Affective Print Literacies in the Context of (Im)Migration

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ABSTRACT

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The guiding argument of this study is that (im)migrants arrive in their host countries with diverse cultural traditions, knowledge and educational experiences and that these constitute strengths, not deficiencies. These strengths and resources can be viewed as a form of transcultural wealth that could be brought to light in both out-of-school and classroom settings, as well as on the community level, as part of the (im)migrants' process of acculturation and integration into their new places of settlement. Furthermore, this study challenges the dominant instrumentalist rhetoric around which adult education programs for (im)migrants in Canada are often structured and which subsumes learning and literacy to market and employment exigencies—a reflection of our current historical moment of advanced neoliberal globalization. Literacy and education theorists have long called for the implementation in classrooms and on a policy level of pedagogical and assessment models, as well as a general disposition towards (im)migrant learners, based not on the language and literacy skills that they lack, but on those that they possess and which form their linguistic, cultural and literacy repertoires, in addition to being deeply connected to their very sense of self. By bringing into the discussion the affective dimension of literacy and learning, this thesis aims to counter the above-mentioned instrumentalist rationality as limited and to emphasize the importance of promoting cross-cultural communication and cross-cultural competencies in adult education. Ultimately, this project is situated within the greater challenge of us learning to live together as humanity, learning to better communicate with each other and accept our differences.

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INTRODUCTION

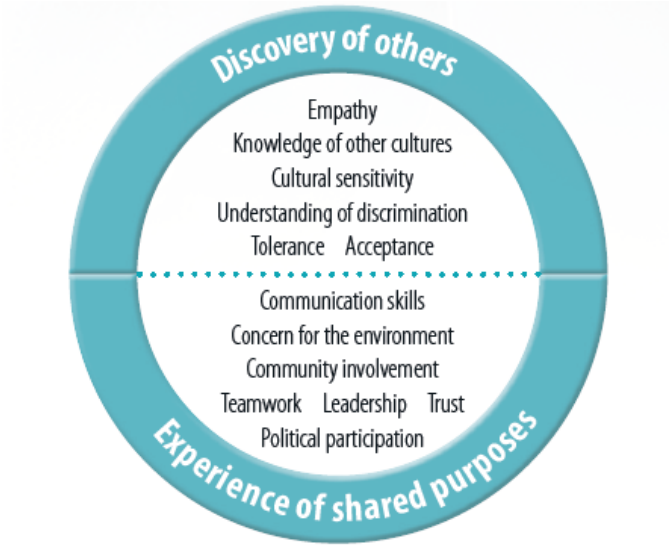
Learning to Live Together

In 1996, the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-First Century led by Jacques Delors submitted to UNESCO its report entitled *Learning: The Treasure Within* (also known as the Delors Report). The report argued that in the new millennium education should be based on four fundamental pillars: learning to know, learning to do, learning to live together and learning to be. Of those four, the commission placed the greatest emphasis on the importance of learning to live together as a crucial foundation for education as well as for lasting peace. The report states:

> Learning to live together, by developing an understanding of others and their history, traditions and spiritual values and, on this basis, creating a new spirit which, guided by recognition of our growing interdependence and common analysis of these risks and challenges of the future, would induce people to implement common projects or to manage the inevitable conflicts in an intelligent and peaceful way. (Delors et al., 1996, p. 20)

The authors of the report acknowledge that some might see this as utopian thinking, but they assert the necessity of imagining a better world as a way to counteract the "dangerous cycle sustained by cynicism or by resignation" (p. 20) when faced with the challenges of the future. These challenges include reducing poverty, exclusion, ignorance, oppression and war by leveraging education's potential to be "one of the principle means available to foster a deeper and more harmonious form of human development" (p. 11).

In a 2014 report, UNESCO developed further the idea of how the philosophical underpinnings of learning to live together can be implemented in concrete national policies, curricula, teaching and learning practices. Based on this principle, UNESCO proposed an educational approach that takes place through two complementary processes (illustrated in Figure 1 below): the "discovery of others" and the "experience of shared purposes," which would lead to the development of key competencies such as knowledge of other cultures, cultural sensitivity, empathy, tolerance, understanding of discrimination, community involvement, trust, etc. This approach, and the competencies it fosters, would ultimately help students reach the goal of learning to live together in a peaceful world.[1]



[1] However, based on research from countries in Asia Pacific and Australia, the UNESCO (2014) report also observes that educational principles aiming to foster and build trust, mutual solidarity and friendships often do not find concrete expression through the school curriculum.

Figure 1. ***Complementary learning processes and illustrative competencies based on the philosophical underpinnings of the concept of Learning to Live Together***

Source: UNESCO, *Learning to Live Together: Education Policies and Realities in the Asia-Pacific* (2014, p. ix).

Learning to live together continues to be humanity's greatest challenge at a time when racism and xenophobia are once again on the rise, fuelled by politics of fear. Learning to live together means learning to accept and live with diversity and complexity—both in the world around us and within ourselves. It means encountering the other as other, in their alterity, and learning to listen to their experiences especially when those experiences are different from our own. It means recognizing each other in our humanity in a process of reciprocal communication.

These reflections on alterity, intercultural communication and shared humanity are the starting point of the present thesis. Through a theoretical exploration of the transformative power of education—literacy and adult education in particular—this thesis project is animated by the belief that diversity is richness and pluralism is a civic value, and that true intercultural communication occurs not when we try to reduce the other's difference to what we are comfortable or familiar with, but when we are open to complete strangeness and when this strangeness teaches us something about ourselves.

Description of the Study and Main Argument

The thematic focus of this thesis is print literacy practices in the context of transnational migration—an extremely complex and multifaceted process, which touches on some of the

fundamental questions of what it means to live together in a world characterized by superdiversity (Blommaert, 2012) and hyper-connectivity. By considering the experience of the (im)migrant, the refugee, the traveller, the stranger, the other, we can think about what are the things that unite us as human beings, rather than divide us, how do we approach the stranger and how much of our own identities, family histories, sociocultural and geographical locations have been influenced and even determined by migration even if we ourselves have not undertaken that kind of a journey.

The guiding argument of this study is that (im)migrants arrive in their host countries with diverse cultural traditions, knowledge and educational experiences and that these constitute strengths, not deficiencies. As Eileen Lagman has observed:

> […] migrants have a particular advantage in literacy. They develop multiple literacies, whether it is through acquiring digital skills, speaking across languages, or mixing languages, and they have multiple social and cognitive positions, because of the transnational ties they maintain, from which they can make meaning. (2018, p. 27)

These strengths and resources can be viewed as a form of transcultural wealth that could be brought to light in both out-of-school and classroom settings, as well as on the community level, as part of the (im)migrants' process of acculturation and integration into their new places of settlement.

Furthermore, with this study, I aim to challenge the dominant instrumentalist rhetoric around which adult education programs for (im)migrants in Canada are often structured and which subsumes learning and literacy to market and employment exigencies—a reflection of our current historical moment of advanced neoliberal globalization. Literacy and education theorists

have long called for the implementation in classrooms and on a policy level of pedagogical and assessment models, as well as a general disposition towards (im)migrant learners, based not on the language and literacy skills that they lack, but on those that they possess and which form their linguistic, cultural and literacy repertoires, in addition to being deeply connected to their very sense of self. I do not mean to minimize the utmost importance for all (im)migrants to find work in their host society that is suitable to their skills and interests and that will ensure that they will be able to provide a life of autonomy and dignity for themselves and their families. However, I also do not think that finding a job should be the only outcome of educational programs for adult learners. By bringing into the discussion the affective dimension of literacy and learning, I aim to counter the above-mentioned instrumentalist rationality as limited and to emphasize the importance of promoting cross-cultural communication and cross-cultural competencies in adult education. Ultimately, I situate this project within the greater challenge of us learning to live together as humanity, learning to better communicate with each other and accept our differences.

Research Method and Theoretical Grounding

This study brings together several strands of research, coalescing around three key theoretical frameworks: transnational multilingual literacy practices with a focus on print literacies; materiality of literacies and the affect that they engender; and transformative, informal adult education that fosters the creation of welcoming and inclusive communities.

In my engagement with these themes and questions I have been guided by some of the fundamental principles of the hermeneutic and phenomenological qualitative research methods.

Hermeneutics allows the researcher to arrive at an in-depth understanding of the researched phenomenon by *interpreting from multiple perspectives* the existing literature and other texts, art, culture, social phenomena, etc. The phenomenological mode of analysis aims to go *beyond what is objectifiable and quantifiable* and to "*understand the complexity of lived experiences*," which is "in turn aimed at raising awareness and finding the meanings surrounding the phenomenon" (Fuster, 2019, p. 217, emphasis is mine). Throughout this study, I have strived to emulate these principles and to approach the experiences of (im)migration that I describe in their multidemensionality and complexity, rather than reducing them only to something amenable to statistical and other quantifiable analysis.

Furthermore, in my approach I have been inspired by Hans-Georg Gadamer's work on hermeneutics, which "rejects the idea that there is any final determinacy to understanding" (Malpas, 2018) and which views the process of understanding a phenomenon as incomplete, an ongoing one. Moreover, Gadamer posits that understanding is a dialogical process. It involves two points of view negotiating with each other in the effort to reach an agreement on the matter at hand and to establish a common framework or "horizon." For Gadamer, understanding is a "fusion of horizons," which, significantly, includes the formation "of a new context of meaning that enables integration of what is otherwise unfamiliar, strange or anomalous" (Malpas, 2018). In this respect, "all understanding involves a process of mediation and dialogue between what is familiar and what is alien in which neither remains unaffected" (Malpas, 2018). While engaged in that fusion and sharing of horizons, the researcher's own prejudices are brought into question and the horizon of his or her own understanding can begin to change. As a researcher, I am drawn to this approach; to me it describes the very encounter with the other, learning to listen to their point of view and, through the fusion of horizons, striving towards a greater understanding

of each other, all the while keeping track of our own prejudices and assumptions. Gadamer's outline of the hermeneutics method is a continual meaning-making process, which is how learning to live together could also be described.

Interpreting the Existing Literature

The approach towards understanding that I have deployed in this thesis involves an interpretation of existing studies from the disciplinary frameworks noted above. I have been careful not to overlook divergent points of view that inform my topic, but to include them as part of the analysis as ways to strengthen the overall understanding of the issues at hand. I have also used case studies from the existing literature as examples of lived experiences and to provide multiple perspectives on the themes I am exploring.

New Literacy Studies

Epistemologically, this thesis is grounded in the tradition of New Literacy Studies (NLS), which positions literacy within a broader sociocultural context—what Brian Street has termed "the ideological model of literacy" (1984, 2001). As Street and other scholars such as James Gee (1990) have argued, literacy is not just a set of cognitive technical skills (learning to decode and encode letters and texts) whose social and individual impact can be measured and which, once acquired, ensure a number of socioeconomic outcomes on personal and collective levels. For example, learning to read and write is often associated in official discourses with a promise for individuals to actualize one's self and find employment, and a promise for state economies to reach further levels of industrial development and modernity. Gee has called such claims "the

literacy myth" and for Street this is the "autonomous model of literacy" or "the assumption that literacy in itself—autonomously—will have effects on other social and cognitive practices" (2001, p. 27).

What is missing from this utilitarian perspective, the NLS theorists argue, are the "cultural and ideological assumptions that underpin literacy" (p. 27). Rather, literacy should be understood as a situated social practice and considered in its plural forms, as literac*ies* as well as multiliteracies (Kress, 2010). For NLS scholars, literacy is not neutral, but is socially constructed in relation to the various political, cultural and economic contexts within which it exists. Thus, literacy is also "always contested, both its meanings and its practices" (Street, 2001, p. 28), because it always stems from a particular set of knowledge and worldviews, which could become dominant and therefore marginalize other kinds of literacy practices. It is important, then, to keep in mind that questions of literacy are closely related to questions of power. Instead of asking what impact literacy has, Street invites us to inquire into "how do people 'take hold of' literacy" (p. 28). How do they make use of literacy? And what are the historical power dynamics and framing discourses that legitimize some literacy practices while de-legitimizing others? Asking these kinds of questions shifts the emphasis from the "impact" and "effectiveness" of literacy learning to "highlighting the power dimension of literacy," its historicity and the diverse "conceptions of knowledge, identity, being," which inform how people approach and make use of reading and writing (Street, 2001, p. 27).

Another important set of questions raised in the NLS literature is how, in the context of economic and cultural globalization, literacies travel between locations. The questions here are which literacy practices are able to travel, what global power dynamics determine where they travel and how they are accessed, appropriated or rejected on a local level. This line of inquiry

has led to ethnographical investigations and case studies that have considered literacy as a social practice situated within local contexts. Scholars have been careful to point out that the relationship between local and global literacy practices is a nuanced one and is often dialectical, producing hybrid practices where literacies could be either "absorbed into previous communicative practices or used to mediate the outside and the inside" (Street, 2004, p. 328). How literacies move globally, what features and meanings they acquire during their circulation and how those features are instantiated at a local level—these questions pertain to a line of inquiry that a number of literacy theorists have identified as an important aspect of the future of the NLS discipline (see Brandt & Clinton, 2002; Jiménez, 2003; Warriner, 2007; Baynham & Prinsloo, 2009).

Informal Transformative Learning in Communities

An additional theoretical lens that I bring to the thesis' topic is the transformative potential of adult education, especially in the context of informal learning within communities. Beyond the institutional setting of the school and the classroom, the community offers another space where cross-cultural encounters often happen and which can open up opportunities to get to know others better and to develop deeper knowledge about who we are as human beings. Communities could also be sites for lifelong education, in either more formal settings, such as libraries and community centres, or informally through various forms of interactions or shared projects with others. In other words and inspired by the vision of the UNESCO 2014 report mentioned above, communities are spaces where we can build trust, mutual solidarity and friendships through learning.

In the context of this thesis, which considers the experiences of transnational migrants, community spaces are understood as both concrete and physical as well as translocal and imagined. They could be the geographically located local communities of the neighbourhood or the town where the (im)migrants have arrived and settled; they could also be the communities in one's country of origin the connection to which, once physical and embodied, becomes an affective and imagined one after the event of migration. Yet another layer is added when we consider the communities of the nation-states of both origin and settlement. For (im)migrants, the connection and sense of belonging to these different communities is not straightforward and unidirectional, but is characterized by immense complexity of attachments, allegiances and practices in maintaining cultural, linguistic, familial and social ties in a situation of translocality.

Relatedly, it is important to remember not to be overly romantic or optimistic about the potential of communities as sites of learning, because they can also be sites of exclusion, tension and even violence. This is particularly the case of communities that are based on a rigid and homogenous sense of identity and that lack openness to diversity. But in increasingly pluralistic societies, it is precisely in such places that the role of education and educators is crucial to initiate the processes of "discovery of others" and "experiencing shared purposes." This could initially lead to resentment and conflict, as people are sometimes reticent to accept the unfamiliar and the unknown. However, the process of accepting change and creating points of communication and intersection could also be profoundly transformational both for the individual and the community.

