The Effects of Diglossia in the Work of Lola Lemire Tostevin and Roy Kiyooka

by

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B.F.A., York University, 1994

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

In the Department of English

We accept this thesis as conforming to the required standard

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Abstract

This thesis assesses how bilingual writers Lola Lemire Tostevin and Roy Kiyooka respond to diglossia, the subordination of their mother tongues, in their primarily English texts. Several approaches to hybridity, translation, and minority writing outline obstacles to creative expression and strategies that respond to power imbalances. The thesis proposes that bilingual writers in English Canada, as linguistic hybrids, occupy a resistant, yet dependent place in the dominant discourse. Through a close reading of three of each writer's works, the thesis examines the strategies they use to undermine the cultural assumptions attached to the use of English. Specifically, the thesis argues that their tentative relationship to language manifests itself in linguistic and generic transgressions in their texts.

The first two chapters explore how each writer recognizes their respectively marginalized positions in the hierarchy of language. A separate look at Tostevin's *Color of Her Speech* (1982) and Kiyooka's *Kyoto Airs* (1963) indicates the writers' awareness of the untranslatable element in their texts as they grapple with the difficulties of hybrid subjectivity and respond to linguistic, syntactic, aural and generic constraints.

The third chapter focuses on aspects of Tostevin's and Kiyooka's work that challenge existing frames of representation in history, art, and literature. *The Fontainebleau Dream Machine*. *18 Frames from A Book of Rhetoric* (Kiyooka 1975) and *'sophie* (Tostevin 1988) level the boundaries of traditional genres. Both writers re-frame familiar works by splicing generic codes. Kiyooka turns to visual collage while Tostevin combines philosophy and the personal essay to explore how language and images embody values that exclude alternative experiences.

The last chapter moves to two later works in which both Tostevin and Kiyooka write in first person narrative prose. Narrative poses a challenge because, by its very nature, it creates an impression of authority and universal experience. *Frog Moon* (1994) responds

to the constraints of narrative by playing with the concepts of fiction and fact, while Kiyooka records his mother's tales in *Mothertalk* (1997). Both texts combine the legends and history of one generation, but in each case their stories are transposed onto a new socio-linguistic context, and refracted through their children's interpretations.

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Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the members of my thesis committee: Dr. Stephen Scobie, Dr. Smaro Kamboureli, and Dr. Marie Vautier. Their patience and encouragement have been much appreciated over the distance and time. Special thanks are owed to my supervisor, Dr. Scobie, for his interest and counsel.

I would also like to extend my thanks to my sister and brother-in-law, Laurie and Tim, for putting a roof over my head when I needed one, and to Ian, whose understanding and support have been unwavering.

Introduction

Bilingual writers in Canada, from all cultural backgrounds, share the challenge of expressing their linguistic duality through a monolingual text. To reach an English Canadian audience, bilingual writers must either explain the implications of cultural differences or find other ways to convey them to the reader. Some, like the Japanese Canadian writer Hiromi Goto, choose to create a potential barrier for the reader by including untranslated text to show that "all cannot be understood" (Goto 111). Others, such as Quebecoise translator and author Susanne de Lotbiniere-Harwood, translate an entire text to express the duality of their background [1] Lola Lemire Tostevin and Roy Kiyooka exhibit a similar concern with writing from a bilingual and bicultural perspective, and it is these two writers whose works I wish to explore in this thesis. Specifically, they share a sensitivity to the nuances of language and to the relative silence of their cultural histories. Further, their bilingualism challenges formal constraints in their works.

While Tostevin and Kiyooka write out of very different cultural and geographical spaces, they share an intriguing preoccupation with language. Each has indicated that writing in English paradoxically both hinders and enriches their texts, which often deal directly with cultural differences. As neither writer calls English their mother tongue, using it as a primary creative language raises questions about how accurate it is for articulating these differences. As their voices are inherently bilingual, a single mode of expression poses limits on their creative texts.

Though both writers have described themselves as bilingual, Kiyooka, a Japanese Canadian artist and writer born in Moose Jaw, was much less at ease with formal

Japanese. He called himself "naturally bilingual," emphasizing that a bilingual person is characterized by a sensibility that is "grounded in two languages" rather than a degree of fluency (Miki, "Roy Kiyooka" 59). Kiyooka identified himself as Nisei, a second generation Canadian born of immigrant Japanese parents. His family survived many hardships after the Second World War, and Kiyooka's own survival hinged on language. As Roy Miki explains: "[t]he young Roy quickly developed resources to fend for himself in the anglophone milieu of the majority, his native tongue sealed in the confines of the familial and internalized by the racism dominant in his society" (58). In the white, English-speaking world, the use of English became a matter of survival.

Tostevin, a Francophone writer from Northern Ontario, has had an equally complex relationship to language and bilingualism. She has written in both French and English, and has worked as a translator. Although her early education took place in French, her language is neither that of Québec nor that of France, leaving her not only in a subordinate relationship to English, but, in some circumstances, to her own mother tongue. As she writes in *Subject to Criticism*: "The various French dialects I've spoken over the years have been so varied they have often felt like different languages" (*SC* 17). She equated French with her religious education, and not wanting to have anything to do with Catholicism left her feeling "paralysed" by language (Press 125-126). Choosing to write primarily in English, she discovered some consistency between her spoken and written languages. Criticized for writing in the "imperialist language of the colonizer," Tostevin explains that, by introducing some French into her English writing, she strives to write "from a paradigm of multiplicity instead of division" (*SC* 17).

Kiyooka shared Tostevin's anxieties about language and education. He was forced to leave school after the bombing of Pearl Harbour in 1941, in the first few months of his tenth grade. The evacuation of Japanese Canadians in 1942 effectively cut off his formal schooling. Although his family was not expelled from the West Coast, all Japanese Canadians were labelled "enemy aliens" and became subject to the racism that led to the loss of his family's livelihood. The Kiyookas moved to Opal, Alberta, where they made their living on a farm (Miki, "RK" 60). Under these circumstances, Kiyooka learned English on the street, developing only an "intuitive grasp" of the language. In an interview with Miki he remarked, "[a]t some level I needed to come to an articulateness by which I could stand in this world of literate people, and hold my own" (Miki, *BE* 55). While Kiyooka's formal education was limited by circumstance, self-education concentrated on the complexities of the English language at the expense of formal and written Japanese.

Obviously, the racial differences between these writers have contributed to very different cultural experiences. I do not wish to trivialize these differences by focussing on the issue of language. Kiyooka's acquisition of English was certainly influenced by his desire to escape the stigma of his Japanese heritage in the context of the War. However, it is important to note that, when visiting Japan, Kiyooka felt like an "alien," despite fitting in physically. And though he enjoyed a level of fluency — he communicated exclusively in Japanese with his mother — he refers repeatedly to a sense of being "tongue-twisted" (*PW* 12). It is this sense of linguistic alienation that interests me in particular, in light of Tostevin's similar comments. Although Tostevin has experienced none of the racial prejudices that Kiyooka has faced, she continually voices irritation with the dismissal or

tokenization of French Canadian culture. In her writing, she demonstrates the oppression of Francophones in Ontario, whose economic fortunes were historically in the hands of the English. What's more, her texts repeatedly deal with a sense of linguistic betrayal she inherits as a cultural chameleon.

As culturally bilingual, both Kiyooka and Tostevin face what Barbara Godard calls the "anguish of selection," for, "in choosing one word, the other is simply excluded" to "construct a bridge for unilingual readers" (72). Simple translation, then, becomes a barrier to a subject's articulation. As a subject, the bilingual not only translates between languages, but also feels compelled to present the state of having two languages at once. As de Lotbiniere-Harwood explains, "[L]e corps bilingue, ça fait allusion immédiatement a ce qui est double. C'est un corps habité par au moins deux mots pour chaque chose [...] Puis c'est un corps qui habite deux espaces linguistiques, culturels, symboliques [...]" (169). In belonging to two sociolinguistic spheres, the bilingual is challenged to speak from two places at once.

Despite the inseparable nature of languages within a bilingual individual, the politics of language in Canada makes such a congruent existence tentative at best. English overshadows every other tongue, creating tensions between linguistic communities. Such cultural difference within a nation, according to Homi Bhabha, exceeds any single representation of social life and leaves in place deliberate acts of "transcultural negotiation" (*Location* 162). Cultural translation for a bilingual, then, cannot resolve linguistic tensions. Instead of being assimilated under the model of the colonial image, that image is absorbed and refracted. Bhabha's theory of hybridity reveals the hesitancy of colonialist discourse to describe its subjects. "Hybridity," he

writes, "is a *problematic* of colonial representation and individuation that reverses the effects of the colonial disavowal, so that other 'denied' knowledges enter upon the dominant discourse and estrange the basis of its authority — its rules of recognition" (114)

By this definition, hybridity also describes the effect of diglossia on the bilingual Diglossia — the superordination of English to one's mother tongue — exists under Canada's version of multiculturalism, where there are varying degrees of bilingualism depending on ethnicity and education. Many new Canadians choose to immerse their children in English, speaking their mother tongue only informally and at home. What I call cultural bilingualism involves the adoption of English alongside a non-English mother tongue, and ties the experiences of an individual to the linguistic hybridity that results from diglossia.[2] Cultural bilingualism is an extension of one's ethnicity, but includes an individual's use of the mother tongue.

My interest here is in the relationship of language and hybridity within the new linguistic contexts multiculturalism creates. Before moving on, I would like to elaborate on multiculturalism and diglossia, as these terms pertain to bilingual experience. As Braj Kachru notes in his work on the spread of English in non-English speaking countries, the co-existence of such a globally dominant language with various other linguistic groups creates a complex dynamic ("The Second Diaspora" 231). First Nations languages, French, and other languages that first generation immigrants brought to Canada affect not only the use of English, but also the role that the English language plays among non-native speakers in Canada. English was diffused in the desire for colonial expansion, becoming the link language in multilingual continents, acquiring "an elitist position

through the power it provided its users" (232-34). In Canada, English and French provide a similar power as the links in a multilingual society, depending on the location of the speaker.[3]

Canadian government policy problematically supports multiculturalism "within a bilingual framework," suggesting that language and culture are divisible in some situations, but not in others. In addressing the necessity of the French language to the Francophone culture, Canada's policy on multiculturalism simultaneously argues that language is less integral to the survival of other cultures. The origins of the *Canadian Multiculturalism Act* came as a response to Book IV of the 1969 *Report of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism,* "The Cultural Contribution of the Other Ethnic Groups," which addressed the exclusion of linguistic minorities under the existing policy of bilingualism. The Trudeau government announced the creation of a multicultural policy on October 8, 1971. However, the Commission's mandate was to help promote the "basically bilingual character" of the country, while acknowledging the subsequent contribution of other cultures to Canadian society (Kamboureli, *Making* 10). Following the entrenchment of the government's policy on multiculturalism in the Charter of Rights, the *Canadian Multiculturalism Act* was passed in 1988. The Act declares as its purpose to

> preserve and enhance the use of languages other than English and French, while strengthening the status and use of the official languages of Canada, and
>
> advance multiculturalism throughout Canada in harmony with the national commitment to the official languages of Canada[4]

The protection of linguistic and cultural rights, in practice, is then relegated to the realm of the private, while in the public sphere ethnic minorities are required to adopt one of Canada's official languages "in the interest of national unity" (Kallen 56). Though this policy would seem favourable to Francophones, those living outside of Québec, despite the benefit of some bilingual government services, are in the position of having to learn a second language in order to survive and communicate outside of their private communities.

The divisibility of language and culture, which the bilingual framework enforces, thus becomes problematic in practice—particularly in the practice of writing. How can an individual accurately communicate through a univocal medium? As Kachru writes:

> [t]o understand a bilingual's mind and use of language, one would have ideally, to be ambilingual and ambicultural. One would have to share responses to events, and cultural norms, and interpret the use of L2[5] within that context. One would have to see how the context of culture is manifest in linguistic form, the new style range, and in the assumptions one makes about the speech acts in which L2 is used. (*The Other Tongue* 330)

The bilingual is thus positioned between two languages and two contexts.

"Diglossia" refers to the subordination of one's mother tongue to a dominant language that becomes the only means of communication through which power can be obtained. Further, diglossia often results in the reduction of the mother tongue to accent, dialect or "colour" (Blodgett 20-21). The term gained currency when, in 1959, linguist Charles Ferguson applied it to cases where 'high' and 'low' variations of a language exist within a community. The 'high' variety is used formally and learned in school, and the 'low' variety is acquired "naturally and informally at home or [on the] playground"

(Britto 8). Consequent applications of the term refer to a society that recognizes two or more languages as well as varieties within a single language (8).

Although Ferguson's theory was based on variations within a single language, Joshua Fishman extended his model in 1972, examining the differences between bilingualism and diglossia, which coexist in certain situations and are mutually exclusive in others (Britto 31-37). The key characteristic of Fishman's definition of diglossia is "functional complementarity," where the high variety (language of the elite or powerful) is superposed on the low (38). Fishman's interlinguistic model was the first to examine diglossia as a social concept that applies to speech communities within a nation. The interlinguistic model is sometimes referred to as user-oriented, or dialectical, diglossia,[6] where non-elite speakers generally use the low variety and acquire the high language in school, while elite speakers learn the high language from infancy (38). Depending on the social situation and position of the speaker, user-oriented diglossia often involves codeswitching, moving back and forth between languages, which can also manifest itself in writing (38). It is important to note that intra-linguistic diglossia can still be considered user-oriented. Such is the case of French in Canada, where a speech community will observe high and low levels of one language, as expressed primarily through diction and accent, also dependent on one's social situation.

Fishman applied his model to colonies, where a colonial power enforces on the conquered nation its own language as the language of formal purposes and reduces the language of the natives to a code that is unfit for official or formal purposes (39). The Canadian context complicates this model to include French Canada, a colony within a colony, and non-British immigrants. For the second generation and beyond, writers of

non-British descent belong to two (or more) cultures within Canada, another marginal position faced when one is no longer close to one's mother country, yet treated as an outsider in an adopted country

Writers who work within this context must face the question Kachru poses: "How does one recreate [ ] relevant linguistic and cultural information in another language?" (*The Other* 343). The texts I will examine by Tostevin and Kiyooka pose similar challenges to textual conventions, responding to the power struggle bilingual writing presents. In particular, I want to explore the impact of bilingualism and diglossia on cultural identity by comparing these two writers of differing backgrounds. How does writing in English affect their texts? What's more, how can the bilingual writer express the hyphen that exists between his or her languages?

