Auteur québécois François Leblanc au PFMP

sujet d’intervention : l’identité francophone montréalaise

Dans la tradition d’événements culturels francophones destinés aux francophiles désirant travailler en dehors de la salle de classe, l’invité d’honneur du Déjeuner du printemps PFMP de cette année sera le psychologue et romancier François Leblanc, qui sera parmi nous à Madison le vendredi 12 avril.

Né à Montréal en 1969, Leblanc a travaillé avec des délinquants durant près de dix ans, à titre d’agent de probation, avant de devenir psychologue en CLSC (Centre Local de Services Communautaires). Pour son premier roman, Quinze secondes de célébrité (2009) — lu et étudié d’ailleurs par plusieurs classes consécutives d’étudiants du PFMP dans le cadre du « module Québec » du cours sur les cultures et sociétés du monde francophone — Leblanc se dit « largement inspiré de mon expérience dans le monde de la probation. » Son second roman, Quelques jours à vivre (2012), inspiré de sa relation avec son père, est situé aussi en partie en « milieu carcéral ».

Dans son intervention à Madison, Leblanc nous dira comment il voit l’identité montréalaise francophone à l’heure d’une ville « francophone et multilingue ».

François Leblanc

Nouveaux livres : cahier de retour en Haïti par Jackie Mauer

Depuis l’âge de quatre ans et demi, Tinan Leroy habite Paris, loin de sa famille et de son pays natal, Haïti. Magnitude 7.3 est l’histoire de son retour en Haïti, à l’âge de 22 ans, et de la multitude de changements qui suivent ce retour. Ecrite dans un style journalier, la première moitié du livre traite son premier voyage et pourra servir à orienter un étranger à la culture de ce pays souvent oublié par les francophiles.

D’une part, le journal est typique d’un voyage plein de nouvelles expériences et impressions sur le peuple, l’environnement, et la vie quotidienne en Haïti. La fête qui commence trois heures après l’heure prévue. La folie en trouvant une place sans un bus surchargé. La fierté pour la danse nationale, le kanpa.

Cependant ceci n’est pas un voyage typique. C’est aussi la découverte d’une famille, d’une pauvreté écrasante, et surtout d’une nouvelle identité que l’auteur devra un jour concilier avec sa

(suite à la page 3)
We interviewed Leah Fink (MFS 2010, business), who has lived and worked in France since doing her PFMP internship in 2009. Here Leah talks about her work, living in Paris, and how the PFMP helped her into this phase of her career.

The PFMP gave me a foot in the door to the market research world in France. My internship was in a small market research company specializing in customer satisfaction.

**WHAT DO YOU DO NOW FOR A LIVING?**

I am a Senior Research Executive at Kantar Health France, a market research company specializing in health care. I work on the daily management of multi-country studies in oncology, to evaluate current market context, help pharmaceutical companies prepare for future product launches and evaluate market potential for adding new drugs to their pipeline.

**HOW DID THE PFMP HELP GET YOU THERE?**

The PFMP gave me a foot in the door to the market research world in France. My internship was in a small market research company specializing in customer satisfaction. That experience, combined with my undergraduate degree in genetics, helped my CV get through initial HR barriers for non-French applicants.

**WHAT ARE THE BIGGEST CHALLENGES FOR AN AMERICAN LIVING IN PARIS?**

During one’s first two years as an ex-pat, the biggest challenges relate to administration (getting your visa, social security, an apartment, filing taxes...). Once you have passed that threshold, the challenges are more related to finding a support network that understands your situation (i.e. other ex-pats from the US and other countries, French people who have spent significant time abroad). Creating a support network is essential for successfully feeling at home in Paris, and when you work, opportunities to meet people are relatively limited.

**WHAT DO YOU HOPE YOUR WORK WILL ACCOMPLISH?**

Working in oncology is extremely rewarding in that the ultimate goal of my work is to find new solutions for improving the quality of life and treatment options of patients with cancer. I hope that I will have a chance to experience the launch of new products that dramatically improve the long-term outlook for patients who previously would have had very short life expectancies following their diagnosis.

