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Media Networks and Language Crossing
in Montreal

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The big city is a fantastic hive of words which never shut up. Without pausing, they stir the energies of the city and are in turn stirred by them. In the endless cycle of the talking city, its current spirit, which rules over the layers of older significations, inscribes itself within words. Language in movement is immobilized in writing which captures within itself the dynamism of the city, just as cold finds itself held within ice.

Karlheinz Stierle, *La Capitale des signes: Paris et son discours*¹

Montreal is both a site for the encounter of languages and a place of linguistic division. Those who write about Montreal – as scholars of urban space or culture, poets, novelists, or screenwriters – usually highlight one of these dimensions of the city’s life over the other. Across various genres of writing on Montreal, I suggest, a preferred focus has been those occasions in which the city’s languages intermingle and lose their exclusivity. This preference is easy to understand. The interweaving of languages offers both a more convivial image of social life and a more interesting complexity than does the presence of strict divisions between languages. Scholars of Montreal-based literature or theatre have charted those practices of writing that thematize or perform the breaking down of linguistic barriers, often seeing this breakdown as a key mission of creative expression in the city.² Those who study public space in Montreal will often seek out ways in which languages are seen to mix, either in everyday speech or in the overlaying of linguistic communication on city surfaces.³ In journalistic writing on

Montreal, linguistic mixing is both celebrated (as the source of distinctive, local versions of English and French) or condemned, as proof of an ongoing erosion of one language at the expense of another.⁴

At the same time, the sense that real or virtual walls divide the French and English languages has a long history in Montreal folklore. It was once common to designate St Laurent Boulevard (“The Main”) as a linguistic wall dividing the francophone and anglophone parts of the city. (More recently, people invoke this designation in order to quickly update, refute, or complicate it.) At a more anecdotal level, the claim that the French division of the National Film Board of Canada worked on Apple computers while the English division used Windows machines has circulated for two decades, invoked as emblematic of the incommunicability between the two language communities. In 1963, a reporter for the Montreal newspaper *La Patrie* wrote in bemused fashion of the opening of one of the city’s first multiplex cinemas, the Versailles, which contained one screening room for each language and a hall that served to divide them. How one saw this hall depended on one’s view of the state of Montreal’s language politics. In *La Patrie*, one writer wondered whether it would become “le salon de la bonne entente” or a “champ de bataille” (a happy meeting place or a battlefield) (Maître 1963, 32).

MEDIA AND LANGUAGE-CROSSING IN MONTREAL

Our natural interest in those spaces (or occasions) in which languages meet and mingle sometimes obscures those forces which work in Montreal to keep languages apart, to reinforce their exclusivity. Key among such forces are media of all kinds, from print and broadcasting to most examples of digital. In Stierle’s evocative words, quoted at the beginning of this chapter (and slightly adapted here), media are places in which the flow of language through social space is momentarily stopped and held in immobile form. Media are places for fixing and freezing linguistic expression. Through this freezing, they bind units of expression to each other, setting them in physical adjacency (as on a newspaper page) or in temporal sequence (as in radio or television programming) in relation to others. In some media, as I will show, this adjacency or sequence is marked by a multiplicity of languages, such that the freezing of expression produces a durable image of linguistic copresence. More often, this same freezing produces clusters of expression characterized by monolingual exclusivity. In this

way, the media of Montreal may be seen as hieroglyphs for the variety of linguistic relations possible in the city.

We might undertake an inventory of Montreal media in terms of their forms and levels of French-English bilingualism. From the outset, it is tempting to develop a number of observations or hypotheses. One of these is that those media in which French and English sit alongside each other in roughly equal proportions tend to be peripheral or “minor” in terms of their communicative complexity or cultural centrality. More crudely: bilingualism is strongest in those textual forms whose wordage is lowest. Thus, as a result of federal law, French and English appear in close proximity and with equal presence on the packaging of consumer goods, on currency and postage stamps, and in the signage systems of federal institutions like train stations, ports, and airports. Elsewhere, homemade announcements of yard sales or missing cats typically convey an imperfect and usually uneven attempt to communicate in both French and English. Commercial signage and restaurant menus in Montreal, since the passage of Bill 101 in 1977, are very often marked by the effort to come as close to full bilingualism as the law (as modified by the amendments and court rulings to which it has been subject) allows.⁵

