

## Table of Contents

1. Introduction	.....	2
2. YFile Announcement	.....	4
3. Elizabeth Sabiston, Opening Remarks and Introduction, <i>Pluri-Culture et écrits migratoires</i> Book Launch	.....	6
4. Robert Drummond, Remarks for Launch of <i>Pluri-Culture and Migrant Writings</i>	.....	9
5. Hédi Bouraoui, Concluding Remarks, <i>Pluri-Culture et écrits migratoires</i> Book Launch	.....	10
6. Book Reviews		
i. Denise Brahim, Professeur émérite, Sorbonne, Paris.	.....	11
ii. Stephen Van Andel, Graduate Student, English, York University, Toronto.	.....	13
7. <i>Pluri-Culture et écrits migratoires/Pluri-Culture and Migrant Writings</i> Book Launch Photos	.....	18

## DOSSIER

### *PLURI-CULTURE AND MIGRANT WRITINGS/ PLURI-CULTURE ET ÉCRITS MIGRATOIRES*

The Canada-Mediterranean Centre (CMC) is pleased to announce the publication of *Pluri-Culture and Migrant Writings/Pluri-Culture et écrits migratoires*, edited by Elizabeth Sabiston and Robert J. Drummond (Sudbury: Human Sciences Monograph Series, Laurentian University, 2014, 560 pp.). The book, which is bilingual and interdisciplinary, constitutes the Proceedings of the May 2012 International Conference held at York University. Of the 50-plus papers presented at the Conference (we received over 90 proposals), we selected 33 that were deemed most worthy of publication. We thank SSHRC/CRSH for their generous support of both the Conference and the book. We are also grateful for the support of the Dean's Office (LA&PS), the Vice-President Academic, Stong College, the Departments of French Studies and English. We thank Ali Reguigui, the Editor at the Human Sciences Monograph Series, for his patience, meticulous care, and attention to detail.

*Pluri-Culture and Migrant Writings* has received a number of early favorable reviews and comments. Two of the reviews are published here, by Denise Brahimi (Sorbonne, Paris); and by Stephen Van Andel (York University). The review by Rafik Darragi, which we have excerpted below, can be found in its entirety at [www.leaders.com.tn](http://www.leaders.com.tn). We have also recently received a very good review by Paul-François Sylvestre that appeared in *L'Express de Toronto*. It can be found at <http://www.lexpress.to/archives/14902/>

#### Other Critical Comments:

“ . . . a striking work in its richness and diversity . . . articles on migrant literatures, French-Arab, Francophone African, Sephardic, Italian, as well as on female immigration and even on transcultural connections arising from artistic and athletic activities . . . a profound and unified scholarly work . . . to be read and reread.”

Rafik Darragi, Professor Emeritus, Université de Tunis

“ . . . the book shows great care in preparation; the division of the texts into thematic sections allows easy consultation, and creates an exhaustive critical instrument for the study of such a vast theme as the literature of migration . . . “ (Angela Buono, Università di Napoli, Italy)

“ . . . a tremendous achievement.” (Marie-Christine Leps, York University)

“ . . . deserves to be read by all government agencies concerned with immigration.”

(Éric Cader, CIUT, Toronto)

The text has also been the subject of several discussions (*débats*) on Pot Pourri, the CIUT francophone program, with the kind help of Éric Cader, who interviewed Hédi Bouraoui, Founder of the CMC, and Professor Marie-Christine Leps, one of our contributors. Elizabeth Sabiston was interviewed by Tracy Griffiths on CHRY, the York radio station.

Radio Interviews:

Hédi Bouraoui, Sunday, October 19, 2014, CIUT, by Éric Cader.

Marie-Christine Leps, Sunday, November 16, 2014, CIUT, by Éric Cader.

Elizabeth Sabiston, Tuesday, November 18, 2014, CHRY, by Tracy Griffiths.

