Ortiz, Fernando. *Contrapunteo cubano del tabaco y el azúcar (advertencia de sus contrastes agrarios, económicos, históricos y sociales, su etnografía y su transculturación.* La Habana: J. Montero, 1940.

Ouellet, Pierre. *Le sens de l'autre: éthique et esthétique.* Montréal: Liber, 2003.

Peterson, Jacqueline and Jennifer S.H. Brown. *The New Peoples: Being and Becoming Métis in North America.* Winnipeg: U of Manitoba P, 1985.

Pratt, Mary Louise. *Imperial Eyes, Travel Writing and Transculturation.* London and New York: Routledge, 1992.

"Quick Facts About Canada's Francophonie." Office of the Commissioner of Official languages/Commissariat aux langues officielles. 12 May 2009. http://tinyurl.com/yjuhok9

Razack, S.H. *Looking White People in the Eye: Gender, Race, and Culture in Courtrooms and Classrooms.* Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1999.

Savard, Rémi. *Destins d'Amérique: les autochtones et nous.* Montréal: L'Hexagone, 1979.

Sioui, Georges E. *Pour une autohistoire amérindienne: essai sur les fondements d'une morale sociale.* Québec: Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 1989.

Smith, Alexander T. and Lenahan O'Connell. *Black Anxiety, White Guilt, and the Politics of Status Frustration.* Westport, CT: E.U., Praeger, 1997.

Steele, Shelby. *White Guilt: How Blacks and Whites Together Destroyed the Promise of the Civil Rights Era.* New York: HarperCollins, 2007.

Thérien, Gilles. *Les Figures de l'Indien.* Les cahiers du département d'études littéraires. 9. Montréal: Université du Québec à Montréal, 1988.

Trigger, Bruce G. *Les Indiens, la Fourrure et les Blancs. Français et Amérindiens en Amérique du Nord.* Trad. Geroges Khal. Montréal: Boréal, 1990. Trad. de *Natives and Newcomers.* Montreal/Kingston: McGill-Queen's UP, 1985.

—. *Natives and Newcomers: Canada's "Heroic Age" Reconsidered.* Montreal/Kingston: McGill-Queen's UP, 1985.

Turner, Margaret. *Imagining Culture: New World Narrative and the Writing of Canada.* Montreal/Kingston: McGill-Queen's UP, 1995.

Urquhart, Jane. *The Stone Carvers.* Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 2001.

Vautier, Marie. "Les Pays du nouveau monde, le postcolonialisme de consensus et le catholicisme québécois." *Québec Studies* 35 (Spring/Summer 2003): 13-30.

—. *New World Myth: Postmodernism and Postcolonialism in Canadian Fiction.* Montreal/Kingston: McGill-Queen's UP, 1998.

—. "Transculturalism, Postcolonial Identities, Religiosity in Lalonde's *Sept Lacs Plus au Nord* and Tostevin's *Frog Moon.*" *International Journal of Francophone Studies* 9.3 (2006): 365-80.

Warley, Linda "Reviewing Past and Future: Postcolonial Canadian Autobiography and Lee Maracle's *Bobbi Lee, Indian Rebel.*" *Essays in Canadian Writing 60* (Winter 1996): 59-77.

White, Richard. *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lake Region, 1650-1815.* Cambridge, Cambridge UP, 1991.



# The Names of Places and the Place of Names: *Late Nights on Air* and the Possibilities of Literary Cartography

**By Sarah Wylie KROTZ, University of Alberta**

In a *New York Times* review of Elizabeth Hay's recent best-selling novel, *Late Nights on Air*, Meg Wolitzer praises the author for telling a good story about a small local radio station in Yellowknife in the 1970s, and an even better one about a canoe trip through the Barrens. Indeed, these settings – Yellowknife in the first half of the novel, the remote muskeg and tundra of the Barrens in the second half – are vivid, luminous landscapes, intensely rendered: a reader can see, smell, and hear them. Wolitzer is less impressed, however, by another landscape that also forms part of the novel's setting. This is a landscape not rendered so much as referenced by an assortment of place names scattered across the narrative – too many of them, according to Wolitzer – names read in radio announcements, for example, and converging in the sub-plot of the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Inquiry. The problem is that these place names, and the expansive northern geography to which they point, remain abstract. "The Hanbury River, Sifton Lake and the Beaufort Sea may inspire specific images among Canadian readers," Wolitzer suggests, "but to someone unfamiliar with the geography they merely create a vague, undifferentiated Canadianness" (2008). Although it might be easily dismissed as a symptom of American ignorance of Canada, and particularly the north, Wolitzer's criticism nonetheless raises interesting questions about how narratives orient themselves in cartographic, as well as geographic, space. Spurred by Hay's novel and Wolitzer's review of it, what follows is a meditation on the complexity of such processes of orientation as they occur through the naming of places in literature.