As one moves toward media of higher levels of audience reach and sociocultural importance, linguistic exclusivity becomes stronger. I refer here, for the most part, to what we might all the great media of the twentieth century, like television, radio, magazines, and the daily newspaper. The most popular examples of these media in Montreal operate with near-exclusivity in either French or English. Of the most-listened-to radio stations in the city during the period November 2013 to February 2014, half broadcast with their spoken word content exclusively in French and the other half in English (BBM 2014). The language of vocal music, as I will show, complicates this situation somewhat, but regulators and the advertising industry nevertheless classify stations as uniformly English or French. While industry measurements of television viewership, which focus more on the popularity of individual programs than of individual stations, are much less easy to compare directly, the dominant stations likewise operate in either French or English exclusively. The same is true for Montreal’s six daily newspapers and for all mass-circulation magazines published or available in the city.⁶ The online versions of these media are almost always marked by the same linguistic exclusivity.

While the future viability of these media is less and less certain in the face of the Internet, they continue to play a major role in the circulation of discourse and in the routines of Montrealers' lives. In their linguistic exclusivity, they pull the heterogeneous language practices of city life into the linguistically uniform time/space of broadcast programming and of print forms such as the newspaper or magazine. Montreal's large-scale media do not simply resist the intrusion of one language upon each other; by absorbing the heterogeneity of social and cultural phenomena within the discourse of a single language, they produce systems of inter-reference that reinforce the coherence and self-sufficiency of that language. The more that information or entertainment media may appear to cover the near-totality of phenomena in a single language, the less likely they are to encourage practices of language-crossing, whereby individuals might seek out media in a second language in order to access specific kinds of content. Even when this language-crossing is common, however – when people switch between French- and English-language media in their daily lives – media maintain their linguistic uniformity.

The exceptions to this monolingualism in Montreal media are usually “marginal” in reach. The copresence of French and English often characterizes self-defined multilingual media, like community radio programming or “ethnic” newspapers. Here, the presence of languages that are neither French nor English frequently serves as an alibi for the additional presence of both. Elsewhere, and for obvious reasons, French-English bilingualism may be found in limited circulation print media aimed at a tourist readership, like the entertainment or shopping guides distributed in hotels. The sector of magazines covering the cultural sector offers a more complex state of affairs. Quebec-based magazines that specialize in music, theatre, cinema, or literature are typically unilingual and, with very few exceptions (such as the *Montreal Review of Books*), published in French. At the same time, there is a principled (if costly) commitment to French-English bilingualism in many of Montreal's magazines covering the visual arts, like *Esse*, *CV Photo*, or the long-defunct *Parachute*. The anomalously high bilingualism of the art magazine confirms the apparently greater bilingualism of Montreal's visual arts institutions and scenes relative to those in which theatre and literature are embedded.⁷

A curious feature of Montreal, then, is that a city that offers so many everyday experiences of linguistic multiplicity and bilingualism has so few examples of bilingual media. Attempts to produce bilingual

media with extensive audience reach in Montreal have almost always floundered for a variety of reasons. These include their perceived economic nonviability, audience indifference, or regulatory intervention. The *Montreal Gazette*, at various points in its history, has experimented with limited French-language content, but no longer does so. In radio broadcasting, as I will show, attempts to broadcast in both languages have run up against the opposition of advertisers and regulators. In some cases, the bilingualism of a media artefact has not allowed it to escape factors that anchor it much more strongly in one language community than another. The film *Bon Cop, Bad Cop*, bilingual from its title through much of its dialogue, grossed twelve million dollars in Quebec, most of that from francophone audiences, and a little over one million in English Canada. While, by the standards of anglophone Canadian cinema, the film's appeal to English-speaking Canadian audiences was high, the unevenness of its success suggests that any dream of a bilingual cinema that resonates in roughly equal measure with both language communities is elusive.

BROADCASTING AND MEDIA BILINGUALISM IN MONTREAL

The history of radio and television broadcasting in Canada is punctuated by short-lived moments in which key television and radio stations broadcast in French and English. In the chaotic early days of radio, before the consolidation of public broadcasting across the country, programming that moved between the French and English languages was relatively common. Richard Collins (1990, 58) has suggested that Western Canadian resistance to the prevalence of bilingual broadcasting in the 1930s was one of the key motives for the introduction of public regulation of broadcasting in Canada. After World War II, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation and Société Radio-Canada initiated new experiments in bilingual broadcasting. These usually followed similar paths of development. As radio or television service was introduced to a particular region, French and English programming shared a single channel, with blocks of several hours devoted to each. Subsequently, after these services were established and additional resources become available, services were split, with French and English channels operating in parallel.⁸ Thus, in 1952, Canada's first television station, CBFT, began by broadcasting in both languages in Montreal, with programming blocks in English and in French. This would continue until January of 1954, when

CBMT, a Montreal-based English-language channel, commenced operations, leaving CBFT to broadcast in French only (Canadian Communications Foundation 2013).