**ANY SUGGESTIONS FOR PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS CONSIDERING THE PFMP?**

Be open to internship opportunities that are not necessarily in line with what your dream job would be. When I started my internship, customer satisfaction was not necessarily one of my interests or where I thought my professional life would go. But that experience in a French company and the skills I acquired there allowed me to better focus my job search and find a career path more in line with my objectives.
From the Executive Director: Use Your French

Just about every work day, I find myself in a conversation with someone who wants to know about the PFMP. Colleagues, organizations who want to partner, and especially prospective students have all kinds of questions. Where do PFMP students intern in the French-speaking world? How long has the program been in existence? What kinds of courses do PFMP students take in Madison? What do your alumni do for a living?

The answers to these questions can almost always be found in the pages of this newsletter (spring or fall, they’re usually there), and on our regular postings at our Facebook page. But the best answers come from our students and alumni themselves. Our “Current Students and Alumni” section (p. 5) gives a nice overall sense of what people do with this degree—while they are completing it, and after they have earned it. PFMP students and alumni are the story of this program.

So who are they?
They are people who want to use their French at work. Beyond that, they really run the gamut—read L’ESSOR or like us on Facebook for a few weeks, and you’ll see. Coming from all over the country (and sometimes from other countries), they are interested in cinema, humanitaire aid, marketing, arts organizations, women’s rights, locally-sourced food, fitness, photography, professional soccer, fundraising, microcredit in developing countries, and more. In program courses like French 901, “Méthodes de recherche,” you’ll find a three-woman work group peer-editing research on luxury design firms, wine marketing, and HIV/AIDS prevention programming. This is what an interdisciplinary classroom looks like.

Let me also tell you what it sounds like. Close your eyes, and you are in an international workshop, in the French language, where apprentice stakeholders (almost native speakers) discuss, present and coordinate projects that will lead them next to piled internships in the French-speaking world. Each year, we admit a seminar-sized group of students (usually between eight and twelve). Their community will provide friend-and support, also becoming an efficient professional network for each of its members as they move to the next stage of their careers.

“One of your students recently did some freelance translation work for my fiancé’s firm,” said one of our own alumni recently. “If I were hiring now, I’d try and snag her!” Others regularly credit the PFMP with helping them get their “foot in the door” (See Leah Fink’s comments on page 2, or international development specialist Karen Dawes’ shout-out in our website testimonials.) Perhaps the most telling was an email we recently received from alumna Megan Maley (MFS 2005), who now heads up a mostly French-speaking marketing team at Nike in Amsterdam after several years rising through the Nike ranks in Paris and London. “The PFMP gave me many of the tools necessary to transform a dream into an international career,” said Megan. “I would not be where I am today had I not started with the PFMP.”

The PFMP gave me many of the tools necessary to transform a dream into an international career,” said Megan. “I would not be where I am today had I not started with the PFMP.”

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From the Executive Director: Use Your French

Magnitude 7.3 (suite de la page 1)

vie à Paris. Les observations sont celles de quelqu’un du nord (le monde développé) qui essaie de comprendre le sud (le monde en voie de développement) dans lequel il s’insère. Bref, c’est une bataille classique entre l’optimisme et le pessimisme—avec des statistiques régulièrement notées.

Pendant les années qui suivent cette première partie, sur la découverte de cette nouvelle identité, Larry essaye de vivre, frustré, entre deux mondes, tous les deux insatisfaisants et décevants à leur façon. Le lecteur peut être déçu aussi, car en général ce sont des observations faites par un habitant du nord qui, malgré ses voyages, n’a pas l’expérience qu’il faudrait pour présenter responsable la vraie pauvreté, ou même la « psychologie », haïtienne.

Ceci dit, le livre semble être une catharsis pour l’auteur… et pour moi aussi. Il pourrait plaire à ceux d’entre nous qui se trouvent perturbés par les images du sud et qui cherchent, tant que possible, à le comprendre mieux.

