SURREPTITIOUS SPACES OF CITIZENSHIP: THROUGH A CANADIAN FICTIONAL PRISM

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> It's not my intent to say these people shouldn't be here, or even don't have the right to be here. That's not for me to choose. I only mean to point out that if they're going to be here, they've got to accept not only the benefits but the responsibilities of being Canadian. A country's not just a piece of land. What makes a nation a nation is when a group of like-minded people decide to work towards common causes, common goals […] People who aren't interested in the concerns of language, religion, politics, all that, can't rightly call themselves active citizens. Really, now, think about it. (Ray Frank in *The Second Life of Samuel Tyne* 160; original emphasis)

This article examines the spaces of actions often coded as structural, systemic and transpersonal in the determinations of citizenship in a nation space. Whereas the institutions that regulate civil, political and social belonging often come across as impersonal entities, these regulating organs reflect the attitudes of the individuals whose opinions dominate the respective spaces. Esi Edugyan's novel *The Second Life of Samuel Tyne* (2004)[1] depicts realms of influences in which the individual, the family, the town, the nation and trans-national spaces are mutually constitutive and interrogative spheres that invent and control citizenship. Other operatives of group solidarity in this novel include social class, generation, age group and an assumed psychosocial affinity that divides people into "normal" versus "aberrant," handicapped versus "whole," sane versus insane, and so on. The novel's representation of these realms corroborates the evidence of feminist scholarship which has challenged the binary of the private versus public for its static constructions of citizenship (for instance, Joseph 73-92; Yuval-Davis 4-27; Meekosha and Dowse 49-72). Suad Joseph suggests that "not only does the site, porousness and shape of the public/private divide vary from state to state and time to time, but these configurations are impacted upon by institutions and forces competing with and within state-building

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projects" (73). Nira Yuval-Davis observes that every social sphere in the modern welfare state is exposed to state intervention, and that inconsistencies and confusions plague decisions about what belongs to the "private" domain. In place of a private/public distinction, she suggests we "differentiate between three distinct spheres of the state, civil society and the domain of the family, kinship and other primary relationships" (13). In *The Second Life of Samuel Tyne*, the private dealings of the character, Ray, with the Tynes and the Porters and his determination of the limits of the Tynes' citizenship capitalize on the authority and privilege conferred by his public office as deputy mayor, thus eroding the boundaries between the private and the public spheres.

This article defines as "surreptitious spaces of discourse and actions" those provinces that mediate citizenship and their imaginings which are obscured in superimposed binaries not only of private/public, but also of microcosm/macrocosm, town/country, language/action, inner/outer being, male/female, able/disabled, and so on. For instance, characterization and the nature of the conflicts in *The Second Life of Samuel Tyne* serve to figure the contestations of the assumptions of citizenship in the narrative's Canadian and African Canadian contexts. These contestations and the conflicts involving the various individuals and the civil and state agents reveal the sly areas of the language and the gestures which construct citizenship. The article suggests that when the events which drive the plot are put into consideration, a major fault line becomes the mental condition of the twin girls, Yvette and Chloe Tyne. Diagnosed with moderate psychosis just after their thirteenth birthday, Yvette and Chloe represent a key creation through which the ideas of belonging and not belonging, citizen, non-citizen and not-quite-citizen, are figured. Disability, understood in this article as including mental impairment and incapacity, as Helen Meekosha and Leanne Dowse observe, "challenges fundamental notions of normalcy and thus, ironically may have great potency for widening citizenship debates" (52). This observation is particularly relevant to *The Second Life of Samuel Tyne*.

Edugyan represents a period covering twentieth century Canada. She highlights the settling of people in Canada and the attendant issues of citizenship in phases drawn from the early, middle and late parts of the century, with a proleptic projection even beyond. In its representation, the novel suggests that space has a temporal dimension. The characters in *The Second Life of Samuel Tyne* experience different historical memories and moments in the spaces they inhabit and in which their citizenship is determined. Unwillingness or a limited willingness to subject their notion of space to its deep mediation by historically and imaginatively experienced time constructs for the characters spaces that range from blank slates to palimpsests and put them in crucial conflicts.

The novel's New World of Canada carries imprints of the old, even as it projects its new character. It shares some of the features of the New World described by Stuart Hall when he ascribes to the Caribbean three "presences": "Présence Africaine, Présence Européenne and New World presence." Some aspects of Hall's elaboration may be applied to the Canadian context: "The Third, 'New World' presence, is not so much power, as ground, place, territory. It is the juncture-point where the many cultural tributaries meet, the 'empty' land (the European colonisers emptied it) where strangers from every other part of the globe collided" (400). The description of the New World as "ground, place, territory," and as "the 'empty' land… where strangers from every other part of the globe collided" has resonance for Canada. *The Second Life of Samuel Tyne* encapsulates a lingering presumption of emptiness by comers to the land through a surreptitious erasure, or a selective palimpsest reading, of prior presences. In varying degrees, Natives, earlier and later-comers remain strangers to one another in this New World territory.

The temporal setting of *The Second Life of Samuel Tyne* utilizes a historical framework that integrates chronologies of actual historical developments, namely the settling of Alberta in the early twentieth century; the immigration waves to Canada following the Second World War of populations that the narrative describes as "refugees of every skin […] seeking new lives in a quieter country" (8); and events associated with a succession of Canadian prime ministers in the second half of the twentieth century. The temporal setting includes Gold Coast's transition from a British colony to a contemporary African state.