The *YFile* carried the following announcement of the November 19, 2014 book launch at the York University Bookstore. We are adding, for your information, the comments made at the launch by Elizabeth Sabiston, Robert Drummond, and Hédi Bouraoui. Special thanks to Kay Li, LA&PS Research Officer, one of our contributors, and a member of our Editorial Committee, for her excellent photos taken at the event.

*Pluri-Culture and Migrant Writings/Pluri-Culture et écrits migratoires* is available from the York University Bookstore (\$35):

<http://www.bookstore.yorku.ca>

We encourage you to suggest this title to your university or community libraries, colleagues and friends. If you would like to review the book, or know a colleague who would, please contact the CMC for a free review copy: [cmc@yorku.ca](mailto:cmc@yorku.ca)

Elizabeth Sabiston

Director, CMC

# YFile Announcement

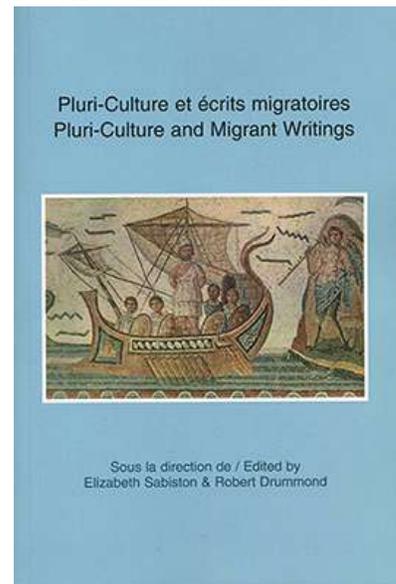
13.11.2014 in [Current News](#)

## Book exploring issues of migration launches Wednesday

The history of the human race is a history of migration. Migration south-north, east-west, voluntary, forced, across nations, cultures, religions and languages, as well as the various issues it raises are explored in a new book of essays launching Wednesday.

*Pluri-Culture and Migrant Writings/Pluri-Culture et Écrits migratoires* (Human Sciences Monograph Series, Laurentian University) is comprised of 33 of the best essays culled from the proceedings of an international conference organized by the Canada-Mediterranean Centre.

It is edited by York English Professor Emerita Elizabeth Sabiston and University Professor Emeritus Robert J. Drummond, former dean of arts. The launch will take place **Nov. 19**, from 2:30 to 4:30pm, at the York University Bookstore, Keele campus. Everyone is welcome to attend the event. Light refreshments will be served.



This bilingual and interdisciplinary collection includes an introduction by Sabiston and a conclusion by Drummond. It focuses on a variety of discourses, both oral and written, to address key issues of migration, which has been increasingly problematized in the global village we inhabit. As Drummond notes, it moves beyond the facts and numbers of the social sciences to put a human face on the immigrant experience.

The aim of the book is to create cultural dialogue, a bridge between similarity and difference, which may mitigate the “clash of civilizations.” By using the tools of both the humanities and the social sciences, the collection underlines the ways in which humans create their own cultures and thereby present a model of tolerance, understanding, peace and acceptance of difference in the context of cultural pluralism.

Denise Brahimy of the Sorbonne, Paris, says “The originality of these writings is that they do not restrict themselves to developing the theme of exile, but are engaged in reflections that one could call essential or existential ...”

And Rafik Darragi of the Université de Tunis, Tunisia, calls it “... a striking work in its richness and diversity ... a profound and unified scholarly work ... to be read and reread.”

International scholars are represented from Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia, Cameroon, Sénégal, France, Italy, Spain and China, as well as the United States and Canada. A number of York scholars contributed essays, including Lesley Higgins and Marie-Christine Leps, Allan Weiss, Kay Li, Wally Dyba, Hernán Humaña and Olga Stein.

The conference and the proceedings were supported by a grant from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. The organizers and editors also acknowledge the help of the Office of the Dean, Faculty of Liberal Arts and Professional Studies (Dean Martin Singer and then-associate dean research Barbara Crow), Stong College, and the Departments of French Studies and English.

