and to literally lock him inside her apartment. Similarly, Daisy welcomed Sharon to move in with her, after the latter's whirl-

wind tour of the United States, and "might have let her stay for ever but she met Eddie." Hence, through the symbol of the Christmas tree, one can perceive the weakness that led to Daisy's demise. In spite of her usual predilection for upholding boundaries, she has a penchant for letting in and *keeping in* that which should strictly stay out; yielding to this penchant, the needleless tree signifies, leads to death.

In the light of this analysis of the dialectic of imagery, Daisy's final gesture — trying to stop the blood — takes on all its meaning. Daisy vainly attempts to restore the boundary of Rafe's body that her own action has shattered, as the play itself tries to undo its tragic dénouement: "on tape, the act begins again." The stabbing of Rafe echoes the introductory action of letting him inside the apartment. Both mark the breaking of a boundary without affording definitive passage from one side to the other. While Rafe fails to realize a complete escape with Daisy, his presence still contaminates the inside world within which Daisy remains trapped. It is the worst of both worlds. Unlike in the previous plays, there is no winner in One Night Stand. The winners, in this drama, are all off-stage: Riva, Nicky, Eddie, those who remain in their quarters and thus avoid the bloody end that Sharon, Rafe and Daisy experience.

Implicational Dialectic:

Although there are no winners on stage, it is still possible to abstract certain implicational dichotomies representative of the two poles between which Daisy moves in the course

of the play. As in the previous case studies, there are several broad dichotomies that apply to One Night Stand, but that do not bring into focus particularly instructive facets of the drama. The compound *Truth/Lie*, for instance, which delimits the two extremes between which Daisy's discourse oscillates, and the set *Reason/Passion*, which covers the range of responses that she exhibits during the play, both describe fittingly enough the text's implied dialectic, without pinpointing the specific motivating forces that make the drama tick.

As in the two previous analyses, these motivating forces are most pertinently abstracted through the duality *Afferent-withdrawal/Efferent-escape*. As in Les Beaux Dimanches, this expression epitomizes simultaneously two levels of tension. First, it accounts for the concrete clash between Daisy's initial inward concentration into the minimalist space of her bachelor suite and Rafe's frantic outward fantasies. And on another, more general plane, it also denotes the contradictory notions of endorsement and transgression of boundaries. From her introductory gesture of locking herself in with Rafe, to her requirement that the rules of the one night stand be respected — "Can we please remember that I picked you up, that's all. We are not supposed to be decorating a Christmas tree" (Bolt 14) — Daisy's actions and discourse, at least in the first half of the play, translate her afferent aspiration to bring all the elements of her existence towards a stable and secure centre, whose boundaries should be maintained.

However, as we have seen above, her desire for an afferent-

withdrawal works against her, for she is "the kind of loony lady who locks herself in with an axe murderer" (Bolt 26). Her pulling Rafe inside her circumscribed milieu results directly in her having to explode her protected nucleus, as her fatal stabbing of Rafe shatters the ultimate boundary, that of the body, whose flow of blood she both provokes and tries to contain. Thus, exactly like Victor Primeau who follows the same negative path, Daisy is made rudely aware of the failure of her wish for enclosure while remaining tragically incapable of realizing the efferent-escape also vainly sought by Rafe.

In the previous chapter, I identified a link between the wish for afferent-withdrawal and the advocacy of social establishment. This link also appears in One Night Stand. As Rafe notes when talking about Daisy's bathroom, there is a nexus between her desire to maintain a minimal environment and her social position as a bank clerk: "It's safe in there, isn't it? It's secure. It's a minimal sort of environment but a space you can understand. Thoroughly. It's like a bank job" (Bolt 37). Rather than being labelled *defence of honour* as in Wedding in White, or *bourgeois prosaicism* as in Les Beaux Dimanches, Daisy's afferent social stance is best epitomized by the term *middle-class security*, opposing Rafe's fascination with *rebellious adventure*.

The *Middle-class security/Rebellious adventure* dialectic is implied early in the play when Rafe belittles Daisy's middle-class notion of adventure: "You think making jokes is adventurous [...] If you wake up in the morning and you don't know

who with, that's an adventure. — Daisy: Yes. I do. — Rafe: It is low level adventure" (Bolt 19). The dichotomy is most clearly manifested, however, in the conversation that opens Act Two, in which Rafe talks about Daisy and himself running off to Peru, where she could become a bandit queen, and Daisy replies, "I have to work on Monday" (Bolt 35-6).

Daisy's initial concern with middle-class security also finds expression in her relationship with Nick, who happens to be her superior at the bank. In an early exchange, Rafe again perceives Daisy's circumstances with surprising acumen: "I bet he told you he could get you into an IBM Training Course. So your future would be secure." "We don't argue all the time, anyway," replies Daisy, thus not denying the sense of security that going out with a bank manager affords her, and even implying that there is little more to their relationship than a mutually agreeable business arrangement (Bolt 20). Interestingly enough, shortly before discovering that Rafe has unplugged the phone, which plunges her definitively into the camp of the murderous antagonist, Daisy declares, "I'm a bandit queen, remember" (Bolt 45), thus acknowledging her relinquishment of middle-class security and her adherence to Rafe's rebellious desire for adventure.

The characterological trait that precipitates Daisy's passage from Nick's security to Rafe's rebelliousness is neither growing awareness, as in the case of Victor Primeau, nor attraction toward facile contentment, as for Jeanie Dougal. Rather, it is her failed attempt to assert her independence from

her entourage that leads to her demise. From her picking up Rafe at a bar to her hanging up on Nick, Daisy's initial behaviour is aimed at asserting that she is among those who "do not mind being isolated and alone, you know. Some people like privacy" (Bolt 13). But throughout the play, she reveals in increasingly evident terms her actual dependence on her friends. This dependence on the presence of others leads her to keep Rafe by her side at the end of Act One although he has admitted to killing a woman, and causes her also to ask Sharon to return to the apartment, which results in the latter's death.

Thus the doublet that best abridges the antithetical temperamental inclinations featured in the play is the tandem *Independence/Dependence*. Clearly, the protagonists, especially Nick, but also Riva who ignores her neighbour's call for help, are characterized by their independence from Daisy. And it is this independence that the apostatic figure tries to emulate at the beginning of the play. Rafe, on the other hand, does not refrain from expressing his dependence on Daisy. He asks her to marry him (Bolt 33), and declares his attachment to her in unequivocal terms: "We get along. We like each other. We're like family, aren't we, Daisy? [...] I want to take care of you, Daisy. I feel responsible for you" (Bolt 45-6). Daisy moves from Nick's frustrating independence, which she fails to reproduce, to the maniacal dependence that she shares with Rafe and that culminates in her killing him, a gesture that irrevocably bonds them together.

This analysis of the implicational dialectic, much less

complex than that of the previous plays given the relative simplicity of the text, allows us to identify the three principal tensions implied by the structure of the text. Once again the Afferent-withdrawal/Efferent-escape duality represents the central motives of the disputing units. This antinomy is complemented by the pairing Middle-class security/Rebellious adventure, which associates the inward impulse with a desire for professional and emotional stability, and the outward drive with a wish for lawless roaming in the open spaces of Peru. Finally the set Independence/Dependence signifies Daisy's contradictory inclinations, which leads her first to reject her friends, but ultimately to request their presence by her side, with the fatal consequences that we know. As in the case of Wedding in White and Les Beaux Dimanches, One Night Stand can be abridged by more than three implicational doublets. However, the other antinomies that could be advanced, like *Rationality/Irrationality*, *Calmness/Emotionalism*, *Simplicity/Complexity*, *Single-minded/Scatter-brained*, would only corroborate the key dichotomies explicated above.

Conclusion:

This analysis of the drama's dialectical structure thus reveals that, in spite of some divergences with the previous plays, One Night Stand shares fundamental similarities with its predecessors. Like Fruet's and Dubé's texts, Bolt's work centres on a clash between an afferent inclination expressed through Daisy's seclusive actions, and an efferent drift, incarnated by

Rafe's eruptive behaviour and discourse. Exactly as in the previous plays, the efferent-escape objective in One Night Stand leads to a dead end, affording no possible alternative to the afferent force.

It is worth noting, however, that One Night Stand differs from the previous plays, especially Wedding in White, inasmuch as the seclusive milieu is seriously weakened at the closure of Bolt's work following the infringement of the efferent stress upon the inside. Indeed, preservation of enclosure is realized, paradoxically, at the expense of the security that it previously afforded. The next play, René-Daniel Dubois's Being at Home with Claude, presents a similar erosion of interior safety resulting from the main character's adamancy to preserve seclusion. But Dubois's play goes much further than Bolt's in its use of paradox and irony.

NOTES

¹. Carol Bolt, One Night Stand (Toronto: Playwrights Co-op, 1977). Subsequent references to this work in this chapter will appear within parentheses in the text, except when additional comments require notes.

². Bolt labels One Night Stand a "play about nothing" in Rota Lister, "An Interview with Carol Bolt," World Literature Written in English 17 (Apr. 1978): 151.

³. Expression used by Thomas Price in his chapter on the apostatic-negative model. See Price, Dramatic Structure and Meaning in Theatrical Productions (San Francisco: Edwin Mellen Press, 1992) 137. Subsequent references to this work in this chapter will appear within parentheses in the text, except when additional comments require notes.

⁴. That Rafe finds the time to lure and kill Sharon while Daisy is taking a shower has been perceived by some critics as one of the main implausibilities of Bolt's text, even in its cinematic form. See, for instance, Janet Maslin, "One Night Stand Romance-cum-thriller," New York Times Apr. 29, 1982: C22:5.

⁵. For references to these films see Bolt, 51, 47, 19, 51, respectively.

⁶. Julia Kristeva, Les Pouvoirs de l'Horreur: Essai sur l'abjection (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1980) 12.

⁷. Kristeva, 11.

CHAPTER VI. BEING AT HOME WITH CLAUDE¹

Synopsis:

Location and Time: A judge's office in Montréal's Palais de Justice, on 5 July 1967, during the last hour of a lengthy interrogation.

A male prostitute called Yves, only referred to as "Lui" in the stage directions, has given himself up following the murder of a university student named Claude, but he refuses to explain his motive. Throughout the one-act play, a police inspector, identified only as "Inspecteur", tries to reconstruct the events surrounding the crime from the snatches of information wrung out of the accused without, however, managing to disentangle the web of paradoxes with which he is presented. The endless interrogation recesses only once, when Yves goes to the washroom. During the break, the Inspecteur phones his wife and discusses the case with his assistant. As soon as Yves returns, the questioning resumes with the same inconclusiveness.

Only at the very end of the play does Yves finally reveal the impetus behind the slaying of Claude, his lover. He slit his throat as they were enjoying a mutual orgasm to preserve this instant of pure ecstasy from the corruption of the outside world. At the climactic point of this perfect communion with Claude, Yves saw troubling images of the sordid universe that defined his existence, peopled with ingrate clients and impersonal coition in the dark trails of Mont-Royal, and realized that this ruthless environment would never permit their loving relationship to survive:

Pis ça s'pouvait pas qu'on reste enfermés comme des moines, les stores baissés, à vivre du grand amour. Pis ça s'pouvait pas qu'on r'trouve c'qui s'passait là, queuqu'menutes par mois, en passant l'est' du temps à négocier avec tout l'monde. Fas que tout c'que j'me rappelle c'est que d'in coup, j'avais l'couteau à steak dans une main. Pis ça s'en v'nait. (Dubois 108)

Following his confession, Yves is taken into police custody, leaving the Inspecteur baffled by such a revelation.

Preliminaries to the Analysis:

Unlike in the previous chapters, the synopsis of Dubois's play does not render its general structure readily discernible, for although Being at Home with Claude is composed almost exclusively of dialogues between two men, the dialectical arrangement that it adopts is far more convoluted than the dual configuration found in One Night Stand.² However, the very intricacy that makes it difficult to perceive the text's structure actually forms an integral component of the dramatic situation. Indeed, "not understanding what is going on" is part and parcel of the characters' experience, as this statement from the Inspecteur attests:

J'ai entendu ben des histoires de fous, dans ma vie, mais celle-là, c'est 'a cerise su l'sundae: un gars qui s'déclare coupab', qu'on aurait jamais pu trouver parce que parsonne aurait jamais pu penser qu'y connaissait 'a victime, pis qui, à place de s'farmer 'a gueule, vire la ville à l'envers pis veut faire chanter un juge, pour que l'juge le disculpe, après qu'c'est lui qui s'est livré. [...] y nous fait baver pendant trente-queuques heures à attend' que l'juge arrive. Pis y veut pas qu'on sache son nom. Pis y veut pas qu'on dise le nom du gars qu'y a tué d'avant lui. Pis y veut même pas nous dire pourquoi. Sacrament, c'est-tu moi qui est fou ou bedon si y'a queuqu'chose qui marche pas dans ta tête à toi? (Dubois 72-3)

The Inspecteur's inability to make sense of the circumstances of the crime as related by Yves parallels the spectator/reader's confusion before the circular dynamic of the drama.

Yves's divulgence of his motive, at the very end, does bring an element of closure to the meandering composition of the play. To a certain extent, this ultimate confession marks Yves's failure to remain silent under the relentless pressure of the Inspecteur. Indicatively, Yves's last word of the play is "J'lâche," thus voicing his resignation (Dubois 110). As such, the end of the drama would seem to trace the apostatic-positive movement of Yves towards the Inspecteur, as the former ultimately abdicates before the latter. But this description does not draw the complete picture of the play's dialectic. Indeed, while it is true that Yves eventually yields to the Inspecteur's demands by providing an explanation for Claude's murder, it must also be recognized that the Inspecteur fails as well in his attempt to rationalize the circumstances of the crime.

Yves only agrees to disclose his story after the Inspecteur has renounced trying to make sense of the case. In his last line, before Yves's avowal, the Inspecteur admits that he has now reached the point where he is "trop fatigué pour penser" (Dubois 94). Fittingly, Yves's subsequent revelation is disjointed and highly introspective, thus denying the logical closure hitherto desired by his opponent. As drama critics Hélène Beauchamp and Thierry Hentsch write about the Inspecteur:

[...] à bout de raison, incapable de reconstruire le mobile du crime et d'expliquer le comportement subséquent du meurtrier, le «fin limier», épuisé par sa

veine enquête, laisse enfin libre cours à l'expression de la vérité : la quête d'amour et d'absolu du prévenu.³

The collapse of the Inspecteur's rational approach, however, does not lead to a happy compromise in which the law officer, moved by Yves's emotional confession, would generously offer to help the repentant young man. Rather, the play ends on a *double defeat*, as Yves is taken away in police custody, and the Inspecteur remains in the judge's office, uncertain of which action to perform next (Dubois 111). The organization of Dubois's play, I would thus suggest, follows Thomas Price's seventh dialectical model, namely, the *synthetic-implied* configuration, which "develops an oppressive conflict between two equally dysfunctional forces [...] and leaves the struggle either stalemated or so unhappily concluded that, in either case, the auditor is drawn to supply in his own mind an acceptable alternative."⁴ In this structure, the notion of protagonist-versus-antagonist is irrelevant, for both sides eventually end up in the losing camp (Price 311). The analysis that follows will attempt to elucidate Dubois's employment of the synthetic-implied structure whose "invariable mode" is irony (Price 315).

Dialectic of Action:

Since the dramatist emphasizes particularly the verbal recapitulation of deeds *carried out before* the beginning of the play, the study of the dialectic of action will rely heavily on the characters' narration of incidents anterior to the inter-

rogation. Unlike in the traditional closed drama, where the description of foregoing occurrences provides the necessary information to draw a meaningful picture of the past, the account of pre-textual events in Being at Home with Claude affords only an incomplete sketch of the antecedents.⁵ Numerous pieces remain missing in the puzzle that both the Inspecteur and the spectator are trying to solve in the course of the play. The analysis of the dialectic of action will thus involve a certain dose of speculation. However, the conjectural conclusions inferred at this initial stage of investigation will be validated afterwards through the examination of the dialectic of imagery, which will suggest a correspondence between the actions reported by the personages and the semiotic fabric of their narrations.

The source of drama in Being at Home with Claude resides in a set of paradoxical actions effected by Yves prior to the commencement of the play. First, Yves killed Claude, the only man he ever loved, his alter ego (Dubois 95, 110). Second, he chose to surrender to the authorities rather than flee, as he could have done according to the Inspecteur's statement quoted above. Third, he arranged to obtain the keys of the judge's office, and secured the assistance of a journalist who agreed to expose the judge's involvement with male prostitutes if Yves is forced out of the office by the police (Dubois 44). Interestingly enough, these precursory actions, although seemingly contradictory, all evince a similar wish for enclosure and retreat from the outside world. Here, we already perceive the recurrent

structure of afferent-withdrawal identified in the three works analyzed before.

As remarked previously, Yves's long testimony at the end of the drama vindicates Claude's murder as the only means to protect their amorous relationship from the atrocities of the exterior world — the antithesis of their beautiful love. At the apex of sexual excitement, it dawned upon Yves that he had to take action to preserve this rare moment of intimacy with Claude. "[...] j'savais qu'y avait un move à faire," he relates to the Inspecteur,

Qu'on pourrait pus jamais r'sortir de c't'appartement-là comme avant. Pis y fallait pas. [...] J'étais en train d'me noyer en lui, avec lui. Pis y'avait l'restant du monde. Le contraire de c'qui était en train d'nous arriver. Je l'sais. Je l'sais qu'la vraie vie, c'est d'êt' capab' de faire l'un pis l'aut'. Je l'sais. Qu'y'a pas rien qu'la beauté. Je l'sais qu'y'a la marde. J'ai payé assez cher pour l'apprend', j'ai pas besoin d'cours là-d'sus. Mais là, j'pensais pas, c'était ça. Ça. Rien qu'ça. Pis ça s'pouvait pas qu'on reste enfermés comme des moines, les stores baissés, à vivre du grand amour. (Dubois 108)

To save Claude from having to face the outside world, from having to "passer ses journées dans marde," Yves killed him (Dubois 110). And to protect *himself* from the outside world, Yves not only elected to surrender to the authorities, but also found shelter in the judge's office whence, thanks to the journalist, he would not be expelled.

Other actions that Yves admits having performed before the beginning of the interrogation also portend his overriding wish to withdraw from the exterior world. After the slaying of Claude, Yves walked for a long time, aimlessly, before finding

himself in Westmount, looking at expensive houses, envying the peaceful life of those who inhabit them (Dubois 28-30). This homely vision prompted Yves to phone Claude, in the vain hope that his obfuscated recollection of the inconceivable deed he had just perpetrated might actually be only a figment of his imagination. His phone call left unanswered, but still under the impression that Claude was alive, Yves went from one gay bar to the next and, eventually, to Carré Dominion, where he usually met clients, in a deluded search for his lover (Dubois 76-9).

Having gradually forgotten, as it were, the horrific images associated with the preceding episode, Yves resumed his usual activities at the Carré (Dubois 81-9). But after having been picked up by an American tourist, who fell asleep before engaging in any sexual activity, Yves realized that something irrevocable had happened to him. "C'est là, dans chamb', avec le surfer ..." he confides, "c'est là que je me suis rendu compte que je pourrais pus jamais êt' un s'rin" (Dubois 89). Faced with a concrete example of the depravity from which he wanted to shield his relationship with Claude, Yves finally grasped the whole meaning of the night's events. Consequently, he signalled his withdrawal from the world of prostitution by leaving the slumbering client without taking his money, something he had never done before (Dubois 89).

Yet, after having recognized that his days as a roaming prostitute were over, Yves returned to the Carré and ended up with another John. This second encounter, however, was perceived by Yves as being of extraordinary import (Dubois 89). Although

the text is never explicit concerning the second customer, there are enough clues in the drama to deduce that it was in fact the judge, Gérard Delorme, in whose office the action of the play unfolds. Some of these clues are stated rather unambiguously in the script. For instance, we learn from Yves that he stole the office keys after Claude's murder (Dubois 91). Furthermore, the geographical territory mapped out in the discourses of the Inspecteur and Yves corroborates the presumption that the prostitute's last trick occurred in the judge's office.⁶ However, other crucial pieces of the puzzle are intertwined in a complex mesh of insinuations and cross-references that do not easily yield to interpretation. A close scrutiny of the text is required to construe a plausible, albeit uncertain, chronology of events: Judge Delorme brought Yves to his office, had sex with him and, out of shame and guilt, kicked the prostitute out without realizing that Yves had taken his keys.

Yves's brief allusion to his second client informs us that "après êt' v'nu, surtout saoul, y a honte. Pis y s'choque. Quand y vient, y a la face rouge comme une fraise, pis y res' de même après, tell'ment qu'y s'choque. D'habitude, y jette l'argent sur mon linge pis y m'met à porte" (Dubois 60). Later in the play, Yves recounts a typical brush with an anonymous John who is not specifically identified as the "second client", but whose behaviour is so analogous that he appears to be the same man. "Savez-vous ce que c'est, baiser avec un bonhomme haut d'même pis large de même." Yves asks the Inspecteur during his final diatribe,

[...] qui est v'nu en d'dans d'deux minutes. Pis que là, la peur le pogne. Qui a peur de s'faire pogner. La job. La femme. Les enfants. La retraite. Se faire traiter de tapette en lett' hautes de même. Pis que pendant qu'moi j'vas pisser (il indique la petite porte), a jus' le temps de r'placer un peu. Pis qui s'met à tourner comme une toupie. Qui sait pus où s'cacher. [...] Y pense à rien. Y calice vot' linge à terre à côté d'la porte pis y pousse vos runnings dessus à coups d'pieds. Pis là, y s'approche d'la porte des toilettes pis c'est plus fort que lui. Y s'met à crier, à hurler: «Dehors. Dehors. Envoye, sors d'icitte. Varmine. M'entends-tu? Dehors, j'ai dit. Dehors, dehors. Sors d'icitte.» Pis ça, c'est rien. Parce que si vous avez l'malheur de conter ça à quelqu'un, un d'vos amis, pis d'y dire à quoi vous pensiez, en pissant: que vous vous disiez que peut-êt' c'te fois-citte, y s'rait correct. [...] si vous êtes assez épais pour conter ça à quelqu'un, vous allez vous faire traiter de naïf. (Dubois 106-7)

Yves's assertion, in both accounts, that the customer became distressed and ashamed after intercourse and, subsequently, evicted him from the premises draws an evident parallel between the second client and the unnamed John portrayed in this passage. On the grounds of this correlation, a link between the second client and the judge can be established through a revealing gesture that the dramatist assigns to Yves in this excerpt, when he alludes to the washroom: "il indique la petite porte." This seemingly irrelevant motion manifests, in fact, that Yves is not only referring to a generic washroom in the apartment of a typical client. Rather, by pointing in the direction of the actual washroom behind the small door, Yves particularizes the situation that he is narrating and intimates that the "bonhomme haut d'même pis large de même" is the judge.⁷ Thus, through an intricate process of association that brings together equivocal comments dispersed throughout the drama, the

second client may be identified as Gérard Delorme.

Although Dubois never allows his audience to know exactly what happened in the judge's office, Yves's comment concerning his wishful thinking while urinating in the washroom is certainly coherent with the prevailing wish of the young man as conceived up to this point, to wit, finding shelter from the outside world. Had the second client (i.e. the judge) behaved as he hoped, namely, allowing him to stay rather than kicking him out, Yves's dreadful perception of the world outside of Claude's home could have been altered, since at least one other man would have shown solicitude, perhaps even love. But on that night, the inevitable gesture of expulsion took on the extraordinary import that Yves had anticipated, for it confirmed the impossibility of reproducing the sense of intimacy enjoyed in Claude's home.

Significantly, after having been booted out by his last client, Yves isolated himself completely in his apartment for two days, tearing off the phone and the door bell because "y m'as pris l'envie de ... de pus êt' là pour personne," he tells the Inspecteur, "que personne puisse me r'joind'. De disparaît'" (Dubois 68). Thus, the audience can surmise that following his lover's murder, Yves went through the process of (re)experiencing the images of depravation, indifference and loneliness that he saw while making love with Claude and, in doing so, substantiated his intuition that there was no place for the two of them out there, hence his choice to withdraw from the outside world and seek enclosure. In a brief but insightful study on Being at

Home with Claude and Marcel Dubé's Florence (1960), Maximilien Laroche also identifies Yves's behaviour in terms of his wish to withdraw from the world: "Il n'y a plus de solution de compromis et seule demeure la solution illusoire de *refuser le monde extérieur* en lui substituant un monde intérieur [my emphasis]." ⁸

Of course, there is always the possibility that Yves's account of the actions that transpired before the play is sheer prevarication, as has been insinuated by certain critics. For instance, Alexandre Lazaridès, in his review of the play, suspects that Yves is only pretending that he killed Claude to preserve their love.⁹ If this were the case, the foregoing analysis would be groundless. However, the principal action that Yves performs *during the play* itself, that is, his adamant refusal to disclose certain details about himself and Claude, confirms Yves's recourse to the "solution illusoire" of afferent-withdrawal into an internal world.

The Inspecteur's reading of some of the stenographic notes taken during the cross examination delineates emphatically Yves's cryptic demeanour:

Question: nom? Réponse: vous l'saurez pas. Question: prénom? Réponse: vous l'saurez pas. Age? C'est pas d'vos affaires. Vous m'avez. C'est moi qui l'a tué. Contentez-vous de t'ça pis crissez-moi la paix. Si vous voulez savoir queuqu' chose, appelez l'juge Delorme. (*Sautant plusieurs pages:*) Comment t'as faite pour entrer icitte? Réponse: charchez. C'est vot' métier, pas l'mien. (*Autre page:*) Question: qu'est-cé qu'tu fais dans vie? Réponse: j'baise. (Dubois 37-8)

Up to the last section of the play, Yves espouses the attitude summarized here, constantly evading the Inspecteur's queries,

giving only perfunctory replies, which results in a seemingly endless reiteration of the same questions and answers — a circular structure punctuated by the Inspecteur's chronic directive, "r'commence" (Dubois 20, 41, 73).

In addition to reproducing the "intentionally frustrating repetition" typical of the synthetic-implied structure as Price defines it (Price 311), Yves's unwillingness to respond directly to the Inspecteur echoes a common practice in modern plays of the type of Being at Home with Claude, in which characters use silence, or oblique phraseology, to manifest their withdrawal from the external environment. The following quote from Leslie Kane's The Language of Silence, which describes dramatic conditions akin to those deployed in Dubois's text, indicates the connection between retreat from language and retreat from the world:

In plays of inaction, when nonprogression in language and nonprogression in time, combined with confined settings, underscore the sensation of entrapment, silent response and muteness reinforce the portrait of a man as not merely estranged from his world, but entrapped in the hell of the self. As a metaphor of solitary confinement, silence confirms man's inability or unwillingness to relate to others and his concomitant torture by exclusion.¹⁰

The term "silence" is understood, here, as denoting "not only nonverbal symbolism, but also many forms of connotative, indirect dramatic expression such as innuendo, intimation, hesitation, reticence, and bivalent speech."¹¹ Consequently, Yves's laconic behaviour, his active short-circuiting of the communication mechanism between himself and the Inspecteur, can

certainly be read, in the light of Kane's description, as a retreat from the wor(1)d.

Furthermore, it is important to note that the information that Yves most contentiously refuses to *let out* pertains to his and Claude's names. In the opening exchange, the first question that Yves forcefully resists answering concerns his identity. "Ton nom," asks the Inspecteur, to which LUI replies, "Ça, oubliez ça, vous l'saurez pas" (Dubois 18). Shortly after, Yves also refuses to tell Claude's names. "Même à lui, tu veux pas dire son nom?" inquires the Inspecteur. "Non" retorts Yves (Dubois 27). Without embarking on a psychoanalytical investigation of Yves's pathological need to silence proper names, it is worth pointing out that such a reticence to speak certain words can stem, as Gregory L. Ulmer observes, from "the refusal to mourn a lost love object [which] causes the object to be preserved like a mummy (mom) in a crypt."¹² Using the Freudian case of the Wolf Man to examine the "metaphorology" of the Name of the Father as formulated by Jacques Derrida, Ulmer explains how proper names can become unspeakable when they are incorporated as literal equivalents for a love-object whose disappearance is unacceptable. The "word-things" are then sealed in a "psychic vault" in a vain attempt to retain the love-object.¹³ As Ulmer puts it, "the symptomatic words, linked to memories of high libidinal value (the shared secret of a desire *fulfilled*), cannot be uttered, are locked away in a crypt [Ulmer's emphasis]."¹⁴

Yves's refusal to speak his and Claude's names, the two

words most directly associated with his libidinal memory of a desire fulfilled (the perfect fusion of two bodies into one, the undistinguishable symbiosis of primary narcissism),¹⁵ reproduces precisely the pathological wish to confine the love-object in a crypt. Yves's "cryptophoric" propensity corresponds to the impetus behind all of his actions, whether narrated or performed during the play, from the slaying of Claude to protect him from the outside world, to his own retreat in the judge's office and his reticence to disclose his purpose. Not surprisingly, it is only in his last tirade that Yves finally voices Claude's name (Dubois 107), and thus marks his failure to safeguard the crypt in which he wished to wall himself up along with his lover.

As remarked earlier, although Yves fails in his endeavour, his opponent, the Inspecteur, does not emerge as a victor either, for he too fails to realize his wish. While the Inspecteur's objective in the conflict is far less convoluted than Yves's, it is not quite as simple as one might believe initially. Throughout the drama, the Inspecteur ostensibly seeks to get to the truth behind Yves's "histoire de fou".

J'veux savoir où c'est qu't'étais. Qu'est-cé qu't'as faite? J'veux savoir pourquoi qu'tu l'as tué. J'veux savoir qui c'est qu't'es. J'veux savoir d'où c'est qu'tu viens pis qu'est-cé qu't'as faite dans vie. Pis tout c'que j'arrive à t'faire sortir c'est des affaires qui matchent pas. Qui ont pas de bon sens.

(Dubois 37)

But the Inspecteur's urge to make sense of Yves's tangled report goes beyond his official mandate to uncover the truth. In fact, his search for a rational explanation for Yves's actions has little to do with determining verity. Rather, what matters to

him is to "sortir une explication qui a d'l'allure" (Dubois 44).

The police officer's intent is, indeed, less to find the truth than to devise a narrative that can contain the threat that Yves represents. For, in the Inspecteur's view, the prostitute's ambition is to create havoc in the city during the Confederation holiday by blackmailing the judge (Dubois 72). From this erroneous understanding of Yves's purpose, the Inspecteur takes it upon himself to smother the potential scandal by concocting a means to encapsulate the young man's motive within the framework of a petty crime. He postulates a hypothesis that depicts the homicide as the deed of an impecunious junky who killed his bourgeois boyfriend following a class-related argument (Dubois 91). In doing so, the Inspecteur aspires to bury Yves's case as a routine affair unworthy of media attention.

In a revealing statement, near the end of the play, the Inspecteur expresses openly the incentive behind his actions:

Je l'sais pas comment que j'vas faire pour t'empêcher d'réussir c'que tu charches. Mais tu peux êt' çartain que m'as toute faire pour. J'sais pas comment que j'vas faire pour prouver que les clés, t'es as volées. J'sais pas jusqu'où va falloir que j'aïlle dans l'parjure pour pas qu'tu puisses salir le juge. Ah, pas parce que c'est un chum. Pas parce que ça peut m'rappporter queuqu' chose. Même pas pour sauver ma job; j'n'ai vu d'aut'. Rien qu'pour te faire farmer 'a gueule. Pour te faire disparaît' d'la circulation. Pour ça, chus prêt à n'importe quoi. (Dubois 93)

This invective proclaims more lucidly than any other passage in the play the Inspecteur's overriding wish to silence Yves (faire farmer 'a gueule) and to remove him from the public scene (faire

disparaît' d'la circulation) so as to cut him off from the exterior world symbolized by the judge. To fulfil his wish, the Inspecteur is even willing to lie (parjure). But Yves's last tirade confutes the Inspecteur's design inasmuch as it reveals a motive that has nothing to do with the scandal scheme that he apprehended, thus rendering it impossible to explain the murder away as the deed of an insignificant hoodlum. Consequently, Yves's confession, at the end, marks the failure of both foes, since it breaks the prostitute's cryptic silence at the same time as it eludes the convenient closure envisaged by the police officer to circumscribe the threat that he represents.

Ironically, the Inspecteur's wish parallels Yves's own desire, insofar as both men want the latter to remain silent and to secede from the world. That the two adversaries actually share the same wish, but approach it from drastically opposite ends — the Inspecteur seeks to shield the exterior world from Yves, while Yves longs to shelter his internal world from the outside — might appear contradictory. But as a matter of fact, it is a standard feature of the synthetic-implied model. As Price maintains, what is habitually staged in this ironic structure is a contention between "[...] apparently opposite but in fact qualitatively identical modes of action pursued by the initial protagonist and antagonist [...] it is in reality a nasty spat between Tweedledum and Tweedledee" (Price 309). Both struggling to achieve the same end, but equally oblivious to each other's itinerary, Yves and the Inspecteur — along with the latter's assistants, the Sténographe and the Policier —

must be viewed, ultimately, as "antagonists unwittingly locked in an internal war" (Price 311).

As is always the case in the synthetic-implied formation, the failure of both combatants provokes a dialectical breakdown that implies the victory of a disengaged figure who points toward a conceivable alternative to the conflict, but who "[...] remains powerless to alter a course of events in which he is often the principal victim" (Price 309). In Dubois's play, the main disengaged figure is so powerless, in fact, that he is already dead at the beginning of the play. I am referring, of course, to Claude, who is irrevocably absent from the contentious environment, but whose presence in the discourse of the two antagonists allows the audience to envision a potential mediation between the two clashing forces.

Although Yves killed his lover to protect him from the exterior, Claude's behaviour, at least as described by the prostitute, suggests that he could have proposed a solution to the strife, for he knew how to negotiate between outward demands and inward drives. Rather than resorting to Yves's radical gesture of killing his love-object to conserve their cloistered relationship, or to the Inspecteur's obsessive assaults on the prostitute to segregate him from the outside world, both tactics seeking to eradicate one side of the dichotomy to preserve the other, Claude opted for the compromise solution of compartmentalization to come to terms with these conflicting pressures. This attitude is reflected in several aspects of Claude's characterization, such as the fact that he kept both an intimate

journal in which "y a un Yves qui est là à tou'es lignes, quésiment," and a financial record in which mention is made of everyone who owes him money, except Yves (Dubois 46). This translates a distinct delineation between the domain of public transactions and the realm of private emotions.

Furthermore, for weeks Claude maintained two relationships, one with a woman involved in the separatist movement, the other with Yves, and never alluded to one in front of the other (Dubois 42-3). To disconnect his sexual life from his political career, Claude also evicted his roommate so as to convert his apartment into an apolitical territory for his encounters with Yves. However, he did not stop attending his partisan assemblies (Dubois 101). Moreover, on the night of his death, he *rejected* his separatist friends' invitation to go to Expo 67, saying that he had something more important to do, but specified as well that he would contact them on the following day, thus asserting that this rejection was not categorical (Dubois 102).

From what the audience can make out of Claude's actions, it surfaces that the student could function positively in both the interior and the exterior worlds; he was "capab' de faire l'un pis l'aut'" (Dubois 108). Claude could even tolerate Yves's "public" life. Not only did he never castigate his lover for his nightly activities, but when Yves would demand to be killed to avoid having to face the world of the Carré, Claude would simply hug him and console him by telling him stories (Dubois 97-8). However, when the roles were suddenly reversed and Yves perceived a gleam of anxiety in Claude's eyes, as they were making

love (Dubois 107-8), the prostitute could not reciprocate the comforting rhetoric that the student had tendered to him.

Not nearly as articulate as Claude, Yves could not tell soothing stories that would make his lover feel as if he were resting "sur un matelas flottant, au milieu d'un lac," and dissipate his doubts about the future of their relationship (Dubois 99).¹⁶ His only option, then, was to terminate Claude's life, as he sometimes wished his own existence would be terminated, to prevent further agony. But by "saving" his lover, Yves precipitated himself into a synthetic-implied tragedy whose only conceivable resolution was obliterated with the very gesture that triggered it. The irony characteristic of Price's seventh structural model could not be more flagrant. Had Claude not been murdered, he could have extended a generous hand and provided a compromise to solve the drama. Yet, the drama would have never transpired if he had not been murdered after having called into question this very compromise.¹⁷

Claude's implied synthetical function is shared by another, far more marginal, hidden player: the Inspecteur's wife. Although she is hardly ever mentioned in the text, her brief appearance, through the intermediary of a phone call, indicates that she plays, on a smaller scale, the same alleviating role as Claude. The Inspecteur's eagerness to call his wife as soon as he has a chance, his domestic gesture of preparing himself a coffee as he is speaking to her, the reassuring tone that he adopts during the conversation — "Ben non, y'a pas d'problème" — all these ingredients insinuate that somewhere, at home

perhaps, there might be happiness and peace (Dubois 47-8).

But whereas Claude and the Wife intimate a possible alternative to the conflict, the other hidden players of the drama, all involved in the internecine battle, function to reassert the indifference and depravity encircling the judge's office. The judge himself, the Minister of Justice, the journalist, Claude's girlfriend and his parents, each partake in the amplification of the conflict rather than in its implied settlement. The Inspecteur is fully aware of this situation. "Tu voulais savoir où c'est qu'on est rendus?" he tells the Sténographe,

On est pognés ent' un juge qui s'en crisse, qui est défaite comme une mitaine; un minist' qui veut pas qu'y sorte un mot, pour pas laisser salir la Justice; un chien enragé qui court après son os;¹⁸ une indépendantiste qui, anyway, croira pas une des histoires qu'on va pouvoir inventer pis va faire un scandale en criant partout que c'est pas vrai, que son chum était pas une tapette, que c'est un frame-up; pis les parents du gars, qui veulent pas qu'y en sorte un mot pour pas faire salir leu nom. (Dubois 57)

Unable to accept the clash between the inside and the outside, the antagonists, including Yves and the Inspecteur, all fight among themselves to annihilate one term of the binary so as to safeguard the other. As in One Night Stand, the radical actions taken to cut off the inside from the outside, in Being at Home with Claude, lead to unmitigated failure, both central combatants ending up in a space that offers neither the safety of the interior nor the freedom of the exterior. Only Claude, the central apex figure, knew how to regulate exchanges between both universes and how to *live* with the discrepancies.

Up to this point, the analysis has demonstrated that the actions performed by both central opponents follow an afferent trajectory, being aimed at cloistering Yves in an inner world of silence. The forthcoming section will examine the use of imagery in the play to show how the semiotic organisation of the text supports this afferent structure. The very title of the text, Being at Home with Claude, provides the primary instance of this organization.

Dialectic of Imagery

At one level, the five words "being at home with Claude" denote, quite literally, Yves's sentiment of having found a safe haven with Claude. In his final monologue, Yves explains how Claude's simplest domestic gestures, such as drawing him a bath, made him feel truly at home.

