



THE INTERPLAY BETWEEN THE LOCAL AND THE GLOBAL IN DOUGLAS COUPLAND'S SHAMPOO PLANET

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Abstract

Many scholars of contemporary Canadian literature have maintained that authors do not mark the elements of fiction with the Canadian national identity. Furthermore, they argue that contemporary authors employ predominantly American settings and characters rather than Canadian ones. As a result, they question the 'Canadianness' of contemporary Canadian fiction. This essay focuses on one of such authors, namely Douglas Coupland, and analyses his novel Shampoo Planet in order to demonstrate how it deconstructs the Canadian literary canon by the author's use of local and global settings, which are illustrated with various locations in the United States, Canada and Europe. In contrast to this critical postulate, Coupland illustrates the possibilities of a highly porous space. Through the protagonist's perspective, Coupland finally imagines a spatial representation of Canada in which national identity requires a new definition in the age of globalization.

Keywords: *Douglas coupland, Shampoo planet, Globalization, Literary canon*

Özet

Günümüz Kanada edebiyatı üzerine çalışan birçok araştırmacı, yazarların kurmaca unsurlarını Kanada ulusal kimliğiyle işaretlemediklerini ileri sürmektedirler. Bununla birlikte, günümüz yazarlarının Kanada'ya ait mekânlar ve karakterler yerine ağırlıklı olarak Amerika Birleşik Devletleri'ne ait mekânları ve karakterleri kullandıklarını savunmaktadırlar. Sonuç olarak, günümüz Kanada edebiyatının "Kanadalılığını" sorgulamaktadırlar. Bu makale, bu yazarlardan birine, Douglas Coupland'e odaklanmakta ve yazarın Shampoo Planet adlı romanını, yazarın Amerika Birleşik Devletleri, Kanada ve Avrupa'da çeşitli yerlerle örneklendirilen yerel ve küresel mekânları kullanımıyla Kanada edebiyat geleneğinin yapısını nasıl çözdüğünü göstermek üzere incelemektedir. Bu eleştirel önermeye karşı olarak Coupland, yüksek düzeyde geçirgen bir mekânın olanaklarını örneklendirir. Coupland, romanın ana karakterinin bakış açısı aracılığıyla, sonuç olarak, küreselleşme çağında Kanada'nın ulusal kimliğin yeni bir tanımına ihtiyaç duyduğu mekânsal bir temsilini tahayyül eder.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Douglas coupland, Shampoo planet, Küreselleşme, Edebiyat kanonu*

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In his column “Time Capsules” in *The New York Times*, Canadian author Douglas Coupland wrote that “*CanLit*¹ is about surviving inside a country’s unique landscape at a certain point in history”. However, set in the United States with American characters and addressing globalization both as an economic condition and a cultural phenomenon, Coupland’s *Shampoo Planet* (1992) is an illustration of a transnational trend in contemporary Canadian literature. That is, Canadian authors produce works that overreach Canada’s national borders and identities rather than illustrating them.² Comparing this fact to the nineteenth century Canadian literature, Stephen Henigan writes, “*the contemporary Canadian writer pretends to be a foreigner. We have arrived at the brink of a new form of alienation*” (2002: 38). Similarly, Albert Braz observes that “*many of [English-Canadian] writers continue to make a conscious effort not to have their works identified with the geographical space called Canada*” (2008: 16). Analyzing Coupland’s novels, Daniel Grassian concludes that “*his fiction, even when it is based in Canada, appears almost indistinguishable from American fiction*” (2003: 183n). Scholars have suggested that this common trend in Canadian literature results from the effects of globalization and transnationalism, the porous border between Canada and the United States, and American hegemony over the entire North America. Yet, although *Shampoo Planet* uses globalization as a theme, it also responds to some of the predominant arguments in Canadian literary tradition, particularly Northrop Frye’s thematic reading of Canadian literature.

