6 Dionne Brand's Toronto, *What We All Long For*

6.1 The Global City of Toronto

'Diversity, Our Strength' is the motto for which the global city of Toronto has become recognized and celebrated (Lo 2008: 122). This distinguishing slogan has come a long way from the once WASP-dominated 'Toronto, the Good' (Rosenthal 2011: 32). In the past 30 years, Toronto has transformed from an almost "exclusively white enclave" (Troper 2003: 20) to the immigrant city and role model of social integration it is today. Canadians are proud of Toronto and attempt to cross-sell this form of cultural diversity to different cities all over the world because this model of integration can function as a best practice for other countries and help promote prosperity (Kymlicka 1998: 3). The unique official government policy partially explains how Toronto has rapidly changed into the multicultural setting of today (Siemiatycki et al 2001: 1): indeed, "the World in a City" (Rosenthal 2011: 32). To fully grasp Toronto's evolution, the city's immigration story needs to be examined.

Essentially, Toronto's population has changed from a homogenous to a heterogeneous one. Until the early twentieth century, Toronto's population consisted mainly of those of British descent (Siemiatycki et al 2001: 1). Between 1931 and 1996 however, the percentage of immigrants of British descent declined from 81 percent to just 16 percent (Siemiatycki et al 2001: 373) as the city grew in size and immigration policies were relaxed. Since the 1970s, for example, the percentage of immigrants from Asia and the Pacific as well as Africa and the Middle East has grown steadily. This growth is largely due to the 1976 Immigration Act aimed at the reunion of Canadian immigrant families, fostering of the Canadian economy, and supporting refugees and diasporas (Jansen et al 2003: 66f.). By the 1980s, Toronto's image had transformed into a culturally tolerant cosmopolitan city of 'polyethnic character' (Harney 1983: 1) of "a remarkably

diverse ethnic, racial, linguistic and religious metropolis" (Siemiatycki et al 2001: 1).

Toronto's strength is its diversity (Siemiatycki et al 2001: 454). Each year, Toronto attracts an average of 70,000 immigrants from close to 170 countries, and, as a result, more than one hundred languages are spoken in the city (Anisef et al 2003: 3f.). Between 1995 and 2001, Toronto was mainly shaped by Asian and Caribbean immigrants (Hoernig et al 2010: 155). Currently, the three largest ethnic groups in Toronto are Chinese (an estimated 450,000), Italians (an estimated 400,000), and Afro-Caribbean (an estimated 250,000) with Vietnamese immigrants making up one of the fastest-growing ethnic groups (Troper 2003: 20).

Toronto is described as Canada's preeminent global city. In the Census Metropolitan Area, it features both Canada's highest rate of foreign-born population in 2006 (46.6 percent) and the highest rate of recent immigrants arriving between 1996 and 2006 (15.8 percent) (Langlois 2010: 448f.). Almost 50 percent of Toronto's inhabitants are thus foreign-born, highlighting the city's unique trait as a cultural hub and a so-called 'gateway city' for immigrants and transmigration. In contrast, in 1996, both New York and Los Angeles featured a smaller foreign-born population of 23 percent and 31 percent, respectively (Anisef et al 2003: 3). However, unlike those two North American cities, the Canadian metropolis has been largely disregarded in studies on urban complexity.

Toronto is considered to be Canada's only global city (Hall 2010: 63). In 1986, it was the only Canadian city featured in Friedmann's classification of world cities and was categorized as second tier (1986). Nearly twenty years later, Taylor (2005) similarly considers Toronto an 'incipient' (Hall 2010: 63) leading world city of second class, following global cities such as New York and Los Angeles. In both studies, Toronto is in the same category as the North American cities of Miami and San Francisco. The city is ranked thirty-sixth in population and twentieth in Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Overall, it is ranked fourteenth in the recent Global Cities Index Methodology 2010[31].

Toronto is viewed as the Canadian 'high-connectivity gateway' (Taylor et al 2002; Taylor 2004: 92) in terms of economy, capital, and business locations. It is

31 The data used for the Global Cities Index Methodology is collected, analyzed, and evaluated by Foreign Policy, A.T. Kearney, and The Chicago Council of Global Affairs, taking various issues into account, such as business activity, human capital, information exchange and access to information, cultural experience, and their influence on global discourses. For more information see <http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2010/08/18/global_cities_index_methodology>.

the country's unchallenged economic center with almost half of Canada's corporate headquarters (40 percent) based in the Greater Toronto Area (Lo 2008: 125). The area surrounding Bay Street has become Toronto's high-rise business district. Due to its significance to the national economy, Toronto, as Canada's financial hub, is often likened to its sister city New York and its significance for the American market.

Immigration has had an impact on Toronto's economy as transnational business networks have been shaped and expanded with the flow of immigrants. In Toronto, both so-called 'working-age immigrants' and immigrant entrepreneurs and their capital have reshaped the city's labor market, simultaneously connecting the different ethnic clusters in Canada and across the globe (Hutton 2010: 117). Thus, international immigrants provide links to the global network, allowing Toronto to play a major part on the world scene. In particular, Toronto's cultural industry has been a key to the global city's economic success. In the video and film industry, for example, geo-proximity, lower costs, and the concentration of talents and resources have meant that many North American television series and blockbusters previously taped in New York or Los Angeles are increasingly filmed in Toronto (Hutton 2010: 117). Nowadays, the film industry's growth rate is even greater than that of Los Angeles (Vinodrai 2010: 105).

The Greater Toronto Area is Canada's largest city (Hutton 2010: 119). In 1998, Toronto's profile as a city changed significantly when it became the megacity of roughly 5.5 million inhabitants it is today. Through a process of amalgamation, several municipalities were fused, the goal being more efficient local government spending and a new, economic level of global competitiveness (Allahwala et al 2010: 210). Additionally, raising Toronto's attractiveness as a location for international headquarters became a key focus. Thus, the city of Toronto was fused with the districts of Etobicoke, East York, North York, York, and Scarborough. However, the integration of different minority groups has proven to be less efficient than the municipal amalgamation as the cultural integration of the municipalities still remains to be implemented. The expansion of public transportation was one of the measures taken to counteract this development.

Public transportation distinguishes Toronto from many American automobile-focused cities. Toronto opened the first subway line in Canada in 1954 (Perl et al 2010: 204) and features today one of Canada's highest rates of public transportation. Although Yonge Street, Toronto's main street, is one of the longest in the world and serves as an infrastructural support for the settlement of North-Western Canada, Toronto's private transportation mobility is relatively low compared to other global cities (Perl et al 2010: 194) and in particular to the car use per capita in Los Angeles.

Toronto's population has become a vital part of urban planning and environmental policies. Recognizing the interdependence of identity and space, Toronto's authorities aimed at the integration of the diverse city dwellers in the infrastructural development. The Humber River Pedestrian Bridge, for example, was designed and built in the mid-1990s to honor Toronto's aboriginal people by integrating their cultural icons, such as animals and totemic masks, into the structure (Miller et al 2010: 175). The city's government thus aimed at honoring a minority, which has been and still is mainly neglected nationwide.

The large number of immigrants arriving in Toronto in the few past decades has transformed not only the city's image but also its physical appearance as "immigration has become a singular force shaping and reshaping Toronto's streetscape" (Troper 2000: 4). Immigration, racial segregation, poverty, and neighborhood formation are often interlinked phenomena. Immigrants tend to form *ethnic clusters*, sometimes resulting in ethnic enclaves or so-called *ethnoburbs* (Liu 1998; Hall 2010: 60), a term originating for Chinese clusters in Los Angeles, which are formed when specific immigrants cluster in a city in dispersed patterns. This settlement and resettlement process is one of the key issues that change a city's social space.

Pre-World War II, Toronto had a few immigrant neighborhoods, such as the Caribbean-influenced Kensington Market. They were disregarded by the majority of the population and did not represent a vital part of urban life (Troper 2000: 5). Following World War II, however, new immigrants mainly settled in urban Canada (Hou 2004: 1). This post-war continuity and diversity of immigration changed the city of Toronto and its spatial pattern: "Anglo Toronto has given way to a rich montage of ethnic villages, an urban complex where variegated ethnic and racial core zones nuzzle up against one another in an overlapping pattern that stretches from the inner city well into the outer suburban ring" (Troper 2003: 58). Until the 1970s, immigrants had originally settled in ethnic neighborhoods in Toronto's inner-city and then resettled later in mixed-ethnic neighborhoods in the suburbs, whereas post-1970 immigrants were likely to immigrate directly to the suburbs (Murdie et al 2003: 139).

Canadians coined the term *visible minority* to address inequalities within the labor market. Similar to the American policy of 'affirmative action' introduced in the 1960s, Canada's employment equity of minorities is ensured by establishing quotas. Visible minority neighborhoods, which have grown steadily in Toronto since the 1980s, consist of at least 30 percent of individuals from the same ethnic group (Hou 2004: 8). Although a trend towards more visible minorities in Canadian urban areas can be identified, a ghettoization process is not taking place (Walks et al 2006: 294).

The phenomenon of the accumulation of same ethnicity members in one area is explained by identifying three different processes in the formation of *visible minority neighborhoods*: 1) relational concentration – when all members of a community increase but the visible minority increases relatively more, 2) gradual transition – the effect is age-related and explains the natural fluctuation of people in the course of their lives, e.g. teens moving out to find their own home, families with children moving closer to education facilities or older community members tending to need appropriate age-based housing, and 3) partial replacement – non-visible minority members moving out and members of a visible minority moving in at the same time (Hou 2004: 3). This last process explains the formation of a large number of visible minority neighborhoods of Chinese, South Asian, and Black decent in Toronto (Hou 2004: 19). Nevertheless, the degrees of visible minority neighborhood segregation are much lower than in the majority of American cities (Walks et al 2006: 294).

The metaphor of the *Canadian mosaic* quickly became popular across the nation and helped to strengthen the nation-building process. John Murray Gibbon's *Canadian Mosaic: The Making of a Northern Nation* (1938) constituted one of the key texts of Canadian identity. Sociologist John Arthur Porter introduced the concept of the *vertical mosaic* to describe Canadian culture and society in his 1965 book *The Vertical Mosaic: An Analysis of Social Class and Power in Canada*. Porter explains that Canada has different cultures, languages, and regions that can be compared to the form of a mosaic. The theme of the mosaic is uniquely Canadian and mostly contrasted with the American model of the 'melting pot' in which every immigrant's culture is dissolving to form the new, assimilated American culture. In contrast, in a mosaic, the different pieces remain recognizable and together form the whole picture of Canadian culture, society, and identity. The 'vertical' aspect of the metaphor of the Canadian mosaic can hint at the uneven distribution of power through classes (1965: 27).

Canadian multiculturalism can be described in different contexts: "a social reality, a federal government policy, and a myth-based ideology (Day 6-7, 16-25; Kallen 75-94)" (Ernst et al 2010: 7). In 1971, Canada's Prime Minister Trudeau initiated the country's transformation from a former British colony to a new form of national ideology by making multiculturalism an official policy and establishing a Ministry of State for Multiculturalism (Cameron 2004: xvii). In 1988, the *Canadian Multiculturalism Act* became part of the constitution. Canadian multiculturalism translates into the acceptance of the system of 'a state-imposed integration,' including the adoption of the new, shared language(s) of Canada (Kymlicka 1998: 39). Multiculturalism can be summarized as the current and future position of Canada as an immigrant country and as the acknowledge-

ment and "promised 'recognition' of previously suppressed, marginalized, and excluded ethnic identities" (Ernst et al 2010: 8).

The growing proportions of non-European immigrants to Canada have posed difficulties to the social integration of 'visible minorities' (Anisef et al 2003: 4). The increased immigration from Asian countries, such as India and China, was a major shift as they began to arrive in the 1960s (Hoernig et al 2010: 154). In Canada, discrimination in the form of racism is less common than in the United States (Anisef et al 2003: 4). Toronto particularly serves as a role model for acceptance to all Canadians. Although many pride themselves on their country's multiculturalism, disillusionment among some Canadians is growing towards this national model of ethnodiversity (Kymlicka 1998: 4)

Despite Canada declaring ethnic integration a government policy, some critics are convinced that the Canadian approach of multiculturalism is doomed to fail as an integrative measure for immigrants. As evidence, they cite the fact that the policy of multiculturalism has not succeeded in putting an end to the problems ethnic minorities currently face, such as prejudice, hatred, and discrimination. A survey conducted in 1993 revealed that 72 percent of the Canadians polled were in favor of the American immigration model of a 'melting pot' over their own model of a 'mosaic' (Ernst et al 2010: 11; Dupont et al 2001: 310ff.). These results are disconcerting, as the Canadian 'mosaic' was originally championed as an alternative to the American model of wholesale assimilation. The Canadian model of 'multiculturalism' can be problematic as it views cultures as 'finished products' (Eze 2005: 24), resembling fixed entities or isolated single cultures as opposed to more dynamic conceptions of cultures, such as Welsch's concept of 'transculturality' as the new form of cultures today (1999).