The primary spatial setting is Aster, a fictional small town modelled, according to Edugyan, after Amber—a community founded in Alberta in 1905 to1912 by Blacks immigrating from Oklahoma.[2] Aster is juxtaposed with actual Albertan cities—Calgary and Edmonton. The name, "Aster," evokes a perennial semi-wild flower found in Alberta and much of the prairie. But the novel's unmistakable picture of the locale by no means suggests a society insulated from the world or a philosophical concern with just the local. A simultaneous narrative of events happening on a much larger vista operates in the novel through the plotting of actions which affect the characters beyond their individual and private concerns and a discourse constantly gesturing to national and international events which have ramifications beyond the immediate locale or the particular moment that generate them. Yet some of the early reviewers of this novel have been eager to define the pivotal conflicts and the novel's arguments in the context of "small town racism," suggesting a distancing of an assumed typicalized nation of Canada from this small town's psychology, sociology, politics and imagination.[3]

Any presumed insularity of the small town turns out to be a fiction, as the townspeople are subject to inside as much as outside forces which shape their perceptions and interactions. There are implied secondary settings, where some of the formative and continuing influential events take place, namely the British colony, Gold Coast, which became Ghana at its political independence in 1957; and parts of the United States. Of importance is the representation of Canada as consisting of differentiated regions characterized by internal migrations, and shaped by global events such as trades and treaties with other nations and the movements of people across its borders. For instance, Ray migrated from Ontario to Alberta in search of a better life.

In Aster, he assumes civic citizenship and control of civic space with a self-assurance that projects an unproblematic, mobile national citizenship. Simultaneously, however, Ray performs a notion of citizenship that is ethnocentric, tribalistic and static in his relationships with the Tynes and the Porters, who represent to him a concept called "black." For Ray, blackness is a sign that is both known and nebulous and that belongs anywhere else but Canada.

The narratives of space, time and consciousness, of geography, history and social discourse in *The Second Life of Samuel Tyne* identify the political and social worlds of the novel as one in which the (post)national, the (post)colonial and the (post) diaspora overlap. In the composite narrative some interests collide in the Canadian space featuring these overlapped worlds. These interests are represented by characters that come already inscribed by the identities designated through the categories, nation, "race," ethnic/cultural/"tribal" group, and so on: Samuel and Maud Tyne, who are originally from Gold Coast; Saul Porter, a Black American immigrant from Oklahoma and his wife, Akosua Porter, who is originally from Ghana; and Raymond (Ray) Frank, an Anglophone white, originally from Ontario, and his wife, Eudora Frank, from Alberta.

The Tynes arrive in Aster in 1968. This year, according to the beginning of the narrative, belongs to "an age characterized by its atrocities," namely: "the surge of anti-Semitism throughout Poland; the black students killed in South Carolina at a still-segregated bowling alley; the slaughter of Vietnam […;] the deaths of Martin Luther King and Robert Kennedy, and those of less public men" (1-2). As the novel progresses, the atrocities culled from the international arena give ground to events of a mixed nature showing Canada's relations to the world and Canada's provincial-federal axis. These events include, notably, Alberta's and Canada's grain export wars of the 1970s. Unto the summer of this 1968 Edugyan projects the novel's fictional events, which, on the surface, suggest a domestic setting. But this domestic setting is permeated by the consequences of actions in the civis and the state, and in the inter-national sphere. The environment is that of the family of Samuel Tyne, described as "a naturally apolitical man, [who] worried over his private crises [for] his world held no future but quiet workdays, no past beyond youth and family life" (2). However, Samuel's apolitical disposition notwithstanding, he is in a world thoroughly traversed by the political, civil and other realms. His family's right, and his own individual right, to own a space in Aster, which is an important gauge of citizenship in this context, is inexorably questioned at all levels.

Samuel and Maud and their twin daughters, Yvette and Chloe, are living in Calgary when Samuel receives news of the death of his uncle, Jacob, who had settled in neighbouring Aster as a farmer. Born in Gold Coast, Samuel had immigrated to Canada about fifteen years before, after graduating first class from a university in England, to which his uncle and guardian had accompanied him upon Samuel's completion of high school in Gold Coast. Samuel was a young boy when he lost his father. Maud had immigrated some twenty-five years before, when she was in her early teens. The news bearer, who introduces himself as Saul Porter, informs Samuel that the latter has inherited his uncle's house in Aster: "Everything's yours," he tells Samuel by phone, adding, "The house has a lot of land surrounding it. Two, three acres" (11). Samuel already bored with his civil service job as an economic forecaster in a federal government office, where his boss, the boss's son and other co-workers abuse him, makes a move with his family to inherit the house in Aster and start a new life there.

Within a few weeks of the Tynes and their summer guest, Ama Ouillet, arriving in Aster, Saul, the Tynes' immediate neighbour, declares that Jacob had willed the grounds surrounding the house to him. He claims he has turned over the will, which he earlier said was in his possession, to the town council. Samuel is not one to accept the conflicting accounts of a man who is evasive, shadowy, mysterious and trickish, like Anansi—the trickster of Ghanaian folklore. He decides to enlist the help of Ray Frank, who, with his wife, Eudora, has befriended the Tynes, and whose status as deputy mayor makes Samuel think will give him access to the public records. However, Frank is also an entrepreneur farmer and he wants the same land for a venture to develop a super wheat crop.

Samuel's first priority is to fulfill his longing to control his own life and to indulge his knack for solving mathematical and abstract problems. He opens an electronics store in aster enabling him to turn his avocation into a vocation. Unable at first to attract customers, his skills are soon discovered and he begins to prosper. Inspired to develop a computer prototype and envisaging success, he uses up his family's savings on equipment and borrows money from investors. Then the Tyne household encounters a series of what seem like serious accidents in which Ama, who is about the same age as the Tyne sisters, Maud and Samuel are targets. The life-threatening incidents are all traced to the twin sisters.

Prior to the family's moving to Aster, there had been unsolved occurrences of arson in the town. After the Tynes' arrival a diner is torched and the Porters' house is razed by fire, the latter incident particularly pointing to the twins as the perpetrators. The circumstantial evidence against the twins is strong. Ray, evoking his status as the town's deputy mayor, but acting in an unofficial capacity, demands that the Tynes leave Aster. When Samuel refuses, Ray intimidates the Tynes into taking direct and personal responsibility for the burnt house. Ray and Eudora unilaterally impose a retributive punishment that forces the Tynes to cede ownership of their house to the Porters. Ray buys the house on behalf of the Porters, whom he gets to repay him gradually, at the same time turning the Tynes into tenants in the house. Ray gets the land he wants for his super crop, stating to an indignant Samuel that his motivations and actions had not been malicious but practical. Still Ray and Eudora insist that the twins leave Aster, threatening to report them to "the authorities" if they fail to comply. When Samuel refuses, his store, with his expensive equipment and computer prototype, is vandalized in a campaign which Frank and Eudora appear to have engineered. Shocked by the intensity of the animosity that has developed in the town towards their family, Samuel and Maud take the twins to a mental facility away from

Aster. Thus ends the summer of the Tynes' move to Aster and thus the novel uses up twenty-two of its twenty-four chapters.