Quand chus arrivé chez eux, y était en train de préparer à manger. Y avait acheté du vin. Pis y m'avait faite couler un bain. [...] Ça avait rien à voir avec la tendre épouse accueillant son mari qui rentre du travail. [...] C'était pas ça. C'tait un gars. Un garçon, j'veux dire. C'tait simp'. Ça allait d'soi. Ça marchait tout seul. C'était pareil comme... Comme... D'un coup, j'étais à la maison. (Dubois 99)

At another level, as Maximilien Laroche reminds us in his article on Dubois and Dubé, the term "home," functioning metonymically as a "figure phonique du préfixe grec homo, il nous renvoie à une figure du même et du sexe qu'on veut."¹⁹ Being at "home/o" thus connotes, in addition to Yves's sense of being at home with Claude, the autotelic longing for a self-reflexive and self-sufficient world. It prefigures the narcissistic

symbiosis that Yves describes at the end of the play — "lui c'est moi, moi c'est lui" (Dubois 103). Furthermore, the use of the present participle "being", in the title, signifies the desire to perpetuate this feeling of perfect union and homeliness, a desire expressed, throughout the drama, by Yves's reticence to speak the word-things locked away in his psychic crypt. Yves's silence in the play is an attempt to keep on being at home with Claude.

As a matter of fact, Yves's silence is already signalled in the title itself through Dubois's use of English, which suppresses Yves's own language. Certain critics, such as Elaine Nardocchio, have seen in the use of an English title for a French Canadian play an overt political message:

As Him considers settling down with Claude a threat to his independence and the realizations of his dreams of freedom and adventure, this English title implies that cohabitation or "association" is an English concept to be avoided at all costs even if one has a burning desire to love one's other self.²⁰

However, one can hardly agree with Nardocchio's political exegesis, for nothing in the text imparts that Yves felt his independence and freedom threatened by his association with Claude. On the contrary, as has been argued above, Yves sought to *preserve* this cohabitation through his radical gesture.

More to the point is Laroche's proposition that the use of English conveys the illusory nature of Yves' whole enterprise. It is by the title, he writes, "qu'est évoqué et que s'atteint le désir illusoire d'un chez-soi (*home*) qui serait doux chez-soi (*sweet home*) et pure création de soi-même pour soi-même en soi-

même (*homemade*) [Laroche's emphasis]."²¹ Put differently, the English title constitutes a simplified version of the "cryptophoric" practice through which the unspeakable and illusory preservation of the love-object "achieves utterance," as Ulmer writes, "by means of a complex [not so complex here] translation process."²² Rather than making a political point, as Nardocchio argues, the English heading of this francophone play evinces that Yves's dream of being, and staying, at home with Claude is unrealizable within the limits of his cognizance. The consummation of the wish is therefore posited as foreign to the prostitute's universe through the use of another language.²³

Ironically, Nardocchio merely pays lip service, in her would-be political reading of the text, to one of the only explicit political references in the play, namely, the fact that Claude belonged to the R.I.N. (*Rassemblement pour l'Indépendance Nationale*).²⁴ Admittedly a detail, it is still worth discussing briefly the figurative value of Claude's party allegiance within the dialectical structure of the drama. Dubois associates Claude with a *legitimate* separatist party rather than with the F.L.Q., the infamous terrorist organization which originated in the early 1960s and vanished after the crisis of October 1970. Had Dubois constructed Claude as a member of the F.L.Q., he would have related him to a kind of radicalism that would not have corresponded to his role as the conciliatory apex figure of the drama. However, Claude's link to the R.I.N. signifies his faith in the realization of Québec's independence through democratic means, and thus is in keeping with his preference for compromise

solutions.

Even though they are not associated with the F.L.Q. either, the two central antagonists of the play do carry with them the images of chaos, violence, and hatred that are common to both terrorist activities and the synthetic-implied configuration. Dubois's description of the judge's office as a sort of living room "*qui est, pour l'heure, l'objet d'une invasion barbare [emphasis added]*" (Dubois 12), corroborates Price's remark that the action of synthetic-implied dramas often takes place in locations that recall "a no man's-land strewn with the smoking rubble of recent battles past and reverberating with the offstage alarms and cracklings of battles present" (Price 314). Significantly, the battleground in Dubois's play is not an open field, or the streets of a city, but a tightly closed room inside a concrete building metonymically linked to the procedure of incarceration — the Palais de Justice. For the aim of this war is not to determine who will take possession of an expansive territory, but whose afferent energy will prevail. Not surprisingly, at the end of the play three knocks are heard at the large door upstage, announcing that, immediately *after* the conclusion of this useless quarrel, the confined environment will be opened-up in a final negation of the wish shared by both enemies (Dubois 111). But *within the limits of the play*, the afferent force remains omni-present and eclipses all possibilities of escape.

Also typical of the synthetic-implied structure is the language that the Inspecteur and Yves use towards one another,

which "is dominated by figures of chaos, violence, useless repetition, and beleaguered wretchedness" (Price 314). The first line of the play, bawled out by the Inspecteur, reads:

(hurlant) Pis moi? T'imagines-tu que j'aimerais pas mieux êt'en train d'faire la queue pour le pavillon du Japon, à place d'êt' pogné avec une guidoune du parc Lafontaine qui s'amuse à égorger l'monde (Dubois 17).

In this first sentence, we can already distinguish the references to chaos (hurlant), mutilation (égorger) and sexual depravity (guidoune) that saturate the plays belonging to Price's seventh structural model. Furthermore, this very first line already translates the afferent propensity of the Inspecteur. Indeed, if he were not *trapped* with Yves, the Inspecteur would immediately move into another situation of entrapment: waiting in line to enter the Japanese pavilion. Yves's first line of the play — "Sacrament, ça fait douze fois j'vous l'dis" — also contains elements common to the synthetic-implied arrangement, namely, the impression of endless repetition and the "loud curse [that] drowns out the soft blessing" (Price 330).

Throughout the rest of the play, the Inspecteur's relentless questioning has the effect of a physical assault on the prostitute, translating his violent animosity towards his opponent:

De quoi t'as eu peur? Si t'avais peur, pourquoi tu nous as appelés? Pourquoi t'as pas sacré ton camp? Pourquoi t'as appelé au quartier général d'la police pour nous dire qu'y'avait un cadavre dans un appartement d'la rue Casgrain? Pourquoi t'as rappelé une heure après pour nous dire que c'était toi qui l'avais tué? Si t'avais peur, pourquoi t'as faite toute ton viarge de numéro, au téléphone, pour nous obliger à

v'nir icitte te rencontrer? Comment c't'as fait pour voler les clés du juge Delorme? Pourquoi qu't'as exigé qu'on vienne te chercher icitte? Pis pourquoi qu't'as appelé l'Montréal-Matin? Pourquoi qu'tu voulais absolument nous obliger à v'nir icitte? Pourquoi qu'tu veux pas dire ton nom? (Dubois 22-3)

This succession of interrogative phrases, most of them beginning with the explosive question word "pourquoi" which resonates more like a barking than a human utterance, not only constitutes a verbal attack on the prostitute. It also serves to corner him, to entrap him under an avalanche of queries that enwraps the whole discursive field, leaving no fissure through which Yves can evade the issues.

Similarly, the Inspecteur's formulation of a narrative that can account for the circumstances of the murder also erects a wall of incontrovertible rationalism around Yves's discourse. Even graphically, in the written text, some of the Inspecteur's recapitulations of the events literally choke Yves's responses, opposing long concatenations of logically connected words to the prostitute's cryptic one-liners (Dubois 37-42, 44-6, 72-3, 90-3). This differs markedly from the Inspecteur's conversation with his wife, which is marked by several ellipses and a gentle tone that manifest a far less constrictive mode of communication (Dubois 48).

Yves also has a number of long speeches throughout the play. In his case, however, the wall of rational postulates is replaced by a flow of perplexing allusions and an obvious lack of precision in the use of words. The following excerpt from an early speech in the play bears witness to Yves's repetitive and

often incoherent discourse:

J'ai marché peut-être une heure. Peut-être plus. J'sais pas, j'ai pas d'mont'. Un moment donné, j'me suis réveillé. J'étais assis su l'bord d'une clôture, dans Westmount. J'avais comme mal à tête. C'est un peu comme si j'm'étais endormi dans mon bain. Vous savez? On s'endort, mais on l'sait qu'on est dans l'bain. Mais on rêve pareil. Pis d'in coup, j'me suis réveillé, assis sur une p'tite clôture de bois verte pis j'me suis rendu compte que tout c'temps-là, en même temps que je l'savais que j'marchais pis en même temps je l'savais pas. J'marchais, c'est toute.

(Dubois 20-1)

The repetition of words like "comme," "mais" and "pis" betrays Yves' inability or unwillingness to articulate his thoughts lucidly and without contradictions. Such a passage assumes the function of dramatic silence as defined by Klein, inasmuch as it relies on "oblique speech, innuendo, ... the extensive use of negative, the use of the mute and/or inarticulate, [which] all suggest entrapment and reinforce the impression of disorientation."²⁵ It is not by chance, therefore, that the frustrated Inspecteur would shout, "tout ce que j'arrive à t'faire *sortir* c'est des affaires qui matchent pas. Qui ont pas de bon sens [emphasis added]" (Dubois 44), for all that will come out of Yves's psychic trap is a resounding silence that speaks of an unspeakable interior state of being.

In spite of Yves's unintelligibility, it remains possible to distinguish certain patterns of imagery in his vocabulary which compose a dichotomy between the exterior environment that governs his "professional" life, and the homelike shelter that he found with Claude. In his closing monologue, Yves is explicit in his formulation of the dichotomy when he says: "[...] y'avait

l'restant du monde. Le contraire de c'qui était en train d'nous arriver. Je l'sais. Je l'sais qu'la vraie vie, c'est d'êt' capab' de faire l'un pis l'aut'. Je l'sais. Qu'y'a pas rien qu'la beauté. Je l'sais qu'y'a la marde" (Dubois 108). In this passage, the distinction between the "beauté" of being at home with Claude and the "marde" of the outside world is manifest. Elsewhere in the play, the differentiation is not so limpidly enunciated, but can still be perceived in clusters of images either harshly negative or radiantly positive in resonance.

For instance, Yves's reference to the houses in Westmount is one of the most serene passages in the play, in which images of home create a rare moment of peacefulness:

J'ai pris un bout d'temps à r'garder les maisons. J'aime ça, les maisons, dans Westmount. J'ai toujours rêvé d'êt' riche. Mon père quand y était p'tit, y'étaient riches, chez eux. Pis y m'contait souvent des histoires de quand y était riche. Mes grands-parents, surtout, m'en contaient, les parents de mon père, à Noël, à Pâques, quand on allait dans des party, chez eux. (Dubois 28)

The feeling of panic and disorientation found in most other excerpts is absent from this one. Nowhere else in the play does Yves talk about his relationship with his family. Indeed, the fact that the sense of domestic comfort created in this segment is associated with memories of childhood with his family reminds us that Yves' wish is one of primary narcissism, that is, a desire to return to the plenitude of infancy.

Yves refers to his father again only at the very end of the final monologue, when he says: "Même à mon père, j'ai pas pu faire ça, parce qu'y est mort pendant qu'j'étais pas là. Pis ma

mère avec, mais elle, est morte tu seule. Mais mon frère, lui, mon semblable, mon reflet, lui oui, j'y ai fermé les yeux" (Dubois 110). A bridge is thus established between the memories of the family home and Yves's sentiment of being at home with his brother, Claude. It is worth remarking, as well, that on both occasions when the Inspecteur refers to Yves's sister, Dubois indicates clearly in his stage directions that the prostitute is affected, as if mention of the last surviving member of his "family" reminded him of the impossibility to ever recapture the gentle comfort of home (Dubois 35, 82).

In contrast to these nostalgic visions of home, the images that Yves associates with his nightly escapades on Mont-Royal, where he goes to satisfy his sexual addiction (Dubois 95), relate to war and horror. When he roams in the dark trails of the mountain, the young man pictures himself either as a soldier in enemy territory or as the passive witness of a terrifying spectacle:

Des fois, c'est la guerre pis chus un soldat en territoire ennemi. Comme le dernier qui reste d'un commando. J'me pratique à m'promener sans faire de bruit. Faut pas que personne me voye ou m'entende. D'aut'fois, ça d'vient des films de peur. Dans c' temps-là, j'm'accote su un arbre pis j'laisse défilier les images jusqu'à temps qu'j' imagine la pire de c'qui vient avec. D'habetude, l'image... (Dubois 97).

Parallel to the fantasies of violence and terror that the mountain setting triggers in Yves, the descriptive imagery that the prostitute ascribes to his clients denotes grotesque physiognomy and bestial carnality:

Savez-vous ce que c'est, baiser avec un bonhomme haut d'même pis large de même. Séparé ça d'large. Boutonneux. Avec un brandy nose. Que vous savez qu'y d'vait êt' beau quand y était jeune? [...] Qui s'jette su vous comme un tig'. Qui souffle. Qui pousse. Qui tire. Qui sue (Dubois 106).

Whatever attraction brings Yves and his anonymous prurient partners together, it doubtlessly hinges on the gruesome magnetism of abjection.

As is evidenced by the radical opposition between the peaceful images of home and the brutal motifs attached to the prostitute's public sexual practices, this pull towards the abject drastically conflicts with Yves's desire for a beautiful, cloistered life with Claude. We have already seen that the drama originates in the decision that Yves made, on the night of Claude's murder, to repudiate the former in order to embrace exclusively the latter. But, ironically, to realize his desire for secluded beauty, Yves performed, at his lover's implicit request, the most abject of deeds, bloody murder, hence the irresolvable contradiction at the core of his struggle.

Appropriately, since the two main characters of the play belong to the same dialectical group, they both describe the ugliness and abjection of the men who people the prostitute's external world in similar terms, the Inspecteur echoing Yves in his emphasis on their deformity and hideousness. "Écoute-moi ben: ça fait cinq ans que des tit-culs comme toi, j'en vois dix par jour," he tells Yves,

J'n'ai vu des grands pis des p'tits. Des gros pis des cure-dents. J'n'ai vu qui ont la face ravagée comme mes pneus d'hiver. Pis d'aut' avec des faces de

beubés. Y'en a qui ont cinquante ans pis qui font peur. J'me réveille, la nuit, des fois, en sueur, en pensant avoir senti leu parfum. [...] J'n'ai vu d'tou'es sorte. Toutes. Mais des comme toi, j'espère pus en r'voir jamais de toute ma criss de vie (Dubois 92-3).

Conversely, the police officer recognizes, like Yves, Claude's beauty: "C'tait un beau gars. Cultivé. J'vois pas pantoute qu'est-cé qu'y pouvait faire avec un trou d'cul comme toi" (Dubois 45). But the signification that they attach to Claude's beauty is drastically antithetical. While for Yves, Claude's beauty is associated with an experience of perfect intimacy (Dubois 105), for the Inspecteur, the university student is the embodiment of the external world that must be spared from the devastating influence of the prostitute. This is a telling illustration of the mirror-image employment of figurative material, which attests to the two characters' contradictory perception of an identical object.

As I have tried to demonstrate in this section, the Inspecteur and Yves both deploy semiotic material that supports their common desire to confine the prostitute. Whether it is the Inspecteur's deluge of questions to engulf Yves's discourse, or Yves's own inability to speak effectively, which symbolizes his withdrawal from the world, the rhetorical usage of both antagonists exhibits an afferent drive. The next step in our inquiry is to extend certain key dichotomies that will define the implicational dialectic of the drama. Yves and the Inspecteur being on the same side of the dialectic, the first term in each doublet will apply to both of them simultaneously. The

second component of each abstraction, for its part, will refer to the values suggested by the actions and imagery linked to the implicitly dominant apex figure, Claude. This term will be put in brackets to indicate that it remains irrevocably foreign to the dénouement of the drama.

Implicational Dialectic:

Several broad antinomies could be submitted to describe Dubois's play. General pairings like *Chaos/[Order]*, *Ugliness/[Beauty]*, *Hatred/[Love]*, *Unhappiness/[Happiness]*, and *Conflict/[Peace]* all bear witness to the chasm that separates the scenes of hostility and rage shown on stage from the distant image of harmony and sensitivity assumed to be emblematic of Claude's apex unit. Like in the foregoing chapters, however, I will not elaborate on these common dualities, for they do not capture particularly distinctive features of Being at Home with Claude. Rather I will concentrate on more sharply focused doublets to highlight the drama's key structural oppositions.

Once again the compound *Afferent-withdrawal/[Efferent-escape]* emerges as a most germane dichotomy to abstract the motivational tension denoted by the text's dialectical arrangement. The first term of this couple manifestly epitomizes the inward pressures that both the Inspecteur and Yves impose on the latter. Indeed, as has been demonstrated at length above, the two main characters are driven by the same afferent desire to enclose the prostitute inside a watertight shell. The second half of the duality, however, *Efferent-escape*, is less obviously

representative of the motivational wish of the implied protagonist, for although Claude expressed an evident attraction for the outside world — characterized mainly by his political involvement — he also seemed to share Yves's desire to withdraw from the "marde" of the world and stay at home with his lover.

To identify the central motive of the implied protagonist, we must determine which desire, on Claude's part, was instrumental in activating the mechanism of the drama. If we are to believe Yves's account — and I am afraid we have to, since there is no other version of the events — the signal that triggered the tragic unfolding of the play is an expression of concern in Claude's eyes at the moment of sexual climax: "Dans ses yeux. A. A. A Claude, je l'ai vu, qu'est-cé qui a chaviré. Qu'est-cé qu'y a compris, d'un coup" (Dubois 107-8). This gleam in Claude's look caused Yves to slash his lover's throat as he was seeing images of their everlasting secluded love: "[...] pis je nous voyais pus jamais r'sortir de chez eux. Jamais nous r'lever" (Dubois 109). Yves's description of Claude's dead body — "Y souriait. Y avait les bras en croix [...] Pis y est mort de plaisir. Sans jamais avoir eu à passer ses journées dans marde" (Dubois 109-10) — suggests that the student died fulfilled, that Yves's fatal gesture *accomplished* Claude's ultimate desire.

But what was the nature of this desire? Always on the basis of Yves's report, it is apparent that Claude's wish, far from seeking inward recoil, was actually oriented toward a complete efferent-escape. As Yves states, Claude experienced pleasure in

having his throat cut open, and never tried to stop the gush of blood splattering "[...] dans les f'nêtres, pis su l'frigidaire. Su l'poêle. Su'a tab'" (Dubois 109). Moreover, the torrent of blood discharging from Claude's ecstatic body was augmented by his ejaculation, as Yves claims: "Pis en même temps, j'sentais son sexe, comme un' arb', qui explosait [...] Sa gorge saignait. Y'v'nait, pis en même temps son sang r'volait jusque dans les f'nêtres [...]" (Dubois 109). Thus Claude's desire, fulfilled both by sexual intercourse and the slashing of his throat, entailed propelling himself outside of his body toward the other, thus recalling Hélène's and Dominique's abject motive in Les Beaux Dimanches.

Conversely, Yves's afferent impulse is clearly manifested in his gesture of incorporating *inside his own body* Claude's discharging fluids: "J'buvais son sang. J'm'en mettais partout" (Dubois 109). Therefore, Yves's narrative of this moment of unparalleled passion with his lover — the source of the entire drama — bears witness to the contradictory, yet complementary, impulses of the two men, one seeking to absorb the other's erupting body: afferent-withdrawal/efferent-escape. But as in all the previous plays, only the afferent-withdrawal movement is conceivable for the characters on stage, the efferent-escape potential having been exhausted outside of, and prior to, the drama, and being kept apart from the setting of the play until the very end.

From this consideration of the opposite motive of the two sides, we can now detect the chief personality trait that

distinguishes the implied protagonist from the antagonists. Indeed, Claude's outward proclivity translates into altruism, evidenced not only in his ability to compromise between his friends and his lover, but also in the fact that he "allait trois fois par semaine porter à souper à sa vieille voisine d'en d'sous" (Dubois 45). Yves, on the other hand, always has only his own interest in mind. For instance, as he tells the Inspecteur, he never "donated" his professional services even to his best clients: "Pis y'en a d'aut', j'peux passer la nuit avec pour le même prix. Mais y restent des clients. J'oublie pas qu'y'a un bill au boutt. Même si y sont ben fins" (Dubois 96). His self-centred attitude is confirmed by the summary that the Sténographe gives of a police report on Yves's relationship with other people. When asked by the Inspecteur if Yves has any known friends, his assistant replies: "A part le gars du Carré, rien [...] c'est l'genre de gars qui si toi t'appelles pas, c'est pas lui qui va appeler" (Dubois 52-3). Moreover, the prostitute's requiring the presence of the authorities in the judge's office while adamantly refusing to answer questions also betrays his utter disregard for the Inspecteur, who would much prefer to "[...] faire la queue pour le pavillon du Japon, à place d'êt' pogné avec une guidoune du parc Lafontaine qui s'amuse à égorger l'monde? T'imagines-tu qu'j'ai rien qu'ça à faire dans vie?" (Dubois 17).

But while he is the victim of Yves' egocentric attitude, the Inspecteur does not exhibit the most altruistic behaviour either. As suggested above, the Inspecteur's attempt to resolve

the crime is by no means an act of generosity towards the judge (Dubois 93). Rather, his only desire is to confine and silence the prostitute so that he may go on vacation the following evening: "Chus supposé partir en vacances, moi, à soir, pas m'faire slaquer. On r'commence" (Dubois 73). Therefore, the implicational dialectic that best encapsulates the contradictory characteriological dispositions of the personages is the tandem *Self-centredness/[Altruism]*, since it accounts, on the one hand, for Yves's and the Inspecteur's obsessive preoccupations with their own goals and, on the other side, for Claude's unselfish attitude towards his entourage. It could certainly be argued that the lack of a stable resolution at the end of the drama ensues precisely from the Inspecteur's and Yves's inability to emulate Claude's altruistic behaviour, blinded as they are by their self-centred afferent drive.

These contradictory behaviours shed light on the social dialectic insinuated in the text. As mentioned previously, Being at Home with Claude differs from the other plays inasmuch as it does not oppose protagonists advocating the preservation of an effective but inflexible establishment to antagonists venturing to shatter the repressive social order. Rather, Dubois's work displays the clash between a social fabric eroded by self-centred insensitivity and an implied socio-political alternative based on commitment and empathy, but unrealizable within the drama's setting. This tension can be abridged — allowing again for a variety of synonymic possibilities — in the dichotomy *Asocial callousness/[Social devotion]*. Although the battle

between the Inspecteur and Yves could give the impression that the former defends the social status quo while the latter challenges it, we are actually dealing with an internecine conflict between two mirror versions of the same corrupt society based on self-interest and deprived of any overarching social communion.

From Yves, who considers intimate relationships as mere business deals or objects of addiction (Dubois 95-6), to Claude's parents, who only want to protect their good name, and the journalist, who cares about nothing but his scoop (Dubois 57), all the antagonists of the play, whether on stage or off, move in a degenerate society where commitment to the other has vanished and in which even the governing elite, like the judge, "s'en crisse" (Dubois 57). Conversely, the alternative proposed by Claude's implied involvement in the drama advocates a society of caring and dedication. Not only did Claude perform empathetic gestures such as helping his old neighbour and telling Yves soothing stories to assuage his loathing of the demi-monde of the Carré, but he was also passionately committed to the nationalist dream, so much so, in fact, that his political meetings with his friends would inebriate him with excitement (Dubois 101). But, as stated already, Dubois organizes his play around the irrevocable absence of Claude and his redemptive outlook, thus leaving it to the spectator to supply a positive resolution to the drama.

As in the previous chapters, this overview of the implicational dialectic allows us to zero in on the three main axes

along which the play evolves, namely, the clashing motives that trigger the characters' actions — Afferent-withdrawal/[Efferent-escape] — the key characteriological traits that define the clashing personalities — *Self-centredness*/[*Altruism*] — and the opposite social perspectives embraced by each side — *Asocial callousness*/[*Social devotion*]. As we see, the apex position draws all the desirable characteristic, leaving only abhorrence and contempt for the characters on stage. But by positioning the perfect apex figure not only outside of the play, but also in its irreversible past, Dubois seems to suggest that Claude's conciliative mode of behaviour is forever lost, or at best, inconceivable in the present. Without imposing any narrow allegorical reading on the text, it could still be argued that the setting of the play, Montréal in 1967, makes an ironic reference to the Canadian ideal that Expo 1967 vainly sought to glorify, situating the dream of national harmony and unity of the Fathers of Confederation as remote from the hysterical spectacle of Expo as Claude's congenial home is from the ruthless scene of Dubois's drama.²⁶ While in the previous plays the notion of confinement could always be partially assuaged by a faint idea of home, here the concept of home has been evacuated completely and we are left with plain confinement. Yves leaves the stage only to be brought to prison, and the Inspecteur remains in the judge's office frozen in non-action: "Hésite un instant en se demandant s'il devrait remettre de l'ordre sur le pupitre du juge. N'en fait rien" (Dubois 111). "Rien" is what is left inside. The afferent force has collapsed upon itself.

Conclusion:

In this chapter, as well as in the three previous case studies, I have conducted a systematic funnelling of the numerous layers of meaning generated by the dialectic of action and the corresponding dialectic of imagery into the sharply synthesized form of the implicational dialectic. This procedure has enabled us to highlight the recurrent dialectical arrangement that constitutes the motivational core of the four plays analyzed, namely, the Afferent-withdrawal/Efferent-escape duality. As has been demonstrated at considerable length, this tension underlies the structure of all these dramas, as they exhibit similar conflicts between the inward recoil desired by certain characters and the outward alternative that their opponents propose without managing to achieve it within the milieu depicted on stage.

The afferent-withdrawal/efferent-escape doublet might not be the only dichotomy characteristic of the four plays. But among all the central dialectical components of the four works, only the afferent-withdrawal/efferent-escape struggle proves to be an essential point of convergence between the texts. The following chapter will establish that the overwhelming majority of the published works of the corpus share this key feature. Moreover, as we will see, all the published texts that exhibit the afferent-withdrawal/efferent-escape antinomy, like the plays scrutinized above, perform the erasure of the latter term from the scene of the drama.

NOTES

1. René-Daniel Dubois, Being at Home with Claude (Montréal: Leméac, 1986). Subsequent references to this work in this chapter will appear within parentheses in the text, except when additional comments require notes.
2. The play counts four characters. But two of them, "Le Sténographe" and "Le Policier", hardly ever speak at all.
3. Hélène Beauchamp and Thierry Hentsch, "Le Vertige d'être ou le verbe généreux de René-Daniel Dubois," Conjonctures et politique 8 (Spring 1986): 137.
4. Thomas Price, Dramatic Structure and Meaning in Theatrical Productions (San Francisco: Edwin Mellen Press, 1992) 309. Subsequent references to this work in this chapter will appear within parentheses in the text, except when additional comments require notes.
5. I borrow the term "closed drama" from Volker Klotz, Geschlossene und offene Form im Drama (Munich: Hanser, 1960).
6. We know from one of the Inspector's comments that Yves lives "dans un taudis d'la rue Saint-Dominique ent' De Montigny pis Ontario" (p.44), a location which is just over one kilometre north of the judge's office in the Palais de Justice (p.11) on Notre-Dame, between St-Vincent and St-Jean-Baptiste, in Vieux Montréal. This one kilometre is roughly the distance that Yves could cover in the "quinzaine de minutes" that it took him to go from the second client's place to his own apartment (p.60). The Inspector draws attention to this "coincidence" when he asks Yves, "un rayon d'quinze minutes autour de chez vous, c'est où, ça?" (p.61).
7. Dubois includes a short scene, earlier in the play, that discloses the fact that there is a washroom behind the small door (p.47)
8. Maximilien Laroche, "De Dubé à Dubois: l'illusion spéculaire," L'Annuaire théâtral 5-6 (Fall 1988/Spring 1989): 210.
9. Lazaridès writes: "Non, ce n'est pas par excès d'amour qu'il tue, comme il le croit et veut le faire accroire – mais la

crédulité extorquée par l'identification aristotélicienne a toutefois des limites – c'est par excès de corps." See Alexandre Lazaridès, "To bed or not to bed?," Cahiers de théâtre Jeu 40 (1986): 259.

¹⁰. Leslie Kane, The Language of Silence: On the Unspoken and the Unspeakable in Modern Drama (London and Toronto: Associated UP, 1984) 24.

¹¹. Kane, 15.

¹². Gregory L. Ulmer, Applied Grammatology: Post(e)-Pedagogy from Jacques Derrida to Joseph Beuys (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1985) 61.

¹³. Ulmer, 62.

¹⁴. Ulmer, 84.

¹⁵. This symbiotic union is exactly what Yves achieved with Claude: "Vous savez, les histoires nounounes de : lui c'est moi, moi c'est lui? C'est vrai. Ça existe. J'sais pas comment expliquer ça. Mais c'est ça. J'avais pas l'impression de t'nir quelqu'un dans mes bras" (103). On the notion of primary narcissism and its relationship to theatrical representation in Québec, see Hélène Richard's "Le Théâtre gai québécois: conjoncture sociale et sentiment de filiation." Cahiers de théâtre Jeu 54 (Mar. 1990): 15-23.

¹⁶. Yves's inability to speak intelligibly is expressed in a passage in which he blames words for not conveying an accurate meaning (p.103-4).

¹⁷. On the night of his murder, Claude had told Yves that he might have to make a choice between the two worlds, "pis qu'y pensait que l'choix, y v'nait jus' de l'faire" (p.103).

¹⁸. The "chien enragé" is a reference to the journalist who is described earlier in the play as "un journaliste des chiens écrasés du Montréal-Matin" (p.44).

¹⁹. Laroche, 210-1.

- ²⁰. Elaine F. Nardocchio, "Chez Him," Canadian Literature 120 (Spring 1989): 191.
- ²¹. Laroche, 211.
- ²². Ulmer, 62.
- ²³. Apparently, filmmaker Jean Beaudin wanted to replace the original English title of the play by a French equivalent for his cinematic adaptation. Fortunately, producer Louise Gendron vetoed Beaudin's decision. See Huguette Roberge, "Beaudin exige un titre français pour *Being at Home With Claude*, le film," La Presse, 26 June 1991.
- ²⁴. The R.I.N. was absorbed by the newly formed Parti Québécois in 1968. For reference to Claude's belonging to the R.I.N. see Dubois p.42.
- ²⁵. Klein, 104.
- ²⁶. See Nardocchio, page 190, for further reflections on the 1967 context of the play's diegesis.

CHAPTER VII. OTHER PLAYS FROM THE CORPUS

In the previous chapters, I have shown at length that the four best-known Canadian and Québécois plays adapted for the cinema between 1972 and 1992 develop analogous dramatic conflicts setting an afferent force, drawing characters inside, against an efferent drive, pushing them towards an external world that is at once alluring and threatening. As we have also seen, the inward pull always dominates the stage, relegating the efferent resistance to a position of ineffectuality in the universe of the drama. In this chapter, I will demonstrate, though in a more concise fashion, that a similar dialectical orchestration recurs in the overwhelming majority of the published texts that compose the corpus of modern Canadian and Québécois film-mediated drama. Moving chronologically, I will begin this analytical survey with Martin Kinch's 1973 play, Me?.

Like Being at Home with Claude, Me?¹ focuses on a male figure, Terry, who longs to isolate himself from the outside world, for, as he declares, "people are very threatening" (Kinch I.35). Unlike Yves, however, Kinch's protagonist does not seek to erect protective walls around an ideal love relationship. Rather, Terry, a bright young author unable to finish his second novel because of the incessant intrusions of his friends and lovers, wishes to reject all external influences so as to create a solipsistic universe in which he could evolve freely. He aspires to convert his apartment, where the entire action of the play occurs, into "a Japanese rock garden. Cool, clear space.

Nothing to hinder my growth. The perfect space to retreat to" (Kinch II.4).

Act One introduces successively the three outer forces that exert pressure on Terry. The first one is Chloe, Terry's sexually aggressive mistress whom we encounter as the curtain rises, extorting a fourth orgasm from her exhausted partner (Kinch I.1-2). Shortly after this preliminary scene, Terry's gay friend, Oliver, arrives on the premises requesting the novelist's moral and physical support following the devastating reviews he received for a musical score he wrote for a movie (Kinch I.8). Near the end of the first half, it is the turn of Terry's estranged wife, Kathy, to invade the apartment and reclaim her husband's undivided attention (Kinch I.30). This accumulation of strains, tearing him apart, ultimately causes Terry to oust them all from his apartment, at the end of the second act, and withdraw into his closed quarters. Left to himself in the last beat of the play, the novelist signals his complete retreat into his narcissistic shell by typing the letters "M. E." on his typewriter. Yet, the question mark that he adds as the lights fade to black underscores the uncertain consequence of this radical afferent-withdrawal (Kinch II-39).

Perusal of the play reveals that although Terry's respective relationships with the three antagonists operate at different levels, they all pose a similar challenge to his unified male ego. Chloe personifies the most obvious menace, for she constantly defies Terry's potency with her insatiable sexual appetite. From the very opening tableau of the play, Terry

already manifests, indirectly, his desire to expel Chloe from his life through playful avoidance of her relentless libidinous advances (Kinch I.4). By the end of the play, however, his oblique resistance has transformed into a straightforward eviction order. When she asks him, "do you want me to come back?" he simply replies "No" and she exits (Kinch II.38).

An even greater threat to Terry's masculine identity is incarnated by Oliver, who bursts into his friend's place with the ostensible purpose of reprimanding Terry for not attending the première of the film featuring his music, and to wail about the negative critical response that his work suffered (I.15, 24-7). But it eventually surfaces that Oliver yearns for more than a mere platonic rapport with Terry. From his appeal for a gesture of consolation from his friend — "could you put your arms around me?" (Kinch I.28) — Oliver gradually moves to a more aggressive approach, even exceeding Chloe's lustful advances. After having stated "I want to make love to you" (Kinch II.8), Oliver wrestles "*[...] Terry to the ground without too much effort [and] sits on top of Terry, pinning his arms with his knees [...] He runs one hand up Terry's leg, into his crotch. Feeling Terry's crotch*" (Kinch II.15). Although this hardly qualifies as a rape, Terry perceives it as such, for more than a mere invasion of privacy, Oliver's action represents an attack against Terry's heterosexual identity (Kinch II.18). It does not come as a surprise, therefore, that to realize his "attempt at recovery" (Kinch II.8), Terry also rejects Oliver in the end (Kinch II.38).

The harshest attack on Terry, at least in terms of bodily damage, is performed by Kathy in the last section of Act One. Although cordial, at first, the spouses' reunion rapidly degenerates into a scene of chaotic violence. "*She springs on him in utter fury,*" reads the last stage direction of the act, "*pummelling him with her fists, as she falls backwards on the floor. Terry's fighting is purely defensive [...] Kathy manages to get up again and deliver a few well-placed kicks*" (Kinch I.42-3). The act closes on the image of Kathy "*furiously destroying anything that is recognizably Chloe's.*"

Seldom in the corpus is the threat that the outside world embodies depicted in more violent terms. Appropriately, the imagery used to describe the representatives of the external menace emphasizes the bestiality, and even the monstrosity of the antagonists. Oliver's description of his own fits of rage following artistic failures could not be more emblematic of the efferent abjection observed in several outward figures from the previous texts. "You're fuelling me up for the big explosion," says the infuriated Oliver to his unresponsive friend, "the moment always comes when I splatter myself against the wall, piss out my venom and return to the fray" (Kinch I.26) The discharging rhetoric, explicitly intertwined with the abject image of the viper spitting its venom, not only recalls some of the semiotic material attached to H el ene and Dominique in Les Beaux Dimanches, but also aligns Oliver with Rafe of One Night Stand and Claude from Being at Home . . ., who splatter bodily fluids.

While Oliver is associated with his "bloody monstrous music," images of bestiality and monstrosity are ascribed as well to Chloe, who is renamed "Vampira" or "the whore of Babylon" by Oliver and accused of being a "promiscuous little bitch" by Terry (Kinch II.11, I.12, II.21, I.26). Similar figurative designations are attributed to Kathy, who is seen by Chloe as one of the "witches" striving to kill her, and constantly envisioned by Terry as "that particular monster" of the vindictive wife (Kinch II.16, I.36). To all these monsters encroaching on his life, Terry retorts: "You can't treat me like this. Goddamnit this is my house" (II.18). His insistence on the fact that he is being harassed in his own house is significant, of course, for his attempt to regain some personal stability is expressed through the cleansing of his apartment, not only from the objects that clutter it, but also from the friends who invade it. "Hiding in an empty apartment, striving for simplicity, and cutting off all [his] relationships [...]" will allow him, or so he believes, to grow into a full-fledged human being (Kinch II.5-6). Kinch's Me? thus revolves as much as the previous plays around the struggle of a character who, like Jim in Wedding in White and Victor in Les Beaux Dimanches, seeks to concentrate his whole existence within a strictly circumscribed environment in protection against the efferent forces that threaten to shatter boundaries and undermine his perceived integrity. Also like in the previous plays, the afferent principle occupies the entire scene at the end of the drama, having literally rid the stage of the efferent agents.

Like Me?, the next published text on our chronology of plays, Michel Garneau's 1976 drama Les Célébrations,² also depicts the struggle between the afferent-withdrawal impulse and its counterpart, efferent-escape. But, whereas Kinch's work puts Terry's desire to retreat at the forefront of the debate, Les Célébrations offers a more diffused articulation of its dialectical concerns. Garneau's work adopts a looser structure than Kinch's, showing a number of days in the rather uneventful existences of Margo and Paul-Émile, an unmarried couple who have been living together for seven years. Much of the play, which takes place entirely in Margo's and Paul-Émile's house, is composed of the kind of ordinary occurrences that make up the life of an average middle-class couple in their thirties. These mundane incidents culminate in the most significant episode of the play, when in the penultimate scene Margo leaves for a trip *on her own* to free herself, at least momentarily, from Paul-Émile's unavoidably domineering masculine presence (Garneau 59).

Her five-day absence has a devastating effect on Paul-Émile. So much so, indeed, that upon her return he immediately proposes marriage in an attempt to insure that she will not leave again (Garneau 64). But while Margo is ready to resume their relationship, she rejects his offer outright, vindicating the freedom of their unmarried partnership against sequestration in wedlock (Garneau 64-5).

This structure is not without recalling the circular movement of Hélène in Les Beaux Dimanches. Although the dialectic in Les Célébrations results in a happy compromise between

Margo and Paul-Émile — the celebration of their seventh anniversary with the hope of many more years together — rather than the ultimate failure that afflicts the Primeaus, the male-female conflicts in both plays present a basic similarity inasmuch as both women need to escape the limits of the house in which the men, more or less authoritatively, seek to confine them. Furthermore, Paul-Émile's first mention of marriage comes only after he has suffered from Margo's absence, thus paralleling, in a way, Victor's appeal to his wife at the end of Dubé's play. Like Hélène, Margo refuses to make a long term commitment because, in her view, "[...] l'mariage là c'est l'fascisme à maison" (Garneau 65). But also as in Hélène's case, her return home in the end attests that, within the framework of the play, the desire for an efferent-escape is eventually annulled by the prevailing afferent force.