Although multiculturalism has proved to be a success for the integration of minorities, some Canadians are concerned that the government's multicultural policies may threat national unity (Kymlicka 1998: 180). Thus, it is feared that the grouping of particular ethnicities in one location results in social ghettoization processes. Further skepticism of the Canadian approach to the integration of minorities arises as a result of government spending for the endorsement of diversity. The Canadian government's policy of multiculturalism is often criticized for selling illusions and supporting clichés where ethnic food, music, and dance are considered (Bissoondath 1994). The controversial 'T.O. live with culture' campaign that was launched in 2005 as a 'cultural promotion package' for local artists in Toronto (Bain 2010: 265f.), for example, was not condoned by the same artists it was trying to promote. They claimed that the high rent and mass construction of high-end condos in the city was resulting in a gentrification process that changed the neighborhoods and their inhabitants substantially.

Despite the criticism of Canadian multiculturalism, the government's policy has raised awareness of and fostered official support for the different minority groups, their cultures and literatures (Padolsky 1996: 24). Beginning in the 1970s, non-fiction writing on Toronto's cultural diversity slowly became a comprehensive research topic. Examples of the wide range of texts about Canadian multiculturalism and particular minorities in Toronto include the African Canadian community (Head et al 1975), Ukrainians (Gregorovich 1976), the French (Maxwell 1977), the Finnish (Lindstrom-Best 1979), Poles (Morawska et al 1982), Italians (Zucchi 1988), Chinatown (Thompson 1989), the Greek community (Almyroudis 1991), the Caribbean community (Henry 1994), the Jewish community (Torczyner et al 1995), Somali refugees (Opoku-Dapaah 1995), Portuguese Women (Giles 2002), Latin Americans (Veronis 2006), Croats (Winland 2007), and Muslim homosexuals (Khaled 2009).

Toronto's literary scene has been habitually neglected for some time. It only started to be of interest to the international community about ten years ago (Rosenthal 2011: 33). This neglect explains the relatively small internationally-known literary canon in comparison to the wide range of works from Los Angeles and the huge selection of literature describing city life and nation-building from New York. One reason for this phenomenon may have been the traditional former colony's orientation towards the British Empire and its literature as Toronto's population was mainly of British origin until the 1970s. Since then, however, Toronto's self-conception as 'the world in a city' and its reflection in fiction and arts in general has slowly been developing. As a result of the significant waves of immigration, the city's literary scene has gradually changed and adapted to its new ethnodiverse texture.

The Romanian-born Canadian poet Irving Layton was one of the first to recognize the changing city space in the 1970s. It is no coincidence that he chose the setting of Kensington Market as a prominent place of international foods in his poem called *Varied Hues* (Elton et al 2009). In the poem's market scene, the different ethnicities of the city, such as Italian, Jewish, and Jamaicans, are coming together to form a literary 'map of the world.' The Sri Lankan-born Canadian author Michael Ondaatje rewrites Toronto as a changing city and a place of class struggle for early twentieth century neglected immigrants in his 1987 novel *In the Skin of a Lion* (Lowry 2005: 64). The famous Toronto-based writer Margret Atwood was among the first to recognize the city as a setting for her literary work (Rosenthal 2011: 34). Her retrospectively written novel *Cat's Eye* (1988), for example, illustrated the change of Toronto's society from a mainly Protestant one in the 1950s to a more tolerant one in the 1970s, one in which multiculturalism and the women's movement gained significant momentum (Rosenthal 2011:

34). Pico Iyer describes Toronto as "The Multiculture" in his globe-trotting search for home and belonging in *The Global Soul* (2001). Toronto is illustrated as a city in which categories of who is Canadian and who is not become blurred, different religions coexist, and boundaries between former enemies, such as Serbian and Croatian, dissolve in an Italian café.

The subject of the intersection of a number of different minorities developed very late in Canadian literature (Kortenaar 2009: 578). Considering the immense increase of international immigration to Canada beginning in the 1970s, the phenomenon of 'true' multicultural writing appears to be at least one generation delayed. The shift towards ethnodiverse writing assumedly took place when second-generation immigrants,[32] who naturally became native speakers, began writing in English. Beginning in the 1990s, besides the author's culture and the 'host culture,' further ethnicities were included in the multicultural casts of characters (Kortenaar 2009: 578). This period can be described as a time of diversity in a globalizing context.

Dionne Brand's depiction of Toronto serves as the prime example for this new type of global interethnic Canadian literature that includes more than one ethnicity. With the multicultural cast of characters and the remapping of ethnic urban space, Brand's novel *What We All Long For* (2005) represents the first attempt to translate the contemporary city's diversity and its 'uniqueness' into literature, as Rinaldo Walcott argues in *The Globe and Mail* (2005). Brand considers the global city of Toronto an 'awakening city' in which the imaginative city in literature is still struggling to keep up with the material city of multicultural reality (Rosenthal 2011: 33). The following sections describe and analyze how the global city of Toronto is imagined as 'the world in a city.'

6.2 TORONTO IMAGINED: THE WORLD IN A CITY

The slogan 'the world in a city' describes the global city of Toronto imagined in Dionne Brand's novel *What We All Long For* (2005). The novel rewrites the formerly anglicized city of Toronto by focusing on a selection of non-white characters of diverse background. Going beyond the idea of the nation (Brydon 2006: 3), a concept of identity is presented in which the four second-generation immigrant friends form "a culturally hybrid, rhizomatic coalition" (Quigley

32 This study distinguishes between 'first-generation immigrants' and 'second-generation immigrants' to emphasize the intensification of the generational conflict within immigrant families.

2005: 65) across the boundaries of the different worlds within the city. Although prejudice and racism are still prevalent in the 'multicultural city,' the younger generation's search for an urban selfhood explores diversity in Canada on a more positive note than in Brand's earlier writings (Dobson 2009: 189).

In *What We All Long For* (2005), Canadian multiculturalism is depicted as a double-edged sword. Brand's literary Toronto is a place where people of different ethnicity, class, or gender and sexual orientation encounter each other and intermingle peacefully, while others still struggle for the integration, equality, and social acceptance promoted by the political ideal of Canadian multiculturalism. The *cosmopolitan citizenship* is proposed as a counter-narrative in which identities are made of multiple global influences that are nevertheless rooted in the global city of Toronto (Johansen 2008: 50). Thus, Brand's novel significantly contributes to the field of English Canadian urban fiction, which is only recently emerging (Rosenthal 2011: 267).

Dionne Brand was born in Guayguayare, Trinidad in 1953 and moved to Canada after high school to attend the University of Toronto in 1970. She received her B.A. in English and Philosophy in 1975 and graduated with an M.A. in the philosophy of education from the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education in 1989. She is a literary critic who is mostly famous for her poetry such as *No Language is Neutral* (1990), *thirsty* (1998), and *Ossuaries* (2010), which won the 2011 *Canadian Griffin Poetry Prize*. The author also publishes fiction, such as *In Another Place, Not Here* (1996) and *At the Full and Change of the Moon* (1999), non-fiction, such as *A Map to the Door of No Return: Notes to Belonging* (2001), and documentaries, such as *Borderless: A Docu-Drama About the Lives of Undocumented Workers* (2006). She is a human rights activist and committed to social justice in terms of race and gender. She received the City of Toronto Book Award for *What We All Long For* in 2006. Brand is currently a Professor of English at the University of Guelph, Ontario near Toronto.

Dionne Brand is considered to be in the major league of authors on multicultural issues in Canada. Her literary work is mainly concerned with identity on a personal and a national level, immigration, diaspora, and cultural politics. She has become known as a voice for the 'black' community in Canada.[33] Her work often relates to influential texts by Derek Walcott, Toni Morrison, and Kamau Brathwaite. Thanks to the popularity of Brand's work, Toronto has become associated with 'black' writing. This association is in contrast to that of the period

33 To highlight the diversity of the regional and cultural background of the 'black' community and experience in Canada, the term is opted often in favor of the expression 'African Canadian' here and in the following.

before the 1990s, when the city was conceived as a predominantly white literary scene (Ball 1994) in which the 'black' experience was mostly disregarded (Rosenthal 2011: 216). *What We All Long For* (2005) represents a shift in Dionne Brand's writing. The novel explores Toronto as a culturally diverse city, exploring city life and integration above and beyond the 'black' community.

What We All Long For (2005) is set in the present-day city of Toronto. After a short introduction to the winter setting, the summer of the 2002 Soccer World Cup is the story's main time frame. A blend of characters with Italian, Vietnamese, Caribbean, and African Canadian background functions as a snapshot of Toronto's cultural diversity. The four twenty-something, second-generation immigrant friends, Tuyen, Carla, Oku, and Jackie were born in the city of Toronto to immigrant parents from within or outside Canada. The novel manages to show the opportunities as well as the drawbacks of an immigrant experience in Toronto.

In the novel, urban space is used as a tool to reflect on identity politics and the Canadian model of 'multiculturalism.' The younger generation chiefly identifies with the global city, its streetscape, and the dynamic cultural intermingling, rejecting concepts of purely ethnic, hyphenated, or national identities. In contrast, their first-generation immigrant parents experience the city as a 'racist space' (Dobson 2009: 186), oscillating between the incomplete integration as Canadian citizens and the preservation of their cultural roots. This contrast results in a generational conflict, showing how integration potentially works better for second-generation immigrants.

Dionne Brand's novel *What We All Long For* (2005) is analyzed in six sections, addressing issues of code-switching, narrative, streetscape and countergeographies, the gap between immigrant generations, and the significance of the title. The following section explores how the novel translates the steadily growing cultural diversity of Toronto as a global city. Thus, the novel becomes a 'polyphonic ensemble' (Fruner 2007: 7) of different languages, cultures, and voices: The portrayal of more than one ethnicity channels as a "polyphonic murmuring" (*WHA* 149) in which various languages voice the city's ethnic diversity.

6.2.1 Polyphonic Murmuring

When creating Toronto in imaginative terms, the portrayal of merely one or two ethnicities proves to be insufficient because, as the novel explains, "that was the beauty of this city, it's polyphonic murmuring" (*WHA* 149). This polycultural view of Canadian society includes a selection of the global city's major ethnic

groups, such as Asian, Italian, and Caribbean blacks. The collection of different characters, languages, and perspectives as well as Tuyen's installation called *lubaio* mirror the different worlds within the city, turning the novel into "a feast of metropolitan polyglottism, a paradigm for urban heteroglossia" (Fruner 2007: 7).

Subsequent to the introduction to the city and its harsh winter setting, the narrator skips forward to summer-time and zooms in to the main characters. Three of the four second-generation immigrant protagonists, Tuyen, Oku, and Carla are introduced in the course of the opening scene on the Toronto subway, one of the city's major cultural contacts zones for the city's inhabitants (Rosenthal 2011: 221). The train ride functions as a synecdoche for the dynamics of space and the transitory character of city life: An analogy to the tram ride in Alfred Döblin's *Berlin Alexanderplatz: Die Geschichte vom Franz Biberkopf* (1929), one of the most renowned city novels.

Similar to a documentary-style camera-eye perspective, the young friends' physical appearance is described in a style of a non-participating observer, thus presenting an outsider's view of life in the city. This first depiction appears to be a coincidental portrayal of random citizens as the protagonists are not yet referred to by their names. Only when reading the opening paragraphs a second time, the reader is reminded of the young group of friends. The Toronto-born second-generation immigrants Tuyen, Carla, Oku, and Jackie are of Vietnamese, African Italian, Caribbean, and African Nova Scotian background, respectively. Thus, the global city's three major ethnic groups are featured in the novel while the literary portrayal of the Vietnamese diaspora, one of Toronto's emerging ethnic groups, provides an additional perspective on immigration and loss.