The remaining two chapters narrate the next thirty years for which Samuel lives. The immediate events following the twins' banishment to the mental facility include the Porters' moving in with Maud and Samuel and Ama's final departure for her parents' house. These events are narrated in the first of the last two chapters and bring the novel's 1968 summer to an end. The last chapter is the most telescopic and condensed, as it narrates what happens in the next thirty years. It begins signally with a legend formula: "Years passed." The passed time sees Maud's and Samuel's ultimately futile attempt to have access to their daughters; Maud's death; Samuel's ritual libation of farewell to Maud and finally to his uncle, Jacob; Samuel's development of a prolonged illness that will kill him; the deaths of Saul and Ray; Eudora's departure for a seniors' home; a conciliatory gesture from Eudora to Samuel; reversion of the house to Samuel; a brief liaison between Samuel and Akosua; the Porter children's departure one by one from home; Akosua's departure for Ghana; Ama's return to Aster to look for Samuel; and Samuel's death. The narrative ends with a cryptic, proleptic reference to a big house falling, observed at a distance by the un-embodied narrator, and the return of one of the twins from the mental facility to the house in Aster, the other having died, and a suggestion of the surviving twin's triumph over her sickness.

Aster's deputy mayor, Ray, predicates the conditions of citizenship upon a reciprocal, give-and-take relationship entailing responsibilities and benefits. Furthermore, he suggests that a nation comprises of "like-minded people [who] decide to work towards common causes, common goals." Finally, his definition includes the quality of being "active," which is gauged as being "interested in the concerns of language, religion, politics, all that" (160). The context of this speech is the pre-dinner chat at the home of the Franks, when they invite Maud and Samuel over. The immediate provocation is Eudora's observation of Akosua Porter as follows: "The Young Old Woman Who Lived in a Shoe. How's it go? Got so many children…?" (158-59). A short while later, Ray finds an example again in the Porters: "But look at someone like Porter. No steady job, a wife who doesn't work, and look at his brood. She's barely off the boat before she pops out ten kids" (161). The frequent reference by the Franks to the Porters may be explained as emanating for the small size of Aster, with not too many examples for the Franks to draw from. However, the small size could also have stimulated the neighbours to know one another better. Akosua does not have ten children; she has three. Saul's first wife, who is deceased, left three children. The Franks have not bothered to check. Instead they base their judgments on selective fact, half truth and skewed fiction. A surreptitious slide among these categories traps their imagined nation space and its human constitution in errors.

Aster townswoman, Mrs. Tyler, at a town meeting equally reminds everyone: "the bottom line is, citizenship should not be about 'what's in it for me?' but rather about 'how can we make Aster a better place?' Citizenship is about working for the greater good and putting aside personal interests" (119). The attitudes and the assumptions behind Mrs. Tyler's expectations are similar to those demonstrated by Ray, although the latter comes across more readily as a bigot. Though these two characters confidently define citizenship for themselves and for others, their terms and yardsticks are quite subjective. For instance, who determines "the greater good"? Does a nation consist of a "group of like-minded people"? Is there a place given to rights that is commensurate with the place given to obligations in the expectations of citizenship?

Ray's term, "benefits," which he pairs up with "responsibilities," projects the idea of "charity," not simply "advantages." This slide in meaning is evident in his representation of the Porters as people incapable of taking care of themselves, despite the fact that Saul's family built the first residences in Aster, and Saul has maintained his family and the family's house over the decades. Ruth Lister identifies a "duties discourse" in late twentieth century interpretation of citizenship that is close to Ray's expectations. She traces this discourse to "the new right and the communitarians in the U.S. and the U.K." linked through their desire to reduce welfare dependence in the two respective countries (20). The "duties discourse" paradigm emphasizes "citizenship obligations over rights" and appeals "to the common good in identifying as the primary obligation engagement in paid work by welfare recipients to support their families" (Lister 19). The linking of citizens' duties to welfare receipt presents a theatre of inequality, as shown by Lister: "Although the work obligation is presented as one that unites all citizens in a contribution to the common good, it is in fact differently applied, for those with sufficient independent means can afford, and therefore choose, to ignore it, if they so wish" (20).

While Samuel observes to Maud on their way home from the dinner that it is as if both Ray and Eudora had "misunderstood a book that nonetheless made an impression on them" (166), Ray's ideas closely echo those of the social theorists who originated the "duties discourse," and whose key texts, according to Lister, include Lawrence Mead's *Beyond Entitlement: The Social Obligations of Citizenship* (Lister 19). Misunderstanding or understanding does not so much separate the Canadian character Ray from the American social theorist Mead as a conservative ideology links both men. Thus *The Second Life of Samuel Tyne* provides a study of ideological and epistemic continuities in the Canadian, the U.S and the U.K contexts in respect of the strings that control citizenship.

The idea of "rights," which are occluded in Ray's and Mrs. Tyler's formulations, takes centre stage in the citizenship theory of the Briton, T. H. Marshall, whose ideas, published in 1950, have been influential in western citizenship theories. Marshall sees civil, political and social dimensions to citizen rights:

> The civil element is composed of the rights necessary for individual freedom—liberty of the person, freedom of speech, thought and faith, the right to own property and to conclude valid contracts, and the right to justice. The last is of a different order from the others, because it is the right to defend and assert all one's rights on terms of equality with others and by due process of law…By the political element I mean the right to participate in the exercise of political power, as a member of a body invested with politi-

> cal authority or as an elector of the members of such a body…By the social I mean the whole range from the right to a modicum of economic welfare and security to the right to share to the full in the social heritage and to live the life of a civilised being according to the standards prevailing in the society. (Quoted in Lister 15-16)

However, the various freedoms of which Marshall speaks are not typically amenable to determination by a common calibrator. In the symbolization by Edugyan, Ray upholds many of the rights spelled out by Marshall but for himself and rarely for the Tynes. How do the Tynes come to be so without rights?