Margo's resolution to go away for a while is not as clearly motivated as Hélène's departure in Les Beaux Dimanches. Whereas we can sense Hélène's frustration building up in the first two acts of Dubé's work until she elects to exit Victor's house, Margo's decision to leave on a trip comes as something of a surprise, for hardly anything in her discourse or behaviour announces it explicitly in the previous scenes. On only one occasion before, early in the play, does she vent her intention to desert her companion when, in response to his agitation resulting from his attempt to quit smoking, Margo declares: "paul-émile fume / ou ben j'm'en va chez ma mère" (Garneau 20).³ Though seemingly irrelevant, Margo's threat is pregnant with

meaning, for while it refers ostensibly to Paul-Émile's bad habit, it actually points toward a far more profound dissension between the lovers, namely, their opposite outlook on death.

As we have seen in previous plays, like Les Beaux Dimanches, the characters' attitude towards death mirrors their orientation, either afferent or efferent, in the vectorial schema of the text. The same is true of Les Célébrations. But contrary to Les Beaux Dimanches, where the distinction between the clashing units is articulated in terms of a conflict between acknowledgment of and obliviousness to death, both personages in Garneau's drama are very much aware of the ultimate limit of their lives. The difference in the case of Margo and Paul-Émile is situated at the level of their contradictory *definition* of death. Margo envisions death as a process of nature: "[...] moi la mort c'est comme les arbres la nature l'océan" (Garneau 19). For Paul-Émile, on the other hand, death is like a dark, bottomless pit in which he sees himself falling every night.

At the level of imagery we can already perceive a clear contrast between Margo's outward, and paradoxically life-affirming conception of death as part of the natural world, and Paul-Émile's afferent vision of death as "un puits profond" (Garneau 20). Paul-Émile experiences an unbearable fear vis-à-vis his mortal condition: "j'ai peur j'ai peur pour vrai / y'a pas un soir que j'pense pas à mort" (Garneau 18). And his endless complaints about the danger of death, rather than his not smoking, are what actually lead Margo to threaten him with her departure:

Margo: paul-émile la vie

Paul-Émile: la vie la vie c'est quoi la vie / une couple de respirs avant d'mourir / ma fille la grande réalité c'est la mort

Margo: paul-émile fume / ou ben j'm'en vas chez ma mère (Garneau 20).

In the light of this early wish to escape from Paul-Émile's obsessive apprehension of death, Margo's eventual departure acquires meaning when read in continuity with the scene that immediately precedes it, in which the couple learns that one of their friends, Marcel, has committed suicide. Profoundly distressed by the news, Paul-Émile says regretfully "on aurait dû l'garder avec nous autres / l'aimer l'caresser / l'garder avec nous autres," to which Margo replies, "tu peux pas attacher quelqu'un / qui veut s'en aller / [...la mort] est jusse une autre dimension" (Garneau 54). These lines not only translate Paul-Émile's afferent response to death, that is, his impulse to keep his entourage close to his centre to combat the mortal threat, but also Margo's perception of death as only another type of departure that should not be hindered.

Whereas the catalyst behind Margo's departure admittedly remains conjectural, Paul-Émile's dread in the face of death undoubtedly motivates most of his actions throughout the play, from his attempt to give up smoking to his embarking on a health-food trip (Garneau 30). But most importantly, his phobia of death translates into his fear of being alone before the world, hence his desire to secure Margo's presence through marriage. During Margo's absence, Paul-Émile expresses his self-

pity in these terms:

Paul-Émile tout seul / avec sa solitude [...] il a surtout peur / de la mort de tout / dans sa solitude [...] j'm'ennuie / comme j'm'ennuyais l'dimanche après-midi / parc'tout l'monde était parti / visiter les grands parents / pis qu'moi j'avais ni grands-momans / ni grands-popas ni d'un bord ni d'l'aute / tous morts avant que j'naisse [...] ma rue était morte pis j'attendais qu'ça s'passe / le dimanche après-midi / margo c'est ma seule famille / en dehors d'elle / chu tout seul dans le monde. (Garneau 60).

His last phrase — *outside* of her, I am alone in the world — conveys emphatically his conception of his relationship with Margo as a fortress that protects him against a world of loneliness and death.

Conversely, the death that Margo apprehends is precisely the in-house fascism of marriage. When Paul-Émile proposes "on pourrait s'marier," she replies:

t'as rien compris paul-émile / s'marier c'est ça la mort / la mort qui t'obsède c'pas la mort physique à fin d'ta vie c'est ça c'est la mort dans ta vie / l'arrêt la stagnation l'institution la loi / les yeux fermés le sacrement l'habitude la coutume les magies des esclaves c'est ça la mort (Garneau 64-5).

Comparison of these lines with Margo's previous statement that physical death is like trees and nature, bears witness to the basic conflict between the afferent-withdrawal motive of Paul-Émile and Margo's wish for efferent-escape. Margo feels much more aversion toward the existential death caused by confinement than toward the death of the body that Paul-Émile dreads above all, and from which he tries to find shelter with his lover. But, as in all the other plays, the efferent-escape potential,

after having been explored briefly, is dismissed, and the afferent-withdrawal condition occupies the whole stage. In the last scene, Margo returns to the fold, where a contented Paul-Émile toasts to their reunion with his usual morbidity by stating, "on va quasiment finir par avoir le droit d'mourir ensemble" (Garneau 67).

The same dialectical arrangement surfaces in the other 1976 play of the corpus, Antonine Maillet's Gapi.⁴ As a matter of fact, the Afferent-withdrawal/Efferent-escape duality is perhaps more evident in this play than in any other work appraised in this section, for the entire drama revolves exclusively around the issue of staying or leaving. As critic Zénon Chiasson remarks, in his short comment on the first version of the text, titled Gapi et Sullivan (1973), "Partir ou rester? Tel est le débat intérieur qui agite Gapi."⁵

Maillet's piece examines the plight of Gapi, a sedentary light-house keeper, who spends most of his time talking to his only mates, the seagulls. Throughout Act One, the old man soliloquizes on his past with his late wife, la Sagouine, and on his lonely present on a dune where no one ever visits him. The companion that Gapi misses the most is Sullivan, the globe-trotting sailor, whom he has not seen in years and expects never to encounter again. "Ben farme ta goule, Gapi," the light-house keeper says to himself in his Acadian accent, "i' reviendra pus, ton Sullivan, pus jamais! Faudra que t'apprenis à vivre tout seul, asteur, et pus jamais espérer parsoune ... Y a pus

parsoune ... parsoune ..." (Maillet 54). As Gapi resigns himself to withdraw into everlasting solitude, Sullivan suddenly arrives on the dune for a short stay between two trips on the exotic seas of the world.

With Sullivan's entrance, the dramatist discontinues the monologic format and resorts, in Act Two, to a dialectical composition that sets the sailor, who boasts about all the things he has seen in the course of his travels, against the light-house keeper, who tries to defend the virtues of staying on the ancestral land while envying the exciting lifestyle of his friend. Allured by Sullivan's descriptions of the cal-lipygous native women he has met during his voyages, Gapi eventually decides to leave his light-house behind and join his buddy on his ship (Maillet 76-7). But, as if it were refusing to let its keeper go, the light-house breaks down just as Gapi is envisioning the prospect of a new life abroad (Maillet 78). Thus reminded that he has to remain on his dune and attend to his sempiternal duty, Gapi must ultimately forego his short-lived desire to leave. After Sullivan has returned to his ship, Gapi resumes his lonely life on his dune, without any alternative other than to reassert his afferent-withdrawal in the face of his only audience, the seagulls: "Allez-vous-en! Allez-vous-en chiauler ailleurs, pis laissez un homme jongler en paix icite [sic]! ... Pssst! Allez dire au grand boiteux qu'i' se dérange pas pour moi. S'il aime mieux la light du Cap ou les boueyes de l'île de Cocagne, je peux rester tout seul. (*Silence*)" (Maillet 100).

As straightforwardly as any other play analyzed in this study, Mailliet's drama thus exposes the predicament of a character, Gapi, who wishes to accomplish an efferent-escape from the confines that restrict his horizons, but who irrevocably fails in his endeavour, tied as he is to a light-house that anchors him to the dune. Sullivan's intervention, in the second act, only magnifies this tension by emphasizing the charismatic power of the outside world through his colourful narrative, without offering Gapi any effective support in his attempt to flee his lonely dune. A brief overview of the drama's discursive construction and imagery confirms this assessment.

In Gapi's very first line of the play, we detect a negative reaction towards the outside world very similar to that voiced by Victor at the top of Les Beaux Dimanches: "*(Gapi regarde par le hublot de son phare, le matin. Il parle aux goélands.)* Ah! farmez-vous, mes petits godêche de sacordjé de volailles épluchées! Vous pourriez pas laisser un houme s'arposer un matin sus deux, toujou' ben? [...] Allez-vous-en! Allez-vous-en!" (Mailliet 27). In words almost identical to those pronounced by Victor to silence the birds in his backyard, Gapi rejects violently the seagulls that manifestly embody the sea and open space. But contrary to Victor, Gapi, upon emerging from the light-house at the beginning of Act One, also expresses a certain fondness for the very birds that he scolds in his introductory statement. Shortly after having chased them, Gapi calls back the seagulls that have now deserted him: "*(Il cherche les goélands)* ... Ma grand foi Djeu, ils sont tout' bâsis, les

grands brailleux. Voyons, par où c'est qu'i' sont passés? Huit-huit-huit! ... petipetipeti ..." (Maillet 29). This ambiguous rapport with the seagulls is emblematic of Gapi's predicament, namely, the clash between his interest in the world beyond the dune and his devotion to the light-house.

In the course of the play, Gapi constantly communicates this afferent-withdrawal/efferent-escape dilemma through the dualistic makeup of his discourse. For instance, the aversion toward voyages that he exhibits in the first act is continually undermined by his reflections on the narrowness of his own universe. Reminiscing about his deceased wife, who never even went so far as Prince Edward Island, he claims:

La Sagouine itou rêvait aux vieux pays [...] quoi c'est que ça y arait douné de voyager? Pourquoi c'est faire qu'une parsoune qu'a vu des Arabes, pis des crocodiles, pis des coconuts dans les coconutiers, serait-i' pus savante, asteur, que c'ti-là qu'a vu des castors [...] Ça t'instruit de ouère du monde, qu'il dit, le Sullivan. Correct, ça t'instruit, j'ai rien à redire. Ben pourquoi c'est faire que faut que tu l'aies vu si loin c'te monde-là, pour que ça t'instruise (Maillet 34).

Yet, a few lines before these disparaging comments on traveling, Gapi recognizes the exiguity of his territory and of his life: "Ça ressemble trop à la dune, la vie: c'est long pis étroite. Ça finit par manquer d'air. Un homme des fois aimerait ben aouère de quoi de pus large, pour pouère se virer de bôrd de temps en temps" (Maillet 32). Significantly, the feeling of asphyxia acknowledged by Gapi in this early passage is echoed by Sullivan in Act Two: "Ça ferait du bien à tout le monde de voyager une petite affaire. Ça manque d'air icitte [...] Ça

manque de place, d'espace ... [emphasis added]" (Maillet 71). Such parallels between Sullivan's overt discourse and Gapi's equivocal remarks illustrate the sailor's function as the embodiment of the light-house keeper's suppressed longing for an efferent-escape.⁶

Gapi's internal conflict is most ingeniously symbolized, though, through the concrete allegory of a lame seagull that the old man particularly likes. As a bird whose physical circumstances hinder his ability to fly away, the lame seagull incarnates evocatively Gapi's drama. His description of his feathered alter-ego conveys Gapi's attempt to ennoble his condition of entrapment as a choice rather than an obligation: "[le grand boiteux] avait point besoin des vieux pays pour vivre, lui, i' savait se contenter de son rocher. Pis i' savait trouver sa nourriture icitte, sus la dune, sans aouère à forlaquer pis galipotter au loin, dans le suroît ou le nordet" (Maillet 44). But at the end of the play, when his hopes to sail away with Sullivan are definitively shattered by the demands of the light-house, Gapi rejects even the crippled bird (Maillet 100), as if the contradiction inscribed in the body of a grounded seagull were no longer representative of the light-house keeper's situation now that he has accepted afferent-withdrawal as the *only* conceivable position for him. This acceptance of his condition of solitary confinement on his small dune, affixed to a light-house that possesses him more than he possesses it, doubtlessly aligns Gapi with the other central characters encountered to this point, who all yield to the afferent-withdrawal impulse.

Though they are drastically different in many respects, Gapi and the suburban comedy, Une amie d'enfance (1977),⁷ by Louise Roy and Louis Saia, employ the common dramatic device of the outsider bringing into a closed milieu the alluring vision of a distant and strange universe. Like Sullivan, Coco (short for Jacques), the main outsider in Une amie d'enfance, enters a tightly circumscribed environment in which his alien perspective opens a window on an unknown world, out there. Whereas the aura surrounding Sullivan's appearance on Gapi's dune is explicitly connected to exotic destinations and adventures, the efferent function of Coco is somewhat eclipsed by the absurdist humour that dominates the text. However, a succinct analysis of Roy's and Saia's play suffices to demonstrate that underneath the drollery of the situation lies the same afferent-withdrawal/efferent-escape structure found in all the previous works.

Une amie d'enfance is set in Angèle's and Gaston's backyard on the outskirts of Montréal, where they are receiving Solange, the former's childhood friend, and her lover, Coco. Both reluctant at first, especially Gaston who would much prefer to watch TV in bed than entertain guests (Roy/Saia 38), the suburbanite hosts slowly develop an ambiguous fascination for their bohemian and free-thinking visitors. Coco, in particular, who has suffered from aphasia and paralysis in the right arm ever since a motorcycle accident, attracts both the amused pity and the admiration of Gaston and Angèle. But the presence of the comically inarticulate young man also disrupts the meticulously organized existence of the middle-class couple.

As his level of inebriation escalates, Coco also becomes increasingly unruly, even bestial, in his interaction with the others. In his introduction to the play, Laurent Mailhot compares Coco to a threatening wildcat: "Qui a peur de Coco? Tout le monde. Vous, moi, les auteurs, les spectateurs. On s'en approche prudemment comme d'un fauve."⁸ Late in the play, Coco starts chasing Angèle around the house, in a grotesque sexual game (Roy/Saia 116), and resorts to actual violence when Gaston tries to convince him to go home and sleep (Roy/Saia 117-8). After this outburst of sexual energy and rage, Coco eventually calms down and, almost in a state of infantile regression, leaves with Solange, while Gaston and Angèle try to erase the signs of the barbaric invasion that has just afflicted their orderly backyard.

Coco's efferent proclivity, which is insinuated in the rowdy behaviour reported above, is most evidently manifested in the semiotic material ascribed to him in the play. Solange's account to Angèle of her first encounter with Coco clearly attests to the young man's association with the outdoors and open space: "On s'est rencontré dans une tempête de neige. J'faisais du pouce [...] Tout d'un coup, j'te vois arriver c't'auto, comme une apparition dans tempête. J'avais jamais rien vu de pareil. Une auto bleue toute recouverte de poussière d'étoiles, pis ça brillait" (Roy/Saia 81, 82). The picture of Coco's car covered with stardust and appearing in the middle of a blizzard immediately evokes images of ethereal freedom amid the elements of the cosmos. This impression is confirmed when

Solange recalls the feeling of escape that she experienced on their first night of love: "Lui en Kimono, dans le lit de mon appartement rouge, j'avais l'impression d'être ailleurs. Tu comprends, loin, très loin." (Roy/Saia 84).

But while Coco is assigned the positive images of open space and freedom associated with the efferent-escape unit, he also displays the kind of abject attributes generally linked to efferent characters. He is crippled and cannot articulate properly. He almost urinates in his pants (Roy/Saia 56), and to seduce Angèle, he employs a grotesque and bestial posture: "*Il se lève, se met à quatre pattes et lui montre son derrière en s'appuyant sur un coude*" (Roy/Saia 106). Belonging to the same unit, Solange also deploys images related to both freedom and the abject. She has ambitions "comme faire le tour du monde! (*Elle rit.*) Être en amour. (*Elle rit.*) Avoir du plaisir. (*Elle rit.*)" (Roy/Saia 54), and she enjoys living in a garage, because "c'est un peu comme si on couchait à la belle étoile" (Roy/Saia 74). While on a trip to New York, she acted in a pornographic film as a live steak tartar: "I' m'avait mis du boeuf haché partout sur le corps [...] le gars, quand ç'a été le temps de manger son steak tartare, i'était pus capable. J'pense que la viande commençait à sentir fort, tu comprends, j'avais chaud moi là-dedans" (Roy/Saia 69, 70). Although humorous, the image of fetid raw meat covering a sweating body is manifestly abject.

Conversely, the behaviour and discursive practice of Angèle and Gaston are emblematic of the afferent-withdrawal inclination. Gaston has an obsessive repugnance of the abject. As

Angèle describes him, "[...] c'est un des gars les plus propres qui existent au monde [...] I'est un peu maniaque en tout ce qui concerne le corps. Une chose qu'i' est pas capable de supporter, c'est le collant" (Roy/Saia 85, 86). Angèle is also overly concerned with the proper body. Significantly, she refuses to have children: "[...] j'ai pas le corps pour avoir un enfant. J'ai la peau trop sensible. Pis j'ai le bassin trop étroit. Ça me déformerait le corps [emphasis added]" (Roy/Saia 67).

The afferent-withdrawal tendency of Angèle and Gaston also translates into a desire to encapsulate the whole world in their circumscribed environment. This is especially evident in Gaston's case who, although a travel agent, is incapable of going on trips, for he is afraid of flying. Interestingly enough, Gaston's fear of actual planes has led him to collect model planes, which he piles up in his basement — an obvious strategy to control that which he dreads (Roy/Saia 89). When Gaston wants to travel, he stays at home and plays with his model planes. "Depuis que je suis jeune j'ai toujours rêvé de voyager," he tells his guests, "mais voyager chez nous. Dans ma tête. Ce que je veux dire, c'est que, ce que j'aime pas dans les voyages c'est de changer de place [...] Moi quand j'ai le goût de voyager, c'est pas compliqué. J'vas au coin de la rue. Y a un terrain vague. Pis là j'fais voler mon petit avion" (Roy/Saia 92, 93).

Angèle also wishes to contain the world in her house by transforming the various rooms into small countries: "I' faut toujours que je me fasse des mondes. T'as pas vu ma toilette,

toi. Tu te sentirais en Grèce. La tapisserie est bleu grec avec un motif grec doré légèrement appuyé" (Roy/Saia 50). The "tropical plants" that she puts on the patio to give a Kon-Tiki flair to the dinner party and Gaston's home-made bar that looks like a hut from a southern island (Roy/Saia 43, 48) substantiate their desire to enclose the world in their backyard, to say nothing of the fact that such kitschy paraphernalia betrays the philistinism of the suburban couple.

The encroaching presence of the transgressive Coco and Solange in Angèle's and Gaston's small realm is not without a certain influence on the hosts. For instance, Gaston, in an intimate conversation with Solange late in the evening, confides: "Moi, si j'me lâchait [sic] lousse, j'démolirais ma maison" (Roy/Saia 115). He thus discloses, perhaps for the only time in the play, a deeply repressed potential for efferent-escape that could translate into the violent destruction of his house. However, as soon as Coco, exhausted by his eruption of aggression, agrees to leave the premises with Solange, Angèle and Gaston proceed to reassert the predominance of the afferent force. To repudiate his interest in Solange, Gaston declares his love for his wife: "Pourquoi j'voudrais une autre femme, quand j'en ai une comme ça, chez nous?" Reinstated in her role as the only woman in Gaston's "chez nous," Angèle finalizes the process of erasing Solange's and Coco's passage by ordering her husband, "viens m'aider, on va mettre un peu d'ordre au moins" as the lights go down (Roy/Saia 125). Once again, as in the other plays analyzed in this study, the efferent-escape option embodied by

Solange's and Coco's outward attitudes, after having been considered momentarily, is vacated and the central characters remain in the stasis of their afferent-withdrawal.

Whereas Une amie d'enfance conveys the violence generated by the tension between inward recoil and outward transgression through the innocuous vehicle of the comedy of manners, Christian Bruyere's Walls (1978)⁹ depicts the brutal potential of the afferent-withdrawal/efferent-escape dialectic in the trenchant terms of the most effective prison movies.¹⁰ Through the use of typical filmic devices such as parallel montage and flashbacks, Bruyere's play shows how the inhumane practice of solitary confinement — the epitome of imposed afferent-withdrawal — leads three convicts to kidnap five classification officers in an attempt to break free from jail. Here, as in other dramas on our list, the fierce desire to escape is countered by an equally stern inward force that stops at nothing to contain the efferent drive of its opponents. In the last scene, after having kept the authorities on tenterhooks for two days while barricaded in a penitentiary office, the felons and their captives are assaulted and subdued by prison guards who kill one of the hostages, Mary, in the process of crushing the insurrection.

The dialectical arrangement of the play, unlike what could be expected, does not rest primarily on an opposition between the kidnapers and their victims. There are obviously frictions between the two groups, but in many instances, these confrontations take the form of internecine conflicts. This is especially

true of Mary, a classification officer, and Danny Baker, the leader of the uprising, who are in fact allies in their intent to break the walls that sequester them, but who use markedly different means to accomplish their common purpose. The flashbacks, which shed light on the present tense of the hostage crisis, show how, over a period of several months, Mary endeavoured to have Danny removed from solitary confinement and re-integrated into the "free" population of the penitentiary. However, because of the bad faith of the Warden and other penitentiary officials, Mary's approach eventually failed. This failure incited Baker and his acolytes to adopt the more radical tactic of kidnapping Mary, herself, along with four other classification officers, to get the results that they could not achieve through legal channels.

Significantly, Mary's belonging in the unit of characters striving for an efferent-escape is confirmed by her own state of entrapment in a problematic relationship with an alcoholic man (Bruyere 29). Although not comparable to Baker's solitary confinement, Mary's marriage, which she hesitates to terminate since her companion needs her, implies a parallel condition of imprisonment that renders her sympathetic to the convicts' cause. Liz, another classification officer taken hostage, also aspires to escape her unsatisfying existence (Bruyere 30). Not surprisingly, she develops a strong attachment for one of the kidnapers, Curt Willis, and whole-heartedly espouses his dream to fly away to Argentina (Bruyere 82).

The dialectical conflict of the play, therefore, is less

between the kidnappers and their victims — although not all the hostages are as supportive of the inmates' crusade as Mary and Liz — than between those who seek to escape the oppressive situation in which they are trapped and those who inflict this confinement upon them. Again, the imagery ascribed to each side of the dialectic bears this confrontational arrangement. On the one hand, the discourse of the Warden and the guards underscores the necessity to maintain order inside the walls of the prison. For instance, Butula, a senior security guard and union leader, always emphasizes that his duty is "the maintenance of good order within this institution" (Bruyere 34), and "upholding the safety and well-being of everyone who works within these walls" (Bruyere 97).

On the other hand, the semiotic material deployed by the convicts and the classification officers favouring the abolition of solitary confinement is manifestly efferent. The very first line of the play, pronounced by Curt, reads: "Open up or this pig bleeds" (Bruyere 13). This short sentence comprises at once the concrete urge to rupture barriers, the bestial rhetoric linked to efferent wildness, and the shattering of the epidermal boundary that retains bodily fluids, already interpreted as a sign of the efferent-escape desire in Being at Home with Claude and other plays. References to barbarism and discharging blood abound in the scenic figures associated with the inmates. For instance, Luke, the third convict, explains to the hostages that he and his accomplices are wearing gloves, "so our knives won't slide out of our hands from your gushing blood" (Bruyere 14).

And Danny's suicide attempt, depicted in a flashback, is described by the dramatist as follows: "*Danny slashes his arm through his shirt. Blood spurts out of his arm. He laughs and gasps. The blood flows all over the place*" (Bruyere 66).

Besides references to flowing blood and the abject, the antagonists also employ other, more positive types of outward rhetoric. In a rare moment of serenity during the two-day hostage crisis, Curt and Liz express their common attraction for the outside world by envisioning themselves in a romantic pastoral setting. "Curt: How about you an' me taking a little walk in the woods? [...] Hey, here's a far out spot, right by the river. Sure is a warm night, isn't it? — Liz: Look at the moon [...] See its reflection on the water?" (Bruyere 85, 87). In order to cope with solitary confinement, Danny also resorted to escapist imaging. "I earned my Masters in Visionary Science," he confides to Mary, "[...] I learned to project myself into whatever space and time I wanted to be in, right?" (Bruyere 89). These passages attest that the desire for an efferent-escape in Walls, as in other plays analyzed above, is connected as much to the attractiveness of open space and nature as to the savagery of unruly excesses. A subsequent chapter will suggest that this is also a characteristic of cinema.

Mary's discourse also contains numerous efferent metaphors. For instance, when asked what new approaches could be used to improve living conditions in the penitentiary, Mary suggests "grabbing one end of a battering ram and charging through until all the barriers are broken down" (Bruyere 28), thus voicing a

desire to explode boundaries analogous to that of the convicts. But the excerpt which comprises the most arresting images is her description of a dream she has shortly before the deadly assault from the prison guards. The dream concerns her pet pig, Petunia, whom she saved from drowning. She tells Danny:

My dad told me I should have let her drown because I couldn't take her to the city with me. So I ran away with her. We went deep into the woods, deeper and deeper. I got cold and hungry so I built a fire. I was outrageously hungry, I mean it was unreal. My stomach growled till I became faint. Then I stared at Petunia and she pushed her little snout into my hand [...] I picked up this sharp stick. She tried to get away, but I jabbed her and kept jabbing her until ... until she was dead [...] (*almost hysterical*) Then I cooked her. And as I was taking the first bite, I saw people I knew around me, my friends and neighbours, and they just laughed and laughed (Bruyere 123, 124).

These lines synthesize several images associated with the efferent unit, from the notion of the woods as a privileged place for escape to the violent gesture of stabbing, which is omnipresent in the play since the convicts' only weapons are knives. Moreover, Mary's dream also closes the circle opened by Curt's first line of the drama, threatening to kill the pig. Through the dream-work, Mary completes her process of identification with the convicts by experiencing the necessity of violence against "pigs" in order to survive. At another level, the narrative of the dream also summarizes Mary's whole project and its bloody outcome. By attempting to save her pet, Petunia, she precipitated her demise. Similarly, by attempting to save her pet, Danny, from solitary confinement, she triggered a series of events that result, shortly after the account of the

dream, into her own death and worse sentences for the mutineers.

Although the brutal ending of Walls bears little resemblance to the reconciliation that closes Les Célébrations or the cleaning up of the backyard that concludes Une amie d'enfance, it performs, nonetheless, the same function, inasmuch as it evacuates the threat of efferent-escape, and reasserts the dominance of afferent-withdrawal in the world depicted on stage. The tone of these plays might be utterly divergent, and the perspective or point of focalisation contradictory, but the fact remains that they all propose the same implicational dialectic of afferent-withdrawal/efferent-escape, and all fade out on the impossibility of the latter term. The same conclusion applies to Jim Gerrard's Cold Comfort (1981) and Kelly Rebar's Bordertown Café (1987).¹¹

As a matter of fact, the afferent-withdrawal/efferent-escape dialectic is so central to Garrard's text that he, himself, labels the tetralogy of dramas to which Cold Comfort belongs "Bondage Plays for My Country" (Garrard 5). This appellation recalls, from the outset, the theme of confinement exhibited in Walls and the other texts surveyed above, and a single reading of Garrard's black comedy discloses that the dialectical structure of the piece, like that of the previous works, is based on an opposition between a confining force and a desire to escape entrapment.

Cold Comfort offers a macabre version of the old joke about the travelling salesman who is compelled because of a Sas-

katchewan blizzard to spend the night in a remote house with a strange man and his attractive daughter. Floyd, the father, found Stephen Miller unconscious in his ditched car and elected to bring him home as a birthday gift for his daughter, Dolores (Garrard 15). Throughout Act One, Floyd encourages Stephen to sleep with his daughter, even leaving them alone for lengthy periods of time to facilitate the process. By the time Stephen and Dolores eventually become intimate, the travelling salesman has discovered that Floyd's inviting him to sleep with the teenage girl is but a mild expression of the old man's bizarre personality. From Dolores's matter-of-fact account, Stephen learns that Floyd once abandoned his wife on an empty road at night because she had reprimanded him for his drinking (Garrard 41-2). Moreover, the father used to shackle his daughter inside the house to keep her from running away (Garrard 60). And most frighteningly, Dolores asserts that Floyd performed an operation on her when she was eight to remove her reproductive organs (Garrard 57). Understandably, Stephen tries to persuade Dolores to leave with him the following morning (Garrard, 63). Delighted at the prospect of travelling around the world, Dolores tenders Stephen her sexual favours in exchange for an enumeration of all the cities he has visited and where he will bring her (Garrard 69-71).

At the beginning of Act Two, however, Stephen's plan to abscond with Dolores is brutally shattered when he wakes up with a chain around his ankle fastening him to the floor. Floyd explains that he resorted to this radical means to prevent the

salesman from taking Dolores away: "It wasn't my idea you should take Dolores out of here. I didn't mind somebody coming in here and, maybe, giving her a little poke. But nobody's fucking well going to take her any place. " (Garrard 76). To convince his daughter to forsake Stephen, Floyd suggests: "My idea, Dolores, is that if you really want to leave here so bad, I'll take you" (Garrard 81). Seduced by her father's proposition, Dolores turns her back on Stephen and starts packing her bags. "What can I do? My Daddy's made up his mind," she tells Stephen before deserting him. (Garrard 92). In the end, Dolores departs with Floyd, leaving Stephen chained inside the house with nothing but the television and a Swede saw that "won't cut chain but it might cut bone" (Garrard 92).

It could be argued that whether Dolores flees with Stephen or with Floyd, at the end of the play, she still manages to escape the confines of the isolated prairie house, and thus succeeds where characters like H el ene Primeau have failed. Her confinement, however, has less to do with the actual prison in which she is sequestered than with the gaoler who controls her every moves, to wit, Floyd. In fact, Dolores herself unwittingly recognizes that Floyd does not need to use chains to enslave her. "When I was younger," she tells Stephen, "Daddy used to put a chain on my leg when he was away, but now he knows he doesn't have to. He never did. I wouldn't run away from him [...] I can't leave Daddy. I don't want him to be disappointed" (Garrard 60, 61). Indeed, she "can't leave Daddy." When Stephen, shackled to the floor, charges, "You must be crazy too. Like him. I don't

understand how you can go anywhere with him, after all he's done to you," she retorts: "I'm sorry, Stephen. Especially after all the nice things you've done for me. But he's my Dad, and I want to go places" (Garrard 84). That he is her "Dad" gives Floyd absolute control over his daughter, who remains metaphorically chained to him whether they stay at home or travel to Vancouver and the United States (Garrard 86, 89). Interestingly enough, in Vic Sarin's film adaptation of the drama, the ending is altered to provide Dolores with a partial efferent-escape, by showing her jumping off her father's truck as he is recklessly driving away. The implications of this change to the script will be further explored in the next part. The issue to stress here is that the play, in keeping with the tendency diagnosed hitherto, resolves the afferent-withdrawal/efferent-escape dialectic through the erasure of the latter term behind a hopeless illustration of inescapable bondage.

As in the case of Cold Comfort, even the most cursory reading of Kelly Rebar's Bordertown Café discloses the afferent-withdrawal/efferent-escape dialectical arrangement. Rebar's work rests entirely on one question: to leave or not to leave. Jimmy, a seventeen-year-old who lives with his mother, Marlene, grandfather, Jim, and grandmother, Maxine, in an isolated café on the Canadian side of the Alberta/Montana border, is offered the opportunity to move to Wyoming with his truck-driving father, Don, and his new wife. The conflict of the play is thus one of *geography*, as Jimmy is torn between, on the one hand, the

proximity of the American border which exerts its formidable magnetism, and on the other hand, his profound Albertan roots which are unfortunately tied to a miserable café dwarfed by nothingness. In this regard, Rebar's set description is eloquent: "*The closed, tight space of the café is contrasted by a sense of overwhelming prairie sky that surrounds the set*" (Rebar 11). Throughout the two-act play, Jimmy considers the two sides of the equation as he patiently waits for his father to come pick him up and take him away, but Don never shows up. When he eventually phones, Jimmy decides to turn down his proposition:

[...] I bin waitin', I had to – to miss hockey, I couldn't do chores for fear of missin' you, and it turns out you weren't even gonna phone to let a guy know? When I got a crop to get off? That wasn't fair, Dad, it just wasn't and I'm thinkin' maybe I'll take a pass on movin' down there actually. (Rebar 100).

In the end, therefore, Jimmy renounces *crossing the border* and determines to stay at home with his family.

Jimmy's mother experiences the same dilemma, feeling a strong desire to leave, but being afraid to abandon the small niche that she has carved for herself in the prairie landscape. Only after she has been confronted with the possibility of her son deserting her does Marlene finally come to terms with her own predicament and articulates a solution to her plight: "[...] you know what? I *like* this place. And any changes I make I wanna make in my own time. But first, I'm gonna ... tra – travel. [...] Booked my flight today. To Hawaii. And I'm goin' [Rebar's emphasis] (Rebar 91-2). Her assertion that she likes the Café, that she wishes to improve it, but that she also desires to

travel implies that there is a way to remain anchored in one's homeland while visiting other regions.

This happy compromise is actually hinted at earlier in the play by Jim, the wise grandfather. "Maybe it'll be good for you to get away from all this haywire here," he tells Jimmy, "Enjoy yourself for awhile. The farm, well it'll always be here" (Rebar 63-4). Jim's message is clear: leaving *temporarily* is the means to insure the preservation of the homestead. And at the end of the play, following Marlene's announcement of her plan to go to Hawaii, Jim explains to the teenager that he too, in his younger days, travelled from Halifax to Minnesota on a whim, to meet an American girl — Maxine. The astonishing fact that his grandfather has "bin off the prairies?" (Rebar 99) while preserving such a solid entrenchment in the ancestral land, and his mother's desire to enrich her prairie life through travelling, combine to inject Jimmy with enough courage to turn down Don's escapist proposal, and energize his commitment to his roots. Thus the annulment of his desire for an efferent-escape allows the emergence of a positive version of afferent-withdrawal, for the centripetal movement that closes the play re-affirms the strength of the family unit without imposing seclusion on any of its members.

Conclusion:

This brief analytical survey of the published corpus from Terry's inward recoil in Me? to Jimmy's auspicious decision to remain at Bordertown Café, demonstrates that all these texts

revolve more or less ostensibly around the afferent-withdrawal/efferent-escape implicational dialectic, and all perform the elimination of the escapist option from the site of the drama. Only one work, in the entire list of original published plays from anglophone and francophone Canada that have been adapted into indigenous films between 1972 and 1992, has not been examined in this survey: Maryse Pelletier's Du poil aux pattes comme les CWAC's (1982).¹² The reason for this omission is that Pelletier's is the only script that does not exhibit as one of its key concerns the afferent-withdrawal/efferent-escape duality.

Du poil aux pattes comme les CWAC's, which follows the army training of four female recruits during World War II, has as its central theme the ability of women from a variety of backgrounds to cultivate their own strength, to enjoy the kind of camaraderie traditionally reserved for men, and to show a common front against whatever enemy they must confront. The song that concludes the drama is explicit in that respect:

J'avais toujours dix oreillers / Quarante duvets très légers / Soixante paires de nylon fin / Cent quatre paires de gants de daim / Je m'amusais très rarement / Je lisais toujours des romans / Je rêvais sans pouvoir bouger / Tout empotée, ankylosée / Mais HALTE / ATTENTION / Tout a changé / Oui j'ai changé / Je marche au pas accéléré / Je cours des heures sans m'essouffler / Je fume et ris aux éclats / Je suis un soldat donc je bois / Et je me sens plus d'attaque / Et j'aime encore mieux me battre / Que d'avoir l'oeil mouillé tout près d'un bénitier / En attendant ce dieu qui doit me marier [Pelletier's emphasis]. (Pelletier 157-8)

Sporadically, in the course of the play, the dramatist evokes

the threat of the German enemy, out there (Pelletier 24, 86), and makes references to certain confining aspects typical of army life (Pelletier 82, 107). However, these are only marginal elements in the composition of the drama. Any critical reading of Pelletier's work reveals that the tensions it deploys cannot be accurately abstracted in terms of afferent or centripetal recoil and efferent or centrifugal evasion. Other struggles predominate, here: the necessity to alter the characters' conception of femininity; the difficulty of negotiating with figures of authority; and their problematic relations with men, either as unfaithful boyfriends, draft-dodging brothers, or chauvinistic fathers. Du poil aux pattes comme les CWAC's thus represents an exception to the rule established over the last chapters.

But this exception, by showing that the afferent-withdrawal/efferent-escape doublet does not apply to every play imaginable, confirms that its overwhelming recurrence in the published corpus is not merely a coincidence. Indeed, by bearing witness to the fact that not all dramas can be made to *fit* in our framework, Du poil aux pattes comme les CWAC's reasserts that the texts that *do* follow the pattern belong to a somewhat exclusive category. This category is all the more exclusive because, as has been shown, the afferent-withdrawal/efferent-escape dialectic does not only recur in the great majority of the film-mediated plays, but wherever it surfaces the unfolding of the dramatic situation always results in the negation in the theatrical space of the possibility of escape.

This means that a play like David French's landmark Leaving Home (1972), which conveys the afferent-withdrawal/efferent-escape structure in the form of a conflict between a seclusive father and his rebellious son, does not belong in the category comprising our corpus, for the son, Ben, definitely realizes an efferent-escape in the end, when he *leaves home*. Similarly, David Freeman's celebrated Creeps (1971), by showing how a disabled man, Tom, gathers enough courage to break free from the sheltered workshop where he is trapped along with other victims of cerebral palsy, clearly stages an efferent ending, and thus is not in the same class with Cold Comfort, for instance, in which Dolores remains unquestionably bonded to her father from beginning to end. It could surely be argued that Ben's and Tom's escape from their respective prisons might not lead to the kind of life that they desire. As Frances Teague writes in her article "Prison and Imprisonment in Canadian Drama," "Creeps does not suggest that freedom is necessarily a solution which will give the characters happy lives."¹³ Quite possibly, life away from the family and the sheltered workshop will be as difficult for Ben and Tom as their previous existences. However, the very fact that they *dare to leave* and not return to the fold minutes later, at least as far as the plays themselves allow us to surmise, represents a decisive gesture of escape which differs markedly from H el ene Primeau's aborted evasion. As Jerry Wasserman points out in his brief but perceptive comments on Leaving Home, Creeps and other Canadian plays of the period, "at best all these plays celebrate moral victories, preservations of

integrity, *possibilities of escape* [emphasis added]."¹⁴ Such "possibilities of escape" are entirely absent from the plays of the corpus.

Many other famous plays from the Canadian and Québécois repertoires also offer examples of accomplished efferent-escapes. For instance, Victor-Lévy Beaulieu's Votre fille Peuplesse par inadvertance (1978), which resembles Cold Comfort in its triangular arrangement involving a cruel father, a victimized daughter, and a young man forced by the patriarch to rape the young woman, ends with the daughter killing her father, and definitively escaping this milieu of bondage and perversion.¹⁵ In the same manner, Françoise Loranger's powerful character Gertrude, from Encore cinq minutes (1965), manages to leave her orderly but unsatisfying domestic life to confront the public space. Unlike Les Beaux Dimanches, which explicitly traces Hélène's failure to realize her escape, Loranger's piece chronicles Gertrude's growing frustration until she eventually explodes the limits that confine her and goes ahead with her escape. Whether or not she will eventually return like Hélène is irrelevant, of course, for it is not part of the play. Michel Tremblay's masterful A toi, pour toujours, ta Marie-Lou (1971) also shows a character, Carmen, who dares to escape her milieu, and Marie Laberge's Governor General's Award-winning play, C'était avant la guerre à l'anse à Gilles (1981) presents the growing awareness of Marianna, a young widow in 1930s Québec, who escapes her claustrophobic village after one of her friends has been raped.

