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Movement and mobility in Quebec migrant writing and contemporary French fiction

This doctoral thesis proposal compares Quebec migrant writing with contemporary French fiction in order to examine the common themes of movement and mobility in these two seemingly distinct streams. The focus is on the impact of an enhanced mobility on contemporary life and subsequently literary imagination.

It considers migrant writing as a form that highlights the displacement and wandering rather than its socio-political implications; as a form of writing that destabilizes the notions of belonging and identity, as it often represents the movement of going back and forth between one's native land and culture and those of the host country. This experience becomes increasingly shared by other contemporaries on the move and features imposingly in today's fiction. How do non-immigrant writers, such as Jean Echenoz and Jean-Philippe Toussaint, represent this global mobility? Do they evoke a similar state of in-between to that of migrants illustrated by Ying Chen and Kim Thuy? What is the impact of this accelerated movement on our way of occupying space and relating to time?

This proposal applies several frameworks to answer these questions. Analysis of the in-between and existential melancholy related to displacement point to a common consequence of excessive mobility. Using the notion by Marc Augé of *non-lieux* (non-places), we consider the importance of transit space and of temporary occupancies: the contemporary transformation of space. Exploring the work of sociologist Zygmunt Bauman on "liquid modernity" and Paul Ricoeur's theories on time and narration, we unpack the subversion of linear temporality, and examine the creative possibilities brought on by a malleable temporality: fragmentation, juxtaposition of multiple timelines, innovative configurations of time-space, etc.