It may be easy to say that Ray's manipulation of the Tynes is an individual abuse of individual rights and of the civic authority of his public image. Even Samuel may be blamed for allowing his alternating naivety—for instance, in the degree of his trust in the representative of the civis—and his intellectual superiority to many around him, not least of whom are the Franks, to hamper his judgement and course of action. However, the character of the public structures in which he is immersed is parallel to Ray's. The depth and the reach of the ideology which link both are areas that must be probed. Just as Ray is able easily to pull the Tynes' home from under them, the state too is able easily to take the Tynes' children from them. Therefore, the relationships between the state and the different individual citizens need always to be closely calibrated although this is admittedly a painstaking exercise.

The term "active" as a criterion of citizenship suggests three senses. One is in the sense of community service. A critique of community service as a citizenship obligation concerns its gendered construct. Lister draws attention to care, "which insofar as it is undertaken in the private sphere of the home, tends to be discounted as an expression of active citizenship obligation" (22). Women are over-represented in care giving in the home, for which they are unrecognized. In *The Second Life of Samuel Tyne*, both Maud and Samuel feel responsible for their twin daughters, but for Maud who has internalised as a woman's province the construction of the domain of domesticity, taking sole charge of the interminable cleaning of the house in Aster, the impact of the twins' illness is far more debilitating.

It is Maud who seeks to initiate the girls into "feminine" ways, for instance, by buying them feminizing clothes to stimulate their response in that direction, and it is she who suffers the most incapacitating consequence of the girls' episodes of destructiveness. The more she seeks to care for the girls by seeking to make them lady-like, the more her love is unrequited and the harder she works. Not surprisingly, she dies an early death from "coronary thrombosis," according to the medical authorities, and "of grief," according to her husband.

The narrative detail that Maud's and Samuel's "citizenship *had been finalized*" (emphasis added), provided at the moment Maud's death is reported, links the states of being and not being to the construction of belonging to the collectivity signified as citizenship in the state. The grammatical tense and sentence sequence render the exact point at which Maud's citizenship is finalized vague, but the novel invests the exactness with no material consequence. Maud has been active in caring for the sick girls all this while but has been irrelevant in the national collective. It is when she ceases to exist that her official recognition as a member of the national collective is mentioned.

A second sense of "active" is that elaborated by Meekosha and Dowse, who consider the ways in which a prevalent representation of physical and psychological fitness as norm has constructed disabled people/people with disability as inactive and passive. Meekosha and Dowse point out that "[w]e speak of upright and upstanding citizens, we stand to attention to the playing of the national anthem. The good citizen is embodied as male, white, active, fit and able, in complete contrast to the unvalued 'inactive' disabled Other" (50). Yet, to be a person with disability does not mean to be passive. It is the exclusionary practices and the discriminatory institutions and ideologies which have placed limits upon the participation of disabled people/people with disability in economic, social and political activities (Meekosha and Dowse 52). The intensity of the twin sisters' psychosis, experienced externally as bouts of destructiveness, increases in direct proportion to their instinct and desire to be not passive. They are very active right from the start.

A third sense of "being active" elaborated by Yuval-Davis (following Sheila Allen and Marie Macey) entails "participating in some form of ruling as well as being ruled, the Aristotelian definition of citizenship" (16). Yuval-Davis observes that "only a minority of people, in probably the minority of world states, can be said to have this kind of active citizenship status. This is not just a question of formal rights. Even in the most democratically active societies there are strata of the population which are passive, too disempowered and/or alienated to participate even in the formal act of voting" (16). This yardstick cannot, therefore, be of universal application. The Canadian-born Tyne twins are children when we meet them, hence disenfranchised from this form of political participation. Their coming of age finds them in a mental facility in which they are not only incarcerated—hence physically thwarted from voting or ruling—but cognitively and physiologically interfered with through a medication regimen that slows down their faculties. The girls' condition of twinness exacerbates their perception by others as freaks. Their gender too contributes to this perception. Maud often wishes that Yvette and Chloe can be graceful, as girls are presumably supposed to be, and vainly tries to make them conform to the image of the mild-mannered, neat and pretty Ama, whom she takes as a model of feminine beauty. Ama reads *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, and to her, the twins' reading of Aldous Huxley's gritty and bloody novel, *The Devils*, confirms their monstrosity.

Thus the notions of "the common good," "active participation," and "common goals," and similar watchwords, as conditions of citizenship demand scrutiny at all times.

If any set of characters in the novel can be counted as active in the senses beyond and including Ray's definition these characters will be the twin sisters, Yvette and Chloe, until their incarceration. Edugyan's depiction of the twins suggests that the plight of the individual is seeded at an early age. Although the twins are diagnosed with psychosis at the onset of their teens, for the next thirty years they will be trapped by the consequences of this diagnosis, including their effacement from civil, political, social and familial spaces. A second achievement of the focalization is the suggestion that the health challenges of a child equally affect the adult care giver responsible for the child: Yvette and Chloe become progressively debilitated, so does Maud, and in spite of his longer resistance, so does Samuel. Thus, the twins' behavioural problems while in Aster effectively seal their parents' fate in economic, social and political terms. Their presumed transgression of the terms of citizenship in Aster curtails their parents' acceptance in the society. As mentally handicapped, exceptionally precocious, black children in the society into which Aster develops, Yvette and Chloe represent a concentrated study of strata of population alienated from citizenship.

The two girls demonstrate remarkable engagement with, and assimilation, of the local and national histories and legends; they engage the politics at the levels accessible to them; they are not only linguistically astute and sensitive to the inflections of English, they care about the linguistic development in their environment. Ironically, they do not appear to Ray in any of this light. Ray is one of the first people to label them "evil" and to banish them from Aster, to strip them of civic, social, political and ethical citizenship.