The last sentence above describes precisely the pedagogical and the philosophical underpinning of the transformative learning theory in adult education, cogently summarized by Amanda Feller when she observes that: "Transformative learning theory tells us that when we

deliberately engage with tensions and dichotomies we can transform them into something productive and generative" (2016, p. 28). Developed by Jack Mezirow in the 1970s, this theory is concerned with learning experiences that bring about shifts in perspective through an evaluation of the assumptions and frames of reference we rely on when we consider our own lives and in our interpretations of the world. As Mezirow describes it, learning is "the process of making a new or revised interpretation of the meaning of an experience" (Mezirow, 1990, p. 1). This approach to learning is based on the importance of developing critical self-reflection, challenging our assumptions and being willing to engage with tensions and dichotomies, even if it makes us uncomfortable. Transformative theory values dialogue and discourse as a way to build a non-hierarchical learning climate open to differing perspectives and where supportive and trusting relationships with others can be nurtured. This in turn can lead to the fostering of welcoming inclusive communities.

Contribution of the Present Study

Situated at the intersection of a sociocultural understanding of literacy and the transformative potential of informal learning in communities, the present study espouses an underdeveloped approach in both disciplines—namely, viewing literacy practices through an affective lens with which to counter the excesses of instrumentalist rationality and to refocus attention on how embodied beings with a diversity and complexity of experiences learn and understand the world and their place in it. The study looks for and highlights points of interaction and connection between self and other, between familiarity and alterity. It explores the questions of "what aspects of life connect and jostle for attention" at these points of intersection, how we can be more intentional and creative in our interactions with others and what potential for

transformative learning do these moments of intersection and interaction create (Feller, 2016, pp. 28-29). In this thesis, transformative learning is understood as the emancipatory power of shifting "our embodied, emotional, spiritual and attitudinal relationships to others" (p. 27).

Why Print Literacy and Books?

As a researcher, I have a longstanding interest and passion for books, reading and the publishing industry. In previous studies I have investigated how questions of language inform the work of book publishing and translation in a setting such as Montreal, Quebec characterized by often contentious linguistic dynamics (Shoumarova, 2007). With the present study I extend this scholarly interest to the field of literacy and learning. Books are multivalent cultural artifacts, which can be viewed as the material embodiment of literacy and language and as such, they are objects uniquely positioned to explore the affective aspect of literacy in the context of (im)migration. Books travel well, and the pages of a book published in one's country of origin and in one's mother tongue could be seen as a metaphorical space where (im)migrants can make an imaginary return to a familiar cultural and linguistic community. This study is interested in the books and other print and written materials that (im)migrants bring with them on their journeys and in the cultural practices that such travelling literacies enable in the context of translocality.

Defining One's Terms

Literacy and Literacy Practices

For the purposes of this thesis, I advance a threefold definition of literacy: (1) as a social practice, which is here discussed from a transnational perspective and which is "embedded in epistemology, deep notions of identity and what it is to be human" (Street, 2004, p. 328); (2) as the skill of reading and writing and a fondness for print literacy; and (3) as a materially embodied practice, in this case, in the form of books. My understanding of literacy is developed in relation to the group of people that I am focusing my scholarly attention on, namely, (im)migrants, who, by virtue of living in-between different linguistic, cultural, political and socioeconomic realities, often engage in transnational literacy practices by deploying multiple linguistic resources. These practices and resources are socially and historically determined and have been learned, collected, used, adapted and modified in the course of one's life and through different experiences, in particular, those of migration and acculturation.

Multilingual and Language Practices

By "multilingual" I mean a person's ability to communicate proficiently in more than one language. An individual's multilingual repertoires inform their language practices, which denote how languages are employed and practiced in a social context. Rather than exploring a person's knowledge of grammar and other structural features of a language, a focus on linguistic practices views speakers as social actors and investigates their language learning trajectories, feelings, attitudes and beliefs as expressed through language, as well as the values they attribute to language and its use. Furthermore, it views languages themselves as imbedded within—and reproducing—ideological systems and relations of power on a local, national and international levels.

(Im)migrant

The Canadian Census defines an "immigrant" as "a person who is, or who has ever been, a landed immigrant or permanent resident. Such a person has been granted the right to live in Canada permanently by immigration authorities. Immigrants who have obtained Canadian citizenship by naturalization are included in this group" (Government of Canada, 2016). This definition fully aligns with state-sanctioned norms of citizenship as a status "granted" by immigration authorities, after a series of other legal designations have been successfully obtained and passed.

In my own usage in this thesis, I am presenting the hybrid term "(im)migrant," which visually and symbolically combines the experiences of all people in a state of migration, movement and displacement, be they migrants who have achieved a citizenship status, permanent residents, migrant workers, refugee and asylum-seekers, international students, temporary professionals—others. Through the use of linguistic marking, I mean to highlight this category's complexity of scope and the variability and uncertainty of situations and experiences that migration entails. Overall, for the purposes of this thesis, by (im)migrants I mean individuals with varying legal status who are in the process of migration or settlement and who possess linguistic, cultural, educational and economic resources that they deploy depending on their particular situation of migration.

Being Mindful

Throughout the writing process I have been mindful of the language that I am using in relation to the subject-matter of this thesis, which englobes a multitude of lived experiences and therefore requires a great deal of nuance and consideration. Part of the overarching intention of the thesis is to point attention to the pervasive use of economistic language in the field of education, and to call for a change towards a more affect-based and relationship-based way of speaking. In this sense, I have been aware of the words I use and have tried to avoid phrases such as "acquiring education," "investing in learning," "knowledge as an asset"—in other words, phrases that imply ownership, financial capital and transactional attitude towards the learning process. I have opted instead to think about learning and education in more relational terms as something that is "built" (or in the process of being built) and "shared" within a context of a community, or something that brings about an affective—not just cognitive—reaction and connection on the part of the learner. Ultimately, I have tried to think about how learning, knowledge and education help us imagine ourselves as well as imagine the possibility of building stronger connections with the world and with others.

Chapter Breakdown

The argument in the thesis unfolds over three chapters. In the first one, entitled "Multilingual Transnational Literacy Practices," I discuss how literacy has been conceptualized from a transnational perspective, specifically with regards to multilingualism within the field of adult education and the connection of such literacy practices to (im)migrants' identity-formation as well as sense of integration and belonging to the host society. The chapter is based on an in-depth literature review, with a focus on written and print literacy practices. This review provides evidence of the diverse ways in which language and literacy construct and maintain connections

across transnational social fields. They also demonstrate how transmigrants draw on their existing and growing linguistic and literacy repertoires to create symbolic connections and relationships to people and practices across borders. The analysis also leads to a nuanced consideration of the complex dynamics between micro and macro contexts, between the local and the global.

The second chapter, "Challenging the Deficit Model of Difference in Times of Neoliberal Education," traces the epistemological as well as practical underpinnings and implications of the concept of "funds of knowledge," especially as it aims to counter the deficit model in teaching practice with students from minority or (im)migrant communities. It also traces the critical inquiries raised by some scholars about the pertinence of using economistic language such as "funds" and "capital" to denote cultural, linguistic and social resources whose value and significance for individuals, families and communities go beyond quantification and measures of assessment. The chapter then examines what I have termed "the promise of adult education" to circumvent that kind of economistic thinking by promoting the possibility for lifelong learning and addressing social injustices. However, this promise has been unfulfilled, especially in recent decades when the logic of neoliberalism has overtaken the policy, practices and provision of learning in the field of adult education. The chapter concludes with an examination of several alternative ways to think and describe funds of knowledge. I suggest using language that is affect-based, emphasizing relationship-building that would shine light on learners' affective relation to knowledge and sense of personal accomplishments—an aspect of learning that defies quantification and because of that often remains unacknowledged.

The argument is fully brought to bear in the third chapter, "Literacy and Affect." It continues the reflection on finding alternative ways to think about adult education and its

purpose and on countering the logic of rationality and instrumentality that often underpins the policies and practices in that area. The chapter proposes that a consideration of emotion in literacy, as expressed symbolically through affective literacy practices towards books and other printed or written matter, is a productive approach with which to begin to discern the depth of emotional attachment that many learners feel towards their learning and the benefits that they derive from the learning process. As in the rest of the thesis, the focus of analysis here is on the affective artifactual literacy practices in a state of migration and how those help elucidate in a more concrete manner—and in the hope of bringing a greater valorization of—the cultural, linguistic, educational and knowledge resources and skills (the funds of knowledge) that transmigrants bring with them to their host countries.

CHAPTER 1

MULTILINGUAL TRANSNATIONAL LITERACY PRACTICES

« Cinq ans après être arrivée en Suisse, je parle le français mais je ne lis pas.
Je suis redevenue une analphabète. Moi, qui savais lire à l'âge de quatre ans. »
Agota Kristof, *L'Analphabète, récit autobiographique*

Global Migrations

Migration of people is as old as humanity itself. Throughout history humans have moved from one place to another in search of food or more favourable living conditions, following trade routes or better working or educational opportunities; they have moved in order to flee from war, conflict, persecution or changes in climate. Many of these movements have been voluntary, many others have been forced. Over the last hundred years the world has witnessed a formidable movement and displacement of people, including several refugee crises caused primarily by the world wars in the first half of the twentieth century and by the conflicts in the Middle East and North Africa in the first two decades of the twenty-first century. According to data from the United Nations' Department of Economic and Social Affairs, in 2019 an estimated 272 million people worldwide were living outside of their countries of birth (UN International Migrant Stock, 2019). With the technological advances in transportation and communication, with the headlong changes in climate throughout the world and with the continued expansion of neoliberal globalization (which has exacerbated global inequality), human migration and

displacement in our times has increased tremendously (the UN data shows that between 2010 and 2019 the number of international migrants has increased by 51 million).

Contemporary movement of people has shifted, as Shibao Guo (2015) has observed, from *inter*national to *trans*national, pointing to the fact that migrants' lives are now organized around "multiple and constant interconnections across international borders and [their] public identities are configured in relationship to more than one nation-state" (Schiller, Basch, & Blanc-Szanton, 1995, p. 48, quoted in Guo, 2015, p. 7). Even though the (im)migrants' sense of self is influenced and even determined by their prior affiliations with a particular community and cultural spaces within a geographically bound place, the process of migration reconfigures this "territorially defined identity" (Warriner, 2009, p. 165). Instead, the (im)migrants come to inhabit an in-between space, their sense of belonging divided between "here" and "there"—an ambiguous state of being, which is often marked by the trauma of uprootedness, but which also offers creative possibilities for self-identification and for encounters with difference. In these "translocal spaces" (Warriner, 2009, p. 165) (im)migrants can create new relationships and cultural connections.

Transnationalism: A Concept for the New Mobilities of the Twenty-First Century

Transnationalism first emerged as a theoretical concept in the fields of political science, law and international relations to refer to non-state actors such as NGOs or transnational corporations, whose presence on the global political scene challenges the nation-state and the overpowering ideology of nationalism and denotes the "contacts, coalitions, and interactions across state boundaries that are not controlled by the central foreign policy organs of

governments" (Nye & Keohane, 1971, p. xi, quoted in Waldinger, 2015, p. 15[2]). In its very ontology, "transnationalism" refers to a state of being that is "beyond the nation."

In the early 1990s cultural anthropologists Nina Glick Schiller, Linda Basch and Cristina Blanc-Szanton sought to expand transnationalism's theoretical reach and harness its power to explain some of the observations emerging from their fieldwork with Caribbean, Haitian and Philipino migrant communities in the United States. Their research was showing that (im)migrants "were forging and sustaining multi-stranded social relations that linked their societies of origin and settlement" (Glick Schiller, Basch, & Blanc-Szanton, 1992, p. ix). These social relations were different from previously observed patterns of (im)migration where the movements of people could be described as more stable and unidirectional. Or, to use Guo's distinction mentioned above, while earlier migratory trajectories could be described as *inter*-national, the prefix "inter" meaning more clearly located between two bounded entities, the patterns emerging towards the end of the twentieth century were beginning to be more *trans*-national, where "trans" carries the meaning of "across" and "something that is changing." Or, as Rebecca Lorimer Leonard puts it, "migration has come to be understood not as unidirectional or linear, as was previously the dominant model of assimilation, but as turbulent, fluid, and circulating with multi-polar, multidirectional and reversable trajectories" (2013, p. 15). Although (im)migrants have always maintained some connection to their places of origin—be it through writing letters, phone calls, visits or sending remittances to their relatives and friends back home—the patterns of cross-state activities sustained over time and space have clearly intensified in the modern era. With travel becoming faster and much more affordable and with the development of the Internet and instantaneous forms of communication, (im)migrants now

[2] For a comprehensive historical overview of the theoretical use of "transnationalism," see Chapter 2, "Beyond Transnationalism," in Waldinger (2015).

have many more opportunities to remain connected to their places of origin, visit more often, keep informed about what is happening there and maintain long-distance ties to family, friends and others. Schiller, Basch and Blanc-Szanton describe these practices of multiple "involvements in both the home and host societies" as the establishment of "social fields that cross geographic, cultural, and political borders" (p. ix).

A distinguishing feature of this anthropological perspective on transnationalism is that it views transmigrants as active agents in the construction of their migrant experience: "Transmigrants take actions, make decisions, and feel concerns within a field of social relations that links together their country of origin and their country or countries of settlement" (p. ix). They participate from afar in political activities taking place in their home countries, activate cross-border economic networks, establish transnational business ventures or choose to maintain affective ties to their home cultures through language use, participation in cultural events or enjoyment of cultural goods and resources—all the while having their daily lives unfold in the country of settlement. The conceptual contribution of transnationalism thus lies in the opportunity it provides to shed light on some of the concrete ways in which these connections play out in and inform (im)migrants' everyday lives. Or, in the words of Michael Peter Smith, transnationalism contributes to our understanding of "how everyday practices of ordinary people produce cultural meanings that sustain transnational networks and make possible enduring translocal ties" (2003, p. 468).

Since its introduction in the social sciences and the humanities, transnationalism has provided a widely used and multidisciplinary conceptual framework. At the same time, the concept itself has been the subject of continued debates pertaining to its proper definition and epistemological validity. Some scholars have analyzed, for example, how the experience of

transnationalism relates to the project of assimilation of (im)migrants into their new societies (assimilation being one of the pillars of maintaining the hegemony of the nation-state). Sociologist Alejandro Portes, whose work has been instrumental in developing and popularizing the concept of transnationalism, has observed that "transnational activities can actually facilitate successful adaptation by providing opportunities for economic mobility and for a vital and purposeful group life" (1999, p. 472). Roger Waldinger, on the other hand, has noted that this view omits to acknowledge the fundamental tension that underpins the experience of international migration, namely the fact that migrants are both immigrants and emigrants: "As *immigrants* oriented towards the host country, the migrants are a foreign presence; as *emigrants* oriented towards their original home, the migrants have an affiliation with a foreign place and people" (2015, p. 26, italics in the original). In either case, "the migrants' quest for acceptance and claims for belonging are in question" (p. 26). Furthermore, some scholars have found that the term is often applied to a plethora of experiences of migration and is in danger of becoming a "catch-all concept" (Clavin, 2005, p. 434). As Portes has also pointed out, human experience alone is not a sufficient determinant of transnational activities. (Im)migrants construct their migratory life-paths in a multitude of complex and often contradictory ways: some people maintain strong ties to their homeland(s), while others prefer to focus more closely on their immediate reality in their host societies.

Despite this inherent impossibility to fully grasp and explain the experience of millions of people around the globe of living in-between states and of having multiple national and cultural allegiances and affiliations, the term transnationalism serves as a useful analytic tool with which to describe and study the patterns and complexity of international migration and the new kinds of mobilities in the age of advanced neoliberal globalization.