Place names evoke maps: they anchor narratives in cartography more than geography. But is there something ironically disorienting in the way that they do this? As Donald Worster has argued, "writing a new name across a blank space on a map … is still a long way from exploring the wilderness the word signifies, from ranging over its landforms, and from investing the terrain with the associations generated by human familiarity" (192-93). What happens when such names enter the space of the narrative? What do they assume or demand of readers? How do they facilitate a text's emplacement? How do they hinder it? What, in short, is the relationship between literature and the inscriptions of place and territory that place names represent? Place names are one of the most rudimentary confrontations between land and language. They inscribe, both into the map and into the literary text, the briefest of stories about humans on the land. Place names thus offer a compelling entry-point into a growing field of research and debate about the relationships between and among space, place, and the literary.

Wolitzer is not the first critic to doubt the literary value of place names. In his 1928 polemic, "Wanted: Canadian Criticism," A.J.M. Smith famously dismissed "French and Indian place-names" as facile gestures of emplacement that poets would do well to avoid along with "the Canada goose, fir trees, maple leaves, snowshoes, northern lights, etc." (137). W.H. New's more recent attention to the "catalogues of naming" that pervade Canadian literature attests that, despite Smith's advice, poets and novelists alike have continued to be allured by, and to explore the literary possibilities of, the place name (153). But as a spatial or narrative strategy,

New cautions, place names all too often "speak a socially conventional language," a language that mimics the act of colonization, in which land is appropriated as it is mapped and named (153). Moreover, the cartographic space that place names inscribe into a literary text is, according to New, a unidimensional space that literature otherwise resists: "[m]aps and names encode in land one shape of history," he argues; "but the powers of interpretation perennially reconstruct or re-encode this 'one' shape" (164). Place names, it would seem, stand opposite literature (which draws its energy from the "powers of interpretation"), with the relationship between the two, at best, tension-ridden. Indeed, in *Late Nights on Air*, the thickness and density of meaning that Hay builds around select places and landscapes casts in relief the spareness of the place names that lie strewn, like so many bones, across its surface. Fort Smith, Fort Simpson, Aklavik, Tuktoyaktuk – these and many other names appear without elaboration, their "one shape" the shape of a map on which places are reduced to abstract points.

Hay's inclusion of these place names in her narrative nonetheless insists upon a relationship, however tension-ridden, between the maneuverings of fiction and the "real" (or at least mappable) spaces of the north. By way of Fort Good Hope, Mackenzie River, the Beaufort Sea, and so on, she grafts her story onto an actual geography that may, in fact, be unfamiliar not just to American readers, but, as Renée Hulan points out, to many Canadian ones as well. "[T]he north has little if anything to do with being Canadian today," Hulan argues; "[o]r, at least, its relevance to the majority of Canadians is obscure" (27). To such readers, each place name proffers an invitation – or perhaps a challenge – to open an atlas and map the story into a little-known part of Canada.

To the extent that the novel invites such acts of mapping, it arguably echoes the colonizing impetus that New and others perceive at the heart of many cartographic acts (see Harley and Huggan), the map that Hay's place names conjure fixing the north in a static, accessible space. Furthermore, the clash of real and fictional worlds that occurs in the novel's mappable landscape perpetuates a key characteristic of what Hulan has identified as Canada's northern myth. "In Canadian literature," Hulan posits, "the dominance of realism ensures that real geographical locations north of the sixtieth parallel remain the stuff of literary discourse" (6). Paradoxically, the place name serves as a means by which the "real" north is trapped in fiction – reduced to "the stuff of literary discourse."