In the opening chapter of the novel, Tyler Johnson, the Canadian-born protagonist, looks out from his hotel window and sees “*the Pacific sunset, utterly unused and orange and clean, like shrink-wrapped exotic vegetables*” (Coupland, 2002: 5). Tyler stays at a hotel in Los Angeles after a long trip to Europe and before arriving in his hometown in Lancaster, Washington, but the landscape he describes is not specifically related to the setting; on the contrary, his expression of the sunset on the Pacific is a materialistic account of a generic space, with the sun reduced to its colour and shape, and prepared as a marketable good. Besides, his physical and emotional distance from the view proves his pretence of being an observer, a tourist, or in Henigan’s words, a foreigner. In his essay “Conclusion to a Literary History of Canada”, Northrop Frye traces this position back to the works of early twentieth century Canadian artists³ and even further to the French explorers of the sixteenth century, and maintains that “*the sense of probing into the distance, of fixing the eyes on the skyline, is something that Canadian sensibility has inherited from the voyageurs*” (2011: 286). Frye relates this gaze to the experience and fascination of the small immigrant populations in a vast space, the ever-present need for transportation and communication, and the terror and dread against the harsh natural environment of Canada. In this sense, as Frye argues, the Canadian identity has been directly related to the representation of the geographical landscape, particularly “*wilderness, intense cold, snow, vast expanses, and rugged topography*” (Fiamengo, 2004: 243). Consequently, he maintains that early and nineteenth-century Canadian literature developed a “*garrison mentality*” through which the subject comforts oneself in a “*closely knit and*

¹ This abbreviation is frequently used for Canadian literature.

² Coupland’s novels before *All Families Are Psychotic* (2001) were set in the United States. In addition, he recounts that he had sent his manuscript for his first novel, *Generation X* to publishers in New York and Toronto simultaneously, but the Canadian publisher immediately rejected it. See Coupland, D. (2009).

³ Here, Frye specifically refers to the Group of Seven, which was a school of painters who depicted the Canadian wilderness as if no human being was present in that landscape.

beleaguered society" (Frye, 2011:289). Setting up a garrison-like social environment would certainly ward off the enemy and construct a strong defensive and conservative position; yet Frye asserts that *"the real terror comes when the individual feels himself being an individual, pulling away from the group, losing the sense of driving power that the group gives him, aware of a conflict within himself far subtler than the struggle of morality against evil"* (2011: 290). In other words, garrison depends on each individual's loyalty for an enduring community; however, with the dissolution of close-knit communities due to urbanization of the provinces in the modern age, Frye anticipates the disintegration of the garrison and the dissemination of the fear of disintegration that caused this very garrison into urban life. According to Frye, this displacement of fear enables the critic to trace an *"imaginative continuum"* (2011: 311), which he suggests as the national distinction of Canadian literature.

Brought under critical scrutiny, Frye's approach to Canadian literature has been heavily contested in terms of its romantic and mythical connotations related to this imaginative continuum. In the process of forming the Canadian literary canon, Frye's analysis might fulfill the scholarly attempt to designate the scope of Canadian literature; yet by so doing he disregards the fact that he is himself designating the literature of a nation, which is, in Benedict Anderson's definition, *"an imagined political community"* (1991: 6). This is evident even in Frye's critical style which introduces a metaphorical equivalent for Canadian literary production. In this sense, 'garrison' as metaphor unifies and solidifies national literature, and as Adam Carter asserts, for Frye, *"the ultimate purpose of literature was the achievement of community through the imagination"* (2003: 91). Some critics and scholars of Canadian literature, however, have sought for this imagined garrison mentality in literary works so as to establish the existence and validity of a distinctive value system. Robert Lecker states that two of these values are *"an expression of national self-consciousness"* and *"a hegemonic identification with texts that are ordered, orderable, safe"* (1990: 658). In other words, Lecker argues that these critics found value in literary works that mirror the imagined national identity expressed as 'garrison'; as a result, those which do not comply with this imagined construction would be left outside the literary canon. However, focusing on the rise of Canadian literary regionalism, Janice Fiamengo argues that *"in the post-1988 era of free trade, when national and cultural distinctions are threatened by globalization, the insistence on difference and specificity has acquired a new value in Canada"* (2004: 241). Fiamengo's observation shows that globalization and the consequently dissolving national borders fortify the very borders that have been dissolving, hence a mounting interest for spatial concerns, whether it is urban, suburban, rural or regional. In this context, Arif Dirlik maintains that *"place consciousness is closely linked to, and appears as the radical other of [...] globalism"* (2001: 15); likewise, Imre Szeman writes that *"far from rendering national allegory useless, globalization makes it an increasingly interpretative mode or problematic"* (2003: 203). In other words, globalization has been transforming and dismantling the myth of garrison in Canadian literature, while simultaneously highlighting the sense of place. It is in this sense that Coupland enters a dialogue with the Canadian literary tradition and criticism in *Shampoo Planet*: Although the protagonist's sense of belonging still relies on the geographical space, he has a strong resistance against the 'garrison' as a national space, and this new condition is represented by his different perspectives towards various local and global settings throughout the novel. By