Tuyen, the daughter of Vietnamese refugees is introduced as "beautiful in a strange way" and possessing "the beauty a falcon has: watchful, feathered, clawed, and probing" (*WHA* 2). The allusion to a falcon hints at her alternative life as a creative avant-garde artist in Queen Street West, which is a dynamic space for Toronto's younger population (Rosenberg et al 2010: 357). Art is Tuyen's means of language, communication, and expression of emotions. The strong, stubborn woman's descriptions are prose-like, illustrating the full variety of her fascinating personality and her androgynous appearance that attracts men and women alike (*WHA* 22).

Tuyen is in love with her next-door neighbor Carla, who is a bike courier and described as "not phenotypically black" (*WHA* 106) and who "might be Italian, southern" (*WHA* 3). Carla's description shows the narrator's rejection of the demarcation of "absolute ethno-national borders" (Dobson 2009: 190). The bike courier suffers from low self-esteem and the suicide of her mother, Angie,

caused by Carla's father Derek ending his extramarital affair with her. Carla is constantly worried about her younger brother Jamal's inability to adapt to Toronto's multicultural society and its norms.

The only male of the four high school friends is a good-looking Caribbean black called Oku (*WHA* 2f.). He is a poet who dropped out of university and is desperately in love with Jackie, who herself prefers the much older German, Reiner. Jackie dyes her hair red and calls herself 'Diva.' She runs a 'post-bourgeois,' second-hand store called 'Ab und Zu' that is located "just on the border where Toronto's trendy met Toronto's seedy" (*WHA* 99).

Toronto's polyphonic sound is translated into the different narratives voices. Bakhtin's concept of *multivocality* describes the coexistence or incorporation of a number of different languages. This literary technique expresses the cultural diversity of characters in the form of different tongues, speech, jargon, dialect, and vernacular. In the novel, the style of narration is adapted to the particular speech patterns of the respective characters, such as "Tuyen's and Jackie's slang sparkling speeches; Quy's disenchanted, often disinfected tone; Fitz's sour-and-bitter rebukes; Rasta's idiolect and hipsters' jargon; disco leaflets oozing techno-funky vibes; Kwesi's jungle bluntness; Jamal's juvenilish replies, angry and tender at the same time" (Fruner 2007: 7). With the help of the individual narrative voices, several perspectives are created, envisioning the world in the global city of Toronto.

Occasionally, linguistic stereotypes of certain native or non-native speakers are employed to intensify the experience of the reader. This strategy of *mimesis*, a tool to translate multivocality, is a form of imitation, resemblance, or a mirror effect. In literature, mimesis is referred to the truthful literary resemblance of reality (Sturm-Trigonakis 2007: 147) with regard to a certain time, place, or person. Jackie, for example, "spoke valley girl, baller, hip-hopper, Brit mod, and French from watching RDI" (*WHA* 45) on TV. She also makes use of powerful expression and graphic language as fillers that stereotypically function as nouns, adjectives, verbs, and transition phrases. This kind of speech stresses Jackie's image as a strong and independent African Canadian woman. Her character's narrative voice is adapted in order to highlight this impression of 'authenticity.'

In a similar fashion, Jamal's character incorporates specific ethnic slang words to sound like an African Canadian, aiming at identification with and becoming a respected member of the ethnic group he desires. The vernacular is illustrated in direct speech with supporting exclamation marks only, as in "Me nah 'fraid nutten, Carla!" (*WHA* 31). Jamal employs typical elements of African Canadian vernacular, such as double negation and the omitting of word parts. His sister Carla is annoyed whenever he uses this vernacular because she "didn't

know why he insisted on speaking in this accent. Something he'd picked up with his friends on the street. He did it to assume badness" (*WHA* 30). As a consequence, and due to his African Canadian appearance, Jamal is repeatedly stopped and searched by the police. Jamal even branded a 'G' for 'Ghost' on his breast, a gang marker. Emphasizing his African Canadian background in terms of appearance, symbols, and slang is his attempt to integrate into Toronto's multicultural society.

Rasta, the homeless person Oku meets at Kensington market occasionally, is another example of an authentic mimesis of slangs. Rasta is poetically begging for money in front of a Caribbean food store: "The streets them hard, you know, dread. The air is abstraction me tell you. Give a likkle something for the I and I (…) Beg you a likkle something to hold I soul together, man. The spirit massive but the body weak" (*WHA* 169). The substitution of the letters 'kk' for 'll' as well as the pronouns 'I' for 'me' and 'my' function as stereotypical language markers. The effect is the literary resemblance of the character's Caribbean background, giving the city's ethnic diversity an 'authentic' voice.

The novel translates and negotiates between the different worlds within a society. This dialog of languages is taking place on eye-level because no voice is prejudiced or in a supreme position. Language thus functions as a 'point of view' and as a means to question the dominance of one perspective. This translates into process of mediation between heterogeneous cultures and languages. Antonio Cornejo-Polar proposes a concept of a *dialogic culture* in which the differences of cultures are recognized. The interaction in this dialogical mode is more democratic, imagining "culture as an open space where diverse languages, ethnicities, cultures, and histories enrich each other by means of that multiple dialogue without losing their idiosyncratic character" (Cornejo-Polar 1998: 24f.). Thus, Toronto's "polyphonic murmuring" (*WHA* 149) can be described as a network of languages that is not hierarchical but tolerant. This heteroglossia is how the imagined Toronto achieves its effect because it "is so well-balanced and intermodulated, it turns the novel into a sheer polyphonic ensemble, performing the many lingos multiethnic Toronto performs" (Fruner 2007: 7).

Cataloging is applied as a device to visualize this dialogue of languages and cultures. This listing in the form of a *meditative catalog* illustrates the diversity of Toronto and is reminiscent of the literary technique of word accumulations employed by Walt Whitman. An example is provided in the following lines, which are used as the introduction to chapter SEVEN. In contrast to the major part of the book, the advertisement Jackie reads is presented in no grouped style of justification, disrupting the standard flow of reading the novel:

Juice/solid Garage featuring Jephte Guillarme – New York – born in Haiti, uprooted to Brooklyn with his family, turning vodun spirituality into something understood. Hit single "The Prayer." Voyage Dreams "Mad Behind the Tet Kale Sound" – Friday 5th – Una mas/Funk d'void – Techno meets funky jazzy house meets Glasgow Funk d'void/Grand Master Flash "immortalized by Blondie, feted by the hip hop cognoscenti, Grand Master Flash turned the humble record deck into an instrument as potent as the piano or guitar"/Afrika Bambaata. B. Boy and Dance classics Saturday 29th (Mancccc Wabanakkk) … (*WHA* 45)

This mishmash of languages, music, and styles of different cultural background represents the jargon and complexity of Torontonian fashion, arts, music, and entertainment. The device of cataloging creates an egalitarian basis and results in a democratizing effect of the listed items. Thus, Toronto is described as a dynamic space of cultural interaction and dialogue, "where identity and alterity, where what is one's own or another's, live together and interact in a productive manner" (Cornejo-Polar 1998: 24f.).

Dionne Brand can also be considered a translingual author, frequently illustrating the city of Toronto in different verbal systems. Various accents, dialects, and vernaculars of Canadian English as well as Vietnamese, Portuguese, and Italian are featured in the novel to express the city's particular cultural diversity in linguistic terms. One example of multilingualism and code-switching is Quy's second chapter, which is situated between chapters SIX and SEVEN. It concludes with a Vietnamese saying that is immediately followed by the English translation, reading "*Troi co mat. Troi phat.* Heaven has eyes. Heaven punishes" (*WHA* 79; italics original). The first sentence is a common Vietnamese saying, translating into the all-seeing eyes of heaven that are "always on the look out for people's moral violations" (Kingsley 2002: 94). This act of code-switching is emphasized by changing to italics. It foreshadows Quy's tragic death. Moreover, not only translations *in* a literary work but also translations *of* a novel can hint at a change of reception of multilingual literature. Apart from English, the Toronto-based novel is very popular in Italian, probably due to the city's large Italian community.

The 'lack of translation' is occasionally employed as a strategy to turn the non-native reader of translingual comments into a position of alterity because translations and thus explanations are not provided. This 'border position' is suggestive of an immigrant who cannot master the dominant language yet. In this case, the writer abandons the option of functioning as a mediating authority. The Portuguese note Tuyen finds: "*A janela já foi consertada, ele só queria dinheiro*" (*WHA* 148; original in italics) are an example of the practice of intention-

ally not translating embedded language. This language swap is an effective means of raising awareness of the linguistic or cultural 'other' by reversing the roles and putting the reader in an outsider's position.

The strategy of presenting and representing more than her 'own' language and culture identifies Dionne Brand a 'transcultural writer' (Kulyk Keefer 1995). Transcultural writers function as critical representatives of their own ethnicity or culture but also require readers to acknowledge processes of change and exchange between and within cultures in order to transgress conceptions of cultures that are fixed and intrinsically logical (Schulze-Engler 2006: 48). Instead of showing a coexistence of different but distinct cultures within a society, the novel's second-generation characters of diverse background are interacting, emphasizing the transition from a multicultural to an interethnic or transcultural perspective of writing.

Moreover, *What We All Long For* (2005) not only portrays the interaction, intermingling, and collaboration but also shows the coexistence, clustering, and isolation of different cultures. A whole section is dedicated to Toronto's aboriginals, raising awareness of the desolate situation of the Inuit and First Nations in Canada. Although government policies and spending aim at facilitating the minority's integration into society, aboriginals are still generally not treated as equals in Canada. In addition to this range of ethnic perspectives, various border-crossing characters with different gender, sex, and sexuality are incorporated into the novel to complement the multiperspectival portrayal of Toronto's society.

The novel's most significant symbol of translation and multivocality is Tuyen's installation called the *lubaio* that captures the world within the city as a "gathering of voices and longings" (*WHA* 149). As artists are "a cultural means of framing space" (Zukin 1995: 23), the work on the installation is Tuyen's contribution as a citizen and her way of honoring the city she was born in. For Tuyen, "the city becomes a space for shape-shifting and for slipping into another body by imagining what people long for" (Rosenthal 2011: 233). The piece of art is consistently referred to in italics in the novel, emphasizing its significance. The *lubaio* is made of different notes and pictures, illustrating the diversity of characters, languages, and memories of the city (*WHA* 158). With her creation of the *lubaio*, Tuyen functions as a translator who transforms the city's "polyphonic murmuring" (*WHA* 149) into a visible object of art. As artists are considered "the ultimate agents of transculturation" (Birkle 2004: 232), Tuyen deems the use of traditional Vietnamese elements to be artificial. She instead opts to function as a representative of "the city's heterogeneity" (*WHA* 142) and thus plans to "have the audience post messages on the *lubaio*. Messages to the city" (*WHA* 17; italics

original). Her achievement is making sense of the individual voices by incorporating them into a cohesive but tolerant patchwork-like structure.

Similar to the ethnically diverse graffiti crew who is 'overwriting' the anglicized city with spray paint,[34] the *lubaio* captures Toronto's new ethnic diversity and becomes a symbol of the metamorphosis of the formerly British-dominated urban space. The design of the *lubaio* reflects a different vision of Toronto's society, serving as a counter-symbol to the Canadian model of 'multiculturalism.' In the Canadian *vertical mosaic* and the American model of the 'melting pot' alike, individual cultures rarely overlap, favoring a coexistence with a formation of ethnic silos rather than an intermingling of processes. Tuyen's creative woodwork, however, illustrates the overlapping pictures and longings in an egalitarian manner, reminding one of a collage or "bricolage" (Bentley 2005), emphasizing the fact that integration is an ongoing process that is never completed nor absolute. This work-in-progress mirrors the dynamics of identity because "Brand's Toronto is a city in everlasting translation, with selves and tongues meeting and morphing" (Fruner 2007: 7). That the *lubaio* is not finished by the end of the novel shows that the transformation from a multicultural to a transcultural society is not completed yet.[35]

As the patchwork-like *lubaio* mirrors the city's different cultures and longings, the novel's structure resembles the convergence of different stories, cultures, and worlds in the city. The following Section 6.2.2 'Converging Threads' examines how two seemingly opposite narrative strands and the different worlds converge by the end of the novel when the allegedly lost son Quy is reunited with his family in Toronto.

6.2.2 Converging Threads

With the introduction of the fifth main character Quy, a second major thread is established after the first chapter in terms of narrative structure and story line. His chapters feature I-narration, a different narrated time, space, and voice, and an outsider's perspective. Quy's disruptive voice is incorporated to dissolve the order and challenge the other stories (Rosenthal 2011: 252). In the course of the novel, the two major stories are weaved together and eventually converge in the

34 For more information on the intrinsic relationship of identity and space as well as the Graffiti crew's transformation of the anglicized city, see Section 6.2.4 on 'Counter-Cartographies.'