The term "hyphen" is commonly used to refer to the in-between site the bilingual occupies,[7] but it is also the subject of much of Canadian poet Fred Wah's critical writing. Wah uses the term to denote the site of a transformative poetics of hybridity, a "marked (or unmarked) space that both binds and divides" (72). Wah's hyphen does not refer to bilingual writing, but is meant to evoke cultural difference in terms of race, with the aim of freeing the racialized writer from the confinement of traditional forms (123). For Wah, instead of resolving the tensions between cultures in a post-colonial society, the hybrid should continue to challenge any notion that the dominant culture is universal by destabilizing the "seemingly solid lyric subject ground" (109). He articulates his strategy for the culturally hybrid writer, the immigrants, visible minorities and "political allies" that might occupy the in-between site of the hyphen:

> The hybrid writer must (one might suspect, necessarily)
> develop instruments of disturbance, dislocation and displacement

> The hyphen, even when it is notated, is often silent and transparent I'd like to make the noise surrounding it more audible, the pigment of its skin more visible (73)

Wah, a Canadian of Chinese and Swedish descent, explains that his notion of the hyphen helps him explore "mixed blood" as a cultural space (74)

What interests me in the way Wah uses the term "hyphen" is his notion of activating cultural differences in a piece of writing without catering to the reader, overcoming the "polarization of a poetics of resistance and a poetics of accommodation" (110) The bilingual's occupation of the site of the hyphen is also political In this case, Tostevin and Kiyooka's texts link the limitations of form to the masking effect English has on their mother tongue Though I use hyphen to describe the state of being between two languages, I also refer to Wah's concept as it describes the deliberate strategy of channelling identity into one's writing

In my first two chapters, I will look separately at each writer's first long poem, which investigate the parameters within which a culturally bilingual writer can speak Tostevin's *Color of Her Speech* (1982) and Kiyooka's *Kyoto Airs* (1963) share a similar concern with how the process of articulation can navigate the confines of poetic space Each book indicates the writer's awareness of the untranslatable element in their texts as they grapple with the difficulties of hybrid subjectivity and respond to linguistic, syntactic, aural and generic constraints

Later works, *'sophie* (Tostevin 1988) and *The Fontainebleau Dream Machine 18 Frames from A Book of Rhetoric* (Kiyooka 1975) express a responsibility for levelling the boundaries of traditional genres In the third chapter, I discuss the aspects of Tostevin's and Kiyooka's work that challenge existing frames of representation in history, art and

literature. Both writers re-frame familiar works by splicing generic codes. Kiyooka turns to visual collage while Tostevin combines philosophy and the personal essay with poetry to explore how language and images embody values that exclude alternative experiences.

As Kachru asks, when two languages and two cultures shape an individual, how can they come to fully articulate themselves? In the last chapter, I move to two later works in which both Tostevin and Kiyooka write in first person narrative prose. Narrative poses a challenge because, by its very nature, it creates an impression of authority and universal experience. *Frog Moon* (1994) responds to the constraints of narrative by playing with the concepts of fiction and fact, while Kiyooka records his mother's tales in *Mothertalk* (1997). Both texts combine the legends and history of one generation, but in each case their stories are transposed onto a new socio-linguistic context, and refracted through their children's interpretations.

Despite their different ethnic and linguistic backgrounds, Tostevin and Kiyooka struggle with the problem of articulation for very similar reasons. Diglossia has created cultural differences inherent in their use of English. I wish to demonstrate how bilingualism and diglossia play a pivotal role in the linguistic and formal development of these writers, as well as in the contexts of their writing.

Chapter One

A difference they can touch and taste

When the editors of the bilingual feminist journal *Tessera* asked Lola Tostevin to discuss the use of French in her poems, she explained that some lines come to her in English and others in French. She responded to the request by writing the essay "Contamination: A Relation of Differences," which puts a positive spin on what Tostevin views as a negative reaction to bilingual writing:

> Not only is it a handicap to be bilingual in Canada, it's unwise to display too much interest in literatures and theories whose linguistic roots can't be traced back to England [ ] no one language can impose itself on the world, [ ] Refusing translation, or even the contamination of one language with another might give us the illusion of authenticity and purity, but it is only an illusion which eliminates the possibility of a relation of differences. (13)

Her essay argues that the experience of passing from one language to another is not necessarily a loss, but a potential gain. Translation, for Tostevin, is not simply the act of transferring meaning from one language to another, but also "an operation of thought through which we translate ourselves into the thought of another language" (14). Tostevin refers here to the hyphen as a corridor between the languages of bilingual thought.

Critical discussion of Tostevin's work tends to present her as observing cultural divisions rather than responding to them. When Janice Williamson inquired about her "divided" cultural tradition, Tostevin remarked, "I came to writing quite late because I felt divided by my two languages. Then I realized I could make it work to my advantage

[ ] I don't feel I'm writing in another culture, two languages is my culture" (36). Her first book of poems deals with this question of linguistic dichotomy:

> 3 words french
> 2 words english
>
> rattling off
> or running at the mouth
>
> 2 words french
> 3 words english
>
> speak white
>
> or as Buber writes
> you have abstracted from me
> the color of my hair
> the color of my speech (Tostevin *Color*, n p)

Tostevin does not speak from a "divided" cultural tradition, but from a diglossic one, as the diminution of the "french" words in the poem suggests. Her reference to Michèle Lalonde's 1974 poem "Speak White" is of particular significance to her cultural heterogeneity. Born out of the Parti Pris movement (1963-8), "Speak White" sarcastically voices the superiority of English and European French to the Quebécois culture:

> dans la langue douce de Shakespeare
> avec l'accent de Longfellow
> parlez un français pur et atrocement blanc
> comme au Viet-Nam au Congo
> speak white
> c'est une langue universelle
> nous sommes nes pour la comprendre. (Lalonde 39)

Lalonde is essentially defending Quebécois French as a native language. The poem advances the argument that the Quebécois, former settlers, have been betrayed, and are being colonized by those in political power. Lalonde's is a writing of resistance, dependent on the socio-political situation of her time. In this context, she equates

diglossia, and the social inequalities created by linguistic differences (both between English and French and within native varieties of French) with racial discrimination Despite this problematic association of "white" with "correct," the phrase "speak white" is still used to mean "speak English," or "speak properly," retaining the implication that the high language is superior

Tostevin repeats the phrase "speak white" from the perspective of her own language community Like Lalonde, she uses the term ironically, she is not merely observing linguistic division, but mocking the idea of purity in language However, Tostevin writes in English and French, employing both "colonial" languages instead of denouncing them In place of Lalonde's biting satire, affiliated with Quebec separatism, she seems to oscillate between languages as an exploratory testing of limitations, making the point that in language, for some, there is no black and white

The phrase "speak white" denotes the complication of Tostevin's subjectivity as a Francophone [8] In many of her texts, she engages in both linguistic and formal codeswitching Codeswitching occurs when more than one language is used "in the course of a single communicative episode" (Heller 1) This practice is often questioned because "it violates a strong expectation that only one language will be used at any given time" (1) Codeswitching is used as a natural form of communication in bilingual or multilingual contexts, but it is also considered a strategy of either "boundary-levelling" or "boundary-maintaining" (1) Tostevin's interest in "a relation of differences" suggests her use of codeswitching acts as a contaminating tool for chipping away at existing boundaries She mixes languages, bringing together differences "so they make contact" ("Contamination" 14) While the theme of assimilation in Tostevin's poem seems to

lament the dilution of the mother tongue, the dialogue between English and French becomes a tool of subversion

> *'tu deparles'*
> my mother
> says
>
> je déparle
>
> yes
>
> *I unspeak*

The connotation of *déparler*, speaking improperly or bastardizing language, changes from a negative to a positive. Purifying one's language merely creates the illusion of authenticity, which stifles difference in the name of asserting it. Instead of "speaking white," the poem's voice switches codes, introducing contact between linguistic spheres. The poem revels in the unravelling of language, what the mother scorns, the daughter affirms.

The alternative to "speaking white" becomes the book's title, *Color of Her Speech*. Tostevin takes the subordinated language, reduced to colour, a curiosity or embellishment, and puts it in the centre of her discourse. She highlights the hyphen between the languages of her own subjectivity by presenting an unpaginated volume of poetry, quotations and commentaries. The book begins with the process of unspeaking, a strategy that refers to prying open existing parameters that subordinate women's language. Unspeaking is a term used by Québécoise feminist writers to address the double diglossia of women's language.[9] Tostevin exercises the strategy as a hybrid writer

— as a feminist, yes, but also as a bilingual. Issues of language and gender are intertwined, but these two struggles do not, as suggested on the book's back cover, serve as "metaphors for the struggle we all must make to recover our personal speech." Rather, they are very specific to a particular cultural position within Canada: the minority Francophone writing outside Quebec. While a female reader can identify with the process of unspeaking in Tostevin's text, *Color of Her Speech* also calls for particular attention to its socio-linguistic perspective.

Some critics comment on the integration of French in Tostevin's English texts without acknowledging that she writes out of English Canada. For example, Janice Williamson writes that Tostevin's work reverses "the hierarchy of discourse, listening to the particular language of Québec." She remarks that Tostevin creates an analogy for women's relationship to language with the power struggle between Anglophone and Francophone realities in Canada (" 'to pen a trait' " 100). The trouble with Williamson's point is that she has reduced the power struggle between Anglophones and Francophones to that of Québec and English Canada—excluding the socio-linguistic background from which Tostevin actually writes. As a Franco-Ontarian, Tostevin introduces contact between languages as a bilingual expression. "I would have thought this natural," she notes, "since I live a bilingual life" ("Contamination," 13).

Contact between languages in Canada results in the dominance of one language over the other. This context resonates with feminist strategies, but Tostevin does more than present analogies. By constructing her book around the concept of unspeaking, she focuses on process, the attempt to translate the self into the thought of another language:

> *vide s'accroche*
> *a sa bouche*

se remplit
de battement d'ailes

ventre plein
de frémissements

une langue
qui abandonne son nid
ne goutte plus

aux oiseaux

These lines convey a frantic desire to speak, combined with the knowledge that once the words escape, they no longer contain the flavour of their origin.

The use of French in Tostevin's English poems, while a reflection of bilingual speech, also addresses diglossia in Canada. The bilingual is caught between "speaking white" and having linguistic differences reduced to novelty:

her body a white lie
bloodless
in the blankness
of that space

'and where is your colorful accent'

they all ask
so white
so black
seeking a difference
they can touch and taste

accent aigu
accent grave
accent circonflexe

The subject's hybridity, the result of being bilingual in a diglossic context, manifests itself in the interaction of languages on a page. Tostevin takes a French accent from an aural nuance to a syntactic mark to a semantic utterance. Transmuted, these marks

harbour a shrill (*aigu*), dramatic (*grave),* circular (*circonflexe= flexion verbale circulaire)* deterioration of form. Tostevin makes her languages interact with what she describes as "eroticism in language in a Barthesian sense" (Williamson, " 'to pen' " 38). Barthes' sense of *jouissance* pervades the destabilizing of expectations in Tostevin's text, furthered in its Kristevan twist, *j 'ouis sens* (I hear meaning), thus creating a meaningful experience of the text through sound (Kristeva 16). In addition to Tostevin's poststructural interpretation of language and subjectivity, this passage also employs codeswitching to show resistance to the position diglossia forces on the bilingual writer.

Drawing further attention to the constraints of form on articulation in *Color of Her Speech,* Tostevin quotes from an essay in Kristeva's *Desire in Language.* She writes " it is through colors that the subject escapes its alienation within a code " A look at Kristeva's essay "Giotto's Joy" helps clarify this statement. The essay investigates the function of colour in Giotto's work, as it presents a form of resistance to assimilation within the formal system of painting (Kristeva 221). According to Kristeva, colour's function is to shatter meaning and unity of the subject "into a scale of differences" (220-221). The introduction of differences into a text creates the possibility of a political subversion of codes that a subject cannot escape (such as linguistic subordination).

> Color might therefore be the space where the prohibition foresees and gives rise to its own immediate transgression. It achieves the momentary dialectic of law—the laying down of One Meaning so that it might at once be pulverized, multiplied into plural meanings. Color is the shattering of unity. Thus, it is through color—colors—that the subject escapes its alienation within a code (representational, ideological, symbolic, and so forth) that it, as conscious subject, accepts (221).

Linguistic and paralinguistic colourations, as I will show, can function as tools for the bilingual writer much like Giotto's colour—as inscription of "instinctual residues" and escape from the codes of representation (221)

Tostevin's subject accepts the use of English as the dominant language, but must also subvert it In general, a text's interpretation and translation depend on the way social, cultural and sexual differences affect its reading In translation theory, linguistic colourations result from the inter-dependence of words that create a certain context, while paralinguistic colourations include the language use specific to a social or geographical context or individual, including dialect, slang, register and idiolect (Gouadec 33) In order to inscribe a bilingual subject into her text, Tostevin uses colour itself as metonym for her linguistic register This device signifies the possibility of culturally differing reading positions[10]

> in an obvious attempt to help crush the silence
> the children combine
> coloring books
> fat iridescent crayons
> french lessons
>
> fill space
> name shapes
> body of things
>
> *tête ronde et rose*
> *oeil jaune*
> *bouche rouge en coeur*
>
> the mouth a valentine
> heart
> of this alien condition
>
> *bras bleus verts mauves*
> *corps multicolores*

Unspeaking is made necessary through the acknowledgement of 'this alien condition,' while color surfaces as a way of naming. Filling space gives way to a celebration of the materiality of language and the converging of differences within it. The colouring begins tentatively, naming and creating within the conventional colours and shapes, but the red heart-shaped mouth leads to the wild abandon of the child's creative act. Still, there is always the form that constrains:

> fingers tight
> and careful
> not to wander
> on both sides
> of the fine lines

Surveying her own artistic process, Tostevin's persona wonders: "what tames/defiance//what colors the air?" The window facing her desk "traps everything/on either side," her only escape through "the prism I use as paperweight," which catches the light, bending it "into new positions." As Barbara Godard suggests, the persona is "speaking in tongues," a split subject creating itself through an "endless signifying chain" (1990, 175). By translating through 'color,' the subject destabilizes any one reading and escapes its alienation within the formal code it has accepted. Homi Bhabha describes this escape from cultural commodification as "the metonym of presence," which first appears to encourage an "authoritarian voyeurism," then asserts itself as hybrid, revealing "the insignia of authority [to be] a mask, a mockery" (*Location* 120). Accordingly, Tostevin's persona appears as a

> chameleon thinking grey white
> in dark cool places
> thinks absence
> thinks extinction
> subjugates to conjugate
> a guise

No one passage, poem or language can accurately account for the book's subject. The chameleon quality that Tostevin both suggests and performs turns a familiar construct (a book of poems) into an investigation of its own tools. By existing between languages, the voice locates the hyphen in the text.

In order to extend that complex linguistic relationship to the monolingual reader, Tostevin also engages in paralinguistic codeswitching. The French in her poems is written in italic type, which appears to signify difference from the roman inscription of the English text. However, Steve McCaffery observes that the typography of the text "relates to meaning as colour does to form as a tactile investment in the verbal order that renders words *things* and foregrounds their material, gestural and non-semantic presence" (44). Tostevin creates a scale within the reading of her own text by highlighting this materiality. To some readers, the use of French will be a barrier, but there is also a hyphen, a bridge between semantic and non-semantic experience of language that allows for an understanding of difference through form.