focusing on the relationship between the globalized world and the local environment, Coupland searches for the means to subvert this close and delimiting metaphor for national unity.

1.THE GLOBALIZED SUBJECT IN SHAMPOO PLANET

Scholarly research on the literature of globalization aims to elucidate issues such as the globalization of literature, globalization as a literary theme, and the representations of the process or condition of globalization in literary works. Such research demands a comparative analysis of globalization and postmodernism so that their similarities and distinctions can be demonstrated. David Harvey explicates postmodernity as a historical period which is marked by the process of globalization. Harvey offers a diachronic approach to the history of modernity, and concludes that our present age has been marked by the ever-increasing time/space compression.⁴ In other words, due to telecommunications and the globally interwoven economic environment, the perception and expression of the age are determined by this new proximity. Fredric Jameson's argument that "*a new depthlessness*", "*a consequent weakening of historicity*" and "*a whole new type of emotional ground tone*" (1996: 6) in contemporary art and literature constitute the characteristics of postmodernism also resonates with Harvey's theory of time/space compression in that these features are the symptoms of the globalized world. In line with this, Susie O'Brien and Imre Szeman allude to the title of Jameson's work, "Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism", and write that "*globalization denotes what might be described as the 'noncultural logic' of late capitalism which has produced the logic hitherto named 'postmodernism'*" (2001: 605). In other words, through the periodizing of globalization it can be assumed that what used to be deemed as 'the cultural logic of late capitalism' has been theoretically extended precisely to the economic, and thus the direction towards globalization signifies a "*leveling maneuver*" (O'Brien and Szeman, 2001: 606). Therefore, the tendency in literary studies towards globalization shows an interest in both the cultural and non-cultural aspects of the text (and context). In this sense, Fredric Jameson elaborates on how these seemingly diverse aspects merge in a literary text. In his article titled "Notes on Globalization as a Philosophical Issue", Jameson examines the discourse on globalization, and writes that "*globalization is a communicational concept which alternately masks and transmits cultural or economic meanings*" (1998: 5). That is to say, globalization is a floating signifier that takes on meanings through the dialogue of conflicting and corresponding discourses on culture and economy. These critical discourses, as Jameson argues, emerge in the positive and negative areas created by the cultural and economic axes. In this dialectic model, the cultural axis includes both cultural pluralism and the standardization of culture. Similarly, the economic axis encapsulates both an increase in productivity and the assimilation of national markets. In the Canadian context, Jameson's argument on globalization has two consequences: on the economic level, it signifies a reevaluation of the discourse on the 'garrison mentality' as a cultural and national specificity. This reevaluation does not necessarily cause the end of the 'garrison'; on the contrary, resonating with Dirlik's and Szeman's arguments on globalization, it highlights the fact that garrison is a spatial metaphor that specifies the nation. Besides, for an argument

⁴ For an extensive reading on this analysis, see Harvey, D. (1992). *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change*, Blackwell, Cambridge.

of the garrison as cultural and national space, it might be useful to consider the garrison's other, namely the wilderness. As the binary opposite of the garrison, the wilderness illustrates another myth in Canadian cultural identity, and in Hammill's words, "writers and critics are now more likely to acknowledge that it is an imaginary or mythical construct, bearing little relation to the daily experience of ordinary Canadians" (2007: 65). Therefore, by depicting this dichotomy, the literary representations of globalization do not efface the cultural, but they betray the constructedness of these spatial myths and deconstruct them.