Éric Cader, CIUT, Toronto, notes that the collection “... deserves to be read by all government agencies concerned with immigration.”

Copies of the book will be available for sale at a special discounted price of \$25 (a \$10 reduction from the list price). This is a one-time only offer. Sabiston and Drummond will be available to sign copies.

For those unable to attend, the book is available at the [York University Bookstore](#).

*For more University news, photos and videos, visit the [YFile](#) homepage.*

copyright 2012 York University

***PLURI-CULTURE ET ÉCRITS MIGRATOIRES***  
**BOOK LAUNCH**

**York University Bookstore, Wednesday, November 19, 2014, 2:30-4:30**

**Elizabeth Sabiston, Opening Remarks and Introduction**

Welcome to our book launch and celebration, members of administration, contributors present, and absent overseas but with us in spirit.

Thanks to the Bookstore (Steve Glassman and Michael Legris). The Bookstore is our distributor and enabler. Michael and Steve made the arrangements for this event. Printing Services (Chris Panagopoulos) has helped with the poster and publicity.

Thanks to Éric Cader, CIUT, who is doing publicity for us. On Sunday he interviewed Marie-Christine Leps about the book and the conference. We appreciate her help.

We acknowledge with gratitude the support of SSHRC, the Dean's Office (LA&PS), especially Dean Martin Singer and then-Associate Dean Research Barbara Crow, Stong College, and the Departments of French Studies and English.

Of those working with us at the CMC, we are very grateful to Liliana Guadagnoli for her great work on the organization of the conference in May 2012, and now to Sylvia Waterman-Anderson, who has been assisting us both at Stong College and now in the Department of French Studies. Many thanks to Marcella Walton, my Assistant for three years, who did good work during the conference, and on this book. We congratulate her on her new position with OAC, and wish her every success.

I would like to introduce our new CMC Assistant, Jessica Abraham, and I have asked her to say a few words.

My other helper is Stephen Van Andel, my R.A. from Graduate English, who is working on his M.A., and was one of my best students as an undergraduate. He has been of great help in the office, postering, etc. He can't be here as the Bibliography course meets at this time, but sends his best.

And of course tremendous thanks to our CMC founder, Hédi Bouraoui, who has been a tireless promoter and idea man for the project.

Introduction: A few personal words about the conference and the book.

I'm an immigrant myself. My parents emigrated from Scotland to the U.S., and I in turn emigrated from the U.S. to Canada. My mother moved to Toronto after my father's death, and she said joyously, "This is the third country I've lived in!" I was an immigrant of the invisible kind. I'd like to talk about those who are not so joyous.

Show *Star* picture of North African and Sub-Saharan migration to Italy.

We tried in the conference and the book to hear the individual voices of migrants, to reverse or counteract the anonymity of numbers and statistics.

Put in historical context, Canada and the U.S. have witnessed waves of immigration:

- The Highland clearances (18<sup>th</sup> century)
- The Irish potato famine
- The “Hungry ‘40’s” in Victorian Britain
- Russian pogroms – Jewish immigration at the turn of the century
- Italian immigration post-World Wars I and II
- Vietnamese post-the Viet Nam War, and now the “Boat People”
- Haitian migration during and after the Duvalier years

... and so on...

The issue is, when older immigrants become “us,” newer immigrants tend to be perceived as “them.”

We have tried to present the diverse voices of immigrant writers, writers about immigration, interviews – in other words, we based the conference, and the book, on discourses, verbal documents.

The themes have included:

- Immigration to France – from North Africa, Sub-Saharan Africa, from China.
- Immigration to Italy – perhaps the most problematical today – Alessandrini’s paper on the Italian educational system attempting to bridge the gap between mother country and adoptive country.
- Immigration to Canada, and particularly Québec.
- “Reverse” immigration – Allan Weiss’s paper on a Canadian woman writer’s experience of Africa.
- Heterotopia in Michael Ondaatje’s novels – see essay of Lesley Higgins and Marie-Christine Leps.
- Immigration then and now – my historical perspective, comparing Willa Cather’s picture of 19<sup>th</sup>-century immigration to America from Eastern Europe (*My Ántonia*) with Hédi Bouraoui’s depiction of contemporary migration from North Africa around the Mediterranean islands (*Les Aléas d’une Odyssée*).
- Sephardic writers post-World War II (Nina Lichtenstein’s essay).
- Female immigration.
- Immigration all over, in the section on Hédi’s work – Hannibal, the hero of the trilogy, voyages all over the Mediterranean islands, and other of his protagonists end their journeys in Canada.

