

irritants²⁴ and as such, were hardly encouraged. However, starting with the Parti Québécois' first mandate, government grants for the first time arrived in support of the creation "of Québec studies centres in Trier, Germany (1976), in Liège, Belgium (1977), in Bologna, Italy (1984), as well as in various French cities,"²⁵ without forgetting government support for the founding of the *American Council for Québec Studies* (1980) and of the *Québec Summer Seminar* at the State University of New York in Plattsburgh (beginning in 1979).

SOME REMARKABLE PIONEERS

This state support must not overshadow the roles played, each in their own way, by the

24. Árpád Vígh recalls the reaction before the rise of Québec nationalism and the 1980 Referendum: "The official press is troubled: Canada is not the Third World after all." (Árpád Vígh, "La difficile émergence des études québécoises en Europe centrale", *Globe. Revue internationale d'études québécoises*, vol. 4, n° 2, 2001, p. 120 [our translation]).

25. Fernand Harvey, *op. cit.*, p. 63 (our translation).

pioneers of Québec studies in various countries. These pioneers laid the foundations for the institutional development which then followed: Lilian Pestre de Almeida in Brazil, Cedric May in the United Kingdom, Józef Kwaterko in Poland, Ursula Mathis-Moser in Austria, Jeanne Kissner and Richard Beach in the United States, David Parris and Michel Martiny in Ireland, and many more.

The motivations which pushed these researchers to study Québec ensue in part from changes in political and academic structures, but it was especially personal (and often interpersonal) reasons which aroused the initial interest. They brought with them a passionate attitude, which recalls that described by Roland Barthes²⁶ about any researcher's fantasy when finding himself before an unfamiliar object. The object provokes in the researcher both the desire of becoming

26. Roland Barthes, *Leçon*, Paris, Seuil, coll. "Points", 1989.

acquainted with it and the passion of eventually possessing an understanding of it.

Within this irrational action, there is an initial seduction which better accounts for the rapid development of Québec studies throughout the world than all the scientific programmes combined. Jean-Marie Klinkenberg writes that it is this difficult-to-define element which explains why “the Centres for Québec Studies have sprung up all over Europe, and not the Centres for Bulgarian or Finnish Studies (to speak of collectivities of a comparable demographic importance)”. While this fascination motivates the often isolated researchers, it “sometimes separates us, on the other hand, from the paths of science. It sometimes gives us the impression, when we are speaking of Québec, that everything is better there.”²⁷ Supported by “Québec’s and Canada’s status-enhancing

27. Jean-Marie Klinkenberg, *op. cit.*, p. 84 (our translation).

image,”²⁸ sharpened by “the overlapping of political and linguistic borders,”²⁹ determined by the powerful appeal of a North-American culture which has experienced spectacular disruptions over the course of the Quiet Revolution, Québec studies have experienced a fascinating development over the last two decades.

As well, it is almost always a research trip to Québec – made possible by a travel grant –, and often preceded by a visit made by an academic or a Québec writer,³⁰ which has been the element triggering the interest in Québec studies. All foreign researchers³¹ can recall the

28. Carmen Mata Barreiro, “Des études québécoises en Espagne. Des indices d’une maturité”, *Globe. Revue internationale d’études québécoises*, vol. 4, n° 2, 2001, p. 144 (our translation).

29. David Parris, *op. cit.*, p. 191 (our translation).

30. In this regard, the importance of the initial tours made by the poet Gaston Miron, the writer Nicole Brossard, and by the sociologist Fernand Harvey must be emphasized.

31. On this subject, see Rachel Killick, *op. cit.*, p. 183 ; Carmen Mata Barreiro, *op. cit.*, p. 144 ; Deming Cao, “Les

necessity of grant programs set up by the federal and Québec governments, which enabled an initial contact with the country :

One must not underestimate the role played by this trip to Québec – a true immersion in the country’s culture, – writes Euridice Figueiredo, since everyone upon their return home could introduce in their classes a text, a song, a piece of information on the situation in Québec. The professor’s power to spread information remains enormous in this regard.³²

Generally speaking, the changes initiated in Québec in the 1960s attracted the interest of political analysts, sociologists, and also

études québécoises en Chine”, *Globe. Revue internationale d’études québécoises*, vol. 4, n° 2, 2001, p. 137 ; Céline Gagnon and Christopher Rolfe, “Les études québécoises au Royaume-Uni”, *Globe. Revue internationale d’études québécoises*, vol. 4, n° 2, 2001, p. 216 and Euridice Figueiredo, “Les études québécoises au Brésil”, *Globe. Revue internationale d’études québécoises*, vol. 4, n° 2, 2001, p. 402.