35 For more information on the different concepts of diversity and the interaction between Toronto's cultures, see Section 6.2.6 'Longing and Belonging.'

same time and space, thereby showing multiple angles of the immigrant experience and the interconnectedness of the different worlds in Toronto.

The novel's structure resembles the two narrative threads. A different time frame, different locations, and a different number of chapters distinguish the two threads. Of the 32 chapters in total, 25 are consecutively 'numbered' with capital letters. Tuyen, Carla, Oku, and Jackie and their families are the center of attention, representing the major story line. The chronology of the novel is interrupted by seven interposed chapters, named 'Quy,' that constitute the additional thread of narration and a counter-story in many respects. The illegal immigrant Quy, for example, serves as the flip side of the coin, representing the undesired 'other' or "the alter ego of the four friends' lives" (Rosenthal 2011: 255).

The seven short chapters on the character Quy are inserted throughout the novel in random order, disrupting the linearity without comment. The different justification in Quy's chapters is a paratextual device that functions as an author's direction for the reader (Genette 1993: 11). Thus, whereas the consecutively-numbered chapters feature a justification in grouped style, Quy's chapters are not grouped, visualizing the interruption from a non-linear narration and the alteration of perspective.

Moreover, Quy's chapters are told achronologically to the rest of the novel. While the main story is set in Toronto in 2002, Quy's story begins before his arrival in Toronto when he was a young child and lost by his parents during their flight from Vietnam. Thus, whereas the main story of Tuyen and her friends takes place within a short period of time, Quy's story recaptures his whole life without his family in a fast-forward manner. The stories of the past and the present converge in 2002 in Toronto, thereby resembling a 'time-space compression' (Harvey 1989) in a globalizing age.

Whereas every character is portrayed from a third-person's point of view, Quy is depicted in the interim chapters from an I-perspective, thereby highlighting the differences of experience and point-of-view. The pronoun 'I' is used repeatedly in his chapters, addressing the reader directly in a story-telling manner. Comments and questions such as "You see what I'm talking about?" (*WHA* 74) are incorporated, inviting the audience to interact. This strategy of switching to a different poetics of narrative serves as a strategy that simultaneously involves and detaches the reader. Quy, for example, confuses the reader about the correctness of his recounts by asking "now who would make up a story like that?" (*WHA* 141). Moreover, Quy also describes his innermost feelings to make the disparity of his life style more obvious. Therefore, the reader's relationship with the character Quy oscillates between closeness or distance and compassion or disgust.

A different narrative voice is used in Quy's chapters, highlighting the diary-like narration of the lost son growing up at the other end of the world. In the course of the novel, the style of narration changes from a child-like to a non-native speaker English with straightforward language. In his first chapter, Quy's words, "I was a boy at that time. It was night. Because it is at night that these things happen. I was with my parents and my sisters. (…) I was loved" (*WHA* 2005: 6), sound like an infant's tongue. The sentences consist of verbs and nouns with few extras. Hardly any adjectives or adverbs are used. In the course of the novel, his struggle with linguistic fluency as an English non-native speaker is stressed, something that is achieved by copying and sometimes parodying ethno-linguistic stereotypes. This narrative voice is similar to the Asian character Bobby in Karen Tei Yamashita's *Tropic of Orange* (1997). Quy explains that he "learned a little English. My first step to humanity" (*WHA* 137) because, similar to the character Henry Park in Chang-rae Lee's *Native Speaker* (1995), speaking English signifies to him access to a better world. By the end of the novel, Quy is portrayed as angry and provoking with the graphic expressions of a grown-up, thereby illustrating his frustration and despair at being left behind in a cruel world.

In the novel, the loss of Quy becomes the synonym for every immigrant's suffering, pain, and loss, symbolizing the sacrifice made when leaving a previous life behind. The parents' longing for the lost son and reminiscence per se cause the disruption between the two generations. The first generation of immigrants often suffers from nostalgia, constantly looking back when immediate integration into their new home country fails. Moreover, the immigrant children in the novel are split into two antagonistic groups: the so-called *one-and-a-half generation immigrants* born in Vietnam who witnessed the tragic incident and the second-generation immigrants, Tuyen and Binh, who were born in Toronto and are haunted by their brother's absence. Furthermore, Quy stands for the ones who did not make it to the 'Promised Land' (Rosenthal 2011: 253). His life with the monk is dominated by cruelty, brutality, crime, opium, smoking, drinking, gambling, fighting, disguising, and theft. This shows how a particular place and its characteristics shape an identity. The character Quy thus demonstrates the full range of consequences of a diaspora's immigration to Canada and is a reminder that loss and mourning are an inevitable part of every immigration experience.

The immense loss and guilty consciousness of leaving Quy behind is expressed in the numerous search letters his mother writes to find him. The letters are written in an Asian immigrant English, illustrated in italics with no grouped justification and several tabs. Each time, they are presented as a new paragraph:

June 29, 1999
Dear Mr. Chiu, astrologer,
I am sending you $350 today as agreed. The day is indeed auspicious as you promised. I slept somewhat last night for the first time since arriving in this country and I know that must mean that my son is safe.

Respectfully and sincerely, Vu Duong Cam (WHA 118)

The unconventional strategy of including letters in a novel facilitates the understanding of political refugees and their struggles across ethnic constraints. This effect illustrates the tendency that hybrid texts contain more transtextual elements in both new world literature (Sturm-Trigonakis 2007: 143) and ethnic writing (Birkle 2004: 231). In the letter featured above, Quy's mother, Cam, calls her home 'this country' instead of Canada, signifying the perceived distance to the country she lives in now, caused by the struggle to integrate as a first-generation immigrant. The search letters constitute one link between the novel's two major story lines. This intertextual device also joins the different perspectives, such as the present and the past, Canada and Vietnam, and the 'first' and the 'third' world.

In chapter TWENTY-TWO, the two stories come together when Quy explains how the monk who raised him was responding to his mother's search letters. His sister Tuyen is scared when she is first confronted with her brother after more than two decades of him being lost because he symbolizes "the excluded body, the sacrifice made for saving the lives of his siblings" (Rosenthal 2011: 253). She was "aware of the man as one is aware of a gecko, a spider, a shadow" (*WHA* 298) and a "ghost" (*WHA* 300), remaining skeptical and questioning his authenticity. Tuyen is, nevertheless, determined to include Quy as a part of her life and thus stops neglecting and alienating herself from her family, their loss, and their past.

By the end of the novel, it becomes clear that Quy was embedded in the novel's main story from the beginning. He was sitting in the same subway train as his sister Tuyen and her friends in the novel's opening scene. He even recognizes her laughter and is flashbacked to his childhood. However, neither knows nor guesses that the siblings are that close. This illustrates how small the world is and how the different threads come together in Toronto imagined as 'the world in a city.' Finding Quy, however, and curing the loss does not solve every problem. In the end, the reader knows more about Quy's story than his own parents and siblings because it is assumed he is killed before he can recount his stories. It thus remains unsolved whether Quy truly is the lost son or not. Jamal allegedly

murdering Quy is a violent and radical form of connecting the different story lines.

Quy, who is, strictly speaking, an illegal, newly-arrived, first-generation immigrant, does not have the opportunity to create a sense of belonging and identity in the city. On the contrary, his character provides a radically different, much more skeptical world view, resembling the outsider's angle on the city of Toronto, Canadian multiculturalism, immigration, and identity. He envies the opportunities of the second-generation because "they have their friends and this city" (*WHA* 137). Quy's difficult relationship to Toronto is revealed when strolling the dark and suspicious parts of the city. He is restricted to the places an illegal immigrant would go to, such as "the alleyways that lead to the back doors of Chinatown in this city" (*WHA* 283). Nevertheless, Quy values the anonymity of the city and the similar criminal network of global cities by provocatively concluding that "anonymity is a useful thing. In some places they think people like me are preparing to bomb buildings and murder children" (*WHA* 138).

The converging threads of the different immigrant experiences, the past and the present, the 'third' and the 'first' world come together in the global city's urban complexity. In the following section on 'Mapping the World in a City,' the different coexisting and sometimes collaborating worlds in the city are explored. The strategy of mapping urban space reshapes the formerly anglicized city of Toronto, illustrating the city's new diversity.

6.2.3 Mapping the World in a City

The different forms of literary place and space are envisioned with 'cognitive mapping' (Herman 2002). Brand's Toronto is mapped as 'the world in a city' (Rosenthal 2011: 32) because numerous perspectives on the global city are offered, including first and second generation, male and female, different ethnic backgrounds, different sexual orientations, positive and negative immigrant experiences as well as insider's and outsider's views. The diversity of different worlds within Toronto "attempts to speak for every city inhabitant, and for the city as collective experience" (Smith 2009: 245). This sensual introduction to the city and the depiction of the experiences of the different city dwellers remaps the urban space of Toronto (Rosenthal 2011: 219).

The particular ensemble of topographical details reveals the role of urban space in the novel. Brand's imaginary Toronto is introduced as a natural space in which the characteristic skyscrapers play a minor and the experiences of the characters play a major role. Toronto's introduction as a winter setting serves as an example for a natural cityscape. This particular form of *narrated cityscape*

(Wirth-Nesher 1996: 11f.) concentrates on the city's natural environment and the weather conditions. The winter setting functions as the prerequisite for a new beginning in which everything man-made, such as infrastructure, legislature, or racial prejudice, is covered by snow. The power of nature over man is stressed because "winters here are inevitable, sometimes unforgiving" (*WHA* 1). The transition to spring signifies the new beginning when "new lives can be started" (*WHA* 2). This scene indicates a new kind of writing about Toronto, a new "way of symbolically building the city" (Rosenthal 2011: 22). Brand's imagined space of Toronto thus rewrites the former anglicized Toronto, incorporates a number of ethnicities, and criticizes the partly controversial concept of Canadian multiculturalism.

The skepticism about Canadian cultural politics is stressed by the first chapter's harsh critique on the government's ability to displace aboriginals residing in Toronto: "All of them sit on Ojibway land, but hardly any of them know it or care because that genealogy is willfully untraceable except in the name of the city itself" (*WHA* 4). Ironically, the city of Toronto, originally named 'Taronto,' is built on stolen land. It is the paradox of the city that stolen aboriginal land is given to people and minorities from around the world. Therefore, the pronoun 'them' featured in the quote above can be read as referring to the first English-speaking settlers in Toronto and to the growing numbers of recent immigrants. Thus, the banishment of Toronto's original citizens remains an atrocity that cannot simply be reconciled by featuring typical aboriginal design patterns on the city's Humber River Pedestrian Bridge.

The *built narrated cityscape* (Wirth-Nesher 1996: 11f.) comprises infrastructural elements, such as monuments, landmarks, or artifacts. The description of places, space, and the movement of characters within a particular space convey a specific literary setting (Nünning 2009: 45). Thus, topographical details, such as "the city hovers above the forty-third parallel" (*WHA* 1) or street names, create a strong sense of space. Similar to Irving Layton's realistic description of Kensington Market in the 1970s, Dionne Brand's repetitive use of street names and mentioning of landmarks create a sense of the city, thereby reimagining Toronto's urban complexity in literary terms.

The immigrant neighborhoods Vanauley Way and Alexandra Park, for example, are described as an "urban warren of buildings and paths" (*WHA* 92) with "the scarred brown buildings" (*WHA* 260), where newly arrived immigrants are "hoping to find a job in Toronto" (*WHA* 92). This run-down area resembles the sad stories of its immigrant residents, such as Jackie's family, thereby stressing the relationship between identity and space. The Bernard family's dream of the city diminishes after Jackie's father served time in jail and her mother had to sell

her body (*WHA* 263). Unlike her parents, Jackie is able to detach herself from this dismal place through the power of her imagination, by actively choosing the city (Rosenthal 2011: 244) as her home. Jackie rewrites the city in her own terms, "allowing herself to see the possibilities of the city" (Johansen 2008: 59f.). She suggests planting flowers to change the dismal appearance because "the sense of space might have triggered lighter emotions, less depressing thoughts, a sense of well-being" (*WHA* 261), thereby criticizing the city's government and officials (*WHA* 264) for not preventing the area's ghettoization process.