The girls' active interest in the political concerns may be seen in their dramatic enactment of "Diefenbachia." As a five-year old, Chloe adopts the name "Ms Diefenbachia," an allusion to John Diefenbaker, Canada's Prime Minister from 1957 to 1963, the period when the twins are growing up. Yvette adopts the name "Dracula." They must have become sensitized to these names and their associations through the narratives in their environment. But the two adopted aliases begin to merge in the twins' consciousness. Their lingo, which represents their conscious intervention, renders the intersected ideas into "Diefendracula" and then "Drachia" (25). Diefenbaker was neither of French nor English ancestry, a rarity so far among Canadian prime ministers. Desmond Morton remarks "the discrimination" which Diefenbaker "suffered, even in Tory circles, for his *foreign-sounding* name" (*A Short History of Canada* 225; my emphasis). Morton's vocabulary shows a common tendency towards Anglo neutralization of its ethnicity and its auto-promotion as the universal standard of values.

Diefenbaker was reputed to have initially shown a warm face to newcomers. He supported Ghana as the first African member in the Commonwealth (Morton, "Strains of Affluence" 498). Later, however, "[n]ew Canadians, who had initially identified with Diefenbaker as a fellow outsider, now associated his period in power with unemployment, reviving prejudices, and restrictions on immigration" (501-502). Maud and Samuel, originally from Ghana, frozen for the couple in its colonial manifestation as Gold Coast, may not have been paying attention to these reports particularly as Maud is so eager to assimilate into Canada that she makes it her mission to erase the accent she came with as a teenager. The twins' dramatizations frequently represent in complex terms the traces of the various repressions endured by their parents and the forces behind these repressions. In the naming game, the twins perform the uncanny aspects of the actions of the prime minister and (pre) figure their own psychosis in the image of Dracula-Drachia.

Homi Bhabha asks whether there is "a passage from the *aura* of rapture to the *agora*, or marketplace, of negotiation" (10). Rapture is transcendent; it is the subliminal experience beneath the skin, under the threshold of consciousness. If its testimony "consists in a kind of breach between experience and knowledge, then what account can it give of itself? More significantly, who speaks for rapture? Can it be witnessed or represented? Can there be a 'subject' of rapture if it introduces a caesura in both time and place?" (10). It is through human agency, as Bhabha explains, that the ineffable experience becomes visible. By engaging "a perspective outside itself" and by finding a language in which aura and agora overlap, the agency enables this visibility (10, 12).

Through their self-conscious agency and their performances of realities that elude everyday description, the twins create a bridge between the easily relatable and the ineffable, between the aura and the agora through which their citizenship is voided into not-quite-citizen. The language and image forged by the twins consist of their troping of the power relations and the dastardly games of belonging/not belonging played in the cultural, social, civil and political environments. They perform at different levels of abstraction the various narratives in which the power play is embedded and sublimated.

The ambiguity of the twins situates their story at several thresholds, after Ato Quayson, who suggests that narrative structures consist of embedded thresholds referring to the social world, which itself comprises of various interacting thresholds (xvi). The twins' story situates them at the thresholds of the ordinary and the not-ordinary, of the strange in the familiar and the familiar in the strange (after Freud "The Uncanny" 148), and of the revelation of "the half-different and the partially familiar" highlighted by Gilroy in his discussion of the metamorphosis of exclusionary identity discourses in present-day. Gilroy observes: "New hatreds and violence arise not, as they did in the past, from supposedly reliable anthropological knowledge of the identity and difference of the Other but from the novel problem of not being able to locate the Other's difference in the common-sense lexicon of alterity" (105-106). The twins constitute a bridge between the mentally handicapped of Eudora's theories and the non-handicapped; between the citizen and the immigrant; and between the forms of outsideness represented in the sign of "foreigner" and that of the "handicapped."

In a tropological manner as well, Ama's relationship with her parents and grandmother queries generational assumptions and the grounds for assuming solidarity, homeliness and belonging within a family setting. Her parents, André and Vaughn Ouillet, are burdened with her mother's chronic illnesses, which impair their parenting responsibility. It is on one of the many occasions when they go to France, their ancestral country, in search of healing for Vaughn that Ama comes to live with the Tynes, who are barely known to the Ouillets. Ama's grandmother, Geneviève Ouillet, pursued by her own psychosis, is not able to care for the girl adequately. Psychosis is understood here as characterized by Freud, who distinguishes it from neurosis as follows: “neurosis is the result of a conflict between the ego and its id, whereas psychosis is the analogous outcome of a similar disturbance in the relations between the ego and the external world” (“Neurosis and Psychosis” 149).

Geneviève’s house, specifically the transformation she brings upon it, is a prominent reflector of her psycho-affective and cognitive states. The house is distinguished by its smell of decayed and decaying food. Geneviève fills up spaces everywhere in her house with food and the surroundings as well. The external visual beauty of the house, the finely trimmed hedges and the breathtaking lawns and flowers represent signs strangely at odds with the oppressive stench emanating from half-decayed foods interlacing the decorative flora. The hoarded food becomes a health hazard, subverting the purpose of food to nourish. The house, so transformed by Geneviève into a strange space, drives people away, including her son, André, who would be her natural heir. André’s resignation is deeply felt, following his abortive attempt to clean up the house: he “supposed that after so many months it would be impossible to resurrect the house from its grave of mould” (*The Second Life* 37). Geneviève’s house thus associated with a grave shares an affinity with the Tynes’ house in Aster, which smells too but of the rankness of uncontrollable flora and of mothballs and is assailed by ashen dust that prompts Samuel to think that his newly inherited house is in mourning.

Geneviève falls into her psychosis out of fear of starvation, following a country-wide economic depression. She is also xenophobic, and the smell enveloping her house seems cognate with the shield she creates to stave off foreigners. The intangible but dreadful stench is matched by the abrasive parole which she uses as a weapon to keep at bay the foreigners she loathes, namely those who do not speak her language, French. A first generation Canadian, Geneviève descends from immigrants from France. She falls in love with a Native, whom she marries against the initial resistance of her father. Later developing an exclusivist linguistic nationalism meant to protect her ancestry, she forgets the Native side of her offspring.