This hyphen bridges the gaps between languages for the reader by drawing attention to the estranging effects that words, sounds, and structure can achieve in a text. For example, McCaffery extends his theory of syntactic subversion in Tostevin's text to its dual form of the serial/book-length poem. The segments are separated by empty diamond-shaped symbols he describes as "tactile signs that refuse in any way to name the texts which follow" (44). It is not always clear where the poems or segments actually begin and end. The only titled poem, "Gyno-Text," comes, in McCaffery's words, "as an eruption and marks a strong discontinuity that promotes the general destabilization of text

and meaning" (44) The book switches syntactic and generic codes as a way of emphasizing the hyphen of its subject

The publication of *Gyno-Text* in 1983 as a separate, yet expanded, version of a poem from *Color of Her Speech* highlights Tostevin's processual mode of writing *Gyno-Text* links words together to form a chain of cumulative utterances she calls "an extended metaphor for a thirty-seven week pregnancy," intended to uproot the authority of medical (patriarchal) language over a woman's experience (Thesen 372) Reversing this metaphor, the poem also creates meaning from the interaction between its lines In *Color of Her Speech* Tostevin writes "it takes/a different tongue/to penetrate/a different depth " *Gyno-Text*, published in book form, builds on this stanza

a
different
tongue
to
pen
a
trait

le
trait
d'union (n p)

"Le trait d'union," the hyphen, joins two languages in a creative act while fusing, as Pauline Butling observes, "the speaking/writing woman to the symbolic body of language" (101) Butling suggests the "trait d'union" conjures both the image of a connection between generations in a family and the image of a barrier between a woman and the text she strives to create (102)

Either context relies on the mother as a language link, a

V
notch

of I
dentity

a
legend
at
leg's
end

The woman storyteller, whose legend(s) are passed on to the next generation, is the only link between cultural subjectivities. Similarly, *Color of Her Speech* alludes to this double sense of responsibility

but mom
speaking both
french and english
is like having two watches

you're never sure
what time it is

The in-between spaces where French and English collide is the site of the subject herself — the mother, the writer— joining generations and languages, while at the same time separating them, existing outside of them

The long poem further reflects Tostevin's ambiguous position, because it depends on the interaction between generic codes (Kambourelı, *On the Edge* 48). Combining elements of various sub-genres, lyric, epic, and narrative among them, the long poem both responds to and rejects the demand for classification. Smaro Kambourelı describes the long poem as a genre 'on the edge'

> By being both outside and inside the established poetic genres, the long poem participates in the category of poetry while defying its limits, the generic laws of its species. This ambivalent positioning marks the deconstructive activity of the long poem. By challenging the monism of the traditional genre, the long poem invites the reader to rethink its laws (48)

Kambourelı argues against the notıon of the long poem as sımply a collectıon of lınked genres, ınstead hıghlıghtıng ıts processual effect as a "betweenness," a shıftıng system of multıple generıc codes (77). Establıshed generıc conventıons, most notably the lyrıc, are thus contamınated wıthın the long poem, contrıbutıng to ıts hybrıdıty as a genre. The lyrıc embedded ın the long poem, for example, achıeves recognıtıon through famılıarıty of ıts code but also works to reveal 'famılıarıty' as a construct. It ıs "a lyrıc fracturıng ıts 'wholeness' parodyıng ıts own lyrıcal ımpulse" (64). Further, the lyrıc's assocıatıon wıth song attempts to "mute the gaps between sıgnıfier and sıgnıfied by conferrıng on the words the ıllusory unıty of a sıngle voıce" (Rajan qtd. ın Kambourelı, 77). The long poem undermınes the concept of wholeness, as determıned by only one mode of expressıon, allowıng ıt to reflect the dualıty of a bılıngual voıce.

In *Color of Her Speech*, the long poem's book length, serıal form maıntaıns the syntactıc and lınguıstıc subversıon of 'wholeness' by refusıng to be contaıned. The book returns to the process of artıculatıon, unspeakıng, colourıng and organızıng language. The contact between languages wıthın dıglossıa ıs reflected ın the contact between formal codes ın the process of makıng art, respondıng to the words of German phılosopher Martın Buber:

> Even as a melody ıs not composed of
> tones, nor a verse of words, nor a statue of
> lınes, one must pull and tear a unıty ınto
> a multıplıcıty, so ıt ıs wıth the human
> beıng to whom I say You. I can abstract
> from hım the color of hıs haır or the color
> of hıs speech or the color of hıs gracıous-
> ness, I have to do thıs agaın and agaın,
> but ımmedıately he ıs no longer You

Color of Her Speech then reworks Buber's words to suggest dispossession or commodification of culture "[Y]ou have abstracted from me/the color of my hair/the color of my speech." Here Tostevin incites active participation in the text. She warns of the potential limitation a text imposes on a subject, while inviting the reader to transcend socio-linguistic differences "the dream is french/ present past unbroken/ what's lost lasts."

Tostevin's emphasis on the writing process throughout *Colour of Her Speech* also invites the reader to see the challenge of writing from the poet's perspective

> 3pm
>
> put down The Origin of the Work of Art
> which I don't understand
> turn on 5 minutes of soap
> One Life to Live
> which I don't understand
>
> my head another area
> always caught in between

There is never just one life to live. A sense of anxiety in composing within a set of confines pervades the voice in the text, a voice preoccupied with the site of the hyphen, with the question of how to

> sit down to write
> for the book
> which makes visible
> something other
> than itself
>
> unconceals
>
> implicates
>
> between two

which fails
if one is false
the other true

Here Tostevin parodies her own lyrical impulses in the writing of her book, her

mouth *twisting*
the arm to form

a poem
between

the way I speak
the way I spoke (my emphasis)

Although the writer has stated that it is natural for her to flip back and forth between languages, the difficulty of conveying all that exists between them still haunts her Aware that form can hide the gaps in language, she chooses instead to expose them In this endeavour, *Color of Her Speech* attempts to re-create the experience of trying to speak with two voices

Chapter Two

(S)inging

The hyphen in Roy Kiyooka's early work functions in a similar way to what Tostevin calls the colour of her speech. Working almost exclusively in English, Kiyooka creates unusual aural and syntactic combinations to emphasize the deliberateness of his language. We can trace the origins of his mode of writing to two main factors: the limited use of his mother tongue and his work as a visual artist. The relationship between these two factors is key to his development as a writer. Kiyooka called the basis for his visual art the "syntax of colour," a silent communication that exceeds the parameters of language: "A painter [...] can see the syntax of colour in his mind's eye, and it's not anything like that simple-minded notion of representation, [...] because one knows it's an artifice as soon as you take up colour and start putting it down on the surface" (Miki, *BE* 65). Kiyooka's writing foregrounds this materiality, celebrating artifice much as colour does in painting, to borrow Kristeva's analogy (221).

An example of this sense of artifice can be found in Kiyooka's poem "Kumo/Cloud/s."[11] Unlike Tostevin, Kiyooka was not fluent in his first language, though he called Japanese his primary language (Miki, "RK" 58). He did, however, experiment with written Japanese in "Kumo/Cloud/s," resulting in a translation, not merely of his poem, but of his relationship with Japanese. The poem's last section is divided into three columns of typed romanized Japanese, corrected handwritten romanized Japanese, and handwritten Japanese combining the phonetic alphabets (hiragana and katakana) and Chinese characters (kanji). On the opposite page the poem is translated into English, with the note

(translated into english
the night Matsuka-san & I

translated my roma-ji[12] in-
to plausible japanese & sang it) (*PW*, 263)

Kiyooka describes the project's process as part of his poem:

I filled 3 notebooks full of
an oftimes indecipherable 'romaji' alternating
with pages of cluttered 'inglish'

all summer long I caught myself sifting long agog
syllables—as if I were beholden to
their 'topos' if not their oftimes libelous wit

all the things I held in my hands –
that was once 'rotund' in either tongue
dissolved into oceanic silences (260)

The 'silences' Kiyooka refers to resonate throughout his work and often mirror those he found in his community. Aside from the community newspaper, *The New Canadian*, there were few sources for Kiyooka to learn about fellow Nisei. He considered silence and a reticence about 'self' "very Japanese" (Miki, *BE* 67).

Susan Fisher labels "Kumo/Cloud/s" an experiment in combining images and text, relegating the Japanese words to the realm of the image. "[F]ew of Kiyooka's readers are likely to understand them, those who do will find the hand-lettering and misspelled words hard to read," she writes (106). However, writing the poem in such a processual form, showing corrections to his own Japanese, Kiyooka is enabling the reader to participate in the translation process. Including the 'romaji,' readable only as sounds to the non-Japanese speaking reader, invites the reader to experience the poem's performance as vowels "[lodged] in a man's throat" (Kiyooka, *PW* 291).[13] Those who do

understand the Japanese, possibly members of the Japanese Canadian community, will see the gaps between the Japanese and English versions:

kono komai
kumo
wa natsu kashii
to omo

kumo

kino no oki
kumo
wa zuibun
osorashikatta (262)

The inglish translation reads: " kumo/i/think--/this/small/cloud/is/love-/ly//kumo/yesterday's/beggar-cloud an un/diminished//n-i-g-h-t-m-a-r-e-" (263). The English word "lovely" doesn't seem to fully translate "natsu kashii," which holds a strong sense of yearning for the past. The second stanza picks up this sentiment in English, adding "beggar-cloud" to what is described in Japanese as only yesterday's large "terrible" or "nightmarish" cloud. Longing travels, via translation, from the present to the past. The poem's second last stanza translates the word "shibotachi," or 'longings,' describing the cloud's relationship to dreaming. The translation reads: "no matter /how often i wring this out/tomorrow's/dream lies—unfettered." The final stanza — "kumo//this/ mirror's/sheen /its/perfect/cloud/awakens"— itself mirrors the Japanese "kore wa/kanshin no kagami/korei wa/kagami/no cloud," literally 'this perfect mirror, this mirror's cloud' (262). Reading this poem's mirror as *self*-reflexive shows how meaning can be nomadic, while the act of translation will always cloud as it reveals.

While Kiyooka communicated with his mother in Japanese, he saw himself as a voice for his family, seeking "recognition through literature" (Miki, *BE* 69). He discusses with Roy Miki the profound effect his lack of Japanese had on his writing

> K If you grow up in that kind of "inter-face" it's very poignant, because not to have been able to write in Japanese is to never have been able to have demonstrated to my mother that well—
>
> M In a sense your texts are sealed off from her in a very immediate, fundamental way, yet she recognizes that the language in those works is still an extension of your familial experience, though now it's been translated into this form, in English (69)

The concept of translation that Miki introduces is a complicated one. Kiyooka called his second language "inglish," with a lowercase "i," which, Miki explains, functions "as both noun and slanted participle" (*BE*, 207). Miki describes the literary climate of Kiyooka's early career as "the heyday of Canadian cultural nationalism," within which "Kiyooka's performances—his 'inging' in the 'uncouth vernacular' of displacements found few ears outside the proper 'english' saturating the white anglo-dominant cultural nomenclature of his life and times" (207). According to Miki, "inging" is meant to evoke the play with the first syllable of Kiyooka's term 'inglish'

> hence "inging" as a short-hand for "inglishing," i e writing in a Kiyookan mode of performing english, but also "inging" to point to the notion of the participle, "-ing," as embedded in the processual - what is in process, movement, including the transitional "[I]nging" can also be assumed as a kind of song, a "singing" that is audible in his poetic line - a composing through the play of syllables (e-mail correspondence, Nov. 27, 1999)

By using his own term, Kiyooka also creates a space for himself outside of formal language, twisting it into new shapes

The 'artifice', the performance of language as, in Bhabha's terms, "the assertion of the hybrid," shows how the use of a dominant language can also become a mask for writers who are both inside and outside of its parameters (Bhabha, *Location* 120). The diglossia Kiyooka experienced was heightened by his family's attempts to escape the sense of alienation that came with being a visible minority. Kiyooka called his artistic pursuits an "initiation" into self-expression. "[G]rowing up in this country and being beholden to the white culture, its institutions, I have nonetheless grown up athwarted. [y]ou are of it, and you are not, and you know that very clearly" (Miki 71). He began to write, "starting from nothing, with only what [he] had an intuitive grasp on" (70). He described his initiation into the English language as both careful and triumphant, remarking, "I had to claim every inch of the language that I've come to, literally syllable by syllable" (71).

Kiyooka's first book of poems brings the subject's hard-won English in contact with an old fashioned and halting Japanese. *Kyoto Airs* anticipates and plays with the romanticized journey a Japanese artist takes to retrieve his roots. What he produces is a hybrid account, joining both sides of the Pacific in the eyes of a traveller. Kiyooka's awkwardness as a traveller in Kyoto brings to light the shift in identity he experiences. In Japan, Kiyooka remains "a tongue-twisted alien" (*PW* 12). As traveller, he is every bit the foreigner, the

> Canadian painter
> come to pay homage
> to ancestors, samurai among them
> whose honour was the slit abdomen,
> whose women hoarded famine rice to
> stuff into their children's mouths,
> whose children's children gad about
> in red high heels, twisting to Ray Charles. (23)

Amazed by the contrasts between old and new encountered around every corner, Kiyooka's speaker finds an opening. Through the images around him, his artist's eye, and his own astonishment, he translates not what he sees, but his own process of recording.

Like *Color of Her Speech*, *Kyoto Airs* speaks across divisions, in this case, between Japanese and Canadian experiences, and Kiyooka expresses similar concerns about the classification of culture:

> I'm truly bored with labels, what they
> pre-empt, and I'm sick of having my origins
> fingered. It's as though an utterly "Canadian"
> experience couldn't embrace either ocean
> and what lies on the far side of each. (qtd. in Fisher 107)

A brief look at two reviews indicates that critics tend to link Kiyooka's Japanese ancestry with his mode of writing. Where Tostevin's bilingual subjectivity has been glossed as feminist metaphor, Kiyooka's linked segments have been called "adaptations of Japanese forms" (Howard 47). Richard Howard's brief review of *Kyoto Airs* describes the sparse sequences as written with a "borrowed strictness," each a "bundle of wisps, tied together by a pervasive foreignness" (47). Howard acknowledges a tension between "form and what is left out of the form," but the brevity of his attention to the book suggests that the link between "Japanese forms" and Kiyooka is merely superficial (47).

Anne Munton also focuses on Kiyooka's Japanese ancestry to explain his choice of genre. In her essay "The Long Poem as Poetic Diary," she links the generic flexibility of the long poem to the Japanese form of utanikki.[14] The characteristics of utanikki that Munton explores include a focus on family life, blending of poetry and prose, disregard for temporal accuracy, and "an artistic reconstitution of fact participating in or paralleling

fiction" (97). While she does not deal directly with *Kyoto Airs*, Munton describes another of Kiyooka's texts, "Wheels, a trip thru Honshu's backcountry '69." "Wheels" combines themes similar to those of *Kyoto Airs*: travel in Japan, family, and the struggle with articulation. Munton sees Kiyooka's version as a modernization of the traditional form, similar to 17th century poet Basho's "Oku no hoso michi". "Unlike Basho, with his bed lice and young guide with 'a short, curved sword at his waist,' Kiyooka encounters souvenir shops and punk kid taxi drivers" (104). Although 'Wheels' does appear to have certain utanikki characteristics, Munton's interesting comparison, like Howard's, lacks elaboration. Her thesis is actually based on the work of bpNichol, who called the utanikki his "retroactively recognized formal model for *The Martyrology*" (97). However, she calls Kiyooka's poem "most like the utanikki models" she discusses, largely because of his Japanese heritage.