Implicit is the contrast between the American “melting pot” and the “Canadian mosaic.” The conference, like the CMC, was founded on the premise that the mosaic is the more fitting metaphor and goal, providing that there is **dialogue** between the various cultures comprising the mosaic: that is, Italians learning about Chinese, and so on. The immigrants not only adopt the

new culture, but retain their own in order to create a **new** culture, which Hédi has called “**Créaculture**,” or “**Transculturalism**,” to combat the “clash of civilizations.” The conference itself became a kind of mini-United Nations, as most of us, including myself and Marcella, stayed in the Pond Road Residence to promote interaction and help the overseas delegates to familiarize themselves with the York campus. I’m happy to say a number of lasting friendships were formed. As it happened, the Refugee Centre was using the residence at the same time, so there was a friendly buzz of languages and exchanges.

I’d now like to introduce my co-editor Bob Drummond (who probably needs no introduction as former Dean of Arts), to say a few words.

I’m delighted to see that we have here a number of our participants, or contributing authors (introduce them). I’d like to ask if anyone in the audience, including our authors, would like to say a few words. The floor is yours!

Last but not least, I’d like to ask Hédi Bouraoui, the founder of the CMC, to conclude our discussions today.

## Remarks for Launch of *Pluri-Culture and Migrant Writings*

**Robert J. Drummond**

I want first to thank my colleague, Betty Sabiston, for allowing me to play a role in this collection and in the conference from which it derives. At York we pride ourselves on being early adapters of the interdisciplinarity that is common in the aspirations, if not the regular practice, of contemporary universities. But it is still rare to have a social scientist and a humanist collaborate in a project that draws their interests and expertise together. By allowing me – a social scientist by training – to experience so many contributions by humanists in an area of our mutual interest, Professor Sabiston has contributed valuably to my education.

Second, I want to commend the authors whose papers were presented at the conference, and especially those represented in this collection. They have taken a clear-eyed, though generally hopeful, view of the migration experience and the culture contact that it inevitably involves. In so doing, they have helped a social scientist, normally concerned with macroscopic patterns and statistics, to understand what it means to *feel* the experience of migration at an individual level.

Finally I want express the hope that studying the creative and scholarly work of those who have written about migration will enable us better to understand the “other” not only as humanly similar but also as valuably different, so that we may approach “pluriculture” not with fear and distaste but with excitement and celebration.

***PLURI-CULTURE ET ÉCRITS MIGRATOIRES***  
**BOOK LAUNCH**

**York University Bookstore, Wednesday, November 19, 2014, 2:30-4:30**

**Hédi Bouraoui, Concluding Remarks**

Good afternoon, everyone! Thank you for coming to this important event for the CMC. Speaking for myself and the CMC team, I am grateful to see so many people.

We have all worked hard for over two years to publish this book, based on the May 2012 international conference held at York, which in turn took two years to organize.

First of all, I'd like to thank Betty, who has been directing the Centre from its inception in 2002. I am very grateful for her professionalism. She has, among other things, been directing two collections we publish, with the help of Steve Glassman and Chris Panagopoulos of the York Bookstore and Printing Services, *Collection Nomadanse* for creative work and *Collection Mosaïque* for academic/critical. We have also just started an online journal, the *Revue CMC Review*.

Betty had the infinite patience to fill out so many forms for the SSHRC application for the conference and book, and I am happy to say that she was successful in obtaining a substantial grant. Congratulations!