But in another sense, the map also undoes the fiction by highlighting the strange way in which places both are and are not the stories that are told about them. As Ian McEwan slyly notes in his postscript to *On Chesil Beach*: "The characters in this novel are inventions and bear no resemblance to people living or dead. Edward and Florence's hotel – just over a mile south of Abbotsbury, Dorset, occupying an elevated position in a field behind the beach car park – does not exist" (unpaginated). McEwan's riddling description of the precise whereabouts of a hotel that is not actually there reminds us that the link between real and fictional spaces is at once deep and tenuous. Hay's novel, "in which all of the characters, except historical figures, are fictitious" (Acknowledgements), weaves real and imaginary geographies to similar effect. If her place names are points where the supposed division between actual and fictional space breaks down, they underscore the way in which the north – both as it exists in the novel and outside of it – is an imagined territory. Indeed, for many of her characters, it is a dream space: a "garden of desire," a "country of the mind" (27). If such phrases do not describe *the only north*, for Eleanor Dew, transplanted from southern Ontario and "a poet at heart" (6), they "captured the North as it lit up the human imagination" (27).

That place names are part of this dream space is one of Robert Kroetsch's points in *A Likely Story*, a portion of which is instructive for my reading of Hay's northern imaginary. Kroetsch describes coming across, "in one of the pads [he] carried [with him to the north], a list that maps the North as beginning from Waterways, a list that measures miles of travel by water. For me, now," he continues, "it is a kind of found narrative, a cryptic narrative that let me map myself into the unknown" (24). The list is an itinerary of places and distances:

Saline 25
Tar River 46
Bitumont 54
Sled Island 70
Poplar Point 95
Point Brule 105
Whitefish Creek 155
Jackfish Creek 155
Willows 170
Fort Chipewyan 187
Little Rapids 209
Peace River 215
Caribou Island 277
Fitzgerald 287
Fort Smith 303
… (24)

Continuing all the way to Aklavik, we can follow Kroetsch's journey into the very territory that Hay shores up in the pages of her novel.

A 1:50,000-scale map attaches these place names to bodies of land and water. But, here, Kroetsch unmoors them from their geographical significance. Offered as a "cryptic narrative," his list invites us to dwell, not in the actual landscape through which he once traveled, but in the language with which it has been mapped. A pun on "Waterways," which is both the name of a village (now subsumed into Fort McMurray) and a name that anticipates the "miles of travel by water" that led him deeper into the north, reveals the way in which this language expands to contain multiple meanings. The names that follow further attest to this flexibility, for they are full of material things – things that we can see, feel, taste, smell, and hear. In addition to rivers, islands, creeks, and rapids, there is salt, tar, and bitumen in these names, and a sled, poplar, willows, whitefish, jackfish, and caribou. If we cannot see precisely the geography to which it points, the list of names gives us plenty that we *can* see. Together, they reveal the way in which language bestows its own particular, imaginative character onto a region. What becomes significant is not the land itself so much as the human inscription, both of the map-maker and the map-reader, upon it.

Importantly, Kroetsch "map[s him]self into the unknown," not to solve the land's mysteries by making it visible, but to dwell imaginatively in the play of language across its surface. He thus produces a poetics of place names from which we might draw as we read Hay's cartographic north. Arguably, the proliferation of unelaborated northern toponyms, which set Hay's narrative within an abstract constellation of points, does not conquer the unknown, but rather underscores its proximity. Many of Hay's characters have come to Yellowknife from places far to the south and east, and their limited knowledge of the vast territories and diverse communities that make up the Northwest Territories is captured in the lacunae behind its place names. Yellowknife, with its detailed interiors and its carefully charted roads, neighbourhoods, and shoreline, is an island of intimate geographical knowledge set against a much wider landscape, not seen so much as felt, in which characters can – and do – get lost. As one southerner explains, "the vastness" of the spaces beyond the town is such that the mistake of turning right instead of left might mean never being found again (242).