Since globalization is a nebulous concept, it is the consciousness of the subject that determines its meaning in a given text. In other words, the formation of the subject's consciousness, namely ideology, marks one's discourse on globalization. In this sense, postmodernism, by "the emergence of a new kind of flatness or depthlessness, a new kind of superficiality" (Jameson, 1996: 9) mirrors the consciousness of the global subject. Exemplifying the poetics and politics of globalization in Canadian fiction, Coupland's *Shampoo Planet* shows the protagonist's failure to relate to his own environment and his fascination with the globalized world. It is through this dialogue that *Shampoo Planet* ultimately offers an alternative discourse that would result in the transformation of the 'garrison', and the wilderness as its other.

Coupland's *Shampoo Planet* employs narrative strategies by which the narrator's consciousness is laid bare as he identifies himself as a global subject. As a prequel to the novel, *Generation X* shows some earlier clues for the depiction of globalization in Coupland's writing. The novel is a frame narrative, and its full title is *Generation X: Tales for an Accelerated Culture*; in other words, the narration and readership are identified in the title itself. The characters in the novel are young people of the 1990s, and they are characterized with self-indulgence, excessive free time, and emotional outbursts of dissatisfaction. Although these members of Generation X do not identify themselves with globalization, one of them indicates the relation between globalization and the next generation. In the tale titled "Why Am I Poor?" Andrew Palmer describes his younger brother Tyler and his friends as "global teens" (Coupland, 2005: 120). He also mentions that they are in their twenties, "they embrace and believe the pseudo-globalism and ersatz social harmony of ad campaigns engineered by the makers of soft drinks and computer-invented sweaters [and] many want to work for IBM when their lives end at the age of twenty-five" (2005: 122). To sum up, 'global teens' are described in *Generation X* as a naïve group of young people who are mesmerized by consumption, and have high hopes for getting rich in a relatively short time. As Suman Gupta observes, "it is the everyday experience of those who are subsumed by ideological attitudes, and personal and professional ambitions, which are manufactured for global consumption – and who are thereby themselves manufactured, in some senses, as persons" (2009: 38). That is to say, consumer society shapes these characters in a way to illustrate what Jameson calls 'a new kind of superficiality'.

The protagonist of *Shampoo Planet* is named after the global teen in *Generation X*, and openly identifies himself as a global subject:

I think of myself being global. I see myself participating in global activities: sitting in jets, talking to machines, eating small geometric foods, and voting over the phone. I like these ideas. I know there are millions of people like me in basements and fashion plazas and schools and street corners and cafes everywhere, all of us thinking alike, and all of us sending each other messages of solidarity and love as we stand in our quiet moments, out in the wind. (Coupland, 2002: 52-3)

In this romanticizing and mythicising view of globalization, Tyler's consciousness illustrates Gupta's emphasis on the ideological formation of Coupland's characters, and Jameson's model of how the optimistic views on culture and economy shape the discourse on globalization. In the novel, Tyler Johnson is a twenty-year-old hotel management student who is bored of living in the fictional ghost-town Lancaster in Washington, and has great expectations to leave there, travel around the world, move to the big city and gain individual success. As a result, he opts for working at Bechtol – a multinational hotel and leisure company with headquarters in Seattle – and devises ingenious projects to apply for a position in the company. His major project is *History World™*, which would be a historical theme park where visitors dig landfills to find historical objects. After a long period of visiting various locations in Europe, Canada and the United States, Tyler finally gets acceptance from Bechtol and then starts reconsidering his blind ambition.

Tyler's perception of globalization relies on his comparison of the local and the global spaces, which can be observed in the two examples above, namely his sense of being global in this local environment, and his ambition to plan a theme park of local history for a multinational company. In other words, the character's 'depthlessness' mirrors his poor understanding of the economic and the cultural axes within the local and global systems. This conflict is a recurring subject in the novel, and takes its cue from *Generation X*. The problem is named in *Generation X* as 'Terminal Wanderlust', and is described as "a condition common to people of transient middle-class upbringings. Unable to feel rooted in any one environment, they move continually in the hopes of finding an idealized sense of community in the next location" (Coupland, 2005: 199). Therefore, Tyler's indecisive position against the local and the global is the main conflict in *Shampoo Planet*.