Jackie Mauer (développement international) a fait son stage PFMP à Prosjekt Haiti (Port-au-Prince), une organisation norvég-haïtienne dédiée à l’alphabétisation et au soutien des femmes en Haïti. Pédagogue depuis plusieurs années, Mauer termine sa maîtrise en faisant un second stage ce printemps, à Montréal, à la Maison d’Haïti, travaillant cette fois-ci avec les femmes de la diaspora haïtienne au Québec.
Book Review: French Children Don’t Throw Food by Amy Church-Morel


Reading books on cultural comparison like *French Children Don’t Throw Food* requires a critical mind, and a healthy dose of skepticism. That is why, as I read the book, I came to realize that either I may have lost the edge or Pamela Druckerman is particularly good at the genre.

French Children Don’t Throw Food is a comparison of French and American parenting styles, based on Druckerman’s life as an American expat in Paris with her British husband and their children. Much of the writing is about her personal experience. I felt a kind of sentimental communion with Druckerman. After living in France for 10 years, reading the book was rather like going through a scrapbook of memories: surprise at children’s first food being vegetable purées rather than rice cereal, finally getting over the initial distance with French families and starting to make friends, distress over the lack of feedback from preschool teachers. She’s able to put words to unnamed things in comforting way, and it’s all delightfully sprinkled with expressions like “faire ses nuits,” “le goûter,” and “caca boudin.”

Druckerman goes beyond anecdotes and gets at her subject with journalistic tactics of interviewing pediatricians and French moms, sitting in on the menu planning sessions at her daughter’s daycare, and filling in background information on Françoise Dolto or the French Dr. Spock.

She highlights some aspects of French culture I appreciate: emphasis on balanced, pleasurable meals and helping kids develop an intrinsic sense of judgment rather than overwhelming them with praise. In other areas, though, I don’t see quite the degree of difference among French and American friends that Druckerman sees in hers. For example, most of the moms I know on both sides of the Atlantic breastfed their children. And everyone I know struggles with issues of balance between work, family and kids’ activities.

It was Druckerman’s comments on autonomy that intrigued me the most. She sees the French as encouraging a “blend of independence and self-reliance in their children from an early age.” In some ways, I agree, but I also have trouble reconciling this with the concept of “la mère-poule” and the lack of autonomy I’ve seen in French approaches to pedagogy in some school and university settings. Maybe Druckerman will address this some day in a sequel about the teenage years...

Amy Church-Morel (MFS 2002, international development) teaches and does research on language diversity in organizations as part of a doctoral program at the University of Savoie. She lives in Aix-les-Bains, France with her husband and their two children with whom she spends a considerable amount of time doing “dictées” homework in French elementary school cursive.

Amy Church-Morel, with her extremely polite French/American children
Current Students & Alumni

Christopher Beaver (MFS 2005, European Union affairs) is an international customer service representative at Trek Bicycle in Waterloo, WI, working directly with Central and Eastern European bicycle distributors. In February, Chris and current PFMP student Kelley Swanlund (international education, back from her PFMP internship at L’Agence Europe Education Formation France in Bordeaux), discussed their educational and professional backgrounds at the Wisconsin Global Youth Summit, designed to encourage high school students to pursue careers in multilingual career fields.

Irene Borngraeber (MFS 2008, media/arts/cultural production) continues her work as founder and chairperson of The Distillery Gallery & Artspace in Jersey City, NJ. Recently named Executive Director of the Liberty Humane Society and instrumental in a rezoning project that led to the creation of a neighborhood arts district, Irene was recently honored as one of Jersey City’s “Women of Action.”

John Brunner (MFS 2012, business) is currently the international communications assistant for Bureau Export de la Musique Française in Paris. He is currently helping with celebrations surrounding the 20th anniversary of the association, including most recently a January press conference unveiling the French music industry’s export sales, awarding Air with the 2013 Prix Bureau Export de la Musique Française in Paris.

Sarah Craver (MFS 2012, media/arts/cultural production) just participated in a site visit to SIT programs in Switzerland (Global Health/International Studies) and Serbia (Peace and Conflict Studies). She is also developing an action plan for setting up cultural exchanges between French classrooms in America and Francoophone artists.