These few titles, to which many others could be added, only serve to demonstrate that the recurrent dramatic structure discerned in the plays perused above is by no means universal, and thus represents a distinctive feature of the corpus of modern Canadian and Québécois film-mediated drama. The next part will scrutinize the films adapted from these texts, putting a particular emphasis on Wedding in White, Les Beaux Dimanches, One Night Stand and Being at Home with Claude, to demonstrate that the afferent-withdrawal/efferent-escape tension is accentuated through the process of adaptation, as cinema's own efferent makeup clashes with the afferent concentration of traditional drama. This analysis will bring us closer to a possible explanation for the constitution of our corpus.

NOTES

1. Martin Kinch, Me?, Toronto: Playwrights Co-op, 1973. Subsequent references will appear within parentheses in the text. In this chapter, I purposefully overlook Jack Cunningham's See No Evil, Hear... from 1972, as well as the other unpublished plays of the corpus, Stephan Zoller's Metal Messiah, Maynard Collins' Hank Williams: "The Show He Never Gave", Peter Colley's The Mark of Cain, Layne Coleman's Blue City Slammers, and John Beckett Wimbs's Memoirs of Johnny Daze, for the reason that these texts are simply not available to the public.

2. Michel Garneau, Les Célébrations suivi de Adidou Adidouce. Montréal: VLB éditeur, 1977.

3. The virgule denotes a break between two lines of text. These breaks are part of Garneau's idiosyncratic mode of writing. Furthermore, Garneau never capitalizes proper names and rarely uses punctuation.

4. Antonine Maillet, Gapi. Montréal: Leméac, 1976.

5. Zénon Chiasson, "Gapi et Sullivan, drame d'Antonine Maillet," Dictionnaire des oeuvres littéraires du Québec - Tome V 1970-1975 (Montréal: Fidès, 1984) 365.

6. Several reviewers have interpreted the dichotomy deployed in the drama as the internal conflict of a single character torn between here and elsewhere. Pierre Mailhot, for instance, writes that Gapi and Sullivan are the two sides of the same coin: "On pourrait même ne parler que d'un seul relief à deux versants, l'un tourné vers l'intérieur familial du pays, l'autre regardant vers le vaste monde inconnu" (Pierre Mailhot, "Gapi," Les Cahiers de théâtre Jeu 4 [1977]: 90). Jean-Cléo Godin also suggests that Gapi and Sullivan are "deux moitiés d'un même être constamment partagé entre la vie sédentaire sur la dune, et l'appel de 'la grand-grand'mer qui finit pas...'" (Jean-Cléo Godin, "Antonine Maillet Gapi," Livres et Auteurs Québécois [1976]: 195.) Similarly, Zénon Chiasson argues: "Le dialogue avec Sullivan, revenu comme par magie dans la seconde partie, n'est qu'une autre façon de dramatiser l'opposition homme des côtes/homme du large, principal enjeu de la pièce. Sullivan, c'est l'autre versant de Gapi." (Chiasson, 365.) That these observers would identify the crux of play, in its two versions, as one character's struggle between an inward reticence and an outward attraction bears witness to the transparency of the afferent-withdrawal/efferent-escape structure of this work.

7. Louise Roy and Louis Saia, Une amie d'enfance. Montréal: Leméac, 1980.
8. Laurent Mailhot, "L'aphasique et les bavards," Introduction to Une amie d'enfance, 9.
9. Christian Bruyère, Walls. Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1978.
10. On the Hollywood genre of the "prison movie" see, for instance, Ira Konigsberg, The Complete Film Dictionary (New York: New American Library, 1987) 272. In his Introduction to the play, Bruyère indirectly acknowledges the influence of the "prison movie" by referring to Papillon (Henri Charrière), whose incarcerated life was made famous by one of the best films of the genre, Franklin Schaffner's Papillon (1973). See Bruyère, 7.
11. Jim Garrard, Cold Comfort. Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1982. Kelly Rebar, Bordertown Café. Winnipeg: Blizzard Publishing, 1987.
12. Maryse Pelletier, Du poil aux pattes comme les CWAC's. Montréal: VLB Éditeur, 1983.
13. Frances Teague, "Prisons and Imprisonment in Canadian Drama," Journal of Canadian Fiction 19 (1977): 121
14. Jerry Wasserman, "Introduction," Modern Canadian Plays vol.1, ed. Wasserman (Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1993) 21.
15. Victor-Lévy Beaulieu has published a second version of Votre fille Peuplesse par inadvertance, entitled La Nuit de la grande citrouille (1993), in which a song is added, at the end, to convey even more explicitly than in the original the daughter's irrevocable escape. The first two lines of the song read: "Partir sans laisser d'adresse / Partir pour ne plus revenir." See Beaulieu, La Nuit de la grande citrouille (Montréal: Stanké, 1993) 95.

PART II. FILM-MEDIATION OF THE DRAMATIC CORPUS

On the grounds of the dramatic structures identified hitherto, we can now proceed to assay the film-mediation process to which the plays have been subjected. Like the previous part, this section will focus on the best-known instances of film-mediated drama and, subsequently, attempt to elaborate a general interpretation of the corpus by extending to other texts the conclusions drawn from the four case-studies. Since the movie versions of Wedding in White, Les Beaux Dimanches, One Night Stand and Being at Home with Claude retain their original configurations at the primary level of action, the task of analyzing the mechanisms of adaptation will consist essentially in explicating the imagery cinematically superimposed upon the action-schema of the plays. This approach to the screen versions is in keeping with both Thomas Price's structuralist framework and Roy Armes's suggestion, in Action and Image: Dramatic Structure in Cinema (1994), that "[...] meanings are clearly added which are not accessible to the ordinary reader, as the action envisaged in the text is realised with the full power of the filmic image."¹ Moreover, this methodology also conforms to a practice in film criticism that David Bordwell labels, in his book Making Meaning (1989), the "core/periphery schema."²

This interpretative strategy, Bordwell indicates, envisions the operations of hermeneutics in terms of three concentric circles. At the core of this arrangement of spheres, Bordwell locates the characters' actions and relationships. Hedging this central realm, we find an intermediate circle made up of the

diegetic material (settings, props, lighting etc.) that supports both literally and metaphorically the characters' deeds and motions. Finally, in the most peripheral ring, Bordwell situates *the non-diegetic* modes of representation (camerawork, editing etc.).³ This tripartite geometrical illustration of the way in which the filmic text is conceived by most schools of interpretation, at least those that put the emphasis on characters in action, determines the process by which explicatory critics conduct their readings of movies. As Bordwell informs us, film interpreters use the focal sphere of character as the cornerstone on the basis of which they determine the symbolical import of the diegetic environment, and elucidate the signifying procedures of non-diegetic means of narration. In Bordwell's words:

By putting characters at the center, this schema makes their traits, actions, and relationships the most important interpretative cues. Less salient but still potentially significant are the characters' surroundings – setting, lighting, objects, in short the "diegetic world" they inhabit. These surroundings are in turn enclosed by the film's representational techniques. [...This schema] promotes those personified agents we call characters (fictional or not) over less prominent cues. The schema also suggests fruitful correlations: between character and setting, between setting and camerawork. It thus offers a way for the critic to map semantic fields onto stylistic or narrational qualities.⁴

In all fairness, it must be stated that Bordwell does not champion such interpretative methods, advocating, instead, "more global investigations of conventions of filmic structure and function."⁵ Yet, his perceptive schematization of these procedures ironically confirms the pertinence of our approach within

the context of this dissertation's admittedly interpretative project.⁶ Indeed, since the core of the textual fabric — the characters and their actions — has already been analyzed in the previous section, the next step in our hermeneutical enterprise, following Bordwell's lead, is logically to focus on the semiotic environment that qualifies the characters' attitudes, and on the non-diegetic manipulations of the diegetic material. This analysis will demonstrate that the cinematization of the original texts magnifies the afferent-withdrawal/efferent-escape tension recurrent in the corpus through the injection of efferent film imagery in the predominately afferent composition of the dramas.

The phenomenon will surface most evidently in the next chapter, which scrutinizes the two adaptations that resort most extensively to the traditional practice of "opening up" the dramatic text, to wit, Wedding in White and Les Beaux Dimanches. Subsequently, I will analyze the more subtle but equally significant modes of transposition involved in the production of the movie versions of One Night Stand and Being at Home with Claude, and discuss some other films of the corpus to corroborate my conclusions.

NOTES

1. Roy Armes, Action and Image: Dramatic Structure in Cinema (Manchester: Manchester UP, 1994) 36.
2. David Bordwell, Making Meaning: Inference and Rhetoric in the Interpretation of Cinema (Cambridge [Mass.]: Harvard UP, 1989) 170-80.
3. See Bordwell's illustration on page 171.
4. Bordwell, 170.
5. Bordwell, 271.
6. In his intricate review of Making Meaning, Bart Testa notes that, in spite of Bordwell's ultimate disapproval of interpretative film analysis, his work can actually serve as a valuable textbook on this very mode of criticism: "In his last chapter, Bordwell moves to his complaint, which is not addressed to the doctrines themselves, but to the consequences of the whole set-up: film studies is consumed by interpretation, or making meaning. It operates within a very narrow band, not of ideas, but of models, to the exclusion of non-interpretative kinds of analysis. This methodological constrictiveness has led to scholasticism in film studies. What Bordwell would prefer is a 'poetics' of cinema [...] Despite all that, however, because Making Meaning is written from inside of current film studies, the book has a secondary and quite ironic value of a sort of handbook or compendium of current academic film criticism." See Testa, "Review Essay: Out of Theory," The Canadian Journal of Film Studies / Revue canadienne d'études cinématographiques 1.2 (1991): 52.

CHAPTER VIII. WEDDING IN WHITE and LES BEAUX DIMANCHES

As the reader will recall, Chapter III demonstrated that Wedding in White displays a dialectical tension between, on the one hand, the seclusive actions of the protagonists, mainly Jim and Sandy, and on the other hand, the escapist gestures of Jimmy, Mary and their fellow antagonists. For their part, the apex figures, Jeanie and Dollie, temporarily oscillate between these two poles, but they eventually surrender to the afferent force that traps them inside. The afferent force also prevails in Les Beaux Dimanches. As shown in Chapter IV, the actions performed by Muriel, Angéline and Paul succeed in preserving the boundaries of the protective shell that they have fabricated for themselves to indulge in bourgeois obliviousness, while the deeds executed by Hélène and the other antagonists fail to transcend or transgress these limits. In this chapter, we will see how this dialectical conflict, common to both works, is augmented through the process of film-mediation, and the victory of afferent-withdrawal reasserted by the films' allegiance to their theatrical roots.

Wedding in White

In one of the rare negative reviews that William Fruet's film received when it came out at the end of 1972, Nat Shuster writes:

The trouble with Wedding in White is in its inability to get away from the conventions of the theatre where it found its original beginnings [...] What Fruet has forgotten, in his effort to present a piece of realis-

tic drama, is that the first rule of motion pictures is motion and action. Because of this oversight, the film remains, in spite of many good things, essentially a static record of a stage production nailed down to its immobile origins. Whereas a certain quality of the confined feeling, created by the proximity of the camera to its subject, works in achieving a mood of entrapment and hopelessness suffered by the heroine, Jeannie (Carol Kane), the continuing and unrelenting claustrophobia becomes, in the end, counter productive.¹

In this passage, Shuster makes several discerning observations on Wedding in White, recognizing, for instance, that the film has difficulty escaping its theatrical roots and that an impression of confinement pervades the work. But whereas the critic perceives these aspects of the movie as flaws, I would argue that they represent a coherent cinematic extension of the dramatic structure ascertained in the previous part. The apparent contradiction at the core of Fruet's transposition of his play duplicates, indeed, the central afferent/efferent conflict of the text.

Significantly, the words that Shuster uses in this commentary describe the film's bond to its antecedent form in terms reminiscent of the afferent-withdrawal/efferent-escape duality, as the cinematic version fails "to get away from the conventions of the theatre," and remains "a static record of a stage production *nailed down* to its immobile origins." Granted that a reviewer's particular phrasing does not carry much authority in a scholarly inquiry, the fact that Shuster acknowledges the film's unachieved demand for motion and emancipation from theatrical stasis still suggests that the tension involved in the cinematization of the play is not merely an abstract notion, but a

phenomenon readily perceivable in the make-up of the adaptation. From the opening scene of Wedding in White, the viewers can immediately perceive, in the imagery projected on screen, the struggle between efferent attraction and afferent resistance and, as the following analysis will demonstrate, the arrangement of the filmic enunciation exhibits a structural conflict akin to the implicational dialectic that runs through the corpus.

The film's very first image shows the bottom steps of a stairway leading up from a completely dark locale to a slightly brighter space out of frame. The camera then slowly tilts upwards, following, for an instant, the illuminated path of the staircase. The extremely narrow angle of view that Fruet affords his spectators and the ascending camera movement that ushers their gaze make it virtually impossible *not* to interpret these introductory twenty seconds as an invitation to leave the darkness that overwhelms the screen. Even at the basic level of the eye's natural attraction towards the visible, the audience's attention is inevitably drawn outside of the tenebrous area comprised in the frame. However, as soon as the viewers have registered this initial efferent motion, the camera pans away from the stairs and plunges us into the obscurity of the setting, which we eventually recognize as a cellar in which a dog abides. In its opening visual statement, thus, the film introduces the notion of efferent-escape only to negate it immediately, hence disclosing one of the main concerns of the drama without resorting to verbalization, and even before the first credits.

The ensuing two-minute sequence reformulates the same denial of egression, again, through purely non-linguistic methods. Following the prefacing shot, the dog is seen pulling on the chain that shackles it to the floor of the cellar and barking aggressively at Jeannie, whose face has just appeared at one of the basement windows. This sight of the fastened animal reinforces the connotation of frustrated outward drive insinuated in the previous images and, in its syntagmatic connection with Jeannie's emergence in the visual field, gives an analogous connotation to the subsequent series of shots. As the image switches from the dog's hostile barking in the basement to an outside view of Jeannie lurking around the house, the spectator instantly surmises that the teenage girl is trying to flee. Her furtive look at her father, Jim (Donald Pleasence), heedlessly sitting on a sofa in the centre of the backyard, substantiates this impression. The subsequent long shot from the outer boundary of the yard (0:01:30)² further suggests that Jim's presence in the middle ground hinders Jeannie's attempt to leave the house, in the background, via the back alley presumed to be located right behind the camera.

Although Jeannie's intent in this scene remains somewhat equivocal, these numerous visual hints, in combination with her despondent expression when she pitifully returns inside her home and the melancholy non-diegetic music that accompanies the whole proceedings, convey the idea of a thwarted effort to leave the premises. The last portion of the preliminary sequence shows the culmination of Jeannie's afferent-withdrawal, as she retreats to

her bedroom (0:02:20), where she contemplates sadly the romantic photographs that cover the walls. To this point, the film still has not used any identifiable material from the play, and yet it has already mapped out the principal elements of the dramatic situation, namely, the adolescent's initial temptation to trespass the boundaries of her father's enclosed domain and her eventual abnegation without so much as a trace of defiance.

The film eventually cites the play when Jimmie's (Paul Bradley) crude call, "Mom, where the hell are ya?" (0:02:50), breaks the silence of Jeannie's sorrowful reverie. For the ten minutes succeeding Jimmie's noisy entrance, the cinematic version adheres closely to the first two scenes of Act One. Though certain lines are cut or merged, most of the information about the characters is rendered through dialogue corresponding roughly to the original script. Here, the camera functions mainly as a support for the verbal exchanges with a minimum of intrusive effects, seamlessly alternating between medium shot and close-up to emphasize facial expressions while insuring the perspicuity of the characters' placement in the single setting of Jim's residence.

Nevertheless, the cinematic apparatus' limited involvement in this segment does not preclude the deployment of eloquent cinematic imagery expanding the semiotic ramifications of the text. For instance, the several close-ups that show Billy's (Doug McGrath) lascivious glances at Jeannie, as well as his impatient reactions to Jimmie's hobnob with his family, effectively counterpoint the friendly attitude he adopts when

addressing his hosts, and obliquely presage his brutal behaviour. Another subdued but meaningful cinematic manoeuvre is Fruet's introduction of Dollie (Bonnie Carol Case) as an evident object of desire. By juxtaposing the shot in which Billy shows Jim pornographic pictures to a shot of Dollie's foot in a red high-heel shoe, followed by a slow tilt revealing her body as the men's lewd laughter segues over the two images (0:09:50), Fruet specifies, from the outset, her role as the focal point of the male gaze.³ The configuration of bodies in the optic field, with Dollie in the foreground and the men in the back looking at her, interspersed by reaction-shots of Billy's and Jimmie's conniving attitudes, imparts perceptually the apex position of the young woman in the network of character relationships.

The use of such film imagery for "indexing, bracketing and scaling"⁴ the pertinent visual information of the plot allows Fruet to convey the themes of his theatrical work with great verbal economy. There are several other instances, throughout the movie, where Fruet uses filmic devices with a comparable amalgamation of restraint and efficacy. For example, the scene in which Billy and Dollie engage in some heavy petting in the kitchen (0:32:00/Fruet 277)⁵ is shot from a low-angle position focusing on the characters' pelvic area. This has the unmistakable effect of depersonalizing the intercourse and eliminating any hint of affection or complicity between the two participants. Conversely, the rape of Jeannie is depicted through a tight two-shot of the rapist's and his victim's faces (0:36:00), thus giving a visage to male brutality and personalizing the

atrociousness of the deed. In this manner, Fruet draws a sharp distinction between carelessly detached flirting and the very concrete repercussions of abusive sex.

The alignment between the rape and Doug McGrath's face is further exploited by Fruet in the next sequence, where Billy, having joined Jimmie in Jeannie's bedroom, is obviously eager to escape the scene of the crime. Hesitating before waking up his friend, Billy stands nervously in front of some romantic pictures on the wall (00:38:45). Fruet holds this shot long enough for the spectators to notice the discrepancy between McGrath's guilt-ridden mask and the portraits of happily married couples behind him, one of which even depicts lovers kissing in a position reminiscent of the rape shot. This juxtaposition in the composition of the image ingeniously underscores the irony of the "Wedding in White" announced in the title, and evokes the dream-shattering consequences of the sexual violation. Interestingly enough, Billy is last seen through a dirty window pane as he is spinelessly absconding with Jimmie (0:40:50). Framed by the edges of the window, this blurred picture of the depraved coward magnifies Fruet's ironic commentary by means of a visual analogy between the rapist and the virtuous soldiers portrayed in Jeannie's photographs.

Another arresting example of Fruet's sober but effective use of the filmic medium is the cinematization of Jeannie's beating by her father (1:06:55-1:07:45\Fruet 304-5). Beginning this sequence on Jeannie's romantic pictures as Jim threateningly calls his daughter downstairs, the filmmaker proceeds to

combine a series of low-angle and point-of-view shots that suture the spectators with the teenager as the receiver of the father's infuriated blows. Inserted among the dreadful p.o.v. perspectives, close-ups of Jim's fists violently punching Jeannie's stomach render his hysterical battering of the pregnant girl the most disturbing moment in the film. Striking a perfect balance between the brutal content of the image, the spasmodic rhythm of the editing and the chaotic noises on the soundtrack, Fruet succeeds in creating a sense of oppression that could hardly be duplicated on stage. Moreover, without having to resort to the gory excesses of a work like Denys Arcand's La Maudite Galette (1971), Fruet manages to depict domestic violence in a manner as shocking as anything displayed in Canadian movies of the early 1970s.

As these few instances attest, Fruet's meticulous utilization of the cinematic apparatus affords an intriguing perceptual expansion of his dramatic language. However, in these and other similar instances, the film medium simply performs the illustration of the stage production without modifying in any consequential fashion the temporal and spatial continuity of the drama. This adherence to the closed universe of the theatre is responsible in great part for the impression of claustrophobia that several critics, like Shuster, voice in their reviews.⁶ Fruet, himself, was conscious of the claustrophobic effect that situating much of the film's action inside the house could create. "I'm sure people are going to get a very claustrophobic feeling as the picture goes on," he stated in an interview

published in the summer of 1972. "They're going to start to feel this confinement, hopefully it won't make them get up and leave."⁷

But while the film undoubtedly exudes an atmosphere of entrapment, this mood does not result exclusively from the director's choice to set most of the movie in the locations imposed by the play. In fact, Fruet situates several scenes in sites other than Jim's house and the Legion hall, allowing his characters to move in streets, back alleys, restaurants, and so forth. Those scenes, which challenge the dicta of the dramatic text, most evidently incarnate the tension inherent in the film-mediation process, that is, the conflict between afferent drama and efferent cinema.

The first scene taking place outside the theatrical territory transpires at the ballroom where Dollie and Jeannie go on their nightly outing. The two initial shots of this original sequence (0:13:55), which is inserted between scenes two and three of Act One, show couples slow-dancing to 1940s music, in a colourful and warm decor. The situation is decidedly more appealing than those previously depicted, and proposes a possible escape from the claustrophobic milieu of Jim's house. When we first see Dollie and Jeannie, however, they are explicitly separated from this liberating image, as they are making themselves up in the washroom. Even when they return to the ballroom, the two women do not mingle with the crowd, remaining withdrawn on the side instead of socializing with the men who approach them. Their detached behaviour reflects, of

course, their function as apex figures. But it also insinuates a gap between the theatrical characters and their cinematic entourage; it is a fissure that confines the characters to their theatrical capacity and hinders any consequential interaction with purely cinematic agencies, for such interactions would jeopardize the dynamic of the original drama.

In the play, the only function of the girls' night-out is to denote their initial outward attraction and justify Dollie's presence at Dougal's house, late in the evening, to set the stage for Jeannie's rape. The nightly escapade, in itself, has no semiotic content and does not partake in the dénouement of the drama. This explains why Fruet elects to *show* the world that attracts the girls without allowing them to actually partake in it, for any fruitful action in the exclusively cinematic ballroom episode might infringe on the pre-formulated articulation of the drama. For instance, for Fruet to have granted Jeannie any genuine contact with a man *outside* of her theatrical milieu would have provided her with a potential alternative to the eventual resolution of her plight, thus undermining the inevitable outcome of the play. Understandably, therefore, Jeannie and Dollie appear out-of-place in the ballroom, for they are stationed in a cinematic milieu in which they cannot perform any momentous gestures, since the circumstances related to the dance-hall anecdote must be absorbed in the semiotic vacuum allocated to this event in the dramatic source.

The only comment that the young women make about their outing, in the play, concerns two soldiers who trailed them on

their way home. Labelled "Mutt and Jeff in person" (Fruet 274) by Dollie, the two anonymous soldiers serve no other purpose than to prompt the girls' giggly chatter and their teasing of the lustful Billy. Fruet chooses to cinematize the soldiers in a scene taking place in a restaurant, shortly after the ballroom chapter (0:22:00). Sitting in a booth with the girls, "Mutt and Jeff" indulge in juvenile imitations of radio celebrities, which slightly amuse Jeannie but annoy Dollie. Again, the filmmaker insures that this supplementary material does not contribute any novel elements to the plot, by not permitting concrete interaction between the two groups. Consequently, the soldiers' intervention remains dramatically expendable, hence allowing the film to be true to the original script, while affording an illustration of the world outside the theatrical setting.

The addition of the ballroom and restaurant scenes represents an instructive instance of the tension at the core of the film-mediation process, a tension that is doubtlessly magnified by the fact that Fruet, himself, plays the dual role of original playscript writer and film adaptor. On the one hand, the very existence of the cinematic tableaux testifies to the filmmaker's attempt to open out the dramatic milieu by introducing a greater variety of locations. On the other hand, the dramatist's insistence on denying the supplementary film material any transformative bearing on the dramatic structure re-asserts the immutability of the original theatrical piece. The possibility for escape proposed by the cinematic universe — the potential meeting of soldiers in the ballroom and at the restaurant — is

thus always already denied by the structure of the drama that abides by the strict succession of episodes which proceed to seal Jeannie's fate.

What these additional scenes accomplish, therefore, is an injection of film images into the dramatic fabric, defining the external world around the characters without, however, exerting any influence on the confining structure of the action. This certainly contributes to the impression of claustrophobia emerging from the film, for although we are offered visions of the outside world, it remains effectively inaccessible to the characters. The afferent-withdrawal/efferent-escape dialectic is thus sharpened through the means of adaptation, since the signifying structure of the work now traverses its formal design. Indeed, while the cinematic enlargement of the text draws an efferent panorama of the external world, the film's dramatic configuration reasserts the ascendancy of the afferent force, as the characters remain immured in their theatrical predicament. This situation, it might be argued, typifies film-mediated drama as a genre, at least in those cases where, as in Wedding in White and most of the other films of the corpus, the adaptations seek both to retain a certain level of faithfulness to the play and to achieve a degree of cinematic autonomy.

Fruet's film does comprise a few scenes exhibiting momentous actions that are not included in the play. One of the best examples of this is a sequence inserted in the first scene of Act Two where Jeannie, now aware of her pregnancy, meanders into a general store with Dollie (0:42:30). Coaxed by her friend to

steal something, Jeannie runs away with a pair of baby socks. Unlike in the previous examples, this exclusively filmic action has an effect on the dramatic construction, because it is through finding the socks in the kitchen garbage can where Jeannie threw them, that Mary (Doris Petrie) eventually discovers her daughter's condition (0:59:40). Here, we seem to witness the complete meshing of the dramatic and the cinematic, as an element indigenous to the latter's discourse determines the former's climactic progression. This suggestion, however, necessitates some qualification.

First, Mary's discovery of the pregnancy does not rest only on the finding of the socks, but also on the way in which Jeannie looks at herself in the mirror, which replicates the circumstances of the revelation on stage (1:00:22/Fruet 296). The socks, therefore, serve as a parallel plot device, rather than as the sole catalyst of action. Second, and more importantly, the appropriation of the socks as a component of the drama is actually performed to the detriment of the cinematic event that injects them into the story. Jeannie executes the theft in the clumsiest way, rushing to seize the socks on a shelf and running out in a panic under the surprised eye of another shopper (0:44:35). The incident should have created a certain commotion in the store and could have triggered a parallel drama involving the authorities. However, the implications of the deed are never even marginally considered. Rather, the myriad semiotic ingredients introduced cinematically in this scene — from the other shopper and the store employee walking

by to the lipstick that Dollie snatches — are filtered out of the narrative, as the film retains only the single element that serves its dramatic purpose: the baby socks.

The use of the socks, therefore, confirms the afferent/effluent tension identified above, inasmuch as the filmic scenario that precipitates their emergence points out towards a broader environment that is immediately erased, as the narrowly focused dramatic structure co-opts the woollen objects and transforms them into a restrictively symbolic device. The claustrophobia noticed by both the filmmaker and the critics is thus not only one of actual space, but also of semiotic deployment as the widely polysemous potential of the filmic discourse is constantly funnelled into the pre-determined configuration of the theatrical piece.

This process of funnelling also characterizes the overarching structure of the work, as the utilization of several locations in the film's first two-thirds subsides to virtually no exterior shots in the last third, after Jeannie has disclosed her situation to Mary. This shift in the geographical circulation of the camera is actually so apparent that it was noted by reviewer Jean-Pierre Tadros: "The psychological drama is intensified in the moment that Jeannie confides in her mother. Now the camera, like Jeannie herself, is confined to the house. One effect of this confinement is to accentuate the theatrical feeling of the film."⁸ Although, unlike what Tadros claims, the camera is not rigidly confined to the house after Jeannie's disclosure — there are a few shots taken from elsewhere in the

last half-hour of the film — there is, indeed, a remarkable parallel between Jeannie's passage from relative freedom to imprisonment and the camera's retreat from several locations to the limits of Jim's house (and the church [1:29:00]). As such, the film proves an even more cogent medium than the stage to embody the struggle between the outward thrust and the inward pull suffered by the characters by subjecting the cinematic apparatus to the very same conflict.

The afferent-withdrawal/efferent-escape duality is also italicized at another level of Wedding in White's filmic discourse, namely, in the constant collision between, on the one hand, the tightly framed content of the image and, on the other hand, the expansiveness of the cinematic narrative achieved through camerawork and montage. This dialectic is most evident in the scene of the stealing at the store and its aftermath, Jeannie's running away into a back alley (0:42:30-0:47:30). The five-minute sequence, which comprises fragments of dialogues from the end of Act Two, scene one, where Dollie talks of going away to live with her sister (Fruet 285-7), takes place entirely outside of the theatrical territory and partly outdoors. It includes considerable movement, from both the camera and the actors, and counts an average of eight cuts per minute, which is about twice as many as most other scenes. It also presents some of the rare long shots in the film, and culminates in an aggressive altercation between the girls, which is less brutal than Jim's beating of his daughter, but assembles a greater variety of visual perspectives (close-up, two-shot, middle shot,

dolly shot).

Because of these numerous factors, the scene stands out as one of the most cinematic parts of the film, capitalizing on the diverse properties of the medium to display a heterogeneous natural milieu, ranging from the cosmetic section of a mart to the puddles of a muddy back lane. But whereas the manipulation of the images manifestly explodes the constraints of the theatrical setting, the content and composition of the pictures themselves reinforce the sense of entrapment created in the movie. Much of the sequence is comprised of close-ups, but avoids the mechanical shot/reverse-shot formula that manifests the plenitude of the cinematic space.⁹ For instance, when Dollie suggests in the store, "You should get a job here. Look at all these things you could pinch" (0:43:15), rather than showing "all these things" to give a sense of the scenographic environment, Fruet's camera remains on Dollie's and Jeannie's tightly framed faces, which eclipse the commercialist vista.

Furthermore, although the sequence incorporates a few long shots of store aisles and back lanes, the composition always stresses the exiguity of the space by encumbering the visual field with shelves, walls, fences and so forth. For instance, one of the most extreme long shots of the film, showing Jeannie and Dollie walking in the alley (0:45:00), literally encloses the girls in a cage of decrepit brick walls and metal panels. The effect is even more pronounced in the middle shots and close-ups of the alley. In these cases, the proximity of the camera emphasizes the gray and humid texture of the cement

blocks and wooden boards that overhang the characters and shed a particularly ironic shadow on Dollie's boasting about her projected travel to the States (0:45:35), and Jeannie's claim that she had sex with Billy because he likes her (0:47:25).

Most exterior shots in the rest of the movie function similarly, emphasizing the constant struggle between film's ability to map out wide open spaces and the afferent quality of the image's composition. Cars driving in the streets are always engulfed by the oppressive darkness of the night (0:23:00; 0:51:15). Sarah (Christine Thomas), one of the characters most often seen outdoors, always moves next to forbidding fences, between rows of bleak houses, and under overcast skies (0:41:30; 0:58:35; 1:25:55). And the shot that begins Jeannie's virtual confinement to the house, corresponding to Act Three, scene one, looks over a foggy street through a window, before turning away from the outside with an inward pan (1:08:50).

Robert Fothergill criticizes Fruet for his aesthetic choice to restrict film's natural ability to depict physical locations:

[...] the exterior locations are so tightly framed that we never see more than a back alley, a couple of house-fronts, a dark roadway, and the inside of an old Kresge's store. The resulting effect of claustrophobia and isolation is rather artificially expressionistic, conveying the unnatural impression that nobody in this little purgatory ever sees the sky or trees or any length of street. But within the home of the Dougal family, a sensation of physical confinement effectively matches the emotional pressures of the human milieu.¹⁰

In the context of the present study, Fruet's choice to emphasize the conflict between film's limitless spatial capacity and the

confining frame of the individual shot is of primary importance, for it parallels, at least according to narratological theory, a duality at the core of the filmic enunciation.

In his book, Du Littéraire au Filmique : Système du récit (1988), André Gaudreault argues that film creates its meaning through a combination of two broad techniques: *monstration*, that is, the showing of images in a continuous shot; and narration, or the juxtaposition of shots through editing. *Monstration* is the aspect of cinema that links it most directly to theatre. In fact, what Gaudreault calls profilmic *monstration*, "[...] équivaut au cinéma au travail du monstrateur scénique de l'activité théâtrale [...]"¹¹ Although certain types of filmic *monstration*, like variable framing, differ from traditional theatrical staging, *monstration* on stage and in film share the common drawback of having to function within a certain unity of time and space. But unlike the theatre, Gaudreault continues, film can escape the limits of *monstration* through narration or montage, which allows it to move freely across time and space. "[...] elle aura beau avoir la possibilité de se dissocier de la *monstration profilmique*," writes Gaudreault,

s'autonomiser par rapport à elle et lui adjoindre une autre couche langagière, la *monstration filmographique* n'en demeure pas moins rivée, tout comme celle-ci et au même titre, au *hic et nunc* de l'énoncé. [...] Impossible pour lui de réaliser ce qui est l'enfance de l'art pour tout *narrateur* digne de ce nom : se déplacer instantanément (*temps*) d'un endroit (*espace*) à un autre [Gaudreault's emphasis].¹²

Monstration, therefore, either profilmic or filmographic, confines cinema, like the theatre, to a place and a time that it

can escape only through narration.

Although Fruet was certainly not concerned with narratological conjectures when he produced his adaptation of Wedding in White, his two-fold utilization of the cinematic medium corroborates Gaudreault's theories. By employing film's narrative ability to explode the limits of the theatrical setting, while using the individual shots to convey an impression of confinement, the filmmaker ingeniously exploits the dual discourse of *monstration*/narration inherent in narrative cinema. Moreover, and of particular interest for our purpose, Fruet's praxis not only illustrates the theory, but also gives a form to the implicational dialectic at the centre of the original drama. The afferent proclivity of *monstration*, to wit, its anchoring of the perceptual material in a fixed space/time continuum, works as a fascinating metaphor for Jim's afferent-withdrawal attitude. Similarly, the efferent potential of the free-flowing filmic narration parallels Jeannie and Dollie's early penchant for efferent-escape. Yet, in the end, cinema relinquishes much of its narrative privilege and concedes, in a gesture of "faithfulness" to the original drama, the victory to the afferent force. Not surprisingly, the very last shot of the film, that of the stairway leading to the newly-weds' bedroom, is held for such a long time, beyond the closing music and credits, that the sense of absolute spatial and temporal entrapment — pure *monstration* — becomes unbearable. Unlike Jeannie, however, the spectator is eventually released as the screen fades to black.

As we can see, film-mediation in Fruet's Wedding in White

not only offers a formal equivalent to the dialectic at the heart of the drama, but also establishes a junction between content, form and theoretical hypotheses on the "quintessence" of the medium. A survey conducted in Chapter X will demonstrate that several other theories, like Gaudreault's narratological framework, approach film and theatre in terms that associate the latter with the afferent mode and the former with its efferent counterpart. This will lead me to conclude that film-mediated drama, which links the two procedures in a more distinctive way than any other practice, affords an especially pertinent strategy to treat the texts of the corpus. At this point, however, we will move on to show that the film version of Les Beaux Dimanches, like that of Wedding in White, underscores in the film-mediation process the recurrent dialectic highlighted in the previous chapters.

Les Beaux Dimanches.

Among the four best-known works of the corpus, Richard Martin's 1974 adaptation of Marcel Dubé's play is the film that plies most extensively the cinematic medium's ability to transcend the spatial and temporal confines usually attributed to the theatre. Although much of the action still transpires at Victor's (Jean Duceppe) house, a sizable portion of the film is relocated in other sites: the city, the country, a restaurant, a hospital, a motel room, etc. Furthermore, Martin also resorts to such "essentially" cinematic devices as freeze frames, visualizations of mental images and flashbacks to explode the

limits of the stage. As a matter of fact, the content of Dubé's original script, in its entirety, is constituted as a long flashback emanating from Victor's memory, as he is receiving a tribute from the Club des Progressistes for his achievements in business and in his private life (0:03:30).

Paradoxically, Martin's earnest exertion to cinematize, or de-theatricalize, the play was perceived by several critics as one of the main irritants in the production. Jean-Pierre Tadros, for one, wrote in Variety: "In an effort to diminish the theatrical aspect of the drama, he moves the action around, but the all-over effect is a dilution of the psychological intensity."¹³ And Séquences reviewer Janick Beaulieu deplored the director's reliance on superficial movie effects at the expense of more subtle resources like expressive lighting and observant camerawork:

On change de local le plus souvent possible pour ne pas faire théâtral, mais l'éclairage demeure très secondaire. On ne compte pas sur la lumière pour traduire des états d'âmes [...] Au lieu de fouiller les visages pour voir ce qui se cache derrière les masques, la caméra s'attarde à nous montrer les détails de la riche demeure.¹⁴

True enough, Martin often seems to apply movie techniques less for the benefit of the text's own logic than to meet some putative standards of filmmaking. An ostensive example of this is the number of shots depicting vehicles moving across urban and rural landscapes, from the very opening image of Paul (Gérard Poirier) driving to the Progressiste meeting, to the closing shot which shows Dominique (Louise Portal) in a bus, on

her way to New York to undergo an abortion. Perplexed by all these protracted car rides, Beaulieu sarcastically inquires, "Est-ce un prétexte à montrer de beaux paysages [?]"¹⁵ As we shall see below, the extraneous depiction of "beaux paysages" is actually a determining facet of the transpositional contrivance, their very *extraneousness* playing a crucial role in the film-mediation of the theatrical piece.

A more structurally questionable cinematic choice is the flashback that comprises the drama. The reenactment of prior incidents, framed by the prologue and epilogue in which Victor is awarded his "plaque annuelle de mérite," is evidently aimed at underlining the ironic distinction between public success and personal failure evoked in the play script and, as such, works rather convincingly. However, by explicitly indicating, through a zoom-in on Jean Duceppe's face followed by a ripple dissolve (0:03:40), that the flashback illustrates the character's recollection of the ensuing sequences, the filmmaker designates the narrative as bearing Victor's individual perspective. This strategy breeds contradictions, of course, because many scenes *within* the flashback adopt other personages' subjective viewpoints. Martin's attempt to elucidate one aspect of the drama, therefore, causes greater confusion in terms of narrative enunciation, for the film constantly contradicts its overarching internal focalization.¹⁶

Moreover, the director ventured to open out the play in order to distinguish the young people from their elders on the basis of their positioning in the broad cinematic space. In an

interview published while the film was being shot, Martin explained:

Il fallait d'autre part sortir du salon, sortir de la maison, créer des atmosphères [...] Et puis on a ajouté beaucoup de scènes avec des jeunes; et je voulais que le drame de ces jeunes se passe au soleil. Alors que chez les adultes, au contraire, les drames se déroulaient en vase clos, à l'intérieur, dans la noirceur.¹⁷

Martin's description suggests an intriguing configuration for the afferent-withdrawal/efferent-escape dialectic, charted around the topography of the generational divide. But his proposed spatial repartition of the characters does not translate into a coherent pattern on film, as the adolescents often experience dramatic situations indoors (for instance, the restaurant scene [1:10:15]) and the senior group regularly interact outdoors (as in the garden party scene [0:44:30]). Martin's film-mediation of Les Beaux Dimanches, unlike Fruet's Wedding in White, thus suffers from a lack of cohesion stemming, at least in part, from the cineaste's attempt to efface completely the theatrical origins of the work. However, as if the process of film-mediation itself insisted on imposing a certain design on the piece that compensates for these various inconsistencies, the movie still stresses the afferent-withdrawal/efferent-escape duality, in a manner not unlike Wedding in White, through a constellation of imagery that both enhances the alluring quality of the external world and denies the characters access to it.

