FACT OR FICTION:

L'HISTOIRE DU CANADA

AND ITS INFLUENCE ON FRENCH CANADIAN NOVELS

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ABSTRACT

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In 1845, François-Xavier Garneau published L'Histoire du Canada depuis sa découverte jusqu'à nos jours. Garneau's history, focusing on the development of New France from 1534 until 1841, was undertaken in response to Lord Durham's Report (1839) in which Durham stated that French Canadians were a people without a history or a literature. The popularity and success of Garneau's narrative led to his being coined "historien national" and to the emergence of nationalist literature in French Canada. His text provided novelists with an abundance of recognizable images which are found in novels written from 1846 to 1981. Drawing on Hayden White's study of the writing of history and the narrative structures used by historians, this thesis will analyze the presentation of Garneau's data, the ideology found in his text, and the influence it has had on French Canadian fiction. Specifically, three types of novels will be studied: "le roman de la terre", "le roman historique" and "le roman contemporain".

Pour ma mère,

... Vous dont chaque pas touche à la grâce suprême,
C'est vous, la tête en fleurs, qu'on croirait sans souci,
C'est vous qui me disiez qu'il faut aimer ainsi.
Alfred de Musset

and for my father,

For thy sweet love remembered such wealth brings
That then I scorn to change my state with kings.
William Shakespeare

This thesis could not have been completed without the help and guidance of my advisor, Laura Groening, whose patience and understanding have been greatly appreciated every step of the way. She is an inspiration as a teacher, as a writer and as a person.

My thanks also go to Paul James whose assistance in the mystical world of technology has saved me from disasters on numerous occasions. I thank him for his willingness to help and his friendship.

Les historiens mentent un peu plus que les poètes.

-Chateaubriand

Oui, il [Garneau] fut poète, ce fut le poète qui poussa le voyageur, et le poète et le voyageur qui créèrent l'historien.

-Chauveau

Table of Contents

Introduction

A national literature is informed by a country's definition of nation as well as by its cultural and historical identity. Canadian history, and the writing of it, finds itself in a precarious position as different historians use different approaches in the telling of their stories and often do not agree on the events which have shaped the nation(s). Consequently, one finds the emergence of separate literatures within the same country. French Canadians, for many years, have adopted a definition of the term "nation" provided by Louis-François Laflèche, spokesman for the Ultramontain movement. In a document written in 1866, Laflèche argues:

> "La nation", c'est la "famille" en grand, dans son parfait développement; la "famille", c'est la "nation" en petit, comme en germe. [...] Voilà en peu de mots ce qu'il faut entendre par *nationalité. C'est un peuple qui parle la même langue, qui a la même foi, et dont les moeurs, les coutumes, les usages et les lois sont uniformes.*[1]

Far from accepting the term "nation" as being defined by a country's geographical or political boundaries, then, the Ultramontain movement, rooted in Laflèche's definition, taught the rigid cohesion of church and state in les grands séminaires and les collèges classiques. Eventually,

[1] Louis-François Laflèche, Quelques considérations sur les rapports de la société civile avec la religion et la famille (Montreal, 1866) 19-24.

Ultramontanism became the philosophy, even the theocracy, of the French Canadian[2] intellectual elite. The Ultramontain movement stressed not only the meaning of "la nation", but the importance of keeping this nation pure:

> Défions-nous de ceux qui voudraient nous prêcher la fusion des races et des nationalités; car il est bien clair et bien entendu que la fusion pour nous, c'est l'anéantissement de notre nationalité. Nous avons une existence et une vie propre, c'est notre existence et notre vie nationale; conservons-la comme la prunelle de notre oeil, et ne permettons jamais qu'on lui porte la moindre atteinte.[3]

The purity of the nation continues to be a contentious issue in political debates today.

While Laflèche was speaking about the French Canadian nation, English-speaking Canadians pondered the notion of "nation" in terms of a national literature. In 1864, in the introduction to his anthology of English Canadian poetry, Edward Hartley Dewart states that a "national literature is an essential element in the formation of national character" and adds that it not only records the progress of a country but is "the expression of its intellectual life, the bond of national unity, and the guide of national energy."[4]

Dewart argues that a national literature is essential to

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[2] The absence of the hyphen is deliberate. This form is used throughout.
[3] Laflèche 76.
[4] E. H. Dewart, ed., Selections from Canadian Poets (Montreal, 1864) ix.