Currently an Admissions Counselor for SIT Study Abroad, Sarah Craver (MFS 2012, media/arts/cultural production) just participated in a site visit to SIT programs in Switzerland (Global Health/International Studies) and Serbia (Peace and Conflict Studies). She is also developing an action plan for setting up cultural exchanges between French classrooms in America and Francoophone artists.

Currently an inside support specialist at SMC Corporation, PFMP alum Mandi Czapla (MFS 2008, international education) has just been hired as Language Program Training Manager at the Language Training Center. She lives with her family in Ashland, Oregon.

Rachel Cizek Faye (MFS 2009, international development) is currently the Customer Tech Support Trainer at Johnson Health Tech - North America in Cottage Grove, WI, the company’s headquarters for the US and Canada, where she was recently promoted to Trainer. She has developed the training program and works with employees in English and French to prepare them for work with Canadian clients.

Leah Fink (MFS 2010, business) was recently promoted to Senior Research Executive at Kantar Health France. In her new role, she works closely with multinational pharmaceutical companies to conduct their European market research studies in oncology. She lives in Paris.

Julia Grawemeyer (MFS 2008, media/arts/cultural production) is teaching French at Otterbein University and English as a Second Language at Columbus State Community College in Columbus, Ohio. She is currently writing creative non-fiction about culture and language.

Don Hall (MFS 2005, European Union affairs) continues to work for Epicor Software, based out of Minneapolis, with extensive national and international travel. He has also recently begun volunteering at the Pierre Bottineau French Immersion elementary school in Minneapolis, as a parent volunteer.

Bryan Hammerquist (MFS 2011, business) is a Senior Customer Operations Analyst at SPS Commerce, a provider of supply chain management solutions based in Minneapolis, MN, where he interacts with francophone and anglophone customers from Canada and the US.

Kate Mayo (MFS 2007, international development) is in her final semester at Brooklyn Law School. She is currently interning with the Environmental Litigation Department at Napoli Bern Ripka Shkolnik, LLP. She lives in Brooklyn, NY.

Amy Church-Morel (MFS 2002, international development) has started a new position as a doctoral research fellow at the IAE Savoie Mont-Blanc in international management. Her research topic is language diversity and intercultural communication in organizations.

Laura Gross (MFS 2012, media/arts/cultural production) is Operations Manager of the

(continued on page 6)
Nouveaux livres : absurdité et mondialisation, à la Laroui  

par Elena Hart


« Rai is not my background music, » se plaignit Fouad Laroui à propos de ses entretiens radiophoniques. Cette citation résume bien l’œuvre de l’écrivain marocain, résidant depuis de nombreuses années aux Pays-Bas et qui a un talent inouï de mettre le doigt sur les petits malentendus culturels, de se moquer des stéréotypes afin de les renverser. Toujours avec cet humour incisif qui manquait à la littérature marocaine, il tisse des histoires autour du regard sur l’Autre et de l’identité de l’individu face à la mondialisation, sans oublier quelques coups à l’administration marocaine.

Son nouveau recueil, L’étrange affaire du pantalon de Dassoukine, ne déçoit pas. À travers les neuf nouvelles, Laroui décortique la vie quotidienne depuis le salon de coiffure du bled jusqu’aux cafés d’un certain « P* capitale de la F* : » « Avec toute l’absurdité et l’ironie d’une pièce d’Ionesco, il ne cesse de questionner notre monde moderne. Prenons, par exemple, l’histoire éponyme où, face à une crise de production dans l’Ukraine, un jeune diplomate marocain se rend à Bruxelles pour négocier l’achat du blé à l’Union européenne. Le jour de son grand discours, il se fait dérober son unique pantalon, mais parvient néanmoins à réussir sa mission.

Comme dans les romans de Fouad Laroui, la question de l’identité prend rapidement sa place au premier plan. « Qui suis-je ? D’où viens-je ? » demande-t-il dans Né nulle part, petite anecdote d’un étudiant marocain qui, en voulant obtenir un passeport, dérober son unique pantalon, mais parvient néanmoins à réussir sa mission.


