

led by dedicated Québecists. If the Canadian studies network appears as a temptation for Québec studies, especially because they are better funded and already structured, they do not in any way ensure the continuity of programs related to Québec.

QUÉBEC STUDIES
AND FRANCOPHONE STUDIES :
CONVERGENCE AND PARALLELISM

If the position of Québec studies within Canadian studies poses the particular problem of linguistic integration among researchers, their position among francophone studies raises methodological issues which are just as restricting. Despite the youth and fragility of its academic position, Québec has often seen the Francophonie world as a natural framework for Québec Studies, capable of facilitating its integration in foreign academic structures. Consequently, at first glance, it provides "a conducive environment for the

development of Québec studies,”⁷⁶ all the more so since France, through its well-funded network of cultural centres, gave itself the mandate of promoting a knowledge of French-speaking countries throughout the world.⁷⁷ This effort coincides with a fascination for post-colonial issues, which brought French-language literatures which had previously been considered marginal to the forefront. This coincided with the moment “when the influence of French literature waned,”⁷⁸ and its teaching overseas became

76. Fernand Harvey, *op. cit.*, p. 66 (our translation).

77. This is especially the case for the Netherlands where Jaap Lintvelt observes the warm collaboration between French and Québec authorities: “The French cultural centre,” he writes, “tied to the French Embassy and affiliated with the University of Groningen, maintains excellent contacts with the Delegation [of Québec in Brussels], which made the presentation of Québec films in their major annual franco-phone film festival possible.” (Jaap Lintvelt, “Les études québécoises aux Pays-Bas”, *Globe. Revue internationale d'études québécoises*, vol. 4, n° 2, 2001, p.168 [our translation]).

78. Euridice Figueiredo, *op. cit.*, p. 403 (our translation).

more difficult, as a result of the more formalist production of the 1970's. Confronted by the coldness of the French "*Nouveau roman*", which was not easily understood in linguistics classes, certain foreign professors preferred to turn towards Québec, West Indian and African texts, thus exposing to the university a field that had been previously unexplored. At the end of the 20th century, this interest doubled in the willingness "to define the meeting of languages and cultures as an eternally renewable dialogue between equal partners [...] allowing itself to be penetrated by the profitable discovery of the *impure*."⁷⁹

In practice, Québec's place in francophone programs has given rise to a struggle whose stakes today still remain to be defined. In Germany, reflections on the "*Neue Romania*" revolve especially around questions of the French periphery in which "Québec studies have been somewhat particular since they

79. Ursula Mathis-Moser, *op. cit.*, p. 255 (our translation).

have been considered ‘junior partners.’”⁸⁰ If Romance language programs in Scandinavia have opened up to include francophone cultures, they only constitute a minute “part of the degree courses at study.”⁸¹ The ambiguity of the academic position towards these literatures also appears in France where it is noted that as long as the status “of francophone literatures in the university is not clearly examined, Québec literature will remain in a marginal position.”⁸²

On the other hand, in certain cases, the study of Québec is used as a vector to open and move the frontiers of the French corpus and to renew teaching. In Spain, the “new Québec-content subjects” are perceived as “the motor of decolonization”⁸³ in departments of French literature and civilization.

80. Peter Klaus and Ingo Kolboom, *op. cit.*, p. 260 (our translation).

81. Elisabeth Lauridsen, *op. cit.*, p. 339 (our translation).

82. Yannick Resch, *op. cit.*, p. 288 (our translation).

83. Carmen Mata Barreiro, *op. cit.*, p. 148.

Generally speaking, it is not rare for European students that interest in Québec as a plural, American and northern nation constitutes an incentive for pursuing studies in French.

If the Québec problematic in certain ways resembles that of old French colonies, it does not remain any less fundamentally different, especially in literary or cultural terms. Also, Québec's integration in this curriculum does not go without saying. Jeanette den Toonder mentions the limits imposed when Québec works "are presented in their relationship with France, most often in the framework of (de)colonialization."⁸⁴ This framework "inevitably exposes," as David Parris writes, "the danger of superimposing on the Québec reality a grid of categories which are only imperfectly adapted to the object."⁸⁵

Nevertheless, there is room for optimism on this side. The realization of the differences

84. Jeanette den Toonder, *op. cit.*, p. 204 (our translation).

85. David Parris, *op. cit.*, p. 197 (our translation).

of francophone literatures also makes it possible to consider each of them in terms of their particularities. In this way, although this awareness could lead to misleading journeys, like that of the masking “of the intertextual and dialogue-based configurations” with French texts, research into the specificity of Québec studies, when it succeeds, makes it possible “to escape from the trap of exoticism” by imposing the accounting of “its historical, national, social and linguistic context,”⁸⁶ which gives a more accurate image. Québec studies, which benefit from an extensive research network and from a scientific tradition in Québec itself, can also, as Jean-Marie Klinkenberg writes, serve to “give a backbone to the francophone problematic”⁸⁷ by formulating “the requirement of quality” to which researchers must measure up, to the greater benefit of all academic discourse.

86. Józef Kwaterko, *op. cit.*, p. 101 (our translation).

87. Jean-Marie Klinkenberg, *op. cit.*, p. 92.