Constructing Identity through Transnational Multilingual Literacy Practices

Transnationalism has proved to be a fruitful concept in the field of New Literacy Studies (NLS) as well, since language and literacy are critical aspects of the transnational experience. As discussed in the Introduction, NLS scholars have produced an important body of literature on how literacy is "taken a hold of" in concrete practices in local settings, with an emphasis on the influence of local cultures, historical developments and ideological and power relations on these practices. As the discipline of NLS has developed, theorists such as Mike Baynham and Brian Street have called for a greater scholarly attention on how "'global' features are […] instantiated at 'local' level" (Street, 2004, p. 328). Street expands on this idea to include a reflection on:

> how "distant" literacies are "taken hold" of in specific local ways, whether absorbed into previous communicative practices or used to mediate the outside and the inside: the process is a dialectical one, not a matter simply of external imposition or local resistance. (p. 328)

Street's thinking here starts from a distinction between "outside" and "inside" forms and practices of literacy, which mirrors how the presence of the stranger (the refugee, the immigrant, the other) vis-à-vis a community has been traditionally represented. However, Street then affirms the contact between inside and outside as a dialectical process, which is an optimistic standpoint about the potential of such contact to beneficially transform the two original forms.

Other theorists such as Deborah Brandt and Katie Clinton have looked for new directions in literacy research that go beyond what they have called "the limits of the local." Rather, they have drawn attention to the material dimensions of literacy and how those dimensions open up

literacy's "transcontextualized and transcontextualizing potentials" and specifically "its ability to travel, integrate, and endure" (2002, p. 338)—a useful perspective from which to consider the topic of this thesis as well. NLS scholars have thus began to pay greater attention to the ways in which local literacies interact with or are influenced by global economic and cultural flows, political processes and ideological constructs.

As literacies travel and encounter—and possibly integrate with—different modes of communication, multimodality becomes a prominent feature of transnational literacy practices. This means, for example, that traditional literacies like print become part of a broader continuum of communicative practices such as online reading and writing and other forms of digital interaction and creation. Such multimodal literacies, especially as practiced by (im)migrant youth, have been thoroughly investigated in the field of literacy and educational studies (Naffi & Davidson, 2017; Duran, 2017). This thesis, however, explores adult transmigrants' multilingual print literacy practices and their material embodiment in the form of printed texts and books. Here I present an overview of research in this latter area, drawing on studies from four interconnected perspectives: language and literacy, composition studies, sociolinguistics and adult education. Often, this research is in the form of ethnographic portraits of transmigrants from a range of national, linguistic and cultural backgrounds and it points to the fact that transnational literacy practices often happen outside of formal locations of literacy and language instruction, and consider transmigrants' homes and community settings as places where such practices unfold. As transnational literacy theorist Doris Warriner has observed, these portraits represent "richly textured and nuanced accounts of the complicated—often contradictory—experiences" of migration (2007, p. 202-3). Such accounts often aim to complicate the ways in which we understand migration, displacement and globalization processes and to challenge

preconceived and unhelpful binaries, such as the distinctions between a centre and a periphery, global and local, micro and macro processes. Below I outline several salient themes that emerge from this research and that inform my thinking about the topic presented in this thesis as well.

Multilingual Literacies in Translocal Spaces

Translocal spaces can be defined as those spaces—both physical and imaginary—that (im)migrants inhabit and that are connected to both their homeland and their place of migration. Within such spaces, transmigrants deploy literacy and language practices that become constitutive elements of their identity and sense of belonging while negotiating current and past cultural affiliations and experiences and maintaining connections between "here" and "there" simultaneously.

A number of studies have investigated how transmigrants draw on their multilingual repertoires and literacies to maintain a sense of ethnic identity and familial connections, to shape their stories and history of migration and transnational connections and to strategically navigate the sociocultural and economic domains of their new place of settlement. Mukul Saxena (1995), for example, has examined the ideological dimensions of language choices of Panjabi and Hindi speakers in West London in the United Kingdom in the 1980s and 90s. He has shown that the ethnolinguistic vitality of the Panjabi-Hindi community could be understood in terms of domains of language use: "Panjabi was mainly associated with the family domain, Hindi with religion, Panjabi and English with community, and English with education and employment" (p. iv). Language choices are practiced and performed depending on an individual's life trajectory and circumstances after (im)migration. Based on their new experiences in the place of settlement,

transmigrants can develop additional linguistic resources, which allow them to strategically navigate their new environments and to know which linguistic repertoires to activate when engaging in different activities and pursuits such as education, work, socialization, networking, family or community life, etc.

Furthermore, researchers have examined the "cultural logics" that underpin some of the literacy practices deployed by (im)migrants and the material consequences of such practices. This is particularly evident in research situated in the intersection between literacy and composition studies, which advance a material notion of literacy as "skills and resources made possible by the technology of writing" (Lorimer Leonard, Vieira, & Young, 2013, p. vi). This is a productive perspective for two reasons. First, in its close association with language, writing is a creative resource that allows (im)migrants to express their lived experiences of migration as well as their identity and cultural affiliation(s). Second, writing, as part of broader print literacy cultures, can become an analytical lens through which to understand "literacy's imbrication in larger political trends" (p. vi) as writing travels across national borders and among languages and social worlds.

With a great deal of attention and consideration, literacy and language researchers have worked with adult transnational migrant individuals and communities to better understand and describe their complex, multilingual and multilayered literacy and communicative practices and how those become constitutive elements of transmigrants' construction of self across national borders. In the US context, much ethnographic research examines the transnational literacy practices of Mexican and Latino/a (im)migrants in both formal and informal learning environments. Adult educator Janise Hurtig (2005), for example, has worked with a group of Mexican women living in Chicago and who participated in a writing workshop led by Hurtig.

Through the creative activities of writing and publishing, the women were encouraged to tell their lived stories of migration and of the social relations they maintained in both the United States and Mexico. Writing offered the women the space to critically reflect on their lives and to acquire a transnational perspective that informed their literacy practices. Through their writing, they were able to identify and contest the ideological influence of the state's unidirectional model of immigration that promotes assimilation.

In another study describing the plurilingual texts that participants produced in a creative writing workshop as part of a French as a second language class at a French university, Noëlle Mathis points attention to the "clear evidence of heterogeneity and dialogism in [the] plurilingual literacy practice" (2015, p. 138) that these participants demonstrated. In their texts they mixed forms of the different languages they speak, thus expressing their plurilingual identities. Mathis uses Danièle Moore and Laurent Gajo's definition of a plurilingual speaker as "a social actor who develops a repertoire made up of various languages and varieties of languages and different forms of knowledge" (cited in Mathis, 2015, p. 139). Participants in this study treated their plurilingual repertories as a continuum "using their languages (or not) depending on the situation, while reflecting on their language learning and literacy practices" (p. 141), thus demonstrating their agency.

In María Teresa de la Piedra's (2011) ethnographic research of Mexican mothers living in the border region between El Paso, Texas and Ciudad Juarez, Mexico illustrates how they maintain connections between the two countries. The women describe the literacy practices in which they engaged with their daughters, specifically the reading of school materials, online messages and community magazines in Spanish. De la Piedra emphasizes the importance of reading together as a biliterate family practice, which strengthens connections between mothers

and daughters, maintains Spanish language and literacy in the home, and promotes values of family unity across the border.

These studies consider (im)migrants as active agents in shaping their lives, who possess diverse cultural, linguistic, social, affective and communicative competencies, which they deploy in critical, creative or strategic ways, depending on the situation and on their self-conceptualization(s) in relation to language(s) and identity.

"Literacy Is Mobile"

The question of how literacies travel has been the subject of research stemming from composition studies. In her article "Travelling Literacies: Multilingual Writing on the Move," Rebecca Lorimer Leonard considers the lived experiences of four multilingual (im)migrant writers in the United States. She engages with the *journey* that multilingual transnational print literacies take as their authors move between locations, languages and social contexts. Lorimer Leonard observes that multilingual literacies do not travel intact between locations and languages but are dependent on social contexts and social practices. Thus, "[w]hen framed as activities on the move, rather than as happening in place, literacies can be better understood as in-process meaning-making activities that encounter various social forces" (2013, p. 17). Lorimer Leonard is careful to temper romantic notions of language mobility, which tend to overvalue the potential and power of language. Rather, she concludes, the symbolic value and material gain of multilingualism is uncertain and dependent on local physical and social phenomena.

Kate Vieira has studied print literacy in a transnational context through an examination of letter-writing practices, and in particular the case study of Katrina, a Russian-born Latvian doctor

who relocated with her mother from Russia to Latvia during Soviet times. This caused the physical separation between her and her grandparents with whom she had grown up. As she was settling in her new life in Latvia in the 1980s, Katrina began writing letters to her grandparents, a practice that soon became a communicative form replacing everyday familial interactions, while still maintaining connection with her family network beyond borders. As Vieira puts it, "letters became a material location where distant family members could commune" (2018, p. 170). And by virtue of its materiality, letter-writing also represented a way to "compensate for bodily separation" from loved ones (p. 170).

The studies mentioned in the two sections above provide evidence of the diverse ways in which language and literacy help construct and maintain connections across transnational social fields. They also demonstrate how transmigrants draw on their existing and growing literacy and language repertoires to "create symbolic connections to people and practices across countries and strengthen transgenerational relationships" (Lam & Warriner, 2012, p. 199). These analyses lead to a more nuanced consideration of the dynamics between micro and macro contexts, between the local and the global. Much of the research in this area challenges the view that languages and the speech communities that form around them are homogenous and bounded entities that can be easily distinguished from one another. Instead, the authors place "emphasis on the tension between homogenization and differentiation in language practices, language ideologies and identities" (de Fina & Perrino, 2013, p. 510). This presents a perspective on plurilingual speakers as agents going back-and-forth between languages, often mixing languages, and considering their linguistic repertoire as a continuum, not separate and disconnected entities. This permeability of boundaries between languages often results in new linguistic, cultural and literacy hybrid practices.

Social Inclusion

Another theoretical angle from which educational scholars have engaged with the framework of transnationalism is from the perspective of adult education, with the aim to explore "how notions of diaspora, migration, and globalization intersect to inform identities and social realities of immigrant adults" (Alfred, 2015, p. 88). Research in this area has often been conducted from an inclusive and social justice perspective. It has produced critical analyses on topics such as: current tendencies in training and education of (im)migrants; the spread of discourses of assimilation through ESL pedagogy; international policy contexts of adult education provision; quantification of learning outcomes and of literacy and language assessment and the implications of this for pedagogy, for practice and for the social inclusion of (im)migrants. A persisting caution in this literature concerns the role of adult educators. Scholars have highlighted the importance for teachers to develop a critical awareness about the realities and dynamics of transnational migration in order to create meaningful relationships and educational experiences for (im)migrant learners and to "enhance[e] socially just and inclusive adult education environments for newcomers" (Guo & Lange, 2015, p. 1).

The Deficit Model

One of the most important issues related to transnational migration that has preoccupied both researchers and practitioners in adult education internationally is the phenomenon of "deskilling and devaluation of immigrants' prior learning and work experience" (Guo, 2015, p. 11). Such devaluation leads to the inability of (im)migrants to find work in their host countries

that corresponds to their potential, skills or educational credentials that they bring from their countries of origin. This, in turn, leads to difficulties integrating into the host society. Guo terms this phenomenon of devaluation "the deficit model of difference" (p. 11). He explains:

> [This model] leads to conflation of "difference" and "deficiency" as well as a belief that the knowledge of immigrant professionals, particularly those from developing countries, is incompatible and inferior, and, hence, invalid. Knowledge has been racialized and materialized on the basis of ethnic and national origin. (p. 11)

Guo sees this as a failure of the adult education sector to "respond positively to the changing needs of adult immigrants and […] to embrace cultural diversity and difference that recent immigrant learners bring to adult education settings" (p. 14). Furthermore, Guo also identifies an issue with "the 'sameness' approach" in community-based adult education, whereby "all adult learners are treated as having the same learning needs and backgrounds, thus negating and denigrating immigrant learners' rich sociocultural diversity and complexity" (p. 13).

Similar concerns are expressed by Tara Gibb, but from the perspective of how (im)migrants' literacy and language skills are assessed on a national and international level. In the age of transnational migration and knowledge economies, companies and countries are competing for highly skilled and educated "transnationally mobile labour force" (Gibb, 2015, p. 54). Thus, immigrants' literacy and language competencies become essential requirements during the process of migration. A number of national and international tests and assessments, such as the International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS) and its successor, the Program for International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC), have been created to measure these competencies, but, as Gibb notes, they all approach this task from a quantitative framework. This approach also reverberates in the policy discourse of national governments. Thus, Gibb argues,

> [t]he policy discourses regulating literacy and language education have been informed by instrumental and functional approaches, shifting literacy and language education from a humanistic and community-based practice to a centralized, standardized and managerial enterprise intended to meet the demands of the market. (p. 55)

This has also impacted adult literacy and language pedagogy by veering away from an approach based on civic engagement and social participation towards one in service of labour market exigencies and the economic order.

Standardizing the way we understand literacy and linguistic competencies does not capture the wealth and complexity of people's multiple literacies, varied knowledge and meaning-making practices. Universal measurement tools such as these tests are designed to treat reading, writing, numeracy and communication abilities as skills and discrete tasks separate from one another, while "in an increasingly textually mediated world, ethnographic research [on literacy] demonstrates a complex relationship between written texts and spoken language" (Gibb, 2015, p. 55). Furthermore, as the examples of the case studies described above show, language itself is not a fixed system and especially in the context of (im)migration, migrants engage in a myriad linguistic and literacy practices informed by their current and past experiences and geographical and cultural allegiances. As Gibb explains, "literacy and languages are aspects of social activity and generated from the cultural landscape of particular localities" (p. 56). Drawing on the work of NLS theorists, Gibb points out that literacy and language education should be seen as "multiple and culturally varied practices" (p. 56). Negating this is similar to the difference as deficit model discussed by Guo, which obscures (im)migrants' existing knowledge, skills and literacies.

Integration

Transnational migration results in more ethnically diverse societies and challenges the overarching meta-narrative of the nation-state as the unified territory for one people that traces its ethnic and linguistic lineage throughout history. Now, nations in the Global North (towards which most of the world's migration still occurs) are faced with the moral imperative to build more inclusive, equal and pluralistic societies.

In Europe as well as in Canada, and particularly Quebec, adult (im)migrant education policy and practice are often framed within the discourse of "integration." In her analysis of this discourse, Marilyn Martin-Jones has described it as "underpinned by particular ideologies about language, nation and identity and by the simplistic representation of nations as distinct, relatively homogenous entities, embracing—across their different regions—groups of people with 'shared' sets of values" (2015, p. 258-9). She further cautions that it is important how this term is used and interpreted by state governments, especially in the context of neoliberal economic globalization, global conflicts and planetary changes in climate, which have catalyzed the displacements of millions of people around the world. The erosion of the power and stability of the nation-state has brought about what Martin-Jones calls "political unease," which although not new, has given rise to overtly discriminatory and exclusionary rhetoric, policies and actions in the twenty-first century. Similarly to other adult education scholars, Martin-Jones also observes in the policy discourse about integration, a "shift away from broad concerns with the language rights of refugees and migrants and with providing support for language learning to an increasing neoliberal focus on gearing language education provision to preparation for employment and to 'skilling up' migrants entering the workforce" (p. 259).