But the Native is an absented presence, effectively captured by Edugyan in the scene in which the Tynes unwittingly give away their children to the state. In the waiting room where the twins’ admission to the mental facility is processed, the narrative remarks that there are only two other people: “two Natives in formal but stained clothes who leaned against each other sleeping” (296). This is the only physical appearance of Natives in the novel. But how haunting this presence, whose brevity nonetheless speaks volumes about a profound silence that is at once emblematic of an engineered silencing and of a response that seeks other terms than the violence of the conquest and the partial extermination that brought this response into being!

In her linguistic nationalism, Geneviève has a soul sister in Akosua Porter, who demands not only that her children speak Twi but that the children of her neighbours, the Tynes, speak the language too. She scolds Yvette and Chloe for not speaking a

Ghanaian language and the parents for not enforcing this Ghanaian heritage. She shows indifference to the challenges of transplanting a Ghanaian language into a new environment and of making it a language of widespread communication; for it is the lingua franca that has often determined the fate of the languages that have crossed the Atlantic westward (Chambers 100-133). A similar impulse on Akosua's part leads her to demand that Samuel hold a forty days' libation ceremony for Jacob as is done in Ghana based on her interpretation, thus disregarding the temporal and personal aspects of the meaning of the ritual for the celebrant.

Geneviève's nationalism and static representation of homeland prevent her from recognizing any affinity she may have with Samuel, who has been cast just like her in some of the national narratives as an inherent outsider. Her nationalism and definition of citizenship are no different from the old world version displayed by the Front Nationale of France in the 1990s, which, as recounted by Gilroy, was "pursuing a crusade against the subversive and unworthy culture of the Left, immigrants, and other groups it regards as alien or unpatriotic. The Front's vision of proper, purified French culture has committed it to the censure of school and other public libraries" (*Against Race* 280).

Ama, unlike Geneviève, crosses over the bloodline through her elective affinity with Samuel and Maud, in a manner whose tone is set in their first meeting. Ama is the only character who exercises faith in Samuel's dream of a computer prototype, her response being shaped by this elective affinity.

Ray and Eudora Frank, while investing their time and company and even affection on the Tynes, simultaneously keep them at an unbridgeable distance. Where does their ambivalence come from? Rinaldo Walcott suggests that Canada's national narrative, which constructs two European descended groups, white Anglos and Francos, who initially colonized the territory as settlers, as the "founding nations," appends a "special" status to aboriginal Canadians and a "multicultural character" clause to others, perpetrates an insider versus outsider hiatus that continues to reproduce a tiered citizenship (118-119). Ray in arguments frequently sounds like an ultra conservative parliamentarian debating immigration and social services policies and is wont to blame public costs on immigrants and economically disadvantaged people, rather than contemplate other possible sources, say, the "corporate welfare bums"—huge firms that rob the public of significant revenue by "deferr[ing] their taxes for years while ordinary citizens paid up"—as exposed in the late 1960s and early 1970s. (Morton, *A Short History of Canada* 258-59). David Lewis, leader of the New Democratic Party who drew attention to the "corporate welfare bums" was responding to similar attacks as Ray's on social rights and policies.

The discursive spaces reveal in Ray's rhetoric a tendency to speak in the first-person plural pronoun, "we"/"us" to demarcate his imagined community:

> "I tell you, we've got a policy to change in this country if we don't want to see another depression. Year after year, rules of entry just get laxer, and if we keep on like this, we don't just risk our culture, but bankrupting ourselves. What happened with ranching

> turn of the century could happen to any other cornerstone of our culture." (159)

Eudora's rhetoric shows a complementary fondness for the third person pronoun, "they"/"them" and equally marks out categories and subcategories of citizenship and sub-citizenship based upon ability and disability:

> "What they need most are trained people who'll help them know where they excel and where they don't. If you shelter them and nurture them from babyhood, there's the potential for them to keep that babyhood innocence. They need a kind of education, not mindless charity, which is *like using a rag to stop a flood*. Getting to the heart of the matter is a hard thing—in this way, you got to admit they can't be treated like normal people. They've got to live in special homes [...] where they're cut off from the temptations that lead to alcoholism, prostitution, hysteria, what have you. I think the government would save money running mandatory facilities, if you compare it with the cost of fixing these people's mistakes." (164; my emphasis)

Ray states his difference from Eudora in his retort: "The government just can't afford it [...] They should nip it in the bud before *we're overrun*" (164; emphasis added). However, the difference between the two Franks' positions vanishes on what constitutes their scale of humanity. Ray's denial of public support to the handicapped denies them full citizenship, while Eudora's tolerance of people with mental disability is a cut between a paternalism and a maternalism which degrade them. Ray's phraseology does recall that of Richard Bennett, Canada's Prime Minister from 1930 to 1935, telling a Calgary audience: "we must not allow our shores to be *over-run* by Asiatics and become dominated by *an alien race*" (The Applied History Research Group; emphasis added). Bennett was representing Calgary and South Alberta when he was elected Prime Minster. Born in New Brunswick, on Canada's east coast, he moved west to Calgary after his university education.

Eudora's compound trope, involving a simile, metaphor and allusion, "*like using a rag to stop a flood*," telescopes a traditional patriarchal belittlement of women's physiology, hence their intervention acts, from a post-creation apocalypse myth (the Flood that engendered Noah's Ark) to the present. Its register and tropology collocate with Ray's secular apocalyptic image: "before we're overrun" (164). Thus the shared discourse shows the couple's inter-subjective link and an ideological affinity between them.

Eudora's depiction vis-à-vis Ray shows an alliance between these members of the female and male genders. The common denominator between the couple is their privileging of whiteness as an arbitrator of citizenship. Eudora, who is a self-proclaimed activist for women's issues, is hobbled by her conservative political and cultural ideologies that underwrite her white cultural supremacy and her paternalism towards people with disability. But in her treatment of fellow townswoman, Tara Chodzicki, who is equally white, Eudora constructs a moral scale on which Tara, reported by Eudora as having committed adultery in the past, fails.

Ironically, Tara, whom Eudora bans from full social citizenship, is the only one among the adults who demonstrates some potential for finding a connection point with the twins' psychic energy and creatively diverting them but she is thwarted by Eudora. Tara's exclusion is limited to parts of the social realm. While it does not suffer the severe political and economic consequences resulting from the more global ostracism of the Tynes engineered by Eudora and Ray, its consequence is an equal excision from the ethical community. Tara's alleged adultery, for which she is condemned in the surreptitious and influential court of gossip, without the opportunity of self-defence, excludes her from ethical citizenship. The Tynes' exclusion from ethical citizenship derives from their Otherness—as people associated inherently with belonging elsewhere.

