

Intercultural Concepts in *Place Cliché* by Jacques Godbout

RACHEL DIERCIE DWYARIE
*French Department,
Universitas Indonesia, Indonesia*

JOESANA TIAHJANI
*French Department,
Universitas Indonesia, Indonesia
joesana.tjahjani@ui.ac.id*

ABSTRACT

*This article discusses the intercultural concepts conveyed in the essay *Place Cliché* by Jacques Godbout. The elaboration centers on how the narrator-actor “I” position himself in facing two cultures. This paper shows how the concepts related to interculturalism are elucidated within the text, especially through the narrator-actor “I”. The identity of the narrator that intertwines with two cultures, French and American, is discovered by exposing the symbols that represent the two cultures. The French and American culture that become a part of the intercultural condition is represented in the stereotypes found in the narrator’s focalization and the textual structure. Intercultural concepts such as hybrid identity and in-between identity will be found in the construction of the narrator’s identity. The presence of those cultural factors becomes the foundation that constructs the hybrid identity of narrator-actor “I” which is the Quebec identity (*Québécois*). The aforementioned findings are acquired through cultural studies theories of Homi K. Bhabha and Stuart Hall. The method that is utilized is a qualitative method with critical discourse analysis theories by Teun van Dijk and semiotics by Roland Barthes.*

Keywords: francophone literature; hybridity; identity; interculturalism

INTRODUCTION

Quebec is a part of Canada that holds a different cultural identity to those of other provinces in the country. This is influenced by the geographic and historical condition of Quebec that is proximate to America but was colonized by France. There are cultural elements such as language, arts, and literature that distinguish the Quebec society to other societies in Canada. The economic and education system in Quebec uses French as their official language. The city of Montreal in Quebec is a city with the most number of French speakers outside metropolitan France. The significant cultural difference causes the Quebec society to reject being a part of the Canadian society and claim to be a distinct Quebec society instead (Juteau, 1993).

Identity has become a primary issue in Quebec’s society, especially during the Quiet Revolution or *Révolution Tranquille* which was a period of significant economic, political and educational changes in Quebec (Clift, 1980). Identity is a complex construct that is resulted from interaction and intersection with multiple factors and can become more dynamic as people create multiple identities (Jerome, Hashim, & Ting, 2016). The Quebec society aspired to build an identity of their own, which is the Quebec identity or *Québécois*. Literature was one of the main means of proliferating ideas about that identity. Due to that, the literary works of that time reflects the conditions of the society that was face-to-face with two cultures. Identity themes, cultural pluralism, and intercultural condition thus became a recurring issue in Canadian francophone literature.

One of the many literary figures that took part in writing about this intercultural condition in Quebec is Jacques Godbout. Jacques Godbout is a novelist, essayist, and cineaste. One of his essays is *Place Cliché* that was published in a literary magazine, *Liberté*.

This essay focalizes a narrator-actor “I” that lives among different cultural elements derived from France and America, some of which are literature and cinema. The two cultures embody different identities but are present in the same intensity in the life of the narrator-actor. Essay, as explained by Montaigne in *Les Essais* (Montaigne, 1595), is the very writer of the essay. This means that the essay represents the author of the essay through its messages. On the other hand, the essay is also a measure to propagate an idea or critic, as was theorized by Francis Bacon (Haefner, 1989). Therefore, the essay becomes a platform to convey an idea and a representation of the writer of the essay. This is further emboldened by the Critical Discourse Analysis theory by van Dijk that states that a text cannot be free from values (Dijk, 1997). It is believed that texts a product or manifestation of a social stance and represents the author’s vision. In this theory, the author is believed to be portraying their ideology in a positive perspective and the contesting ideology negatively.

In this critical discourse analysis, context plays as the macro structure of the discourse. This context comprises geographical and cultural situation of Quebec by the time of writing. It is worth to mention that cultural identity amidst a plurality of culture is an important aspect for the Quebec society and a primary theme in francophone literature. Although Quebec is essentially a part of Canada, the essay *Place Cliché* elaborates many factors of the Quebec society identity by portraying the influences of French and American culture. Canada becomes a geographical status that contextualized the narrator’s perspective of other cultures, for instance, on how the American films are more known to the narrator due to the proximity of the country to his. In a multicultural society such as Canada, two different phenomena are typically expected. In one hand, it is possible for a conflict between the different cultural influences to take place. On the other, it is also possible that instead of a conflict, the different cultures harmonized and create a new identity which is referred to as hybrid identity (Bhabha, 1994). This paper argues that the latter is what this essay portrays.