How this shift is applied in practice can be seen, for example, in pedagogical materials such as the Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLB) document, which develops a systematic and levelled program for teaching English-language proficiency to ESL learners in Canada. Douglas Fleming has conducted a comparative study of the 2000 and the 2012 versions of the CLB and has specifically analyzed how citizenship and citizenship rights are featured and treated as part of the CLB pedagogical tasks. He counted "only three references to tasks or competencies broadly associated with citizenship" in the 2000 document and observed that "the word *vote* did not appear" at all (2015, p. 68, italics in the original). The newer, 2012, version of the document did not fare much better, with only a few references to labour rights added and voting mentioned twice, "in relation to passive activities" (p. 70). Fleming concludes that the focus on both versions is on consumer, rather than citizenship rights. Also, and significantly, the scant references to citizenship in both versions occur in tasks associated with the highest level of proficiency, thus implying that "opinions expressed in languages other than English [at lower levels of English proficiency] had little value and that voting not informed by a high level of proficiency is an activity that warrants little engagement" (p. 69).

Transnational Perspectives from the Quebec Context

How do the issues discussed so far in the chapter and pertaining to transnationalism, multilingual literacy practices and (im)migrants' experiences of integration within educational settings as well as within the broader host society (what Quebec government policies poetically refer to as "réaliser son projet migratoire") play out in the local Quebec context?

Statistical Portrait of Quebec's (Im)migrant Population

In October 2019, the Conseil supérieur de l'éducation, an advisory body to the Quebec government on matters related to education, published two reports presenting a statistical portrait of the (im)migrant population in the province in the last nine years. The reports outline their educational needs and provides a brief history of literacy and *francisation* programs offered to newcomers by the Quebec government. The reports are written from the perspective that the term "immigrant" is not a unified category, but contains a great deal of diversity and socioeconomic characteristics, and that having a better understanding of these characteristics is an important aspect of facilitating the (im)migrants' successful social integration.

The statistical portrait in the first report aims to highlight that diversity. According to the 2016 Census, close to 1.1 million (im)migrants were living in Quebec in 2016, representing 13.7% of the population in the province. Most of the newcomers arrived as economic immigrants. Refugees and people in a similar situation accounted for 1.6% of the (im)migrant population. In terms of places of origin, recent migration to Quebec is reversing previous trends of predominantly European (im)migration. The majority of people who (im)migrated to Quebec in 2017 came from Asia (43.4%), followed by Africa (27.5%), Europe (15.8%) and the Americas (13.1%). Most of the migrants are young, 25-34 years of age (32.6%) and an almost equal number and men and women were admitted. The vast majority of people chose to settle in Montreal (76.1%) or in the surrounding region (8.9%). In terms of education, 31.6% of newcomers to Quebec in 2017 had 17+ years of schooling, which means that they have completed high-school and have post-secondary and possibly graduate education as well; 31.5% have between 14 and 15 years of schooling.

Based on these statistics, the report draws some preliminary observations about (im)migrants' educational needs. For example, in terms of language proficiency, 76% of (im)migrants had neither French nor English as their first language, and overall, the number of (im)migrants living in Quebec who do not speak French has been on the rise for the last ten years. The authors of the report point out that:

> Cela sous-entend non seulement un besoin croissant de services de francisation, mais également, si l'on étend le regard aux codes culturels et aux différences de fonctionnement entre les sociétés, le déploiement d'une offre accrue en matière d'éducation citoyenne pour appuyer ces nouveaux Québécois. Leur inclusion et le processus d'acculturation qu'elle sous-entend peuvent nécessiter davantage d'apprentissages pour qu'elles puissent fonctionner ou faire leur juste place dans la société, étant donné une distance culturelle parfois importante ou des écarts notables entre les façons de faire des sociétés d'origine ou d'accueil […]. (2019, p. 24)

In the case of adult immigrants, other challenges to integration stem from delays in recognizing foreign educational credentials from countries that have not signed an agreement to that effect with Quebec as well as from instances of a discriminatory labour market. Research has shown that (im)migrants from the Maghreb region in northern Africa and from Eastern Africa are more likely to be unemployed compared to native Quebeckers (p. 26). On the other hand, (im)migrants from the Middle East and Western Asia experience the phenomenon of overqualification—they cannot find work in Quebec that corresponds to their level of education received in their countries of origin. Lack of proficiency in either English or French languages explains in part these challenges, the report notes. Another explanation, however, is the presence

of discrimination based on an individual's ethnic origin (p. 26). The report emphasizes the need for education on both sides—(im)migrants as well as the host society:

> Ainsi, dans un contexte où la provenance de l'immigration se diversifie et que des obstacles à l'inclusion semblent toucher plus particulièrement certains immigrants, il convient de mettre en place des processus éducatifs qui ne s'adressent pas qu'aux nouveaux arrivants, mais aussi, plus largement, à l'ensemble de la société et de la population dans une réelle perspective inclusive exigeant des ajustements de tous. D'une part, l'existence de situations de discrimination […] soulève des besoins éducatifs en lien avec le développement de compétences interculturelles et l'apprentissage du vivre-ensemble de la part de la population d'accueil. D'autre part, les moyens éducatifs, dont ceux visant l'orientation et l'accompagnement, gagneraient à être davantage individualisés pour prendre en compte les caractéristiques individuelles et familiales de chacun des nouveaux arrivants et mieux les soutenir. En outre, il importerait de s'assurer que le système éducatif lui-même n'est pas source de discriminations systémiques pouvant entraver le parcours de certaines personnes en particulier. (p. 27)

The report points out that developing intercultural competencies and learning how to better live together in society is a two-way process that requires both newcomers and the settled society to work together towards that common goal—a stance that has the effect of breaking down the deficit model a little bit. It is not only up to (im)migrants to learn the language and the social rules and norms of their new place of residence, it is also up to the host society to be educated about the realities of migration and the challenges that (im)migrants face when they arrive in Canada. The report also incorporates suggestions from research about positive educational approaches for adult (im)migrant learners, such as providing more individualized instruction that

takes into consideration (im)migrants' lived experiences and the knowledge, cultural and educational resources that they already possess. The report notes furthermore that for those who have arrived as refugees or asylum seekers and who might have had a difficult migratory path, additional continuum of services should be offered such as *accompagnement* and psychosocial support as well as a different approach to learning (for example, focusing on basic literacy, or *alpha-francisation*) (p. 31). The authors of the report thus hope that achieving such mutual understanding would "favoriser le vivre-ensemble et réduire la discrimination envers les nouveaux arrivants" (p. 42).

Integration and Inclusion in the Quebec Context: Inclusion into What?

Provincial policies regulating (im)migration and *francisation* programs in Quebec are actualized around three concepts: *inclusion*, *intégration* and *pleine participation*.

Inclusion is defined as:

> Ouverture à la participation de personnes de toutes origines à la vie collective de la société, dans l'acceptation de leurs différences et dans le respect des valeurs démocratiques, notamment en levant les obstacles à l'égalité de droits et de conditions. (Gouvernement du Québec, 2015b, p. 7)

Intégration is:

> Processus par lequel une personne immigrante en vient à participer pleinement à sa société d'accueil et à s'épanouir selon son potentiel et ses aspirations. L'intégration repose sur l'engagement partagé, soit l'engagement collectif de la société à inclure les

> personnes de toutes origines et à soutenir l'intégration des personnes immigrantes ainsi que l'engagement individuel de chacune et de chacun à prendre part activement à la vie québécoise dans le respect du cadre civique commun. L'intégration est un processus transitoire, multidimensionnel, multifactoriel et diversifié, qui s'échelonne sur des périodes de temps variables selon les personnes. (Gouvernement du Québec, 2015b, p. 7)

Finally, by *pleine participation*, the Quebec governement means a concept that:

> Désigne un idéal d'engagement de tous les membres de la société dans les sphères de la vie collective. Elle est le reflet d'une conjugaison réussie des capacités et aspirations individuelles et des pratiques inclusives de la société. (Gouvernement du Québec, 2015b, p. 9)

These three definitions outline an ideal vision of an open and inclusive society where everyone is accepted in their difference, is able to fully realize one's potential and participate in civil society, upholding and respecting democratic values. These definitions also describe this process as two-directional: it is incumbent on both host society and newcomers to work together to achieve this ideal.

Moreover, these three concepts are integral to the realization of another social ideal developed by Quebec, namely, interculturalism. A unique concept designed to capture the sociocultural and linguistic uniqueness of Quebec within the Canadian federation as well as on the North American continent more broadly, interculturalism encompasses a specifically Québécois vision of "vivre-ensemble en contexte de diversité ethnoculturelle" all the while maintaining the vitality and distinct character of Quebec's francophone culture. It envisions a way of living together in harmonious intercultural relations, in respect of the French language

and human rights and freedoms in a pluralistic society. The official definition of *interculturalisme* also carries the idea of shared responsibility between host society and (im)migrants in achieving this inclusive and ethical ideal.

With these definitions in mind, it is a telling exercise, then, to look at how these concepts are deployed in official government documents. Here I will provide a brief discourse analysis of two such documents: the 2016 policy of the Quebec Ministère de l'Immigration, de la Francisation et de l'Intégration entitled *Ensemble, nous sommes le Québec. Politique Québécoise en matière d'immigration, de participation et d'inclusion* and the 2019 practical guide *Les valeurs démocratiques et les valeurs québécoises exprimées par la Charte des droits et libertés de la personne*.

The first document is the current official Quebec policy on immigration, adopted in 2016 for a period of five years. It recognizes the essential role that immigration plays in ensuring Quebec's economic productivity in the coming decades as well as contributing to the demographic growth of the population in the province. The language that is used throughout the publication strikes a good balance between a discussion of economic exigencies and of "le parcours Québécois de vivre-ensemble" (Gouvernement du Québec, 2015a, p. xi). It affirms the importance of the French language as a foundation of public, political and economic life in the province and paints a picture of an inclusive Quebec, which "reconnait et valorise de plus en plus sa diversité ethnoculturelle, ce qui est à son avantage, puisqu'il est reconnu que la reconnaissance de la diversité, la tolérance et la confiance sont des facteurs de prospérité nationale" (p. 10). The policy also acknowledges that this ideal vision is not fully realized in practice given that there are documented cases of racial tensions as well as persisting bias and discrimination towards (im)migrants. It also briefly acknowledges the presence of eleven

Indigenous nations on Quebec's territory, as well as the historical significance of the English-speaking community in Quebec.

The second document is very different in nature and tone. It is a practical guide addressed to those applying for immigration to Quebec and in a sense, it also presents itself as a study guide. In terms of audience, this document addresses international applicants, some of whom will be future Quebec residents. The tone of this publication is somewhat stern, privileging straightforward, declarative sentences. It warns applicants that if they do not pass the test on Quebec values—which became a mandatory part of applications for immigration on January 1, 2020—their application will be rejected. It then presents an overview of five key values based on the Quebec *Charte des droits et libertés de la personne*:

1) Le Québec est une société francophone
2) Le Québec est une société démocratique
3) L'égalité entre les femmes et les hommes
4) Les droits et les responsabilités des Québécoises et des Québécois
5) Le Québec est une société laïque

These five values, the document argues, have direct repercussions on people's daily lives in the province, and knowing them would allow newcomers to know Quebec better (Gouvernement du Québec, Ministère de l'Immigration, Francisation et Intégration, 2019, p. 6).

Important to note is the following phrase, which this document uses throughout to introduce the very idea of Quebec values: "valeurs démocratiques et les valeurs québécoises exprimées par la Charte des droits et libertés de la personne." This somewhat cumbersome construction is based on and extends the phrase "valeurs démocratiques," which is used

extensively in the above-mentioned 2016 policy document to reinforce ideas of inclusion, integration, “les rapprochements et contacts interculturels ainsi que la lutte contre la discrimination et le racisme” (Gouvernement du Québec, 2015a, p. 1). In contrast, the practical guide speaks about a *québécois* culture in general terms, without mentioning once the contributions of (im)migrants and ethnic minority communities to Quebec society.

Although the practical guide does say that “[l]e Québec et la personne immigrante sont tous les deux partie prenante envers l’apprentissage des valeurs démocratiques et des valeurs québécoises exprimées par la Charte des droits et libertés de la personne” (p. 3), it is written from a deficit perspective that does not acknowledge the fact that newcomers will arrive in Quebec with cultural, linguistic, educational, social and, possibly politico-economic capital, which is not a liability and should be recognized. The word “diversité” appears in the documents only four times, two of which are in relation to biodiversity and the others in relation to diversity of opinions. The guide is written from an “us and them” perspective and leaves the impression of a monolithic Quebec society, which is defined by and reproduces the language-nation-identity ideological construct. The document demonstrates a top-down approach based on unity and homogeneity and does not account for the complexities of highly diverse groups of adult (im)migrants.

Conclusion

This chapter began with an exploration of how the concept of transnationalism can help us better understand and describe (im)migrants’ complex, multilingual and multilayered literacy and communicative practices and how those practices are interwoven in the construction of the

self across national borders. A literature review and case studies from four interconnected theoretical and practical perspectives—language and literacy studies, composition studies, sociolinguistics and adult education—revealed many stories and recorded life experiences of (im)migrants who possess diverse cultural, linguistic, social, affective and communicative competencies, which they deploy in critical, creative or strategic ways, depending on the situation and on their self-conceptualization(s) in relation to language(s) and identity. For example, some studies show how transmigrants have used their print literacy skills to identify and contest the prevailing state ideological influence of a unidirectional model of immigration that promotes assimilation.

However, the literature also highlights a longstanding preoccupation with the phenomenon of deskilling and devaluation of (im)migrants' prior knowledge, educational credentials and work experience, or what Shibao Guo has cogently termed "the deficit model of difference" (2015, p. 11). When applied on a policy level, deficit thinking on the part of the host society can impede the successful integration of (im)migrants by treating their difference as a form of exclusion. One of the ways in which this has been achieved is through a standardization of literacy and linguistic competencies and embedding those standards in universal measurement tools and tests designed to treat reading, writing, numeracy and communication skills as discrete tasks separate from one another. It is becoming increasingly evident, however, that this approach does not capture the wealth and complexity of people's multiple literacies, varied knowledge and meaning-making practices. One of the most influential concepts that has emerged to counter the deficit model of thinking and teaching is "funds of knowledge," and I offer an in-depth discussion of that concept in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 2

CHALLENGING THE DEFICIT MODEL OF DIFFERENCE IN TIMES OF NEOLIBERAL EDUCATION

> Stories of resilience, of hope against all odds, and of survival erupt in all shapes when the narratives that dwell within households are uncovered.
>
> Norma Gonzalez, Luis Moll, Cathy Amanti, *Funds of Knowledge: Theorizing Practices in Households, Communities and Classrooms*

Funds of Knowledge—Connecting Communities, Homes and Classrooms

One of the most popular and effective concepts for countering the "deficit model of difference" is "funds of knowledge." The concept traces its roots to anthropologist Eric Wolf's (1966) work on the different kinds of resources, strategies and know-how that households have to maintain in order to ensure their survival and well-being. Wolf identified several such funds within the household economy: caloric, replacement, ceremonial, social and funds of rent. In the 1980s and early 1990s, anthropologists Carlos Vélez-Íbañez and James Greenberg deployed the concept in their studies of economically vulnerable Mexican families living in the southwestern US-Mexico border region. They defined funds of knowledge as "strategic and cultural resources" (2005, p. 47), part of the "operational and cultural system of daily life" (p. 58). Such funds included, for example, knowledge about how to repair homes and appliances, how to find information about jobs, government assistance, school programs or legal help, etc., as well as

knowledge of planting and gardening, cooking, and making things in general. Their study identified the relational nature of funds of knowledge between households and kinship connections spanning both sides of the border, based on the cultural expectations of *confianza*, or mutual trust. They also recognized the importance of community-based knowledge and solidarity networks, especially at a time when "capitalist dislocations and technological changes" made households more dependent on wages and when "the funds of knowledge required of workers became increasingly specialized" (p. 57).