I would like to thank Betty and Bob Drummond for the production of the book, which is extremely well presented in thematic sections.

Finally, I'd like to thank Steve Glassman for agreeing to be our distributor. This is very important for us. The publisher, the Human Sciences Monograph Series at Laurentian University, is edited by my friend Ali Reguigui, who gave us the right to distribute the book.

I'd like to close with a little anecdote. I happened to be working on an interview for a special 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary issue of *Horizons Maghrébins* (l'Université de Toulouse), which was to be devoted to two former students, including myself, who became well-known writers. It was corrected by myself and Rachid Aous, but I said that the best way to be sure is to send it to Betty, who is better at French grammar and proofreading than two native speakers. Rachid is now writing an article for the *Revue CMC Review*, and he said "Give it to Betty" so there are no mistakes.

Our task now is to make *Pluri-Culture and Migrant Writings* known to a wide audience through the media, book reviews, etc.

This ends the formal part of the book launch – now enjoy the refreshments and conversation!

***Pluri-culture et écrits migratoires*, sous la direction de Elizabeth Sabiston et Robert Drummond, Sudbury, Ontario, Canada, 2014.**

Ce beau et gros livre (560 pages !) est le résultat d'un colloque international qui a eu lieu à l'Université York de Toronto en mai 2012. Au premier regard porté sur les 33 articles qui le composent, on se rend compte que les participants sont d'appartenances très diverses, venant aussi bien de France, du Canada, des trois pays du Maghreb et d'Italie, ce qui est déjà beaucoup mais ne tient compte que des universités où ils travaillent actuellement, alors que leurs origines ethniques et culturelles sont encore beaucoup plus variées. C'est dire que dans le sujet indiqué par le titre du recueil, la plupart des auteurs se sentent impliqués personnellement, et qu'ils parlent ou écrivent à partir d'expériences ou de faits dont ils se tiennent depuis longtemps au plus près. Cependant il ne faudrait pas en conclure à la nécessité d'être soi-même un migrant pour s'intéresser aux écrits migratoires. Les textes dont il est question dans ce livre sont des œuvres littéraires et quiconque aime la littérature peut être amené à les apprécier. Ce qui ressort de ce livre est l'importance prise par ces mêmes écrits à notre époque et ce pour deux raisons : d'une part les phénomènes de migration choisie ou plus ou moins forcée sont de plus en plus nombreux, on pourrait aller jusqu'à dire qu'ils la caractérisent ; et d'autre part il y a aussi de plus en plus d'écrivains qui éprouvent le besoin d'en parler, la nouveauté de ces écrits étant qu'ils ne se bornent pas à développer le thème de l'exil mais s'engagent dans des réflexions qu'on pourrait dire aussi bien essentielles et existentielles.

Avant de s'expliquer sur ce double aspect, il faut revenir sur ce très riche recueil, pour rendre hommage au Centre Méditerranée-Canada (CMC) du rôle qu'il a joué dans cette initiative. L'écart qui est inclus dans sa définition—presque un oxymore—est la promesse d'une culture qui ne s'effraie d'aucune différence et d'aucun rapprochement. Il est possible qu'une ville comme Toronto soit le lieu où l'on peut aborder en connaissance de cause une telle diversité, encore fallait-il un homme pour s'en charger et pour en être si l'on peut dire l'incarnation—et l'on aura reconnu cet homme en la personne d'Hédi Bouraoui. Nul n'ignore qu'il a été et continue à être le valeureux champion de la transculture, un concept qui vient de lui, même s'il ne cesse de lui valoir des disciples. Sans doute s'étonnera-t-on bientôt qu'il ait fallu toute sa ferveur et sa conviction pour parvenir à l'imposer. En tout cas, *Pluri-Culture et écrits migratoires* ne laisse aucun doute sur l'importance du rôle qu'il a joué, et l'on voit bien que tous ceux qui le connaissent le savent à l'origine des principaux concepts de la pluri-culture ; d'autant qu'il a su leur donner corps en inventant des mots pour les dire, mots poétiques et riches de sens justement parce qu'ils mettent en œuvre le pouvoir créateur de la poésie.