The Quebec society has been known to experience marginalization in multiple aspects such as economy and politics. This has created conflict that ensued from ideas of separation and overall struggle with imbalanced plurality. Multicultural policies had been difficult to implement as a result of different language and perceived identity (Blad & Couton, 2009). To later draw a conclusion, we look at a study done upon another renowned Canadian-francophone literature, *Speak White* by Michelle Lalonde. This study showed how poetry was a tool for its writer to communicate the alienation of French-speaking Canadians by the English-speaking community. *Speak White* portrays a strong inequality between the English and French-speaking communities in Canada where French speakers become a marginalized group. *Speak White* positions itself directly against the English-speakers (Mezei, 2014). It is an example of how in the presence of different cultures conflict may occur. A study that discusses hybridity and interculturalism in Quebec’s culture was previously done upon a text by Marco Micone, *Le Figurier Enchanté*. Although it specifies the same cultural phenomenon, this study is centered around the identity of an Italian immigrant in Quebec, as opposed to the Quebec society themselves. In *Le Figurier Enchanté*, we are shown with the character’s struggle in alienation and marginalization. Struggle of imitating language and being a part of the society was shown as an important journey in reaching acceptance of the character’s hybrid and intercultural identity (Cooke, 2011). Therefore, this article distinguishes itself by discussing *Place Cliché*’s narrator who is a part of the Quebec society and chose not to place himself against any party and was not part of a societal struggle. With the presence of the two different cultures, this article focuses on elaborating the cultural factors that construct the narrator’s identity in the essay, *Place Cliché* by Jacques Godbout. Henceforth, this article will uncover the position the narrator, given the presence of two cultures and elaborate on how cultural elements construct the narrator’s identity.

TEXTUAL STRUCTURE OF *PLACE CLICHÉ*

Textual structure plays as a superstructure in this critical discourse analysis. This text comprises nineteen paragraphs that can be classified into fifteen sequences that centers on different points of focalization. Out of those fifteen sequences, the content of the text can be divided into four parts. The first part talks about the initial understanding of the narrator-actor “I” of France and America. The second part talks about the elements of French and American culture, for instance, thoughts and literature from France and technique and cinema from America. The third part deals with the interrelatedness of French and American culture, as well as francophone culture. The last part talks about the French and American culture in the perspective of a Quebecker. In a sum, the text discusses the French and American culture in most parts but is concluded by a contemplation of Quebecker’s identity. Therefore, based on the discussed issues in each part, the theme of this text is the cultural identity of France, America, and Quebec.

As part of the microstructure analysis of this discourse, language choices must be accounted for. This includes repetitions and word associations which are also semiotic choices. Repetitions of certain words can also be found in the text. Words found to have the most repetitions are *français* and *américain*. The word *français* and *américain* are adjectives, hence the essay does not talk about the country France and America, but the characteristics of those countries. In this text, these characteristics come in the form of cultures associated with the two countries. The word *Québécois* and *Canadiens-français* that are repeated twice and four times respectively are also a part of the cultural identity theme of the text. The narrator-actor “I” elaborated his understanding of French and American culture by mentioning the forms of which the cultures manifest according to his understanding. This is shown by the repetitions of *littérature*, *livre(s)*, and Paris that are associated with France and *cinéma*, *écran*, and Hollywood repetitions that are associated with America. There are also repetitions of Côte-des-Neiges that is a neighborhood in Quebec that is described to have a French bookstore and an American theater, Van Horne which is repeatedly mentioned. There is also a repetition of *seize ans* which shows that the attempt to understand French, American and Quebec’s culture occurs during the narrator’s age of sixteen. In addition, it is also found that France and America are being referred to in different ways. America is referred to as Hollywood, *États-Unis*, and *Californie*, while France is referred to as *Saint-Germain-des-Prés* and Paris. This shows that the narrator contemplates the cultures that form his identity through identifying their cultural elements that exist in his life.

In the texts, there are many different words associated with both France and America, some of which are adjectives and nouns. These vocabularies can be grouped in the tables below.