Hay's scattered place names inscribe this vastness into her text with something of the disorienting effect that Eric Bulson identifies in *Novels, Maps, Modernity*. Bulson demonstrates that, while "readers have been mapping novels for as long as they have been reading them," place names, street names, and other cartographic markers can serve to overwhelm and disarm readers, making them feel, not oriented, but rather, lost in literary space (1, 107-131). Being lost induces a form of humility – or humiliation – that runs against the grain of Imperial conquest and the arrogance of mapping-as-knowledge. We might accordingly read Hay's place names in *Late Nights on Air*, particularly as they emerge via the historical backdrop of the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Inquiry, as markers of resistance to neo-colonial incursions. Knowledge of the places to which they point is left to rest with people whose claims Hay and her southern characters and readers can only begin to imagine – people for whom "the land," we read, "was their flesh and blood, they were born and raised on it, they lived and survived by it, they loved and respected and belonged to it, as had their ancestors for thousands of years" (84). Insofar as they indicate places known, inhabited, and safeguarded by people with deep-rooted histories and claims to the north, these place names point to a heterogeneous postcolonial spatial politics, much as Hay's passing references to Dogrib, Slavey, Hareskin, Loucheux, Chipewyan, and Inuktitut intimate a similarly-inflected linguistic one. There are many stories that might be told about the north, Hay seems to be saying, and hers is just one of them.

*Late Nights on Air* meditates, then, on a world understood in fragments. In fact, the novel is an exploration of how pieces of the world – objects, sounds, voices, even people – change as they move from one context to another. From Harry's jarring realization that "[w]e look so very different from the way we sound" (2), to Gwen Symon's practice of making radio documentaries out of scraps of everyday sounds that she reconfigures into a kind of skeletal song, Hay draws attention to radio as an agent of such fragmentation and reorientation. Like the place names on Kroetsch's itinerary (or, for that matter, on Hay's northern literary map) the sounds that the radio transmits at once point to and conceal something bigger, richer. Juxtaposed with one another in strange new configurations, they become something different from what they were originally. The radio holds a kind of auditory cabinet of curiosities, a decontextualized collection that, rather than mapping a particular space, creates countless novel ones.

The formation of such collections in the novel implicitly underscores the fact that words – place names among them – are always being reinvented in similar ways. Although many place names enter Hay's narrative without comment, others are emphasized to reveal their particular qualities as vessels of playful, idiosyncratic, and shifting meaning. We glimpse the carnivalesque invention of place that names can effect, for instance, when Ralph Cody recalls Yellowknife in the 1930s as "a veritable rainbow of names": "In those days, he said, you could meet a woman in the Wildcat Café and get married by a priest who doubled as a magician and have your wedding in the Squeeze Inn" (77). And when Gwen recalls how, as a child, the name "Owen Sound … gave her the notion that you could be stuck in a certain sound for the whole of your natural life," Hay playfully reminds us that linguistic reinventions of place occur all the time in the private sphere of the individual mind (41). The name of the town becomes a repository of the child's fanciful imaginings that, in turn, inform her memories of the place. No matter that "Owen Sound" was named for the brother of William Fitzwilliam Owen, explorer and surveyor, and for the harbour on which the town is situated (see Rayburn 260-61). Hay lets history and semantics fall away and an invented meaning take their place, revealing the way in which, like the street names of which Michel de Certeau writes in *The Practice of Everyday Life*, place names "slowly lose, like worn coins, the value engraved on them, but their ability to signify outlives its first definition" (104). The fur trade and Inuit histories that lurk behind names such as Fort Simpson, Fort Smith, Fort Rae, Fort Good Hope, Aklavik, Tuktoyaktuk, Fort McPherson, and Mackenzie River are similarly concealed in the novel, the names lying open, like disembodied voices, to imaginative re-making.

Gwen's recoding of "Owen Sound" is as childish and, ultimately, false, as are Marcel Proust's "performative projection[s]" (Miller 2), described in *Swann's Way*, of towns never visited, but only read as stops on a railway timetable. He imagines "Bayeux, so lofty in its noble coronet of russet lacework, whose pinnacle was illumined by the old gold of its second syllable; Vitré, whose acute accent barred its ancient glass with wooden lozenges; gentle Lamballe, whose whiteness ranged from egg-shell yellow to pearl grey," and other towns as vividly yet naïvely conjured (553). If, as J. Hillis Miller observes, Proust ultimately shows that "such readings are … always false," they are "also always unavoidable," and thus they represent a significant way in which a name "gives access" to a place (2). In *Late Nights on Air*, place names are both definitive markers of the "real," mapped spaces of the north and repositories of limitless possibilities of meaning.