The introduction of FM radio broadcasting in Montreal followed a similar pattern. The CBC launched its first “national” FM network in 1960, as a link between stations in Montreal, Ottawa, and Toronto. The network operated only during the evenings on weekdays and from noon to midnight on weekends, with programming in both languages. (During non-network times, Montreal’s CBM-FM simulcast programs from its English-language AM equivalent, CBM-AM.) The introduction of a single FM service that operated in both languages was rooted in part in a scarcity of resources, but also expressed the CBC’s conviction that bilingual broadcasting was an ideal for the country whose time of realization had come (see Cote 1961, 7). In his review of the FM service shortly after its launch, the *Globe and Mail’s* long-serving music critic John Kraglund (1960, 8) notes the ways in which bilingual programming highlighted differences in sensibility between Montreal and Toronto and their respective uses of language:

It is too easy to pass any serious judgment on what is being offered and the way in which it is being done. However, we wonder why it is that Toronto announcers come across blasting in like high-pressure commercials, while those from Montreal retain the same volume level as their programs. And Jean Valleraud’s Montreal broadcast, an informative talk with recordings, on the survival of the gallant style in French music, suggested that Montreal is more effectively bilingual than Toronto, since he spoke and translated at a frightening pace.

This experiment in bilingual FM broadcasting in Canada ceased in 1962, when the CBC went back to simply simulcasting its AM stations on the FM network. On 1 October 1964, distinctive FM networks in each language were launched (CBC 2014a). By this point, and until CHOM-FM’s experiment with bilingualism in the 1970s (discussed below), day-long dual-language broadcasting in Montreal could be found only on a single private station. CKVL-FM, launched in 1947, broadcast announcements in both French and English and for many years presented a bilingual program live from the Simpson’s department store downtown (CBC 2014b). By 1969, CKVL-FM possessed the most powerful radio signal in Canada, was the only FM station in the

country to broadcast twenty-four hours a day, and was considered the only bilingual station in the country. In 1973, it switched to French-only broadcasting (ibid.).

In the late 1960s, the program *Jazz en liberté* was one of the last vestiges of bilingual broadcasting on the Montreal stations of Canada's public radio service. Broadcast on both English-language CBM and French-language CBF, *Jazz en liberté* is interesting in part because its content was seen as particularly suited to language-crossing. In 1966, the *Montreal Gazette* published a lengthy article about Montreal-based jazz musician Nick Ayoub, who had recorded performances for the program. Under the headline "Need No B and B Commission to Understand Jazz – Nick Ayoub," Wylie (1966, 13) quoted Ken Withers, program director for Montreal's CBC-FM, who argued for the special place of jazz in a country marked by linguistic and cultural divisions: "On a jazz program, no B+B Commission is needed to bring French and English together. In Canada, jazz is the only true national expression of brotherhood among majority and minority groups. Language differences don't really exist. The jazzman projects his feelings through music, and his message is readily understood." The B+B Commission referenced here was, of course, the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, which at this historical moment was preparing a report demonstrating that francophones were underrepresented in Canadian business and politics.

There is, here, a somewhat curious justification for the exceptional bilingualism of *Jazz en liberté*: that a music not notably Canadian, and thus relatively untouched by Canada's linguistic duality, could serve as the cultural token around which bilingualism was practiced. At the same time, as a music shaped by relations of majority to minority whose local equivalents went unspecified, jazz was seen as partly healing the divisions that otherwise made bilingualism impossible. In its emphasis on tone rather than words, jazz also seemed to transcend language and the differences carried within it. Roughly similar claims would be made in the 1970s about disco and in later decades about other forms of dance music, such as house.