America	France
<i>Forte</i>	<i>Critique</i>
Strong	Critical
<i>Haute</i>	<i>Cliché</i>
High	Cliché
<i>Perverses</i>	<i>Intellectuelle</i>
Perverse	Intellectual
	<i>Étrange</i>
	Estrange

TABLE 1. Classification of adjectives associated with France and America

America	<i>Émotions fortes</i>	<i>Cinema</i>	<i>Système symbolique</i>
	Strong emotions	Cinema	Symbolic system
	<i>Faste</i>	<i>Acteur</i>	<i>Règle matrimonial</i>
	Splendor	Actor	Matrimonial rules
	<i>Exotisme</i>	<i>Industriel</i>	<i>Règle économique</i>
	Exoticism	Industrials	Economic rules
	<i>Argent</i>	<i>Millionnaire</i>	<i>Art</i>
	Money	Millionaires	Art
	<i>Mort</i>	<i>Héro</i>	<i>Religion</i>
	Death	Hero	Religion
	<i>Gloire</i>	<i>Hommes politiques</i>	<i>Sons</i>
	Glory	Politicians	Sounds
	<i>Vie</i>	<i>Femmes perverses</i>	
Life	Perverse women		
<i>Écran</i>	<i>Technique</i>		
Screen	Technique		
France	<i>Intelligence critique</i>	<i>Livre</i>	<i>Réflexion</i>
	Critical intelligence	Book	Reflection
	<i>Ironie</i>	<i>Littérature</i>	<i>Amitié</i>
	Irony	Literature	Friendship
	<i>Vivacité</i>	<i>Écrivain</i>	<i>Langue</i>
	Vivacity	Writer	Language
	<i>Art</i>	<i>Idée</i>	<i>Odeur</i>
	Art	Idea	Smell
	<i>Poésie</i>	<i>Discussion</i>	
	Poem	Discussion	
<i>Religion</i>	<i>Dissertation</i>		
Religion	Dissertation		

TABLE 2. Classification of nouns associated with France and America

There are two nouns associated with both cultures, those are religion and art. The association of religion and art with France occurs at the beginning of the essay, hence shows that this association happens in the early phase of narrator's contemplation of the French culture. However, in the later part of the contemplation, he found American factors in the religion and art he understood. This shows a development in the understanding which the narrator contemplates on.

Things related to the French and American culture can also be grouped into isotopies. Those isotopies are vocabularies associated with the two countries. The majority of words related to France are in the form of aspects of literature, while most of the words associated with America are aspects of cinema. Based on this, we can form literature and cinema isotopy. The literature isotopy comprises *livre*, *auteur*, *librairie*, *écrivain*, *écriture*, and *écrire*. Those words are related to written works, such as book, writer, writing, and bookstore. The cinema isotopy comprises the word Van Horne, *film*, *écran* and *acteur*. In addition, there are also words used to describe France which meaning has similarity to the word "unclear". The words to explain unclearness can be grouped into an isotopy comprising of the word *fresco*, *collage*, and *cliché*. It can be inferred that the semiotic choices the author made are done to portray an unclear image the narrator has of the French culture, but a clearer imagery of the American culture.

There are also names mentioned that represent France and America that can be grouped into name isotopy. French names isotopy comprises Sartre, Prévert, Camus, Éluard, Calvet, Baudelaire, Verlaine, Rimbaud, Giono, Lévi-Strauss and Foucault. The similarity among these names is that they are French writers and philosophers. The isotopy of American names comprises Glen Miler, Bob Hope, Hedy Lamar, Bing Crosby, Humphrey Bogart, Jean Gabin, Bourvil, Fernandel, Morgan, and Jouvet. All of those names are American actors, with the exception of Glen Miller who is a musician. There is also an isotopy of francophone figures, those are Ramuz, Jacques Berque, Albert Memmi, Frantz Fanon, Pierre Maheu and

Léandre Bergeron. This isotopy of names comprises academician, writers, philosopher, cineaste, and playwright. The name isotopies are representations of French, American, and francophone people. Overall, it can be inferred that France is mostly associated with literature and philosophy, while America is associated with cinema. This further strengthens that the narrator perceives both cultures through different channels and acquiring different types of insights from the two cultures.