The novel's setting is mainly reduced to Toronto's inner city because to Jackie and her friends, "it is downtown that promises freedom" (Rosenthal 2011: 244). In both the novel and in the city of Toronto, the younger generation of immigrants resides in downtown, an area in which immigrants predominantly settled until the 1970s (Murdie et al 2003: 139). Whereas immigrants now first settle or resettle in the suburbs, the younger generation enjoys downtown as a cultural contact zone, interacting and being inspired by different ways of life, connecting with the diversity of Torontonians, and forming "affiliations across racial and ethnic boundaries" (Rosenthal 2011: 248).

Queen Street West, an area alive with galleries, vintage shops, trendy cafés, and restaurants, is one key example for gentrification in Toronto, because "since the 1950s this neighbourhood has been transformed from an economically depressed, largely immigrant, community in the light industrial garment district into a trendy 'new Soho'" (Bain 2010: 270). The term 'new Soho' refers to New York's artists and avant-garde sector. Toronto's similar creative space, called West Queen West Art and Design District, is filled with art galleries and ethnic food stores. Tuyen and her friends live in this area. Similarly, Kensington Market developed from a Caribbean neighborhood to a cross-cultural meeting place for artists, hippies, and intellectuals. The area between Marlee, Dufferin, and Eglinton (*WHA* 190) is Toronto's hub for West Indians and their products, illustrating one of many worlds within one city. Oku regularly goes to a coffee shop in Kensington Market to read African American poetry by Amiri Baraka and Jayne Cortez.

Whereas airports typically signify the predominant cultural contact zone in most global cities, the novel concentrates on public transportation, ethnic neighborhoods, and the streetscape. Whereas citizens of Los Angeles, for instance, keep their sovereignty by mainly driving in their own car, Toronto's system of public transportation encourages cultural contact. In the novel, the subway is presented as a vital cultural contact zone, as "the crossroads of the city" (*WHA* 3), in which people intermingle although they pretend to remain separate by try-

ing to avoid "letting the city touch them" (*WHA* 3). However, intersection, exchange, and mixing are inevitable because "anonymity is the big lie of a city" (*WHA* 3) and "any minute you can crash into someone else's life" (*WHA* 4).

The city of Toronto is portrayed as a space of cultural multiplicity and urban complexity. The power of this cultural encounter and mixing is stressed because "it's good, it's like walking on light" (*WHA* 4). The novel thus becomes a *zone of contact* (Bakhtin 1981: 27f.) in which different languages, cultures, and ideologies intersect. Brand's Toronto is introduced as a place of diversity: "There are Italian neighborhoods and Vietnamese neighborhoods *in this city*; there are Chinese ones and Ukrainian ones and Pakistani ones and Korean ones and African ones. Name a region on the planet and there's someone from there, here" (*WHA* 4; emphasis added). This catalogue of different ethnic neighborhoods represents the many worlds coexisting in one city, capturing the diversity of Toronto's citizens from 170 countries, speaking more than 100 languages (Anisef et al 2003: 3f.). Considering the quote's arrangement of neighborhoods as separated into sectors explains how certain worlds within the city maintain their own space. Thus, figuratively speaking, minority neighborhoods particularly stand next to each other like *ethnic silos*. The term 'silo' is frequently used to illustrate the low interaction between and isolation of ethnic groups. This metaphor describes how Toronto's different city cultures coexist rather than intermingle. If this is true, part of the government policy's vision of a culturally diverse Canada remains unfulfilled with isolated minority neighborhoods coexisting rather than interacting. The coexisting worlds of diverse but distinct pieces resemble the model of the 'Canadian mosaic' or the similar American version of the 'salad bowl.'

In the novel, both the city of Toronto's particular traits and the common characteristics of the cultural diversity of any global city are stressed. Whereas the names of a city's neighborhoods, streets, or other major attractions highlight the sense of the 'real' city, generic expressions such as 'this city,' describe the global city in general. The novel's repetitive use of the phrase 'this city' instead of 'Toronto' emphasizes the impression of a nonspecific global city and thus turns the specific urban experience into a global one. Therefore, readers become aware of their local situation and of the global context (Brydon 2006: 6), combining 'a sense of the global' and 'a sense of a local' (Massey 1994). Earlier Canadian writers such as Morley Callaghan omitted particular street names as a strategy to include the American readership (Rosenthal 2011: 33). This novel's repetition of the phrase 'this city' implies that the story can also take place in any other global city, thereby identifying it to be at eye level with other urban literature.

The 2002 FIFA Soccer World Cup is reenacted in the novel. During this event, Torontonians of different ethnic background encounter each other on the street. Public space is turned into private space by waving national flags and fans occupying the streets. The huge public event transforms Toronto's streetscape because "every four years, June in the city is crazy. Cars speed about flying emblems of various nationalities" (*WHA* 203). People of different age, class, and ethnic background gather in the streets to celebrate the global event of fairness. Instead of stressing the difference, creating rivalry, or forcing the competition between countries, a collective is formed based on a global interest in sports and the similar goals of entertainment, winning, and fairness.

For the young generation, streets translate into a liminal space because their homes are cluttered with their family and their cultural traditions. To create a new, cosmopolitan identity, the young Torontonians need to leave the familiarity of home to find their new sense of belonging. Thus, the streets and their intersections and the various hideaways, such as Tuyen and Carla's apartments, are important places for self-management and the formation of the friends' cross-cultural group identity.

When Korean, Brazilian, and fans of further nations celebrate together, the streets resemble the meeting point for this post-national, interethnic, or transcultural encounter. Tuyen enjoys the diversity of Toronto on the streets when the crowd cheered and the cars were lined up with waving flags, she "felt elated, infected by the mood on the street" (*WHA* 204f.). Since the Vietnamese team had not made it, Tuyen decided to be Korean for that day, exemplifying how "lives in the city are doubled, tripled, conjugated" (*WHA* 5). The twenty-something friends celebrate Korea's unexpected victory, disregarding ethnic demarcations by "watching and waving and singing, '*Oh, Pil-seung Korea! Oh, Pil-seung Korea*!'" (*WHA* 214; emphasis original).[36] This celebration signifies "a cross-cultural moment that empowers anyone who identifies with its minority ethos" (Buma 2009: 16). Thus, members of one minority show "solidarity with others who are equally dependent on the sense of tolerance within the wider society" (Shaw 2006: 29). This collective feeling of 'shared otherness' enables and tolerates diversity across ethnic, language, or social borders.

The Soccer World Cup, however, also demonstrates the breaks of Toronto's society because the sports event makes the citizens feel culturally close and apart

36 The novel offers no translation. This expression is Korean and translates into "Oh, Korea must win! Oh, Korea must win!" For more information on the strategy of code-switching and the intentional lack of translation, see Section 6.2.1 on 'Polyphonic Murmuring.'

at the same time. On the one hand, a feeling of unity and belonging is created. On the other hand, the tensions between ethnicities are revealed when "resurgent identities are lifted and dashed" (*WHA* 203). It becomes clear that the immigrants' integration into Canadian society is an ongoing, exhausting process that will never be completed by some, thereby "suggesting the extent to which old nationalisms remain in effect despite the post-national outlook of Brand's characters" (Buma 2009: 17). The novel illustrates that, in a multicultural society, an immigrant's original identity is not erased as in the assimilationist model of the 'melting pot.'

The soccer fans' national pride thus reveals the truth about Canadian multiculturalism and integration when "small neighborhoods that seemed at least slightly reconciled break into sovereign bodies" (*WHA* 203). The novel's repeated allusion to Toronto's clustering of visible minority neighborhoods hints at the society's multicultural design in which the 'sovereign' neighborhoods resemble 'ethnic enclaves' or 'ethnic silos.' However, the statement that the World Cup "reimposes borders on the city's 'borderless' space, exposing the idea of borderlessness as a fictional construct" (Buma 2009: 17) represents merely one side of the coin. The crucial difference between the different immigrant generations also needs to be taken into consideration.[37] Whereas the imposition of borders proves to be true for the parents "who are isolated along clearly defined ethnic lines" (Johansen 2008: 58), most of the second-generation characters have the potential to cross ethnic, national, and spatial borders. The second-generation's development of so-called 'counter-cartographies' represent a key prerequisite for integration into Toronto's society.

6.2.4 Counter-Cartographies

The perception, presentation, and the representation of urban space bring to light the relationship between the city and its dwellers. The novel's culturally diverse urbanites identify with different parts of the city. Whereas Toronto means home and a place of possibilities to the four friends Tuyen, Carla, Oku, and Jackie, the city's geography symbolizes a space of prejudice to Jamal or Quy. The different types of place, such as public and private or static and dynamic, are of importance when analyzing forms of integration or suppression in urban space. Graffiti art, Carla's bike ride, or ethnic, gendered, and generational refuges function as means of 'counter-cartography' (Bentley 2005), rewriting the cityscape

37 For more information on the generational conflict of immigrant families caused by the different levels of integration, see Section 6.2.5 on 'Time-Space Discrepancy.'

and thereby presenting other and sometimes unconventional ideas of urban place and space (Rosenthal 2011: 229).

In the novel, with the help of tags, pictures, and writings, the ethnically diverse group of graffiti sprayers rewrites the city of Toronto creatively, thereby changing the former anglicized city's physical appearance and the significance of urban space. The graffiti crew leaves its traces across the city, literally rewriting the city in their own terms with "Kumaran's grinning pig, Abel's 'narc' initial, then Keeran's desert and Jericho's lightning bolt. (…) They had practically filled all the walls of the city with these four signs" (*WHA* 31f.). Graffiti thus radically transforms Toronto's public space (Rosenthal 2011: 229) with the help of an illegal underground activity by inscribing the cultural diversity of its young residents.

Graffiti thus serves as one example to describe Toronto as a palimpsest-like dynamic space that is constantly modified. The Greek term 'palimpsest' literally translates into a seemingly unending process of being "again rubbed away" (Cuddon 1999: 631). As pictured by the following quote, the city of Toronto is in constant transition because

> One moment a corner is a certain corner, gorgeous with your desires, then it disappears under the constant construction of this and that. A bank flounders into a pizza shop, then into an abandoned building with boarding and graffiti, then after weeks of you passing by it, not noticing the infinitesimal changes, it springs to life as an exclusive condo. (*WHA* 183)

The process described is *urban gentrification*. This term is commonly used in urban geography to describe the dynamic process of urban development and change that takes place in cities of different sizes around the world. As the quote illustrates, urban places frequently undergo changes in appearance, meaning, and relevance. New urban study approaches concentrate on the powerful influence of gentrification in association with the mushrooming of condominiums. Luxury condominiums are built in the last phase of the four-stage gentrification process (Bain 2010: 269), attracting upper-class citizens. When standards and prices are raised, artists and further residents are displaced to different neighborhoods with cheaper housing. Then, the cyclical process starts over. Culture and arts like graffiti play an important role with regard to the constant change of Toronto's inner-city neighborhoods, being a vital part of the gentrification process and transforming urban space.

By illegally spray-painting a new layer on top of walls and other surfaces, places are provided with new meaning. Graffiti functions as urban territorial

markers (Ley et al 1974) because the sprayer's tag claims a certain possession of space, crossing borders and thereby marking territory of influence. The sprayers' ability to perform wherever they want is a unique proposition of power. It is their way of claiming a space in the city as their own, leaving text and pictures messages, and often criticizing social conventions or societal constructions. Graffiti thus functions as a form of integration by force. The artists are making themselves belong, and graffiti becomes their means of self-determination and inclusion.

The young Torontonians like Carla and Tuyen acknowledge this provocative and illegal form of urban art, identifying themselves with this kind of resistance. Instead of showing the breaks, rivalry, and violence of Toronto's youth, the graffiti crew illustrates how ethnically heterogeneous group identity formation works (Rosenthal 2011: 230). They translate the desires and longings of the second-generation immigrants through their art. The walls close to Tuyen's and Carla's apartments, for example, are miraculously painted in exactly the way Carla had always imagined her city of Toronto: "On one side there was a flowering jungle, lianas wrapped around the CN Tower, elephants drinking by the lake, pelicans perched on the fire escapes. On the other side there was a seaside, a woman in a bathing suit and hat shading her eyes, looking out to sea" (*WHA* 301). Carla thus connects with the city in an intimate, spatial experience when she identifies with the scenes sprayed and finally manages to cope with her mother's suicide.