Le recueil se partage en plusieurs sections selon l'origine géographique des migrants et leur pays d'accueil, mais on se rend compte en écrivant ces mots qu'ils sont réducteurs par rapport aux

prolongements de ce qu'on pourrait appeler l'expérience migratoire, dont il est tout à fait évident qu'elle ne consiste pas simplement en un déplacement dans l'espace. Et c'est ici que le témoignage des écrivains est tout à fait important, parce qu'ils sont en état d'explorer ce qui se passe chez les gens qui vivent ce déplacement au quotidien, comme une entreprise existentielle. On retrouve ici l'un des deux mots annoncés, pour dire que c'est de cette existence au quotidien des migrants que la littérature, romanesque ou poétique, sait tirer une riche substance, d'autant plus appréciable qu'elle constitue une découverte pour nombre de lecteurs. Elle donne le sentiment—et n'est-ce pas l'un des buts de la littérature ? — que nous frôlons chaque jour des êtres dont la vie devrait nous interroger bien plus qu'elle ne le fait généralement.

Pourquoi dire aussi—et c'est le second mot annoncé—que de telles réflexions sont essentielles ? Parce qu'elles touchent à ce qu'on a trop longtemps appelé des problèmes d'identité, un mot qui ne peut manquer de venir à l'esprit, évidemment, mais dont il faut pourtant savoir à quel point il peut constituer un piège, parce qu'il immobilise, parce qu'il bloque et tout simplement parce qu'il parle de ce qui n'existe pas. La plupart des articles de ce recueil nous incitent à cette conviction, même si elle paraît légèrement provocatrice ! Car ces articles nous parlent d'élaborations en cours, de découvertes, d'innovations et d'inattendu, ce qui évidemment peut avoir son prix de difficultés et d'angoisses : qui pourrait en douter ? Mais le sentiment finalement très fort qu'on retire de toutes ces passionnantes analyses est que de tels efforts d'adaptation et de reconnaissance réciproque (en dépit des attitudes négatives inévitables) ne peuvent être en pure perte. De toute façon, ils sont notre avenir.

Denise Brahim  
Professeur émérite, Sorbonne, et critique  
Paris

Elizabeth Sabiston and Robert Drummond, eds. *Pluri-culture and Migrant Writings/ Pluri-Culture et écrits migratoires*. Sudbury: Human Sciences Monograph Series, 2014. 559 pp.

The book is a publication of the proceedings of the conference “Pluri-Culture and Migrant Writings: An Interdisciplinary Approach” held at York University from May 17-20, 2012. The book is a collection of 33 papers, the majority of which are written in French. Including the introduction and conclusion, I will be reviewing the 8 English language papers.

Elizabeth Sabiston, co-editor of the proceedings, writes in her introduction that “the stated objective of the conference was to reflect on a variety of discourses which address migration—national social, or individual—and the relationship of these discourses to cultural pluralism” (11). She later elaborates “the conference emphasized the cultural values that each migrant takes with him in emigrating from one country to another...the objective was to highlight...pluralism in the production of immigrant writers or creators in texts” (12).

Elizabeth Sabiston also contributes the first English language essay of the book, titled “Female Imagination Then and Now: Willa Cather’s *Ántonia* and Hédi Bouraoui’s *Laura* as Talespinners,” the final essay of several on the work of the Tunisian-born Canadian novelist and poet Hédi Bouraoui. Her essay is a comparative analysis of Willa Cather’s *My Ántonia* (1918, set in 1880s Nebraska) and Hédi Bouraoui’s *Les Aléas d’une Odyssée* (2010), two novels written nearly a century apart. Paying special attention to the historical contexts, Sabiston compares the fictional treatment of migration and explores the roles of women in migration and cultural exchange. She notes that both heroines are characterized as story tellers, as creators and preservers of a cultural heritage. This characterization aligns them with the heroes of the epic tradition, the founders of nations and the begetters of a culture. A major difference Sabiston points out is that while *Laura*, the heroine of *Les Aléas d’une Odyssée*, is able to write her own story—the fictional convention is that she writes half of the novel’s narrative—*Ántonia*, illiterate and deprived of a formal education, has her story told by childhood friend and neighbour Jim Burden, who is half in love with her. This difference reflects the relative restrictions experienced by the women in the different historical settings. Sabiston is careful to show that *Ántonia* is a creator of another sort. Besides leaving behind a large, well-established family, *Ántonia* has the role of the poetic muse; she inspires others, like Jim Burden, to write her story.