RADIO, MUSIC, AND THE CASE OF CHOM-FM

Radio broadcasting in Montreal has been the terrain on which the successes and impasses of bilingual media have played themselves out with greatest intensity. The particular status of radio in the city has

much to do with the important role played in radio broadcasting by music, a key element in radio programming. Music sits in a complex relationship to language. Important historical forms of music seem to contain no linguistically marked expression (classical symphonic music, for example), and others do so only occasionally (jazz or electronica). Other genres of music are important carriers of language (such as folk music or the francophone tradition of the *chanson*). In those forms of popular music that have achieved the greatest commercial success in the last half-century (rock and pop), vocal expression is prominent. However, language-based expression often grounds the meaning and reach of popular music much less than do its markers of genre, style, and fashionability. Listeners and fans use musical tastes to express cosmopolitanism, up-to-date-ness, and political solidarities. These often generate affinities with music that take listeners outside of their primary language group.

The peculiar relationships of music to language, and of radio broadcasting to language communities, were central to one of the most important controversies around media and language in Montreal history – that which surrounded FM radio station CHOM-FM’s attempt to broadcast in both French and English in the 1970s. CHOM was the successor to CKGM-FM, and was launched in Montreal in 1963 by the Maisonneuve Broadcasting Corporation, Limited. CHOM developed its own album rock format (a programming strategy later formalized in radio industry discourse as “album-oriented rock”) and for a time was the only Montreal radio station playing so-called progressive rock music.⁹ From its inception, CHOM let announcers move back and forth between French and English, a policy that the station claimed reflected the bilingual character of its listenership and city. This language switching was also part of the station’s wilfully adopted free-form approach to radio broadcasting.

By the early 1970s, the Canadian Radio and Television Commission (CRTC), which granted and renewed broadcasters’ licences and devised policies to guide the growth of each broadcast medium, confronted several challenges in dealing with radio. One of these was the increased commercialization of the medium, which encouraged a clear division of audiences and advertising markets. Radio broadcasters whose audiences crossed linguistic lines were viewed at best as confusing to advertisers, at worst as seeking to poach listeners from one linguistic group for stations operating in another. During the same period, political struggles over language, particularly in Quebec,

became intensified, with bilingualism receding as an ideal and each of Montreal's dominant language groups seeking entrenchment of their right to be served in their own language. It was in this context that the CRTC took up the question of CHOM's experiments in bilingual broadcasting. In its renewal of CHOM's licence in 1973, the regulator refrained from stating in explicit terms that it approved of the station's use of both languages. It simply authorized continued use of the station's "experimental type of programming"; any reference to the explicitly linguistic character of that programming was diluted within the ruling's acknowledgement that the station's broader approach to radio bent the rules in an experimental fashion. Without using the word "French," its ruling said: "During this period [the two years for which its licence was now renewed] the applicant may carry on broadcasting in the language of the majority within its coverage area." Canadian rock critic Ritchie Yorke (1973, 60), reporting for *Billboard* magazine, saw the decision as one with "far-reaching implications" insofar as it seemed to authorize broadcasting in both languages without saying so openly.¹⁰ Indeed, in its renewal ruling, the CRTC's interest in language seemed directed more at the broadcasting of speech whose content some listeners deemed offensive. The station was warned that it might be pandering to a "growing permissiveness in [its] subject matter and language" and should be attentive to possible infractions (*ibid.*). A station spokesperson suggested this warning was prompted by CHOM's broadcasting of excerpts from albums by George Carlin and the National Lampoon comedy troupe (*Globe and Mail* 1973, 8).

By the mid-1970s, CHOM had become the most listened to FM radio station in Montreal (and the third most-listened-to English-language station on either dial) (*Billboard* 1975, 70). Its announcers often spoke in French, and while advertising in that language had been prohibited in the 1973 ruling, its introduction of music and freeform conversations with its listeners were marked by high levels of bilingualism. CHOM's listenership among francophones had grown amidst an increase in the extent to which it played music of British origin or of a generally progressive bent: "Pink Floyd, Genesis, Shawn Phillips, Babe Ruth, Gentle Giant, the Rolling Stones" (*ibid.*). The appeal of this music to francophones, explained CHOM's program director Les Sole, had to do with the ways in which the linguistic marking of this music was weak: "The young Quebecois enjoys British rock with a classical base like the Strawbs and Genesis ... That's almost bilingual

music. A lot of times I would say that the Rolling Stones' music is illiterate anyway. Unless you have a lyric sheet in front of you, you have no idea what Jagger is saying even if you understand the English language. The French also like a good theatrical presentation by an act" (ibid.).