Vélez-Íbañez and Greenberg's further important contribution to the concept was their attention to the historical processes that have informed the development of funds of knowledge of Mexican-US households and Mexican-American cultural identity, as well as to the question of how these knowledges, resources and identities are socially transmitted between generations. They argued that, in the realm of education, funds of knowledge can be useful in providing a critical perspective, countering "the deficiency model or a minority model of instruction used for culturally different students" (p. 48).

As it applies to education, the concept of funds of knowledge has been further developed and popularized by Luis Moll, Cathy Amanti, Deborah Neff, Norma Gonzalez and other anthropologists, educational researchers and practitioners. They have defined it as "the historically accumulated and culturally developed bodies of knowledge and skills essential for household or individual functioning and well-being" (Moll et al., 1992, p. 133). In the context of their research, Moll et al. have identified the funds of knowledge characteristic of working-class Mexican-American households in Tuscon, Arizona, and have argued that, contrary to accepted beliefs, low-income families are neither socially disorganized nor intellectually poor. On the contrary, they contain "ample cultural and cognitive resources with great potential utility for

classroom instruction" (p. 134). The authors proposed that teachers should take on the role of learners and even of ethnographical researchers and come to know their students and the families of their students in a deeper way, outside of the classroom. In this way, teachers can begin to better understand their students' prior knowledge and, consequently, implement that knowledge in the classroom in order to provide more culturally responsive and meaningful learning experience for their students. The direct connection that teachers are invited to establish with students and parents in the context of accessing previously hidden funds of knowledge, could lead to the establishment of relations of *confianza* and a sense of continuity—on the part of both teachers and families—between home and school.

Moll et al. substantially expanded the concept of funds of knowledge by including an element of praxis to it and broadening its ecosystem beyond the household to include the school as an institution and engagement with individuals. Building on Vélez-Íbañez and Greenberg's work, they oriented the concept's original focus on household economics towards the strategic knowledge resources and skills to be found in domestic settings and shared between individuals in order to emphasize how those skills and resources are "grounded, embedded in the 'thick' social and cultural relations that make up family life" (Moll et al., 1990, p. 1). In this way, they also emphasize and valorize students' prior learnings rather than concentrating on what students—especially those from cultural or ethnic minority groups—are perceived to be lacking.

In its practical application, this iteration of the funds of knowledge approach has opened up a space for relationship-building that extends outside of economic transactions and takes place between groups that might be characterized by different power dynamics. It has invited teachers to be active participants in the reciprocal relations formed between classrooms and the lifeworlds of their students and families. By acquiring first-hand and more accurate

understanding of those lifeworlds, teachers can, first, check and confront their own assumptions and stereotypes and, second, draw on students' life experiences, cultural knowledge and values in order to, as Linda Hogg has cogently pit it, "scaffold student learning from the familiar" (2011, p. 667).

Checking the Concept's Blindspots

Funds of knowledge has been widely used and debated in the field of education. As scholars have reflected on or adopted the concept, either in theory or in practice, they have raised critical questions aimed at examining some of its blindspots.[3] This critical lens is not meant to undermine this important and effective concept, but rather to point to areas that require more attention in order to strengthen the validity of this approach. Furthermore, it is possible to build on what funds of knowledge have achieved thus far in the field of education in order to expand the concept in a direction that is more attuned to the sociocultural and political developments of the past 40 years.

Whose Knowledge? And Who Decides What Counts as Valuable Knowledge?

Some of the recurring questions in the literature on funds of knowledge pertain to *what sources* of knowledge and *whose* knowledge does the concept encompass. Are the home and community a principle source of knowledge or should other relationships and experiences also be considered? For children and young adults, are schooling, peers and popular culture also valid

[3] For comprehensive critical overviews of the concept of funds of knowledge and its theoretical application, see the excellent studies by Hogg (2011), Llopart & Esteban-Guitart (2018), Oughton (2010) and Hinton (2015).

sources of knowledge? Some researchers have extended the concept to include teachers' knowledge in addition to that of parents and families. However, Helen Oughton warns that this approach might lead to teachers "imposing their own cultural arbitraries in deciding what 'counts' as funds of knowledge" in the communities they might not be familiar with (2010, p. 70). Furthermore, if the intent of the concept is to redress the deficit model of education and to inform effective pedagogical practices for diverse students, then teachers who do not belong to their students' communities might indeed benefit more from a position of active listening and understanding of their students' lifeworlds. Otherwise, they might run the risk of "replacing one set of cultural arbitraries (the approved curriculum) with another (our own well-intentioned but value-laden judgements)" (p. 73).

An important contribution to the concept is what some theorists have termed "funds of (difficult) knowledge" (Becker, 2014) and others, "dark funds of knowledge" (Zipin, 2009). These account for "stories that disturb one's sense of cohesiveness" (Britzman, 2000, p. 43) and for "emotionally difficult chapters of one's cultural heritage or migration story" (Becker, 2014, p. 19). This perspective calls into question the fact that, as conceived by Moll et al., funds of knowledge seem to highlight positive resources and skills, while an individual's life is a rich and varied tapestry of both joyful and painful events and experiences that can become embedded in cultural and social practices. Furthermore, even negative experiences can sometimes transform into positive life resources, such as resilience, resourcefulness or a sense of purpose. There is, however, the opposite risk, as some scholars have noted, of dark or difficult funds of knowledge foregrounding some of the stereotypes associated with marginalized communities, and therefore, perpetuating the deficit perspective of thinking. For example, the experiences of (im)migration and settling in a host country may often be perceived as difficult, traumatic, lacking in economic

resources, and while that certainly is true in many cases, it is not the only or the full story. While dark funds of knowledge can bring to light "emotionally difficult chapters" in an (im)migrant's journey, they may also lead to reinforcing prejudices and to exclusion on the part of the broader host society.

Essentializing Communities and the Notion of Culture

Another area of concern raised by scholars is the possibility that by incorporating funds of knowledge into culturally responsive pedagogical approaches, cultural or ethnic groups might, in the process, be essentialized as homogenous and as "possessing fixed cultural traits" (Oughton, 2011, p. 70). Gonzalez et al. have addressed this concern by explaining that the focus of funds of knowledge is not on a static, normative view of culture generalized and shared through "surface markers, such as dances, food, folklore and the like" (quoted in Oughton, p. 70). Rather, in Gonzalez et al.'s view, culture is processual and relational—it refers to the sociocultural practices, lived experiences and daily activities within families, through which historically accumulated funds of knowledge become apparent.

Questions of Power—Community Cultural Wealth

Funds of knowledge aims to put forward as valuable the knowledge, resources and skills of marginalized communities, such as (im)migrants or communities of colour, whose knowledge is usually not sanctioned through the dominant discourse and is therefore often dismissed as low-status or as "basic skills," without acknowledging the sophistication and sometimes deep traditional cultural connections that such knowledge is built upon and maintains. Some scholars

have argued, however, that the funds of knowledge concept omits to pay more explicit attention to the power dynamics that underpin the processes of creating and maintaining a dominant social group and culture, legitimized through institutional discourses and often naturalized and transmitted through the educational system. It is this dominant group then that often decides what knowledge counts as valuable and which knowledge and cultural resources are to be disregarded and viewed as deficient. Kip Austin Hinton levels the critique that: "Since its development, the funds of knowledge framework has been implemented in sometimes simplistic ways, often unintentionally endorsing power relations" (2015, p. 304), while Helen Oughton worries "that questions about the role of neoliberalism are suppressed as the funds of knowledge framework is reified" (p. 304).

As a way to introduce the question of power dynamics into the discussion of funds of knowledge, Tara Yosso uses the lens of critical race theory and proposes the concept of "community cultural wealth," which she defines as "an array of knowledge, skills, abilities and contacts possessed and utilized by communities of colour to survive and resist micro and macro forms of oppression" (2005, p. 77). Challenging traditional interpretations of Pierre Bourdieu's theory of capital based on bourgeois values and aspirations, Yosso identifies at least six alternative forms of capital that constitute cultural wealth, including "aspirational, navigational, social, linguistic, familial and resistant capital" (p. 77). These represent rarely acknowledged cultural and social resources that communities of colour possess and deploy in their everyday lives and which, in addition to having the potential to positively affect the process of schooling, work in service of the "larger purpose of struggling towards social and racial justice" (p. 82).

Thus, conceived from an anti-oppressive perspective, Yosso's concept of community cultural wealth examines issues of race and class as pertaining to education, all the while

embracing family and culture. The six forms of capital that she identifies point to the unique strengths of communities of colour that are not necessarily grounded in notions of exchange, investment and competition from a financial capital point of view but propose a more extensive and humanistic framework. For example, Yosso describes familial capital as "those cultural knowledges nurtured among *familia* (kin) that carry a sense of community history, memory and cultural intuition. This form of cultural wealth engages a commitment to community well-being and expands the concept of family to include a broader understanding of kinship" (2005, p. 79). In this way, Yosso proposes a view of social organization that substantially differs from the prevailing one in Western societies where capital and economistic frameworks form the foundation of sociocultural life. In Yosso's conception, the individual is part of a social network, or an "extended family," which diminishes the sense of social isolation and which has educational potential in transmitting powerful models of solidarity, caring and coping in addition to what Dolores Delgado Bernal has called "pedagogies of the home." This kind of funds of knowledge are coupled with other essential ranges of knowledge and skills, such as the ability to navigate through social structures and institutions that have not been set with minority communities or communities of colour in mind and often serve to perpetuate the silencing and marginalization of such communities. This is what Yosso terms "navigational capital," which "acknowledges individual agency within institutional constraints, but it also connects to social networks that facilitate community navigation through places and spaces including schools, the job market and the health care and judicial systems" (p. 80). When individuals and communities deploy strategies, cultural knowledge and skills to resist oppression and challenge inequality, they are using their "resistant capital," which could lead to social transformation.

Deploying Funds of Knowledge to Build Welcoming, Inclusive Communities—an Example from Adult Education

In summary, the funds of knowledge concept has come a long way from its initial focus on the resources sustaining the wellbeing of household economics to a powerful theoretical and practical framework for challenging the deficit model of education. Built on the "simple premise […] that people are competent and have knowledge and their life experiences have given them that knowledge" (Gonzalez & Moll, 2002, quoted in Hogg, 2011, p. 672), this framework has, first, raised awareness about the deficit model of thinking that is still evident in curricula and teacher training programs in Canada and the United States specifically, and second, offered a successful approach to countering that kind of thinking, despite the concept's limitations discussed above. It has mostly been applied with young students in schools, but it can also be useful in the effort to build welcoming, inclusive communities on the level of adult education.

As an example of how building such communities can be achieved, one can listen to the experience of practitioners themselves. Sarah Leith is an ESL teacher in Edmonton who works with high school students and adult learners who are also newcomers to Canada. Leith participated in a series of webinars organized by the Faculty of Education at the University of Alberta, during which she pointed out how she is constantly rethinking her practices in order to make her (im)migrant students feel more welcome in the classroom. She is particularly careful to create an environment where students can feel valorized despite cross-cultural differences and where they can feel encouraged to share their prior learnings. For instance, to students who are not comfortable writing in neither English nor French she provides the option to write in their first language, even if the teacher herself cannot read what they have written (she would have their writing translated later). In this way she sends students the message that, first, she can see

the literacy and academic skills that they possess and, second, they themselves can begin to perceive those skills in a new context. The teaching moment here is that, as Leith puts it, "we are limiting the problem to one of language instead of a general sense of inadequacy or a feeling of being less intelligent" on the part of the students (Faculty of Education, 2016-2017). Furthermore, Leith recommends that teachers learn to properly pronounce the names of their students. "Even if we get it wrong," she notes, "it's OK, it shows that it's OK to not get things correctly right away, that you can do things again and again until getting it right." This willingness to reach across difference "sets the tone for that kind of learning and working together." Leith also notes that there is a fine line between creating a welcoming atmosphere in the classroom and falling into the trap of stereotypical representations. She is careful as to what objects she brings into the classroom, and tries to find things that remind learners of home and that "can spark stories and interesting conversations," such as fabrics, or objects that echo different faiths (such as a prayer rug), which may provide a sense of comfort and groundedness and are part of the students' funds of knowledge. It is important to remember, however, that some objects can trigger traumatic memories for the students—or dark/difficult funds of knowledge—which they would rather not share with others.

These are simple practices and gestures, but they can be very effective in creating spaces where learners who are also transnational (im)migrants can feel supported and respected in the funds of knowledge that they carry with them across national and cultural divides. By valorizing one's existing language skills and cultural knowledge, the teacher not only shows willingness to connect with the learners across differences, but also "scaffolds student learning from the familiar" thus improving their chances of perseverance and success in learning. This attitude of openness also allows the teacher to understand the fact that, as Leith says, "some of the students

might be highly competent in complex communications, but have a toolset that doesn't include hockey or any other ways of communicating familiar to Canadians," and therefore to adjust her teaching approach to be mindful of and integrate diverse skillsets. Not at the least, the examples mentioned above, through their emphasis on inclusion and being open and receptive to others, show the important role that funds of knowledge can play in advancing a kind of education that represents a holistic practice between individuals with the ultimate goal to be, in Leith's words, "accessible to each other as learners and as people."

The Economic Metaphor of Funds

Another aspect of funds of knowledge that deserves discussion is its use of the metaphor of "funds" to describe life skills and cultural and social competencies of individuals, households and communities. Although the concept itself aims to counter the deficit mindset in education, often from a social justice orientation and without a direct connection to money, the use of this economistic language works to inscribe it within—and, furthermore, to endorse—the broader neoliberal discourse that, in the twenty-first century, has become pervasive in all spheres of political, public and civic life, including arts and culture, healthcare and education. The way neoliberal discourse works is that words and phrases from the field of economics become widely accepted and used in broader realms of human thought and activity. Consequently, this economistic language, which tends to view the world and human relations in transactional and monetary terms, spreads that kind of logic to other areas of human activity and, with time and repetition, becomes common sense. Based on economic rationality and measuring techniques, this discourse promotes competition, consumerism, efficiency, productivity, streamlining and an individualized sense of "well-being," thus replacing the benefits of community and solidarity,

especially when it comes to upholding human rights and social justice principles. As Henry Giroux (2018) explains:

> The vocabulary of neoliberalism operates in the service of violence in that it reduces the capacity for human fulfillment in the collective sense, diminishes a broad understanding of freedom as fundamental to expanding the capacity for human agency, and diminishes the ethical imagination by reducing it to the interest of the market and the accumulation of capital.

Thus, in the realm of education, students and their parents become "clients" or "shareholders" to be served by the school boards. Teachers and parents adopt a market-based vocabulary such as "outcomes," "buy-in," "productivity," "assets," "deficits." Education itself is seen as an "investment." Standardized testing and other assessments become the norm because they provide measurable results, even though, as discussed in the previous chapter, those results may obscure a broad range of knowledge and competencies that the learners also possess. Ultimately, the relationships between all actors in the field of education begin to align with the transactional logic underlying that kind of discourse. Words matter, and language has the power to influence our thinking. The discourses we create around essential institutions such as schools or other places of learning can frame our mindset about these institutions and influence policies.