In contrast to these reviews, Susan Fisher sees no reason to attribute Kiyooka's poetics to a direct ethnic link. In "Japanese Elements in the Poetry of Fred Wah and Roy Kiyooka," she ridicules this notion by quoting Hiromi Goto's poem "The Body Politic":

> People ask me what I do
> and I say, oh, I do a little writing.
> Do you write poetry too? someone will ask,
>
> and I say, yeah, a little bit.
>
> OH! Please make up a haiku for us, we'd love to
> hear a haiku
> from you.
> Uh—I don't—
> Oh, don't be shy! You Japanese are so clever with haiku! (qtd. in Fisher, 94)

Fisher acknowledges Kiyooka's interest in Japanese culture and his ability to speak the language, noting that he visited relatives in Japan as a small child before returning there as an adult in 1963 (101). However, regardless of Kiyooka's cultural background, she maintains that *Kyoto Airs* is a "standard traveller's version of Japan," which, despite its Japanese setting, "owes very little to Japanese literary traditions, except as they were filtered through the New American Poetics" (101). She maintains that Kiyooka's work was more influenced by the American poets of the 1950s and 1960s who studied in Japan and showed considerable interest in Japanese literary forms, than by his own experience (93).

The missing ingredient in these viewpoints is Kiyooka's hyphen: the relationship between the silence of his mother tongue, and the artifice of his acquired language. After starting *Kyoto Airs* in Japan, Kiyooka attended the Vancouver Poetry Conference in the summer of 1963, where he studied with Charles Olson and other writers who identified with the New American Poets. Kiyooka was fascinated by "the peculiarities of their speech" which influenced his writing while he strove to "claim some kind of articulation" for himself (Miki, *BE* 63-64). Keeping in mind Kiyooka's comments regarding his acquisition of English, we see the link between the aesthetic influences of Olson's thought and his own bilingual background. In his well-known essay "Projective Verse," Olson called a poem "energy transferred from where the poet got it [ ] by way of the poem itself to, all the way over to, the reader" (16). Olson focussed on the syllable as the axis of poetry, declaring, "It is by their syllables that words juxtapose in beauty, by these particles of sound as clearly as by the sense of the words which they compose. In any given instance, because there is a choice of words, the choice, if a man is in there, will be,

spontaneously, the obedience of his ear to the syllables" (Olson 17-18) Kiyooka's subsequent emphasis on accuracy in language would link his bilingualism to self-expression by focussing on the projection of the interiority of the poet's imagination onto the page

Kiyooka's deliberate and halting use of English conveys the experience of coming to articulation away from one's mother tongue

> the song is
> about tortoise
> and not the hare
> not the hare
>
> black heads lifted
> their sing
>
> sing into the air
> walking by sun
>
> in my eye sing-
> ing also singing
>
> another song the
> air of Kyoto sings (7)

With the ear as the "threshold of projective verse," to repeat Olson's phrase, Kiyooka would locate himself as listener Aware of his blending of language sensibilities, Kiyooka acknowledges his mother's influence " i know how her bitten-words came to crease my own vernacular " (296) His basic understanding of Japanese would activate the voices around him, distinguishing him from Fisher's standard traveller However, the language he would hear in Kyoto would differ from the Japanese he spoke with his mother, who was from the island of Shikoku and spoke in the dialect of Kochi prefecture Further, the vocabulary and phrasing of his mother's Japanese were from earlier (Meiji) forms of the language, which she brought to Canada in 1917 (Miki, e-mail

correspondence Nov 27, 1999). The poem projects a sense of alienation amidst an unknown Japanese dialect. As a bilingual, Kiyooka experiences diglossia on both sides of the ocean. In the context of his comments about English, *Kyoto Airs* makes clear that Kiyooka views both his English and his Japanese as belonging to the low, or informal, level of language.

Kiyooka makes use of repetition and line breaks to create contrast between his use of English and his Japanese surroundings. The short lines create a staccato accent mirroring the "tongue twisted" uneasiness he expresses about his mother tongue (Kiyooka, *PW* 12). They also slow the reader down to really listen to the play of syllables and their roles in the construction of meaning. Bridging "hare" and "black heads," for example, Kiyooka jumps from the childhood fable to his perception of the crowds around him. He delays the satisfaction of reaching the end of the line, evoking the effort of listening, understanding and speaking a foreign tongue. As the poem recounts his first visit to Japan as an adult[15], he must have also been visually struck with his participation in the overwhelmingly homogeneous demographics of his location. The line " my eye sing-/ing" suggests Kiyooka still identifies himself primarily as an artist, articulating through the visual to compensate for his lack of language. By breaking the line, he also celebrates his own "inging," in his mode of performing English, offering the air as a link between the past and present on the streets of Kyoto, containing all of its stories. The air is also, literally, the song of the present moment, "also singing/another song the/air of Kyoto sings" (7).

Robert Hogg best described *Kyoto Airs* back in 1964 as a book "written for and upon an occasion of going & coming the conjunction—the poems ARE that

ampersand—lies in the acceptance of things lost, found—*made known*" (2) (my emphasis). The conjunction becomes part of that operation of thought translating the unfamiliar. As in Tostevin's urge to unspeak, Kiyooka is interested in using language to more accurately reflect his process of articulation.

> I see that in the naming of whatever it is that you experience, there are two things at work: there is the actuality of that experience as it has worked through the person, and there are all the other names for that experience which you have been given. It's the combination of those two qualities by which you come, in your own way, to define that experience — and try to find a language in which you can say what it is. (Kiyooka and Marlatt n. p.)

Kiyooka 'makes known' images that show the overlap between past and present Japanese and Canadian experiences — images that he felt a "responsibility" for putting out into the world (Miki, *BE* 66).

How is it, Deleuze and Guattari ask, that the writing of linguistic minorities becomes torn from its own language? (Deleuze and Guattari 62). This problem is particularly pressing for the second generation of immigrant families who are born into a country that marginalizes their mother tongue. Hence, bilingualism as a "sensibility grounded in two languages" (Miki,"RK" 9) becomes diglossia, the mother tongue as subordinate. Although he was not as fluently bilingual as Tostevin, it was his lack of formal Japanese, the "high" variety in Ferguson's terms (Ferguson 6), that he considered a loss. He expressed himself in English, a language that has less of a gap between its high and low varieties (20), to respond, like Tostevin, to the diglossia he experienced within his mother tongue. As a result, he became a nomad in relation to his own language.

Deterritorialization, a characteristic Deleuze and Guattari list as central to minority writing, connotes not only a separation from the mother tongue but also a political subordination that often prompts a "reterritorialization" or "new intensity" in language

> This language torn from sense, conquering sense,
> bringing about an active neutralization of sense,
> no longer finds its value in anything but an
> accenting of the word, an inflection Children
> are well skilled in the exercise of repeating a
> word, the sense of which is only vaguely felt,
> in order to make it vibrate around itself (63)

Kiyooka conveys the effort to recover the barren terrain of articulation in 'Found in a Mound'

> the voices
> the voices
>
> lost in the dust
>
> the word
> the word
>
> the lost word
> found in an urn
>
> made from earth
> to earth returned
>
> the lost voice
> returns
> in the shape of an urn
>
> a burial urn
> a bronze burial urn (*PW* 8)

The lost voice is returned to the earth from which it was taken, as Kiyooka's return to Japan prompted him to write The "new intensity" of reterritorialization in the poem's voice overcomes the constraints of diglossia by removing English from its context,

tearing it away from fixed meanings. Repeating words, layered like paint on a canvas, recalls what Kiyooka said of painting: "one knows it's an artifice as soon as you take up colour and start putting it down on the surface" (Miki, *BE* 65). At the same time, Kiyooka engages in the high language of English poetry: celebrated artifice as a way of naming experience. Locating the "ear" in the earth, the voice returns as both pure sound and the silence found in an urn, the shape of which, in Keats' words, "legend haunts"(374).

By using the term "artifice," I am referring to a creative use of English that is conscious on the part of the writer. As in Kachru's description of "contact literature," the bilingual uses English creatively "to delineate contexts which generally do not form part of what may be labeled the traditions of English literature" (*Alchemy* 161). I want to emphasize that, in addition to the influence of other writers who may have been interested in Japan, Kiyooka's sociolinguistic background is central to his text. The context of his poem includes both an interest in the history of his ancestors and his emergence as a poet.

The act of becoming in the poem reflects the struggle for the articulation that Kiyooka wanted to claim for himself (Miki, *BE* 64). In "Coffee Shop," the poem unfolds as a carefully constructed list of sounds that still the reader to experience the poet's silence:

tremor of
cut glass
betrays the
indiscreet
blast from
the air conditioner

or is it
the music—
Beethoven's

7th that
makes it
tremble so

myriad colours
reflected
on each cut
glass surface
shimmer to
the sound

of voices,
clattering
cups, the music,
all sounds
other than
my own (13)

The chain reaction of noises that bump up against each other becomes deterritorialized, no longer belonging to a language of sense (Deleuze and Guattari 21) The voices, the cups, the music exist only in relation to what the writer is not saying

It is near the end of *Kyoto Airs* that we discover the reason for Kiyooka's visit, his first meeting with a sister, Mariko, who had been separated from the family (Miki, *BE* 56) Kiyooka's sister is the tangible link between Kiyooka's worlds, as he offers her this dedication

the sash you bought
for my ukata is
firm around my waist
each time I tie it
you are on one end
& I am on the other
how else tell
of a brother & sister
thirty years parted
drawn together, again? (7)

Mariko was born in Japan while Kiyooka's mother was visiting her ailing father in Kochi prefecture. According to Mrs. Kiyooka, she left her daughter behind because of the family's unstable financial situation in Canada. Mariko eventually spent most of her life, including the years of the Second World War, on the opposite side of the Pacific (*MT* 64-130).

Kyoto Airs drifts from the tourist-like awe of sight and sound to a contained quietness in the stanzas that deal with Mariko. The image of the sash creates the link between their two lives. Focusing on the visual, Kiyooka asks, "how else tell ?" (*PW* 306). In 'The Dress,' Kiyooka translates the visual through his acknowledgement of painterly artifice:

> the sheen
> of it sur-
> rounding you
> is the
> shape
> of intentions
> both of us
> wear (20)

'In the Kitchen' joins the speaker's family visit with the years of speculation when brother and sister were "thirty years parted."

> as if you could make-
> up for the hunger of
> the lean days when
> you bartered clothes
>
> for a bowl of rice
> mixed with dry beans
> to make a mouthful—
> fit to choke on
>
> how small you are

the cotton frock hides
moments of despair shaped
by fire into something
rare, something rare (20)

'My Sister Tells Me' suggests the unreliability of carrying truth through the lyric. We do not know how much of Mariko's story was actually spoken: "why not/speak of it/nothing/can harm you" (21). The foregrounding of artifice in the text paradoxically creates a sense of intimacy. Kiyooka is not relating a story, discussing his sister's 'moments of despair,' but showing that those moments are shaped in the poet's imagination. We cannot know what was discussed on that meeting, but the intersections of past and present, Japanese and Canadian, truth and imagination, become the language that Kiyooka had been searching for to define experience.

We are also invited to imagine that link extending outside the text:

"I can write
my name and address
and how are you
you will write
simply won't you?"

how are you?
tomorrow I
will float
these poems
to you 5000 miles
away do you
trust the sea? (22)

How trustworthy is memory across distance and language? More is at work in this stanza if we consider the wartime exchanges between Mariko and her family described in "Dear Lucy Fumi c/o Japanese Canadian Redress Secretariat":

I was moved whenever we received a letter from a
war-ravaged Nippon. My older sister Mariko who was

> born and raised there kept writing to a home she had never seen except in photos to tell about her appalling hardships And I clearly recall how those precious letters had been slit and the contents scrutinized and stamped by a nameless Censor (Kiyooka, *MT* 188)

Kyoto Airs' Japanese setting, place names, and Kiyooka's own family name bring about certain romantic expectations of the exotic travelogue Instead, Kiyookan inglish, an idiolect of diction, language layering and repetition, creates a sense of the poet's own displacement and astonishment Where there may exist an expectation of cultural mediation, we are met with a speaker who is overwhelmed by his own mother tongue Both Japanese and English prove inadequate to encapsulate any articulation of experience The visual image and non-verbal sounds underlie the process of articulation, posing the question "how else tell?" Kiyooka's flirting with Japanese poetic forms is worth noting, but does not amount to a cultural link The problematic "fit" of genre to ethnicity mirrors the ambiguities of a bilingual subjectivity As Tostevin refuses to "speak white," Kiyooka refuses the cue to speak from colour Instead, he colours language, celebrates the artifice of naming with the tools in his possession, and "subtly transmutes" the way of telling

"How else tell?" is the question upon which Tostevin and Kiyooka conclude their poems Both are overwhelmed by the inadequacies of language to translate their experience of cultural difference If translation expresses, as Walter Benjamin tells it, "the central reciprocal relationship between languages," what describes the relationship between languages that is not reciprocal? (*Illuminations* 72) Language is culture's mediator, often presenting more barriers than corridors for the bilingual writer Kiyooka seems aware of this from the beginning, inching toward language cautiously Despite

Tostevin's statements that her bilingual writing is an extension of her life, on reading her texts we see a struggle to express this state in a book where one language is the norm In diglossia, one language always shadows another How can this dominant language convey what lies outside of it? How does the writer translate "the hidden mirror" that "reflects all things impartially"? (Kiyooka, *PW* 24) The relationship of one syllable to the next, one line to the next, suggests the answer lies somewhere in the cracks between languages, the only constant being the yearning to convey what cannot be said By emphasizing the processual and removing language from fixed assumptions through devices such as strategic line breaks, puns, images and unusual combinations of words and sounds, both poems seem to burst with possible pathways

Chapter Three

How did my desire come to wear your face?

Having established that both Roy Kiyooka and Lola Tostevin use subversive strategies in their early English texts to overcome barriers related to diglossia, I want to bring these two writers together to compare how they deal with the representation of cultural differences as they hinge on language. Linguistic minorities in Canada share a similar experience on at least one level, as Nicole Brossard points out, by having to reflect on "what it means to be colonized through language, which is to say what it means to interiorize, to make your own, values and prejudices which are degrading the group you belong to" (Huggan and Siemerling 95). When English is a second language, it proves inadequate to express cultural differences, as it masks the gaps in meaning through translation. In response, the hybrid text exhibits an "*element of resistance* in the process of transformation" (Bhabha, *Location* 224). It is the manifestation of this resistance, what exceeds translation, that interests me in this chapter, namely how the writers question generic conventions and subsequently construct alternatives. I hope to show how the individual concerns about articulation that both Tostevin and Kiyooka identify in their early works manifest themselves later as generic transgressions in their poems.

The two books in question, Tostevin's *'sophie* and Kiyooka's *The Fontainebleau Dream Machine*, question the relevance of Western images and philosophies to the minority subject. Both writers re-create their relationships to certain concepts and images by removing them from their original contexts and placing them side by side, as in a collage. As I have discussed, based on Kambourelis's analysis, the long poem is made up

of other genres co-existing and making contact with each other. I want to focus on how the distinctions in these books call attention to themselves as independent actions within a greater body of work. Each shift in structure within the long poem interrupts, in Walter Benjamin's words, "the context into which it is inserted" ("The Author" 17). Like a collage, the heterogeneity in both content and expression stimulates alternative, polyvocal readings. Each fragment of image or text can be read both as part of its original context, and through its role in the new text. As a means of questioning the illusion of representation, the collage exposes the very cracks in the continuity of a given work.