32. Euridice Figueiredo, *op. cit.*, p. 402 (our translation).

literary writers. The first ones saw in “Québec society a certain laboratory of political thought” which “enabled them to provide elements of response to collectivities crossed by cultural pluralism and by social diversity.”³³ In Germany for example, the interest was fuelled by “the critical distance taken towards the United States as well as the discovery of literary and political nationalism.”³⁴ Literary scholars also took note of these political changes in cultural works, accompanied by an “unparalleled blooming of Québec culture since 1960.”³⁵ If this interest implies the methodological risk of a functionalist reading of works, of “[reducing] them only to

33. Alain-G. Gagnon and Jonathan Paquin, “La science politique et le développement des études sur le Québec dans le monde. Éléments de problématique et esquisse d’un profil”, *Globe. Revue internationale d’études québécoises*, vol. 4, n° 2, 2001, p. 311 (our translation).

34. Peter Klaus and Ingo Kolboom, *op. cit.*, p. 258 (our translation).

35. Rachel Killick, *op. cit.*, p. 184 (our translation).

the symbolic expression of a minority francophone collectivity, short of asserting its presence on the North-American continent,"³⁶ it nevertheless enables one to "capture the interest numerous students who are fascinated by an anti-establishment discourse."³⁷

More recently, the transformation of Québec society at the end of the 20th century has also attracted researchers' attention. "Its questioning of identity, its opening up to the Americas and its reflections on multiculturalism"³⁸ embraces contemporary problems in other countries. In the United States, the signing of the North-American Free-Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and the constitutional debates have rekindled the interest held by

36. Józef Kwaterko, "Les études francophones et québécoises en Pologne. Déficiences, paternalismes, opportunités", *Globe. Revue internationale d'études québécoises*, vol. 4, n° 2, 2001, p. 106-107 (our translation).

37. Yannick Resch, *op. cit.*, p. 287 (our translation).

38. Yannick Resch, *ibid.* (our translation).

American researchers for Québec.³⁹ In the last decade, questions concerning immigration, international relations, migrant writing and “the coexistence, interference of mixed contributions, on the level of cultures, training and approaches,” have contributed to research carried out on the idea of a hybrid culture.

To these reasons must be added, in the case of Europe, the interest of discovering, on the American continent, the “mixture of the French fact and of Americanness which lies at the heart of the Québec identity.”⁴⁰ Forming, for the romanists, a window onto North America, Québec also appears to be a young nation, which “gives the impression of taking historical turns more quickly.” It is a rich coun-

39. On this subject, see Gregory Mahler, “American Approaches to Canadian Domestic Politics: A Distinction Without a Difference”, Karen Gould, Joseph T. Jockel and William Metcalfe, *Northern Exposures. Scholarship on Canada in the United States*, Washington, D.C., Association for Canadian Studies in the United States, 1993, p. 49-68.

40. Céline Gagnon and Christopher Rolfe, *op. cit.*, p. 222 (our translation).

try, even if it is considered a minority, which is represented at the same time as both a type of “anti-America and a ‘cultural exception.’”⁴¹

In European universities, this appeal has not provoked a development equal to that of American Studies. This result is related to particular circumstances, including the fact that American studies are linked to English departments. However, it is during this period that “several academics set aside traditional teaching, with its preference for language and literature, in order to shift their focus to more modern approaches”⁴² which favoured Québec literature. Furthermore, the radical transformation of program structures allowed for the expansion of disciplines linked to cultural studies, to “*area studies*” and to minority cultures. Finally, certain researchers saw Québec studies as a way of renewing their

41. Jean-Marie Klinkenberg, *op. cit.*, p. 85.

42. Céline Gagnon and Christopher Rolfe, *op. cit.*, p. 216 (our translation).

research since they provided an “interesting alternative to dying disciplines, such as medieval studies.”⁴³.

