

Seminar: Minority Language Performances in Quebec and Canada / Performances de langue minoritaire au Québec et au Canada

Organizers/Organisateurs : Thea Fitz-James & Sean Robertson-Palmer

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Languages: We invite papers/proposals in either English or French, will be able to correspond in either English or French, and aim to maintain a bilingual working group throughout. However, “la langue primaire” of the working group will be English.

Langues : Nous acceptons les propositions en français ou en anglais mais notre session sera surtout menée en anglais.

CALL FOR PROPOSALS:

This seminar explores Official Language Minority Communities (OLMCs) within Canadian performances of cultural identity. OLMC is a community “whose maternal or chosen official language is not the majority language in their province or territory – in other words, Anglophones in Quebec and Francophones outside of Quebec” (Canada Council). Looking specifically at minority languages in performance traditions, such as plays, films, music, and everyday performances, this working group invites participants across a variety of disciplines to address, critique, or further contribute to analysis on performances of Canadian nationalism, sovereignty, and cultural identity. Through a focus on OLMCs, this seminar explores how language intersects with cultural identity. What alternative performances of nationalism, sovereignty, and cultural identity trouble the English-French binary in/across Canada? Upon what stages-- be they institutional, technological, or artistic— do minority language performances take place? What of performances ‘lost in translation’ that explore failures of colonial integration or assimilation? Does the ‘official’ recognition of language minorities have the potential to undermine colonial authority? What role does language play in the performance of colonial nationalism, and how and where is that performance located on the map of Canada?

Ultimately this seminar hopes to continue the conversation on the intersections of performances, language and identity, and indeed focuses on the country’s colonial languages in order to critique and deconstruct colonialism. This seminar aims to reflect the diverse cultural identities reflected in OLMC performances, and as such we aim to provide space for the disruption of French-English binaries. This may include artists and artistic practices that negotiate, reimagine or resist the categorization of identity within the framework of Canada’s chartered languages. As Meerzon (2019) notes, imagining our nation’s stages as inclusive of artists with accents (audible minorities) or “hyphenated identities” (i.e. Lebanese-Québécois, Chinese-Canadian) opens new potential for the rehearsal of Canada’s civic nationalism (2-3). We hope this seminar will add to the historicization of OLMC performances, and join the important previous scholarship that aims to locate anglo-language theatre in Quebec, and franco-language theatre outside of Quebec (See Beauchamp and Beddows 2014; Graham 2001). We are inspired by the post-colonial work of Nolette’s “playful translation” (“traduction ludique”), and hope to connect questions of “where” OLMCs performances take place with “what” and “why” they take place (Hurley “townships theatres” 2016). As such, we explore the role language plays in situating home and cultural identity, and how it is staged alongside performances of Québécoisité and Canadian Nationalism.

We invite papers/proposals in either English or French, will be able to correspond in either English or French, and aim to maintain a bilingual working group throughout. However, “la langue primaire” of the working group will be English. To participate in this working group, please submit a 250-word abstract/proposal to Thea Fitz-James (tfitzjames@gmail.com) and Sean Robertson-Palmer (seanrp@yorku.ca) by **February 1, 2020**. Successful participants will be expected to submit a 5-page paper by mid-March 2020.