The novel suggests that the Black Diaspora is in formation still through its representation of the intersections and interrogations between earlier black settlement and more recent immigration from the Africa. Saul hallows the grounds on which Samuel's house stands. More than an act of greed, it is Saul's nostalgia to the time back to his family's founding of Aster and their establishing a community in a place decidedly hostile to them that underpins his desire to annex Samuel's house. As felt by Samuel, Saul's pressure on him to sell the house soon after the Tynes move in constitutes a hostile take-over. Not "race" or socio-economic class, or parallel economic struggles, or an assumed historical connection through the American and European imperialisms that touch their lives provokes a basis of solidarity between the two men. If Saul had approved of Jacob Tyne's ownership of the house, grateful even for Jacob's restoration of the then abandoned and deteriorating house, what should be the problem with Jacob's nephew now owning it? Exigency makes allies in this case: Saul and Ray become strategic allies as each seems to require the other's cooperation or protection in order to gain access to Samuel's house and the surrounding grounds respectively. But despite Saul's and Ray's overlapping longevity in Aster, the land does not necessarily provoke overlapping cognitive and psycho-affective responses from both men. Ray wants the land for purely economic reasons.

Ray arrives closer in time to Saul Porter's family's pioneering settlement in Aster upon their immigration from Oklahoma, U.S.A, which is south of Alberta. He learns and recites the lore of the Porters' settling of the land. Ray evokes Samuel's more distant country of origin, which he consequently turns into Other, as in the scene when his farm's caretaker, Jarvis, brutally slaughters a calf and Ray reprimands Samuel for being traumatized by the slaughter when according to him, "as a man coming from where you're from, this stuff ought to be a bit less traumatic" (136). Yet Ray, responding to a newspaper story, remarks to Samuel: "Oh, here's something for you—'affirmative action'—just got instituted in the States, don't know the particulars, but it's supposed to help you guys" (93). All the particulars that Ray knows about Saul and Samuel prior to this time become transmuted into sameness. Ray's impulse to construct the world in black-versus-white and white Anglo-versus-others dissolves all personal knowledge and bleaches history from diaspora formation.

What is the disposition of the state for which the characters speak and on whose behalf they act and imagine citizenship? The policemen who come to the Tynes' house to report the desecration of Samuel's store are the most visible representatives of the state. Other representatives are the psychiatrist and the administrative staff of the mental facility to which the twins are taken. At a more systemic level, Aster's town council, which is the local government and repository of public records, is a miniature of the state. Other representatives come from the parallel historical narrations which make references to government policies and the succession of prime ministers. The state is "the authorities" evoked by Ray when he threatens Samuel; by Maud in a domestic dispute in which she half-heartedly threatens to report Samuel; and by Saul narrating his family's immigration to Canada. The officers of the RCMP (Royal Canadian Mounted Police), Canada's federal police, who bring the Tynes the news of the store's destruction, represent the state as tangible presence:

> Seeing the immaculate pants, the tall black boots, and the moustaches that gave their faces a severe, parochial look, Maud was beset with panic. She wiped her hands on her apron, trying to smile.
> The policemen stood on the porch, chatting easily between themselves until they saw her.
> "We're looking for Samuel Kwabena Tyne. Is he home?" (291)

The state's power and demeanour are projected through the policemen's formidable and strict outfit and appearance, a spectacle that contrasts their ease while also heightening the gulf between them and Maud, who has been triggered into panic by the policemen's presence. When they state their mission we learn for the first time Samuel's middle name, which marks him more readily as of African origin than his first name and family name. Names, it transpires, are shorthand for critical information in the state's semiotic system. The policemen express no interest in investigating the store's destruction as a criminal encroachment on Samuel's space: why? Could it be that Samuel's identity and the police's facility to assess, pre-judge or typecast him based on their onomastics influence the policemen's nonchalant attitude to the destruction of his store? Or are the policemen (pre)selective about the citizens they protect?

The RCMP officers remark to Maud, who is only beginning to understand Samuel's lapse into shock upon his return earlier from the store: "Sheer vandalism. What is happening to this town?" (292). Then they depart. Yet, the graffiti splashed on Samuel's store, where the vandals had urinated, smashed his workbench and burnt his computer prototypes, admonish their addressee in bold letters: "Go home firestarter." Where do these officers assume Samuel's home to be? They would obviously be aware of the unsolved cases of arson in the town. Why are they not interested in investigating the "firestarter" in the graffiti's message? The policemen instead see the destruction and the defilement of Samuel's store in impersonal terms and readily blame it on anonymous forces. The state, through its agents, fails to protect the Tynes. It is against such nonchalance that the state's conferment of formal citizenship on Samuel and his family appears not to matter much to Samuel. By the time their formal papers are reported, the Tynes have found their own citizenship, defined for them by their struggles and their sacrifices to the place they have made home, accepting its dire challenges, and by their cognitive and psycho-affective relation to this place, including the impact of the loss of their family members buried or incarcerated there.

The contradictions of the state as a custodian and nurturer of the citizens and one which turns into a dungeon for those it makes semi-citizens are seen in the mental facility. There the nurses keep personalized and individualistic logs of public appointments. None of the nurses who attend to Samuel and Maud when the latter attempt to see their daughter passes her booking information to the other nurses on the duty roaster, with the result that the right hand does not know what the left hand is doing. Maud and Samuel are subjected to a meaningless, Kafkaseque return to the facility without their being able to see their children. What happens here is a strange cocktail of private and public ownership—the nurses' separate and privately guarded hospital log books are superimposed upon public allocation of time-space resulting in an alienating bureaucracy. These nurses' privatization of the public domain is similar to the nepotism of the boss and the boss' son, nicknamed Dombey and Son by Samuel, in the government office in Calgary. The "Dombeys" form a dynastic rule in this public domain. Samuel and Maud virtually lose their children to the state, as they are made to sign papers at a moment of distraction surreptitiously exposing them to losing jurisdiction over the children.