Brazilian educator and philosopher Paolo Freire (1970) has also pointed our attention to the effects of economistic language when he uses the term "banking model of education" to offer a critique of the traditional education system that positions students as empty vessels in which knowledge should be deposited like money is deposited in a bank account. He views that kind of system as reinforcing oppression and the status quo, rather than teaching students to be critical thinkers and to value and activate their pre-existing knowledge and skills.

Although this is not the original intent of the concept, one can nevertheless perceive remnants of that kind of thinking in the funds of knowledge metaphor, with its allusion to banking terms such as "funds," "investments" and "deposits." Helen Oughton has argued that this perpetuates the metaphor of learning as acquisition, as opposed to learning as participation. While the former positions "the human mind as a container to be filled with knowledge, and the learner as gaining ownership of that learning," the latter understands learning "as the process of becoming a member of a certain community" (2010, p. 71). An important distinction between the two is that between "having" knowledge as opposed to situating knowledge within context and culture (p. 71). Ironically, its name not withstanding, funds of knowledge aim to uncover, in both theory and practice, precisely the close connection that exists between culture and learning and to valorize the kind of knowledge that is transmitted in informal settings, such as the home and the community.

Kip Austin Hinton also considers that the metaphor of funds, as well as that of capital, is too contaminated by the notion of "financial capital," which itself is "premised on unequal exchange" (2015, p. 299). He questions "whether any market-based strategy can counteract marginalization" (p. 306) because community empowerment runs counter to capital's agenda. "Do we choose capital as a metaphor because it is the best metaphor, or because it is the one we are familiar with?," he asks and asserts that by letting go of that metaphor, "we may find more relevant and more ethical ways to theorize culture" and education (p. 310).

The (Unfulfilled) Promise of Adult Education

To further understand how the split between community-informed and market-based perspectives on culture and education has taken place, it is instructive to take a closer look at the development of adult education in Canada, or at what Maren Elfert and Jude Walker have called the "Canadian adult literacy story" (2020, p. 109). Throughout their long history, adult education programs and initiatives in Canada have often been built—and successfully so—from the ground up, in an informal manner, as an integral part of civil society. They have also often espoused the ideals of social justice and participatory citizenship. Whether we think of Frontier College, the Antigonish movement, the agricultural learning societies and the Saskatchewan section of the United Farmers of Canada, the Mechanics' Institutes throughout the country, the African United Baptist Association's version of folk schools in Nova Scotia, the Women's Institutes or the National Farm Radio Forum, these educational projects represented alternative sites for learning that often combined practical education with critical thinking. By privileging a participatory engagement and a pedagogy with emancipatory potential, these programs and institutions have laid the foundation of what adult education historian Michael Welton has called "the civil society learning infrastructure" (2012, p. 42). Adult education, especially at the turn of the twentieth century, was grounded in the major social movements across Canada, which sought to improve the living and working conditions of farmers, factory workers, labourers in remote areas, women, immigrants and racialized communities in the country—and empowering people through learning was an essential part of that project.

In Quebec, a Task Force on Adult Education (la Commission d'étude sur la formation des adultes) was convened in 1980 to lay the foundation for a provincial policy on the sociocultural and professional development of adult learners. Led by Michèle Stanton-Jean, the Commission recommended in its final report that adult education should be understood from the perspective

of lifelong learning and as a field of action encompassing "toutes les dimensions humaines" (Gouvernement du Québec, 1982, p. 12). The Commission argued that the purpose of adult education should be viewed as part of the broader cultural, economic and political continuum of modern societies and that adult education is "un lieu privilégié pour mieux outiller les individus et les groupes face à la complexité et à la rapidité des changements que nous vivons" (p. 13). Already in the early 1980s, the report emphasized that "l'éducation des adultes ne saurait être axé uniquement sur des considérations d'ordre économique; elle doit aussi viser l'épanouissement global de la personne" (p. 14). In order to achieve this, the report identified democratization as one of the fundamental objectives in the development of adult education. The authors of the report addressed adult learners primarily in their role as citizens and defined the democratic educational orientation in this way: "Démocratiser signifie donc 'conscientiser,' 'responsabiliser' et 'outiller' adequatement l'adulte face aux développements et aux changements de la société dans laquelle il vit" (p. 15).

In summary, the history of adult education in Canada shows its immense potential as lifelong learning practice and how it can be mobilized and led on a grassroots level by the people who would most benefit from it. It shows the possibility, through adult education, to carve out space in our lifeworlds for reflection and for critical evaluation of one's life.[4]

[4] It is equally important to acknowledge, however, that these educational initiatives were not without tensions as the struggle for control over the education of adults between the ruling elite and grassroots organizations has been present throughout the history of the field. Examples of this are the proselytizing educational practices of the early Christian missionaries, whose goal was to promote and produce "Euro-Catholic subjectivities" (Welton, 2012, p. 18) or the religious fervor that was an important aspect in the establishment of the Antigonish movement (English, 2009). Furthermore, in the spirit of decolonization, the devastating impact that the school as an institution and a place of learning has had on the Indigenous peoples of what we now call Canada has to be fully acknowledged. The learning dynamics that ensued between the early settler-missionaries and the Native peoples were based on highly asymmetrical relations of power and knowledge-transfer where the missionaries did not think that they had anything to learn from the Native peoples' traditional knowledge systems. This power imbalance was subsequently institutionalized on a federal level and culminated in repressive policies, one of the most atrocious of which is the forceful taking away of Indigenous children to residential schools in the effort to

The Neoliberal Turn

From the late nineteenth and into the twentieth century, adult education programs and initiatives in Canada were a strong driving force of community development through the creation of spaces for reflection and action. However, despite the field's potential of bringing about more equitable and inclusive societies, the status of adult education and literacy in Canada has itself been marginalized since, as Elfert and Walker observe, "adult education has long been associated with basic education for poor people with low literacy skills" (2020, p. 111). In conjunction, the increasingly forceful implementation of neoliberalism since the 1970s and, more recently, of austerity policies in industrialized liberal welfare states, has eroded the institutional foundation of civil society in Canada and elsewhere and has co-opted adult education and the idea of lifelong learning in the service of the neoliberal mantra of "training" in the sense of preparing the workforce for the global economy.

In Canada and elsewhere, the transition from more community-informed policies towards what Richard Darville has described as "the economic importance of literacy, with ubiquitous attention to competitiveness" (2018, p. 27) has been closely connected to a series of international literacy assessments, which divided the surveyed populations according to literacy levels, linked in turn to a country's economic productivity and competitiveness. Many scholars have noted the deleterious effects of these assessments and divisions and the ways in which they have informed and changed public policy on literacy in Canada (Gibb, 2015; Hayes, 2009;

assimilate them to the dominant white Canadian society—an act of cultural genocide. Such painful histories serve as reminders that despite its democratizing and progressive potential, the education system can also be used as a powerful tool of oppression that perpetuates "the colonial imagination" (Welton, 2012, p. 11).

Smythe, 2015; Darville, 2011, 2018; Pinsent-Johnson, 2014; Elfert & Walker, 2020). For Darville, their effect is nothing short of engendering a new "construct" of literacy, which is "systematically alienated from the way in which literacy is experienced in everyday lives" (2018, p. 28). We are far from considering here an individual's or a community's funds of knowledge and their connection to culture and tradition or to the development of a civic consciousness. Instead, the focus of policy and the programs that flow from that policy has transferred to "literacy and essential skills," which "signalled a move away from the citizenship and collective dimensions of literacy and largely reduced literacy to individual skills required for the job market" (Elfert & Walker, 2020, p. 116).

We can see in this shift the outline of neoliberal thinking, with its emphasis on standardized metrics to inform personal development and with the ultimate goal of servicing the economy. Similar to Darville's argument above, Tannis Atkinson sees this process as a normative reorientation of literate conduct. Standardized measures of literacy, she argues, have "redefined literacy to mean a capacity to process information so as to compete in market relations" (2019, p. 151). Such measures contain literacy practices within rigid categories that preclude more flexible interpretations of what it means to be literate (p. 144). The result is a radical transformation of literate subjects, who begin to "treat themselves as units of human capital" (p. 143), rather than citizens, and to treat their education "as a form of investment in themselves, one that can help them adapt to shifting demands at work" (p. 151). Importantly, Atkinson also warns about the profoundly negative effects that these developments can have on marginalized populations, such as communities of colour or (im)migrants, who might have had most barriers to access to education or recognition of educational credentials. For (im)migrant individuals, their very migrant trajectories are sometimes dependent on the scores of these

literacy assessments, as they are competing with others on the international labour market and for admission into countries like Canada. We need to be vigilant against the ways in which "neoliberal literate norms" are solidified and rendered common sense through the linking of "literacy study outcomes […] to the strength of the economy" (Atkinson, 2019, p. 151). This, in turn, can naturalize social inequalities and obscure "the complex correlations between poverty and low literacy" (p. 151) by privileging the literacy practices of some social groups to the detriment of others. This is how the deficit model is perpetuated.

Resisting Dominant Literate Norms

As discussed above, in the fields of literacy, adult education and lifelong learning, ideas of citizenship (local and global), community development, diversity or sustainable living have been subsumed in the rhetoric of free market economics. Yet, are we to simply forget about such ideals? It is undeniable that people need training or upgrading of their skills in order to find or retain employment or to attain the next levels of their professional development. But that is not the whole story. It is equally undeniable that our lives cannot be reduced to a workforce statistic and that we, as a collectivity, have many more shared objectives than creating jobs and economic growth.

Therefore, the question is: Can we recuperate the language of citizenship, relationships, community and social action in order to oppose discourses based on economic rationality and to build alternatives for the future? Furthermore, can adult education still live up to its original promise and be a site not only of training to increase employability potential, but also of

reinforcing feelings of care and solidarity and of instilling a sense of local and global citizenship?

To achieve this, we need to reorient our thinking by leaving behind the language of economics and transactional relationships when we speak of literacy and education and by embracing alternatives to the metaphors of funds or capital. Scholars have been proposing different ways of thinking about knowledge and learning based on a more affective and relationship-based language, and in the remainder of this chapter I explore several such alternatives.

Helen Oughton, for instance, proposes that we think of knowledge and learning as a "village well or pool" (2010, p. 72). She explains: "It is a source which is filled without intention or directed effort on anyone's part, yet which can be drawn upon by any member of the community and is not diminished through use" (p. 72). Oughton emphasises here the village or community as the backdrop of the gathering of knowledge as a common reserve that does not necessarily depend on market conditions, and from which everyone can draw. This vision is closer to the learning as participation model described above and promotes relations between people and communities that are not expressed in transactional terms.

Hinton, for his part, proposes a blueprint of four interpretative frameworks for culture: resistance, spirituality, love and trust (the idea of trust here is akin to the connections of *confianza*, described above as part of the funds of knowledge approach). This is a radical proposition in that it does not rely on the language of capital at all, but is rooted in history, lived experiences, relationships and affect. These frameworks depict shared emotional dynamics that take time to build and unfold, and unlike capital, they are not easy to quantify. Similar to Oughton's idea of the well of knowledge, Hinton's frameworks are not diminished by use; in

fact, one could argue that the more they are applied, the greater their replenishment. An important part of these frameworks is that they consider learners and people in general not as buyers and sellers, but in their relationship to each other, to their communities and to the broader society. Hinton acknowledges that by themselves the frameworks he proposes are not enough to challenge oppressive powers and to bring systemic changes. However, they are a good step forward towards revealing the emotional motivations that are "fundamental to relationships and decision-making" (2015, p. 312).

Still other thinkers have considered the event of (im)migration and the kind of wisdom that comes from (im)migrants' experience of transculturality and how that wisdom can be understood as knowledge. Elizabeth Lange, Yvonne Chiu and Rebecca Gokiert discuss the transformative learning of first- and second-generation (im)migrants in Canada. Sometimes, the ways of being and knowing of newcomers can clash with or, as the authors say, "deeply challenge existing norms in the receiving country" (2012, p. 282). Based on Homi Bhabba's theory of "third space," Lange, Chiu and Gokiert think about (im)migrants' integration in their new societies as a process of transculturality. This requires an "integrated social, emotional, cognitive, and spiritual development" (p. 282), which, the authors emphasize, often manifests as wisdom.

Lange, Chiu and Gokiert define wisdom as "a quality of integration whereby age, life experience, and various cognitive, affective, and reflective capacities interact to enhance life meaning and common humanity" (p. 283). Wisdom is also the "non-age-related ability to learn from life experiences" (p. 283). As described by Lange, Chiu and Gokiert, who draw on a number of theories, wisdom is both cognitive and affective. It transcends the ego through an understanding of the self as part of complex sociocultural systems and through the fostering of

tolerance towards ambiguity and paradox. There is also another dimension to how Lange, Chiu and Gokiert talk about wisdom: as an "active domain characterized by societal engagement and sound judgements based on justice" (p. 283).

Conclusion

This chapter traced some of the epistemological as well as practical underpinnings and implications of the concept of "funds of knowledge," especially as it aims to counter the prevailing deficit model in teaching practice with students from minority communities. It also traced the critical inquiry raised by scholars about the pertinence of using economistic language such as "funds" and, similarly, "capital" or "wealth" to denote cultural, linguistic and social resources whose value and significance for individuals, families and communities go beyond quantification and measures of assessment. The chapter then considered what I call "the promise of adult education" to circumvent that kind of economistic thinking by promoting the possibility for lifelong learning and addressing social injustices in the process. This promise has, however, remained unfulfilled, especially in recent decades when the logic of neoliberalism has overtaken the policy, practices and provision of learning in the field of adult education. The chapter concluded with an overview of what some scholars have proposed as alternative ways to think and describe funds of knowledge that would shine light on the kinds of community-based, intuitive knowledges, resources, competencies and affective attachments that defy quantification and, consequently, often remain unacknowledged. These alternative ways include the idea of learning and knowledge as a community well to which all community members can contribute and from which they can draw; a consideration of knowledge from the frameworks of resistance, spirituality, love and trust; and an acknowledgment of the wisdom that (im)migrant communities

develop as a result of their experiences of transculturality. These ways of re-imagining education contribute to building reflexive literacy and learning practices oriented towards enhancing a sense of common humanity.

In the next chapter, I continue the reflection on alternative ways of thinking about (im)migrant literacy practices in the context of adult education, with which to counter the prevailing logic of rationality and instrumentality. I propose that a consideration of emotion and affect in literacy, as expressed symbolically through affective literacy practices towards books and other printed or written matter, is a productive approach with which to begin to discern the depth of emotional attachment that many learners feel towards their learning and the non-monetary benefits that they derive from the learning process.

CHAPTER 3

LITERACY AND AFFECT

> Reading, writing and literacy mean far more than understanding words on paper. Literacy has a lot to do with enriching and discovering more about yourself, your personal dreams, ambitions and hopes—coming to understand that "sacred place inside." Literacy also enables us to share this "sacred place" with others, either with an intimate friend or with the world, through "stories, songs, dances and art." When you are reading or being read a favourite book, poem or story, the writer is sharing with you something of that "sacred place inside."
>
> John Daniel O'Leary, *Creating a Love of Reading*

Affect and Emotions in Education

Literacy and education scholars have long acknowledged the powerful role that emotions and affect play in teaching and learning. No matter our age, emotions have a considerable impact on our thoughts, values, attitudes, as well as motivations for learning. Emotions allow us to experience the world in imaginative ways and through our senses, and to get to know ourselves and the world in a deeper, meaningful way. In adult learning contexts, emotional issues, both positive and negative, often play a significant part because, for adults, learning is closely connected to their life experiences and the knowledge and expertise they have collected throughout the years—and there is a deeply emotional aspect to such knowledge and expertise. As John Dirkx writes, "The social and relational nature of [adult education] often fosters, elicits or implicitly encourages learners to give voice or expression to this underlying affect or

emotion" (2011, p. 351). Furthermore, the learning environment itself could provoke emotionally laden issues such as conflicts with teachers and fellow learners, frustration with the learning process, memories of past humiliations in school, or conversely, joy from building new knowledge, pride from personal achievement or making new friends and meaningful connections in the classroom.