As A.J.M. Smith's targeting of "French and Indian" – but not English – place names for critique suggests, not all names are held as equal in this regard. That some names may yield richer access to place than others is the subject of Al Purdy's poem, "Boundaries." Mobilizing a rather different image of the place name as a worn coin, Purdy contrasts "the mannered expressionless urban names" that "mark the boundaries" of southern Ontario and "insert themselves like worn silver shillings / in mouths of city people / to spend on tiny vistas / in parking lots / fenced backyards" with the "still-rich vulgarity" of the "Far north" (159). Here, he writes, are names

> to match
> a man-breaking country
> "The Torngat Mountains"
> east of nowhere
> westerly
> "Telegraph Creek"
> "100 Mile House"
> northerly
> "Arctic Red River"
> "Tuktoyaktuk"
> Nobody speaks those names without feeling
> the tongue touch rank bear-steak
> or prickling devil's club
> and remembers the mountain land
> the iron north. (159)

Still, at the end of the poem, when "teeth chatter over mere pronunciation / biting the stammered name / to pieces held there a moment / in a man's cold mouth / the edge of our loneliness," memory gives way to a kind of fragmentation that underscores, once again, the limits of our imaginative grasp of place through naming (160). Hay does not distinguish between either a southern and northern toponymic lexicon, or, as Purdy goes on to do in his later poem, "Say the Names," a colonial and an aboriginal one (see also Stafford 3-8). However, she too fluctuates between place names as, on the one hand, highly evocative, individual, imaginative openings, and, on the other, markers of "the edge of our loneliness."

Maps, and the place names that inscribe them, are by definition abstract. But they are nonetheless a felt part of any experience of place. As Miller puts it, "topographical considerations, the contours of places, cannot be separated from toponymical considerations, the naming of places" (1). As they float adrift from any easily identifiable geographical referent

across the surface of a text, names can, however, be wrested from their topographical contexts. But far from creating a "vague and undifferentiated" space, "[a] rich indetermination gives them, by means of a semantic rarefaction, the function of articulating a second, poetic geography on top of the geography of the literal, forbidden or permitted meaning" that the names may also hold (de Certeau 105). A poem might thus be teased out of the names that punctuate Hay's narrative, a poem that is, on the one hand, part of her fictional narrative, but that also stands apart from it. A poem that points to a map of the north and to the strange and interesting ways in which it makes texts of the earth. A poem of cryptic, fragmentary meaning, partially erased, its gaps supplied by the whimsical reasoning and associations of its readers. A poem that marks the north as a contested space, layered with meanings, many of which remain only partially understood. A poem that at once orients and disorients, in which we might alternately lose or find ourselves.

**Works Cited:**


Bulson, Eric. *Novels, Maps, Modernity: The Spatial Imagination, 1850-2000.* New York: Routledge, 2007.

Certeau, Michel de. *The Practice of Everyday Life.* Trans. Steven Rendall. Berkeley: U of California P, 1988.

Hay, Elizabeth. *Late Nights on Air.* Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 2008.

Harley, J.B. "Maps, Knowledge, and Power." *The Iconography of Landscape: Essays on the Symbolic Representation, Design, and Use of Past Environments.* Ed. Denis Cosgrove and Stephen Daniels. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1988. 277-312.

Huggan, Graham. *Territorial Disputes: Maps and Mapping Strategies in Contemporary Canadian and Australian Fiction.* Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1994.

Hulan, Renée. *Northern Experience and the Myths of Canadian Culture.* Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's UP, 2002.

McEwan, Ian. *On Chesil Beach.* Toronto: Knopff, 2007.

Miller, J. Hillis. *Topographies.* Stanford: Stanford UP, 1995.

Kroetsch, Robert. *A Likely Story: The Writing Life.* Red Deer: Red Deer College, 1995.

New, W.H. *LandSliding: Imagining Space, Presence, and Power in Canadian Writing.* Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1997.

Proust, Marcel. *In Search of Lost Time, Volume I: Swann's Way.* Trans. C.K. Moncrieff and Terence Kilmartin. Rev. ed. D.J. Enright. Toronto: Modern Library, 1998.