By its revolutionary nature, collage can turn a book jacket into a political instrument, according to Benjamin (24). As I am interested in considering these poems as whole books, their book covers offer a good starting point, since they immediately present interference with cultural concepts. Tostevin chose "Allegory for Music" by Hans Baldung Grien as her cover image, an image of "thought mediated, made visible by the body" (*SC* 112). The 16th century painting presents the naked figure of Musik with a text in her left (sinister) hand, transforming her from the muse into the musician, possessor of forbidden knowledge (O'Quinn 44). The apostrophe marking the book's title also signifies something altered, recontextualized. An apostrophe "suspends one presence and replaces it with another," Tostevin explains. "For a short while 'Phil' will disappear from *philosophie* and leave *'sophie* to her knowledge, her music, her desire" (*SC* 113). In the search for knowledge, she dismantles *philosophie*, yet *'sophie* is always part of another whole.

The Fontainebleau Dream Machine also portrays the pursuit of knowledge as a subversive activity. Its cover features a hot air balloon, a recurring image that Eva-Marie

Kroller calls a "vehicle of freedom and an instrument of surveillance" (Kroller 52) The hot air balloon appears futuristic in the image, as we see the reaction of villagers scrambling to both witness and destroy the strange craft As an instrument of surveillance, it also "turn[s] the gaze of the discriminated back upon the eye of power" (Bhabha, *Location* 112) Kiyooka's cover is a collage that combines an engraving of the first hot-air balloon landing in Gonesse, details of Pierre Milan's "Jupiter and Calisto," and a modern photograph of a so-called dream machine and its mechanic The result is chaotic, with the villagers clambering over a brick wall, the gods engaged in a tête-a-tête in one corner of the scene, and a man wearing jeans and a T-shirt with "notary public" on the back who appears across the spine of the book Kroller suggests this figure is Kiyooka himself (52) He is holding the scene together while operating the dream machine, a crude chariot bearing two television monitors, each displaying a different hot air balloon

Kiyooka's cover questions the mechanisms of artistic representation The chaotic collage reveals the randomness of Western images (European art, mythology, industrial machines) within a minor subjectivity The image of machinery also serves as allegory since the minority writer, as Deleuze and Guattari point out, must find "a mode of writing that allows us to account for the different 'machines' that condition our actual relation to the world, to the body, [and] to desire" (Deleuze and Guattari xvi) Sorting through these systems, Kiyooka embarks on what he calls a "Quest for the true body, the abode or one man's Dialect among a host of, oftimes, alien ikons" (qtd in Ondaatje n p) Like *'sophie*, *The Fontainebleau Dream Machine* begins by positioning itself between the established and emerging work of art

Both Kıyooka and Tostevın ınscrıbe multıple poınts of entry ınto theır texts, creatıng dıstınct sectıons wıthın each work's heterogeneous makeup Thıs serıalıty marks the texts' hyphen, the space they occupy as both part of, and outsıde of, the larger contexts of Phılosophy and Art For example, Tostevın's text ıs dıvıded ınto four maın sectıons the first ıs an untıtled serıes of poems/segments, the second an essay descrıbıng the experıence of attendıng a semınar gıven by Jacques Derrıda, the thırd a prımarıly French sectıon entıtled "espaces vers", and the last, "Song of Songs," a poem dıvıded ınto numbered stanzas that plays wıth the bıblıcal text by the same name Most of *'sophıe*'s segments are lınked by a sıngle apostrophe at the top of each page, markıng ıt wıth a suspended presence The apostrophe thus remınds us of *'sophıe*'s external context, whıle each sectıon adds a new dımensıon to the book's emergıng subject

Whıle Tostevın's apostrophe sıgnals a text already ın progress, Kıyooka subtıtles hıs work "18 Frames from a Book of Rhetorıc," ımplyıng ıt ıs an excerpt of some larger body Each of the book's lıteral frames barely contaıns ıts collage of overlappıng ımages, ıncludıng hot-aır balloons ın varıous states of flıght and catastrophıc descent The accompanyıng poems, commentarıes, journal entrıes, and dream descrıptıons dırect the reader to questıon the truth of what she sees The frames themselves are ornate ımıtatıons of the 16th century Fontaınebleau desıgns of fruıt, leaves and naked fıgures (Kroller 48) For theır part, the Fontaınebleau engravıngs were also based on the art of Italıan Mannerıst paıntıngs (48), whıch were characterızed by exaggerated perspectıve, undermınıng the authorıty of the great Renaıssance artısts These references also mark the book wıth artıstıc ghosts Whıle tryıng to carve a place for "one man's Dıalect," (qtd ın

Ondaatje n p) Kıyooka's subject ıs ınextrıcably connected to the artıstıc tradıtıons of the Western world

For example, Kıyooka pays homage to French 19th century artıst Eugene Delacroıx, referrıng to hıs journal ın the text of *Fontaınebleau* He finds a connectıon wıth Delacroıx that transcends theır cultural dıfferences In her detaıled revıew of Kıyooka's book, Kroller poınts out that Delacroıx advocates serıalıty as a means of expressıon[16]

> the book ıs lıke an edıfice of whıch the front ıs often a sıgn-board behınd whıch, once [the paınter] ıs ıntroduced there, he must agaın and agaın gıve equal attentıon to the dıfferent rooms composıng the monument he ıs vısıtıng, not forgettıng those whıch he has left behınd hım [ ] As 'portıons of pıctures ın movement,' books requıre as much ınvolvement from theır readers who are lınked to these portıons, as they do from theır authors (qtd ın Kroller 47)

Delacroıx's rooms reflect moments of transıtıon that occur between segments ın Kıyooka's text These moments offer what Bhabha calls a "strange stıllness" that draws attentıon to the dıfficulty of translatıng cultural ınformatıon, movıng "toward an encounter wıth the ambıvalent process of splıttıng and hybrıdıty that marks the ıdentıfıcatıon wıth culture's dıfference" (*Locatıon* 224) Kroller's observatıon elucıdates the cumulatıve and shıftıng nature of *Fontaınebleau*, lınkıng Kıyooka's poetry wıth hıs art, and partıcularly wıth the art of photography The artıst develops the work from somethıng he has borrowed, captured, and transformed, pıece by pıece, lıke a roll of fılm

Each pıcture ın Kıyooka's book ımplıes movement, as though a scene were ınterrupted ın full swıng and held stıll These ımages are accompanıed by commentary descrıbıng the frame, as well as a poem For example, the first frame shows a hot aır balloon rısıng from behınd an old stone buildıng wıth three rounded archways The

balloon is surrounded by clouds and tightly framed by engraved Fontainebleau ornamentation The commentary reads "The 1st frame shows Breath (shadowing) Dream (shadowing) Air (shadowing) itself" (110) Kiyooka uses authoritative language to instruct the reader about what she is seeing, and in doing so, he exposes language's function as what Deleuze and Guattari call a machine of expression for which the author is also "the gears, the mechanic, the operator and the victim" (Deleuze and Guattari 56) The author creates and performs language, but he is also subject to its limitations Breath, dream and air are intangible, making Kiyooka's explanation unsatisfying and suspicious, lurking in the "shadows " The upshot of the description is that what the 1st frame shows is the 1st frame Kiyooka's parody of Western art and literature coincides with his quest for "the true abode of [his] dialect" (Ondaatje n p) His interest appears to lie not only in the work itself, but the place his work will take in a larger context He puts it this way "I'm not interested in Literature, say, if it is insisted that I worship at the feet of William Shakespear [sic] or Blake — such fatuous esteem can divest you of your own articulation, 'articulation' could be another name for history" ("with RK" 29)

Kiyooka's text also echoes his relationship to the English language, which provides him with a voice that remains mute in his mother tongue The repetition of the words "breath," "shadow," "dream," and "air" brings an ethereal quality to the work as a whole, as though the text were being mediated, a dream translated By using the term translation, I want to build on Benjamin's notion, which "ultimately serves the purpose of expressing the central reciprocal relationship between languages" (*Illuminations* 72) Yet the word "reciprocal" does not apply here, instead, the relationship is diglossic For example, Kiyooka's thoughts on the English language reveal the potential of conflict

every time he expresses himself. He mockingly describes himself as "to all intents and purposes, a white anglo saxon protestant, with a cleft tongue," explaining that thoughts come to him in a "North American/West Coast dialect of the English Language," but silences and unexpressed emotions are "enfolded in an unspoken Japanese dialect" (*MT* 182-183). In other words, his writing bears the weight of a mute mother tongue. "Even my anger," he writes, "not to mention my rage has to all intents and proposes [sic] been shaped by a gut level obscenity I picked up away from my mother tongue" (181). Even the most basic emotional experiences are translated in the words of a colonizing language.

In contrast to the dream-like frame, Kiyooka's voice is weighed down in his first poem.

> Out of the lair of breath the Dream
>
> Machine slipt its moorings
> in the Cave of my mouth and climbed the tree
> tops of my sleeping eyes up into
> the cool blue Night. Mother mute mother
> of my breath the unvoiced Cry of
> the child i am 'rings' the Changes in
> your granite mouth
>
> these stones these stones embody a tongue
> tied Speech (110)

Many of the female figures that populate the book's collages appear as statues or carved relief images, stone into which history is etched. Like Kiyooka's silent mother tongue, the figures remain mute, representing Kiyooka's aphasia, a translation "weighted with a heavy alien meaning" (Benjamin, *Illuminations* 72). The Fontainebleau Dream Machine becomes the hyphen, the strategy that permits the poet to take flight once language "slipt its moorings/in the Cave of [his] mouth" (110), turning stones into tones, an Air (song)

"(shadowing) itself" (110). Kiyooka breaks his line both to double the implications of the last word (Dream/Machine, tree/tops, tongue/tied) and to create a pause, a stillness in the voice.

Stone carvings, whether figures or buildings, provide, along with the hot-air balloons, points of connection throughout the book. The heavy, mute figures sketched in a classical style, and the Renaissance architecture Kiyooka plucks from various existing artworks, overlap with the balloons' light, airy photographs. Despite the odd combination, which appears thrown together haphazardly in a single frame, the images of stone and balloon remain constant throughout the book. Using these points of connection that multiply in their successive combinations, Kiyooka suggests a multitude of possibilities. The components of each engraving interact to create what Deleuze and Guattari call "the proliferation of series," spinning off into "innumerable polyvocal combinations, forming segments that are more or less near each other, more or less distant" (70). Focussing on these points of connection, instead of a linear aesthetic impression, brings out the series' anti-lyricism. "The artist is nothing like an aesthete, and the artist machine, the machine of expression, has nothing to do with artistic impressions [ ] the artist himself is only a dream" (Deleuze and Guattari 70).

Kiyooka defies the idea of a single language of interpretation by speaking through the visual. He underlines the relationship between the process and the product, resisting cohesion:

> The tall (fluted) STONE (breath) Column
> — a man with a Nikon F-2 measures the
> Lattices-of-Sunlight falling across Broken statues
> Of a "once upon a time there was ..." O
> The intricate marble fluted foliations
> the inflamed

> Lyre kindling
> stone leaf grief
>
> **the 5th Frame** hides
> the actual length of the column inside your Inner Ear (114)

The image accompanying the poem shows two hot-air balloons, one behind the other, appearing to come out of a Corinthian-style column air rising from stone, the future emerging from the past, a thing transformed Kiyooka explains

> The thing about photography, and the thing about the visual arts overall is you must not confuse the verbal extrapolation (in front of it, or whatever other way you look at it) with the visual image It has its own relevance, its own language, and is not transferable, in its uniqueness, its exactitude It's like making a translation It has its own experiential dimension, that you simply grab, and walk away with—mute (Miki, "with RK" 29)

In his quest for "one man's dialect," he introduces the still image as a silent language—measured, rhythmical — in lieu of the lyric

The lyric does not simply defy generic codes in the long poem, it works against them Its traditional function is to maintain balance between desiring subject and desired object The lyric mode, however, falls prey to what Kamboureli calls a "blind spot [ ] its inability to hear its own sound" (*On the Edge* 74) In *'sophie*, Tostevin's subject also acknowledges that the lyric's unifying ideology renders her mute (74) Writing, however, offers a corridor

> I write because I can't sing I am the book exiled
> from my voice in search of a melody but like the woman
> who is blind because her eyes are filled with seeing
> and like the woman who is deaf because her ears are
> filled with hearing I am mute because my voice is filled
> with words and unlike music I can only be understood
> and not heard (10)

According to Kambourelı, muteness becomes, for Tostevın, "an *enablıng* condıtıon that requıres readers to shıft theır readıng strategıes [ ] Tostevın's employment of the lyrıc ıs ınformed by her desıre to undo both gender and genre categorıes" (74-75, emphasıs added) Some elements of the tradıtıonal lyrıc — statement of the personal, and choral partıcıpatıon, for example — seem to appeal to Tostevın, ın prıncıple, despıte the lımıtatıons of the genre's unıversalızıng nature These characterıstıcs, however, remaın ınaccessıble to the female subject, as demonstrated ın the long poem's dıffusıon of the lyrıc

The personal and the collectıve remaın ımportant elements of Tostevın's poetry and her contınued search for new possıbılıtıes ın her wrıtıng

> Through femınıst awareness, many women wrıters
> faced the realızatıon that previously held assumptıons—
> whether unıversal, socıal or cultural—were changıng
> We were beıng pulled ınto unexplored terrıtory, our
> wrıtıngs often translated from the unknown as we
> attempted to redefine the boundarıes between and beyond
> cultural and gender dıfferences (*SC* 9)

She questıons the ıdea of tradıtıon as both a resource and a burden that a wrıter must address

> No ıdea ıs ever born from ısolatıon For example,
> for women wrıters not to approprıate the genre of
> the essay because ıt was conceıved by Mıchel de
> Montaıgne, an elıtıst whıte Frenchman, would not
> only be absurd, ıt would perpetuate women's sılence
> at a tıme when, more than ever, women need to test theır own
> judgement and ıntellectual faculties (12)

Varıous systems, ıncludıng her bılıngualısm, actıvate Tostevın's femınısm Through her socıo-cultural experıence, she ıdentıfies Catholıcısm wıth "beıng French" (Press 124) But the language of religıon presents her wıth a paradox a fascınatıon wıth hymns,

prayers and rituals on a linguistic, and perhaps experiential, level and a distrust of the codified patriarchal system of Catholicism (124) Weighted with these cultural associations, French proves inadequate for Tostevin to undermine the system of Philosophy "To a certain extent I think that philosophy is just another genre Unfortunately it got so caught up in its own beliefs it became a closed system, another master narrative" (*SC* 162)

Suspending 'Phil' from Philosophie, she describes her book as a birth of woman in music, the "sonority" of woman "where all becoming begins and passes through the becoming of her own representation" (*SC* 113) It is crucial for women to inscribe themselves into a critical genre, according to Tostevin Crossing genres and blending different levels of discourse is a way for women to undermine closed systems (10) As she explains in *Subject to Criticism*, at the time of writing *'sophie*, Tostevin was studying Derrida's philosophy and the issues of language as they affected her as a writer Having published essays on feminism and bilingualism in journals such as *Tessera* and *la nouvelle barre du jour*, Tostevin was still grappling with the problems language poses for her in her writing, eventually turning Derrida's dismantling of philosophical discourse against him