Mais Laroui est plutôt chroniqueur que littéraire. Son style et court, direct ; ses phrases incomplètes, comme des notes dans un calepin. Ce n’est pas l’esthétique poétique des générations précédentes. Laroui est l’homme de son temps qui vit le contact culturel et la mondialisation à travers son parcours insolite et qui écrit cette réalité. Les nouvelles de L’étrange affaire du pantalon de Dassoukine sont fraîches, réelles, mais avant tout pertinentes. À découvrir absolument.

Fouad Laroui sera présent à la Comédie du livre de Montpellier, le plus grand salon littéraire en dehors de celui de Paris, le 7-8-9 juin 2013. Elena Hart (MFS 2009, éducation internationale), chef de projet pour les « petits films littéraires » du festival (entretiens filmés), prépare un entretien avec Laroui sur les thèmes de l’identité, la mémoire et le retour au pays.

Current Students & Alumni

Elena Hart

Lauren Herzog

Ashley Herrick

Lauren Herzog, en stage à AZUR Développement, à Sibiti (République du Congo)
Some French majors don’t want to teach. So what do they do with their French?

Find out.

“Exactly the type of text we need to really show how relevant studies in French can be.”
- John P. Greene, Professor of Classical and Modern Languages, University of Louisville

“I opened Post-Francophile this evening after dinner thinking I would just read an article before putting my kids to bed, but I couldn’t put it down and ended up reading it cover to cover. With the current discussion about the crisis in foreign language education in the United States and all of the obstacles that French educators are facing, it was refreshing and uplifting to read these stories that clearly show that the study of French is alive and well.”
- Molly Kraeger Enz, Assistant Professor of French, South Dakota State University

Current (continued from page 6)

The generosity of PFMP alumni and other donors has allowed us to create important scholarships for PFMP students. These gifts directly help our students defray important living expenses, both in Madison and while they do their internships abroad.

DONATE ONLINE. It’s easy—go to https://secure.supportuw.org/MultiPage/processStep1.do, and make sure to type ”Professional French Masters Program Support Fund” in the “Designation” box.

TO MAKE A GIFT BY CHECK: please make your check payable to the University of Wisconsin Foundation, write ”Professional French Masters Program Support Fund” in the memo line and send to:

University of Wisconsin Foundation
U.S. Bank Lockbox
P.O. Box 78807
Milwaukee, WI 53278-0807

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Current Students & Alumni (continued from page 7)

Sara Meador (MFS 2010, European Union affairs) works as a Customs Analyst for Kraft Foods, Canada division. Sara handles all imports into Kraft Canada and manages all free trade agreement certificates and import tariff classifications.

Bob Mohar (MFS 2006, education) continues to teach French at De Pere High School (Wisconsin), where he is currently completing a practicum in pursuit of an administrator’s license.

Sarah Moore (MFS 2009, media/arts/cultural production) is Acting Director of AT&T's Business Marketing/Technical Writing department, whose clients are the company’s largest business customers. Sarah remains the subject matter expert for all things international, working as a cross-team consultant for AT&T's global opportunities. Recently selected to join the top 1% at her management level around the world in AT&T’s "Accelerated Development Program" for future company leaders, Sarah is also expecting a baby girl in June. She lives in Dallas.

Maggie Mund (MFS 2008, European Union affairs) teaches French at Convent of the Sacred Heart School in Greenwich, CT.


Les moustachues: a lighter study break, with (L-R) Lauren Herzog (international development), tutrice Adélaïde de Valence de Minardière, and Jessica Warmington (business)

News: Faculty, Staff, Board Members, Partners, & Friends

The Journal for Computer Mediated Communication has just published a study co-authored by UW-Madison Life Science Communication professor Dominique Brossard. The study, supported by the National Science Foundation, demonstrated how the tone of blog comments in articles about nanotechnology can negatively affect readers’ perceptions of the risks posed by those technologies, regardless of the facts presented in the articles themselves.