In her essay “Interactive Cross-Cultural Encounters,” Kay Li discusses the treatment of pluri-culture and immigration in the fiction of Gao Xingjian. Gao, the 2000 Nobel Prize Laureate in Literature, is ethnically Chinese, but emigrated to France in 1987, and became a French citizen in 1997. Li explains that Gao uses fiction to come to terms with his selfhood and his biography. As a result, much of Gao’s fiction has to do with understanding the relationship between one’s identity and a pluri-cultural environment. She describes this as “a centripetal movement converging towards the self” (239). She notes, however, that “this focus on the self is also a powerful means to reach the common humanity in his readers and audience” (240). Gao is also able to make a centrifugal movement and reach “towards a universal humanity.” This twofold movement has enabled Gao to appeal to a transnational readership and to win the Nobel Prize for Literature.

Olga Stein contributes an analysis of the influences of international literary prizes on postcolonial literature in her essay “Literary Prizes and Diasporic Writers in Canada: Valorization or Containment.” Specifically, Stein’s essay is a critical comparison of writings by postcolonial theorists Timothy Brennan and Graham Huggan—both of whom consider the influence of Western capitalism and the Western publishing industry on postcolonial/minority writings. According to Stein, Brennan speaks negatively of what he calls “cosmopolitanism”—a trend in postcolonial literature in which political, social, and cultural dissonances are elided in texts that instead celebrate the “unity and complementarity” of cultural difference despite the “persistence of postcoloniality in the form of economic and cultural imperialism” (317). Stein compares Brennan’s position to Huggan’s, who offers a more balanced account of the relationship between post-colonial writings and the dominant culture. He writes that “mainstream culture is always altered by its contact with the margins” and suggests that the literary stardom accorded to certain postcolonial writers actually increases the “two-way flow of cultural influence” between cultures (322). Stein concludes that it is important to understand that “readers, within and across geopolitical regions, comprise numerous communities motivated by diverse yet overlapping fields of value” and that thus “global markets and mass media are just as likely to enable as disable authentic creative impulses and criticism in works of literature” (324).

In “Becoming Pluricultural in Ondaatje’s *Oronsay*,” Marie-Christine Leps and Lesley Higgins conduct a Foucauldian analysis of Michael Ondaatje’s *The Cat’s Table* (2011) and

*Anil's Ghost* (2000). They argue that the *Oronsay*, a ship which is the setting for both novels, is an example of what Foucault called heterotopia, which they define as “a real space that represents, contests, and inverts all other spaces produced by established relations of power and knowledge” (383-4). In *The Cat's Table*, the *Oronsay* is “a luxury liner at the height of its glory” (383). The protagonist, a young boy named Michael, is sent on the *Oronsay* from Sri Lanka to Europe. Positioned on the margin of the ship's social life, the “Cat's Table”, Michael has a unique perspective on the social/power dynamics at play in adult interactions. In *Anil's Ghost*, set over 20 years later, the *Oronsay* is rusty and land-bound. The ship has been converted into a make-shift laboratory where Anil, working for an international human rights agency, investigates a murder she believes was committed by the Sri Lankan government as part of the Sri Lankan civil war. Anil's position as a former Sri Lankan turned international observer reveals the relationships between politics, knowledge, and power in the Sri-Lankan civil war. Leps and Higgins suggest that *The Cat's Table* and *Anil's Ghost* “constitute experimental ‘experiences’ that temporarily include the reader in other spaces of comprehension that foster altered subject positions and new elaborations of the self” (386).