In the section of her book entitled "by the smallest possible margin," Tostevin argues that Derrida is subject to the master narrative he tries to undermine The piece veers the book into a new sub-genre the personal essay In the first person, Tostevin relates her experience as a participant in Jacques Derrida's seminar on The Political Theology of Language While her reading of Derrida is only one among several possible

interpretations, she takes issue with the paradox that a particular philosophical discourse, while promising "to question the masters," limits the questioning of its own methods

The four-page personal essay is written in a frustrated and confrontational voice "In spite of claims that his deconstructive method of analysis allies itself with the voiceless, the marginal and the repressed, Jacques Derrida doesn't much care for questions by women" (45) Derrida's course promised "to focus on the discourse of 'the Chosen People,' primarily the Jewish Nation, the differences and conflicts relating to their languages" (45) Tostevin relates the experience of asking a question in Derrida's class—following a growing resentment toward what she perceives as his dismissive attitude toward women "I decide to speak I am paralyzed Aphasic"(47)

Describing God as a name of origin, of the law, Derrida suggests that he can only be experienced as absence and cannot be perceived as mediator Since, according to Derrida, both religion and philosophy lack a mediator, Tostevin suggests, "by way of the amniotic," a parallel between the absence of God and the absence of women in Derrida's material "Could the absence of God and the absence of women," she asks, "not be the same thing? Could woman only be a name? Absence?//His shrugging shoulders and emphatic 'yes' elicit another laugh" (47) Though she may have stated the obvious to "the greatest mind of the 20th century," the suspended presence of the woman spoken for becomes a sign through her very act of speaking " *'sophie* Name of a woman, title of a book On its own, a title has no meaning [ ] but a title is at least a promise Lives up to its promise by giving voice to words in which a figure is inscribed [ ] No longer spoken she becomes at odds with what's been said She is what she is" (48) As part of a long poem, the essay reminds us that Tostevin's version of events is subjective, recording the

ımpact the experıence had on the makıng of her text Through her very tıtle, she ınserts the presence of the "I", whıch, "ın order to define ıtself, assert ıtself, has to deny so many elements of ıtself ıt can only dıffer from nothıng by the smallest possıble margın" (47)

The personal essay allows Tostevın to speak from experıence, to argue and to present her sıde of the story Yet, whıle she uses her mother tongue ın several of the lyrıcal lınes ın her book, she wrıtes the essays ın Englısh She reflects on thıs curıosıty ın the sectıon "espaces vers" "demı-pensee demı-chanson ıntonatıon d'une voıx/lorsequ'elle se reduıt a l'essentıel s'en va au dela d'elle/pour mıeux s'entendre entre versıons entre amour entre/phılosophıes" (57) She ıs curıous that her voıce must go beyond ıtself to truly hear ıtself It ıs ın the space between versıons that a voıce can find ıts essence For example, Tostevın's admıtted assocıatıon between the French language and Catholıcısm would load a dıscussıon about the absence of God In one aspect, Englısh gıves her dıstance, and actually frees her from certaın cultural assumptıons that French would hold

Kıyooka's sıtuatıon dıffers from Tostevın's ın that he has no choıce but to use Englısh ın hıs wrıtıng However, he remaıns crıtıcal whıle searchıng for hıs place ın Art Hıstory, callıng *Fontaınebleau* hıs "oftımes bemused Homage to the whole domaıne of European Art, [of] whıch, together wıth Chrıstıanıty and ıts twın, Capıtalısm— [he ıs] an errant chıld, an orphan" (Ondaatje, n p) As Tostevın recontextualızes the genre of the phılosophıcal essay, Kıyooka "crıtıques art practıces that contaın rather than release desıre" (*PW* 309) The book becomes Kıyooka's "re-takıng of / Art Hıstory ıts awesome oft / ımes comıc verıtıes" (309) For example, Kıyooka's nınth frame ınterferes wıth the orıgınal "La Madeleıne transportee au cıel" by combınıng ıt wıth a cartoon of a horse tıed

to a hot-air balloon with a donkey on its back The resulting collage places Mary Magdalene and three supporting angels on the horse, while cartoon donkeys are reproduced in the frame As Kroller points out, the scene looks more like a fumbled kidnapping than an ascension to heaven, with the angels struggling to keep Mary atop the overburdened horse (49) The action spills over the frame, instead of remaining within it Donkeys (Kroller dubs them the "asinine spectators") are minimized into a strip at the bottom of the frame and seem to be looking up in awe Kiyooka dismisses the scene of "Shining Angels," claiming "of such Heavenly Hosts i know nothing [ ] lucky or unlucky the Augury they propose lifts a blanket of doubt/from the green morning meadow filled with braying donkeys" (118)

"[L]'aura of the Ukraine Opal Alberta," the sixteenth frame in Kiyooka's book, introduces the town where his family relocated during the war

> the Carboniferous Sky over Europa and Asia Black
> as my horse Sleepy Jim who fell thru the winter sod
> roof of
> our Root Cellar and ate – ate til the snow the snow
> falling thru the hole the huge Sky-hole Jim had fallen thru
> fell down on top of him (125)

The frame's central figure, a lyre, is in a bright spotlight with the commentary "the 16th Frame shadowing the inflamed Lyre burning in the 2nd Narrows" (125) The lyric's unifying ideology, sewing together the gaps in a story, undermines the insertion of "truth " The moment Kiyooka records remains in the shadows of a burning lyre, while he lies on the border between two worlds, the day the sky fell

> aphasia a cross frozen stubble
> aphasia the drifting snow-mantled pasture
> aphasia down the huge black hole
> aphasia his un deserved famine
> aphasia (125)

In lieu of a personal narrative, the dream machine paints elaborate pictures, as "the Hand of the unseen Poet turn[s] into a Palimpsest//sifting the Rune/s for//the Behemoth of Speech the absolute truth" (116-117).

The "absolute truth" for both Kiyooka and Tostevin always lies just beyond their reach. Getting to the point of an alternate message can prove a difficult task when the point is always written in a conventional language. Tostevin complains:

> Once the word was invented it was just a matter of time before we all set out to find the real thing [ ] when it's a matter of getting to the point to the source you outrun me curious courser swift as the arrow you follow while I crawl at the tortuous pace of the crooked foot tortoise in search of the sound your arrow makes when it reaches then wrenches from the real thing (14)

Getting to the point is never easy for the minority writer, because a colonizing language precedes a minor subjectivity, the message is clothed in the familiar. The "crooked foot tortoise" must transform the tool of language to accommodate what does not lend itself to translation. Desire functions within writing, but also wrenches lines and expressions away from fixed contents, toward a means of escape, "finding a way out, precisely a way out, in the discovery that machines are only the concretions of historically determined desire" (Deleuze and Guattari 59).

Tostevin and Kiyooka, as bilingual writers using English, need to explore the range of what they "can say" and "can mean," realms that are distinct (Kachru, *Alchemy* 164). English contains assumptions of cultural norms that cloud cultural difference while mediating through the "language and literature of colonial imposition" (Bhabha 1984, 95). The hybrid subject must always challenge the 'truth' of static representation. The

images, as well as the recognizable conventions of traditional genre, carry the burden of "historical and ideological productions without any of the inevitability that they claim" (97). Tostevin counters with cultural assumptions of her own, performing, while explaining, her bilingual codeswitching

> oser mi-dire (à toi qui ne fait que lire) comment expliquer ce besoin? Langue normalement organisatrice s'aventure hors de son abri se trouve soudainement sans lieu tourne en rond laisse échapper ses sons comme une bête son piège oraison du desert sons-souches qui trainent les profondeurs de la pensée
>
> je mi-dis donc je suis (57)

Her "demi-pensee" or "half thought" is made manifest on the page. Language lets go of its presuppositions, the trap that contains it, and lets the sounds collaborate "in the configuration of two or more codes" (Kachru 164). Tostevin translates mi-dire as both "half-speak" and "midspeak," indicating both incompleteness and the common ground between both sides of a hyphenated subject.

The corresponding codes in Kiyooka's book are the visual and the written. Miki argues that the interface between the poem-texts and collages proposes a "textual discourse, a 'rhetoric' " (*PW* 309). In other words, a half-speak that, in keeping with Kachru's notion of the bilingual's creativity, expands the range of what he can say and what he can mean (Kachru, *Alchemy* 164-165). The strongest example of Kiyooka's half-speak is the commentary that introduces each frame, explaining alternately what it "shows," "hides," "is hiding," "pre-figures," "shadows," "belongs to" and "exposes" (109-127). The frame descriptions sound like explanations of a surreal photo album. The interaction between the photographs, engravings, figures, and names propels the text into a multitude of directions and the reader is tempted to rely on these explanations for

clarity Some of the comments re-enforce the struggle of the mute poet, bearing echoes of *Kyoto Airs* "the 10th Frame hides/the fluted (breath) Column in the unmined Quarry beneath your tie'd tongue" (119) Others offer insights for the reader's imagination, adding secret information to the images in the frame "the 8th Frame hides/the real pigeon shit spattered on the back of a bronze Napoleon" (117) Finally, some statements seem to leave the reader squarely out of the loop, giving the poet the last word "the 4th Frame/a Clap of Thunder marking the Distances We Travel by Night" (113) The pronouncements that accompany the images, then, create more possible readings, raising more questions than they answer

What necessitates the reader's disorientation is the dominant genre within this long poem, which is, first and foremost, a personal journal The lines, images, characters, and quotations are presented as they relate to the poet/artist, a subject himself born out of collage Kiyooka was interested in artists' writings, but, given his comments on the inaccessibility of language, he needed a different vocabulary with which to chronicle his own life While Tostevin splices her poetry with personal essays, Kiyooka combines the elements of his long poem as a life unfolding "breathing Thing/s I lie under the belly of/the Dream"(127) He half-speaks, therefore he is

The final poems in each book suggest a coming to terms with, rather than a resolution of, minority subjectivity The last frame of *The Fontainebleau Dream Machine* consists of naked figures that appear to be waking from their posts among the fruit and foliage The dream, which "dies every morning in the cave//of your Mouth," suggests a reversal of roles, asking the poet/mechanic to write the dream, to "be my Daylight" (127) Inside the frame, a camera reveals through its lens the hands of an artist at work The

ever-present hot-air balloons are attached upside-down, strapped under the frame Christian Bok suggests they reflect the pears from the first frame, representing "the forbidden fruit of poetic knowledge" (28) Kiyooka punctuates this sentiment with his last lines "who is really dreaming the dream everyone/one by one, dreamt?" (128)

Tostevin's *'sophie* also appears to have gained "the forbidden fruit of poetic knowledge" in "song of songs," but only after "a thousand and one nights/wooing wisdom/speaking to myself" (68) At the poem's outset, Tostevin repeats the biblical line of heartbroken love, "I am sick of love," like a woman more fed up than desiring Through the poem's eight segments, the speaker's desire turns inward, hedging where romantic love would take precedence "when you say love me/as thyself I can only answer/not yet not yet" (69) Finally, when "the muse has learned to write," she is offered "another apple *un appel une pomme* a poem," a course along which she can choose which point she gets to and when, declaring "I can love you now that I am no longer spoken for" (74)

Creating a fragmented context where multiple genres meet, these texts reverse the positions of their subjects The polyvocal overthrows the dominance of one meaning by disrupting the syntax of genre Both writers thus express suspicion of language's ability to convey cultural difference In the act of cultural translation, the writer can use the English language by dismantling the cultural assumptions it carries

Chapter Four

Bi/oto/graphy

The last two works in this discussion focus on the art of telling. Moving from the long poem to narrative prose, each writer examines the difficulties of moving between the languages, cultures, and generations of a bilingual's family. Tostevin's *Frog Moon* positions its speaking subject between French and English communities in Canada. In a similar context, Kiyooka situates *Mothertalk* between Japan and Canada to explore how communities in both countries have shaped a life. As I have argued, Tostevin and Kiyooka exhibit suspicion of generic constructs and authoritative voices, making the primarily narrative constructions of *Frog Moon* and *Mothertalk* a departure for each writer. Throughout this chapter, I focus on folk stories and family lore that surface in each book as translations of oral history. Again, the authority of genre is displaced, as everyday events are set alongside these legends, which are translated from each subject's mother tongue.

It may seem unusual to compare these books because each appears to belong to a separate generic category. Critically, *Mothertalk* has been received as "dual autobiography," combining the voices of mother and son (Hodder, Egan and Helms). However, the title presents the book more ambiguously as a collection of "life stories," suggesting, without committing to, a biographical context while accenting the art of storytelling. *Frog Moon* is more clearly classified as a novel, as is declared on the book's front cover. The first person narrative, however, detours through the legends told by the main character's parents, making the art of storytelling the focus of the novel. The two works hinge on the relationship between history and legend, with language differences

providing the vehicle between the two realms Neither book uses its stories to reconcile tensions, but to break open the boundaries of form to reconstruct an alternative space for a silent history

Oral traditions are the root of community history, according to historian Carole Carpenter Folklore, she writes, is the experience of cultural artifacts that people can come to identify with through oral/aural means, observation, or imitation (150) However, she laments the reduction of folklore from "an important means of cultural articulation in the face of majority superiority and/or mainstream domination" to what she perceives as merely "rhetoric" (149) Canadians, she finds, "have an unrealistic or unrealized understanding of themselves and others as cultural beings" as a result of viewing folklore as a token of the multicultural ideal, instead of a functional aspect of society (149) Translating folklore into a written form contains the risk Carpenter describes, particularly when the essence of the original oral history is also translated into a different language

Language, in both *Frog Moon* and *Mothertalk*, contributes directly to each community's history, as new generations build on the stories of the past The subject moving between language communities is continually translating from one set of expectations to another The problem facing a bilingual writing narrative prose is that no one language fully contains experience at any given time Representing a bilingual history, even in an imaginative context, remains a complex endeavour, a problem Bhabha confronts

> The enunciation of cultural difference problematizes
> the binary division of past and present, tradition and modernity,
> at the level of cultural representation and its authoritative

> address. It is the problem of how, in signifying the present, something comes to be repeated, relocated, and translated in the name of tradition, in the guise of a pastness that is not necessarily a faithful sign of historical memory but a strategy of representing authority in terms of the artifice of the archaic (*Location* 35).

Without a critical examination of one's own community within its cultural context, a writer's preservation of oral history could become merely nostalgia. As writing in English cleaves a bilingual's voice from part of their history, the challenge, then, lies in reflecting the actual ambiguity – rather than a perceived authority – of their story.

As I noted in the first chapter, Kiyooka felt that the Nisei (the second generation Japanese Canadians) became the pioneering voice for his community. The lack of writing by the Issei, the first generation, is mainly due to the language barrier and extreme hardship Kiyooka records in *Mothertalk*. Mrs. Kiyooka, or Mary, as she becomes known in Canada, has spoken almost exclusively in Japanese throughout her life, lamenting "My kids will never know all that befell their mom because she never learned to speak English well and they didn't learn enough Nihongo" (14-15). By including this testimony, Kiyooka suggests that his recording of her stories could never fill the silence of his mother's generation.