The first notable use of imagery in the film occurs at the

shifting point between the present tense of the story and the flashback, when the dissolve blends Victor's pensive face with his suburban fortress. The attractive surroundings of the large house, in combination with the sound of singing birds, immediately establishes the appeal of the natural setting explicitly anchored in Victor's memory. The following image, however, breaks the external charm by showing Victor emerging from the house, bellowing at the birds and shutting them out when he walks back in, slamming the door behind him (0:04:05). From the outset, therefore, the film discloses its formal conflict opposing an efferent drive, achieved visually through a long shot of the backyard and aurally through off-screen bird sounds, to Victor's afferent reaction against this outward pull.

Shortly after these images have laid down the afferent principle guiding Victor's initial actions, the efferent longing emblematic of the antagonists is similarly exhibited on the screen via the visualization of one of Dominique's daydreams. In a car with Étienne (Robert Maltais), returning from a night in a motel room, Dominique looks lovingly at her companion as another dissolve marks the spectator's insertion into her mental universe.¹⁸ There ensue three shots showing Dominique running and playing with children in an open field, with bucolic overtones accentuated by slow-motion photography and a gentle melody (0:07:00). It would be difficult to conceive a more unequivocal depiction of Dominique's desire for efferent-escape-cum-child-birth than this ethereal portrayal of youngsters moving freely in the meadow. But this engaging embodiment of efferent desire

is soon annulled, when its status as an unrealized reverie is re-asserted by a cut back to Étienne's small car. The naturalistic sobriety of the latter shot contrasts markedly with the radiance of the phantasmic passage, a clash augmented by the jazzy cacophony that supplants the former pastoral music (0:07:30). Although perhaps not as abrupt as Victor's earlier rejection of his natural environment, the interruption of Dominique's musing nonetheless exacerbates the conflict between efferent potentiality and afferent actuality.

Interestingly, even if Dominique's stare is fixated on her lover before and after the daydream, Étienne, himself, is not part of the fantasy. His conspicuous absence from her "sub-conscious" imaging effectively conveys his estrangement from her desire, while the amorous quality of her "conscious" behaviour betokens her partial unawareness of Étienne's overbearing attitude. Later in the film, Dominique daydreams again, this time precisely about her relationship with Étienne (0:32:00). In this mirage, signalled by a dissolve followed by soft-focus photography and sentimental music, the two lovers are seen in the middle of a crowd, Étienne playfully kissing her hand and sharing an apple with her.

What is most striking about the scene is the persona that Étienne projects. Holding a conspicuous red umbrella and wearing a shirt that makes him look like a 1970s inamorato, the Étienne of Dominique's vision shares few character traits with her real boyfriend, whose selfish personality and hypocrisy are exposed shortly after, when he is seen flirting with another woman, and

being jokingly warned by a friend: "Arrange-toi pour pas la mettre enceinte celle-là" (0:39:15). The impression of genuine sharing conveyed in the daydream differs strikingly from the inequitable relationship that the play and most of the film exhibit. There is thus a disparity between Dominique's *escapist* reveries, which she later acknowledges as unfashionably romantic (0:46:30), and the actual circumstances brought to bear on her by Étienne's stringent conduct. That the scenes epitomizing Dominique's illusory outward longing are pure cinematic fabrications is undoubtedly meaningful in the context of this study, for the daydreams, as paradigmatic excursions in the syntagmatic chain, increase the sense of a dual discourse opposing a narrowly-defined set of afferent dramatic situations and an imaginary conception of an efferent, boundless territory.

The opening sequences of the film further illustrate this disparity, between the passion for romantic freedom that Dominique voices in her fantasies and the actual confining pressure that Étienne exerts upon her, by juxtaposing aerial views of a vast landscape and tightly framed close-ups of the young couple inside the vehicle (0:05:00-0:09:20). The systematic absence of middle-shots integrating Dominique in her environment establish Étienne's auto as a concrete enclosure that cuts her off from the space through which she is literally steered by her boyfriend. Again, the dissemination of efferent film imagery only attests to the characters' severance (wilful or not) from the expansive territory deployed before them.

At another level, the disjunction between contingent

efferent-escape and consummated afferent-withdrawal is cinematized through the interposition of the exclusively filmic sequence of the young people driving in the country, and the transposed theatrical scenes involving angry Hélène (Catherine Bégin) and her hung-over husband (0:09:20-0:13:30). Although, as mentioned above, this division of imagery between the young and the old is not utilized consistently throughout the film, it nevertheless offers valid interpretational cues in the early parts of the overarching flashback. The very first cut from the adolescent lovers to the married couple clearly manifests the afferent/efferent dialectical opposition.

The editing splices an image of the former, kissing as they are speeding on a highway, with a quick shot of glasses shattering on a floor followed by the appearance of Victor swearing at Hélène (0:09:25/Dubé 24). The impact of this montage springs, chiefly, from the clash between the *impression* of freedom that emerges from the moving car in the cinematic landscape and the sense of entrapment created by the railing bars foregrounding the shot that introduces Victor into the dramatic scene (0:09:-25). In the course of the sequence, the filmmaker will resort again to the railings to connote confinement, as in the long take in which Hélène, contained by the structure of the staircase, compares their house to a cemetery (0:15:00/Dubé 42). The subsequent cross-cutting reinforces the divergence between the two couples, as the sensation of freedom and love between Étienne and Dominique increases, while the animosity that characterizes Hélène and Victor's relationship degenerates into

utter contempt. In the course of this sequence, movement in the external world thus emerges as the positive counterpart to the confining atmosphere visually and verbally conveyed in the first feud at the Primeau household.

In the final analysis, however, this filmic dialectic of imagery still confirms the inaccessibility of the efferent alternative since, as suggested before, the outward freedom associated with the young is, itself, undermined by a dual visual discourse that posits the dominance of the afferent principle. Fittingly, the car-ride sequence does not culminate in an affirmation of freedom. On the contrary, Dominique is driven back to her father's house, where she is incorporated into the oppressive drama of the older generation (0:13:40/Dubé 34). The scene that traces Dominique's transition from her "freedom" with Étienne to her sequestration with her parents (0:12:00), actually bears witness to the young man's constrictive authority over his girlfriend. Under the guise of tenderness, he imposes his standpoint regarding their future on the still unsuspecting teenager. Clutching her throat in an ambiguous manner, he condescendingly declares: "On pourrait faire notre vie ensemble. Mais t'as admis avec moi que ça serait la pire folie avant la fin de mes études. Il n'y a plus qu'une solution, Dominique" (0:12:20). From this early point in the film, it already surfaces that Étienne is the direct heir of Paul and the other libertine protagonists, all exclusively concerned with their own personal gratification.

Appropriately, the introductory film-mediation of Paul, and

the rest of the protagonist cast, echoes that of Étienne and Victor, as it sharpens their afferent propensity by contrasting the open environment in which they are initially positioned, with their urge to disconnect themselves from it. Paul is first depicted, in the opening images of the film, in the dark foreground of a chiaroscuro composition, setting the driver inside his car against the bright cityscape visible in the background through the vehicle's windows. The circumscribed arrangement of this picture, which presages the confining close-ups of Étienne and Dominique described above, clashes tonally with the next photograph: a luminous long shot of Paul's automobile stopping in front of Hotel Windsor (0:00:15). Not surprisingly, as soon as Paul emerges from his wheeled cubicle, he literally *runs inside* the hotel, where he joins his Progressiste colleagues. His subsequent arrival at Victor's house, with Evelyn (Andrée Lachapelle), reproduces the same afferent motion, as he gets out of his car only to trot towards the fortress-like residence, despite his wife's reluctance (0:19:00).

Angéline's (Denise Filiatrault) initial depiction in the film similarly translates her eagerness to retreat from open space. Following a series of shots, all displaying Hélène in restrictively composed pictures (0:17:15-0:18:20) — in the narrow corridors of her house; through the tight visual field of a mirror or a door frame — a panoramic view of the grounds surrounding a church breaks with the claustrophobic mood of the previous scene. But as soon as the emancipatory effect of the cut has been registered, we spot Angéline impatiently prodding

Omer (Yvon Dufour) and Rodolphe (Serge Thériault) to follow her off-screen, away from this vista towards a narrower site where their car awaits them (0:18:40). She then drives hectically to Victor's, and dismisses Omer's objections as she dashes into the house, thus fulfilling her afferent desire to party (0:23:30).

After the less boisterous arrival of Muriel (Luce Guilbeault) and Olivier (Yves Létourneau) (0:28:45) to complete the petit bourgeois picture, Martin's camera remains bound for some time to Victor's estate, recording the activities of the clique. Once the passage of time between Act One and Act Two has been evoked through a series of stills taken by Rodolphe, which literalize Olivier's photography metaphor (0:29:00/Dubé 68), the party resumes, first, around the *interior* pool, which is as empty as the characters' lives (0:30:30), and then moves downstairs, where Victor and his guests view a home movie of their holiday at the beach. Significantly, these canned images are the only ones in the film depicting Angéline, Paul and the others enjoying themselves in the wide-open spaces (0:39:30).

The camera eventually comes out of Victor's house to show Dominique waiting for Étienne on the front lawn (0:37:30). This scene centres visually on a bunch of silver birches, whose vertical lines recall the imprisoning connotations of the railing bars and suggest that, although "outdoors", Dominique remains trapped in Victor's realm. Her constant moving around, but never away from, the birches as she tries to avoid Rodolphe's annoying questions, re-inforces the symbol of the birches as cage. Used earlier in a similar fashion, when Dominique

returns from her night out, and when Victor and Evelyn discuss her cynical frigidity (0:22:00/Dubé 53), the birches stand out as a consistent visual metaphor for imprisonment. Again near the end of the film, when Dominique hopelessly agrees to undergo the abortion, the sense of entrapment is conveyed by the evident trees looming in the background (1:23:00/Dubé 175). Therefore, as in the sequences analyzed previously, the cinematization of the exterior world, which presents an *image* of openness and freedom, is continually undermined by elements of the composition that negate the efferent potential of the motion picture.

The filmmaker resorts to the same strategy in a sequence illustrating the garden party that succeeds the projection of the home movie (0:44:45). This scene is composed of eight shots exhibiting the characters as they enjoy a barbecue. Though all are exterior shots, *every single one of them* has a depth of field manifestly limited by the insertion, in the background, of concrete boundaries, either fences, parked cars or, most frequently and oppressively, house walls. The garden party is thus entirely contained within the Primeau domain. Notably, like in the play, when the signs of uncontainable nature — mosquitos — start crossing the confines of Victor's terrain, the gang regroups inside to resume the festivities (0:51:00/Dubé 135).

For the next eight minutes, the camera attends to the theatrical situation, faithfully transcribing the growing dramatic intensity that leads to Hélène's climactic departure and Angéline's drunkard striptease (0:51:00-0:59:00/Dubé 138-144). Besides the markedly less loquacious dialogue, one aspect

of this scene that diverges from the original text is Omer's own exit from the party, in reaction against his wife's performance. Though the camera follows Omer outside the house, where a concerned Olivier joins him, film's ability to flee the locus of Victor's party is utilized, once again, only to record the impossibility of actualized escape. The outburst of anger that prompts Omer to desert Victor's house is channelled into the abject output of vomiting. With his usual acumen, Olivier understands the nullifying function of the efferent heave: "Ça va te soulager. Il fallait que tu te vides toi aussi. Demain tu n'y penseras plus" (0:59:45). This physical discharge, a repulsive equivalent to Hélène's earlier exit, voids Omer of his outward drive, which will be completely dissipated by the next day. Consequently, far from affording Omer's liberation from the domination of his wife, his outward gesture exhausts his élan and re-affirms his weakness, for rather than leaving her definitively, his response to her provocative behaviour is merely to return home (0:59:30), as Hélène, Dominique and Evelyn will do later in the drama.

Another revealing cinematic transformation of the original material is the depiction of Hélène's arrival at Manuel Lacroix's house (1:01:00). Unlike in the play, Lacroix is there to answer Hélène's call. But his presence is even more devastating than his absence, for he is in the company of several other people, obviously partaking in an orgy akin to those conducted in Victor's circle. This radically annihilates Hélène's hope of ever finding the "ailleurs" that she so desires, since Lacroix's

realm is a mere carbon of Victor's. Once more the cinematic apparatus holds a dual discourse. On the one hand, it traces an area outside of Primeau's circumscribed milieu, by following Hélène on her journey. But by the same brush stroke, it also asserts the impossibility of escaping Victor's universe by annexing all other locations to his fortress.

A similar effect is reproduced twice later in the film. First, when the camera briefly trails Paul, Angéline and Muriel in their pilgrimage from one station of the "tournée" to the next, thus constructing the neighbourhood as an extension of Victor's garden (1:08:45). Second, and more importantly, this impression of an inescapable territory dominated by the protagonists' hedonistic philosophy also surfaces in the sequence in which Dominique finally realizes Étienne's callousness. Beginning with the romantic atmosphere of a candle-light dinner in a rustic restaurant, the scene soon loses its aura of sentimental perfection as Étienne criticizes the cost of the meal (1:11:00). The equivocal mood then transforms into sombre drama when he presents Dominique with an envelope containing money for the abortion, and impassively compares her fateful trip to New York to a pleasant "voyage organisé" (1:11:30).

Visibly affected, Dominique exits the restaurant and goes to a nearby marina. Rendered through a long shot, the segment in which Étienne joins her by the calm river (1:12:45) strikingly differs from the tight composition of the restaurant scene. But whereas the image offers a liberating panoramic view, the soundtrack, saturated with the songs and rude jokes of rois-

terers on an adjacent yacht (perhaps Charles's), indicates the boundaries of Victor's universe exactly like Lacroix's party does in the earlier scene. The crude aural commentary on the visual allusion to freedom notifies the audience that Dominique's escape from her oppressor is as futile as her mother's, and Omer's. Against this background of drunken laughter, the teenager asks, in an act of abdication, to be driven back home.

Significantly, after this series of alternations between the cinematic environment and the dramatic situation, the last few minutes of the flashback comprising Dubé's play are set inside Victor's home, thus pronouncing, again in faithfulness to the dramatic source, the victory of the afferent pull. There, Victor and his daughter engage in a barren argument over the father's crumbling right to do what he wishes in his house: "Moi aussi j'ai le droit de crier. J'ai le droit de penser. Je suis chez-nous ici-dedans" (1:26:50). As Victor acknowledges the extent of his loneliness, entrapped in his luxurious residence, the applause from the Progressiste tribute fades in, closing the ironic circle on Victor's financial success. The irony is augmented by the final sequence of the film which shows, simultaneously with flattering descriptions of Victor's "vie exemplaire" (1:29:00), Dominique on her way to New York. The dark and cramped composition of the penultimate shot, showing Dominique squeezed between a fat, sweating man and the bus window (1:31:50), epitomizes the figurative depiction of the unbridgeable gap that separates the theatrical characters from the cinematic zone in which they move.

The screen version of Les Beaux Dimanches thus delivers, somewhat like Wedding in White, a dual discourse: one concentrating on the interpersonal drama of Victor and his entourage, and the other depicting the broader territory that they either want to explore or from which they wish to retreat. For the purpose of my study, this split-focus pattern has two crucial implications. First, it accentuates the afferent-withdrawal/efferent-escape duality at the core of the drama. Second, it accounts for the two modes of composition involved in the process of film-mediation, namely, the theatrical convergence in the drama of a few characters and the filmic ability to paint a panoramic environment around them. As in the case of Wedding in White, the duality of Martin's film echoes theoretical considerations on cinema and drama, in particular those of André Bazin.

Bazin draws a distinction between theatre and film in terms of each art's relation to the notion of decor. In his view, the presence of the actor on stage, at the centre of a finite decor, directs the attention of the theatre audience towards the human soul. "This is why," says Bazin, "[theatrical] dramaturgy is in its essence human. Man is at once its cause and its subject."¹⁹ Unlike the theatre, which has a human dramaturgy, the cinema has a "dramaturgy of Nature," Bazin suggests. Because of film's ability to convert the artificial decor into recorded reality, he adds, "there can be no cinema without the setting up of an open space in place of the universe rather than as part of it."²⁰ The separation that Martin's film wedges between the human drama

and its milieu thus corresponds to the dramaturgical split at work in the film-mediation of Les Beaux Dimanches.

Again, I do not claim that the cineaste had any particular theory of adaptation in mind when he directed the film. However, as Chapter X will evince, there is such a consensus among theorists, from Gaudreault to Bazin and others, concerning the afferent function of drama as opposed to the efferent makeup of cinema, that one is tempted to confer an intrinsic quality to the practice of adapting plays that would favour the depiction of a universe torn between a closed circle of personages and the open space that surrounds them. But before proceeding to suggest this "essentialist" definition of film-mediated drama, we will seek to extract further evidence of this afferent/efferent dichotomy from the analysis of One Night Stand, Being at Home with Claude and other films of our corpus.

NOTES

1. Nat Shuster, "Canadian film view: Wedding in White," Motion (Sept./Oct. 1973): 43. Note that, in the film's concluding credits, "Jeannie" is spelled with two n's, rather than only one as in the play. I will adopt the film's spelling throughout this chapter.
2. For the sake of avoiding confusion when referring to certain shots, I will indicate, roughly, the temporal position of the segment in relation to the film's first image. The format is: (hour:minute:second).
3. For a commentary on the theoretical discourse surrounding the concept of "the male gaze" see Robert Stam, *et al.* "The Gaze," New Vocabularies in Film Semiotics: Structuralism, post-structuralism and beyond (London: Routledge, 1992) 162-74.
4. "Indexing, bracketing and scaling" are identified by Noël Carroll as the three main "formal devices for directing the movie audience's attention [...] The variable framing insures that the spectator is always attending to the details and configurations that, for the purposes of the story, are appropriate; variable framing virtually guarantees that the spectator is attending where and when she should." See Carroll, Mystifying Movies: Fads and Fallacies in Contemporary Film Theory (New York: Columbia UP, 1988) 201-4.
5. When deemed useful, I will refer to the corresponding scene in the play, using the same edition as in the structural analysis conducted in the previous part.
6. Read, for instance, Richard Gay in Cinéma/Ouébec 2.4 (Dec. 1972): 42; Jean-Pierre Tadros in Take One 3.7 (Pub. Dec. 1972): 31; Peter Morris in The Film Companion (Toronto: Irwin, 1984): 320. Unlike Shuster, however, most of these reviewers comment on the intense claustrophobia of the film in positive terms.
7. Fruet quoted in George Csaba Koller, "Bill Fruet's Wedding in White," Cinema Canada 3 (July/Aug. 1972): 47.
8. Tadros, 31.

- ⁹. For a discussion on the theorized function of the shot/reverse-shot structure, see Carroll. 183-5.
- ¹⁰. Robert Fothergill, "A Place Like Home," Canadian Film Reader, ed. Seth Feldman and Joyce Nelson (Toronto: Peter Martin Associates, 1977) 359.
- ¹¹. André Gaudreault, Du Littéraire au Filmique : Système du récit (Québec: Presses de l'Université Laval, 1988) 121.
- ¹². Gaudreault, 123.
- ¹³. Jean-Pierre Tadros, "Les Beaux-Dimanches (Lovely Sundays)," Variety 276 (30 Oct. 1974): 42.
- ¹⁴. Janick Beaulieu, "Les Beaux Dimanches," Séquences 79 (Jan. 1975): 31.
- ¹⁵. Beaulieu, 30.
- ¹⁶. Here, I use the term "internal focalization" as Gérard Genette defines it: "En focalisation interne, le foyer coïncide avec un personnage, qui devient alors le 'sujet' fictif de toutes les perceptions, y compris celles qui le concernent lui-même comme objet : le récit peut alors nous dire tout ce que ce personnage perçoit et tout ce qu'il pense." See Gérard Genette, Nouveau Discours du récit (Paris: Seuil, 1983) 49.
- ¹⁷. Richard Martin quoted in, Jean-Pierre Tadros, "'Les Beaux Dimanches' tels qu'ils nous reviennent," Le Jour 27 Jul. 1974: V1.
- ¹⁸. Here is a probative example of confused focalisation. How could Victor remember, in his flashback, Dominique's daydream?
- ¹⁹. André Bazin, "Theatre and Cinema Part Two," What is Cinema vol I, trans. Hugh Gray (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967) 106.
- ²⁰. Bazin, 110

CHAPTER IX. ONE NIGHT STAND, BEING AT HOME WITH CLAUDE
and Other Films from the Corpus

One Night Stand

Unlike Wedding in White and Les Beaux Dimanches, the 1978 film version of One Night Stand hardly resorts at all to the practice of opening up the original text, confining the drama almost exclusively to Daisy's (Chapelle Jaffe) apartment, and depicting only marginally the broader environment in which the characters move. Nevertheless, director Allan King's unobtrusive handling of the medium still intensifies the afferent-withdrawal/efferent-escape duality of the drama through an orchestration of subtle filmic components that define and qualify the personages' relation to their respective spheres of activity, either theatrical or cinematic. As I shall demonstrate, the characters' governing wishes, as identified in the previous Part, find representation in Daisy's and Rafe's (Brent Carver) antithetical rapport with the spaces manufactured respectively by the theatrical original and the cinematic version as they intersect in the process of film-mediation.

This is not to say, of course, that the contending characters in One Night Stand are dialectically distributed over the pictorial terrain according to a simplistic indoors/outdoors dichotomy; both Daisy and Rafe cross, at one point or another, the boundary that separates the interior from the exterior. Rather, the diametric disposition of the characters is articulated visually and aurally in terms of their opposite interaction with the milieus depicted in the film. Whereas Rafe's

efferent impulse translates into frequent motions towards the purely filmic domain, Daisy, even when she is positioned in public, open spaces, remains separated, withdrawn from the territory *originated* in the film-mediation process. She commands full authority over her surroundings only when film submits to the narrow perimeter dictated by drama.

The first sequence, which relates the events preceding the action of the play proper, most emphatically illustrates this pattern. The film opens on a short series of shots juxtaposing Rafe, playing guitar on the sidewalk, and Daisy, working "in the completely impersonal confines of a TV bank," as David McCaughna phrases it.¹ During this prologue, while Rafe sings directly to the passers-by who give him money (0:00:30),² Daisy communicates with other characters only obliquely, either via the mediation of a television system (0:00:40) or through distant sign-language, when Nick (Robert Silverman) shrugs at her as he enters his mezzanine office with his wife (0:01:20). From the outset, Daisy is thus portrayed as a character effectively segregated from her entourage, a condition of isolation especially meaningful from our perspective, for this segment introduces her as an alien in a scenography cinematically *imagined* through the transpositional operation. Later in the film, King will reverse the procedure, and show Rafe as a stranger in the theatrically conceived space.

The next scene corroborates Daisy's estrangement from her filmic environs. As couples are dancing in a disco, Daisy stands on the sidelines, not only distancing herself from the whirling

animation on the dance floor, but even refusing to respond to a patron who buys her a drink (0:02:00). In this manner, Daisy's filmic personification echoes that of Dollie and Jeanie in Wedding in White, insinuating a fissure between the dramatic persona and her cinematic context. The first direct human contact that Daisy establishes with anyone in the film is with Rafe (0:02:50), whom she sees as he is trying to make his way past the disco's doorman. Leaving the nightclub together, Daisy and Rafe behave according to their divergent impulses. As Daisy suggests, expectedly, "let's get a taxi and *go back to my place*," Rafe hails some friends driving by and starts singing with them in the middle of the street, visibly on his turf in the hustle and bustle of downtown Toronto on a Friday night (0:03:00). Undeterred, Daisy jumps into a cab and hauls Rafe in with her (0:04:00).

This brief episode bears witness to the contrast between Rafe's outward attraction and Daisy's withdrawing inclination, by granting the former contact with the diegetic figures cinematically engendered, and keeping the latter divorced from the extra-theatrical field. The rest of the movie builds upon this pattern of dissension, maintaining much of the dramatic integrity of Daisy, while infusing Rafe with filmic circumstances that partially explode the limits of his stage embodiment. Accordingly, at the moment the film coalesces with the play-script, that is, when Daisy and Rafe arrive at her apartment, the libidinous young woman takes charge of the secluded space in a manner completely at odds with her earlier restraint, physi-

cally asserting her possession of the dramatic zone by maneuvering around the narrow area, prancing provocatively.

In addition to Daisy's actual return home, in the dramatic décor, this scene re-theatricalizes the character, after the cinematization conducted in the prefatory sequence, through the amalgamation of a sensual dance and the routine gestures that she accomplishes as she traverses her territory (putting Rafe's coat in the closet, shutting the window, turning on a light, etc. — 0:05:30). The stylized movements that she performs (cavorting lasciviously, flaunting her diminutive chest before Rafe) invests the scene with the purport of a love ritual, while the mundane actions that she executes anchor the ritual in a realistic context. As such, the scene aligns itself with anthropological definitions of theatre. Victor Turner, for one, sees drama as a phenomenon of liminality — i.e. a performative genre "dissolv[ing] all factual and commonsense systems into their components and `play[ing]` with them in ways never found in nature or in custom [...]" — that "tends to become a way of scrutinizing the quotidian world."³ In other words, theatre as ritual playfully formalizes the raw material of "real life" to examine the operations of ordinary existence.⁴ Daisy's *acting out* the part of archseductress in front of Rafe thus supplements the quasi-documentary literality of her filmic depiction⁵ in the cinematic proem with notions of spectacle and performance, hence theatricalizing the situation and even mirroring the complexion of much modern theatre, from Strindberg's Miss Julie (1888) to Les Belles-Soeurs, as the exhibition of ritualistic enactments

in a kitchen-sink setting.

Appropriately, during Daisy's ceremonial, Rafe remains an immobile spectator. Their relation to the acting field has evidently been inverted. In the first instants of her dance, he is manifestly out of place in the enclosed, theatrical confines, his sense of performance having been associated, to this point, with the informal (and arguably non-liminal⁶ because of its overt casualness) practice of playing guitar on the sidewalk. In time, he does make himself at home, taking out his guitar, starting to sing and engaging in the petty conversation that comprises roughly the first nine pages of the playscript (0:06:40 - 0:15:00). However, Rafe's initial compliance with the one-night stand scenario does not signal his acceptance of Daisy's confining demands for safe intimacy. In the film as in the play, the disturbed young man soon discloses his explosive temperament, when he begins shouting at Sharon (Susan Hogan) on the phone (0:16:10/Bolt 9), hence triggering the slow but inexorable shattering of Daisy's sense of sheltered safety.

In both works, this preliminary indication of Rafe's efferent impetuosity is succeeded by a further gesture of transgression, as he exits the restricted locale of the drama "to ask [Daisy's] neighbours to [her] party," disregarding her claim that she hates the neighbours (0:16:50/Bolt 10). In the source, the import of Rafe's departure is limited to the visual impact of his outward movement. In King's version, on the other hand, the transgressive quality of his action is magnified by one of the few clusters of *original* imagery created by the filmmaker,

namely, the depiction of Riva's (Dinah Christie) apartment, which Rafe visits on a few occasions (0:17:00; 0:21:20; 0:43:30). Not only is the presentation of the neighbour's domicile, in itself, a cinematic transgression of the closed dramatic space, but the representation of the room as a haven for sado-masochists (albeit of the benign sort), complete with racy red lighting, whip, peculiar mechanical toys, death's-head and Frankenstein masks, constructs this site as the emblem of what transgresses on Daisy's delineation of proper sex. No need to recall, here, the widespread psychoanalytical film theories that have long regarded cinema as a gratifier of sado-masochistic impulses,⁷ to deduce that Rafe's interaction with Riva and her companion (Mina E. Mina) in this obstreperous, exclusively filmic milieu, inserts in the otherwise centripetal design of Daisy's dramatic script (her body being the centre towards which the various vectors of the drama *should* converge), the outside possibility of unbounded sexual conduct. Not surprisingly, when Rafe returns from his brief escapade in the realm of the purely cinematic, Daisy re-asserts the afferent theatrical frame, by performing her ritualistic dance as she moves in on him and resumes the seduction protocols (0:19:00).⁸

Rafe's next effusion of craziness is related, again, to outward motion, but this time it hints at the negative side of efferent excess. Having suddenly realized his vocation as rescuer of captive ladies, he throws Daisy over his shoulder, and shouts, "I'm going to rescue you. I'm going to tear these sheets in strips [...] and climb down over the balcony just like

in the movies," as he wields her over the balustrade above a seventeen-floor drop (0:31:40/Bolt 20). The sight of the pavement below provokes in Daisy, as well as in the spectator who is presented with an unsettling point-of-view shot of the abyssal vista (0:31:45), a nauseous reaction to the petrifying apparition of the external threat. Although the peril dissipates and the dialogue resumes as soon as Rafe brings Daisy back inside, this instant of trepidation, explicitly connected to the former's efferent leap, anticipates the horrific exposure of Sharon's dead body near the end of the film (1:21:00), which concretizes the abjection of mortality intimated here and more humorously via the death mask worn by Riva's lover (0:21:30).

As we see, by inserting some exclusively filmic imagery in the chain of dramatic events, King manages to connote both the liberating force and ominous excess of Rafe's efferent challenge to Daisy's afferent inclination. But besides these few cinematic addenda, that hint at the external menace from which Daisy wishes to retreat, the cineaste generally refrains from depicting the outward impulse alluded to in Rafe's speech and actions. This moderate use of film's ability to move across time and space is most obvious in the passage, shortly after the balcony incident, during which Rafe comments on the northern woods of Kapuskasing and the core of downtown Detroit (0:37:30/Bolt 22).

While the content of this monologue clearly invites imagery picturing the countryside and urban scene described verbally, King's camera refuses to leave the site of the theatrical tirade and remains fixed on Carver's face as he says his lines. Such

insistence on the character's visage, interspersed with infrequent reaction shots of Daisy, puzzled by her companion's speech, naturally draws the viewers into his psyche. But the absence of reverse shots showing the cityscape at which Rafe is ostensibly staring through the window, denies the process of suture that would have prompted the audience to identify with him. This creates a sense of estrangement vis-à-vis Rafe, whose facial mask, although expressive, paradoxically interdicts empathy and elicits a feeling of uncanny distance between the young man and his audience (Daisy and us).

King's minimal use of the filmic apparatus to convey Rafe's strangeness in this scene is not inconsequential, of course. By fabricating him as alien through a primarily theatrical rendition, the filmmaker effectively counterpoints the precursory cinematization of Daisy as a foreigner in the outside world, where Rafe, conversely, felt totally comfortable. Admittedly, the close-ups on Rafe and the reaction shots of Daisy are, strictly speaking, cinematic and not theatrical devices.⁹ But their tight syntagmatic arrangement, which prohibits the interference of outdoor images, nevertheless manufactures a space that is as enclosed as a stage box set, unbroken by reverse shots of the cityscape that would immediately project the spectator outside the apartment. Significantly, this predominantly theatrical section in the film culminates in the first acutely dramatic crisis of the text, as Rafe reveals, shortly after his monologue, that he has murdered a girl (0:39:-30/Bolt 23), a statement which triggers Daisy's first panic

attack and prompts her to call Sharon.

As in the play, this crisis is soon resolved, and Daisy and Rafe eventually end up in bed together. To express the passage of time approximating the entr'acte, during which the young people are presumed to be making love, the filmmaker employs another one of his understated but cogent cinematic stratagems, displaying to his audience a long shot of the slumbering city (0:55:00). This panoramic view of skyscrapers, the first in the film, might conjure up romantic connotations ensuing from both the intrinsic quality of the image — shimmering lights in the night — and the extrinsic reference to the intimate intercourse that it shrouds. The subsequent close-up of Daisy sleeping potentially strengthens this impression of peace and harmony.

However, King's next use of the external urban tableau subverts these positive implications. The second long shot of downtown Toronto (1:04:00), perhaps even more attractive visually than the previous one because of the nascent sunlight, is understood initially in terms comparable to those attached to its predecessor, for it seems to shield the sexual games of Rafe and Sharon, who has returned to the apartment while Daisy is having a shower. But in retrospect, it emerges that this peaceful vista of the urban skyline, far from affording a discreet veil concealing romantic intercourse, serves in fact to hide the violent crime of a deranged murderer. King's figuration of the city, therefore, endows the broad environment that surrounds the dramatic scene with both surface beauty and undertones of cold indifference towards the suffering of those who

inhabit it. Hence, with great economy, King expresses the contradictory impact that the outside world has on the characters, operating dialectically as the object of Rafe's efferent motivation and the cause of Daisy's inward recoil. Moreover, the third and last depiction of the cityscape backgrounded by the early morning sky, which provides resonance to Rafe's idealistic projection into the future, is followed by a shot of Daisy looking down at the police car that ominously portends the tragic dénouement of the drama (1:07:00/Bolt 38-9). The juxtaposition of these shots emphasizing the clash between the two perceptions of the outside world — as an alluring panorama of promises and a threateningly repressive agent — epitomizes in a few seconds the afferent-withdrawal/efferent-escape dichotomy at the core of the text.

From this point on, with the exception of a few brief shots of the police officers in the corridor and Riva on her balcony, the camera will depict exclusively Daisy's apartment, as if following the murder of Sharon, which manifests the ultimate infringement of the frigid external body into the circumscribed interior, King no longer had to portray the outside world. Notably, one of the only cinematic additions in the last quarter of the movie bares the killing of Sharon (1:25:00). Superimposing on a diegetic sound recording (Bolt 49) pictures of the gruesome murder, the filmmaker compounds the cinematic image with the abject actions that the stage version never discloses.

This does not mean that brutal deeds cannot be exhibited on stage; the stabbing of Rafe at the end of the play attests to

the contrary. But the origination by the filmic discourse of a scene of explosive violence authenticates the pattern recognized hitherto, to wit, the use of the cinematic medium to emphasize the confrontation between Rafe's transgressive role and the contained script of Daisy's drama. The film-transgression nexus is all the more striking in that it is *not* counterpointed by cinematically originated spectacles of love-making. Indeed, the cine-mediation process only generates material that shatters boundaries and confinement, and never deploys imagery of protective embrace other than what is already dictated by the theatrical source.

Albeit with much more moderation than Fruet and Martin, King therefore echoes the practice of his predecessors by employing film to stress the efferent angle of the dialectic while retaining, in all faithfulness to the source, the afferent dominance of the play. King aptly concludes his production with an image that suggests the film's re-establishment of the theatrical situation. Following Daisy's stabbing of Rafe, the camera slowly dollies out of the apartment until it shows the two characters through the window (1:30). The proscenium arch formed by the window — complete with curtain closing on the scene — re-theatricalize the representation, and professes, I would argue, that regardless of its ability to transcend space and time, film-mediated drama remains bound to its theatrical origins. Our last in-depth analysis of a film-mediated play will confirm this assumption.

Being at Home with Claude

Like King's One Night Stand, Jean Beaudin's Being at Home with Claude, released in 1992, prefaces the action of the play with a depiction of the events that precede and trigger the drama. Although Beaudin's cinematic foreword is far more complex technically than King's, with its swift editing, jump-cuts and drastic ruptures in the stream of aural information, its function in the film, as a blueprint of the text's central concerns, is actually more evident than in One Night Stand. From the very first shot, a black and white panorama of downtown Montréal counterpointed on the soundtrack by orgasmic breathing, the filmmaker readily exposes the two poles of the dialectic, namely, the sense of intimacy that Yves (Roy Dupuis) experiences with Claude (Jean-François Pichette) — signified aurally — and "l'restant du monde" (Dubois 108) exhibited visually.

The rest of the pre-credit montage intensifies the dichotomy, pitting the brutal chaos pervading the city, with its loud punks, threatening bikers and seedy prostitutes, against the affectionate intercourse taking place in Claude's home. The two antithetical worlds are displayed both synchronically and diachronically, as tightly-framed shots of Claude's and Yves's naked bodies, moving harmoniously, are inserted in the chain of images that trace the progression of the camera away from the boisterous crowds downtown towards the increasingly marginalized district of illicit sexuality culminating in Claude's apartment. These first few minutes imply a causality between the two terrains, gradually defining the lovers' intimacy not only as an

alternative sphere of activity (through the initial parallel montage), but also as a reaction against the external environment (with Claude's home as the destination of the camera's journey away from the mob). Accordingly, the pictures of urban frenzy, which dominate the first half of the prologue, vanish when the camera, having reached its goal, enters Claude's abode through a window and reveals in lyrical, slow-motion photography the copulating men in the homely milieu that had only been glimpsed previously.

This funnelling manoeuvre from public, efferent chaos to private, afferent love-making is reversed in the last portion of the opening sequence when Yves slashes Claude's throat at the climax of sexual ecstasy (0:04:25). The blood gushing on the walls, the first colour image in the film, precipitates a series of shots showing Yves running away from the scene of the crime into the disorderly urban setting, before a fade-out terminates this precursory filmic assemblage and raises the curtain on the play proper. Throughout this section, Beaudin orchestrates a transparent oscillation of the cinematic territory from the open cityscape to Claude's enclosed suite and back to Montreal's streets and subway stations. The film's subsequent section, composed of the bulk of the play with a few cuts and changes in the dialogue, reinstates the circumscribed territory as it transpires principally in the office of Judge Delorme.

The filmmaker is fully aware of the synecdochic role that his added exordium performs in the overall structure of the work. "C'est la caméra qui part à la recherche du personnage,"

he explained in an interview published at the time of the film's release,

Elle passe à travers toute la ville qui est Montréal vu presque d'est en ouest, à travers les édifices, les rues, le festival de jazz, le boulevard Saint-Laurent avec ses prostitués, pour arriver chez Yves [sic] dans une course folle jusqu'à l'épuisement total. Ce sont donc des lieux. C'est aussi la synthèse de toute la pièce. Quelqu'un qui pourrait décortiquer ces neuf minutes trouverait là toute l'histoire, c'est-à-dire toutes les données de la pièce. Rien ne manque. Ensuite, on en reparle avec des mots pour essayer d'expliquer ce qui s'est passé.¹⁰

Indeed, the cineaste divulges, in the first moments of his movie, the main contention at the core of the dramatic discourse: the afferent-withdrawal/efferent-escape dialectic that the rest of the film, like the play, will resolve negatively through the erasure of the latter term of the binary.