FRENCH AND AMERICAN CULTURAL ELEMENTS AND STEREOTYPES

The Quebec society's condition of being surrounded by French and American culture is the background of *Place Cliché*. The presence of the two cultures in *Place Cliché* is shown through the cultural elements that represent those cultures. With the previous findings on how the narrator associates cultural elements to certain cultures, we can infer how the cultures are characterized. Other than literature and cinema, the two cultures are also symbolized by certain words that can be grouped into words with abstract and concrete characteristics. This classification can be seen in the table below.

Words with abstract characteristics to describe France	Words with concrete characteristics to describe America
<i>Livre</i>	<i>Écran</i>
Book	Screen
<i>Littérature</i>	<i>Cinéma</i>
Literature	Cinema
<i>Idée</i>	<i>Technique</i>
Idea	Technique
<i>Structure</i>	<i>Organisation</i>
Structure	Organization
<i>Écrivains</i>	<i>Acteurs</i>
Writers	Actor
<i>Langue</i>	<i>Action</i>
Language	Action

TABLE 3. Classification of words with abstract and concrete characteristic

The vocabularies that are classified as those with abstract characteristic are words referring to things that do not have a concrete or material form such as idea, structure, and language. They are also words that refer to things that do not contribute material products, such as books, literature, and writer. The vocabularies that are classified as having concreteness are those that have a visible form or visible product. Those words are screen, cinema, technique, organization, actor, and action. This shows that the French culture is generally described to be abstract, whilst American culture produces concrete items and comes in visible forms.

Literature, that is highly associated with France in this essay, is something that is related to intellectuality and knowledge. Connotatively, literature is also a source of entertainment but is considered more traditional. This is because it uses traditional media, commonly books. Writing and reading a book is considered to take longer time because writers and readers must deal with word-by-word. This shows how literature requires a process of rumination and imagination. On the other hand, cinema is a more modern type of entertainment. It uses technologies to make stories shorter, thus it is an entertainment that requires less effort from the consumer. By the same token, cinema does not give as much space for imagination because the messages they send are already portrayed in specific pictures. This renders citation such as,

«*J'ai appris l'anglais au cinéma,*»
“I learnt English through cinema”

a symbol of how instant the penetration of American culture and language is.

In its isotopy, cinema is also represented by Hollywood, while literature is represented by Saint-Germain-des-Prés. This can be found in the citation below.

«*Ma mère se nommait Hollywood. Mon père Saint-Germain-des-Prés.*»
“My mother is called Hollywood. My father Saint-Germain-des-Prés.”

Hollywood and Saint-Germain-des-Prés become interchangeable with America and France. The two places are also associated with cultural elements that are related to America and France in other parts of the text. Hollywood, in its literal meaning, is a place that is the center of the film and entertainment industry. Hollywood is also a place associated with the wealth and fame of the people in it. Saint-Germain-des-Prés is a part of Paris that is highly associated with academics and intellectuality, especially since there are many cafés known to be the places where past philosophers and writers gather, and it is also known as the *Quartier Étudiant* or student quarter for its proximity to renowned universities. Hence Saint-Germain-des-Prés symbolizes intellectuality, literature, and arts.

The wealth and fame that Hollywood symbolizes are also things that are materialistic. Wealth and fame also signify a lifestyle that is dedicated to obtaining material things. This is in line with how America is associated with “money” in another part of the text. Thus, the symbolization of America through Hollywood functions to depict the stereotype of America as a materialistic country. On the other hand, the cultured character of Saint-Germain-des-Prés is in line with the symbolization of France in abstract things. This signifies that the French lifestyle does not center around material pleasure, but pursue pleasure in the enjoyment of literature, arts, and intellectuality. This is inferred from the stereotypes of people in Saint-Germain-des-Prés, who are commonly portrayed as people who spend time in cafés discussing literature, philosophies, and arts.

According to the table, there are also other vocabularies used to symbolize France and America other than literature and cinema. Similar to the previously discussed words, the other words are also a symbolization of French abstract nature and American material nature. French culture is also described by words such as book, idea, writer, and language. Those things are related to words, thus do not have a form or is only related to concepts and theories. While words such as screen, technique, actor, and action, are related to pictures and action. Thus, has a concrete form. Things that are not concrete requires imagination to be understood, therefore people can only interpret themselves the meaning of abstract things. Concrete things have forms that can only be seen in the same form by most people. Hence abstract things can be misinterpreted more easily than concrete things. Abstract and concrete things are often related. Concrete things such as screen, technique, actor, and action are common manifestations of an abstract concept, idea, or theory. On the other hand, book, idea, writer, and language generally becomes the foundation of material things. Therefore, the two characteristics of cultural elements are oppositional but complementary.