The creative work of the graffiti crew is a type of *experimental topography* (Ley et al 1974: 505; Rosenthal 2011: 229). It is a strategy to picture the transformation of urban space and its residents. The change from a mainly British Toronto to the nearly 50 percent foreign-born population of today has a tremendous effect on the city's physical appearance and its *streetscape* (Troper 2000: 4). In the novel, the graffiti crew functions as a facilitator to drive this change and make it visible because "they saw their work – writing tags and signatures – as painting radical images against the dying poetics of the anglicized city. The graffiti crew had filled in the details of the city's outlines" (*WHA* 134). This phenomenon marks a cultural turn in the city. The shift from anglicized poetics to a culturally heterogeneous creative art community through the conquering of public space serves as a visualization of the second-generation immigrant's voice, adapting Toronto's urban space to its new, culturally diverse community.

Carla's bike ride represents another form of urban imaginary, revealing the character's innermost feelings and what she longs for. Riding the bike translates into Carla's strategy "of making sense of the city and her position in it" (Fellner 2010: 233). Urban space functions as her 'sparring partner' (Rosenthal 2011: 228). Carla's impressions of the city can be compared to Walter Benjamin's

concept of the plural *dialectical image* (Fellner 2010: 232). In this approach, the intrinsic relationship between language and image is stressed. Benjamin's dialectical image "is a dimension of reality made recognizable rather than a representation in the mind, whether past or present" (Friedlander 2008: 4). The different images of the city "come together in dialectical Benjaminian fashion, creating a transcultural space that is characterized by fragmentation, dislocation and the various contradictions of urban experience" (Fellner 2010: 232).

The particular depiction of urban space on Carla's route reveals her attitude towards specific places, the neighborhood's citizens, and socio-political norms. The young woman identifies with the places that have been reassigned with meaning by her generation, such as "the triangulating girders now possessed by the graffiti crew" (*WHA* 32). Carla feels at home in the dynamic, creative, and trendy space of Toronto downtown in which "the city was vivid. Each billboard screeching happiness and excitement. The cars, the crowds intense" (*WHA* 28). When riding the bike, Carla feels comfortable as a part of the city (Rosenthal 2011: 225), establishing an intimate and empowering relationship with the city because "she loved the feeling of weight and balance it gave her" (*WHA* 32). Her bike becomes a powerful tool in identifying with and reassigning sense and meaning to urban space. The bike courier even becomes one with the bike, fusing with the handlebars (*WHA* 29).

Carla's aversion to particular places away from the lively downtown areas is emphasized by making use of motion verbs. She is racing through the rundown suburb Etobicoke, which is described as "the badlands of some alienated city" (*WHA* 28) with "low seemingly unfinished buildings, the stretches of uncreative streets, the arid after-winter look of everything, the down-in-the-heel, stranded feel of the people" (*WHA* 28). Furiously riding the bicycle at the speed of light (*WHA* 26-30) shifts the city's geographies, thus involving a perceived 'time-space compression' (Harvey 1989). With the act of 'racing' by High Park's "old British-style houses" (*WHA* 29) and the running of red lights, Carla is revolting against the artificial constructions of Toronto's elite. The neat alignment of manicured yards makes her sick because those spaces are still dominated by the city's British past. On her bike, however, Carla feels independent because she determines the route and decides the speed. Riding the bike thus becomes a process of border-crossing because Carla "saw the city as a set of obstacles to be crossed and circled, avoided and let pass" (*WHA* 32), rewriting the earlier meaning that "the white bourgeois elite of the city has written for itself" (Johansen 2008: 57).

Places of refuge, whether in terms of ethnicity, gender, or generation, serve as private or public counter-cartographies, aiming at comfort, freedom, or es-

cape. The identification with a certain place can thus function "as a source of belonging, identity and security" (Massey 1994: 170). Tuyen's and Carla's apartments on College Street function as generational escapes where second-generation immigrants are independent from their first-generation immigrant parents. Their places serve as creative laboratories where different counter-culture realities can be created. Their apartments are home to several subcultures and "became *places of refuge*, not just for their immediate circle but for all the people they picked up along the way to their twenties. Like the Graffiti Boys across the alleyway, Tuyen's friends from the gay ghetto, a few hip-hop poets" (*WHA* 23; italics added). The creative chaos of the place is conceived as a form of liberation (Rosenthal 2011: 224), testing unconventional life styles. In the apartments, the young friends have "free reign of the place" (*WHA* 23), experimenting with alternative forms of arts and drugs such as Ecstasy and magic mushrooms. The refuge therefore represents independence from paternal control, cultural constraints, and social pressures.

The bar Pope Joan on Parliament Street nearby the city's LGBT[38] community serves as a gendered refuge in the novel and is described as "the last eastern outpost of gay life in downtown Toronto" (*WHA* 268). Toronto's LGBT community is chiefly situated in Church and Wellesley. Canada's largest gay enclave provides an unprejudiced space for sexual orientation, celebration, and acceptance (Lynch et al 2010: 331f.). In a gay village, sexual orientation, which is usually confined to private space, is transferred to the public. Thus, gay villages represent urban places of liberal identity politics.

The Pope Joan is a *feminine space* where suppressed personalities have the opportunity to become visible and, in particular, overcome gender, sexual, and sexuality constructions imposed by society because "all that couldn't be lived outside was lived in here" (*WHA* 268f.). The term 'feminine space' is commonly used in human geography, gender theory, and sociology of space. Earlier conceptions view feminine space as limited to the private sphere. The same concepts define the public sphere as a predominantly *male space* because in Western societies, the majority of places are traditionally dominated by masculine views (Massey 1994: 170). In the novel, Tuyen enjoys the Pope Joan because the masculine dominance of society is neglected and turned into a predominantly feminine space in which women are the ones in power. In this *gendered refuge*, the emancipated bisexual character trespasses these constructions of masculine dom-

38 The English-speaking gay community itself started using the term 'LGBT' to include lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender.

inance, thereby disregarding and abandoning social norms and political categorizations.

The establishment of *ethnic refuges* constitutes "a meaningful strategy towards a more inclusive urban citizenship" (Hoernig et al 2010: 158) because a sense of belonging is created when public space is transformed into an ethnicity's private space. Minority neighborhoods often function as ethnic refuges for newly arriving citizens, operating as major hubs in a global network of immigration and transmigration. Ethnic clusters, however, occasionally develop into isolated ethnic silos in which intercultural intermingling is rarely facilitated.

In the novel, the Paramount is described as a *counter public space* for Toronto's Black diaspora (Johansen 2008: 53). The club serves as an ethnic space for "black people and a few, very few, hip whites – whites who were connected" (*WHA* 95). Jackie's parents enjoyed the club, which served far more purposes than dancing. It was an ethnic contact zone where "people went to feel in their own skin, in their own life. Because when a city gets finished with you in the daytime, you don't know if you're coming or going" (*WHA* 95). In this urban retreat, people was valued for their dancing, clothing, and for being a good lover instead of their visible otherness.

Moreover, in the parallel world of Paramount club life, individuality within ethnic groups was recognized that was otherwise disregarded by Canadian society and "elided by the city" (Johansen 2008: 53). In the novel, this "heterogeneity of blackness" (Johansen 2008: 53) is illustrated by the intercultural fights between men, women, and couples of different nationalities. When the club closed down, both their social acknowledgement within their countercultural space and their intraethnic individuality were lost because they once again were considered a part of a society-determined, visibly homogenous minority. By closing down the club, the ethnic network was destroyed and "all the athletes and the intellectuals, the jazz aficionados, the new-comers from down home, the just-comers from the Caribbean, all of them had to fly solo, go places where nobody knew them" (*WHA* 179). As a result, the integration of black Canadians into Toronto's urban space became more difficult.

In the novel, a general difference of social integration within first-generation immigrants can be identified. Whereas the black Canadian diaspora is able to create a temporary place of refuge, immigrants of other ethnic background often "occupy spaces that are defined by prescribed visions of ethnicity and gender" (Johansen 2008: 53). Tuyen's Vietnamese parents, for example, feel obliged to adapt the interior design of their house to a mainstream look in order to be accepted as Canadians. Considering that their furniture is covered with plastic, however, signifies their simultaneous obsession with preservation and nostalgia.

This contradiction is exemplary for the first-generation's oscillation between unsuccessfully striving for a Canadian identity and their reminiscence of their cultural background and identity before immigrating to Toronto. In contrast to their children, first-generation immigrant parents are not able to create a permanent place of refuge in the city. How this difference of political and social integration into Canadian society results in a generational gap is explored in the following section.

6.2.5 Time-Space Discrepancy

David Harvey's notion of 'time-space compression' (1986) explains the perceived convergence of time and space in a globalizing age. In *What We All Long For* (2005), a *generational gap* is caused by a 'time-space discrepancy' between the different immigrant generations. Whereas first-generation immigrants are commonly focused on a lost past, second-generation immigrants have stronger ties to their birth place. Due to language skills, prejudice, and invisibility, the two generations differ in their level of integration into Canadian society. Once the second generation comes of age, the gap widens in a double sense by them disconnecting from their families to form an adolescent self and finding their own, mixed cultural identity in Toronto.

In the novel, first-generation immigrants often lack social standing, opportunity, and equality. The perspective of the first generation is incorporated to "show the multiple ways in which bureaucratic authorities and stereotypical assumptions about immigrants' skills make them invisible or reduce them to broad categories" (Johansen 2008: 52). This categorization process of an immigrant's profession is exemplified in a cataloguing technique at the beginning of the novel: "In this city there are Bulgarian mechanics, there are Eritrean accountants, Columbian café owners, Latvian book publishers, Welsh roofers, Afghani dancers, Iranian mathematicians, Tamil cooks in Thai restaurants" (*WHA* 5).

In *What We All Long For* (2005), the first-generation parents are prejudiced against due to their foreign appearance and possible language barriers. Their previous way of life, social standing, and any achievements are commonly neglected and stereotypes are cast on specific ethnicities, mostly regarding professions. Upon arrival in Canada, for example, Tuyen's Vietnamese parents cannot continue working as a doctor and an engineer (*WHA* 65). Her mother "Cam became a manicurist in a beauty salon near Chinatown while Tuan unloaded fruit and other produce from trucks to the backs of stores on Spadina" (*WHA* 65). Thus, upon arriving, they were being defined by the city. To be successful in Toronto, they had "to see themselves the way the city saw them: Vietnamese food"

(*WHA* 66f.). When Tuan and Cam realize that their previous professions are erased, they give in to the pressure of ethnic categorizations in Canada by opening a restaurant.

In the novel, the Canadian model of multiculturalism is criticized as arbitrary, showing how this concept of cultural diversity is influenced by stereotypes and clichés. The demonstration of how ethnic categorizations with regard to profession and food influence an immigrant's life serves as a strategy to question these labels. Comical remarks emphasize the ridicules of a British-dominated society that longs for exotica because, ironically, "neither Cam nor Tuan cooked very well, but how would their customers know? Eager Anglos ready to taste the fare of their multicultural city wouldn't know the differences" (*WHA* 66f.). This critique can be compared to the comment "multiculturalism is bullshit" (*TRO* 128) by the character Emi in Karen Tei Yamashita's *Tropic of Orange* (1997). The Japanese American disapproves of an Asian woman wearing chop sticks in her hair to artificially convey the attachment to a certain ethnicity.

In the novel, first-generation immigrants can be described as time-focused instead of space-focused, resulting in a time-space discrepancy between the two immigrant generations. The detachment of the first generation from their former life often proves to be a difficult task. Oku, for example, believes that his Caribbean parents Fitz and Clare "somehow lived in the near past and were unable or unwilling to step into the present" (*WHA* 190). The same nostalgia makes Tuyen's parents suffer. Her father is sick from drawing buildings like a civil engineer "as if he was still what he was" (*WHA* 114). Her mother is sick of pacing, her insomnia, and writing letters to find her lost son. The repetition of these tasks underlines their despair. They are torn between the two worlds and identities. Letting go of the 'former' world is not possible, however, because they are constantly haunted by a tragic reminder of the past, impersonated by their lost son Quy.[39]

In contrast to the second generation, the parents can rarely influence the city's space. The first generation is largely "being defined by the city" (*WHA* 66) instead of being able to create counter-cartographies. Thus, for the first generation, Toronto remains the anglicized city, "a site of marginalization where the places open to them are predicated upon invisibility and separation" (Johansen 2008: 50). The term *marginalization* describes the process of how some ethnicities are on the edge of society in terms of equal rights and representation. The effect of 'uprootedness' results in a sense of displacement. In this condition, mi-

39 For more information on the significance of Quy as a symbol for immigration and loss, see Section 6.2.2 on 'Converging Threads.'

grants oscillate between two worlds: not being integrated into society and the nostalgia of a lost past (Chambers 1994: 27).