One of the most notable semiotic additions introduced by Beaudin in his cinematic preamble, and further developed during the remainder of the work, is the use of black-and-white photography throughout the whole overture, with the sole exception of Claude's blood seen splashing around the kitchen. Conversely, the scenes in the Judge's office are all in colour except for Yves's black-and-white flashbacks, which punctuate his narration of the story to the Inspecteur (Jacques Godin). At first sight, the way in which black-and-white scenes alternate with colour sequences seems to suggest a rudimentary nexus between black-and-white imagery and the past, as is commonly witnessed in mainstream movies. This interpretation, however, is not consistent with Beaudin's actual utilization of the chromatic sig-

nifier. If we postulate that the introductory segment is in black and white simply because it occurs before the present tense of the interrogation, then how can we account for the vivid red of Claude's blood?

Moreover, there is one flashback, later in the film, that is *not* in black and white. As the Inspecteur relates the facts, "Samedi soir, à onze heures et d'mie, quelqu'un appelle au quartier général pis dit qu'y'a un gars mort au 8574¹¹ Casgrain" (0:23:30/Dubois 41), we are presented with a colour re-enactment of the police officer's description of the discovery of Claude's dead body. Beaudin's insertion of this colour flashback in the film contradicts any straightforward equation between black-and-white renditions and the narrative past tense. Within this colour flashback, however, there are a number of black-and-white pictures representing photographs of the corpse taken by the Inspecteur's assistant (0:24:00). The incorporation of these snapshots in the flashback, rather than operating as a syntagmatic shift between present and past, actually cull from the natural unfolding of action in colour moments arrested in time, correlating black-and-white imagery with the notion of events being *captured* as in still photography.

The hermeneutic cue afforded by this utilisation of black and white permits a retroactive interpretation of the prolegomenon not merely as Yves's remembrance, but more precisely as what can be contained in, or captured by, his cryptophoric memory. This explains why the dichotomy between the chaotic exterior and the harmonious interior is enunciated in such explicit terms in

the preface, for this section represents Yves's own articulation of his relationship with Claude, cloistered from the external surroundings. The prefatory sequence is, in fact, a literal visualization of Yves's final explication of the incident: "J'tais en train d'me noyer en lui, avec lui. Pis y'avait l'restant du monde. Le contraire de c'qui était entrain d'nous arriver" (1:13:30/Dubois 108). Only the blood flowing from Claude's body is in colour, because that vision is precisely what refuses to fit into Yves's recollection of his own *afferent* desire, symbolizing, as it does, Claude's *efferent* yearning.

Significantly, in his last monologue, Yves never actually says that he slashed Claude's throat: "[...] pis j'nous voyais pus jamais r'sortir de chez eux. Jamais nous r'lever. Pis, en même temps, j'sentais son sexe, comme un arb', qui explosait. *Pis déjà, y'avait pus d'couteau dans ma main* [emphasis added]" (1:15:00/Dubois 109); and as Yves recounts these events, the shot of gushing blood is *not* shown again, for this moment of pure *efferent* eruption, which negates both Yves's and the Inspecteur's inward purpose, is unequivocally outside the realm of the drama. Only the exclusively cinematic prologue could present this discharging image, and then again, very briefly. As such, Claude's blood epitomizes the notion of cinematic excess, as Kristin Thompson designates it: "Outside any [narrative] structures lie those aspects of the work which are not contained by its unifying forces — the 'excess'."¹²

Except for the uncontainable excess effected by Claude's slaying, which pointedly announces the dialectical inconclusive-

ness typical of Thomas Price's synthetic-implied model, Beaudin's adaptation of Dubois's work emphasizes the dominant afferent pressure exerted on the efferent force. The main body of the film comprises a number of shots and scenes that transgress the hermetically closed dramatic arena. But while these cinematic accessions illustrate aspects of the characters's circumstances extraneous to the strict province of the play, they are invariably co-opted into the work's pre-established structure either visually, aurally or narratively. One of the most manifest examples of this practice occurs at mid-point in the film, when the Inspecteur temporally rids himself of Yves by forcing him to go to the washroom (0:27:00/Dubois 47). As in the play, the Inspecteur takes advantage of this brief hiatus to contact his wife (Johanne-Marie Tremblay).

Beaudin's depiction of the phone conversation is emblematic of the paradox "inherent" to film-mediated drama, to wit, the dialectical dynamic between the theatrical roots of the play-script and the displacing procedures constitutive of the motion-picture adaptation. Capitalizing on film's ability to escape instantaneously any temporal or spatial restrictions, Beaudin elects to show the Inspecteur's wife in a homely kitchen, cutting vegetables as she is chatting with her husband on the phone. At one level, the cinematic inclusion of the woman concretizes her role as identified in Chapter VI, by endowing her with connotations of the peace and happiness conceivable outside the battlefield that the Palais de Justice has become. On another plane, however, the efferent potential suggested by the

presence of the wife "out there" is undermined by the afferent way in which the filmmaker portrays her. She has her back to the camera — the audience never sees her face; she is positioned in an exiguous corner of the kitchen, with the camera's perspective narrowly limited by the converging walls; and every time the dialogic shot/reverse shot arrangement returns to the woman, she is framed in increasingly tight composition until only the back of her head fills the screen.

Through this cinematization of the Inspecteur's wife, Beaudin simultaneously points out towards an alternative world "elsewhere," and frustrates the filmic capacity to escape confinement by enclosing her in an oppressively cramped space. Similarly, after the phone call, the camera follows the Inspecteur outside the Judge's office, into an adjacent garden where he enjoys the smell of roses (0:30:00). Although this scene initially stages an escape from the office, it soon appears that the garden, itself, is completely immured, as stone walls are seen in the background of every long shot composing this section. Yves's black-and-white flashbacks function in the same manner, as unrealized filmic escapes from the dramatic locale.

The afferent undercutting of the cinematically escapist flash-backs works at a variety of levels. For instance, the first black-and-white insert, during the interrogation proper, is visually efferent, as it commences with Yves walking energetically on a belvedere overlooking Westmount (0:14:45). The soundtrack, however, subverts this outward motion through Yves's narration, which reports his interest in nice houses and the

childhood memory of Christmas and Easter parties at his grandparents' place (Dubois 28). As we have seen in Chapter VI, this passage expresses the prostitute's afferent, narcissistic desire to return to the plenitude of infancy, a sensation corroborated by a subsequent black-and-white inclusion showing a young woman running in slow-motion as the Inspecteur mentions Yves's sister (0:18:40/Dubois 35). The spoken lines of the drama thus shed an inward light on the outward spectacle of the screen image.

Conversely, in the third black-and-white flashback, the image, rather than the sound, affirms the predominance of enclosure despite film's facility to change locations instantly. In this segment, many of the lines describing Yves's tearing out the phone and the door bell, because "y m'a pris l'envie... de pus êt' là pour personne" (Dubois 68), are replaced by images of his restless pacing in a dark apartment observed from low-angle perspectives (0:35:00). Visual escape from the judicial precinct thus augments the feeling of confinement, ironically enough, since the prostitute's home, rendered in low-key lighting and fragmented editing, comes across as an even more claustrophobic architecture than the Judge's office, which is somewhat assuaged by comfortable furniture and tempering bookshelves (although this elegant décor obviously connotes, as well, the oppression of Yves's underclass).

Arguably the most intricate orchestration of the film's dual makeup surfaces in the pivotal flashback where Yves relates his first meeting with Claude, at the Carré (0:39:00-0:48:30). The directorial rationale behind this flashback is somewhat

enigmatic, for the scene fuses Claude's character with the American tourist referred to in the play, whom Yves meets after the slaying of his lover, the visual recollection attributing to Claude the actions performed by the foreign John (Dubois 88-9). Whether Beaudin made this alteration in the text for the sake of economy¹³ or to give actor Jean-François Pichette more exposure, the construction of the flashback, itself, still bears witness to the oscillatory organization of the work as a whole.

The shot immediately preceding the flashback shows Yves literally behind bars, as he looks outside through the railed window of the Judge's office. This evident symbol of confinement is counterpointed by subsequent black-and-white images that exhibit chaotic cavorting on the dance floor of a gay nightclub. Although the gay bar is, strictly speaking, an interior setting, the riotous behaviour of the dancing crowd recalls the sense of boundless commotion experienced in the first part of the prologue. As such, the juxtaposition of the present-tense shot of Yves behind bars and the past-tense gay-club scene reiterates Yves's motivating desire to retreat from the latter. Appropriately, he soon leaves the night club for the Carré where he meets Claude, who indicates with timid but unequivocal gestures his interest in the prostitute. There follows a brief exchange in Claude's apartment, ending in the student's anti-climatic passing-out before engaging in any sexual activity.

As in the pre-credit introduction, there is a geographical progression away from the chaos of "l'restaurant du monde" toward the tranquillity of Claude's home. But also as in the prelude,

the pleasure of being at home with Claude is short-lived. At the end of the flashback, Yves gives his money back to the slumbering Claude, and returns to the Carré. Yet, Yves's efferent movement away from Claude's home is immediately reintegrated into the afferent pattern as the prostitute is perceived walking towards a gazebo at the center of the park. Although brief and seemingly irrelevant, the picture of the small building in the middle of the ground gains unmistakable significance retrospectively when it re-appears in the very last shot of the film following Yves's monologue.

Despite the changes that Beaudin made to the young man's last lines, the modified statement still expresses clearly the motive behind his criminal deed. "[...] Je le sais qu'en le tuant," Beaudin's Yves avows, "je me tuais moi avec ... pis c'est ça que je voulais. Mais là, en attendant ma vraie mort à moi, lui, *y vit en moi* ... comme personne l'a connu. Rien que moi. *Y est rien qu'à moi*" (1:18:45). The re-appearance of the gazebo in the centre of a deserted black-and-white panorama, shortly after this confession, can hardly be interpreted as anything other than a metaphor for Yves's desire to preserve *inside himself*, inside his cryptic home, the memory of his lover. His earlier advance towards the isolated pavilion, after his initial meeting with Claude (0:48:25), thus becomes a visual presage of his ultimate retreat inside himself, alone with the souvenir of a fleeting moment of love. Consequently, following this subtly revealing flashback, all subsequent black-and-white inserts in the film contain exclusively tightly-framed recollect-

tions of the lovers' final moments together, for Yves's march towards the gazebo marks the symbolical erasure of all reality outside "le souvenir de lui" (1:18:30).

As we see, like Fruet, Martin and King, Beaudin fluctuates between depicting regions exterior to the original theatrical space, a practice greatly facilitated by the filmic apparatus, and denying the characters actual escape as a result of the original work's imposition of a pre-determined structure, which requires that the antagonistic Inspecteur remain as cut off from an alternative world of love and compassion as his internecine opponent, Yves. By this point in our inquiry, it should be obvious to the reader that this paradox is by no means a flaw. On the contrary, the constant tension between film's eruptive potential and the restrictive demands of the authoritative stage play results in a remarkable amplification of the implicational dialectic that subtends the great majority of the published works comprising the corpus of film-mediated drama: afferent-withdrawal/efferent-escape.¹⁴ The section below will examine succinctly other films from the corpus to verify the recurrence of this configuration.

Other films from the Corpus

The extent to which film adaptations of published Canadian and Québécois plays transfigure their sources ranges from the virtually non-existent cinematic input of Francis Mankiewicz's Une amie d'enfance (1978), religiously complying with Louise Roy and Louis Saia's text, to the radical alterations that Norma

Bailey executed on Kelly Rebar's Bordertown Café. But even the latter's considerable broadening of the terrain covered by the characters, stretching from Alberta to Wyoming, does not manage to transform the theatre characters into purely cinematic figures incorporated in their surrounding landscape. As in Les Beaux Dimanches and the other works analyzed, Rebar's dramatis personae remain effectively segregated from the filmic environment concocted by Bailey.

K. George Godwin remarked on this paradox in his review of the film:

Ostensibly, the cafe is a busy spot, yet the five primary characters have virtually no interaction with the people who patronize the place; these customers remain characterless "comic" figures, an excuse for occasional visual and verbal jokes. There is no sense of a surrounding community. In fact, the border town is never provided with any visual connection to the cafe – the locations remain isolated from each other so that when the characters occasionally go into town, they seem to be entering a completely separate world.¹⁵

Although Godwin obviously disliked the movie, his comments eloquently attest to the fundamental gap that separates the stage drama from the cinematic panorama. The return of all the main characters to the cafe, after their cross-border peregrinations, re-asserts the theatrical structure that the cinematic appendages merely obscured temporarily.

Between the extremes of Une amie d'enfance and Bordertown Café (1991), other films of the corpus offer noteworthy variants of the patterns identified hitherto. For instance, John Palmer's 1974 version of Martin Kinch's Me?, while keeping the climactic scenes inside the theatrical setting, counts a few sequences

located outside the limits of the drama's original domain. Actions unfolding in streets, pubs, parks and even in a theatre, where Oliver (William Webster) — a dramatist in the film, rather than a musician — seems to reside (0:45:30),¹⁶ break the unity of place strictly observed in the play and, in this manner, accentuate the efferent angle of the dialectic. Palmer's praxis thus parallels Beaudin's and King's film-mediation methods.

At first sight, however, it seems that Palmer, unlike his peers, lacks a systematic strategy in his distribution of the characters over the cinematized site of dramatic struggle. Although most of the exterior scenes showing the central afferent figure of the play, Terry (Stephen Markle), retain the feeling of enclosure experienced in his apartment, with walls or fences usually circumscribing the locations, his last presence outdoors transpires in a park unobstructed by emblems of confinement (1:06:00). Conversely, Kathy (Chapelle Jaffe), one of the efferent forces in the text, never moves in such wide open spaces. The characters, therefore, seem to manoeuvre indiscriminately between the closed area of the play and its cinematic surroundings, regardless of their respective functions in the dialectic.

But a more attentive look at the personages' behaviour in their various spheres of activity divulges a significant difference between the two structural units. Whereas the three antagonists — Oliver, Kathy and Chloe (Brenda Donohue)¹⁷ — actively interact with the cinematic environment, Terry never

establishes any actual connection with the world outside his suite, neither via effective action upon his broader environment nor through contact with cinematic characters. The first exclusively cinematic scene in the film shows Oliver bursting out of the St. Lawrence Centre for the Arts, after the failure of his play, and tearing down the posters that remind him of his flawed oeuvre, Strange Lady (0:01:50). Admittedly minimal, Oliver's deed in the filmic realm, in addition to being visibly efferent, has a more significant impact on the external environment than any gesture executed by Terry. Terry's only transformative interaction with the cinematic universe consists of kicking a can in a parking lot. But significantly, he is not actually seen performing this action, as he enters the frame only after the can has already settled back on the ground (0:44:55).

Elsewhere in the film, as Terry and Oliver are enjoying a drink in a tavern (0:18:00), the latter whines bitterly to a stranger while the former never addresses the third man directly; nowhere in the movie, as a matter of fact, does Terry communicate with any extraneous characters. Kathy, on the other hand, extends a giving hand to a fellow passenger on a train, offering him a cigarette and even lighting it up (0:02:00), and Chloe does not hesitate to hug and chat with a passer-by on the sidewalk (0:57:20). The efferent antagonists, therefore, are portrayed as (relatively) integral parts of the cinematic universe, whereas Terry remains severed from this environment essentially extrinsic to the immured zone in which he wishes to

isolate himself.

The most telling sequence in Me [sic],¹⁸ however, has nothing to do with the depiction of the outside world. Rather it concerns the brutal infringement of the efferent impulse onto the protected abode, to wit, the fight involving Terry and Kathy. The playscript describes only briefly the struggle between the former lovers before a fade marks the end of Act One. Contradistinctively, the film indulges in the depiction of the violent blows that they inflict on one another (0:38:30 - 0:42:30). In this scene, the use of the cinematic medium succeeds in shattering the cohesion of the closed architecture not only through the physical destruction of the set, but also and mainly through a succession of fast-edited images that break the rules of spatial continuity.¹⁹ This provokes disorientation in the spectator, who becomes incapable of situating one section of the room in relation to the others. As a result, Kathy's attack on Terry is much more effective in the screen adaptation than on stage, for such geographical confusion, within the apparently solid boundaries of the box set, is unachievable in the theatre because of the fixity of the audience's perspective.

However, the film undermines its own catastrophic potential by emphasizing the artificiality of the altercation. At one point, for instance, Kathy throws ketchup on Terry, hence casting doubt on the provenance of the red liquid that covers their faces at the conclusion of the brawl. Furthermore, some of the movements seem exceedingly contrived for comical effect — for instance, a pirouette that Terry helps Kathy to perform

(0:38:55); and the duel of slaps in the bath is so evidently parodic that the transgressive quality of the confrontation evaporates behind the theatricality of its execution. In the end, therefore, as in all the films analyzed above, the addition of cinematic imagery, while hinting at the prospect of pulverizing the theatrical décor, eventually concedes victory to the original structure and re-asserts the dominance of the afferent pull. In the last scene of the film, as in the play, Terry thus achieves the cloistered existence for which he strived, without managing, however, to channel his energies toward the production of his belated second novel.

Yves Simoneau's Les Célébrations (1979), based on Michel Garneau's play, also highlights the recurrent implicational dialectic by means of film-mediation, but even more compendiously than Palmer's work. Beginning with a written epigraph from the dramatist calling for simplicity of treatment,²⁰ Simoneau's movie adopts a most minimalist style, with as little cinematic input as possible. The camera faithfully relays the conversations of Paul-Émile (Normand Lévesque) and Margo (Léo Munger), eliminating only the "Brechtian" third-person songs of the original and replacing them with timidly emphatic close-ups. There is not a single picture from outside the theatrical set for forty minutes; and when the camera finally goes out of the house, it is only for a few seconds to show Paul-Émile entering a restaurant through an extreme wide-angle shot (0:40:30).

Although merely three seconds long, this insert is nevertheless pithy, for its use of a fish-eye lens — the first unor-

thodox effect in the film — invests the outside with destabilizing potential as it distorts the previously conventional visualization of space. This initial designation of the outward cinematic environment as the realm of uncanny perception is amplified by the next exterior shot, more than twenty minutes later, which briefly displays, in double framing slow-motion, Paul-Émile and his friend Marcel walking on a sidewalk (1:01:45). Over the first sixty minutes of Simoneau's film, there are thus only two cutaways illustrating sites other than the dramatic locale, and both shatter the uniform fabrication of the circumscribed arena in which Paul-Émile and Margo play out their verbal games.

Furthermore, in the second insert, the exterior sphere is not only depicted in eccentric fashion, it is also directly connected to death — Paul-Émile's paramount phobia — as the image of Marcel in open space coincides with the announcement of his suicide (Garneau 52). Consequently, Marcel's abject departure from the cloistered existence for which Paul-Émile strives (Garneau 54) finds a visual equivalent in the camera's departure from both the confines of the house and the cohesive construction of space and time that characterizes it. With a most economical and cogent technique, therefore, Simoneau conveys the predicament at the core of the drama, drawing a parallel between the outdoors, death and the disturbing effect that these two efferent symbols have on Paul-Émile's perception of himself and his entourage.

The scene immediately following the macabre revelation

takes place entirely in a park on a sunny day, and unlike the two previous outdoor inserts, this sequence-shot conforms to the understated style of the film. This visual orthodoxy might appear inconsistent, at first, seemingly contradicting the foregoing interpretation. But one central element differentiates this passage from the two other ones, namely, Margo's presence. Indeed, for the first time in the film *she* is seen outside the domestic milieu, in a context germane to her divulgence to Paul-Émile of her intention to go on holiday by herself (1:06:20/-Garneau 56). Far from being inconsistent, the portrayal of Margo in a rather benign exterior setting imparts her efferent desire to explore new territories, as opposed to Paul-Émile's afferent wish for secluded stability.

But while avoiding the discomfort generated cinematically in the two earlier exterior shots, so as to avert belying Margo's outward urge, the scene still creates disturbance through Paul-Émile's physical and verbal anxiety. He fidgets, raises his voice, and deduces fatalistically, "tu m'aimes pus," construing her efferent design as a lethal assault on their relationship. Hence, the sequence in the park exposes simultaneously the two sides of the dialectic, that is, Margo's efferent drive towards an alluring elsewhere, stressed cinematically by the natural background, and Paul-Émile's afferent resistance against such centrifugal movement, conveyed *theatrically* through Normand Lévesque's performance.

Not surprisingly, the subsequent montage displays the lovers, now separated, in antithetical relation to their

external environment. Whereas Paul-Émile is perceived as a lonely figure on a barren expanse, depressed and saddened by his companion's absence (1:10:00), Margo is espied walking nonchalantly in a bucolic autumnal forest (1:11:10). Their divergent portrayals in the cinematic landscape speak volumes on their opposite poles of attraction. Yet, despite Margo's serene interaction with the natural setting, she does not reject the peaceful comfort of the inside either, as she is seen, in the same series of shots, enjoying her solitude in a motel room, while Paul-Émile cuddles up with the cat at home.

Margo's concurrent allegiance to the outside and the inside foreshadows her return to Paul-Émile at the end of the film, and her last monologue in which she utterly refuses his marriage proposal (efferent opposition), but agrees to remain at home with him (afferent concession) (1:19:00/Garneau 64-5). As in the previous case studies, therefore, the few cinematic additions in Les Célébrations open up the play, albeit minimally, to reveal an external vista that is as alluring as it is repulsive, only to annul its influence in the end, and re-affirm the ascendancy of the inward pull.

Unlike Les Célébrations, Paul Blouin's 1981 adaptation of Antonine Maillet's Gapi comprises much more than merely a few exterior scenes. There is no shortage, here, of panoramic tableaux picturing the dune whose every square inch the old lighthouse keeper, Gapi (Gilles Pelletier), has explored. It may thus seem astounding that reviewers have criticized Blouin's movie for being "stagebound."²¹ But the fact of the matter is

that in spite of the impressive landscapes and ocean views that abound in this production, the unity of place constituted by Gapi's dune, in Maillet's original text, is never contested by the film-mediation process, since the camera never leaves the vicinity of the island. Moreover, Gapi's and Sullivan's (Guy Provost) numerous accounts of past incidents are never supplemented by flashbacks, the filmmaker preferring to scrutinize the facial expressions of the actors rather than embodying their remembrances on screen. Although the walls and ceilings that comprise the dramatic setting in other works are substituted in Gapi by sand, water and blue skies, the impression of enclosure persists.

This does not imply, however, that Blouin's use of the cinematic apparatus serves absolutely no semiotic purpose. On the contrary, the discreet, but eloquent, visual rhetoric that the cineaste deploys conveys, cumulatively, the primary dialectical structure of the drama. Throughout the film, the camera punctuates Gapi's monologic beats — often in accordance with Maillet's own paragraphic divisions — as well as his exchanges with Sullivan, by means of a dichotomic procedure that consists in beginning the discursive unit with an establishing shot, which situates the character in his broader environment, and subsequently re-framing the actor into a medium-close-up composition for the main part of the tirade.

This consistent movement from an outward perspective to an adjacent angle and back out again for the following passage, duplicates visually Gapi's psychological fluctuation between the

efferent attraction personified by Sullivan, and his attachment to his lighthouse and dune. This technique is evident in the last section of Gapi's monologue, corresponding to the end of Act One, in which he deplores the three-year absence of his friend (0:48:20/Maillet 52). This scene begins with a medium shot of Gapi walking on the beach, with the sea and the sky occupying a prominent portion of the frame. As Gapi gradually comes to accept his state of lonely entrapment on the dune, the camera moves increasingly close to its subject, until his head and shoulder cover the visual field almost entirely. Then, when Sullivan's "Câlisse de tabarnacle de Gapi!" is heard (0:50:45/Maillet 55), the camera quickly moves back, resuming its distanced position, and re-introducing the sea and sky as the sailor arrives to re-inject fantasies of travel and exotic women in Gapi's imagination.

Similarly, the scene in which Sullivan suggests, "Ça ferait du bien à tout le monde de voyager une petite affaire" (1:06:10/Maillet 71), begins with a panorama of the dune and the wide open sea in the background. But as Gapi attempts to convince his friend that "une dôré dans c'te baie-citte passerait des beaux jours, tu sais," the camera moves in to capture the two men in a narrow two-shot that conceals the ocean completely (1:07:00/Maillet 72). The panorama re-emerges in all its splendour again only when Gapi confesses his own efferent desire: "[...] j'm'en viens m'assire sus la roche, à cet endroit icitte, pis j'avise au loin, dans le seillon de lumière [...] et je guette quoi c'est que je ouèrais s'aouindre au bout de l'eau, là-bas ...,"

to which the globe-trotter replies, "Au bout de l'eau, c'est le commencement du monde, Gapi" (1:08:30/Maillet 72-3).

The most significant use of the technique is probably the last montage sequence, in which long shots of Sullivan leaving on his rowboat are juxtaposed to shoulder shots of Gapi shouting at him: "Viens-t-en, Sullivan, pis je te baillera ma light" (1:37:00/Maillet 99). Fittingly, this series of images, rather than closing on a vista of Sullivan disappearing in the distance, concludes on a negation of escape, with a downward tilt from the sea to a decrepit embankment, succeeded by a close-up on Gapi's face (1:38:00), thus closing the circle initiated with the very first picture of the film: a close-up on a lonesome Gapi, lying in bed. This last sequence effectively denotes both the impossibility of departure, through the concealing of the horizon, and the light-keeper's solitary seclusion on his dune, signified by his grave attitude. Although Blouin's Gapi exhibits more expansive landscapes than any other work in our corpus, the utilization of the filmic medium still achieves a result similar to that recognized throughout the study, to wit, the cursory illustration of the object of efferent desire and its ultimate refutation in favour of the drama's afferent resolution.

Even a film that bears as little similarity to its dramatic source as Tom Shandel's Walls (1984), which merely replicates the general plot-line of Christian Bruyere's play, nevertheless adopts a binary arrangement similar to that of Gapi and the other instances of film-mediated drama examined above. In the initial shot of the movie, the tension between inward contain-

ment and an efferent desire for freedom is conveyed visually through a slow pan from an oppressive concrete wall, which occupies the whole screen, to a slightly more open space including a patch of grass but still enclosed by forbidding ramparts in the background. The compositional diachrony of the shot, from utter enclosure to an increasingly agape panorama imminently obstructed by a distant fortification, corresponds to the narrative movement of Danny Baker (Winston Rekert) and his acolytes, from solitary confinement to the explosive hostage-taking crisis with its promise of freedom and the bloody conclusion that annuls all prospect of escape — the slow-motion shooting of Joan Tremblay (Andrée Pelletier).

The film as a whole espouses this oscillatory pattern. In addition to its temporal swing, juxtaposing the insurrection and the events that provoked it, Shandel's work also proceeds to enlarge its spatial field in the first half of the film, only to restrict it again in the second half. From the beginning to the mid-point of the story, Joan is shown trying and eventually succeeding in her endeavour to bring Baker and the others out of solitary confinement and back into the penitentiary's "free" population (0:38:30). Appropriately, this section culminates with the only wide open vista in the film — a long shot of downtown Vancouver — thus implying the achievement of a certain degree of emancipation.

However, as soon as this liberating image has been registered, the audience hears the liberal lawyer, Ron Simmons (Alan Scarfe), expressing doubts about the validity of Joan's work. "I

just think that getting them out of the hole at the present time is likely to jeopardize everything we're doing," he tells Joan as the camera tilts away from the open view and focuses on the inside of the penthouse restaurant where they are having a drink, "because I'm afraid that something may happen, while they're out, to turn the situation against us" (0:42:20). This shot, which is literally *central* in the narrative, tenders an eloquent metaphor of the dramatic reversal that soon turns efferent hope for freedom into the reassertion of the afferent force.

Shortly after the scene in the restaurant, the events precipitate themselves until the convicts, apprehending their return to solitary confinement, resort to the desperate excess that results in Joan's death. Not surprisingly, following the caption superimposed on the freeze-frame of Joan's dead body, in which we learn that "the three hostage-takers are charged with her murder [and] Danny Baker will spend another five years in the hole" (1:26:00), the image of a concrete wall overhanging a patch of grass terminates the film on its opening statement that efferent-escape can be conceived but not achieved, at least not in the currently depicted state of affairs. Although less an adaptation of Bruyere's stage docu-drama than a parallel interpretation of the same historical facts, Shandel's film still expresses in cinematic terms the implicational dialectic underlying the play, portraying the external world that is never represented on stage, but conserving the afferent *dénouement* of the primary text.

The film that comes closest to challenging the afferent closure imposed by the dramatic source, Vic Sarin's 1989 adaptation of Jim Garrard's Cold Comfort, still falls short of actually allowing the efferent-escape to be fully realized. In the hands of scenarists Richard Beattie and L.Elliott Simms, Garrard's original text underwent a number of changes, the most significant being the ending, as Dolores (Margaret Langrick) jumps off of Floyd's (Maury Chaykin) tow truck while he is recklessly driving away from the dilapidated garage in which Stephen (Paul Gross) is chained, towards an approaching train. This penultimate scene, which culminates in the destruction of the vehicle by the train and the probable death of Floyd, both corroborates and contradicts the original finale. On the one hand, Floyd's suicidal gesture in the film is in keeping with our interpretation of the play's ending as a false deliverance for Dolores, since she remains captive of her father's madness. However, Dolores's actual escape from the truck, in the nick of time, operates a significant break from dramatic entrapment, effecting the only gesture of actual liberation in either play or movie.

Furthermore, in the film's very last shot, the teenage girl is seen walking in the direction of the garage, visibly on her way to free Stephen. Yet, his release remains purely conjectural for the image fades to black before Dolores reaches the isolated building. In the end, Sarin's version still does not dispose of the central agent of confinement, that is, the chain that holds the travelling salesman inside the house, as it did Dolores in

the past. As a matter of fact, the closing panorama, with its prairie landscape, overwhelming the small shack towards which Dolores is walking, somewhat reaffirms Floyd's dominance over the scene, for throughout the narrative, the landscape and its mood-shifts are associated with the eccentric tow-truck driver as the temperamental force that impounds the young man.

Like the other works of the corpus, Cold Comfort employs the boundless medium of cinema to expose the external environment that contours the closed arena of the theatrical conflict. Through the lense of cinematographer Sarin, the natural surroundings fluctuate from the howling blizzard that causes Stephen to drive his car into the ditch, to the peaceful desolation of an icy prairie morning in the dead of winter. Floyd's cyclothymic behaviour parallels this range of climatic manifestations. There are segments in the film where Floyd appears as serene as the sunrises affectionately photographed by Sarin. For instance, after a first evening of rather pleasant conversation between Stephen and his hosts, there follows a bucolic picture of early morning radiance, as Dolores is playing with the dogs and hugging her father before he leaves for work (0:25:30). Everything in this scene, from Floyd's loving gestures to the sentimental melody that accompanies the images, emits an aura of harmony among the elements and the individuals that interact with them.

Shortly after this sequence, however, the blizzard resurges and as Stephen is compelled to prolong his sojourn for a second night,²² under the pretext of celebrating Dolores's birthday, he

is confronted with Floyd's darker side. While the Manitoba²³ wind blows outside, the young salesman first discerns his elder's serious psychological disequilibrium as they are competing in an arm-wrestling match that exasperates Floyd beyond reason (0:38:00). Later, a strip-tease performed by the teenage girl exposes the incestuous overtones of her relationship with her father and climaxes in an unprecedented show of anger on Floyd's part (0:42:30). Following this incident, Stephen seeks to escape the madhouse on foot (his car keys having disappeared), via the backwoods. However, the environment again conspires with Floyd to contain Stephen's efferent effort; a few hours after his attempted escape, Stephen is found comatose in the snow, his foot caught in a wolf-trap (0:49:00).

The seemingly inoffensive white carpet that circumscribes the garage thus reveals itself to be as treacherous as Floyd and the erratic climate from which he earns his living. It does not come as a surprise, therefore, that before attaining Stephen's prison, which she never does within the limits of the film, Dolores is forced to cross a field of snow that seriously hinders her mobility, as an insert of her feet sinking in the frozen substance attests (1:24:50). Although ostensibly freed from the oppression of her afferent father, the cinematic Dolores is still not entirely emancipated from her theatrical antecedents, which structurally resist the liberation of Stephen.

As Séquences critic Martin Girard rightfully remarks in his review of Sarin's movie:

Au bout du compte, le film souffre de n'être au fond qu'une adaptation d'un texte écrit pour la scène. Le réalisateur a beau multiplier les «sorties» pour briser le huis clos théâtral, cela ne fait qu'amoindrir l'impact du suspense et montrer jusqu'à quel point l'ensemble repose sur un scénario artificiel.²⁴

But whereas Girard sees this situation as a flaw in the production, I would reiterate the argument proposed at the top of Chapter VIII to the effect that the film's inability to escape its theatrical source is, in fact, a constitutive aspect of our corpus. Indeed, as the foregoing scrutiny of the cinematic works demonstrates, film-mediated drama constantly struggles, but irrevocably fails, to tear itself away from the stage, thus replicating, at a formal level, the implicational dialectic central to the dramatic texts: afferent-withdrawal/efferent-escape.

My contention is thus that the particular composition of the corpus of modern Canadian and Québécois film-mediated drama stems, at least partly, from the process of film-mediation itself, which mirrors and amplifies the tension that recurs in the overwhelming majority of published plays made into feature films between 1972 and 1992. Condemned, as it were, to produce cinematic adaptations that bear at their core a tension between the fluidity of cinema and the "huis clos" of the theatre, the film-makers who choose to adapt plays, I would suggest, select dramas that precisely revolve around this very tension and signify in their structures the incapacity of the transpositional procedure to erase completely the fact that the films

remain adaptations.

This is not to say, of course, that William Fruet, Richard Martin, Allan King, Jean Beaudin and the others determined to adapt playscripts in full awareness of the symmetry between the plays' structure and film-mediated drama's paradoxical make-up. However, I would submit that the notion of film-mediated drama as an amalgamation of an afferent theatrical source and the efferent cinematic medium is so widely accepted in the theoretical discourses of the last forty years, that any cineaste even remotely familiar with the stage/screen dichotomy is conscious, at some level, of the dialectic immanent in the cinematic treatment of drama, and could thus be drawn "naturally" towards the texts that explore this specific issue. The next chapter offers a brief survey of theoretical comments about cinema and theatre that evinces the extent to which this notion pervades critical appraisals of the relationship between the two art forms. Moreover, Chapter X will hypothesize that film-mediated drama displays an intriguing representation of a commonly-acknowledged aspect of the Canadian/Québécois imagination.

NOTES

1. David McCaughna, "Mr. Goodbar rides again," MacLean's 6 Mar. 1978: 66.
2. The count being based on a version edited for television, the exact position of shots might differ from the feature version.
3. Victor Turner, "Images and Reflections: Ritual, Drama, Carnival, Film and Spectacle in Cultural Performance," The Anthropology of Performance (New York: PAJ Publications, 1986) 25, 27.
4. Interestingly enough, in his article, "The Condition of Ritual in Theatre," J. Ndukaku Amankulor urges performance critics to accept the various denotations of the word "ritual," among others, the notion of "routine," which obviously applies to Daisy's love ceremonial in this scene. See Interculturalism & Performance, ed. Bonnie Marranca and Gautam Dasgupta (New York: PAJ Pub. 1991) 229-31.
5. The non-performative character of Daisy's filmic depiction in the introductory sequence is most evident in the scene at the disco, in which she is cut off from the "performers" (singers; dancers) both visually and through her withdrawn behaviour.
6. Here I use the word "liminal" as Turner understands it, namely, as denoting "a threshold between secular living and sacred living." Turner, 25.
7. See, for instance, Tania Modleski, who writes that ever since Laura Mulvey's landmark essay, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" (1975), much psychoanalytic feminist film theory has focused "on Hitchcock's films in order to show how women in classic Hollywood cinema are inevitably made into passive objects of male voyeuristic and sadistic impulses; how they exist simply to fulfil the desires and express the anxieties of the men in the audience; and how, by implication, women film-goers can only have a masochistic relation to this cinema." Tania Modleski, "Hitchcock, Feminism, and the Patriarchal Unconscious," Issues in Feminist Film Criticism, ed. Patricia Erens (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1990) 59. Certain theorists, like Gaylyn Studlar ("Masochism and the Perverse Pleasure of Cinema" [1984]), and Steven Shaviro (Cinematic Body [1993]), go further and argue that masochistic pleasure is enjoyed by both female and male spectators.

8. Given the role-playing aspect of Riva's and her partner's sado-masochistic games, it could be argued that the sequences in the neighbour's apartment confer an aura of theatricality on the proceedings. But as Turner writes: "I also think the questions that lie at the foundation of theatre and theatrical performance lie at the foundation of ritual and ritual performance – questions about the relationship of actors to text, of actors to audience, or fiction to fictive reality, and so on" (Turner, 149). It is thus apparent that the two transgressive lovers are not partaking in a theatrical performance, for they do not have an audience and hardly interact with a text. Unlike Daisy who literally performs *for* Rafe, Riva and her companion – and Rafe when he joins them – play together as in a carnival, but lack the detached observer necessary for theatre to exist.

9. Of course, one could argue that stage directors such as Georgi Tovstogonov have found ways to reproduce "close-up" effects in the theatre by moving action forward on platforms. (See, for instance, Oscar G. Brockett, History of the Theatre [Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1987] 680-1). But these are hardly standard practices.

10. Léo Bonneville, "Interview: Jean Beaudin," Séquences 157 (Mar. 1992): 20.

11. Strangely enough, the only difference between this line in Dubois's original and in the film is the address. The published play says "8544 Casgrain", rather than "8574" as in the film.

12. Kristin Thompson, "The Concept of Cinematic Excess," Narrative, Apparatus, Ideology: A Film Reader, ed. Philip Rosen (New York: Columbia UP, 1986) 130.

13. This short-cut allows the filmmaker to skip ten pages of dialogue in the play – pages 76 to 86.

14. One could even argue that the choice of Roy Dupuis, a very physical and sensual actor, to play the part that the introverted Lothaire Bluteau played magnificently on stage in 1985, is another example of an efferent cinematic figure trapped in an afferent dramatic role.

15. K. George Godwin, "Border Town Vogue," Border Crossings 10.3 (July 1991): 37.

- ¹⁶. The count being based on a version edited for television, the exact position of shots might differ from the feature version.
- ¹⁷. Terry's brother, Wilf, does not appear in the film.
- ¹⁸. Note that, for some reason unknown to me, the film's title as written in the credits does not comprise a question mark.
- ¹⁹. See, for instance, "imaginary line," in Ira Konigsberg, The Complete Film Dictionary (New York: New American Library, 1987) 164.
- ²⁰. The epigraph also prefaces the play. See Garneau, page 8.
- ²¹. L. Klady, "Gapi," Variety 308 (1 Sept. 1982): 19.
- ²². Unlike the play, which takes place over a period of less than twenty-four hours, the film covers five or six days.
- ²³. The location of the story is hinted at by a shot of a licence plate reading "Friendly Manitoba" (0:03:50).
- ²⁴. Martin Girard, "Cold Comfort," Séquences 145 (Mar. 1990): 53.

PART III. THE BROADER SIGNIFICANCE OF FILM-MEDIATED DRAMA

After having conducted a close analysis of the dramatic and filmic texts of the corpus, I propose in the final part of this study to look at the broader implications of my previous conclusions. The following chapter will thus look at film-mediated drama in terms of both the general effect of the process of cinematic adaptation, as it can be deduced from the hypotheses of several film and theatre theorists, and the connection between film-mediated drama and a specific trait of the Canadian/Québécois imagination.