In the essay, there are also vocabularies that can be compared directly because they have oppositional meaning, two of which are critical intelligence and strong emotion. Critical intelligence describes something that is controlled with high consciousness and knowledge, it is characterized by making responses after careful deliberations. Emotion is something that is understood as something derived from subconsciousness, thus strong emotion is something that is difficult to be controlled or free. It can be inferred that French culture is described as a controlled culture, whilst American culture is freer. On the other hand, this choice of words

portrays a coldness of France, because it emphasizes intelligence and conscious acts, while America is portrayed as more humane because emotion is something strongly related to humanity.

With all said above, the cultural elements of France come in abstract forms while those of America come in concrete forms. The stereotype that is attached to France is that their people spend their times enjoying ideas, arts, and literature. France is portrayed as a country where people sharpen their intelligence. France is a culture that is more difficult to understand. American culture is associated with worldly and material things, including wealth and fame. American culture is easier to understand, thus can tap into the vaster society. The two cultures are described to have starkly different characteristics but can be complementary.

THE HYBRID IDENTITY OF THE NARRATOR

The narrator-actor “I” accepts the presence of both the French and American culture. This is inferred from the positive focalizations of literature and cinema which are the symbols of France and America. In the text, the narrator displays his affinity for both literature and cinema. Literature and cinema were brought up at the same time several times. This seems to be how the narrator shows that there are similar characters of the two.

«Pourtant il existait deux domaines de l'esprit que l'Église de Rome ne contrôlait pas tout à fait, ne pouvant que leur imposer une censure qui les rendait plus alléchants encore: le livre, l'écran.»

“Even so, there were two areas of the mind that the Church of Rome did not quite control, it can only impose on them a censorship that made them even more enticing: the book, the screen.”

In that citation, the book becomes the representation of literature and screen becomes the representation of cinema. The two elements are portrayed to take part as the things in the narrator’s life that aren’t controlled by the church. It can be inferred that the narrator accepts the presence of the two cultural elements. The two elements are present at the same time and hold the same role. This portrayal of equal roles shows that the narrator does not prefer one cultural element over another. Without any preference, the narrator positions himself in-between the two cultures. The in-between position creates a third space where the narrator forms a third culture that is neither French, not American. Given the in-between position of the narrator, the third culture he creates is formed by a combination of the cultural elements of the culture surrounding him.

This type of cultural identity is also known as a hybrid identity. The intention of the narrator to form this identity is shown through some of his statements. The notions delivered by the narrator in this essay show an intention to merge the two identities, which can also be referred to as hybrid. Some of these notions are contained in this sentence.

«Nous pouvons, nous, écrire l'américain directement en français!»
“We can write American directly in French.”

The narrator proposed to use the French language, which is one of the aforementioned French cultural elements, to write about America. This means that he sees the French language he uses as a tool to deliver the American culture he knows about. This symbolizes a benevolent collaboration of the two cultures. The hybridity concept is applied in this statement because what the narrator essentially says is that he wants to merge the two cultural elements and create a third space in the form of American writing in French.

The form of this hybrid identity is depicted as well in the narrator's focalization. The hybrid identity is a Quebec identity that hybridized the French and American cultural elements and contextualized in Quebec's location that is in Canada. One of the ways the narrator depicts this form of identity is by using symbols such as Côte-des-Neiges in this sentence.

«Il y a toujours, en haut de la Côte-des-Neiges, une librairie française, et un peu plus bas le cinéma Van Home qui présente des films américains.»
"There is always, at the top of Côte-des-Neiges, a French bookstore, and a little further down the Van Home cinema which presents American films."

Côte-des-Neiges is described to be a neighborhood which has relation to literature and cinema. Having both a French bookstore and American cinema, Côte-des-Neiges symbolizes how French and American culture can co-exist in Quebec's ground. The same message is shown in the portrayal of French-Canadians as people who sing Botrel and dance to Glen Miller in this sentence.

«Nous étions, cela pétait d'évidence, des Canadiens français, chantant Botrel et dansant sur des musiques de Glen Miller.»
"We are, evidently, the French Canadians, who sing Botrel and dance to the music of Glen Miller."