In the 1960s, the producer of CBC's *Jazz en liberté* had based jazz's appeal across language groups in its universalism and emphasis on "feelings." For Sole, progressive rock crossed the linguistic divide in part because of the incomprehensibility of its lyrics (which made its instrumental dimensions that much more important) and in part because of its theatricality, which involved nonlinguistic forms of communication like costume and record jacket design. Unsaid in this discussion, but arguably inflecting it in important ways, was the sense that, in its explicit intellectualism and artfulness (however pompous these might be on occasion), English-language progressive rock from Europe was not an obvious villain in the struggle to preserve the French language from the inroads of popular, commercial (and usually American) culture.

In 1975, the CRTC acknowledged CHOM's commitment to bilingualism in a new licence renewal. The station had asked for permission to begin broadcasting advertisements in the French language. The regulator denied this request, but allowed the station's programming to continue in both languages: "In its application the licensee requested authority to continue to broadcast programming in both the English and French languages and to commence broadcasting commercials in the French language. The Commission APPROVES the continuation of the experiment of programming in both languages and DENIES the right to commence broadcasting commercials in the French language."¹¹

CHOM's 1975 renewal was for a period of short duration, ending 31 March 1976. The CRTC claimed it wished to re-evaluate the station's overall programming policies in the light of a new, broader consideration of FM programming in Canada. In early 1976, the owners of a number of French-language radio stations in Montreal complained to the CRTC that CHOM threatened their viability by attracting francophone listeners and thus harming their ratings and advertising revenues. The very structure of the radio broadcasting and advertising industries in Montreal was then – as now – based on a clear division between language groups. Advertisers counted only the English-speaking listeners for English-language stations when targeting their

advertising and determining a station's ratings (and the same held true for francophone listeners of francophone stations). Bilingual broadcasting and audiences' language-crossing had real effects on station revenues – by drawing away listeners who were part of their target audience – but produced no benefits for stations able to attract listeners across the language divide inasmuch as those crossover listeners were not counted in audience measurements.

In a 29 July 1976 ruling that renewed CHOM's licence until 1980, the CRTC put an end to the station's experiment in bilingualism. The commission, its ruling noted, "is of the opinion that the interest of both English and French population of Montreal are best served by not renewing CHOM-FM's authority to broadcast in the French language over and above its use in proper names and those expressions, quotations, words and phrases that are common currency."¹² Reference to those uses of the French language "that are common currency" be-trayed the difficulty of enforcing unilingualism in a context in which French and English were often interwoven. French-language stations, particularly those (like the newly "progressive" CKOI-FM) that featured a good deal of new music by anglophone musicians, had regular recourse to English in designating new generic categories (like "New Wave") or in interviewing stars as part of their programming. The CRTC's denial of CHOM's bilingualism nevertheless allowed the station to deliver "such announcements as station identification and time-checks" in both languages ("CHOM" 1977, 31). Here, as with airport signage and consumer packaging, bilingualism was confined to its briefest forms and to those most restrained in rhetorical and affective terms.

In a 1977 section devoted to Canadian music, *Billboard* spoke favourably of the CRTC's commitment to a prohibition on bilingual broadcasting: "The licensing policy of the [CRTC] to give stations licenses to broadcast in either French or English but not bilingually has on the whole enormously helped the retention and development of the Quebecois culture and the music industry in particular" (18). If this was the noble purpose of the CRTC's 1976 ruling against CHOM's bilingualism, the station nevertheless responded in an obstinate fashion, announcing its intention to fight the ruling in court and making its protest known to national media (*Billboard* 1976, 62). Under the headline "A French Voice Strangled," a 1976 *Globe and Mail* editorial suggested that it was a "disturbing notion that the CRTC had actually succumbed to pressure from the French stations." CHOM station man-

ager Leslie Cole stated that the station intended to “keep on doing bilingual radio and [that] we will go beyond the CRTC if necessary to do so” (*Globe and Mail* 1976b, 2). Program director Peggy Colson told the *Montreal Gazette* (1977) that the station’s “on-air staff whose mother tongue is French find it a bit frustrating always having to make sure they are speaking English.” In the same article, she estimated that 60 per cent of CHOM’s listenership consisted of francophones.