Trauma and the effect of deterritorialization cause many immigrants to move to ethnic neighborhoods. The Bernards, Jackie's black parents from Halifax, Nova Scotia, for example, choose to remain within their own cultural sphere, thereby supporting the creation of ethnic silos and enclaves. Nevertheless, cultural clusters also offer a supportive network, aiding newly arriving immigrants when settling down.

The first generation is convinced that social standing offers the opportunity to eradicate ethnic differences and prejudices, facilitating political integration. In the novel, many newly-rich immigrants therefore "flee to rangy lookalike desolate suburbs like Richmond Hill where the houses give them a sense of space and distance from that troubled image of themselves" (*WHA* 55). They aim at setting themselves apart from poorer immigrant families with the realization of the American dream in a "from rags to riches" manner. Their objective is acceptance by their neighbors as fellow Canadians. The suburb Richmond Hill serves as their artificial refuge from being an immigrant outsider that "will somehow eradicate that person once and for all" (*WHA* 55). Cam and Tuan's Canadian-style decorated house is an important object of social prestige. It functions as mimicry or camouflage, emphasizing the family's strong urge to fit in. Tuyen nevertheless recognizes that her parents' house is in fact artificial, antiseptic, rootless, contrived, and desolate (*WHA* 55).

Like many immigrants, Tuyen's parents simultaneously want to blend in and shake off the stigma of "that troubled image of themselves" (*WHA* 55). As part of a visible minority, they suffer from not being recognized in terms of acknowledgement and integration. They come to hate "that self that keeps drawing attention, the one that can't fit in because of colour or language, or both" (*WHA* 55). As a result, the immigrant self turns into a socially-determined unwanted 'other' that is described as "helpless, weak, unsuitable, and always in some kind of trouble" (*WHA* 55). This escapism from their 'immigrant other' will, however, never be accomplished completely because, as the novel explains, "they end up living with all the other immigrants running away from themselves" (*WHA* 54f.). The first-generation immigrant thus remains in an 'in-between' situation, or, as Bhabha puts it, "less than one and double" (1994: 166). Thus, the immigrant's dream of integrating by being successful in monetary terms remains an illusion, as only the second generation can seize the opportunity to become an accepted Torontonian in the novel. Consequently, a strong intergenerational conflict arises.

The second-generation immigrant children are portrayed as steadily disconnecting from their parents, their parents' stories, nostalgia, and their culture be-

cause the children identify themselves with the city and its space. This results in a clash of time and space between the two immigrant generations. The parents raise their children in an environment in which the second-generation is torn between the 'old' and the 'new' culture. As a consequence, their children are torn between two ways of life, "as if they inhabited two countries – their parents' and their own" (*WHA* 20). Jackie's parents, for example, "pictured Nova Scotia, Halifax, as a paradise on earth and Toronto as a wretched hellhole" (*WHA* 93). To the younger generation, however, Toronto functions as a cultural contact zone that facilitates a bonding process within the same immigrant generation across ethnic boundaries.

For Tuyen, Carla, Oku, and Jackie, the formation of "a culturally hybrid, rhizomatic coalition" (Quigley 2005: 65) functions as a strategy to counteract sole ethnic or national identity constructions. In this family-like bonding process, societal constructions such as cultural background, class, gender, and sexual orientation play a minor role. On the contrary, "their common oddness, held all of them together" (*WHA* 19). Rejecting their ethnic background, and thus their families, results in the formation of a community based on empathy (Rosenthal 2011: 258). Thus, the four friends agreed "on distancing themselves as far as possible from the unreasonableness, the ignorance, the secrets, and the madness of their parents" (*WHA* 19).

Culture, language, and concepts of individuality and community constitute the major disparities in the generational conflict. Troubled by their families' stories and refused to hear about their parents' past times, the four friends are bonding when growing up (Fellner 2010: 233). Their coming-of-age process is exemplified by a long, poetic journey when "each left home in the morning (…), untangling themselves from the seaweed of other shores wrapped around their parents" (*WHA* 20). The cultural glue in the form of the 'seaweed of other shores' resembles the attachment to their parents' cultural background. The procedure of 'untangling' signifies the difficulty to be independent.

The immigrant children born in Toronto are constantly "translating the city's culture to their parents" (*WHA* 120), mediating between different languages, cultures, generations as well as time and place. This translation of the city and Canadian life is offered to the parents and for the reader (Smith 2009: 243). The younger immigrant generation thus functions as a "translator of the city" (Smith 2009: 243), acting as their parents' "interpreters, their annotators and paraphrasts, across the confusion of their new life" (*WHA* 67). Tuyen and Binh were asked "to disentangle puzzlement; any idiom or gesture or word they were counted on to translate" (*WHA* 67) to their parents and their older sisters born in

Vietnam. Thus, the parent-child relationship is reversed, resulting in lack of respect (*WHA* 125), revealing that language and translation are powerful tools.

Whereas the children have little interest in their parents' mother tongue, a language they "did not live in" (*WHA* 131), the first generation's lack of English skills intensifies the generational conflict. Carla, for example, cannot identify with her father's Jamaican language, food, and values, considering the foreign customs and traditions as "embarrassing oddities that she would try to distance herself from in public" (*WHA* 131). Similarly, Tuyen rejects her Vietnamese identity, revolting against ethnic constraints by speaking English to her parents' Vietnamese customers, drinking milk, and calling herself 'Tracy' (*WHA* 20). This rejection is a counter-strategy to the society's othering process of ethnicities.

Tuyen's two sisters Lam and Ai belong to the one-and-a-half generation immigrants who grew up in the former home country. In the novel, Lam and Ai are compared to "shadows" (*WHA* 59) with no individual identity, no self-consciousness, and no self-determination. Similar to their parents, the one-and-a-half generation is torn between the one and the other, their home country and their original culture as well as between the different languages, places, and customs. Tuyen's two sisters are a constant reminder of the "past, their other life; the life that was cut in half one night on a boat to Hong Kong. Lam and Ai had become shadows; two little girls forgotten in the wrecked love of their parents" (*WHA* 59). The two sisters blame themselves as much as their parents do for losing Quy. This difference in experience separates the two sisters form the other siblings as well as the second-generation from the one-and-a-half generation.

In *What We All Long For* (2005), the second-generation immigrant perspective offers a more positive and culturally diverse view of Toronto's society because, to them, "finding community is a specifically urban project" (Dobson 2006: 88). The following section on concepts of longing and belonging illustrates how the different characters in the novel identify with the city and thus can create or cannot create a sense of belonging.

6.2.6 Longing and Belonging

The novel's title *What We All Long For* functions as a paratextual device for the reader, signifying the importance of longing and belonging in the global city of Toronto. The title's inclusive 'we' refers to the longing of every Toronto citizen and of the globe (Dobson 2009: 182). This inclusive, multiperspectival portrayal of life in the global city explores the various forms of integration of and within the different immigrant generations. Whereas the four second-generation immi-

grant friends form a culturally diverse urban identity, to some immigrants 'belonging' to Canadian society remains an unfinished task. Due to their 'hypervisible' otherness in terms of language and appearance, prejudice and racism are much more apparent towards first-generation immigrants and black Canadians of both generations. Moreover, female immigrants appear to integrate more easily. Finally, as Quy's death violently demonstrates, illegal immigrants are least likely to integrate into Canadian society.

Dionne Brand's non-fictional memoir *A Map to the Door of No Return: Notes to Belonging* (2001) can be considered a pre-text to her novel *What We All Long For* (2005), as the resemblance of the novel's title and the memoir's subtitle indicate. In the memoir, Brand questions the concept of 'national identity' as "a dance of artificiality" that "obscures its own multiplicity by insisting on itself as unchanging" (2001: 72). Her 'notes on belonging' question static socio-political constructions in a rapidly changing, globalizing world. In Brand's 2005 novel *What We All Long For*, the second-generation immigrant characters similarly reject socio-cultural categorizations and opt for an 'anti-national' (Dobson 2006: 88), cosmopolitan identity (Johansen 2008: 55).

In *What We All Long For* (2005), the generational conflict becomes particularly apparent in terms of identification or no identification with a nation-state. Both generations are not part of a nation-state identity structure. Whereas the parents "try to belong to a nation-state that refuses to recognize them because of their ancestry" (Dobson 2006: 88), their children long for an identity that goes beyond the idea of the nation (Brydon 2006: 3) because "the daily reality of being non-white within Canada gives them strong anti-national political consciousness" (Dobson 2006: 88). Instead of focusing on a national identity that fails to recognize them, the second-generation immigrant friends focus on urban life and the counter-geographies they create in Toronto.

The younger generation experiences "a universalizing cosmopolitanism" (Dobson 2009: 186) in which identification with the city and its locales is crucial. In this "urban, post-national community" (Buma 2009: 23), the four friends identify with the urban space of the global city. To the four friends, the influence of the nation is not as prominent any more in a globalizing world. Instead, the awareness of living in a global city is stressed by being conscious of their urban surroundings and the whole world (Dobson 2006: 89) because their urban life style "is connected to global modes of living before it is connected to discourses of the nation" (Dobson 2009: 191).

The younger generation is "part of Sassen's battle to decolonize the city. They fight their colonization by both the white hegemony in the city that others, them and their parents' desire for them to remain tied to a homeland to which

they have no physical connection" (Johansen 2008: 60). Although the second-generation friends are often "shut out from full participation in the official world, they create their own spaces within the interstices of the city" (Brydon 2006: 7), forming their identity as Torontonians. Moreover, in a global city, struggles of identity take place on the streets and in the neighborhoods (Sassen 1996: 197). Areas such as Bloor West signify a constant intermingling with other people, cultures, and ideologies. The four second-generation friends "believed in it, this living. Its raw openness. They saw the street outside, its chaos, as their only hope. They felt the city's violence and its ardour in one emotion" (*WHA* 212f.). As a result, a 'counter Toronto' (Smith 2009) is imagined by crossing the borders of socially-constructed categorizations.

In Toronto's urban space, the second-generation immigrants manage to erase borders and make distinctions irrelevant by ignoring the British-dominated space and by creating their own escapes and refuges. Tuyen, Carla, Oku, and Jackie were constantly "trying to step across the borders of who they were. But they were not merely trying. They were, in fact, borderless" (*WHA* 212f.). Their borderlessness refers to several aspects of freedom. In comparison to many other characters in the novel, their life in the city is a relatively independent one. They form coalitions across ethnic and gender boundaries and "actively move into the city's public places" (Johansen 2008: 49). To them, Toronto becomes a space of agency, a place with which all four can identify because "as disturbing as all they were living was, they felt alive. More alive, they thought, than most people around them" (*WHA* 212f.).

This identification with urban space and Toronto's streetscape results in "new, territorialized cosmopolitan identities" (Johansen 2008: 50) that have a strong relationship with the city. This close connection is emphasized by explaining the children's relationship with their birth place as if "a new blood had entered their veins; as if their umbilical cords were also attached to this mothering city" (*WHA* 67). This *gendered personification* (Paxson 1998: 154) of the city of Toronto makes the inanimate object appear human by using female traits. The unborn child's attachment to the umbilical cord in the mother's womb is possibly the strongest metaphor to express an intimate connection of two entities. The maternal relationship with the city is described as being so close that it even affects their identity and thus, to the four second-generation friends, the space of the global city provides the opportunity to search for their new, own, and mixed cultural identity. They form a cosmopolitan citizenship and identities with multiple positionalities that are nevertheless rooted in Toronto (Johansen 2008: 50).

Tuyen and her friends experience the city as a chaotic and creative place in which they generate "a viable sense of self" (Dobson 2009: 180). To the four friends, the city becomes "a space for building culture from below" (Dobson 2009: 180), symbolizing a grass roots revolution that reshapes the formerly anglicized city. They disregard the hyphen (Smith 2009: 243), viewing themselves as Torontonians and part of the diverse life of the global city. The second-generation's global vision of a 'diverCity,' however, is often interrupted by the multicultural design of Toronto's ethnic integration.

In *What We All Long For* (2005), several drawbacks to the Canadian concept of 'multiculturalism' are presented. The novel clarifies that prejudices, stereotypes, and racism still prevail in Toronto because, "at multiple points, we see characters being physically imprisoned or socio-economically restricted" (Dobson 2006: 90). Thus, to some Torontonians, integration into Canadian society remains an urban legend. In addition to first-generation immigrants, visible minorities and illegal immigrants constitute further exceptions to the rule of integration. The various outsiders' perspectives on longing and belonging are presented to provide an integrated view of multiculturalism and the integration of minorities.