Purdy, Al. *Beyond Remembering: The Collected Poems of Al Purdy.* Ed. Al Purdy and Sam Solecki. Madeira Park, British Columbia: Harbour, 2000.

Rayburn, Alan. *Place Names of Ontario.* Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1997.

Smith, A.J.M. "Wanted: Canadian Criticism." *Selected Writings.* Ed. Michael Gnarowski. Toronto: Dundurn, 2006.

Stafford, Kim. *Having Everything Right.* Lewiston: Confluence, 1986.

Wolitzer, Meg. "Northern Composure." Rev. of Elizabeth Hay's *Late Nights on Air. New York Times on the Web* 8 June 2008. http://tinyurl.com/6ljzaq

Worster, Donald. *Nature's Economy: A History of Ecological Ideas.* 2nd Ed. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1995.


# Transculture, "souchitude" et "orignalitude" chez Hédi Bouraoui


## Par Johanne MELANÇON, Université Laurentienne


On a dit d'Hédi Bouraoui qu'il était le "chantre du transculturel."[1] Aussi, dans plusieurs textes de réflexion, principalement *Transpoétique. Éloge du nomadisme*, ou lors d'entrevues, Hédi Bouraoui se réclame du transculturalisme, proposant même, par exemple, sa propre analyse de la "praxis transculturelle dans le conte *Rose des sables*" (2000b) dont il est l'auteur. Enfin, de nombreuses études abordant ses œuvres le font à partir de ses notions de "transpoétique" et de transculturalité.[2]

Hédi Bouraoui affirme d'une part une affinité avec la transculturalité du fait qu'il a vécu sur trois continents: l'Afrique (la Tunisie où il est né et où il a passé son enfance), l'Europe (la France [sud-ouest] où il a été éduqué) et l'Amérique (les États-Unis où il a poursuivi ses études, et le Canada où il a passé plus de la moitié de sa vie comme professeur à l'Université York). Il dit assumer pleinement ses trois cultures: "[...] dans les transits culturels, je ne me suis senti en aucun cas exilé, victimisé ou aliéné par aucune composante d'une situation spécifique ou pluridimensionnelle" (2000a 14). D'autre part, il inscrit sa propre pratique scripturaire, à la fois créatrice et critique, dans cette perspective:

> We have added inventiveness to mediation to allow space for more inventiveness and more mediation. This free space is what is meant by the "creative-critical dialectic." [...]
> I would like to emphasize that I do not want to fall between the two stools of creativity and criticism, or to present an uneasy mix of the two, but to create a new genre appropriate to the illumination of contemporary experimental works. (1983a 10)[3]

Cependant, si plusieurs réflexions ou analyses tentent de démontrer la part d'une certaine transculturalité dans les œuvres de Bouraoui (incluant les textes de l'auteur lui-même), peu[4] ont tenté de synthétiser la pensée bouraouienne de la transculturalité, non plus que de la situer dans l'ensemble des recherches sur la transculture. Dans le cadre de cet article, je tenterai de cerner la notion de "transculturalisme" chez Hédi Bouraoui, pour ensuite examiner les concepts de "souchitude" et d'"orignalitude" qui lui sont reliés, afin de saisir comment ces concepts sont mis à contribution par Hédi Bouraoui pour porter un regard critique sur les situations hégémoniques des institutions littéraires, en particulier sur l'institution littéraire québécoise et surtout sur l'institution littéraire franco-ontarienne.

### Bouraoui et la transculture

Hédi Bouraoui, écrivain, essayiste et professeur, affirme avoir "lancé la notion de transculturalisme au Canada dès le début des années soixante-dix" (2000a 11)[5] en réaction au "multiculturalisme" canadien, politique trudeauiste de la mosaïque canadienne qu'il considère un échec puisqu'elle crée des ghettos et ignore la culture autochtone. Pour lui, le transculturalisme est un "moyen d'abolir les frontières et de sortir des multiples ghettos" (2000a 12), de construire "des ponts de compréhension et de tolérance entre les cultures fondatrices et autochtones et les cultures récemment importées. Une force motrice considérable qui tente d'unir au lieu de diviser" (2000a 12). Il lui semblait urgent