Tostevin's main character is a writer who also records her parents' stories, translating them into another language. She examines the shift in the social position of minority Francophones, revealing differences between Québecois culture and that of Northern Ontario. In particular, she acknowledges the impact of English on a family over three generations. Tostevin's fictional family travels across and away from the Ontario-Quebec border, a line that divides language communities. However, the protagonist's

parents in *Frog Moon* represent resistance to assimilation while the main character struggles with the guilt of living away from her mother tongue

English represents oppression to both the French Canadian and Japanese Canadian families the authors depict, as the older generation continually points out The narrator's mother in *Frog Moon* calls the English the "main prong in a French Canadian's three-pronged fork," the other prongs being the priest and the devil (47) That the English were the "main prong" is not insignificant, considering the extent to which the Catholic church affected the lives of French Canadians, especially in Tostevin's portrayal For example, the storefronts of French-owned shops, as the mother points out, bear English signs, "because that's where the business was, with the English, and you didn't want to offend them by flaunting your French" (50-51) Children who turn away from their linguistic roots exacerbate that sense of indignity Louise, the narrator's daughter, shows off her "Toronto French School" French, claiming not to understand her grandparents' rural accent David, the son, stubbornly aligns himself with the "English only ranks," much to his grandfather's frustration (141)

Linguistic tensions divide family members in Kiyooka's book as well, as Mrs Kiyooka's children grow ashamed of the "patchwork quilt kind of English" she spoke in the family's immigrant neighbourhood (135) She relates several attempts to interest her children in their heritage but even the two who grew up in Japan want to put those years behind them (63) She is caught between a "very strong" desire to throw off the family's immigrant status (151) and the frustration of witnessing her children's assimilation

> The public school system taught them English history
> and didn't teach them anything about their parents' culture
> Even in the twenties Papa and I could see that it was going to
> be hard but it didn't occur to us that we would have to forego

> being Japanese. When I pass away there won't be a soul left to tell how the heart-of-Tosa sang in our home behind an English façade. (172)

The older generation clearly identifies how diglossia silences their communities and both Tostevin and Kiyooka acknowledge this sense of loss.

To convey their unwritten histories, *Mothertalk* and *Frog Moon* rely on family lore. Tostevin splices Laure's mother's childhood with the Legend of Rose Latulippe, a cautionary tale of a motherless teenaged girl punished for defying the church. Against an elaborate story where the Devil and Monsieur le Cure fight over Rose's soul, she exposes the cultural oppression that the mother blames for her own hardships. "I should have been in school but like most French Canadians I'd not gone back after the elementary grades. There were no French high schools in Timmins or Cochrane, no French high schools in Ontario until 1969" (52). Laure's mother recounts the legend to both represent, and distance herself from, her position between the English and the Catholic church.

Laure's father, at her urging, talks about work in the lumber camps, spinning fantastic stories of ghosts and werewolves, but he also alludes to the poverty and hardship that remain unspeakable. The character's name, Achilles, places him in mythical territory, while history eludes him. Having endured hard physical labour from the age of nine, he cultivates his storytelling skills in part because of an inability to write. Despite this limitation, he is not without history, but is a product of his oral culture. As Tostevin writes, "details had to be committed to memory because they didn't exist anywhere else" (162). The tale of La Corriveau, a ghost who rode on the backs of men, illustrates the burden of hard work and the nomadic lifestyle the camp workers endured. Achilles contrasts the men who looked as though they had the ghost, and her iron cage,

"perpetually strapped to their backs" with the romantic figures of English explorers, such as James McGill and Noah Timmins, depicted in history books

Mrs Kiyooka also tells ghost stories, expanding the context of her personal narrative By introducing elements of the fantastic into anecdotal recollection, Kiyooka destabilizes the reader Is this the life story of Mary Kiyoshi Kiyooka, or is it a collection of the stories she told in her lifetime? For example, she establishes her ability to see ghosts, in the form of a "wreath of fire," in a matter-of-fact tone (16) The wreaths appear in the North, she declares, because of an attack against Lord Yamanouchi, of the clan her samurai father served, which took place in the Northern mountains She combines the archaic phrases "legend tells" with the declarative "that is why," placing herself between the realms of fantasy and history The "hungry ghosts" she describes reappear when her daughter, Mariko, tries to pass as an orphan in Japan, leaving Mrs Kiyooka in their company In another anecdote she insists she spotted a floating Noh mask in her son's house and recalls him chiding her "your ghost tales belong to another time and place" (171) In addition to their position in Mrs Kiyooka's narrative, the ghosts denote the disappearance of the old ways of life, the continual loss of territory (Japan, and later Canada), the separation of her family, and assimilation of her children Though her children tell her to move on, the ghosts remain in the corner of her eye

Growing up a samurai's daughter in the Meiji period, Mrs Kiyooka has many stories involving brave swordsmen and restless spirits Her throwaway yarns are part "wives' tale," part anecdote, connecting folklore from her native Japan to her own life's narrative For example, Mrs Kiyooka tells the story of a one-eyed Japanese Christian beaten to death by her family At first, the story sounds like village gossip, but Mrs

Kiyooka goes on to say that the spirit of the Wronged One always comes back as an Onibaba, an old devil-woman. In this story, the old woman casts a spell on her son and daughter-in-law, and they each die a horrible death. Mrs. Kiyooka later recalls placing flowers on the woman's grave, blurring the lines between fantasy and fact (33). While this story illustrates the historical closed-mindedness, the "feudal cocoon" Mrs. Kiyooka calls Japanese society, inscribing an element of fantasy isolates the incident from her own fond hometown memories (42). The poverty that Ronin experienced after the restoration contrasts with the indignity of suffering at the hands of one's own community. In fact, the story also foreshadows the fate of the Issei in Canada. Canadian citizens were "stripped of everything" and registered as "Enemy Aliens" by their own country because of their difference (137). The story is one of several that express humiliation, suffering and anger in a way that Mrs. Kiyooka's own first person narrative does not. Summing up her feelings about the War, she simply states: "Boy it's been a bitter pill to swallow" (137).

Writing on the historical construction of identity, Joan W. Scott uses fantasy as a synonym of imagination, and calls it "the means by which real relations of identity between past and present are discovered and/or forged" (287). Writers intentionally direct the imagination to achieve a coherent product. "Fantasy," she writes, "is at play in the articulation of both individual and collective identity, it extracts coherence from confusion, reduces multiplicity to singularity [. . .] it is precisely narrative that evokes, erases and thereby resolves social antagonism" (289-90).

Scott merges the term fantasy with "echo" to account for a deliberate strategy in creating an illusion of historical continuity.[17] As delayed returns of sound, echoes produce only a fragment of an original phrase. These partial phrases alter the original

sense they once contained (291). Echo, for Scott, suggests the "temporal inexactness of fantasy's condensations," which minimizes differences through the repetition of information (292). The idea of identity as a continuous, coherent, historical phenomenon is a fantasy that erases divisions and differences that separate subjects in time (292). Echo reminds us that identity "is a complex and diffracted relation to others" (292). Fantasy echo replays and redirects in time and over generations "the process that forms individuals as social and political actors" (292). Scott uses the concept of "fantasy echo" to discuss what she perceives to be the necessary but illusory idea of a continuous women's history. I am borrowing her term, fantasy echo, to illustrate how storytelling functions in Tostevin and Kiyooka's work, interweaving legends with cultural history, exposing the cracks in narrative prose, and demonstrating how a voice becomes diffracted in relation to its two cultures.

Paradoxically, English is the language used to relate these stories of cultural difference. Tostevin and Kiyooka each engage in a method of "translation" that highlights the hyphen, the in-betweenness that characterizes each voice. Language and memory intertwine in *Frog Moon* as its main character uses her second language to fictionalize her past. Laure is inspired by her English teacher, Madame Wickersham, who advises her pupil to put her stories, diaries, and dictionary definitions into a book, which is, in fact, what *Frog Moon* becomes (192-3). The title chapter begins: "[m]y first memory is of my mother telling stories" (39). On the following page, the narrator echoes: "[m]y first memory is of my father telling stories" (40). Contradicting herself in this way, Laure shifts our focus from the parents' stories to the cultural makeup of the present voice. Laure, who later becomes known as Laura,[18] explains: "Much of what I know of

the lives of my parents has been passed on in the form of stories revised over the years, tall tales that grow taller as they spin themselves into the spine of my history, each tale an acoustic mirror[19] reflecting the different facets of my background, my geography" (*FM* 151)

In her novel, Tostevin includes both a disclaimer and a tribute, eschewing suggestions that she is the subject of her own book: "*Frog Moon* is a novel whose characters are fictional, however, I would like to extend my gratitude to all pioneer voices that form the basis of its historical, legendary, and mythological chronology, especially my parents, Laurette and Achilles Lemire" (218). Tostevin's main character remarks: "There are some stories so factually accurate the names of the main characters have to be changed to protect the innocent, while there are others whose facts are so irrelevant only real names should be used" (39). This comment is meant to remind the reader that any "autobiographical" references that can be gleaned from previous books, essays, or public facts are, as she repeats on at least four different occasions, interpreted, or misinterpreted designedly[20].

> pervert: from F *pervers per* through or by means of *vers* a line of writing, or L *vertere* to turn, n: one who has turned to error, especially in religion, opposed to convert, v t: to turn another way, to turn from truth, to divert from a right use, to lead astray, to misinterpret designedly (75)

While Laure's voice comes to us in English, the stories that she "translates" from her parents' oral histories are spoken to her in French. She recognizes the task as she re-writes her father's stories: "[n]ot only do I translate his telling into writing, his history into fiction, but his language into another language. From my father's point of view his version is more accurate in its relation to the past, while from my point of view my

version is an advance on the future" (161) She acknowledges that the telling itself adds a layer to the story and struggles to exceed the recording of her community's heritage

For example, *Frog Moon* alternates between the first and third person, suggesting the narrator is composing her own story alongside that of her parents The two sections entitled "The chorus" illustrate the main character's migration between languages Though it is clear that the "young girl" in the first section is Laure, the absence of her name coincides with her silences In her opening scene, Tostevin describes the young girl's experience singing in the choir As she sings off-key, she is asked to simply mouth the words "[ ] while she sings 'Mon beau sapin,' her silence fills the auditorium with a forest of northern pines, fresh snow, and the aroma of her mother's *tourtieres*" (16) In contrast, the book's final section, "The chorus (ii)" is written in the first person After spending six weeks in Paris seeking inspiration for her writing, Laure returns to Northern Ontario, noting "Paris has only confirmed that I don't belong there either" (214) Ironically, it is in Paris that Laure claims English as her creative language, free from the confines of the convent Following that realization, and once returned to her childhood geography, Laure reclaims her voice, writing the stories about the young girl's past that are interspersed throughout Tostevin's novel

Laure comes to this realization after much soul-searching The political dichotomy of French and English in Canada pressures *Frog Moon*'s characters to choose an allegiance, even when one is able to communicate in both languages As we have seen through the parents' stories, English is always a factor in Franco-Ontarian history Laure seeks an escape from this pressure through the materiality of words, the properties of language that lie beyond identity politics The Latin she finds in *Gray's Anatomy*

fascinates the young girl She finds words in "The Female Organs of Generation" similar to the language she speaks in prayer (131) At Christmas she misses "that magic stroke of a universal clock when an entire congregation gathered under one roof and chanted in a language no one understood, though it was a common language A story located somewhere beyond speech" (70)

The English language also represents for Laure an escape from the social constraints that religion placed on French Canadians, in her case the language of the convent She wants to write letters home in English to escape the probing eyes of the nuns (177) Because the nuns read English badly, Laure is asked to scrutinize the English books for any inappropriate material, and is thus allowed to read uncensored books that she has no access to in French (173) She is also encouraged to write English stories to "invent" her "truth" by the only teacher not subject to the rules of religion—Madame Wickersham (172) Laure's shift between language communities, from French Northern Ontario to English Toronto, as well as the shift in the language of her family life, is often painful, but it also affords her a choice

Kiyooka, on the other hand, had no choice but to write in English, he did not consider his Japanese adequate to transcribe his mother's stories He wrote in the first person, through his mother's point of view, but her stories are mediated through a series of translations, in part due to the language barrier between mother and son *Mothertalk*'s subtitle, "The Life Stories *of* Mary Kiyoshi Kiyooka," suggests it would be limiting to read this book as factual history or biography The italicization of "of" in the subtitle subtly points out the fluidity of the voice in the text Although *Mothertalk* is written in

the first person, the reader wonders how much of the book is told *by* Mrs. Kiyooka, and how much is told *of* her through her son's words.

Kiyooka's writing process is similar to the one Tostevin's narrator explains. Although Kiyooka could understand and speak Japanese, he engaged a more fluent friend, Matsuki Masutani, to transcribe the stories and then translate them into English.[21] Familiar with the tales, and how his mother would tell them, Kiyooka then re-translated Masutani's English using a new rhythm and diction. According to Daphne Marlatt, who edited the final book: "Roy took Matsuki's pages and freely rewrote them, fashioning a voice in English that would reflect his mother's Tosa-ben"[22] (3-4). As a result, *Mothertalk* is a record not only of Mrs. Kiyooka's history, but of the cultural history of Roy Kiyooka. Marlatt includes his poetry to highlight the inter-subjectivity between mother and son:

> this roundabout
> saunter
> through Gotenyama backstreets
> re sound-
> ing inside the shell
> of a child's
> syntax
>
> (as 'echo'
> of a distant echo...
>
> my mother
> taught me on the Sunday morning
> back porch
> of a long ago East Calgary
> circa 1930s (*MT*, 57)

In addition to the significant historical value of the book, Kiyooka preserves his mother's stories *as he heard them* and interfered with their final form to achieve that end.

For example, Marlatt found that Kiyooka's version of the interviews did not follow the chronology of the conversations, and that the stories floated back and forth in time and place. He had eliminated some biographical material and linked stories thematically. Marlatt remarks:

> When I read over the pages of transcript and compared them to Roy's last draft, I found he had considerably expanded many stories, adding vivid detail and sometimes wry social or political commentary that matched his mother's occasional comments in this vein. It's impossible to know whether the detail comes from his own poetic elaboration, sparked by visits he made to Kochi-ken over the years, or whether it comes from other, earlier versions he heard his mother tell. (*MT* 5)

Marlatt became the book's editor after Kiyooka's death in January 1994. She insists that she did not change the manuscript, but often went back to the original transcripts for clarification, noting "they were quite different from Roy's final draft" (Hodder 14). She returned the stories to the more chronological order in which they had been transcribed, but she also included some of Kiyooka's other writing. Marlatt's account of her involvement in the text shows that Kiyooka was rearranging his mother's words, much as Tostevin was fictionalizing her family's pioneer voices. While Masutani translated the telling into writing and from one language into another, Kiyooka created his own version of the text, focussing on the transmutation of language and the voice of the subject.

As subjects, Laure's parents and Mrs. Kiyooka break with convention while upholding the values of their communities. Translating family lore into a broader Canadian history, these voices retell a collective story that differs from the mainstream, English Canadian experience. Finding themselves moving between cultures, both geographically and generationally, the voices echo stories from the past into the present.