Along with the thematic content, Coupland integrates a non-literary element to the novel to underline the conflict between the local and the global. The novel begins with two charts named as 'Elements'. In an identical form to that of Periodic Table, the chart contains objects, concepts, and personal names with their abbreviations. Positioned randomly in this chart, Coupland's elements in *Shampoo Planet* function as a foreshadowing of the commodification of history, culture and social life in Tyler's point of view. In this sense, the deliberate change in the chart's title is also significant: The Periodic Table aims at indicating the recurring properties of elements; therefore, the randomness in the design of the chart in the novel proves Tyler's inability to contextualize them. Consequently, the name of the chart emphasizes the lack of a historical consciousness, since these elements belong to different periods of time and are grouped haphazardly. In addition, referring to a similar use of culture-specific nouns in *Generation X*, Gupta observes that they are prevalent in North American popular

culture, and thus the novel *“gestures to the aptness of the British and North American literary context for a discussion of globalization as a literary theme”* (2009: 38). Likewise, in *Shampoo Planet*, the chemical elements of the chart portray the elements of everyday American life inasmuch as they obliterate the periodical table’s universality; or to put it differently, American culture is used in exchange for a universal or global culture.

The visualization of the founding elements of the universe in the novel certainly evokes Jameson’s description of postmodernist poetics in that it shows ‘flatness’ and ‘depthlessness’. Likewise, in his analysis of the concept of class and characterization in Coupland’s novels, Ryan Moore mentions *“[a] fascination with spectacular situations regardless of their signified content”* (1998: 225), hence the primacy of the signifier. Moore’s analysis explains how language enables and mirrors the reproduction of ideology and asserts its primacy over thought. In *“The Elements”*, the usage of some floating signifiers (like Power, Freedom, or Democracy) together with material objects (like Computer or Shampoo), trademarks (like MTV or Prozac), celebrity names (like Marilyn Monroe), and decades (like The 1960s) render all of these elements materialized and consumable. This characteristic trait of Coupland’s style can be traced in blank fiction genre which specifies the transgressive American fiction produced from the 1980s onwards. Preoccupied with excess, consumption and commodification, blank fiction uses a language that not only reflects the everyday experience of the last thirty years, but also, in James Annesley’s words, *“speaks in the commodified language of its own period”* (1998: 7). Therefore, from the very beginning, *Shampoo Planet* shows how globalization is experienced and expressed in the language of younger generations.

As opposed to his fascination with globalization, Tyler presents a dismal portrayal of his hometown. In his words, *“Lancaster’s population is still about 50,000, the population of Paris during the Dark Ages”* (Coupland, 2002: 8). Besides, he complains about the *“changelessness”* in the town and its isolation *“from anywhere meaningful and fun”* (2002: 9). In other words, complying with Frye’s definition of garrison, the town is described as a stronghold against change. What Tyler appreciates about the town is ample space, large buildings, and that many cars can travel through this large space; yet, cars travel within the town’s limits, not out of them. Foreshadowing the opportunity for mobility as an aspect of globalization, Tyler concludes that, in his own expression, he will *“escape”* (2002: 11). Throughout the novel, he travels through various locations, and what he means by escape is being part of the global economy and leaving his hometown.

Tyler’s description of Europe echoes a similar sense of exhaustion and helplessness as compared to his description of Lancaster. In Paris he observes that *“the sun shone hot and tanning salonlike over the city’s shortbread-yellow buildings, its Gypsies, its smug Euroyuppies, its exhaust fumes, and its decaying ambulance vibrators”* (2002: 93). The way he portrays the city shows Tyler’s materialization and commodification of the Parisian landscape; yet this European setting also resists consumption since it has already been consumed: Resounding Tyler’s history theme park project, the European space is depicted as a historical artifact in landfill. Exhausted and exhausting, Europe fails to acquiesce with the positive aspect of the economic and cultural axes in the dialogue between the global and the local.