In her essay “Unpacking her Cultural Baggage: North African, Jewish and French,” Nina Lichtenstein considers the novels of two female Sephardic writers, Jewish-Algerian Annie Cohen's *Le Marabout de Blida* (1996) and Jewish-Tunisian Annie Fitoussie's *La Mémoire Folle de Mouchi Rabbinou* (1985). Lichtenstein writes that her analysis aims “to shed some light on the often confusing and arduous process of unpacking and taking ownership of the diversity of one's cultural heritage” (426). Both of these largely autobiographical novels feature young women of Sephardic ancestry who have only recently migrated with their families to France. In an attempt to adjust to and acquire what they consider a superior French cultural identity, both women initially reject and rebel against their Sephardic cultural heritage. This attempt to “become European” is ultimately unsatisfactory to both women. Following strange encounters with Maghreb spiritual sages (the rabbi and the marabout featured in the novel's respective titles) the women realize they must come to terms with their cultural heritage and find a way to navigate their pluri-cultural experience. For both women, writing becomes the instrument by which the recovery and re-integration of cultural heritage is effected. Lichtenstein states that for Simone, the protagonist of *La Mémoire Folle de Mouchi Rabbinou*, the “act of writing will

eventually help her embrace her past, accept her present, and give her courage to look toward a pluri-cultural future” (431).

In the final academic essay of the book, titled “‘The Culpability of Innocence’: The Encounter of Canadian Women and Africa in the Short Stories of Isabel Huggan,” Allan Weiss introduces the work of Isabel Huggan. Huggan, a contemporary Canadian writer, spent a number of years in Kenya with her husband, who was deployed there with an international development agency. In her memoir, *Belonging, Home Away from Home* (2003), and the short stories “Losing Face” and “Skin the Colour of Money” (1993), Huggan presents and explores the difficulties she experienced as a temporary migrant in Africa. Weiss explains that her “texts present both the hope for and the failure of communication between female Canadian visitors and the Africans whom they met and even employ” (492). According to Weiss, in Huggan’s stories the visiting Canadian women desire both to rectify the colonial past and to build genuine friendships with local African women (492). These desires are frustrated as money invariably mediates the Canadian’s relationships with Kenyan locals. The Canadian women in these stories are warned and often discover that they are being befriended only for their money. In the story “Skin the Colour of Money” the Canadian female narrator is told directly by another white woman “there is only one thing black Africans see when they look at you. They see your skin, and your skin is the colour of money (124, qtd. on 500). Huggan’s work suggests that the “cultural baggage” white migrants take with them in a pluri-cultural setting is often that of economic privilege. Huggan writes that “it’s the economic barriers that really separate us” (24, qtd. on 493), indicating both the role of class in cultural interaction and the way in which class can disrupt meaningful and reciprocal cultural exchange.

Robert Drummond offers a social scientific perspective in the conclusion of the proceedings. Drummond asks what the social scientist can learn from the humanistic focus of the preceding essays. He suggests that “meaning for a social scientist lies in the measurement of causes and effects” while “for the humanist, there is as much to be learned by the expression of individual experience and the emotional reality it creates” (537). He goes on to say that “social scientists can tell us what happens, and they hope often to be able to tell us why. But it takes artists and novelists to help us understand how it ‘feels.’ And literary scholars can show us how that is done” (539). Drummond also enlarges on the importance of such cross-disciplinary

dialogue in light of the broader cultural debate on multiculturalism. He concludes that “narrated experience” can greatly enrich the social scientist’s perspective on migration and cultural exchange.

Stephen Van Andel

**Stephen Van Andel** is a graduate student in English at York University. His studies have focused on British Victorian and Modernist literature.

*Pluri-Culture et écrits migratoires/ Pluri-Culture and Migrant Writings*

**Book Launch Photos**