PFMP Executive Director Ritt Deitz’s collection of French-language short stories, Rêver local, has just been published by Incidence Editions. He is currently editing Francophonie, a book of PFMP alumni essays about “the moment when you realize the ‘French-speaking world’ is not quite what you expected.” This winter, Deitz was named Chevalier dans l’Ordre des Palmes Académiques by the French Ministry of National Education, for his efforts in promoting the language and culture of France in the United States.
Beyond the Classroom

Déjeuner du printemps PFMP. With guest speaker, Montréal novelist François Leblanc, on francophone identity in the city of Montréal today. In French and by invitation only.


Paris Streaming Live in Madison: France Alumni-Student Career Event. A diverse panel of Wisconsin alumni based in Paris discussed their international careers. Sponsored by The "Ouisconsin" Chapter of WAA, France, the International Internship Program, and La Maison Française.


Diversity in Family Trends in Europe. Tomas Sobotka. Sponsored by the European Union Center of Excellence and co-sponsored by the Center for Demography and Ecology.

Soirée Théâtre et Chanson: Lecture publique de pieces comiques en un acte. En français. Suivie de performances musicales faites par la communauté francophone de Madison. Sponsored by the PFMP and French & Italian.

Videoconference on international fields and work in Africa Program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies. Sponsored by La Follette School of Public Affairs.


Land Tenure Center Speaker Series: Private Property Rights as Human Rights? Harvey Jacobs, Urban & Regional Planning and IES. Sponsored by Land Tenure Center and Nelson Institute for Environmental Studies (IES).


ONGOING

Africa at Noon Series. (Weekly presentations on African phenomena, current and historical, by scholars from all over the world.)

DINERS PUBLICS le mercredi à la Maison Française (appeler 262–5074 pour réserver une place).

DEJEUNERS PUBLICS le vendredi à la Maison Française (appeler 262–5074 pour réserver une place)

French, "Café et Conversation" All levels. Michelangelo's Coffee Shop, 114 State St. Thursdays, 7:00 - 8:00 pm. 256-1113.

Current Students & Alumni

(continued from page 8)

Kristen Murphy (MFS 2009, European Union affairs) works for Wine Library in Springfield, NJ, where she runs the customer service department and is a buyer for most of Eastern France, Germany and Austria. She has also just added Champagne & sparkling wines to her buying categories. Following a coveted guest appearance on the national wine podcast, “I’ll Drink to That,” Kristen just finished a weeklong wine tour in Spain this month, with a group of other wine industry professionals. Kristen lives in New York City.

Laura Paris (MFS 2010, éducation internationale) aime bien son nouveau poste de Coordinatrice de programmes à l’étranger à l’Université de Géorgie et sa nouvelle ville adoptive d’Athens, GA. Elle vient d’ajouter un nouveau rôle—celui d’External Program Liaison, forgeant de nouveaux liens et renforçant les programmes existants avec des organisations externes qui offrent des programmes à l’étranger.

Christopher and Jennifer Quinlan have left Wisconsin with their three boys to move to Provo, UT, for new employment. Christopher (MFS 2003, international development) is Director of Philanthropy at Community Action Services and Food Bank, a non-profit organization that provides emergency assistance and long-term support to help families in poverty become self-reliant. Jennifer (MFS 2004, international education) is an Instructional Designer for World Languages at Brigham Young University Independent Study. Her team is developing a cutting edge online language acquisition model that allows students extensive one-on-one interaction with a fluent speaker and focuses on developing written and oral proficiency simultaneously. The boys are in an immersion French class and are enjoying the mountains but “wonder where all the lakes and rivers are.”

Kristi Sandven (MFS 2012, international development) is a caseworker at NAV Internasjonalt, the National Office for Social Insurance Abroad, where she handles disability claims made by Norwegian residents applying for disability benefits from other European countries. She lives in Oslo.

Mandi Schoville (MFS 2004, international education) has replaced Chris Beaver (MFS 2005) as PFMP Internship Liaison.

Natalia Swerchowsky (MFS 2010, business) has left her position at Longbow Research, where she conducted market research in Francophone markets and managed the International Research Group. She now works at BakerHostetler, where she is a Competitive and Market Intelligence Analyst. She lives in Cleveland.