In more traditional educational research and theories, emotions have often been opposed to cognition or seen as a "barrier to reason and knowledge" (p. 350). This kind of thinking is a heritage of the Cartesian mind-body dualism that has informed the development of Western thought and ideas of knowledge-production since the Enlightenment (and of which neoliberalism could be seen as a reflection and an extension). In the dominant Western worldview logical-cognitive ways of knowing and learning prevail, while emotional and somatic ways of knowing (learning through the body) are often regarded as suspect because they are considered unpredictable, unmeasurable and ungraspable through scientific methods.

Resorting to literacy assessment standards and tests is an example of the attempt to eliminate the emotional, affective or unruly side of knowledge and learning by reducing literacy to a series of discrete tasks and processes that do not allow space for measuring such essential aspects of the learning experience as the drive and desire to learn, the feeling of accomplishment by something that has been learned or the feeling of dignity as a result of the ability to express one's self that has been achieved through learning. Measurement techniques also tend to disregard the ways in which we learn informally (such as through artistic expression) and in which we access this learning through our emotions, or the ways in which learning can also be kinetic, experienced through our bodies and movements. In the prevailing "ideology of vocationalism" (Boshier, 2005, quoted in Merriam & Sek Kim, 2011, p. 382), we lose what

Richard Darville has cogently identified and defended as the two aspects of the imaginary of literacy work: that literacy is, first, responsive and respectful of the learners' "diverse particularities of experience and ways of learning" (2018, p. 25) and, second, that literacy is relational in the sense that literacy development happens as a collaborative, community endeavour. Thus, if we only focus on the rational, formal, market-driven view of learning and literacy as acquiring skills for the workplace, we risk losing the benefits of a learner- and humanistic-centred education that has the affective power to build communities.

More recent scholarly work in the field of adult education has begun to look at "a more integral, central and holistic role of emotion in reason, rationality, learning and meaning making" (Dirkx, 2011, p. 350; see also Anwaruddin, 2016). Such an approach seeks to acknowledge that mind and body, rationality and emotions are equally important and mutually integrated components of the way humans learn. Furthermore, it seeks to provide a corrective to dominant rationalistic approaches to issues of marginalization and empowerment. With the development and popular success of theories around emotional intelligence, one can identify a tendency towards a "more nuanced 'multidimensional model of intelligence' that takes into account an 'ever-developing understanding of the complexity of learning'" (Lagman, 2015, p. 5).

Educational scholars are beginning to use the term "affect" to denote such multidimensionality and sensory experiences in relation to literacy and learning, thus recognizing, for example, how "texts and responses to texts are embodied and performed" (Lagman, 2015, p. 5). Morton Alpern offered one of the first definitions of affective education in his 1974 article "Curriculum Significance of the Affective Domain": he viewed it as the "*provisions for the growth of attitudes and behaviours that deal with feelings, emotions, values, and in general, the personal concerns of students*" (p. 46, italics in the original). Although

striving to be exhaustive, this definition remains somewhat clinical and detached from the imaginary realm of knowledge and learning. Eileen Lagman's more recent definition is attentive to the desire to understand how literacy and knowledge are experienced somatically, on the level of the body, all the while remaining cognizant of the power structures within which all learning happens. Lagman writes: "As literacies are concerned with processes and practices of symbolic mediation as well as the politics of language and schooling, affect opens up an additional dimension to representation that links symbolic practices to a larger network of sensual corporal life" (2015, p. 5). An affective approach to literacy and knowledge-gathering would be more attentive to the deeply felt significance, values, concerns, interpretations and attachments that readers bring to texts and to their practices of literacy. Or, in the words of Métis author Maria Campbell, quoted in the epigraph to this chapter, such an approach would tap into "the sacred place inside"—that which is deeply connected to who we are as human beings.

In the remainder of this chapter, I will explore how applying an emotional or affective lens to print-based literacy practices of reading and writing and, in particular, to the object of the book as the symbolic material embodiment of literacy, has the potential to reveal the non-rational significance that transnational (im)migrants make of their use of literacy and how that reveals an inner sacred place informed through their linguistic and cultural heritage. This approach, I argue, could also inform a more multidimensional understanding of the "funds of knowledge" of (im)migrant communities and provide a different kind of language with which to speak of that knowledge and learning, a language that is not solely rationality-based, but stems from and reflects a person's emotional attachments and sensory understanding of their positioning in the world.

Affective Literacies

In his work on pious reading practices in medieval Europe, Mark Amsler connects affect with the engagement with texts and books. He terms this engagement "affective literacy," which denotes the ways in which we develop "emotional, somatic, activity-based relationships with texts as part of our reading experiences" (2001, p. 83). The "semiotic network of textualities, acts and bodies" (p. 83) that developed at that time in history informed gestures of reading and somatic literate technologies such as tracing the text one reads with one's fingers, kissing a page in veneration to its content, voicing the text when reading aloud, etc. Amsler takes into consideration this kind of textual engagement when he outlines three aspects of affective literacy. The first has to do with the physicality of engagement: it "involves the immediate somatic ways we touch, sense, perceive, vocalize, or perform a text with our eyes, hands, mouths, and bodies" (p. 83). The second, while connected to a kinetic expression of affect, also attends to the "emotive, noncognitive, paralinguistic things we do with or to texts during the act of reading—for example, holding a book close like a charm for comfort or protection, or touching or kissing reverentially a page in a prayer book" (p. 83). The third aspect points to "the range of emotional, spiritual, somatic responses readers have to a text, such as crying, laughing, becoming angry, or becoming aroused" (p. 83).

Amsler's use of "affect" denotes the physicality of reading and points to the porousness of boundaries between texts and bodies. Affective literacy is a performative practice of texts, it is part of the construction of "interactive textualities" and "textuality beyond the page" (p. 84). These aspects make literacy a "potentially unruly practice," with the capacity to challenge and displace literate ideologies, which posit "that reading is unilateral consumption and [that] a text is a discreet object" (p. 84)—ideologies that Amsler considers prevalent both in the Middle Ages

and to this day. Rather, affective literacy has the capacity to bring to the surface our emotive engagement with texts and reading. As Amsler explains, it "seeks out the life principle, messy and complex" (p. 83).

I argue that it is precisely this messy and complex life principle that is currently missing from discussions of inclusion and integration into host societies and policies in adult education as it relates specifically to transnational (im)migrant learners. The discussion on how to come to terms with and embrace that kind of complexity is missing when we speak about an (im)migrant's *projet migratoire* in the context of Quebec. I contend that one way to begin introducing such complexity and bringing back the aspect of humanity into the discussion, is through the affordances that a concept like "affective literacy" offers. The advantage of such a concept is that by foregrounding the human trace in relation to literacy practices, it brings into the discussion the literate experiences of embodied beings. For instance, touching a book or other printed artifact with one's hand reminds us of the "potency of *handling*," as Margaret Mackey remarks (2016, p. 167, italics in the original), the trace left by a human hand on the surface of an object, a gesture that transforms literacy from an abstract activity into a concrete one.

Amsler developed his theory based on the object of the book and the practice of reading as classical and symbolic literate technologies. His view of literacy is both spiritual and material. The question of literacy's material qualities and the material conditions within which it is rooted is gaining prominence in the literature on literacy practices (Pahl & Rowsell, 2011; Bartlett, 2007). Margaret Mackey has argued that "we may better understand the role of literacy in our lives if we attend to the tangible as well as the abstract associations the objects of literacy evoke and if we think of literacy as a form of material as well as intellectual engagement" (2016, p. 166). She uses similar language as Amsler when she remarks that the ways in which literacy is

entwined with our everyday lives are "richly messy, sprawling and multi-focused" (p. 166). She points our attention to "the daily unruliness of home literacies, which are embedded in a rich clutter of people, objects and emotions" (p. 167).

Objects—or artifacts—play an important part in our lived experiences and our sense of self. Cultural and domestic objects, in particular, are often connected to the stories we tell about ourselves and our place in the world. In fact, sometimes, it is through such objects that our stories can become known—they become our biographical objects that share our lives and that can stand as "a metaphor for the self" (Hoskins, 1998, p. 3). I am reminded here of the words of ESL educator Sarah Leigh quoted in the previous chapter who brings into the classroom artifacts that would be familiar to her culturally diverse students (different fabrics, baskets, a prayer rug). By incorporating such objects into the space of learning, she signals to her students that she sees them in their complexity as human beings with their own stories to tell, and that the space of the classroom is as much about the formal learning of the rules of English grammar as it is about the lifelong process of knowledge-gathering and knowledge-sharing of who we are as individuals. In a learning space, objects also have the potential to highlight less visible stories of literacy and education, and a consideration of literacy's tangible qualities can reveal a person's subjective relationship to learning. This is what Kate Pahl and Jennifer Rowsell have termed "artifactual literacy": it "makes more explicit the role of material objects in literacy and their thing-like status. It is a lens that can materialize literacy and make visible stories that link to objects" (2011, p. 133).

Books as Symbolic Literacy Technologies

The artifact of the book can be thought of as the material and durable embodiment of literacy in its traditional formulation (as reading, writing and arithmetic). The presence of books in a household suggests a degree of positive attitude towards reading, knowledge and learning, and as such they can be considered as part of the household's funds of knowledge. Books are also closely connected to affect. In fact, the trope of loving books and reading is an ubiquitous one in Western cultures. A myriad of publications on this theme have appeared over the past two decades. Here is just a handful of recent titles that connect books and reading with love, passion, and with life itself: *Loving Literature: A Cultural History* by Deidre Shauna Lynch; *A Passion for Books*, edited by Harold Rabinowitz and Rob Kaplan; *The Man Who Loved Books Too Much* by Allison Hoover Bartlett; *So Many Books, So Little Time: A Year of Passionate Reading* by Sara Nelson; *Rereadings: Seventeen Writers Revisit Books They Love* by Anne Fadiman; *Lire c'est la vie* by Jacques Godbout. A forthcoming publication, *Bookishness: Loving Books in a Digital Age* by Jessica Pressman, explores the assertion that "twenty-first-century culture is obsessed with books." Even though the death of the printed book has been announced every time a new and seemingly stronger communication technology appears on the cultural scene, books continue to maintain their "multivalent meanings" and relevance in contemporary culture. As Pressman explains, "Books can represent shelter from—or a weapon against—the dangers of the digital; they can act as memorials and express a sense of loss." Books—both in their content and in their material form—thus, have the ability to incite strong attachments by reaching feelings, thoughts, memories, and other affective states deep inside their readers' psyche. Amsler speaks to that kind of attachment when he notes that for some scholars in the Middle Ages books, and specifically the books of hours, were "functional texts for triggering contemplation and spiritual *affectiones*," while others considered them "special or sacred objects" that allowed the reader to

"compose and affectively contemplate the divine through the mediation of material form" (p. 95). This contemplation through affection was at the same time cognitive, spiritual and embodied and connected to the literate technology of the book.

Margaret Mackay offers another perspective on affective literacy inspired by books. She looks at the "the abstract, tangible and mundane ingredients of childhood reading" (2016, p. 166). She has compiled a collection of literacy materials from her childhood (which includes not only print, but audio-visual materials as well), with the intention of better understanding the development of her early literate life as a young child and the places where it unfolded, specifically home and school, but also the church, the library, the museum, etc. She retraces the material histories of the books she had as a child and in the process revisits some of the affective or emotional attachments or disengagements she experienced in relation to reading and to the use of these books. She also carefully considers the physical markings that the books bear (her name as the owner of the book handwritten by her mother, the elastic bands and duct tape used to keep together the pages of books coming undone by time, etc.). These are the tangible traces of mundane use and the incorporation of literacy practices in daily lives. In the degradation of the ragged copies of her childhood books, Mackey sees an expression of affect: the books "have been damaged by being loved for so many years" (p. 171).

Uncommon Paths to Literacy and to Books

That one can feel deep attachment to the object of the book and to one's home library, that one can be passionate about the activity of reading and the imaginative worlds that it opens to us, and that being surrounded by books and other printed artifacts in our living spaces can be a

source of comfort and give us a sense of connection and belonging—these ideas underpin some of the reflections that this thesis presents. However, it is also important to acknowledge that these ideas are only part of the full story of what literacy is or can be. The paths to literacy vary across cultures and are as diverse as each person's life experiences. It is important to keep in mind that the paths to literacy and to developing an affection for books and reading do not always fall within the romantic narratives of children enjoying the presence of books in the house and being read bedtime stories by loving parents, or of a child encountering an attentive teacher or another mentor figure who gently instills in the young mind the love for books and the joy of reading. On the contrary, sometimes the path to books, reading and, ultimately, literacy is difficult and laden with obstacles and barriers.

Shirley Brice Heath reminds us of that when she speaks of her experience growing up on her grandmother's small farm where only few books existed and where the daily rhythm of the household was not characterized by the ritual of bedtime stories or learning, but by the cyclicity of the seasons, of caring for the farm animals and tending the garden and orchard. The author's early life was punctuated by the "narratives of life and work" and family literacy was simply "reciting Bible verses while we worked" (2011, p. 35). In her evocatively titled article "The Book as Home? It All Depends," Brice Heath challenges the ideal of family literacy that "links books with leisure, literate identity, and well-roundedness" (p. 34) and reminds us of the close association that has traditionally existed between social class, education and book-buying and book-reading habits. She writes: "Books, their accompanying artifacts and their relation to children's socialization and adult habits of child-reading could not be considered apart from socioeconomic class, geographic location, religious beliefs or cultural milieu" (p. 40). Thus, depending on one's socioeconomic and cultural positionality, the route towards books and

reading could be accidental and unexpected rather than the straightforward trajectory of a cultural habit intertwined with ideas of morality, edifying values and academic achievement. Brice Heath calls those who undertake such an alternative path "uncommon readers" (p. 39). Also different are the family stories that are being told in this way: they often use different kinds of reading materials such as letters or newspapers as "prompt and props for stories" and they often include gossip, jokes and "tales full of fun and moral lessons" (p. 40).

Yet another uncommon path to literacy, one that does not necessarily have printed matter at its core, can be discerned from educator Glasceta Honeyghan's personal account of her literacy development. Honeyghan remembers the everyday sounds, voices and rhythms of the village in Jamaica where she grew up. Hers is a sonorous affective literacy where voices, music, songs, storytelling serve a double function: they create deeply emotional attachments and a sense of belonging to a community all the while being instructive waypoints for a young person who is learning to navigate both the word and the world. Honeyghan paints the lifeworld of her youth:

> In that small village, without technology or much in the way of distractions, I grew to appreciate the music in language and the recurring rhythms that resonated through my world. The sounds came through the movements all around me, and I responded to the rhythms in the everyday sounds of such things as stories, the "biggest lie" game, riddle-rhymes, and even the sad sounds at the death of someone dear. (2000, p. 406)

Honeyghan remembers her father reading their home Bible, "a big black book" sitting on his lap (p. 408), and she remembers his voice when he was telling stories, peppered with words in Spanish, which she also recalls. As an adult, she can appreciate how much the poetic and aesthetic beauty of Bible verses that she heard as a child has taught her about rhythm, with their "use of repetition, verbal parallelism, and patterns of sound" (p. 409).