More precisely, Chapter X will suggest, first, that theoretical commentaries on the differences between theatre and film, while not necessarily confirming any essentialist definition of film-mediated drama, deploy such a consensual discourse that one is led to surmise that it exerts a marked influence on filmmakers concerned with the cinematization of plays. The second half of the chapter will cite a number of cultural analysts who also reach a striking consensus in their definitions of the Canadian/Québécois imagination. This itemization of often widely-known statements, I will suggest, presents such a cohesive vision of the national ethos, at least regarding a certain spatial dynamic apparently endemic to the Canadian imagination, that it is difficult not to conclude that this vision has had some influence on most cineastes partaking in the formation of the national cinema. Whether or not Canadian and Québécois filmmakers spend any time at all reflecting on the means to portray the "national identity" on screen remains

entirely conjectural, as does the question of their direct involvement with film and theatre theory. But connecting the dialectic arrangement of the plays, the film-mediation process and one of the most often acknowledged constitutive structures of the Canadian imagination, is a symmetry so literal that it appears as much more than a mere coincidence. If nothing else, it attests to a Canadian/Québécois collective unconscious which finds a cogent expression in the cinematic transposition of dramatic pieces.

As a postscript to this study, the concluding chapter will consider the fact that the numerous adaptations of plays produced since 1992 do not exhibit the unity of vision discerned in the works of the 1972-1992 corpus. I will suggest that this *might* result from the changes that Canadian society has undergone over the last few years and that now seem to be affecting our collective unconscious. These changes, I will propose, might render less relevant representations of afferent-withdrawal/eff-erent-escape as displayed in Wedding in White, Being at Home with Claude and the other texts examined. Yet, it might be too early to identify accurately the direction that film-mediated drama is taking in the 1990s. For that reason, I will limit my comments in that final chapter to informed speculation.

CHAPTER X. DISCOURSES ON THE STAGE/SCREEN DICHOTOMY
AND THE CANADIAN/QUÉBÉCOIS IMAGINATION

Theoretical Commonalities on the Stage/Screen Dichotomy

The purpose of this section is not to present an exhaustive review of all the theories comparing theatre and film; such a survey would require, in itself, several chapters, if not a full volume.¹ Rather, my aim here is to offer some reference points from which to trace the contours of the theoretical discourse on the stage/screen dichotomy, so as to demonstrate that certain notions concerning the contrasts between the two media constantly recur across time and ideologies. This recurrence leads me to suggest that, although these theoretical postulates might not necessarily define the "essence" of film-mediated drama, they surface with sufficient consistency to be assumed as belonging to the collective vocabulary of most cineastes, even those who are not particularly versed in film theory.

In two influential articles, first published in 1951 in the French magazine Esprit and reproduced in English translation in What is Cinema? I (1967), André Bazin identifies a series of differences between drama and film stemming from his conviction that the quintessence of cinema lies in its ability to record reality.² For Bazin, one of cinema's fundamental characteristics, sharply distinguishing it from the theatre, is its rejection of the *locus dramaticus*,³ which encloses the dramatic figure on stage, in favour of a limitless space where characters can move freely. It is worth quoting Bazin's argument at some length:

The stage and the decor where the action unfolds

constitute an aesthetic microcosm inserted perforce into the universe but essentially distinct from the Nature which surrounds it. It is not the same with cinema, the basic principle of which is a denial of any frontiers to action. The idea of a *locus dramaticus* is not only alien to, it is essentially a contradiction of the concept of the screen. [...] In contrast to the stage the space of the screen is centrifugal. It is because that infinity which the theater demands cannot be spatial that its area can be none other than the human soul. Enclosed in this space the actor is at the focus of a two-fold concave mirror. From the auditorium and from the decor there converge on him the dim lights of conscious human beings and of the footlights themselves [...] "The Theatre," says Baudelaire, "is a crystal chandelier." If one were called upon to offer in comparison a symbol other than this artificial crystal-like object, brilliant, intricate, and circular, which refracts the light which plays around its center and holds us prisoners of its aureole, we might say of the cinema that it is the little flashlight of the usher, moving like an uncertain comet across the night of our waking dream, the diffuse space without shape or frontiers that surrounds the screen [translator's emphasis].⁴

Dudley Andrew, in his analysis of the French critic's works, summarizes his thoughts on cinema and drama in these terms:

Bazin's lengthy reflections on these differences of theater from cinema coalesce into one of his most elaborate and beautiful analogies. The force of the theater is centripetal [afferent], with everything functioning to bring the spectator, like the moth, into its swirling light. The force of the cinema is on the contrary, centrifugal [efferent], throwing the interest out into a limitless, dark world which the camera constantly strives to illuminate.⁵

And Egil Törnqvist, in a Bazin-inspired comparative analysis of theatre and film, writes:

In the theatre, "drama proceeds from the actor, in the cinema it goes from the decor to man." [Bazin, 102] Thematically, this means that, whereas stage drama traditionally emphasises the conflict between (i) man and man, or (ii) man and God, screen drama will emphasise the conflict between (iii) man and his environment, since the environment is precisely what

the film camera can superbly and almost limitlessly describe.⁶

From the notion of a *breach* between the theatrical decor and the nature that surrounds it to the concept of the screen space as centrifugal in opposition to the centripetality of the stage, Bazin's seminal remarks on the antithetic make-up of film and drama manifestly offer a germane theoretical corollary to the recurrent configuration identified in both the plays' dialectical structure and the dual composition of the cinematic adaptations. These crucial divergences, it could be argued, elucidate the constitution of our corpus, inasmuch as they reveal that the texts examined above contain at their very core a conflictual motif that duplicates the tension inherent in the combination of anthropocentric drama and panoramic film imagery. Using a metaphor from chaos theory, one could even suggest that a *recursive symmetry*⁷ relates the basic architecture of the dramas to the transpositional process to which they are subjected. We shall see later in this chapter how this closely relates to a specific aspect of the Canadian/Québécois ethos.

However, one can hardly advance a tenable theory of film-mediated drama on the sole basis of Bazin's precepts, for they have often been called into question by film theorists of younger generations. The principal reason for Bazin's depreciation, especially over the last twenty years, is his staunch insistence on the realist mandate of cinema, best realized via *mise-en-scène*, and his disparagement of formalist practices such as Eisensteinian montage, which he once labelled the "anti-

cinematic process *par excellence*." ⁸ Most recent comments on Bazin have tended to dismiss his work altogether, since it is at complete odds with the postmodernist view that the film image is *always already* a construct. For instance, Steven Shaviro, in his 1993 book, The Cinematic Body, argues "against Bazin, that a style based on long takes and depth of field is no less artificial and constructed than one based on montage." ⁹

I chose Shaviro's statement here, among myriad other similar citations, because his decidedly 1990s anti-realist and ante-semiotic ¹⁰ approach to cinema could not be more remote from Bazin's 1950s humanist realism. But pertinently enough for our purpose, the distinctions that Shaviro draws between film and theatre, in the introductory chapter to The Cinematic Body, are surprisingly analogous, albeit in a drastically dissimilar idiom, to those proposed by the famed French critic forty years earlier. For Shaviro, as for Bazin, cinema differs from theatre principally in its ability to dissolve the presence of the actor, which stands at the centre of the centripetal space of the stage (the "two-fold concave mirror"), into the boundlessness of virtual filmic space. Talking about the intrinsically distanced quality of the cinematic space, Shaviro explains,

[...] Brechtian techniques have an entirely different impact when they are transferred from stage to screen. The fact is that distancing and alienation-effects serve not to dispel but only to intensify the captivating power of cinematic spectacle. Precisely because film is already predicated on what [Walter] Benjamin (1969) calls the destruction of the aura, because it is already an "alienated" art, its capacity to affect the spectator is not perturbed by any additional measure of alienation [...] [William] Flesch (1987), following Benjamin, therefore speaks of

"the *proximity without presence* of the virtual space of film" in opposition to the power of the aura as implied by "charismatic, theatrical presence" (p.287). In film's virtual space, visual pleasure and fascination are emphatically *not* dependent upon any illusion of naturalness or presence. And consequently, this pleasure and fascination cannot be reduced by traditional modes of critical reflection. Alienation-effects are already in secret accord with the basic antitheatricality of cinematic presentation [Shaviro's emphasis].¹¹

The antitheatricality of the cinematic presentation, which ensues from the absence of the charismatic human body in the limited space of the theatre and the overwhelming presence of its distancing image, thus destroys the theatrical aura exactly like Bazin's realistic film space evacuates the "human soul" from the cinematic decor and denies "any frontiers to action." Although Shaviro never talks of film's virtual space in terms of centrifugality, his description of the cinematic image's explosive potential corroborates Bazin's impression. "The cinematic image," Shaviro adds in the same section,

in its violent more-than-presence, is at the same time immediately an absence: *a distance too great to allow for any sort of possession*. In its disruptive play of immediacy and distance, film is not just an art without an aura; it is an art that enacts, again and again, what [Georges] Bataille calls the sacrifice of the sacred (auratic) object, or what Benjamin calls the disintegration of the aura in the experience of shock [emphasis added].¹²

Constantly projecting the spectator at an unbridgeable distance from the space that it presences through the imaginary mode, cinema annihilates any possibility for the stable space intrinsic in theatrical performance and, in the process, brutally shatters the charismatic bond that the stage actor

establishes with the audience. Not surprisingly, Shaviro later designates the destructive shock value of cinema in terms of the abject, which we have already associated with the efferent (centrifugal) force battling against its inward rival in the plays and the film versions. "What inspires the cinematic spectator," says Shaviro, "is a passion for that very loss of control, that abjection, fragmentation, and subversion of self-identity that psychoanalytic theory so dubiously classifies under the rubrics of lack and castration."¹³ Cinema, unlike theatre which hinges on mutual interaction between performer and spectator, is "a technology for intensifying and renewing experiences of passivity and abjection [emphasis added]."¹⁴ Film is abject, eruptive, efferent.¹⁵

As we see, although Bazin and Shaviro stand at the opposite poles of the theoretical spectrum, both discriminate between drama and film in comparable fashion, similarly stressing the latter's capacity to destroy boundaries and negate frontiers, and the former's concentration on the concave mirror of the auratic stage. Between these extremes, a number of theorists, who contrast the two art forms from a variety of angles, reiterate analogous conclusions, defining the theatrical experience as afferently stable, in opposition to the efferent excess of boundless cinema.

Such is the case for Walter Benjamin, one of Bazin's rare contemporaries whose observations on the media are still deemed relevant enough in the 1990s to serve as a basis for Shaviro's argument. Benjamin conceives of theatre and film as essentially

distinct at the level of their involvement with technology, primarily, mechanical reproduction. "Any thorough study," he contends, "proves that there is indeed no greater contrast than that of the stage play to a work of art that is completely subject to or, like film, founded in, mechanical reproduction."¹⁶ As an art fully constituted in the here-and-now of live performance, theatre is irrevocably anchored in a specific and unique historical context. Film, on the contrary, as an infinitely reproducible technological commodity obliterates this notion of stable historical positioning. Benjamin explains:

[...] the technique of reproduction detaches the reproduced object from the domain of tradition. By making many reproductions it substitutes a plurality of copies for a unique existence. And in permitting the reproduction to meet the beholder or listener in his own particular situation, it reactivates the object reproduced. These two processes lead to a tremendous shattering of tradition which is the obverse of the contemporary crisis and renewal of mankind. Both processes are intimately connected with the contemporary mass movements. Their most powerful agent is the film. Its social significance, particularly in its most positive form, is inconceivable without its destructive, cathartic aspect, that is, the liquidation of the traditional value of the cultural heritage.¹⁷

Consequently, cinema diverges most drastically from the theatre in its destructive impact on the solidly defined limits — cultural, historical and physical — inherent to the unique stage performance.¹⁸ Several decades after Benjamin, Timothy Corrigan makes a congruous point in his book, A Cinema Without Walls: Movies and Culture After Vietnam (1991):

The four walls of theatrical viewing, which might have once reflected the way movies were able to "capture"

an audience within carefully constructed cultural parameters, are thus no longer, it seems to me, an appropriate metaphor with which to describe who watches movies, how they watch them, and how movies acknowledge this new audience. The growing budgets of movies have required audiences too large to be truly circumscribed; those audiences have increasingly dispersed themselves in terms of their social and cultural neighborhoods.¹⁹

Whether it lies in the technology of reproduction that has manufactured all films since 1895, as Benjamin suggests, or in the cultural and epistemological shifts that Corrigan claims were precipitated by the Vietnam war, the "essence" of contemporary cinema results in the shattering of theatrical enclosure.

Although working in a more politically-neutral mode than Benjamin and Corrigan, a number of other film and/or theatre critics have also argued that drama and cinema diverge in terms of their construction of space as either confining or expansive. As attested by Kenneth MacKinnon's useful survey of early comparative theories of the stage and the screen, in Greek Tragedy into Film (1986), this distinction was drawn even prior to Bazin's work. MacKinnon reminds us that, "for Erwin Panofsky, writing in 1934, the space of the theatre is essentially static, while that of the cinema is essentially dynamic."²⁰ Comparing the effects of film and theatre *mise-en-scène* on the spatial deployment of narrative episodes, the realist critic Siegfried Kracauer, says MacKinnon, similarly argued that "the theatrical story can, in this sense, be classified as 'closed', the cinematic as 'open'."²¹ Even Susan Sontag once claimed:

If an irreducible distinction between theatre and cinema does exist, it may be this. Theatre is confined

to a logical or *continuous* use of space. Cinema (through editing, that is through change of shot — which is the basic unit of film construction) has access to an alogical or *discontinuous* use of space.²²

While using more concrete terms, Martin Esslin's discrimination between theatre and film, in The Field of Drama (1987), closely parallel Sontag's hypothesis:

[A] decisive difference between live and cinematic drama lies in the fundamental distinction between the theatrical and the cinematic space. Whereas the stage (whether of the "peep-show" type, an open arena or "in the round") confronts the spectator throughout the performance and is its basic "given", the cinema or television screens are doors through which the spectator freely enters a space which is infinitely variable and constantly changing [...] Because the camera acts as the spectator's eye, the spectator enters any space into which the camera takes him: he speeds along in a car, runs in and out houses, approaches and recedes from objects. This increases the spectator's "mobility in space".²³

Almost ten years before Esslin formulated his theory, Roger Manvell had already come to a similar conclusion in his famous treatise Theater and Film (1979):

The great difference between stage and screen is that the film is always free to use natural or man-made locations, adapting real streets, landscapes, seas, and mountains for its environmental territory; the screenplay unlike the stage play, by its photographic nature *is liberated from the confines of the theater's acting area* [emphasis added].²⁴

Following a similar line of argument, the comparative literary theorist Käte Hamburger establishes a connection, in her book The Logic of Literature (1973), between film and the novel in terms of the broad spaces that they can depict as opposed to the narrowly-confined area that drama delineates.

Quite paradoxically, Hamburger writes,

the two dimensional film conveys a more natural spatial experience than the three-dimensional stage. Indeed, to express this phenomenon quite pithily, the two dimensional, i.e., the film, produces a three-dimensional spatial experience, whereas the three-dimensional stage produces a two-dimensional one [...] not everything which we see in a film can also be seen on a theatrical stage. We can, however, read it in a novel. When, for example, the sun on the distant horizon slowly sinks into the sea, when a plane lifts off from the ground and disappears into the sky, when couples dance through spacious ballrooms, snowflakes whirl and settle on trees and fences – in such instances we do see something, but we see something which is narrated. The animated image, or motion picture, has a narrative function; it replaces the word at work in the epic narrative function.²⁵

And in the straightforward phrasing of Neil Sinyard: "in some ways, the two forms are antithetical: theatre is artificial lighting and illusion, and cinema is open-air and realism; theatre is verbal, cinema visual; *theatre is stasis, cinema is movement* [emphasis added]." ²⁶

More convoluted, but equally pertinent to this study, are David Lodge's comments on *metaphorical* theatre and *metonymical* cinema. Using Roman Jakobson's "notion that metonymy and metaphor may be the characterizing structures of two poetic types," Lodge suggests that drama is metaphorical for it functions in complete separation from the reality that it symbolizes.²⁷ "Any play, however naturalistic in style," says Lodge,

is essentially metaphorical in that it is recognized as a *performance*: i.e. our pleasure in the play depends on our continuous and conscious awareness that we are spectators not of reality but of a conventionalized model of reality, constructed before us by actors who speak words not their own but provided by

an invisible dramatist. The curtain call at which the actor who died in the last act takes his smiling bow is the conventional sign of this separation between the actors and their roles, between life and art [Lodge's emphasis].²⁸

Conversely, cinema is metonymic, for "the gap between performance and reality is not exposed."²⁹ Cinematic technology allows continuity between the spectator's sense of real space and the territory of the filmic spectacle:

The camera and the microphone are voyeuristic instruments: they spy on, eavesdrop on experience and they can in effect follow the characters anywhere — out into wilderness or into bed — without betraying their presence, so that nothing is easier for the film-maker than to create the illusion of reality [...] This verisimilitude can be explained as a function of the metonymic character of the film medium. We move through time and space lineally and our sensory experience is a succession of contiguities.³⁰

The fundamental distinction between metaphorical drama, closed off from the reality that it analogizes, and metonymical film, in direct imitative contact with the real, results in drama seeming "ill-at-ease in the film medium, and most obviously so when it deserts the economical single setting for which it was originally designed, to take advantage of the freedom of location afforded by film. *The two media seem to pull against each other* [emphasis added]."³¹ The oppositional pull acknowledged explicitly by Lodge and implied in all the other theories considered above — including André Gaudreault's narratological concepts covered in Chapter VIII — echoes the afferent-withdrawal/efferent-escape tension discussed previously.

As indicated at the top of this chapter, such comments on

theatre and film do not constitute a definition of the essence of film-mediated drama; critics like Charles Eidsvik might always argue against all these differential theories that "one must, finally, question whether there are any irreducible differences between these two performing arts."³² However, the notable recurrence of such observations throughout the discursive field of theatre and film theories suggests a certain concordance of opinion regarding the notion that the cinematization of a theatre piece is liable to exert a centrifugal strain on the original centripetal drama. I am not implying, here, that the filmmakers who have adapted Canadian and Québécois plays between 1972 and 1992 have consciously taken into account those various theoretical statements before choosing to film a given dramatic text. What I wish to emphasize, however, is that one can hardly dismiss as mere coincidence the fact that eleven of the twelve works examined in this study display dramatic and cinematic structures that correspond *precisely* to the oppositional pull apparently inherent in the combination of the two media. I would argue that these theoretical commonalities on the stage/screen dichotomy, through their sheer general acceptance in the critical discourse, inform directly or indirectly the filmmakers' selection of material for adaptation. One only needs to recall Richard Martin's comments on the *necessity* to open up Marcel Dubé's Les Beaux Dimanches — "*Il fallait d'autre part sortir du salon, sortir de la maison [emphasis added]*"³³ — to realize that filmmakers take for granted certain differences between theatre and film that might not be essential but that

are certainly widely acknowledged by critics.

Inferring from this postulate, one could legitimately propose that the afferent-withdrawal/efferent-escape dichotomy, since it conforms to seemingly essential theoretical conceptions of theatre and film, would be likely to recur not only in Canadian and Québécois film-mediated drama, but also in American, Brazilian or Japanese³⁴ film adaptations of plays. This might very well be true; another treatise will have to confirm or discredit this supposition. Nonetheless, I would argue that the case of francophone and anglophone Canadian film-mediated drama remains rather unique, for not only do the plays incorporate within their dramatic structure the tension inherent in the process of cinematic adaptation, but this two-tiered correlation is supplemented by a third level of recursive symmetry comprising a particular aspect of the Canadian/Québécois imagination as it is described by several observers of the cultural scene.

Hypotheses on the Canadian/Québécois Imagination.

The prevalence in the Canadian imagination of a tension akin to the implicational dialectic that I have labelled afferent-withdrawal/efferent-escape, was seminally formulated by Northrop Frye in his often-quoted "Conclusion to a Literary History of Canada" (1965), in which he broached his famous metaphor of the "garrison mentality" to designate an attitude common to a great number of literary works in Canada, an attitude "of deep terror in regard to nature."³⁵ This garrison

mentality, Frye explains, developed in Canada as a result of the country's constitution as a compound of

Small and isolated communities surrounded with a physical or psychological "frontier," separated from one another and from their American and British cultural sources: communities that provide all that their members have in the way of distinctively human values, and that are compelled to feel a great respect for the law and order that holds them together, yet confronted with a huge, unthinking, menacing and formidable physical setting [...].³⁶

However, while the garrison offers protection against the terror elicited by the environment, it also provokes an internal terror as a result of the strictly unquestionable rules that it imposes on its members: "In a perilous enterprise one does not discuss causes or motives: one is either a fighter or a deserter." "The real terror," Frye thus suggests, "comes when the individual feels himself becoming an individual, *pulling away from the group*, losing the sense of driving power that the group gives him, aware of a conflict within himself far subtler than the struggle of morality against evil [emphasis added]."³⁷ Consequently, the garrison mentality typical of the Canadian imagination comprises two movements: first, the inward recoil before the menacing surrounding; and second, the deserter's outward pull in resistance against the centripetal force of the group — afferent-withdrawal/efferent-escape. However, even the pull away from the community does not annihilate the garrison mentality, for departure from one garrison often leads to the formation of another. Frye continues:

It is much easier to multiply garrisons, and when that

happens, something anti-cultural comes into Canadian life, a dominating herd-mind in which nothing original can grow. The intensity of the sectarian divisiveness in Canadian towns, both religious and political, is an example [...]³⁸

The ramparts of the garrison might sway, but never break down altogether.

Twenty-five years after Frye, Dominique Clift in her 1989 book The Secret Kingdom: Interpretations of the Canadian Character substitutes for the term garrison mentality "neo-tribalism" to describe the afferent/efferent tension that characterizes the Canadian imagination. "The country," according to Clift, "is still composed of a number of competing groups closed in on themselves and unwilling to accept the risks of communication and co-operation beyond a certain point."³⁹ Extrapolating from the works of Mordecai Richler, for whom "the country's obsession with ethnicity appears to be [a] leading preoccupation,"⁴⁰ Clift argues:

One of the negative effects of this neo-tribalism resides in the tendency of groups to impose their own interests and perceptions on individuals. Groups will solicitously call strays back to the straight and narrow path of solidarity; deviancy and recalcitrance will be branded as desertion or betrayal. Conformity, as a reflex of the group mind, turns out to be as stifling as the hostility and repression encountered outside. Claustrophobia balances agoraphobia [...] The problem is how to escape from the smothering embrace of the tribe. This is one of the key aspects of the Canadian problem of identity.⁴¹

"This latter-day tribalism," Clift concludes her section on Richler, "makes the individual a prisoner of the group's value system [...] In other words, the ethnic pyramid inhibits freedom

to be one's self, to determine one's future, and to develop autonomously."⁴² Therefore, like the characters depicted in the plays and films analyzed above, Clift's typical Canadian is torn between staying with the "tribe" or deserting it. But, again as in the works of the corpus, the Canadian character ultimately falls victim to the afferent force of the group, and *remains trapped inside*. Therefore, like Frye's garrison mentality, Clift's neo-tribalism represents an afferent force that triggers an efferent reaction of escape that is doomed to failure.

In her 1972 thematic exploration of Canadian literature, Survival, Margaret Atwood submitted a diagnosis of the Canadian/Québécois imagination akin to Clift's, but focusing on the family, rather than on the ethnic group, as the locus of imprisonment. Atwood notices that

Families in Canadian fiction huddle together like sheep in a storm or chickens in a coop: miserable and crowded, *but unwilling to leave because the alternative is seen as cold empty space*. I'd say that this pattern is as true, if not truer, in the literature of French Canada as it is in that of English Canada, though it is more likely there to be symbolized by blocked incestuous love [emphasis added].⁴³

Later in her book, Atwood further asserts that "The plight of English Canadian characters trapped by their family ties seems mild compared with that of the French Canadian ones: in Québec, it seems, you can't leave home at all, and if you do you'll want to go back, no matter how miserable home was when you actually lived there."⁴⁴ Atwood's point clearly echoes that of Monique Lafortune quoted in Chapter I, concerning the seclusive nature of French Canadian villages and cities, and the inevitable

return home of those who try to flee Québec.⁴⁵

Although it might come as a surprise given the widespread belief that Québec and English Canada have little in common in terms of literary and artistic practices, several cultural observers actually concur with Atwood and Lafortune that the French Canadian imagination is characterized as much by the afferent-withdrawal/efferent-escape dialectic as its anglophone counterpart. For instance, Philip Stratford, in his book All the Polarities (1986), also perceives in Québec literature a constant depiction of space as closed and ultimately inescapable: "one of the most salient features of Québec fiction is that it seems to belong to a literature of encirclement."⁴⁶ Stratford clarifies his point in these terms:

Despite its geographical size, as an enclosed area lacking autonomy and variety [Québec] becomes a prison. Escape within Québec is no escape. This is why the sense of space in the Québec novel is so restrictive: a quarter, a village, thirty acres, a room, a cell, a cement box, a coffin [...] In the Québec novel there is no individual salvation. One struggles to achieve personal freedom, but it cannot be won to the exclusion of another liberation, that of the group to which one is tied. This inescapable sense of solidarity creates a double confinement, one imposed from without, the other from within.⁴⁷

Undoubtedly, Stratford's views on Québec parallel Clift's neo-tribalist reading of English Canadian culture. Micheline Cambron, as well, in Une société, un récit (1989), describes French Canada as a monolithic clan closed in on itself. "Le sujet réfléchissant y est toujours un «nous» englobant et monolithique, qui est défini circulairement par l'espace clos qui le conscrit," suggests Cambron.

L'espace est clos, il se ramène à des lieux de proximité et d'appartenance, et aucun mouvement ne semble nécessaire à sa construction conceptuelle. La logique des actions, enfin, étant contrainte par un temps et un espace sans perspective et enfermés dans l'organisation spéculaire d'un «nous» immobile, exclut toute transformation [emphasis added].⁴⁸

Interestingly, Simon Harel argues, in Le Voleur de parcours (1989), that the recent influx of immigrants in Québec, as well as their increased presence on the literary scene,⁴⁹ has actually intensified in French Canadians (at least, as they are portrayed in certain works) the need to affirm the "«nous» englobant et monolithique" described by Cambron. Following Hungarian psychoanalyst Imre Hermann,⁵⁰ Harel labels this behaviour "pulsion d'agrippement,"⁵¹ that is, an adamant clinging to one's roots and community in reaction against a foreigner who is "simultanément séduisant et angoissant."⁵² Harel sees Yves Beauchemin's bestseller Le Matou (1981) as most representative of this "pulsion d'agrippement" in its depiction "du motif de la filiation, des alliances ethniques [...] qui permettront de vaincre l'étranger."⁵³ For Harel, Beauchemin's 1980s hit novel harks back to the nineteenth century French Canadian tradition of the *roman du terroir*, as it nostalgically focuses on a tightly-knit, utopian community defending itself against invasions from the outside.⁵⁴ "Il y a une hantise du centre dans Le Matou," says Harel:

une volonté manifeste d'ancrer le récit dans un contexte qui puisse faire échec à la menace que représente l'altérité. Ce récit de quartier est associé à un discours de la nostalgie. Revendication d'une identité stable dont il s'agit d'expurger les

éléments compromettants: l'étranger est ce repoussoir commune, un bouc émissaire. Désir narcissique puisque la formation de l'identité fait appel à une endogamie, tissée d'alliances (le roman de Beauchemin est en effet le récit d'une complicité familiale et communautaire: d'Aurélien Picquot à Monsieur Émile...), qui permet d'associer la revendication linguistique (en l'occurrence le français) et la lutte contre l'étranger.⁵⁵

As Harel demonstrates, the presence of "l'étranger" in several recent literary works from Québec reasserts affinities among "old-stock" Québécois, as the foreigner's very difference from the norm reinforces the sense of homogeneity and unity in the dominant group.⁵⁶

Thus, whether cultural critics talk of "la pulsion d'agrippement," of "un «nous» englobant et monolithique", of neo-tribalism or of the garrison mentality, the same struggle is denoted, namely, the afferent-withdrawal/efferent-escape dialectic observed in the texts of the corpus. Gaile McGregor has coined the term "Wacousta syndrome" to abstract this particular trait of Canadian/Québécois imagination. Surveying an impressive variety of artistic and literary works from anglophone and francophone Canada, as well as several texts from the United States to provide points of comparison, McGregor's treatise, The Wacousta Syndrome (1985), offers perhaps the most exhaustive analysis of the Canadian/Québécois "centripetal impulse."⁵⁷ This impulse, McGregor argues, finds its prototypical expression in Major John Richardson's nineteenth century life-in-the-garrison novel, Wacousta (1832) — hence the syndrome's nomenclature — and recurs throughout the corpus of Canadian/Québécois cultural productions. Without reproducing

McGregor's argument in its entirety, it will prove useful to look at her line of reasoning in some detail to grasp all of its intricate implications.

The Canadian character, McGregor suggests, has long been influenced by an ambiguous relationship with the environment, an equivocal "opposition between centre and ground, between 'self' and 'not-self'."⁵⁸ This ambiguity ensues, at least in part, from a contradiction between *conceptions* of the environment, and actual *perceptions* of the environment, a contradiction that dates back to the early days of colonization in Canada. Influenced first by romantic notions of nature imported from Europe, and later by the American definition of the Frontier as a "great crucible," to use Frederick Jackson Turner's term, where the colonist could go "to re-capture that Renaissance condition where each man was potentially able to realize his broadest ambitions,"⁵⁹ the early Canadians "embraced enthusiastically a romantic cult of primitivistic wilderness-worship."⁶⁰ This cult, however, clashes drastically with actual perceptions of the Canadian environment. In art, this gap between a romantic vision and a traumatic first-hand experience of nature is clearly conveyed in the artistic production of the Group of Seven. As McGregor explains,

Ardently pro-nature in their articulated stance, these artists yet produced collectively a version of the Canadian landscape which, at least in the view of many of their contemporaries, was at best harsh and somewhat disturbing, and at worst evoked the quality of nightmare.⁶¹

Looking at their paintings, McGregor adds, "it would seem that

the Group, no less than their colonial predecessors, whatever they might say about the effects of nature actually saw something there that was far from wholesome [McGregor's emphasis]."⁶²

In the works of the Group of Seven, as well as in other expressionistic paintings of the 1920s and 1930s such as those of Emily Carr, McGregor finds ample evidence "of the tension between the Canadian's desire for and fear of reconciliation with nature."⁶³ A similar ambivalence emerges from the early literary tradition of Québec, the *romans du terroir*, which "reveal a great deal of antipathy toward the landscape even as they eulogize the pastoral tradition."⁶⁴ McGregor argues that these early examples of the Canadian/Québécois paradoxical attitude vis-à-vis the environment can still be found, albeit in different forms, in more recent cultural products. For instance, in Jacques Godbout's 1965 novel, Le couteau sur la table,

the incessant circling of the narrative, compulsively wrenched back as it is to the claustrophobic discomforts of a storm-bound present, not only echoes the protagonist's sense of his cultural situation as hopelessly stultifying but, in the felt obtrusiveness of the blizzard outside his room, also makes it seem as though nature itself [...] must inevitably overwhelm and extinguish the puny efforts of a merely human will [...].⁶⁵

In Godbout's novel, as in other modern Canadian/Québécois texts, the claustrophobic pressure exerted by a narrow interior, which provokes a desire to get out into the open, is counterbalanced by the formidable forces of nature.

Not surprisingly, McGregor identifies the house as one of the central metaphors of Canadian literature and art, a symbol

that "can be seen as connoting either protection or imprisonment."⁶⁶ The Canadian conception of habitation, she explains, comprises images of "the good house and the bad house, cave and cage, [which are] inclined — like the landscape itself — to resist simple typing."⁶⁷ For instance, as McGregor informs us, the presence of windows and doors in Christiane Pflug's paintings of houses may "represent a reaching out, a creative extension, or a fear of the exterior." Clearly, this conflict between a desire to reach out and a fear of the external world recalls the behaviour of several characters encountered in the corpus of film-mediated drama, as it also mirrors the tension noted above between the theatrical locus dramaticus and cinematic centrifugality. But, McGregor adds, "even when the demonic aspect of the house is evoked, the wish to escape tends to be undercut by a resistant fear of what is 'out there'."⁶⁸ Therefore, the house in Canadian culture is frequently conceived as a horrific prison that still remains a lesser evil in comparison with the environment that surrounds it. Again, McGregor's observations bring to mind my previous conclusions concerning both the inability of the characters of the corpus to escape entrapment, and the relative failure of the film medium to break free from the theatrical origins of the works adapted in spite of the addition of efferent imagery in the process of transposition.

McGregor, of course, recognizes that over the years, as the terrifying Canadian environment has been tamed by technological progress, nature has become far less of an actual threat in the

everyday life of the average Canadian than it was up to the early twentieth century. The Canadian character, however, continues to be affected by the *wilderness experience*, for "the factor that has been of primary importance in the evolution of our contemporary world view," McGregor explains,

is not the *object* of our apprehension – the landscape – but the *mode* of that relation, considered as a prototype for our relation not merely with nature but with the world at large. [...] Although the retreat from nature – the "Wacousta syndrome" – provides a kind of prototype for responses on other levels, the recoil we are talking about here – and this is the point that must be stressed – operates quite independently of any specific stimulus. [...] E]ven generations removed from the real wilderness the *form*, if no longer always the *content*, of Canadian consciousness is still derived explicitly from the peculiar relation between the northerner and his environment. [...] B]y the mid-twentieth century the recoil, the introspective impulse that characterizes the type [sic] Canadian response to the environment, is no longer necessarily linked to a hostile landscape, but represents a generalized stance vis-à-vis the entire external world [McGregor's emphasis].⁶⁹

The awesome environment that fascinates and petrifies Canadians is thus not only the natural landscape, but all that is "other." As McGregor wrote in a 1992 supplementary comment on The Wacousta syndrome, "the centripetal impulse signalled by the original recoil becomes, at least metaphorically, a prototype for responses not just to nature but to 'otherness' in general."⁷⁰ Incidentally, this opposition between the Canadian and a threatening Other is the cornerstone of Anthony Wilden's treatise on the Imaginary formation of the national identity, The Imaginary Canadian (1978). For Wilden, the Other from which Canadians recoil and against which they define themselves is

primarily the dominant American culture — arguably a menace to Canadian integrity much more serious than nature ever was.⁷¹

Patricia Smart, in her study Écrire dans la maison du père: L'émergence du féminin dans la tradition littéraire du Québec (1988), also puts great emphasis on the symbol of the Other in Québec literature. Looking at francophone novels from the angle of a collectively unresolved Oedipus complex, Smart concurs with the cultural observers quoted above that the French Canadian ethos, as displayed in texts by Québécois men, is characterized by a sense of imprisonment inside the "Maison du père" resulting from a fear of the Other, namely, Woman. Smart explains that there exists,

[...] un rapport différent au pays et à la «question nationale» chez les écrivains et les écrivaines. Car c'est à la voix du pays bafoué, à n'en pas douter, que les hommes croient obéir quand ils s'accrochent à un rêve de la pérennité vieux comme l'identité masculine, érigé comme une *Maison-forteresse* contre tout ce qui est perçu comme «autre», y compris et surtout la femme [emphasis added].⁷²

Impotent before the Father and incapable of confronting the feminine Other, the Québécois man, or at least his construction through literary metaphors, appears as a frustrated tragic figure unable to break free from the house of the father. "Dans une maison où le Père est tout-puissant," says Smart, "la position du fils-Oedipe est certes frustrante, mais du moins y a-t-il une place pour lui dans la Maison — un coin où il peut s'asseoir pendant qu'il continue de tourner le fer dans ses plaies."⁷³ McGregor makes a similar point when she writes, "When the father inside is as much of a threat — as fully tainted

with violence and irrationality — as the demonic masculine element outside, the garrison is indeed vulnerable."⁷⁴

Interestingly enough, Mary Jane Green, in her thesis on Québec literature, "Writing in a Motherland" (1984), sees the father-son conflict as less significant in the French Canadian novel than the mother-daughter relationship, which is characterized by a profound attachment. What must be stressed, here, is that whether one talks of an unresolved Oedipus complex, like Smart, or of a strong mother-daughter connection, like Green, the result remains the same, that is, the "child" cannot break free from the parental figure. As Green writes: the daughter "though ... initially overcome by hostility ... can never fully abandon her very strong feelings of attachment and continuity with the mother." Québec literature thus shows a much greater proclivity for the feminine theme "of rejection and reconciliation" than for the masculine theme of the sharp break prevalent in American literature.⁷⁵ This distinction between the feminine reconciliation and the masculine break, it should be added, parallels a comparison often made by cultural theorists between the counterrevolutionary (feminine) tradition of Canada and the revolutionary (masculine) history of the U.S.⁷⁶ Canadians and Québécois might wish to break all ties, but they never do.⁷⁷

Continuing her exploration of the Canadian fear of the Other, McGregor further theorizes that this "recoil from otherness [...which] tends to exert a centripetal influence on the imagination,"⁷⁸ short-circuits any possibility to effect the Kierkegaardian leap of faith that allows transcendence. She

posits, to distinguish the Canadian ethos from classical existentialism, that "the `leap' outward from the self here-and-now — even if this is equated with `upward to God' or `forward beyond history' — is not, therefore, even in abstract terms easily reconcilable with the dynamics of the Canadian vision."⁷⁹ As McGregor adds, later in her argument, Canadian novels seem to say: "*There is no way to get outside the prison of the self, ever* [McGregor's emphasis]."⁸⁰

This inability to transcend the prison of the self takes a variety of forms like the failure to escape the milieu that defines one's identity. Using, like Dominique Clift, the novels of Mordecai Richler as representative of the "Jewish metaphor," McGregor points out that Richler's character Joshua Shapiro,

[is] a man who is apparently so strongly, albeit unconsciously, identified with the underdog image characteristic of the ghetto mentality that after he has to all intents and purposes `escaped' from his entrapment by virtue of professional success, marriage to an aristocratic gentile, and cosmopolitan lifestyle, he ends up (in Joshua Then and Now [1980]) precipitating his own "re-ghetto-ization" by a disastrous self-identification (in jest!) with an even more downtrodden and despised minority, the homosexuals — we see quite clearly the kind of "psychological garrison" that [Michael] Greenstein, following Frye, has cited: that is, the self-projected garrison which, by definition, cannot be transcended.⁸¹

Another form by which writers represent the impossibility of transcending the self is the futility of political action, a theme common to both English Canadian and Québécois novels, like those of Roch Carrier that McGregor offers as cases in point. "However much one would *like* to act [McGregor's emphasis]," explains McGregor,

the only way to combat such a diffuse `enemy' [i.e. the forces that have enslaved Québec] is not to politicize but simply to withdraw. Carrier's protagonists, therefore, are just as isolated, as paranoid and impotent, as the alienated individuals who wander their way through English fiction.⁸²

McGregor further contends that the impossibility of escaping marginalization and the futility of politization as a mode of transcendence find echo in Canadian literary representations of love and sex, which never allow protagonists to go beyond their personal limits. In both francophone and anglophone Canadian novels, "far from being a haven, love — with its empty yet enticing promises — can only mock hope with its impotence. No escape route this, but far crueller trap than unloved and *unillusioned* loneliness [McGregor's emphasis]."⁸³ McGregor notes, moreover, that certain texts merge all these false roads to escape so as to magnify the Canadian character's incapacity to achieve transcendence.