The telling of their stories, through Tostevin and Kiyooka's words, records the context of their histories and highlights their survival in adapting between cultural spaces

The meandering detours the reader takes in these two narratives prevent us from minimizing the value of differing experiences, or falling prey to "fantasy's condensations" (Scott 292) The echo released in their linguistic and generic negotiations both repeats and distorts private experience, thus bringing us closer to the complexity of their communities The repetition and refraction of subjectivity over time includes the writers' participation Both Tostevin and Kiyooka refer to the complexity of a writer's role in preserving folklore As an aspiring writer, Laure reflects on this question

> Perhaps this is the writer's function, or the daughter's role The denial of a family history as simple reconstruction, each translation a facet in the endless possibilities of a story or a life, each interpretation one of the many directions a member of a family might take The writer as alchemist, practising the arcane art of transmuting elements of reality into the shining, enduring element of fiction The daughter practising the arcane art of transfiguration (161)

Cultural translation becomes an "alchemical" enterprise, involving both linguistic and generic transgressions to destabilize the authority invested in a first person narrative This approach exposes the experiences of *Frog Moon*'s characters in "frontier" conditions, including those of the narrator The writer in the novel has become a prospector, searching through family lore to construct a fantasy echo that both preserves and transforms elements of her community in order to negotiate a place within it

Kiyooka also refers to the creative process as alchemy " we all know that even a simple-minded 'image' let alone—the hiss of a mere syllable has more alchemical layers than you can shake a wand at" ("PW" 79) His manuscript went through several incarnations, from Japanese oral history to written translation, and from written Japanese

to Kiyooka's inglish, as he and his family engineered what Egan and Helms call the "serial collaboration" that produced *Mothertalk* (63). Both the generic meanderings from family history to legend and the linguistic inflection of an old-fashioned, rural Japanese create a fantasy echo, in Scott's terms. Kiyooka's reference to the transformative powers of writing underscores his role in the making of the text. Each phase in the text's creation, rather than replacing the previous version, elucidates the relationship between generations.

The artistic process, however, is only part of the alchemical operation in both texts, yet another way to describe the hyphen in their writing. Each translation becomes, in Tostevin's words, "a facet in the endless possibilities of a story or a life" (161). But re-telling in English also leaves a mark on the writer. In what Kachru calls "the alchemy of English," the language "continues to provide unprecedented power for mobility and advancement to those native and non-native users who possess it as a linguistic tool" (*Alchemy* 14). It is this power that gives voice to stories that would otherwise remain silent.

There are examples in both works that indicate the writers are aware of the alchemy of English. Here I am extending Kachru's term from the non-native use of English in former colonies to the Canadian context, where English is the mother tongue of the majority. The subjects in both books see themselves transformed.

Mrs. Kiyooka reviews the lives, loves and losses of her neighbours and children near the end of her narrative. She seems to be inching toward closure with talk of old age and death. She goes on to recount a famous Japanese legend in which the citizens of an impoverished northern town took to transporting their elderly to the mountaintop to die,

lessening the burden for their families "What a sight! The whole ledge was heaped with skeletons [ ] Here the famished son laid his mother down among the wind-wracked bones Bowing, he mumbled a mute prayer on her behalf and without a backward glance, began the steep descent" (155) Kiyooka follows this story with his mother's account of trying to get a monument erected in the memory of her father "The story of the stone," she explains, "began soon after Father passed away and Roy was born" (161) The stone presents a generational link, and re-occurs in much of Kiyooka's writing Another example can be found in *StoneDGloves* "after that death 'breath'/breaks into s-i-l-e-n-c-e— /(al-/most/its own/monument/all/most//stone" (*PW* 85) The words death, breath, silence, and stone reappear in many of his poems The attention to his grandfather's stone in his narrative suggests that his writing is his monument to the family's silent history

The stone brought Mrs Kiyooka to Japan, as she attempted to find a proper site to lay her father's memory to rest This task also allowed her to bring her children to visit Japan "After we're gone," she says, "there'll only be father's stone to tell others who we Oes were" (161) Of course, the Oes, Mrs Kiyooka's family, will live on through her son's text Instead of abandoning the past, the son transforms himself into the storyteller through the English translations of his mother's history He becomes both the conjuror and the product of alchemy "For an Issei woman," his mother affirms, "her kids alone speak the prodigality of life" (172)

The notion of transformations is also central to Laure's writing in *Frog Moon* Laure goes to Paris to write but she chastises herself for not spending enough time on "what should be written," declaring after several attempts, "I have become inaccessible to myself" (197) Throughout the day, she sees her reflection, but it is always somehow

distorted or confined. She is drawn to the mirror-like quality of her friend's art installation, for example: "Beside the static images of the past, the stainless panels offer blurred reflections of the present" (198). Later that night she has a disturbing encounter with a confrontational taxi driver that makes her feel trapped: "I am confined to the space of a mirror framing his dark eyes and bushy eyebrows that slant and meet on the bridge of his misshapen nose" (203). Remarking on the driver's unwanted attention she writes, "the mirror will not give up" (205-206). Finally home, she inspects herself for signs of the driver's forced kiss: "The mirror tells nothing" (209). Laure earlier attends a performance of Polanski's version of Kafka's *Metamorphosis*, remarking the slow evolution of the character's representation: "The other realm through which we imagine ourselves" (200).

Tostevin begins her chapter with "*Il pleut . . .*" then switches to English to describe the events of the day, a story Laure later writes, calling it "Le baiser de Juan-Les-Pins." The kiss has the unexpected effect of inspiring Laure, who, while looking through a guide to the Picasso Museum, comes across an image of two figures entwined in a violent, yet passionate embrace. The guide provides the accompanying commentary "Art is never chaste." Tostevin describes it as "an explosion of garish colours, two intertwining bodies kiss, their limbs and organs so topsy-turvy it's impossible to tell which ones belong to the man and which to the woman" (209). The distorted mirror image that had recurred throughout the day is transformed in this painting. Colour replaces polarity with discovery, recalling Tostevin's *Color of Her Speech*. At this moment, Laure reconciles the languages of her two selves. She begins to see English not as something she yields to, but rather something she can embrace: "I pick up my pen and on the first page of the

French scribbler I bought more than a month ago, I begin to write *Le baiser de Juan-Les-Pins. It was raining.*

The juxtaposition of legend and personal anecdote in both books calls attention to the fact that there is not a cohesive history for either of the texts' subjects. Instead, history is plucked from silence by repeating it in a different form. The parents' voices in both texts ironically speak in the language of their oppressors, as a result of diglossia, their children, the fictional Laure and Kiyooka, the writer, use English as their primary written language. Both Tostevin and Kiyooka refer to the manipulation of language and story as the means to an end. They transform past into present, one language into another, and oral history into written text. Their representations of community history undermine the authority of narrative prose. Each presents a fantasy to fill a gap in subjectivity. The hybridity of the books themselves is the echo of cultural identity, diffracted in its relationship to the past and forged into the future.

Conclusion

By examining writers across linguistic and ethnic groups, my intention was not to deny differences between minority communities, but to suggest that there is such a thing as a bilingual sensibility, one aspect of a minority community that transcends these differences As a bilingual, I was interested in Kachru's suggestion for such an understanding, I wanted to explore how the context of culture (bilingualism within diglossia) can manifest itself in language and style My first impression of these two writers was of their restlessness within the confines of their books Like many experimental writers, they created new tools to work with, responded to other writers and experimented with form What separates them is their attention to the immediacy of language, the recurring theme of being caught in between the languages of their families' past and present and the formal manifestation of this between-ness

What Deleuze and Guattari call the "literary machine," a text beholden to the assumptions of cultural norms, generic prescriptions and syntactic expectations, creates boundaries that pose a challenge to the hybrid nature of a bilingual sensibility In choosing one word, a bilingual is always leaving another behind Further, English plays both an oppressive and an enabling role it masks linguistic duality, but allows a subject to speak across cultures The concept of the hyphen, its reciprocal quality, creates new possibilities for exploring bilingual writing As a hybrid, the bilingual Canadian writer responds to the power imbalances of languages, the diglossia that confines the mother tongue to the sidelines Building a bridge of the hyphen between languages could level the playing field, lessen the gap between what one "can say" and "can mean" (Kachru, *Alchemy* 164)

The hyphen's role in Tostevin and Kiyooka's work moves beyond joining and dividing languages to engaging the reader in that experience As Bhabha suggests, the hybrid state that results from the interplay between languages (in this case, within a Canadian context), absorbs the dominant language and transmutes its rules to displace authority Aside from direct commentary on language divisions, I traced several of these transmutations at the linguistic level, including codeswitching, speech rhythms or cadences infusing the adopted language, and breaks in syntax All of these strategies discourage the reader from relying on familiar notions associated with words, leaving each line open to possibilities

As hybrid writers, Tostevin and Kiyooka also destabilize the unifying ideology of genre Their long poems highlight the tensions between genres (narrative, lyric, epic), functioning as colour does in painting to shatter unity Kiyooka introduces collage, and Tostevin the personal essay, into book-length poems, placing traditional forms into new contexts Their first person narratives speak from, then re-write, their origins creating hybrid subjects between history and the fabrication of story, weaving a "fantasy echo " These generic transgressions become a tool to articulate a bilingual subjectivity in the face of "the Behomoth of Speech the absolute truth" (Kiyooka, *Fontainebleau* 117) Shifting the language of genre puts the writer back in some degree of control over what can be said, challenging the existing balance of power that diglossia exerts on cultural expression

I originally came to these writers and these works intuitively, I sensed the struggle of articulation as much in Kiyooka's work as in Tostevin's, though I discovered his degree of bilingualism much later When one says "bilingualism" in Canada, the

assumption is too often an official French/English variety that has more to do with legislation than culture Language is a writer's most important tool, and just over forty per cent of Canadians have a mother tongue other than English [23] I don't believe the challenge that English presents the bilingual writer can ever be fully overcome My interest in Tostevin's and Kiyooka's linguistic and generic experimentation is certainly only one small example of how Canadian writers handle and convey that challenge

Notes

[1] See *Re-belle et Infidele La traduction comme pratique de reecriture au feminine/The Body Bilingual Translation as a Rewriting in the Feminine* (Montreal and Toronto Les editions du remue-menage/Women's Press, 1991)

[2] Although French immersion programmes effectively help children become bilingual, the controlled use of French in an Anglophone environment does not create cultural bilingualism

[3] Although there are pockets of Francophones in many provinces (for example, Manitoba) New Brunswick is the only province that is officially bilingual

[4] *Canadian Multiculturalism Act* sec 3 (1) i and j c 31 21 July 1988

[5] The second language

[6] In contrast, use-oriented diglossia occurs within a language where both high and low varieties are used by the whole community and acquired in the same manner regardless of characteristics (class, religion) of users

[7] For example, Deborah Kong's article 'Spanglish speakers 'live on the hyphen' *The Globe and Mail* [Toronto] 6 Nov 2002 A10B

[8] In her study of codeswitching in the Ottawa-Hull region, Shana Poplak identifies a distinct difference between Franco-Ontarian and Quebecois speakers Her research in Ottawa, Ontario and Hull, Quebec concluded that Ottawa residents engaged in codeswitching three to four times as much as Hull, Quebec residents and further, used English incorporations for different reasons, often in French syntactical constructions In addition to switching more frequently, the Franco-Ontarians used English to provide the most apt expression, while the Quebecois switched mainly to make metalinguistic references In addition, both communities, when compared to bilingual speakers in Puerto Rico, drew far more attention to their codeswitching "by repetition, highlighting explicit metalinguistic commentary and use[d] the contrast between codes to underlie the rhetorical appropriateness of their speech" (230) Poplak also identifies a 'linguistic insecurity' regarding Parisian French and Quebecois In other words, Franco-Ontarians are subject to three levels of diglossia—a sense of inferiority to the English language, Parisian French and Quebecois French

[9] See 'Pour une lecture critique des texts de femmes" in *la nouvelle barre du jour*, No 66, Mai 1978, 76-79

[10] Sheila Rabillard extends a similar argument in her essay "Absorption, Elimination, and the Hybrid Some Impure Questions of Gender and Culture in the Trickster Drama of Tomson Highway" *in Etudes Theâtrales/Essays in Theatre*, Vol 12, No 1, November 1993, 3-27

[11] Also published in *Pacific Windows Collected Poems of Roy K Kiyooka* ed Roy Miki, 1997, 255 As the *West Coast Line* version is included as an unpaginated insert, I will quote page numbers from *Pacific Windows*

[12] Japanese written phonetically in roman letters

[13] The poem was originally sung as an introduction to a film produced by Kiyooka's daughter, Fumiko, and Scott Haynes about the atomic bomb and its aftermath

[14] The term is self-explanatory in Japanese, "uta" meaning song or poem and "nikki" to write down in a journal

[15] Kiyooka visited relatives in Japan as a child, as noted in both Fisher (101) and Kiyooka 1997a (124)

[16] Kroller quotes from *The Journal of Eugene Delacroix* Trans Walter Pach (New York Crown, 1948)

[17] The term 'fantasy echo", she explains, was derived from a student's misunderstanding of "fin de siecle" (284)

[18] In the texts, both Laure and Kiyooka Kiyoshi are given Anglicized names, Laura and Mary respectively, as a result of their geographical and cultural migration

[19] See Kaja Silverman, *The Acoustic Mirror The Female Voice in Psychoanalysis and Cinema* (Bloomington Indiana University Press, 1988) Silverman uses the French "enceinte" with its double meaning of 'pregnant" and "enclosure"

to represent 'one of the governing fantasies of feminism, a powerful image both of women's unity and of their at times necessary separatism" (125)

[20] Lola Tostevin, *Double Standards* (Edmonton Longspoon Press, 1985) n p , Tostevin, ' Sounding the Difference" interview with Janice Williamson *The Canadian Forum* Vol LXVI No 765, 34, Tostevin, *Frog Moon*, 75 and 178

[21] There is some discrepancy as to the translation process Susanna Egan and Gabriele Helms' genealogy of the text states that Masutani interviewed Mrs Kiyooka, taping and transcribing her stories, which Kiyooka re-translated to capture his mother's dialect See "The Many Tongues of Mothertalk *The Life Stories of Mary Kiyoshi Kiyooka*" *Canadian Literature* 163, Winter 1999, 47 However, at a reading of early drafts of *Mothertalk*, Kiyooka refers to recording his mother's conversation about her life, noting ' When my mother and I speak to each other, we have always spoken in Japanese " Kiyooka states that Masutani later offered to translate the tapes, but the conversations took place between mother and son See "Mother Talk" CD recording, Vancouver Art Gallery, 1991 in *Collapse* No 2 (December, 1996) There is likely truth in both statements, as Kiyooka wrote ' Pacific Windows" from that series of conversations, and had heard his mother's stories many times However, both Masutani and Marlatt state that Masutani interviewed Mrs Kiyooka

[22] Dialect from the Tosa (now known as Kochi-city), region of Kochi prefecture

[23] *Population by Mother Tongue* Statistics Canada 9 October 2002 <www statcan ca/english/Pgdb/demo18a htm>

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Title of Thesis

The Effects of Diglossia in the Work of Lola Lemire Tostevin and Roy Kiyooka

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April 28, 2003