

Acknowledgments

Since 2007, a team devoted to research on the novel, an initiative generously funded by the Fonds de recherche du Québec – Société et culture (FRQSC), has been headquartered at McGill University and led by Isabelle Daunais. Over the years, this bilingual group, called “Travaux sur les Arts du Roman” and known by its evocative acronym TSAR, has hosted presentations in French and English by graduate students, McGill faculty members, and scholars from other universities. Approaches to literary studies by Francophone and Anglophone researchers vary widely, and the fruits of this collaborative enterprise have been as fulfilling as they have been unexpected. In May 2017, under the auspices of TSAR, a group of scholars gathered at McGill University to discuss diplomacy in modern French and British novels. Over two days, participants from France, the United States, and Canada considered the comedy, tempo, quirkiness, and occasional klutziness of diplomats in modern fiction. The colloquium was a full dress rehearsal for the essays in this collection.

During the interwar years in France and Britain, diplomats of all ranks – from consuls to ambassadors – wrote memoirs, novels, plays, and essays on diplomatic themes. Certain of these writers, such as Paul Claudel, Jean Giraudoux, Paul Morand, and Saint-John Perse, have a firm standing in the French literary canon; lesser writers, such as Albert Bérard, Henri Hoppenot, Louis de Monicault, and Gilbert de Chambrun, all members of the diplomatic corps, reinforce the claim that the interwar years in France were a golden age of diplomacy, at least culturally. In British literature, claims of the intertwining of writing and diplomacy are not so pronounced, even though certain writers have served as attachés, consuls, or envoys. Lawrence Durrell was a press attaché for the British embassies in Cairo and Alexandria during the Second World War; after the war, he worked for the British Council in

Argentina, then Yugoslavia, in what might be called arm's-length cultural diplomacy. David Cornwell, prior to adopting the nom-de-plume John le Carré, was unofficially an MI6 agent and officially the second secretary at the British Embassy in Bonn, West Germany, in the late 1950s and early 1960s.

French has been the *lingua franca* of diplomacy since the Renaissance. A surprising number of British writers discussed in this volume spoke (or speak) French fluently, including Harold Nicolson, Graham Greene, Nancy Mitford, Lawrence Durrell, and John le Carré. In his book called *Diplomacy*, Nicolson goes so far as to claim that "it is impossible to use French correctly without being obliged to place one's ideas in the proper order, to develop them in a logical sequence, and to use words of almost geometrical accuracy." Be that as it may, strictures on what should and should not be said in diplomacy are still in play. Charles de Martens advises that a good diplomatic style should never be overstated: "bien dire dans l'ordre convenable tout ce qui doit être dit, et rien au delà."

Nicola Danby and Gregory Brent translated three essays – Michel Biron's, Isabelle Daunais's, and Maxime Decout's – from French to English. Allan Hepburn further refined those translations with input from the authors. Where primary texts have already been rendered into English, such as Dorothy Bussy's translations of André Gide's works, Ezra Pound's translation of Paul Morand's *Open All Night*, Barbara Bray's translation of Romain Gary's *Europa*, or Scott Moncrieff's legendary translation of Marcel Proust's *Remembrance of Things Past*, those existing translations have been used and English titles adopted, sometimes with minor modifications. Whenever necessary, untranslated passages in French have been rendered into English. In the spirit of give and take, a few French phrases have been let stand, as vestiges of the global dominance of French as the language of diplomacy. Curiously, in French, one speaks of "la Carrière," with an upper-case C, to signify diplomacy *tout court*. In English, one speaks of "a diplomat *de carrière*" to mean a lifelong diplomat.

As with any collaborative enterprise, thanks are due to a number of people who moved this project forward with diplomatic tact and skill. Nora Shaalan brought her meticulous proofreading and formatting skills to bear on the entire text. Three anonymous readers provided generous and enthusiastic reports that have helped improve all aspects of this volume. Mark Thompson at the University of Toronto Press has been gracious and sensible in equal measures during the process of moving the book forward to publication. Lastly, financial support from FRQSC and the Insights program of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council has been, quite literally, invaluable in bringing this book into being.