This depiction signifies that a French culture and American culture can become one as a habit of the same society. For that reason, the Quebec identity is constructed from the French and American cultural elements and the common geographical location of the Quebec society.

There are also some statements that convey the narrator's intention to merge the two cultures more explicitly. One of which is that the narrator states to be structured in French and organized Americanly.

«Je crois avoir été structuré à la française et organisé à la américaine.»
"I believe to be structured the French way and organized the American way."

The word structure and organization are similar in meaning. Those words referred to an arrangement designed to direct people. This shows that even when the two cultures take up different roles, the roles are equal and similar. The narrator does not only show that he doesn't prefer one culture over the other, but also shows that he wants both cultures to be present.

This can also be related to how the French and American cultural elements are portrayed to have different characteristics. By portraying the cultural elements as different but equal, the narrator also argues that the elements are complementary. The existence of the different elements within the narrator's self, such as what's shown in the previous citation, aims to show that his identity exists only when both cultures exist. This is also shown in the usage of different adjectives that are oppositional but not mutually exclusive for the two cultures, such as strong and critical. Both adjectives hold different roles but are both positive. This emphasizes further the intention to merge the two cultures.

This intention comes as a development from the initial state of the narrator that depicts the cultures as two different and separated elements. At the beginning of the essay, the narrator thinks that all things related to ideas come from France, while all things material come from America. The separate portrayal of the two elements at the beginning is shown in this citation.

«Les idées étaient toutes françaises. Mais les acteurs, les industriels, les millionnaires, les héros, les hommes politiques et les femmes perverses étaient tous Américains.»
"The ideas were all French. But the actors, the industrialists, the millionaires, the heroes, the politicians and the perverse women were all Americans. "

However, in the development of the text, the narrator realizes that both cultures influence one another. The narrator realizes that there are American influences in many aspects all over the world, including in France. The narrator found that the two cultures have fused. This finding causes the narrator to realize that he has never understood the French nor the American culture fully. This can be seen in this statement.

«Pourtant ses images sont toujours produites à Hollywood, puisque la télévision a pris la relève des cinémas de quartier. Les idées viennent-elles toujours de France?»
"Yet their images are still produced in Hollywood since television has taken over the neighborhood cinemas. Do ideas always come from France? "

In the statement above, it is shown that the narrator questions his previous understanding ideas only come from France. This change of conception is also shown in how at the end of the essay where idea and religion are no longer only associated with France but also America.

The narrator also admits that he requires both elements of the two cultures to be present in order to know both cultures. This can be seen in his focalization of how to know France he needs help from the cinema. France is located far from Quebec and cinema is described as a tool to understand things that he cannot reach. He explains that he cannot learn about France directly, thus his picturization of France is blurry, as stated in this citation.

«Je procédais par collage, je découpais dans les paysages d'ici des objets familiers que je situais au hasard dans une fresque imaginaire et chaude. Je remplissais les vides, je bouchais des trous avec une pâte de papier et d'encre.»
"I proceeded by collage, I cut into the landscapes here familiar objects that I place randomly in an imaginary and hot fresco. I filled the voids, I plugged holes with a paste of paper and ink."

His understanding of France is analogized by collage and fresco. These two words refer to things that are formed by fractured pieces combined. This means that the narrator also admits that the information he has about France is only in the form of pieces of information that is not complete. Literature is described to be one of the tools that the narrator uses to understand France, especially in providing information about France through the books he reads.

«Je me suis constitué une France de papier et j'ai parcouru le monde sur celluloid.»
"I built a France out of paper and traveled the world on celluloid."

The statement that France is built from papers is a reference to literature. While the ability of the narrator to travel the world from celluloid is a reference to cinema and how cinema takes him to places he has never been to before. Therefore, this also goes to show how the narrator never really understood the cultures, he could only imagine how France is like and could only imagine himself to be present in places he isn't actually in through the help of cinema.

This is something in relation to the title of the essay, *Place Cliché*. The literal meaning of *cliché* is a negative prototype. A cliché is a picture that only shows a blurry shadow of what is being captured. It is not the finished outcome of a picture yet, but it can be projected into a film. A clear cliché produces a film. The character of a cliché is in line with the portrayal of France as something abstract or unclear. America is portrayed to have the

characteristic of a film or a clear picture. Therefore, the process of concretizing the idea of France happens because of the presence of films or cinema, which essentially represents America. This is shown in this citation.