With regard to the Canadian concept of 'multiculturalism,' the metaphor of the mosaic was originally introduced to counteract notions of wholesale assimilation. However, due to the coexistence of the diverse but distinct cultures within the mosaic, categorizations and clichés are naturally supported. Due to the growing number of immigrants from Asian countries, who began arriving in the 1960s (Hoernig et al 2010: 154), the social integration of visible minorities became a considerable challenge (Anisef et al 2003: 4). In *What We All Long For* (2005), Canada is partly portrayed as a "racist country" (Dobson 2006: 93) in which some immigrants fail to integrate as a result of ethnic stereotypes. As a consequence, their sense of belonging is lost. The homeless person Rasta, for example, claims that the white man makes the African Canadians mad and destroys him. He warns Oku: "follow the white man ways and you doomed" (*WHA* 173).

The novel illustrates "the experience of blacks in Canada as oscillating between invisibility and hyper-visibility" (Rosenthal 2011: 235). Jamal functions as a prime example of racial stereotypes and pressures. Oku and Jamal are both constantly faced by clichés and racial stigmatization due to their status as a visible minority. They are both stopped by the police because of their 'African look' (*WHA* 35). The strategy of incorporating these stories in the novel can be read as a critique of the superficiality of the Canadian government, its agencies, and officials. When Carla's brother feels disconnected (*WHA* 236) from his family but also from society as a whole, he is getting involved with the negative space of

the city (*WHA* 32). Jamal's decision to opt for the black part of his cultural heritage is doomed to result in negative prospects. Nevertheless, he chooses to belong to a black gang, although Carla warns him that because he is black, he "can't be in the wrong place at the wrong time" (*WHA* 35).

A difference in social struggles between African Canadian men and women can be identified. Female characters of the younger immigrant generation manage to adapt to urban space and life in Toronto better than their male counterparts (Rosenthal 2011: 249). Oku explains to Jackie that being in jail is a "rite of passage in this culture, girl. Rite of passage for a young black man" (*WHA* 46). Oku's female traits of wiring poetry and cooking make him an exception to the rule (Rosenthal 2011: 249). Whereas Jamal is trapped within societal constructions of ethnic classifications and the accompanying stereotypes, Oku questions the society's structures and conventions when dropping out of school and protesting against establishments. The police, however, are different. Although Oku had also been stopped by the police stigmatically due to his African Canadian appearance, he soon learned that revolting is useless. Instead, "he simply lifted his arms in a crucifix, gave up his will and surrendered to the stigmata" (*WHA* 165). This explains why Oku "cultivated the persona of the cool poet – so that he wouldn't have to get involved in the ordinary and brutal shit waiting for men like him in the city. They were in prison, although the bars were invisible" (*WHA* 166). The reference to invisible bars' stand for the societal and ethnic constraints that keep young African Canadians literally 'imprisoned' in their stereotypical predetermined destiny. The ones who did not surrender and insist on their rights had to fight even harder and "ended up in the system fighting to get out. They ended up hating everyone around them. Homicidal" (*WHA* 165). This statement criticizes Toronto's multicultural society. Moreover, it foreshadows Jamal becoming a murderer by the end of novel. This quote also criticizes the entanglements in the invisible and underlying pressures of racism, revealing that Canadian multiculturalism remains a myth for many minorities.

Some critics claim that if there is a unifying sense of being Canadian in the novel at all, it is only expressed in the conformity that is demanded by officials, such as those at school or the police (Buma 2009). These institutions, however, are portrayed as prejudiced or even racist rather than contributing to a feeling of unity. In the novel, the literary device of situational irony is applied to show the artificiality of ethnic category-thinking when the police introduce "salt-and-pepper cops" (*WHA* 98) "to smooth the way. One of 'their own' to make them feel comfortable and make them talk" (*WHA* 98). The wider acceptance of cops across ethnic boundaries failed, however, when the "pepper cop" from the West Indians was considered "a race traitor" (*WHA* 98). This example illustrates that

the officials' concept of 'multiculturalism' is limited to employing simplistic categories, such as black and white only, thereby disregarding variances within the heterogeneous Canadian minorities.

Furthermore, the novel makes clear that prejudices are not a one-directional process but all-encompassing. Ethnic stereotypes and racism are reversed to transcend the conventional expectations of cultural prejudices. Oku's jealously of Jackie's German boyfriend Reiner, for example, illustrates that racism is also directed towards whiteness and the artificial sense of belonging through the imitation of slang. Reiner, the only white character of significance in the novel, represents the anglicized Toronto. Oku envies him for being "white" and thus "safe" and in control of the city. Reiner "could not possibly see the city as a prison" because he is taking possession of the city's space and Jackie (*WHA* 176). In his rage, Oku is tempted to judge his opponent in racist terms, calling Reiner a Nazi. He is disgusted by Reiner's efforts to sound like a "brother" when he is uttering "Hey, man, what's happening?" (*WHA* 177). Oku does not accept Reiner's attempts at befriending him by speaking in a kind of second language, imitating Oku's own tongue. Interestingly, although Oku is part of an interethnic group of friends, he does not value the white immigrant's efforts to belong to another ethnic group.

The projection of British-dominated Toronto's racism towards visible minorities on other ethnic groups is also exemplified by Carla's case. Although Carla and Jamal have the same parents, she is rejected by the African community, and by her father's and stepmother's family in particular, due to her light complexion. Although whites usually were not aware of her African background, "most black people recognized her anyway. There were more attuned to the gradations of race than whites" *(WHA* 106). Carla's mother Angie faced similar criticism for crossing a racial border. Her Italian family refused to accept her liaison with a Caribbean black, considering her a dead person (*WHA* 106). Both examples of this category-thinking process constitute the main arguments against 'multiculturalism' because it is a model of diverse but distinct cultures within one society that rarely interact.

The novel's most powerful strategy for showing how racism sometimes forces minorities to think in racist terms themselves is illustrated by Jamal killing Quy. Ironically, whereas their sisters, Tuyen and Carla, love each other, Carla's brother kills Tuyen's brother. Moreover, Jamal's allegedly killing Quy in the end shows the dangers of not integrating. Jamal is stigmatized due to his hypervisible otherness and his choice to become a gang member by catering to specific stereotypes. The sad ending deconstructs Toronto's myth of being the prime example of Canadian multiculturalism because Jamal, a Canadian of Caribbean Italian

background who is unable to adapt to society due to his hypervisible otherness and the regularly experienced racism, kills an illegal Asian immigrant. This violent encounter of Jamal and Quy can be read as symbolizing a cultural clash on city level, since Italians, Asians, and the Caribbean constitute Toronto's three major ethnic groups. Thus, the ending questions "the peaceful coexistence of cultures in a society demarcated by differences" (Rosenthal 2011: 255). With this narrative twist, the model of 'Canadian multiculturalism' is criticized for supporting parallel worlds within one society that rarely interact and sometimes severely clash.

With respect to the significance of the title, the main question is whether the characters find what they long for in the end. The reconciliation of the two immigrant generations remains a difficult task due to the first generation urge to preserve their cultural roots, symbolized by the search for Quy. The prospect of reuniting two generations by reuniting Tuyen's brother with her family fails when Quy is killed before the reunion takes place. After Quy's tragic death in Toronto, it becomes apparent that the second generation's past cannot be combined with their Toronto present. The state of ambivalence will subsist.

Quy's death also shows that "the biggest illusion Brand's text destroys in the end is that racism might end with the unanglicized city" (Rosenthal 2011: 256). Since multiculturalism is associated with the coexistence of different but distinct cultures within one society, this model of integration can create stereotypes, categorization processes, and borders. In order to transform the anglicized city into a more tolerant form, a 'dialogical exchange' (Antor 2006: 330) across cultural boundaries is necessary.

The *lubaio*, a polycultural art installation that captures multiple forms of code-switching, serves as the novel's model of cultural exchange in a dialogical fashion. Tuyen, the main agent for the longings of Torontonians in the novel, accepts her role as a translator between the present and the past, her own life and that of her parents, the different traditions, cultures, and generations. Moreover, she acknowledges her role as an artist who translates the culturally diverse, individual voices of the city into the *lubaio*, by asking "wasn't that what her art was all about in the end? She had a vision of the cloth on the wall in her apartment, the scores of scribbled longings (…). She would take photographs of the people of the city too, and sprinkle them throughout" (*WHA* 308).

Tuyen's mediation of ethnic diversity in a random manner resembles a new form of socio-cultural integration. Rinaldo Walcott reviews Brand's novel as an approach to a new form of "everyday multiculturalism" that "requires us to think about the lives people make across differences and, importantly, connections that produce new modes of relationality and being" (2007: 19f). Therefore, as

Tuyen's patchwork-like, work-in-progress installation on longings illustrates, the Canadian model of 'multiculturalism' requires revision to adapt to global cities such as Toronto that are increasingly characterized by multidirectional migration and the acceleration of cultural flows.

6.3 INTERIM CONCLUSION

Dionne Brand's *What We All Long For* (2005) can be analyzed in terms of poetics of code-switching, narrative, and space to identify the ethnic diversity of the imagined global city of Toronto in a globalizing age. The city unites the sometimes antagonistic young people of different mixed ethnicities. The different lives are interwoven, forming a network of different cultures in the city. This phenomenon of intermingling and group identity formation, however, is limited to a selection of second-generation immigrants born in the city who claim the city's space for themselves and thus voice their agency. Thus, the second-generation characters function as 'translator-protagonists' (Smith 2009: 244) who interpret the city to their parents and the reader.

Regarding multivocality, the novel functions as a medium, translating the new ethnic diversity of Toronto's formerly anglicized society to the reader: "It's like this with this city – you can stand on a simple corner and get taken away in all directions (…) then the other languages making their way to your ears (…) this all sums up to a kind of new vocabulary" (*WHA* 154). This new vocabulary makes Toronto's new ethnic texture audible, giving the different cultures a voice. The city's "polyphonic murmuring" (*WHA* 149) is expressed in different forms of code-switching such as narrative voice, jargon, and translation. The use of polyglossia creates closeness to the characters and an 'authentic' impression of Toronto's cultural complexity.

With the introduction of Quy, an additional narrative thread and perspective is presented on immigration and loss, showing that the illegal immigrants' perspective is a considerable part of the immigrant experience. The novel's different perspectives, localities, and times are incorporated to position the "contemporary cast of characters within longer histories of migration and struggle" (Brydon 2006: 2). The first generation's immigration struggles, their current situation, but also their children's situation in Toronto and the experiences of a newly arriving illegal immigrant are portrayed to illustrate the great array of experiences and perspectives involved in the immigrant experience.

In association with the poetics of space, different types of narrating the city can be identified, which are conveyed with mental maps or cataloging. With the

different characters and events, the city's space is illustrated from various perspectives, thereby revealing the multiple meaning and associations inscribed in a certain place, such as public and private, static and dynamic, male and female, or different ethnic escapes. Although the second generation is also displaced (Dobson 2009: 189) in Toronto, the four friends seize the opportunity to shape their own space in the city.

In the novel, the two immigrant generation perspectives are incorporated to show the effect of 'time-space discrepancy.' Whereas the first-generation parents unsuccessfully long for a Canadian identity and the preservation of their cultural roots and thus the old times, the second generation opts for a global, cosmopolitan self-definition that rejects hyphenated, national, or ethnic concepts of identification.

The novel manages to combine two contradictory discourses. On the one hand, the drawbacks of multiculturalism as a policy are presented when, for example, the failed integration of the Caribbean Italian Canadian Jamal is portrayed. The discrimination of blacks in Canada and other 'visible minorities' are still effective in many areas, such as politics, the labor market, and the public space of the city (Rosenthal 2011: 215). Moreover, as the novel shows, first-generation, male, and illegal immigrants cannot integrate as easily. On the other hand, Toronto offers a space of diversity and tolerance to second-generation immigrants who identify with the city. The group of second-generation immigrant friends and Tuyen's art installation the *lubaio* serve as such a new form of 'interethnic networking' in the city. The bonding across ethnic, gender, or class demarcations is a "rhizomatic form of political resistance" (Dobson 2006: 89). In this new form of urban and global citizenship, predetermined socio-political constructions, such as ethnic boundaries or the concept of 'Canadianness,' are rejected.