Within French-studies programs, studies on Québec first appeared during the reign of the “*Nouveau roman*” : Québec works provided a pleasure, which was often increased, for students, “by exempting them from having to become initiated to the mysteries of a certain French formalism.”⁴⁴. Teaching Quebec literature also appeared “as a ‘democratic’ issue” : that of the right to difference, of the claim for an off-centre status, outside of prescriptive cultural protection.”⁴⁵. In short, these works attest to “a language which is henceforth multicentric [...] characterized as the unprecedented meeting of unity and diversity.”⁴⁶

43. Céline Gagnon and Christopher Rolfe, *ibid.* (our translation).

44. David Parris, *op. cit.*, p. 192 (our translation).

45. Józef Kwaterko, *op. cit.*, p. 100 (our translation).

46. Ursula Mathis-Moser, “L’émergence des études francophones et québécoises en Autriche”, *Globe. Revue*

In developing countries, the interest in Québec is more economic and political. In China for example, the intensity of business exchanges led to “the need for a better knowledge of Québec”⁴⁷ and consequently, of its culture and literature. In India, Québec studies have “first of all been motivated by the desire to become closer to one of the most economically developed countries in the world”, but the academics have also been “quickly won over by the dynamism of Québec literature.”⁴⁸ The financial contribution made by the federal and Québec governments is hardly insignificant and partially explains the better structuring of these studies overseas in relation to the studies devoted to other countries.

internationale d'études québécoises, vol. 4, n° 2, 2001, p. 254-255 (our translation).

47. Deming Cao, *op. cit.*, p. 137.

48. Ramaya Kichenamourty and K. Madanagobalane, “Rapport sur la situation des études québécoises dans quelques centres d'études françaises en Inde”, *Globe. Revue internationale d'études québécoises*, vol. 4, n° 2, 2001, p. 361-362 (our translation).

This situation however does not hold solely for the poorer countries : without this financial support, “Québec studies would not have experienced such a boom”⁴⁹ in the United States, nor even in the Scandinavian countries.

In certain cases, Québec also plays the role of a mirror or model of another national situation. In the case of Catalonia, “one notices a solidarity defined by a strong sense of identity [...] which proves to be very fruitful in conferences, seminars and research projects,”⁵⁰ especially as concerns comparative law, political linguistics and the assertion of identity. In the case of Scotland, especially since the reintroduction of a Parliament in 1999, “there is lively interest in the very clear analogies with the Québec situation”⁵¹ while in the case

49. Jane Moss, “Les études québécoises aux États-Unis”, *Globe. Revue internationale d'études québécoises*, vol. 4, n° 2, 2001, p. 376 (our translation).

50. Carmen Mata Barreiro, *op. cit.*, p. 145-146 (our translation).

51. Jeanette den Toonder, “L'étude des littératures francophones et québécoise dans les universités écossaises”,

of Ireland, its history resembles that of Québec⁵² and allows for rich parallels to be traced. Finally, the situations in India,⁵³ Africa⁵⁴ and the Nordic countries,⁵⁵ also offer unexpected possibilities for new comparisons and perspectives in Québec history and culture.

Globe. Revue internationale d'études québécoises, vol. 4, n° 2, 2001, p. 211 (our translation).

52. See the first part of the article by David Parris, *op. cit.*, p. 187.

53. "The majority of researchers have asserted that the common points between Canada and India are very numerous and that India had better follow closely what is happening in Canada in order to extract useful and profitable lessons." (Ramaya Kichenamourty and K. Madanagobalane, *op. cit.*, p. 363 [our translation]).

54. "The way of being francophone in Québec is for Senegal an example in that this way of being francophone finds its source and its exemplary nature in a discourse of freedom and in an affirmation of Québec's cultural identity even while it opens itself up to the world." (Amadou Lamine Sall, "Perception des études québécoises au Sénégal", *Globe. Revue internationale d'études québécoises*, vol. 4, n° 2, 2001, p. 273 [our translation]).

55. "Several Québécois have asked me where this interest in Québec originates from, for a country which is relatively

STRUCTURING AND INSTITUTIONALIZATION

Although the degree of structuring varies by country, continent and academic tradition, it remains that in most countries, we observe a display of associative efforts and an expansion in terms of distribution, teaching and research. This attests to the general emergence of Québec studies which has been occurring over the last twenty years. The movement towards this institutionalization is often initiated by the seminar presentation of a visiting Québec writer or professor, by a trip to Québec, or through family ties with Québécois. This is followed by the publication of some articles and works on Québec, while at the same time courses and seminars are developed. This inevitably gives rise to the

distant from Scandinavia. Each researcher has without a doubt his or her own reasons, but the map of the circumpolar region gives us an initial explanation." (Elisabeth Lauridsen, *op. cit.*, p. 329 [our translation]).