«*Mes premières images de Paris me furent même présentées par Gene Kelly sous la pluie.*»
“My first pictures of Paris are presented to me by Gene Kelly in the rain.”

This focalization shows that the narrator obtains a picture of Paris from the cinema. He knows France from American movies. Indirectly, the narrator shows that his understanding of France is unclear or inaccurate because it isn't obtained directly from France.

In correlation with the actual condition, this is a portrayal of the narrator's position as someone from Quebec who experiences difficulties in understanding French culture due to the geographical barrier. However, the abstractness and distance of France from the narrator is an essential part of the contemplation of his identity. Through this, he realizes that he cannot fully be a part of the French culture, nor he can fully be a part of the American culture. This takes him to the desire to have his own cultural identity. This is proven in his focalization that the French-Canadians cannot understand the entirety of French and American culture. The effort to do so exhausts him and that is stated here.

«*Cela exige une connaissance étendue de toute la gamme française, des odeurs de Paris et de la Provence, cela demande une perception aiguë de tous les sons américains, ceux des fusées de la Nasa ou des publicités de Madison Avenue, cela requiert d'en savoir toujours autant (et parfois plus) sur les Autres que sur soi. Cause profonde de la grande fatigue culturelle canadienne-française?*»

"This requires extensive knowledge of the entire French range, the smells of Paris and Provence, it requires a sharp perception of all American sounds, those of NASA rockets or Madison Avenue commercials, it requires to always know as much (and sometimes more) about others than about oneself. A profound cause of the great French-Canadian cultural fatigue?"

This question implies that the narrator's identity cannot be French nor American, but French-Canadian instead. This identity receives influences from the two cultures but isn't part of any of them, thus does need a full understanding of both cultures.

Even though the term “French-Canadian” is used in the previous focalization, it is replaced by *Québécois* in this statement.

«*Il n'y a plus de Canadiens français. Il existe maintenant des Québécois francophones.*»
"There are no more French-Canadians. There are now francophone Quebecers."

This focalization emphasizes that the usage of “French-Canadian” refer to Quebec's society no longer applies. Quebecer, that's more commonly said in its French form “*Québécois*”, is a term coined during the Quiet Revolution to replace the term “French-Canadian”. The usage of this term shows that the narrator specifically identifies himself as a part of the Quebec society and not just a Canadian that speaks French. This is showing that the cultural identity affirmed by the narrator is the *Québécois* culture which incorporates the geographic similarity that binds the people of Quebec. The *Québécois* culture has its own elements, separate from Canada and France, hence the rejection of the term “French-Canadian”.

The usage of the word “*Québécois*” is an attempt to distinguish the society in Quebec who speaks French. By using this term, the narrator emphasizes its existence. Therefore, *Québécois* is the special identity for Canadians in Quebec who embodies the cultural

elements elaborated by the narrator, including the French language, the affinity of French literature and American films. This means the term *Québécois francophone* also shows that the narrator distinguishes himself not only from France and America but also Canada. Therefore, the narrator specifically rejects the term “French-Canadian” and sums up his identity to be a Quebecker who speaks French.

In comparison, the narrator does use the word “*Canadiens français*” more often. The usage of this term in plural form can also be inferred as a generalization of the entire Quebec society. However, the term “*Canadiens français*” is not used to refer to himself personally, but rather as a third person. He refers to himself as *Québécois*, such as what can be seen in this statement.

«Je suis un écrivain québécois de langue française.»
“I am a *Québécois* writer of the French language.”

What it shows is that the term “*Canadiens français*” is a label of identity that is created by society outside of the owner of that identity. The statement above goes to show that the narrator identifies himself as a *Québécois*. From this, we can see that *Québécois* is the form of identity that is constructed and validated by the beholder himself, instead of an external party.

The narrator concluded his ideas by conveying his intention to merge the French and American culture in himself. This is done by stating that “We can write American directly in French.” This statement, as previously mentioned, is an example of the hybrid culture. This is also an invitation to start using both elements of the culture. The narrator also highlights a special trait that the Quebeckers have, which is to live close enough to America to understand American culture and a natural speaker of French. Therefore, the narrator shows an intention to utilize his unique hybridity. This statement is positioned alongside the names of francophone figures who hold roles such as academician, writer, philosopher, cineaste, and playwright. This is done to show that francophones too can fulfill the roles predominantly belonged to French and Americans.