Samuel's determination to stay on in Aster constitutes a form of resistance to the denial of full citizenship to his family in the New World. It evokes Harriet Tubman's rooting trope in a speech "denouncing the nineteenth-century colonization movement back to Africa":

> She had likened Blacks to a field of onions and garlic that cannot be easily uprooted. Whites had brought Black people here to do their drudgery, and now were trying to uproot them out and ship them back to Africa. 'But,' she said, 'they can't do it; we're rooted here, they can't pull us up.' (Bristow and others 9)

It entails a transformative translation of aspects of the old world in the context of the new.

This translation is principally a spiritual and an ethical one and it is presented at the levels of action and symbolism. Samuel has been estranged from his father-figure, his uncle Jacob, whom he begrudges for a good part of a lifetime on account of Jacob's departure for Aster, mistaking the departure for desertion. It is when Samuel finally grants Jacob his freedom to claim his own space in the world, that he (re)discovers his own. A non-passive inheritor of his uncle's house in Aster, Samuel rediscovers his uncle through his interaction with this house and realizes their linked searches for freedom and meaning. In the process he comes to appreciate a necessary connection between the living and the dead, because this link helps foster belief. Guided in his earlier responses by his intellectualism and scientific empiricism, Samuel bypasses the ritual of remembrance for his uncle which, traditionally, is kept in Ghana as "the forty days' libation." This ceremony ensures that the dead relatives receive their due rest, as suggested by Akosua (146-147).

As Samuel's awareness of the cycle of life and death deepens, and he ponders his daughters' sickness, he begins to appreciate alternative forms of existence. This awareness is the context in which he performs the libation ritual for his wife, who dies of unrelieved grief over the incarcerated twins, and finally for Jacob, and all his departed relatives, and reclaims his daughters into the community by following his ritual with a drive to the mental facility to see them. A similar embodiment of the translation is the relationship forged between Ama and Samuel, which crosses the bloodline to privilege ethical and affective values.

Using the theme of juvenile mental illness as the agent provocateur for the complication of the plots of *The Second Life of Samuel Tyne*, Edugyan avoids predictability at the levels of theme, argument, figuration and style. She fills a gap in what so far has tended to constitute the black literary voices in Canada by presenting continental African voices, represented by Samuel, Maud and Jacob Tyne and Akosua Porter, among the voices of people who have settled in Canada and made the country home. Her representation is achieved in part by making her African Canadian characters a strong presence, provoking misgivings about the label for non-White Canadians of "visible minority," which has taken dubious roots in Canada's public discourse. There is nothing minor, nothing inherently marginal, about the people that Edugyan evokes; it is a national narrative which encourages tiered citizenship that confers marginalization and a fraught visibility on the groups figured through these characters. Edugyan's narrative does not propose a quintessential African experience in Canada; it participates in a dialogue with black Canadian past and present histories on the traversing, merging and diverging of African, black and Canadian identities. It represents the multiple components of contemporary Canadian, and any, citizenship. It breaks down the walls of stratified living and communication involving older and newer Canadians through its stereographic and multilateral representation. Her provocative characterization responds to the different vectors in Fraser Sutherland's useful question, if rather broad generalizations, regarding contemporary relations in Canada:

> In their poetry and fiction, immigrants write about old homelands, and the experience of living in a new country. And the Canadians whose families have long resided here have no compunction about writing about citizens of other countries but typically avoid artistically coming to terms with those who have settled here […] Is it possible that both groups fear engaging with each other in art, a mirror image of the engagement in life? (31)

The Second Life of Samuel Tyne also contests George Elliott Clarke's assertion that African Canadian literature breaks down into a basic binary of "integration versus nationalism," where this nationalism is "a nostalgic yearning for homelands in Africa, the Caribbean, or the southern United States" (13; 15). More than advocating unambiguous integration, it rather asks: integration into what? It renders the space occupied by the modern nation in the New World, more specifically Canada, as a conflicted and productive palimpsest and hybrid of old world and new, nation and diaspora. The characters are significant because Edugyan draws attention to the subtlest shifts in their gestures. Her descriptions often evoke the lingering presence in the mind's eye of an action that is already past, the progressive transformations in states of being, and the metamorphoses and mutations inherent in what is often codified as behaviour and citizenship. She captures vividly the aura and the liminal bespoken by the violence that resides in the calm spaces of contemporary nation.

ENDNOTES

1. Two editions of *The Second Life of Samuel Tyne* came out some months apart, a hardcopy edition published by Knopf Canada in August 2004, and a soft cover edition published by Vintage Canada in 2005—both publishers being divisions of Random House of Canada. The 2005 publication is slightly shorter than the 2004 edition and contains some changes in some of the descriptions of some of the events. As neither the novel's author nor Vintage Canada has made any statement that the 2005 edition constitutes a new or revised edition, I take it that they do not intend for those changes to be taken as major changes. From my reading of the two versions, the differences between both do not in any way affect the arguments of this article. Page references in the article are to the 2004 hardcopy edition.

2. See "Interview," in "New Faces 2004: Esi Edugyan," http://www.randomhouse.ca/newface/edugyan.php. Accessed May 15, 2005. See also Shepard, Bruce. *Deemed Unsuitable: Blacks from Oklahoma move to the Canadian prairies in the early 20th century in search of equality only to find racism in their new home.*

3. See the inside blurb of the Vintage Canada Edition, 2005, of *The Second Life of Samuel Tyne*. The blurb quotes reviews from *The Times-Colonist* of Victoria which foreground "small-town racism" in the novel; and from the *Edmonton Journal* which draws attention to the small town as it is what defines Edugyan's writing in this novel: "Edugyan is excellent on small-town life, showing the back-biting and the charm woven down deep." See also the promotional material by Random House, which first published *The Second Life of Samuel Tyne* in 2004, at http://www.randomhouse.ca/newface/edugyan.php. This web page cites a *Winnipeg Free Press* review as follows: "She [Edugyan] writes with quiet compassion about Aster's black population and their struggles through small-town stereotypes and expectations."

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