While the question of CHOM’s bilingualism appeared to have been settled by the CRTC’s ruling, it would erupt in a sideshow that captured the messy political character of the affair and the absurdities to which the CRTC sometimes appeared to resort. In March 1977, *Billboard* reported on an exchange of letters between Sole and Canadian Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau. Inspired by a speech in which Trudeau laid out his dreams for a bilingual Canada, Sole wrote to the prime minister:

Your statements last evening on an emerging progressive culture, and the spirit of brotherhood in Canada have been sentiments close to our hearts at CHOM-FM for the past six years. In that time, we developed a unique medium that was based on bilingual and bicultural foundations ... In light of recent developments, with regard for the essence of your national unity goals, we are planning to ask Mr. Boyle and the Commission to reinstate our mandate to use Canadian French in the radio in Montreal along with Canadian English and maintain our role as our audience defined it. (quoted in Melhuish 1977, 109)

In a reply that skirted close to government interference in a CRTC decision, Trudeau expressed his contentment with Sole’s decision to appeal and announced that he was sending a copy of Sole’s letter to Jeanne Sauvé, who was minister of communications and the cabinet official responsible for media policy. While nothing came of this exchange, CHOM’s efforts to link its regulatory troubles to the national question of Canada’s bilingualism marked an apparent shift in its rhetoric, four months following the election of an independentist government in Quebec. Earlier justifications of CHOM’s experiment in bilingualism had been couched much more modestly in relation to the communities of progressive radio listeners to which CHOM appealed across linguistic lines, or with reference to the bilingual character of its own on-air staff.

It is tempting to explain the CRTC's shift of policy toward CHOM's bilingualism in terms of the change of chairs at the Canadian Radio and Television Commission (which became the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission in 1976). Pierre Juneau, who served as chair between 1968 and 1975, was a close colleague of Trudeau and shared the latter's commitment to official bilingualism. In 1975, Trudeau named Juneau to his cabinet as minister of communications, but Juneau's failure to win a by-election resulted in his replacement as minister by Sauvé. Harry Boyle, who succeeded Juneau as CRTC chair, had worked for several years in public broadcasting, but had begun his career in private radio and was seen as someone with an intimate understanding of the issues facing commercial broadcasters. In any event, the CRTC's increased reluctance to extend CHOM's experiment in bilingualism came amidst the ascendancy of FM broadcasting as a lucrative activity whose players preferred markets free of ambiguity.

In 1982, the CRTC allowed CHOM to broadcast one thirty-minute program per week in French. In the ruling granting this permission, it acknowledged the "bilingual and cultural character" of Montreal. In 1984, following a renewal hearing, the CRTC reminded the station that any other uses of French were to be restricted to the aforementioned "proper names and those quotations, words and phrases that are common usage." It admonished the station for letting French words that went beyond common usage slip into the ongoing discourse of announcers who, it appeared, could not help themselves. Over a three-day period in May 1983, the CRTC had monitored the station's programming and found a number of such violations (*Globe and Mail* 1984, B1).

Since the 1970s, linguistic diversity on Montreal radio has persisted and flourished mostly in the programming blocks of *radio communautaire*, like Radio Centre-ville. Language-crossing on the part of listeners of commercial radio continues, as does intermittent speculation about the viability of bilingual radio broadcasting in the city. In 2012, a report on the state of the Montreal radio market noted that large numbers of young, francophone Montrealers were listening to anglophone radio stations. CHOM, it was noted, had more francophone than anglophone listeners – something that the station had claimed since the 1970s – and the same was true for other English language stations whose programming was dominated by music rather than talk. The question was posed, again, as to why the regulating body, the CRTC,

might not allow bilingual radio broadcasting in the city. The answer, given by an industry analyst, was simple. If the CRTC permitted bilingual broadcasting, the result would be a local radio dominated by francophone hosts playing anglophone music (Ducas 2012). The average radio listener in Montreal, it appears, wants French-language talk and English-language music.

Under current regulations governing radio, broadcasting in the French language is inseparable from the public goal of promoting French-language music. This project is enforced by French-language content regulations that govern the music playlists of stations designated as francophone. (Currently, French-language radio stations are required to ensure that 65 per cent of all music played is in the French language.) English-language stations play no similar, prescribed role in relation to music in the English language (which is not perceived as threatened, though its Canadian versions are). English-language broadcasters must, instead, play a certain percentage of Canadian music (which, incidentally, may be in French). To give radio stations the option to broadcast in either language, it is believed, would lead them to speak in French, like the majority of their audience, while still playing the English-language music widely believed to be more attractive to francophone listeners. The refusal to allow bilingual broadcasting means that more and more young francophones listen to English language music on English language radio stations, where the news, commentary, and advertising speak to them in incomplete ways.