In contrast to his vision of Europe, North America restores Tyler’s sense of being global. Coupland uses birds as metaphor for mobility in the local space, which he

illustrates in Tyler's description of birds in Vancouver. Upon his visit to his birth place to see his biological father, Tyler observes that "*bald eagles hang out in the updrafts like preteens massed in a video arcade. A swan lands beside the ferry. A pulse of Canada geese patrols the waters in the distance. So many birds!*" (2002: 176). Compared to the birds in the runway in Los Angeles, the birds in Vancouver have generic names and characteristic movements. In other words, here the local hosts the diversities in culture but needs to distance itself from the global or the economic, because as Tyler mentions "*there are almost no other traces of human habitation having once been here. All metals have rusted, all wood has rotted*" (2002: 176). However pleasant the birds' independence may seem to Tyler in the first instance, this is not the place he can situate himself in due to its peripheral position in the globalized world; the untamed setting, namely the wilderness, does not offer any economic prospects, which he passionately strives for. In addition, the types of birds listed in this extract indicate different nationalities. The bald eagle is the national bird of the United States, the Canada goose bears Canada's name, and the swan is associated with royalty and aristocracy, hence the United Kingdom in this context. As a result, the depiction of the local space mirrors the consequences of the colonization of America, thereby referring to the history of globalization. The geese's vigilance against the eagles also denotes Canada's own perception of threat from the United States as a hegemonic power against which Canadian national identity constructs itself. One of the striking examples of this in Canadian literature is Margaret Atwood's *Surfacing* (1972) in which the narrator mentions the American tourists' greed over nature by stating "*they're the kind who catch more than they can eat and they'd do it with dynamite if they could to get away with*" (Atwood, 1994: 66). In this respect, the geese symbolically construct a garrison against the eagles, although due to globalization both parties are entitled to share the same location. It is also significant that Tyler, as a Canadian-born character residing in the United States, is historically determined by both Britain and Canada, hence representing the blurring of national borders himself. In addition, American Eagle and Canada Goose are used as trademarks for clothing retailers in the United States and Canada respectively, which also shows that local elements, albeit mobile, are easily reduced to goods to be sold internationally in the global market. Through the image of birds, Tyler's account of this specific location reinforces the image of globalization, and his inability to comprehend the actual dialogue between the negative and positive aspects of the local.

Douglas Coupland also employs the bird metaphor to demonstrate the fluidity of Canadian national identity in the North American landscape. Karen Skinazi notes that "*in Coupland's fiction, scenes of Canadian-American border-crossing reinforce national distinctions while at the same time they are so seamless as to be forgettable*" (2007: 7). Here Skinazi's comment echoes Grassian's observation on the nationally indistinguishable character of Coupland's writing; however, she also asserts that through his imagination of a porous border between Canada and the United States, Coupland "*Canadianates the American landscape*" (2007: 2). In other words, it is the protagonist's consciousness that marks a particular setting and its elements with a local distinction. For example, during his overnight in Los Angeles on his return to the United States from Europe, Tyler notices from his hotel room "*jets descending while flocks of birds, immune to the jets' howling, quietly perch to the side of the runway, feeding*" (Coupland, 2002: 4). Although the actual setting is in the United States, it demonstrates

no elements that are specifically American. In contrast, complying with Coupland's elements in his periodic table, adjectives such as American, universal and global are used interchangeably. In this example, Tyler's statement reveals the possibility of a dialogue between the local and the global, but this possibility is hindered by the personification of the jets as ferocious animals. Furthermore, the birds are gathered in flocks, but they focus on the ways to sustain their lives – which is only bare survival, feeding – rather than attacking the planes or screeching at them. Associated with the birds, survival also denotes a thematic and much contested reading of Canadian literary history. Following Frye's thematic criticism that seeks to identify the imaginative continuum of Canadian literature, Margaret Atwood considers the theme of survival "*the central symbol for Canada*" (2012: 27) on the grounds that it "*functions like a system of beliefs (...) which holds the country together and helps the people in it to cooperate for common ends*" (2012: 26). Identifying national themes for American and Canadian literature, Atwood maintains that the central symbol for American writing is the frontier. Similar to her illustrations of the Americans in *Surfacing*, she contrasts the American imagination to that of Canada, and concludes that Canada has been vulnerable against American expansionism and Manifest Destiny; however, in Tyler's depiction of the scene, the birds are not alien to the jets, since they occupy the same space. The birds and jets represent the negative and positive aspects of mobility: while one is vulnerable, the other is hegemonic. In addition, their coexistence reveals the dichotomy between the local and the global. In this sense, the birds function as local elements, although they are mobile; their immunity to jets also proves that the local's survival depends on its ability to move and adapt to change, rather than reinforcing their local borders.