Indeed, the frequent explicit conflation in Québécois fiction of revolutionary activity with sex, and both with death (a strategy used not only by [Hubert] Aquin but also by [Jacques] Godbout, [Claude] Jasmin, and others), besides further denigrating the possibility of love, casts such an air of fatality and irrationality over the whole area of French-Canadian politics as to place it definitely beyond the reach of human comprehension.⁸⁴

The only possible escape from the imprisonment of the self is madness, or more precisely foolish wisdom. McGregor argues that the figure of the "fool-saint" frequently recurs in Canadian literature to signal a type of withdrawal from the world that can actually be relatively painless. As she claims,

"the fool-saint, passive, peaceful, *accepting*, thus seems [...] to hold the secret for escaping from the terrors of the existential world [McGregor's emphasis]." "What his saintliness does do," McGregor continues, "is to protect him from awareness of his miserable state. His innocence, a kind of spiritual blindness that parallels his physical disability, is simply a kind of protective armour [McGregor's emphasis]." ⁸⁵ Pierre Gobin, in his analysis of Québécois theatre, Le fou et ses doubles (1978), also perceives the recurrence of the fool-saint figure throughout the canon as a response to entrapment. Many characters in French-Canadian drama, like Claude from Michel Tremblay's En pièces détachées (1969), find

dans le refuge asilaire ou dans les fantasmes privés, dans le rejet de la norme ou dans la négation de la norme, une manière de vivre l'utopie ici et maintenant, de reprendre l'altérité dans le soi. La folie subie ou assumée apparaît dès lors comme une façon d'être en «vacance» par rapport aux contingences. C'est peut-être le refus de renoncer à l'idée que le paradis perdu peut être retrouvé. Cette «vacance», folie, utopie, ou reconnaissance géniale d'une hétérogénéité radicale par rapport au contingent qui pourtant demeure perçu, c'est sans doute la meilleure chance du théâtre [Gobin's emphasis]. ⁸⁶

The psychological madness, which allows escape from the self, is sometimes paralleled, McGregor points out, by a physical manifestation of the body evading its own limits, that is, "deformities of the flesh, [which] can be used as a physical correlative for the existential chasm between 'self' and 'other', the absolute discontinuity between inside and outside." ⁸⁷ But when the prison of the self is transcended, when the ultimate boundary of the "centripetalized" body is crossed, what

results is dreadful and fascinating horror. McGregor deals with this issue in her 1992 supplement to The Wacousta Syndrome, which examines the films of David Cronenberg. Seeing Cronenberg as a typically Canadian filmmaker, in spite of his ostensible disregard for conventional Canadian content, McGregor writes "that for Cronenberg the most horrifying possibility imaginable is the breaking down of the barriers between Self [...] and Other."⁸⁸ This constant focus on the fear that the body — the fragile envelope between the self and the environment — might disintegrate is the aspect of Cronenberg's films that renders them uniquely Canadian.

The "real" horror, [Cronenberg] once told an interviewer, is "looking into the mirror and realizing that one's own treacherous flesh [is] rotting on the bones, that death [is] already at work." As I have demonstrated [Wacousta Syndrome 112-24], the same feeling undercolours a good many Canadian novels. And why? Not because Canadians are any more scared of death than other people, but because they are obsessed with exploring the dividing line.⁸⁹

This typically Canadian preoccupation with horror ensuing from the decomposition of the body-boundary evokes the observations made in the previous chapters on the role of the abject in the plays and films of the corpus. As will be recalled, the abject or the horror of the deformed or disintegrating body has been specifically related to those characters who try to transcend the limits of their narrow existence, like Marcel Dubé's Hélène, whose desire to escape is intimately tied to her fixation on death and her aging body. There thus emerges a crucial connection between the characters' psychology, their

relation to space and the cultural framework in which they function. Indeed, the dominant preoccupations and desires of the efferent characters studied above manifest themselves in terms of a fascination with various forms of the abject or horror, as is the case not only with H el ene but also with Carol Bolt's Rafe, and Louis Sa ia and Louise Roy's Coco, to name just a few. In turn, these particular behavioral traits are theatricalized by way of the characters' intended (but never constructively realized) movement towards the spaces outside the limits of the stage, a point made with most emphasis on the abject through the image of Stephen's bruised body chained to the stage floor in Cold Comfort. Finally, as we now discover, these psychological and spacial correlatives correspond to a specific facet of Canadian/Qu eb ecois culture, namely, an endemic ambivalence towards the environment, a deep-rooted ambiguity vis- a-vis the dividing line between self and other that renders Canadians particularly concerned with the abject. Not surprisingly, the aesthetic expression of the plays and, even more so, the films of the corpus acknowledge abjection as part of the characters' make-up. The blood gushing out of Claude's throat in Beaudin's Being at Home with Claude is only the most graphic example of this aesthetic tendency.

In her Cronenberg article, McGregor states that the most "horrible" vision in Videodrome (1982) is the "blurring of the distinction between masculine and feminine."⁹⁰ Yet this abject sexual merger, she argues in The Wacousta Syndrome, is commonly associated with the positive figure of the liberated fool-saint

to represent at once "a perverse desire for self-transcendence [... and] the healthy union of the sundered halves of the psyche."⁹¹ The horrific, the perverse, the healthy and the transcendental are thus indistinguishable in the hermaphrodite fool. For this reason, "the morally ambiguous, freaky and/or saintly hermaphrodite provides an incomparably useful means of objectifying our national ambivalence [...]"⁹²

Significantly, McGregor hypothesizes that the "ambivalence" expressed in the content of many Canadian texts finds an echo in the literary genres that Canadian authors favour. Noting that many writers from Canada and Québec produce *narrative poetry* before they move on to compose *poetic novels*, she uses the work of David Lodge on the metaphoric character of poetry and the metonymic quality of the novel to propose that this practice manifests the unresolved desire to escape isolation.

If we go even further and speculate – as, looking at the great preponderance of poets-turned-novelist ([A.M.] Klein, [Douglas] LePan, [Leonard] Cohen, [Margaret] Atwood, [Robert] Kroetsch, [Michael] Ondaatje, et. al) over novelists-turned-poet, we might well do – that the dynamic *behind* the uneasy equipoise bespeaks an at least vestigial attempt to break out of our (metaphoric) isolation to make (metonymic) connection, it explains a good many of the anomalies in Canadian literature. What this view would assert, in other words, is that Canadians, despite their ambivalence and even fear, while accepting discontinuity as man's first and ultimate condition yet *postulate relation as a goal*. This may seem like a rather extravagant conclusion to draw on such scanty grounds, but if we think of what has been said about the likelihood of an extravertive reaction to extreme introversion, the hypothesis takes on a certain amount of at least theoretical plausibility [McGregor's emphasis].⁹³

McGregor's "extravagant conclusion," I would contend,

actually fits perfectly well with the conclusions drawn hitherto, as the "metaphorical poetry-to-metonymical novel" movement quite literally parallels the transposition of material from the afferent stage to the efferent screen (remember Lodge's reflections on drama and film quoted above). Exactly as poets-turned-novelists retain the metaphorical vestiges of their primary mode of expression,⁹⁴ the centrifugal cinematic adaptation never fully manages to break free from the centripetal dramatic original. Moreover, this failure to break free from the metaphoric, afferent original unquestionably mirrors all the comments cited in this section concerning the Canadian/Québécois character's inability to fully escape the "garrison."

Conclusion:

Consequently, a link can be discerned between the plays, the film adaptations and the culture that produced them. The analysis of the plays has revealed a tension at the core of the great majority of the dramas, which pits an urge to escape against an undefeatable inward resistance. Subsequently, perusal of the film adaptations has demonstrated that the cinematic imagery added to the basic dramatic actions affords a certain extroversion of the closed situations written for the stage, thus emphasizing the tension between the circumscribed theatrical space and the boundless filmic environment. However, these filmic appendages never completely succeed in countering the centripetal pull of the original drama; the movies always remain *stage-bound*, as several reviewers have noticed. The film

form thus matches the dramatic content inasmuch as the afferent/ efferent conflict, which functions as the key antinomy both *within* the works and *between* the two media involved, results in an unrealized transcendence of restrictive parameters. Finally, I have extrapolated from the conclusions drawn in the previous chapters to suggest that the afferent-withdrawal/efferent-escape dialectic corresponds to both a fundamental dichotomy between theatre and film and, perhaps most significantly, an endemic trait of the Canadian imagination that consists in a strong desire for, and an even stronger fear of, the Other "out there."

From these findings we can finally postulate that the composition of the corpus of film-mediated drama finds an explanation in the concordance that it displays between content, form, mediatic amalgamation and cultural implication. Indeed, as has been evidenced, the corpus exhibits a distinct coherence that has less to do with the popular success or artistic merit of the pieces than with a fundamental structure which extends from the stage to the screen and ultimately to the cultural scene whence the works have emerged. Having established this unique correspondence in the 1972-1992 corpus, we can now close the study by looking beyond this group of texts to speculate on the direction that film-mediated drama seems to be taking in the 1990s.

NOTES

¹As a matter of fact, Gregory A. Waller devoted a whole book to the review of the stage/screen theoretical debate that took place between 1908 and 1941. See Waller, The Stage/Screen Debate: A Study in Popular Aesthetic (New York: Garland Publishing, 1983).

² On Bazin's elaboration of a realist theory of the cinema see, for instance, J. Dudley Andrew, "André Bazin," The Major Film Theories: An Introduction, (London: Oxford UP, 1976) 134-77. "The writings of André Bazin," says Andrew, "are unquestionably the most important of realist film theory, just as those of Eisenstein are the most important of formative theories" (p.134).

³André Bazin, "Theatre and Cinema - Part Two," What is Cinema? I, trans. Hugh Gray (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967) 104.

⁴Bazin, 105-6, 107.

⁵Andrew, 149.

⁶ Egil Törnqvist, Transposing Drama: Studies in Representation (Houndmills, Hampshire and London: MacMillan, 1991) 19.

⁷As N. Katherine Hayles explains, "A figure or system displays recursive symmetry when the same general form is repeated across different length scales, as though the form were being progressively enlarged or diminished." See N. Katherine Hayles, "Introduction: Complex Dynamics in Literature and Science," Chaos and Order: Complex Dynamics in Literature and Science, ed. Hayles (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1991) 10.

⁸See Bazin, "The Virtues and Limitations of Montage," 46.

⁹Steven Shaviro, The Cinematic Body (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993) 37.

¹⁰"Ante-semiotic" because, in Shaviro's view, "We respond viscerally to visual forms, before having the leisure to read or interpret them as symbols." Shaviro, 26.

¹¹·Shaviro, 43, 44.

¹²·Shaviro, 46.

¹³·Shaviro, 57.

¹⁴·Shaviro, 65.

¹⁵·Or to put it in the concise formulation of William Rothman, "Film is evil." See Rothman, The "I" of the Camera: Essays in Film Criticism, History, and Aesthetics (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1988) 78.

¹⁶·Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," Illuminations (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1968) 231-2.

¹⁷·Benjamin, 223.

¹⁸·As Benjamin argues, "The uniqueness of a work of art is inseparable from its being imbedded in the fabric of tradition." (p. 225).

¹⁹·Timothy Corrigan, A Cinema Without Walls: Movies and Culture After Vietnam (New Brunswick [N.J.]: Rutgers UP, 1991) 2.

²⁰·Kenneth MacKinnon, Greek Tragedy Into Film (London: Croom Helm, 1986) 6, from Erwin Panofsky, "Style and medium in the motion pictures" (revised), Critique 1.3 (Jan/Feb 1947).

²¹·MacKinnon 8, from Siegfried Kracauer, Theory of Film: the Redemption of Physical Reality (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1960).

²²·Susan Sontag, "Film and Theatre," Film Theory and Criticism: Introductory Readings, eds. Gerald Mast and Marshall Cohen (New York: Oxford UP, 1985) 346. Paraphrased in MacKinnon, 14.

²³·Martin Esslin, The Field of Drama: How the Signs of Drama Create Meaning on Stage and Screen (London: Methuen, 1987) 96.

²⁴·Roger Manvell, Theater and Film (London: Associated UP, 1979) 27.

²⁵ Käte Hamburger, "Cinematic Fiction," in The Logic of Literature, trans. Marilyn J. Rose (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1973) 220, 222.

²⁶ Neil Sinyard, Filming Literature: the Art of Screen Adaptation (London: Croom Helm, 1986) 157.

²⁷ Jacobson's Theory of Literature (1948) quoted in David Lodge, The Modes of Modern Writing: Metaphor, Metonymy, and the Typology of Modern Literature (Edward Arnold, 1977) 73.

²⁸ Lodge, 83.

²⁹ Lodge, 83.

³⁰ Lodge, 83, 84.

³¹ Lodge, 86-7.

³² Charles Eidsvik, Cineliteracy: Film among the Arts (New York: Random House, 1978) 233.

³³ Richard Martin quoted in Jean-Pierre Tadros, "'Les Beaux Dimanches' tels qu'ils nous reviennent," Le Jour 27 Jul. 1974: V1.

³⁴ Incidentally, an analysis of Japanese film-mediated drama could uncover a recursive symmetry not unlike the one demonstrated in this study. Indeed, some of the cultural traits identified below as characteristic of the Canadian/Québécois imagination, and which perfectly replicate the structure of the plays and films examined above, find intriguing parallels in Japanese culture. Donald Richie's comments on the pattern shared by several Japanese films of a female character "rebellious and then succumbing [...] turning away from her husband and then turning back," obviously recall motifs found in our own corpus (See Richie, The Japanese Movie [Tokyo, New York and San Francisco: Kodansha International, 1982] 106). Furthermore, the "rigid dichotomy between private and public behaviour" (ibid. 131) that Richie sees as typical of Japanese society echoes many remarks cited in the second part of this chapter concerning the typically Canadian preoccupation with the lines dividing the inside and the outside. Interestingly enough, Gaile McGregor, whose observations on Canadian culture are quoted at length in this section, recognizes "the Canadian's affinity for the Oriental mode [i.e. *mono no aware*]: acquiescence to rather than

battle against the inevitable" (See Gaile McGregor, The Wacousta Syndrome: Explorations in the Canadian Langscape [Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985] 232). But of course, these fascinating analogies between Japan and Canada are much beyond the scope of the present study.

³⁵Northrop Frye, "Conclusion to a Literary History of Canada," in The Bush Garden: Essays on the Canadian Imagination (Toronto: Anansi, 1971) 225.

³⁶Frye, 225.

³⁷Frye, 226.

³⁸Frye, 226.

³⁹Dominique Clift, The Secret Kingdom: Interpretations of the Canadian Character (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1989) 99.

⁴⁰Clift, 108.

⁴¹Clift, 101.

⁴²Clift, 108.

⁴³Margaret Atwood, Survival: A Thematic Guide to Canadian Literature (Toronto: Anansi, 1972) 132.

⁴⁴Atwood, 226-7.

⁴⁵ See Monique Lafortune, Le Roman québécois: reflet d'une société (Laval: Mondia, 1985) 225-27.

⁴⁶Philip Stratford, All the Polarities: Comparative Studies in Contemporary Canadian Novels in French and English (Toronto: ECW Press, 1986) 98.

⁴⁷Stratford, 100.

⁴⁸Micheline Cambron, Une société, un récit. Discours culturel au Québec (1967-1976) (Montréal: L'Hexagone, 1989) 175-6.

49. For instance, Réjean Beaudoin sees the introduction of "le point de vue des communautés culturelles," as one of the most notable features of Québec literature in the 1980s. See Beaudoin, Le Roman québécois (Montréal: Boréal, 1991) 76.
50. See Imre Hermann, L'Instinct filial. Paris: Denoël, 1972.
51. Simon Harel, Le Voleur de parcours : Identité et cosmopolitisme dans la littérature québécoise contemporaine (Longueuil [Montréal]: Les Éditions du Préambule, 1989) 257.
52. Harel, 284.
53. Harel, 256.
54. Harel, 257.
55. Harel, 259-60.
56. Harel, 278-79.
57. Expression used by McGregor in her supplement to The Wacousta Syndrome, focusing on David Cronenberg's cinema, "Grounding the Countertext: David Cronenberg and the Ethnospecificity of Horror," Canadian Journal of Film Studies/Revue Canadienne d'études cinématographiques 2.1 (1992): 52.
58. Gaile McGregor, The Wacousta Syndrome: Explorations in the Canadian Landscape (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985) 5.
59. David Stouck's "Notes on the Canadian Imagination" (Canadian Literature 54, 1972) quoted in McGregor, The Wacousta Syndrome, 50.
60. McGregor, The Wacousta Syndrome, 51.
61. McGregor, The Wacousta Syndrome, 54.
62. McGregor, The Wacousta Syndrome, 56.
63. McGregor, The Wacousta Syndrome, 57.

- ⁶⁴McGregor, The Wacousta Syndrome, 62.
- ⁶⁵McGregor, The Wacousta Syndrome, 63.
- ⁶⁶McGregor, The Wacousta Syndrome, 102.
- ⁶⁷McGregor, The Wacousta Syndrome, 103.
- ⁶⁸McGregor, The Wacousta Syndrome, 102. The first quote is from Ann Davis, The Drawings of Christiane Pflug (Winnipeg: Winnipeg Art Gallery, 1979) 9.
- ⁶⁹McGregor, The Wacousta Syndrome, 76, 77, 87.
- ⁷⁰McGregor, "Grounding the Countertext," 52.
- ⁷¹Anthony Wilden, The Imaginary Canadian (Vancouver: Pulp Press 1978). See also R. Bruce Elder, Image and Identity: Reflections on Canadian Film and Culture (Waterloo [Ont.]: Wilfrid Laurier UP, 1989) 10-13.
- ⁷²Patricia Smart, Écrire dans la maison du père: l'émergence du féminin dans la tradition littéraire du Québec (Montréal: Éditions Québec/Amérique, 1988) 37.
- ⁷³Smart, 34.
- ⁷⁴McGregor, The Wacousta Syndrome, 171.
- ⁷⁵Mary Jean Green, "Writing in a Motherland," French Department, Dartmouth College, Hanover (N.H.), 1984. Quoted in Seymour Martin Lipset, Continental Divide: The Values and Institutions of the United States and Canada (New York: Routledge, 1990) 63.
- ⁷⁶Lipset, 59-63.
- ⁷⁷ The fact that Québécois sovereigntists insist that an independent Québec should maintain close economic and even political ties with Canada seems to corroborate Green's argument about "feminine" conciliation as opposed to radical "masculine" break.
- ⁷⁸McGregor, The Wacousta Syndrome, 78.

- ⁷⁹McGregor, The Wacousta Syndrome, 83.
- ⁸⁰McGregor, The Wacousta Syndrome, 107.
- ⁸¹McGregor, The Wacousta Syndrome, 66.
- ⁸²McGregor, The Wacousta Syndrome, 174.
- ⁸³McGregor, The Wacousta Syndrome, 129.
- ⁸⁴McGregor, The Wacousta Syndrome, 175-6.
- ⁸⁵McGregor, The Wacousta Syndrome, 202.
- ⁸⁶Pierre Gobin, Le fou et ses doubles: figures de la dramaturgie québécoise (Montréal: Presses de l'Université de Montréal, 1978) 253.
- ⁸⁷McGregor, The Wacousta Syndrome, 211.
- ⁸⁸McGregor, "Grounding the Countertext," 55.
- ⁸⁹Cronenberg interviewed by David Chute in "He Came from Within," Film Comment 16.2 (Mar./Apr. 1980): 37. Quoted in McGregor, "Grounding the Countertext," 54.
- ⁹⁰McGregor, "Grounding the Countertext," 55.
- ⁹¹McGregor, The Wacousta Syndrome, 212.
- ⁹²McGregor, The Wacousta Syndrome, 212.
- ⁹³McGregor, The Wacousta Syndrome, 361-2.
- ⁹⁴McGregor, The Wacousta Syndrome, 360-1. Example: "L'aquarium by Jacques Godbout might quite easily have been taken from a collection of poems [...]"

CHAPTER XI. POSTSCRIPT TO THE FIRST CYCLE
OF MODERN CANADIAN AND QUÉBÉCOIS FILM-MEDIATED DRAMA

This study has demonstrated that the corpus of Canadian and Québécois plays adapted into films between 1972 and 1992 is characterized by a recursive symmetry that extends from the afferent-withdrawal/efferent-escape implicational dialectic of the original scripts to the tension between *afferent drama and efferent cinema* and, ultimately, to the typically Canadian centripetal response to a fascinatingly horrific otherness. As such, film-mediated drama appears as a unique means to convey the Canadian/Québécois imagination. As suggested in Chapter I, it could even be argued that film-mediated drama's representativeness of the Canadian/Québécois experience is augmented by the very marginality of this practice in Canada, for, as critic Robert Nunn submits, "history has conditioned Canadians to see themselves and their culture as marginal."¹

However, since 1992, film-mediated drama seems to have become less marginal a practice than it was previously, at least in English Canada. The recent increase in adaptations of anglophone plays is such, in fact, that Angela Baldassarre, in her article "A Different Take" (1994), talks of a new "stage-to-screen phenomenon."² Plays like Brad Fraser's Unidentified Human Remains and the True Nature of Love (1989), Daniel MacIvor's House (1992), Linda Griffiths's The Darling Family (1991), and Hillar Liitoja's The Last Supper (1993) were all made into films in 1993-94. Most significantly, the plays that are now being adapted no longer emphasize the victory of afferent-withdrawal.

It could be argued that the alterations in the composition of the corpus after 1992 could bear witness to the profound changes that English Canadian society has undergone over the last few years and that might now be affecting our collective unconscious, making of the centripetal impulse a decreasingly representative description of the national identity.

Seeing those changes in a very positive light, Dominique Clift wrote in 1989:

the hold maintained by the group over its members, the possessive tyranny of the tribe over those born into it, have lost their power. As a result, individuals are relieved of the obligation to subordinate their personal goals and inclinations to those of the community they belong to. Hence conformity begins to recede as a social requirement and a much greater degree of personal freedom is allowed.³

According to Clift, there thus seems to be a new-found freedom in the Canadian people which renders obsolete representations of afferent-withdrawal as experienced by Jeanie in Wedding in White and the other characters encountered in our analyses. In his 1990 book, Mosaic Madness, Reginald W. Bibby also speaks of a "new freedom" for Canadians. In his chapter entitled "The True North Finally Free," Bibby writes:

On the individual level, to an extent never known before, we have been emancipated. We have been given the green light to focus on ourselves, to give attention to our personal development – mentally, physically, socially, spiritually [...] Previous barriers to individual expression and growth have been breaking down like a series of Berlin Walls. Race and ethnicity, gender and physical attributes, marital status and personal relationships are among the many walls that are at various stages of demolition.⁴

Not surprisingly, this new freedom which counteracts the centripetal impulse seems to have made its way into film-mediated drama. For instance, Liitoja's The Last Supper, cinematized by Cynthia Roberts in 1994, far from stressing the ascendancy of the afferent pull, celebrates the possibility of escape. This play deals with the last few hours in the life of a man, Chris (Ken McDougall), dying of AIDS. Refusing to surrender to the disease, Chris chooses the time and the way in which he will effect his passage from life to death. Orchestrating an elaborate ritual with his lover (Jack Nichol森) and his personal physician (Daniel MacIvor) to mark his transcendence of the diseased body, Chris asserts his right not only to escape the debilitating sickness, but also to escape the constrictive laws and regulations that forbid Canadians from terminating their suffering when they see fit. Created at a time when the issue of assisted suicide was at the centre of a passionate legal debate in Canada, this work bears witness to the changes that English Canada is undergoing.

Interestingly, the film version of The Last Supper makes no attempt whatsoever to break with the theatrical setting of the original text. Virtually every image in this movie shows the dying man in bed, anticipating the moment of his death and reminiscing about his past glory as a ballet dancer. Therefore, unlike all the films considered in the preceding chapters, Roberts's production does not use the cinematic medium to intensify the afferent/efferent tension of the play. This is hardly surprising, however, since the sort of transcendence

dramatized in Liitoja's text is not one that can be expressed cinematically in terms of wide panoramas, intricate camera movements and quick editing. To do justice to the kind of freedom that Chris *achieves* in the end, a freedom relating more to the spiritual realm than to the concrete space of a Toronto apartment, a bordertown café or a provincial penitentiary, the director rightfully chose to focus on the dying man's emaciated face, trembling hands and croaking voice. All these minute physical manifestations, when eventually they cease, signify deliverance much more strikingly than any long-shot of vast open fields ever could.

Although written in a style drastically different from The Last Supper, Fraser's Unidentified Human Remains and the True Nature of Love, adapted by Denys Arcand under the title Love and Human Remains (1993), does not submit to the afferent impulse either. Recoiling from otherness is not the central motif in this play. On the contrary, the key theme of the text is the reaching out towards the other, as all the characters seek — and some of them actually succeed in finding — true love in a fierce urban setting. This is not a particularly Canadian theme. As a matter of fact, the preoccupation of young adults with finding love in an urban wasteland has been the subject of several American films of the early 1990s, such as Cameron Crowe's Singles (1992). Not surprisingly Arcand's film has an obvious "Hollywood" edge to it. Indeed, based on a play that is already fast-paced, brutal and sexy, Love and Human Remains emphasizes violence, suspense and the physical attractiveness of

all the late-twenties, early-thirties love-sick characters that it features. From the debonair gay actor-*cum*-waiter (Thomas Gibson) whose cynicism is eventually defeated by his friends' affection, to the curvaceous yet square book reviewer (Ruth Marshall) who unwittingly seduces an impish lesbian (Joanne Vannicola), the personages in this movie are indistinguishable from all the hip characters found in the trendy prime-time dramas that saturate American (and Canadian) television.

Arcand's film, although not a success with either the critics or the public,⁵ is representative of the "new freedom" in more ways than one. First, as mentioned above, its theme breaks with the typically Canadian fear of the other. Second, it also breaks with the potentially afferent pull of the original text. Several aspects of this movie, from a new title to a revised ending, mark the distinction between the stage script and its cinematic version; cinema, in Love and Human Remains, manages to break free from theatre. Finally, as Arcand's first feature film in English and his first production partly funded by a company from English Canada, Love and Human Remains signals the filmmaker's own breaking free from his tightly-knit community. Not that Arcand has become anti-Québécois, but with Love and Human Remains he has asserted his freedom to work either within Québec or elsewhere.⁶

This raises the question of film-mediated drama in Québec. Unlike in English Canada, where adaptations of plays seem to attract increasing attention, in Québec the practice remains as marginal as it was before 1992, without a *single feature film*

made from an indigenous play in either 1993 or 1994 (except for Fraser's Alberta piece which was shot in Montréal). One of the reasons that *might* explain this situation is that, unlike in English Canada, Québec might not have achieved its "new freedom" yet. Still, in 1995, part of a country for which they do not feel much attachment, but which they are reluctant to forsake altogether, Québécois might not experience the sense of liberation that Clift and Bibby witness in contemporary English Canada; hence film-mediated drama would remain a marginal practice in Québec aimed at illustrating the state of imprisonment of a marginal nation. Moreover, in spite of the significant cultural changes it has undergone over the last decade precipitated primarily by the inflow of immigrants, Québec still appears as a much more homogeneous and self-absorbed society than Ontario or British Columbia. In fact, as suggested by Simon Harel's comments quoted in Chapter X, the increasing number of "neo-Québécois" might very well exacerbate the afferent-withdrawal tendencies of French Canadians, which would then mean that only those plays that dramatize the victory of inward recoil offer a germane source for film productions.

But on the other hand, it could also be argued that the lack of radical change in Québec draws a more accurate portrait of what is *actually* happening in Canada than the seeming progress of other provinces. Indeed, the apparent freedom and self-confidence that seems to be replacing the afferent-withdrawal tendency in English Canada could very well be only a passing illusion, for although the self-assertive quality of

Canadians seems to be growing, the country itself is *still* confronted with the menace of, at best, stagnation, and at worst, disappearance. The unmanageable public debt, the unresolvable conflict between Québec and the rest of Canada, the utter cynicism of citizens towards governments and institutions, all these factors seriously undermine any optimistic view of the future of this country. As Baldassdarre insightfully observes, "one has to wonder if what we're seeing in Canada is another flash in the pan or the first stages in an area of new development."⁷ Given my own afferent temperament, I would bet on the former.

NOTES

¹Robert Nunn, "Marginality and English-Canadian Theatre," Theatre Research International 17.3 (Autumn 1992): 217. Similarly, Linda Hutcheon argues that "the periphery or the margin might also describe Canada's perceived position in international terms." See The Canadian Postmodern: A Study of Contemporary English-Canadian Fiction (Toronto: Oxford UP, 1988) 3.

²Angela Baldassarre, "A Different Take," Theatrum 37 (Feb./Mar. 1994): 18.

³Dominique Clift, The Secret Kingdom: Interpretations of the Canadian Character (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1989) 226.

⁴Reginald W. Bibby, Mosaic Madness: The Poverty and Potential of Life in Canada (Toronto: Stoddart Publishing, 1990) 60, 61.

⁵See my criticism of the film in Reverse Shot 1.2 (1994): 45.

⁶In a recent interview, Arcand said: "I have always worked in the very close vicinity of Montreal, except for Love and Human Remains, for which I went all the way to Toronto, 500 miles away. Is this a sign that I am leaning towards an 'international' career? Will I ever leave my small country to work with the big people, with their big budgets? I don't know. I only know where I come from, not where I am going." In André Loiselle and Brian McIlroy, eds. Auteur/Provocateur: The Films of Denys Arcand (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger, 1995) 161.

⁷Baldassarre, 18.

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APPENDIX 1

List of original Canadian and Québécois plays made into feature films between 1972 and 1992.

The main sources used to establish this list are the following: D.J. Turner, Canadian Feature Film Index 1913-1985 (Public Archives, 1987); Copie Zero (Cinémathèque québécoise, 1979 - 1987); Annuaire du cinéma québécois (Cinémathèque québécoise, 1988 - 1992); Film/Video Canadiana 1970-1993 on CD-Rom (Canadian Film Institute, 1993); Littérature québécoise et cinéma - Revue d'histoire littéraire du Québec et du Canada français 11 (Université d'Ottawa, 1986).

This list includes made-for-TV movies that have received at least one public showing in a cinema: One Night Stand premiered on CBC television on 8 March 1978, and received a public showing in New York on 28 April 1982 at the Film Forum; Gapi premiered on 23 August 1982 as part of Montréal's Festival des Films du Monde, and was shown on Television (Radio-Canada) on 23 May 1983; Du poil aux pattes comme les CWAC's premiered at the Cinémathèque québécoise on 1 February 1986, as part of the Rendez-vous du cinéma québécois, and was shown on Television (Radio-Canada) on 2 March 1986.

This list does not include film adaptations of stage plays that were themselves adapted from other media. Such is the case for Gordon Pinsent's John and the Missus (1986; direction and screenplay: Pinsent), which was a novel (1974) before being a play (1976) and a film, Aaron Kim Johnston's The Last Winter (1989; direction and screenplay: Johnston), which is a free adaptation of the stage version (1985, Sandra Birdsell et al.) of William Kurelek's children's book A Prairie Boy's Winter (1973), and Andrew Angus Dalrymple's A Quiet Day in Belfast (1973; direction: Milas Bessada; screenplay: Jack Gray), which was produced first as a radio programme (CBC, Jan. 1972) before being rewritten for a stage production at Tarragon (1973).

This list does not include film-recordings of stage performances or documentaries on theatre productions, such as Roger Frappier's Le Grand Film ordinaire (1970) on the activities of the troupe Le Grand cirque ordinaire, and Albert Kish's Paper Wheat (1979) on 25th Street Theatre's famous collective creation. Peter Mettler's Tectonic Plates (1992), in spite of its use of location-shooting, is not itemized here either, for it is less a case of film-mediated drama than film-mediated theatre, that is, an evocative filmic record of a stage performance of Robert Lepage's and Théâtre Repère's ever changing spectacle — "a bizarre documentation of the play" as scenarist Don McKellar calls it (Theatrum 37 [1994]: 14).

An asterisk indicates that the play has not been published.

-Wedding in White (1972) by William Fruet
(1972; dir. and sc.: Fruet.)

-Peep adapted from Jack Cunningham's See No Evil, Hear...* (1972)
(1973, released in 1984; dir. and sc.: Cunningham)

- Me? (1973) by Martin Kinch
(1974; dir.: John Palmer; sc.: Kinch and Barry Pearson.)
- Les Beaux Dimanches (1965) by Marcel Dubé
(1974; dir. Richard Martin; sc.: Dubé, Martin and Richard Hellman)
- Metal Messiah* (1975) by Stephan Zoller
(1977, released in 1978; dir.: Tibor Takacs; sc.: Zoller)
- One Night Stand (1977) by Carol Bolt
(1977, released in 1978; dir.: Allan W. King; sc.: Bolt)
- Une amie d'enfance (1977) by Louise Roy and Louis Saïa
(1978; dir.: Francis Mankiewicz; sc.: Roy and Saïa)
- Les Célébrations (1976) by Michel Garneau
(1979; dir.: Yves Simoneau; sc.: Garneau and Simoneau)
- Hank Williams "The Show He Never Gave"* (1979) by Maynard Collins
(1981; dir.: David Acoma; sc.: Collins)
- Gapi (1976) by Antonine Maillet
(1981, released in 1982; dir.: Paul Blouin; sc.: Maillet)
- Walls (1978) by Christian Bruyere
(1984; dir.: Tom Shandel; sc.: Bruyere)
- Memoirs (of Johnny Daze)* (?) by John Beckett Wimbs
(1984; dir.: Bachar Shbib [formerly, Chbib]; sc.: Shbib and Wimbs)
- The Mark of Cain* (1984) by Peter Colley
(1985; dir.: Bruce Pittman; sc.: Colley and John Sheppard.)
- Du poil aux pattes comme les CWAC's (1982) by Maryse Pelletier
(1985, released in 1986; dir.: Daniel Roussel; sc.: Pelletier)
- Blue City Slammers* (1985) by Layne Coleman
(1987, released in 1988; dir. Peter Shatalow; sc.: Coleman)
- Cold Comfort (1981) by Jim Garrard
(1989; dir.: Vic Sarin; sc.: Richard Beattie and L. Elliot Simms).
- Borderdown Café (1987) by Kelly Rebar
(1991; dir.: Norma Bailey; sc.: Rebar)
- Being at Home with Claude (1985) by René-Daniel Dubois
(1991, released in 1992; dir. and sc.: Jean Beaudin)

APPENDIX 2

The following is a list of some of the Canadian and Québécois novels that have been made into feature films since 1960. The only purpose of this list is to give the reader a sense of the quantitative difference between literary film adaptations and film-mediated drama (Appendix 1). Although it counts well over forty titles, it is by no means an exhaustive list.

- Maria Chapdeleine (novel: 1914) Louis Hémon
(film: 1983; direction: Gilles Carle)
- Bonheur d'Occasion (1945) by Gabrielle Roy
(1983; Claude Fournier)
- Two Solitudes (1945) by Hugh MacLennan
(1978; Lionel Chetwynd)
- Who Has Seen the Wind? (1947) by William Ormond Mitchell
(1977; Allan King)
- Les Plouffe (1948) Roger Lemelin
(1981; Gilles Carle)
- Poussière sur la ville (1953) by André Langevin
(1965; Arthur Lamothe)
- Agaguk (1958) by Yves Thériault
(1993; Jacques Dorfman)
- The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz (1959) by Mordecai Richler
(1974; Ted Kotcheff)
- La Corde au cou (1960) by Claude Jasmin
(1964; Pierre Patry)
- The Luck of Ginger Coffey (1960) by Brian Moore
(1964; Irvin Kershner)
- Why Rock the Boat? (1961) by William Weintraub
(1974; John Howe)
- Why Shoot the Teacher? (1965) by Max Braithwaite
(1977; Silvio Narizzano)
- In Praise of Older Women (1966) by Stephen Vizinczey
(1978; George Kaczender)
- La Route d'Altamont (1966) by Gabrielle Roy
(Le Vieillard et l'enfant, 1985; Claude Grenier)

- Jos Carbone (1967) by Jacques Benoît
(1975; Hughes Tremblay)
- Le Nez qui voque (1967) by Réjean Ducharme
(Le grand sabordage, 1971; Alain Périsson)
- Kamouraska (1970) by Anne Hébert
(1973; Claude Jutra)
- Le Dernier Havre (1970) by Yves Thériault
(1986; Denyse Benoît)
- La Fleur aux dents (1971) by Gilles Archambault
(1975; Thomas Vamos)
- Snow Lark (1971) by Ronald Sutherland
(Suzanne, 1980; Robin Spry)
- Les Oranges d'Israël (1972) by Michelle Guérin
(Valse à trois, 1974; Fernand Rivard)
- Surfacing (1972) by Margaret Atwood
(1980; Claude Jutra)
- Agency (1974) by Paul Gottlieb
(1979; George Kaczender)
- Moi, mon corps, mon âme, Montréal etc. (1974) by Roger Fournier
(Au revoir...à lundi, 1979; Maurice Dugowson).
- "Making it," in Butterfly Ward (1976) by Margaret Gibson
Gilboord
(Outrageous!, 1977; Richard Benner)
- La Lampe dans la fenêtre (1976) by Pauline Cadieux
(Cordélia, 1979; Jean Beaudin)
- The Wars (1977) by Timothy Findley
(1983; Robin Philips)
- La Sablière (1979) by Claude Jasmin
(Mario, 1984; Jean Beaudin)
- Le Sourd dans la ville (1979) by Marie-Claire Blais
(1987; Mireille Dansereau)
- Armand Dorion, homme à tout faire (1980) by Micheline Lanctôt
(L'Homme à tout faire, 1980; Micheline Lanctôt)
- Moonwebs (1980) by Josh Freed
(Ticket to Heaven, 1981; R.L. Thomas)
- Joshua Then and Now (1980) by Mordecai Richler
(1985; Ted Kotcheff)

- Le Matou (1981) by Yves Beauchemin
(1985; Jean Beaudin)
- The Marriage Bed (1981) by Constance Beresford-Howe
(1986; Martin Lavut)
- Le Crime d'Ovide Plouffe (1982) by Roger Lemelin
(1984; Denys Arcand)
- Dancing in the Dark (1982) by Joan Barfoot
(1986; Leon Marr)
- Les Fous de Bassan (1982) by Anne Hébert
(1986; Yves Simoneau)
- Hey Malarek! (1984) by Victor Malarek
(1988; Roger Cardinal)
- Les Portes tournantes (1984) by Jacques Savoie
(1988; Francis Mankiewicz)
- Comment faire l'amour avec un nègre sans se fatiguer (1985) by
Dany Laferrière
(1989; Jacques W. Benoît)
- A Certain Mr. Takahashi (1985) by Ann Ireland
(The Pianist, 1991; Claude Gagnon)
- Getting Married in Buffalo Jump (1987) by Susan C. Haley
(1991; Eric Till)
- Coyote (1988) by Michel Michaud
(1992; Richard Ciupka)