This one again displays the concept of hybridity. *Québécois* is the third space that is different from French and American culture. The impartial position the narrator takes in facing the two cultures show that he positions himself with his own culture, which is the *Québécois* culture. Both French and American culture holds a stake in the construction of his identity, but that does not entail the obligation to be a part of or to fully comprehend French and American culture. The conclusion of the essay explains that the cultural elements of France and America form the hybrid identity that is the *Québécois* identity in the narrator.

In the real-life context of Quebec, *Place Cliché* portrays how the common habits, knowledge, and cultural settings are formed in Quebec. It does not represent the entire Quebec’s view of multiculturalism, but it shows one of the ways French-speakers view their culture, as well as American and French culture. It portrays how in a multicultural setting the society seeks for a solution to the cultural frictions they often experience. While in *Speak White* resistance become the perceived solution, *Place Cliché*’s way of responding to them is by embracing all influences in a way more similar to *Le Figurier Enchanté*. As a discourse, the essay portrays Godbout’s ideology in which he believes that hybridity is the ideal response to cultural differences. *Place Cliché* can be seen as an attempt for the non-dominant cultural group to assert their existence in a multicultural society. This is shown by the essay’s inclusion of character identification, narrative voice, and focalization (Lutsenko, 2018). Henceforth, the hybrid identity of *Québécois* is no longer deemed as a symbol of alienation or marginalization but is instead a cultural asset.

CONCLUSION

The essay *Place Cliché* by Jacques Godbout is themed identity hybridity in an intercultural society. The essay *Place Cliché* differentiates itself from other literary works themed interculturalism by portraying a character that actively tries to understand the influencing cultures, thus cultural elements became a big part of the discussion. The essay is contextualized to the experience of a *Québécois* who experiences cultural hybridity in ways different from the Italian immigrant in *Le Figurier Enchanté* and from the nuance of the *Speak White* poem. The narrator grew up and internalized a *Québécois* culture that incorporates French and American cultures thus did not experience the same struggle as Micone's character in *Le Figurier Enchanté* nor did the narrator resonate defiance as a marginalized group that is expressed in *Speak White*. The previous explanations have shown the position of the narrator in the face of two cultures. Unlike the poem, *Speak White*, the presence of two cultures remains in harmony within the narrator's self instead of creating societal conflict. Therefore, it can be inferred that the narrator was in a non-preferential position to any of the cultures which is the foundation of a hybrid identity. Knowing the narrator is a part of the Quebec society, this essay reflects how individuals in Quebec also refuses to side with either French, American or Canadian culture. Instead, they label themselves as *Québécois*, which is a distinct identity that associates itself with the cultural elements of the French and American culture.

Place Cliché is a uniquely positioned literary work that portrays the opposite of most studies that highlight the cultural and social conflict within Quebec. Despite other studies that show a tendency of conflict as an in-between cultural group, *Place Cliché* portrays a narrator that embraces the situation as an identity. This produces a distinct identity, known as the hybrid identity, that is able to have a unique level of understanding of both American and French culture. Although it has been influenced by external societies, the *Québécois* in *Place Cliché* takes pride in having the ability to combine both cultures which can't be done by Americans, French, or Canadians.

The narrator becomes a representation of the Quebec society that underwent an identity construction within the time of writing of this essay. The society accepts the presence of both French and American culture but is aware that they are not a part of any of those cultures. The presence of these two cultures that are often found in the Quebec society is shown through the cultural elements mentioned by the narrator, most of which in correlation with literature and cinema. How both literature and cinema are portrayed positively conveys the non-preferential treatment the narrator has towards both culture and positions himself in-between the two cultures. In the absence of preference, the narrator declares that his preference is to have an identity of his own, the *Québécois* identity which is hybridized from the cultural elements found in the narrator's contemplation. This study has shown that *Place Cliché* is representing a cultural stance that takes place in the heights of Quebec and Canada's tension in the nineteen sixties. The author idealizes and thus propagates the idea of hybridity and intercultural spirit in response of the plural cultures in Canada. The hybridity portrayed by Godbout symbolizes the existence of a non-binary multicultural society that refuses to be an opposition of either side of culture.

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