The depiction of the United States, used interchangeably with globalization, mirrors Tyler's swinging perspective. His failed trip to Los Angeles is an example in which his fascination and discontent with globalization intersect. When Tyler and his girlfriend Stephanie first arrive at Los Angeles, he tells her, "*Check the view, Stephanie – talk about real glamour – a real futurescape: Bank of America – Intel – TransAmerica – and across the bay, nuclear aircraft carriers in Oakland – all of this, plus the earthquake faults threatening to cum at any moment. What a city – it's so modern*" (Coupland, 2002: 203). In this description, his blind optimism for a future in a 'modern' American city obscures the fact that the image is nothing more than a 'real glamour'. Similarly, Tyler's sense of 'being global' is not hampered by the image of the nuclear aircraft carriers, whose military implications remain unmentioned throughout the novel. For Tyler, the image of Los Angeles is so strong that earthly tremors only signify the assurance for a restorable order. Arjun Appadurai lists "*five dimensions of global cultural flows*" (1996: 33) which he terms as ethnoscapas, mediascapas, technoscapas, finanscapas, and ideoscapas, indicating the spatial aspect of globalization. In this context, 'futurescape' mirrors a utopian combination of all the cultural flows Appadurai mentions, and associates globalization with the future. Furthermore, the word which Tyler uses to describe the city ironically gathers three English words: future, -scape as a suffix, and escape. That is, he is so mesmerized with the glamorous image of the future that he completely disregards the negative aspects of the economic and the military. However, his optimism is shattered upon being employed in a temporary low-wage job at WingWorld instead of a well-paid one. Tyler shows his discontent with his economic condition by describing his flat as a "*microapartment*" (Coupland, 2002: 253) and his

bedroom as “echoey” (2002: 236); furthermore, after selling his car to cover his expenses, he resents having lost his “fine sense of independence” (2002: 235). This loss of independence is verbalized by an infinite repetition of making “enough sustenance to be able to continue working at WingWorld to make enough sustenance to continue working at WingWorld to...” (2002: 237), which he calls “the loop of evil” (2002: 237). However, on his last day Los Angeles is hit by a small-scale earthquake, which triggers the car alarms, and Tyler says, “I sit on the steps in the heat of the sun and listen as one by one these car alarms extinguish themselves until once more only the muted roar of the city is audible, and the city [...] resumes dreaming its collective dream” (2002: 238). Used as an extended metaphor for his crisis, the earthquake and its aftermath restore Tyler’s faith in globalization.

After Los Angeles, Tyler goes to Seattle for a job interview at Bechtol. In Tyler’s point of view, Bechtol headquarters fulfill his dream of being global. However, the way his perspective is verbalized in the novel illustrates the ‘probing into the distance’ that Frye identifies with the Canadian tradition. Tyler recounts “Bechtol employers have been entering the carbon-black revolving doors of the Bechtol Tower only to dash back again onto the piazza where I have been sitting and watching for almost an hour” (2002: 254). Like his account on the Pacific sunset, the Bechtol Tower is the materialization of the global economy, in contrast to his local environment. The glass walls, ample aisle space, and voice identification barriers in the headquarters, however, indicate unseen borders and hierarchy rather than their ultimate effacement; furthermore, when spatial limits are not enough, voice is used to distinguish between subjects. In case Tyler starts working for the corporation, he would be required to reproduce his voice within this global environment. In this sense, the voice recognition system in Bechtol can be read in terms of Louis Althusser’s theory of interpellation in which the subject enters an ideological discourse by one’s response to the other’s hailing.⁵ In this context, Tyler would become part of the ideological discourse by means of his inability to realize the fact that it is ideological and constructed in the first place. Recruited by the company and heading towards his hometown once more to get packed for Seattle, Tyler describes his journey home: “[We] begin our long slow descent into the fertile dry plains of central Washington, through vineyards and roaming cattle and big skies and memory” (2002: 257). As he heads home, his perspective is not straight, but downward: Home, or the local, is characterized here as an inward reflection, nostalgia and barrenness. As opposed to the complex architecture of Bechtol headquarters, the way home is represented as a space devoid of human presence and man-made structures. In contrast to the local space, the Bechtol headquarters allude to the future in Tyler’s point of view. To put it differently, between memory and the future, Tyler’s present is yet to be determined by the gray area in which the dialogue between the local and the global takes place.