In its editorial bemoaning the end to CHOM's experiment in bilingualism, the *Globe and Mail* (1976b) spoke of the CRTC dropping "the portcullis between the two languages." This wording invoked the language of walls and borders that has long seeped into accounts of Montreal's language relations. For the foreseeable future, it appears, radio broadcasting in Montreal will continue to be marked by the linguistic classification of stations, even if listeners themselves are language-crossing to an extent made easier by music's uneasy status as linguistic address. In radio, nevertheless, this crossing takes place to a much greater extent than it does with television, the newspaper, or others of those twentieth-century media I referred to earlier. These other media, I argue, produce lines of flight that carry attention across a single language, producing bounded spaces of language-specific experience, celebrity, and civic engagement. These lines of flight are reinforced, of course, by the monopolistic corporate ownership of the television stations, celebrity magazines, live performance opera-

tions, and other cultural channels through which the tokens of Quebec life pass.

Montrealers regularly resolve to consume media in the “other” language as a way to expand their linguistic abilities. This is particularly true for anglophones new to the city, for whom the commitment to watching French-language television or reading *Le Devoir* every day offers a seemingly convenient way to improve one’s French. Unscientific observation suggests that these commitments are rarely upheld for long periods of time. Arguably, exposure to media in the other language exposes one to complex systems of inter-reference (to celebrities, films and television programs, political impulses, regions and neighbourhoods, and so on) that are often of limited intelligibility and interest. Rather than serving as pathways of orientation, then, Montreal’s linguistically divided media produce coherent and rarely overlapping symbolic universes that only serve to intensify estrangement.

Large numbers of Montrealers will move back and forth between media in the French and English languages. This is particularly common among those for whom neither language is a mother tongue. This movement, as I have show, is widespread among radio listeners who, in seeking out the music they prefer, will cross linguistic boundaries in order to find it. In this switching, we find another site (like street-level conversation) in which the boundaries between language are challenged. Most of the time, however, this switching does little to weaken the linguistic exclusivity of Montreal’s media themselves. These media rarely represent, within their own programming, the language-switching that is a deeply rooted feature of everyday life in Montreal.

NOTES

- 1 My translation. The original reads: “La grande ville est une ruche fantastique de mots qui ne se taisent jamais. Sans trêve, ils attisent les énergies de la ville et sont attisés par elle. Dans le cycle sans fin de la ville qui parle s’inscrit en eux, imperceptiblement, l’esprit actuel de la ville qui domine les strates de significations anciennes. Le langage en mouvement est immobilisé dans l’écriture qui fixe pourtant en elle le dynamisme de la ville, tout comme le froid se trouve fixée dans la glace.”
- 2 See, among many other examples of scholarly works that deal with linguistic mixing in Quebec writing, the essays collected in Ireland and Proulx (2004).

- 3 On mixes of language in everyday street terminology in Montreal, see Médam (2004, 49). On the overlaying of languages on city surfaces, see Darroch (2010).
- 4 For one among many discussions of “Montreal English” and its borrowings from the French, see Hayhoe (2013). For warnings about the erosion of French by English, see, for example, Rolland (2013).
- 5 For one among many other interesting accounts of this process, see Artières (2014).
- 6 It is worth noting that Montreal has more daily newspapers than most cities of comparable size in North America. *La Presse*, *Le journal de Montréal*, *Le Devoir*, and the *Montreal Gazette* are all available six days of the week. *Métro* and *24 heures* are free dailies aimed at commuters, the former owned by the Quebec-based Transcontinental corporation and the latter by Québecor’s Sun Media Corporation.
- 7 This bilingualism may also be an effect of the extent to which magazines devoted to the visual arts circulate through international networks of gallery bookstores and other venues in which English has become a shared language of communication.
- 8 For an extended discussion of bilingual broadcasting in Canada, and of English-language resistance to the practice, see Raboy (1990, 130–1).
- 9 In 1977, CKVL-FM renamed itself CKOI-FM and offered roughly similar programming in the French language (see *Globe and Mail* 1977b, 67).
- 10 See also CRTC Decision 73-80, 19 March 1973.
- 11 CRTC Decision 75-32, 28 January 1975.
- 12 CRTC Decision 76-498, 29 July 1976.