Cristina Settar (MFS 2011, business) has left Transperfect Translations and is now a Translation Project Coordinator at RR Donnelley, in their Life Sciences division, where she manages client relationships, quoting new projects/timelines and focusing on handling French “Quality Control” work as those opportunities arise. She “uses her French even more” and is now the only American on her team. She lives in New York.

Anika Smith (MFS 2009, business) was recently hired as the Assistant Vice President of Marketing at Mayberry Investments Ltd, a boutique investment and brokerage firm in Kingston Jamaica. There, she is responsible for developing and executing the Firm’s marketing and PR strategy.

Amanda Stauffer (European Union affairs 2012) has been working for Google as a Bilingual Data Specialist on the Freebase project since December. Currently residing in the Washington, D.C. area, Amanda will be moving to London this summer.

Kelley Swanlund (international education) is the International Student Advisor and Office Manager at Madison English as a Second Language School (MESLS). In addition to advising, immigration

(continued on page 11)
Lettre d’une stagiaire : La Maison d’Haïti, Montréal

En automne 2012, Kate Williams (développement international) a fait son stage PFMP à La Maison d’Haïti, à Montréal.

Plusieurs de mes amis m’ont dit que mon stage ressemblait à une version de l’enfer. « Tu ne comprends rien, et tu penses que ça va ? T’es folle », une amie m’a gentiment confirmé par g.chat. Je venais de lui dire que la plupart de mes collègues parlaient en créole, une langue que je n’avais jamais entendue avant mon arrivée à La Maison d’Haïti. Par conséquent je passais une grande partie de ma journée dans un état de confusion totale – je l’adorais.

Comme toute rencontre chanceuse, j’ai trouvé La Maison d’Haïti (LMH) sur Internet en cherchant les mots clés organisation communautaire et Québec. La première page à apparaître était celle de LMH, une maison d’accueil offrant des services de soutien à la communauté du quartier Saint-Michel, Montréal, dont la majorité des habitants sont des immigrants d’origine haïtienne. Suite à des recherches et une conversation téléphonique avec plusieurs personnes (la réceptionniste m’a transférée à la directrice générale, à la directrice du dossier femmes, à la directrice d’immigration, et au directeur de développement) on m’a offert un stage dans les cours de francisation et d’anglais destinés aux nouveaux arrivants.

Cette première conversation téléphonique aurait dû être le premier indice qu’en allant au travail j’y laisserais la culture et la neige de Montréal pour trouver un rythme de vie plus antillais. Tout à LMH était plus chaleureux - des hibiscus décorant les fenêtres aux airs de musique zouk et reggae provenant des bureaux. Les gens se saluaient en créole, l’idée d’être à l’heure changeait, et un sentiment de solidarité entre les Haïtiens était palpable.

Je suis entrée dans ce nouveau rythme haïtien plus littéralement dans un cours de danse folklorique haïtienne avec la troupe de danse Ekspresyon. Enfin, j’ai essayé d’entrer dans la danse. Chaque cours m’a laissée avec des courbatures dans les muscles que j’avais oublié d’exercer depuis bien longtemps. Ces pas de danse si gracieuses chez les Haïtiennes me donnaient à moi, quand j’essayais de les danser, un air de vieille poule qui béquetait…

Bref, évidemment ce nouveau rythme n’était pas toujours très naturel, mais j’ai essayé de m’intégrer quand même. Je me suis perdue, j’ai fait des faux pas, et parfois je ne comprenais rien. Cependant, loin d’être l’enfer, cette expérience plurilingue et multiculturelle m’a ravie et m’a fait apprendre énormément.
The University of Wisconsin-Madison Professional French Masters Program is an interdisciplinary master’s degree program for college graduates who want to use their French to build careers outside the academic classroom. The PFMP has concentrations in business, French education, international education, European Union affairs, international development and media/arts/cultural production, all culminating in a personalized professional internship abroad and a professional portfolio. We also offer the Capstone Certificate of Professional French Studies, which includes partial master's coursework and the full internship in all six concentration areas.