2.MUTINY IN THE GARRISON

Szeman has characterized globalization as “a master narrative that demands that all other concepts, ideas, and practices are redefined in relation to it” (2007: 157); in *Shampoo Planet*, Tyler’s expression of freedom relies heavily on his adherence to globalization. Returning home after a long time since his trip to Los Angeles, he resents his negligence towards his family and loved ones. But when he visits his mother, he

⁵ See Althusser, 2001, especially pp. 115-120.

faces her abusive husband, and attacks him. Overthrowing the authority figure, he says *"I am fueled by my embarrassment at my profoundly mistaken belief that simply living in freedom in itself guarantees the continuation of that freedom"* (Coupland, 2002: 274). Tyler defines freedom as his individual success story, which is linked to a prominent American theme: the American dream. Portrayed as an extension of American cultural and economic hegemony, globalization works against the integrity of the local; although it gives the subject a sense of individualism and independence, it also implies illusions and an inevitable disenchantment. Besides, Tyler's resentment also shows a reflection on his local environment after his encounter with the global, and proves that he is developing a new perspective. As a result, he acknowledges that his is a 'mistaken belief', and freedom is not limited to the individual. In this respect, Tyler's return home is a reevaluation of both the local environment and the global world.

Tyler's reflection on the local emerges once more when he visits his former girlfriend, Anna Louise. Staying at her place, but this time on the *"floorscape"* (2002: 281), Tyler gradually realizes his emotional commitment to Anna Louise and his memories with his transition from 'futurescape' to 'floorscape'. In other words, his new perspective is more spatially-oriented than his initial idea of globalization. However, it is the dramatic change in Anna Louise's apartment that leads Tyler to perceive the local in a totally different way: The ceiling collapses and the upstairs neighbor's birds fly around the devastated flat. As Tyler recounts,

Budgies and canaries are sweeping into the bedroom's air. Kittens prance and chase the carp which writhe and twitch and flop on the floor by my feet. The lovely mooch of a spaniel puppy licks the cola dribbles at the bottom of the glass at my side and shudders with pleasure as I scratch its head. Animals, one by one by one, are adorning all surfaces of the room. (2002: 282)

As a result of the collapse, all the technological devices in both flats are destroyed. Nevertheless, the wreckage is *"beside the point"* (2002: 282) and does not matter for Tyler. He pokes Anna-Louise, and says, *"Wake up – the world is alive"* (2002: 282). In this context, the apartment can be compared to the 'garrison' since they both are ordered, safe, closed and limiting spaces; therefore, Tyler considers the devastation of the apartment a redefinition of his presence within the local space. The destruction of the technological devices (which represent the global) by the ceiling's collapse (which represents the local) undermines the garrison/wilderness dichotomy and enables a gray area, in which traditional interpretations on Canadian national identity are contested.

Daniel Ray White comments that *"the novel ends in a postmodern-ecological epiphany"* (1998: 184) and explains the ceiling's collapse with a sudden fluidity among the partitions in the Periodic Table that Coupland presents in the opening of the novel. White's interpretation is not particularly related to a Canadian national specificity in the novel, but draws attention, firstly, to its preoccupation with the local and global spaces; secondly, its final suggestion that the local space is elemental, and thirdly, that partitioning is in itself a new assemblage. In *Shampoo Planet*, Coupland acknowledges

Frye's garrison metaphor and Atwood's theme of survival, yet imagines a spatial representation in which they require a new definition. Consequently, the novel, far from reflecting an American perspective, engages in conversation with Canadian literary tradition, and draws attention to Canada as a geographical space, whose local elements have been transformed by the negative and positive aspects of globalization.

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