Brice Heath's and Honeyghan's accounts demonstrate that literacy growth is bound up with one's historical and sociocultural position and that it is interwoven with the pace of daily life, the "vivid human drama" and the voices of one's community (Honeyghan, 2000, p. 412). Literacies take many forms—they do not necessarily have to be print and textual—and what matters most is the significance of those literacies in one's life, how much they are able to convey and teach us about the life experiences of those around us and the extent to which they empower our own voices as human beings with agency in the world.

Books and the Event of (Im)migration and Displacement

The event of (im)migration brings about as much physical as identity displacement and adapting to a new society often requires trying to find new ground in order to begin re-rooting one's identity. This transitional time often entails a desire to maintain contact with one's place and culture of origin. Since daily physical contact is not possible, cultural artifacts often become substitutes for such a connection.

As artifacts, books can be thought of as what Gabiele Budach, Catherine Kell and Donna Patrick have called "boundary objects," which are "able to move physically across contexts" and "are endowed with the ability to carry meaning" (2015, p. 393). It is not uncommon for (im)migrants to bring books with them from their countries of origin to their new homes in the host country. Some people bring books that they think would enhance their learning in the new setting and help their professional development, such as dictionaries, manuals or trade publications related to their professions. Others bring books from their childhood as a way to maintain a sense of self developed during their formative years. Still others bring literature

written and published in their mother tongue in order to preserve a linguistic and cultural connection. Whatever the motivation, an (im)migrant's decision to take books along suggests the desire to maintain certain continuity with language and reading—in other words, with familiar literacy practices. Such practices may seem foreign in the host society, but they are tied to social and cultural traditions, which are, in turn, formative part of (im)migrants' identities as well as the funds of knowledge that they carry and have the potential to establish and incorporate in their new realities. A greater mutual curiosity and understanding—of the (im)migrants' homeland literacies on the part of the host society and of the host country's local literacy learning on the part of (im)migrants—would go a long way towards a greater valorization of such practices as funds of knowledge.

Karen Dali's innovative study of the reading habits of Russian-speaking (im)migrants in Toronto and of their attitudes towards their home book collections sheds further light on the role and influence of reading (and specifically leisure reading) in (im)migrant lives. The empirical data that Dali has collected through surveys and semi-structured interviews with members of the Russian diaspora shows that reading and owning books as part of a personal home collection were important values and practices for this ethnic community, both in Russia and in Canada. The majority of Dali's respondents had personal libraries in their homes in Russia and continue to purchase books for home after (im)migration. Dali outlines six themes that emerged from the answers of this group of respondents as to why having books at home is important for them:

1. Preserving one's cultural and historical heritage is deemed personally important and as a connection to the motherland. […]
2. Preserving one's cultural and linguistic heritage so as to pass it on to the next generation. […]

3. The desire to keep personal favourites in one's home collection and reread them. […]
4. The pleasure derived from reading one's native language in a foreign language environment. […]
5. Books at home are a part of one's physical milieu and spiritual life. […]
6. Collecting books at home as a means of educational attainment, personal growth and personal development. […] (Dali, 2004, p. 351)

Dali's study offers a glimpse into the book reading and print literacy practices of (im)migrants and demonstrates the vast complexity of motivations and uses of literacy in the space of translocality—complexity made up of both emotional and pragmatic reasons. The themes above show the close association that migrants who love to read make between print and their cultural, historical and national heritage, and therefore to a sense of identity and belonging. Books are also closely connected to language and through their materiality ensure cultural continuity between generations, especially in the context of (im)migration. The respondents' affect for their libraries is evident here through their expressed desire to have books close by in order to be able to reread personal favourites or to delight in the script and sound of their mother tongue.

In a second study with avid readers from the Russian-speaking community in Toronto, Dali investigates the role of leisure reading in (im)migrants' lives. Analyzing her respondents' answers, she notes an emerging sense of "inexplicable affection": "The notion of *inexplicable affection* to reading and books is clearly pronounced, with many participants claiming that they read for no particular reason, merely because they like it" (2012, p. 266, italics in the original). Such affect is partly rooted (among other aspects) in what Dali identifies as a coping mechanism for the culture shock (im)migrants experience when they find themselves in a disorienting and

often overwhelming unfamiliar geographical, social and cultural environment. To that, "the only antidote […] is the familiar," Dali writes (p. 267). She explains:

> Books and the act of reading in the native language, therefore, reduce the level of anxiety and confusion [from culture shock]. They do so not by being *instrumental* in resolving puzzling situations, not by providing information or certainty about unfamiliar matters, not by teaching survival skills or introducing efficient coping mechanisms, but *by virtue of linguistic, psychological, and cultural familiarity* that is scarce in the lives of newcomers. This is probably one of the most powerful and least cerebral roles of reading, which is all about emotion and bodily response. (p. 267, italics in the original)

Dali further connects (im)migrants' affective experience of leisure reading with the acculturation process that they are also undergoing in their new society. Acculturation is closely related to identity. For the participants in Dali's study reading books in Russian for pleasure "also bolsters the ethnic cultural component of [their] identity and, by so doing, secures the continuity and stability of identity through the immigration transition" (p. 273). The connection they maintain in this way with their Russian heritage "stabilizes [their] self-image" and "resolves the fragmentation of group and personal identities" (p. 270). This development, which takes place within the realm of private life, in one's home, can then become exteriorized in the public realm and form a basis from which the readers can start developing a more "multifaceted" identity as both Russians and Canadians (p. 273) and integrate within Canadian society, all of which is part of the acculturation process and of the "perpetual semiotic reorientations of identity work" (Blommaert, 2013, p. 616).

Travelling Literacies

The reading, book-collecting and literacy practices of (im)migrants could be viewed as examples of—to return to Brian Street's words quoted in the first chapter (2004, p. 328)—taking hold of distant literacies in local ways, all the while participating in the unfinished project of identity-formation. Reflecting on (im)migrants' desire to bring books across international borders and on their attitude towards that specific kind of literacy does not reveal much about, for example, their timed ability of decode, comprehend, or retain a text or information—in other words, it does not tell us much about their particular literacy practices from the point of view of prescriptive pedagogy and assessment. What it allows us to do is to better understand the role that literacy plays in their lifestories and the emotional engagement that literacy stirs as part of those stories. It shows us how travelling literacy manifests in ways that are material, embodied and deeply felt, and how those literacies' "route-dependent meaning" (Vieira, 2019, p. 87) intersect and connect with local cultural and communicative practices.

Kate Vieira has studied the circulation of texts and literacy objects in the context of migration, and she views that kind of circulation not as a "problem," as it is sometimes perceived from a nationalist-assimilationist perspective, impeding the seamless integration of (im)migrants into the host society. Rather, she points out:

> it becomes a rich resource, a kind of a mobile fund of knowledge that is activated precisely in the mobility of people and their literacies. In this way, the love and learning that can accompany textual mobility, as texts are enhanced with apps, wept over, and shared, can be one way to negotiate the inequitable conditions that separate families across punishing borders (p. 87).

This connects to Dali's abovementioned finding of reading as a way to alleviate the anxiety of culture shock. Translocal literacies can open up affective spaces where both feelings of loss and joy can be dealt with by (im)migrants: loss of familiar surroundings, the sonorous environment of one's community, mother tongue and immediate cultural belonging, but at the same time, the joy of being able to lean on the materiality of a favourite book as a form of connection and a waypoint from which to begin the acculturation process in one's new home.

Dual Nature of Translocal Literacies

While most of the case studies and resources that I have used as examples and discussed in this thesis present the joyful, even passionate, and edifying uses of print literacies as expressed through reading, books and writing, these are by far not the only kinds of engagement with printed texts in the context of migration, and I would be remiss not to acknowledge the dual nature of translocal literacies, affectively characterized by both joy and loss (Lagman, 2018), as mentioned above, as dependent upon migratory contexts and journeys.

Vieira identifies several kinds of printed texts that circulate in the context of (im)migration. In terms of labour migration, she looks at texts "such as letters, text messages and other technologies of writing [that] are sent from distant family members, negotiating the economic inequities that promote labour migration" (2019, p. 80). She is also attentive to the kinds of circulating texts that have the potential to reinforce oppression supported by state bureaucracies, such as immigration papers. And then there are texts such as poems, novels and essays, exchanged "among friends, like-minded community members, and sometimes institutions, building community commitments to peace" (p. 80). Vieira thus remind us that

literacies and circulating textual and print materials are not neutral or innocent, but that they have the potential to both oppress and liberate (p. 79). They can be tied up with state power and dominant ideologies, as becomes apparent in the accounts she has collected from study participants about "deportations, their separations from their families, the ways that having the right official letter, written by the right family member, with the right immigration status from the right country, could potentially pave the way to the right papers" (p. 80). These are descriptions of dark or difficult funds of knowledge, perpetuated by "the regulatory literacies of the state" (p. 82). Thus, Vieira reminds us to be careful not to romanticize the idea of how literacies travel across space and time, especially as it pertains to print literacies, and shows the "practices through which and conditions under which the circulation of texts—a fact of contemporary literacy—participates in both hegemony and resistance" (p. 92).

Conclusion

This chapter explored how the integration of the concept of "affect" in literacy theory can expand our understanding of learning and literacy as multidimensional, sensory experiences, rather than primarily cognitive ones. An affective approach to literacy is attentive to the deeply felt significance, values, concerns, interpretations and attachments that adults bring to the learning process. By using the example of the artifact of the book and the literacy and language practices that it engenders in the context of migration or displacement, the chapter aimed to foreground the complex ways in which (im)migrants construct their sense of identity and belonging during a process of acculturation to their adopted countries. It also acknowledges, however, that travelling literacies are not neutral—they could become the sites for dark or difficult funds of knowledge and be characterized by feelings of both loss and love.

Ultimately, this chapter explores the "route-dependent meanings" (Vieira, 2019, p. 87) of literacies as they travel and intersect with local cultural and communicative practices. It aims to provide a better understanding of the role that literacy plays in (im)migrants' lifestories and the emotional engagement that it stirs as part of those stories.

CONCLUSION

> Complexity is not the absence of order, it is the presence of a complex, non-categorical and non-linear form of order.
>
> Jan Blommaert, "Complexity, Accent, and Conviviality"

Embracing Complexity

Towards the end of the documentary film *La Langue est donc une histoire d'amour* (Livov, 2019), which offers a glimpse at a *francisation* class for adult (im)migrants at the William-Hingston Centre in Montreal, we see a group of students listening to the local news on their phones. We hear the voice of a journalist describing some of the proposed mandates of what would later become Loi sur la laïcité de l'État, or Bill 21, passed into law by the government of the Coalition Avenir Québec (CAQ) in March 2019. In the film, the students ask their teacher to clarify what they are hearing. She explains that, if elected, the CAQ government would propose that if (im)migrants want to be able to stay and live in Quebec, they have to fulfill three conditions: to speak the French language, to know and espouse Quebec values as outlined in the Charte des droits et libertés de la personne and to have a job. The consequences of failing these conditions could be relocalization to other parts of Canada or an expulsion and return to their home country. Upon hearing this, the students look at each other, lifting their eyebrows, realizing the severity of the penalty. We do not see in the film the subsequent reaction or the conversation that followed in the class, but it is a poignant moment of conscientization: the moment when a minority group of people realizes that a distanced and restrictive policy could have a major impact on their lives by influencing the kinds of opportunities for integration that are available to them. The exclusionary, authoritarian leanings of this policy are in sharp contrast

to the rest of the documentary, which offers a window into the vibrant lifeworlds of the learners. Throughout the film, we see their personalities revealed in their multidimensionality as the participants describe their journeys of migration and "open up about their attachment to their country of origin and their desire to be accepted by their adopted country" (Miekus, 2019).

The film's director Andrès Livov, an (im)migrant himself, has said in an interview that he hopes his documentary will prompt audiences "to reflect on their relationship with immigrants and on their portrayal in the media" (Miekus, 2019). By showing the human side of (im)migration and the importance of interpersonal relationships, he hopes that people can "connect with immigrants," "approach things from a different perspective" (Miekus, 2019) and that, ultimately, a sense of mutual trust would emerge. At the same time, the film is attentive to the dominant social, cultural, political and economic relations of power that underpin Quebec (im)migration policy. The three mandates of the policy mentioned in the film establish a link between culture (as expressed through language), assimilation (as expressed through an avowed adherence to a set of national values) and the economy (as expressed through the condition of employability). The result is a top-down restrictive policy, based on deficit thinking and on upholding the language-nation-identity ideological construct.

This example from Quebec is not unique. At a time when many social and economic policies in the countries in the Global North are based on the politics of fear of the other, my goal with this thesis has been to offer a reflection on how alterity is very much part of the human condition and how initiating contact and conversations with those who are different from us could be an incredibly enriching experience. What the film also makes us realize is that "(im)migrant" is not an abstract notion; situated on the other side of these policies are embodied human beings.

How can we make a step forward towards alterity and living together peacefully? How do we establish a common framework? How do we work towards what Hans-Georg Gadamer has described as the "fusion of horizons"? To be able to do that, I believe, we need to first be ready to embrace complexity, to be confronted with the vastness of a person's lifeworld, to know we could never arrive at a full understanding of that vastness, but that we are nevertheless willing to listen. We could adopt a stance of active listening to the Other, which could in turn lead to a closer connection. It is possible that in the process we may need to reconsider—or even unlearn—some of our own knowledge we hold dear or the assumptions we hold for granted, if they prove to be in service of unhelpful and divisive discourses or if they help maintain colonial or racist mindsets.

Adult education also has an important role to play in the context of (im)migration and displacement. I remain optimistic that, despite the turn towards neoliberalism, the field of adult education still holds the potential of making a significant contribution through its power to transform. It can reaffirm its tradition of social justice, civic participation and inclusion and commit to building vibrant communities by reinforcing tolerance and respect for diversity. It can be more intentional in celebrating and legitimating (im)migrants' plurality of knowledge systems and in opening up informal, culturally and linguistically accessible spaces for community learning. Adult education can take on the role of a "cultural broker," in Elisabeth Lange and Catherine Abidi's words, by "bridging, linking and mediating between groups of differing cultural backgrounds for the purpose of creating social change and resolving conflict" (2015, p. 107). I hope that this thesis will contribute to the advancement of this latter endeavour and to our continued imagining, as a society, of how to achieve our common project of learning to live together.

CODA

The Migrant Libraries Project

In the spirit of approaching and listening to others, I have developed a creative companion piece to this thesis. Entitled "Migrant Libraries" and accessible at www.migrantlibraries.net, this is a photography and audio project about the personal libraries of people who have (im)migrated to Canada, and specifically, about the books in their native languages that they have brought with them from their countries of origin. The visual part of the project presents informal photo portraits of the participants, their home libraries and the books in their native languages. The photographs are accompanied by audio recordings of the participants' personal stories of what have compelled them to bring these particular books with them to Canada. In this project, I am using the book not so much as an object of nostalgic recollection (although it certainly has this effect), but rather as a material and symbolic starting point from which to initiate a dialogue and share stories and life experiences with the other, the (im)migrant, the refugee, the person who comes from elsewhere and who carries that elsewhere with and within them. The project does not feature as part of the research of this thesis, but it offers an additional space, beyond these pages, where I extend my reflections on the intimate connection between language, literacy, and ways of knowing as aspects of the (im)migrant experience.

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