a country's development and claims that those who contribute to such a literature are enshrined in the "national heart" and that "it has become a part of the patriotism of the people to honor and love their memory."[5] Dewart's comments are valid for both French and English-speaking Canadians; however, the two groups do not share the same patrotic literature and, furthermore, descendants of French and English Canada have enshrined very different writers and spokesmen. Dewart was neither unaware nor indifferent to the dualistic vision existing in Canada at this time, and he acknowledged the existence of a patriotric element in French Canadian literature stronger than that represented in English Canadian literature of the period:

> Is is to be regretted that the tendency to sectionalism and disintegration, which is the political weakness of Canada, meets no counterpoise in the literature of the country. Our French fellow countrymen are much more firmly united than the English colonists; though their literature is more French than Canadian, and their bond of union is more religious than literary or political.[6]

Whether or not French Canadian literature of the period is more French than Canadian is certainly debatable. What is more important is that Dewart affirms the existence of a bond between literature and religion in French Canada, a bond that

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[5] Dewart ix.
[6] Dewart x.

was encouraged by the Ultramontain movement. Thus, French and English Canadian literatures developed separately, and each group had its own driving force, its own view of history and its own literary tradition.

French Canada's sense of nation, of brotherhood, and of history, then, differs from, even excludes, its English Canadian partner. It is, as Pierre-Joseph-Olivier Chauveau described in 1876 when he compared Canada to the famous staircase in Le Château de Chambord, a staircase built in such a manner that two people can be climbing at the same time without ever meeting or seeing each other:

> Anglais et français, nous montons comme par une double rampe vers les destinées qui nous sont réservées sur ce continent, sans nous connaître, nous rencontrer, ni même nous voir ailleurs que sur le palier de la politique. Socialement et littérairement parlant, nous sommes plus étrangers les uns aux autres de beaucoup que ne le sont les Anglais et les Français d'Europe.[7]

While the experience of climbing the staircase may differ, the staircase described by Chauveau remains a common experience in the lives of the English and the French in Canada, and it is one on which the two literatures developed separately, but inter-dependently, particularly in the case of French Canadian literature which communicates a concern with a

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[7] Pierre-Joseph-Olivier Chauveau, L'Instruction Publique au Canada (Quebec, 1876) 335.

traditional culture perceived to be found in English Canada. Consequently, the focus of this thesis is the development of the French Canadian novel, as it developed from its colonial roots into a literature whose form may have evolved but whose ideology has remained remarkably consistent from its beginnings in 1837 to the present. French Canadian literature has maintained an allegiance to a creed, conceptualized by an historical document, which was written following the union of the Canadas in 1841.

In 1970, at the request of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, a study was undertaken to examine the Canadian history program and textbooks used across the country, at levels ranging from Grade 5 to Grade 13.[8] The study revealed that the history being taught, as well as the prescribed texts, are considerably different in Quebec than in other provinces. The fact that Canadian students are exposed to different ideologies inevitably results in varying views of the nation, of the collective past, and of Canadians' position and role within the nation. Quebec senior students using Gérard Filteau's text *La civilisation catholique et française au Canada* read the following about cultural survival:

> Notre peuple devait désormais affronter la domination d'une nation puissante, longtemps ennemie, animée de vifs sentiments anticatholiques,

[8] Marcel Trudel and Geneviève Jain, Canadian Textbooks: A Comparative Study (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1970).

> dont la politique commerciale ne pouvait guère favoriser le relèvement canadien. L'opposition d'idées, de sentiments, d'intérêts, devait nous placer devant un péril extrême pour notre survivance. [...] La résistance à l'assimilation constitue la lutte la plus dûre de notre histoire, la plus exténuante aussi parce qu'elle se prolonge toujours. Même au cours de périodes calmes, le milieu anglo-saxon qui nous entoure exerce sans cesse son action et nous force à une vigilance de tous les instants.[9]

As early as 1845, national historian François-Xavier Garneau was describing the situation in Canada in much the same way, defining the history of Quebec in terms of the threat of English domination. A brief look at the sovereignists' doctrine will elucidate the way the divergence of national ideals is a threat to the unity of the country. For years, many Quebecers have clung to the idea that an independant nation is essential to the survival of French Canadian ideals, language, and traditions. The perceived threat of assimilation is so prominent in this province that it seems to symbolise life in Quebec. François-Xavier Garneau's 1845 depiction of Canadian history informs us that French Canadians were constantly being threatened by English domination and suffered greatly at the hands of their English oppressors: "Les Canadiens ressentaient déjà les malheurs de la domination étrangère. Les sacrifices qu'ils avaient faits n'étaient rien en comparaison des souffrances et des

[9] Gérard Filteau, La civilization catholique française au Canada (Montreal: Centre de Psychologie et de Pédagogie, 1960) 306.

humiliations qui se préparaient pour eux et pour leur postérité."[10] One hundred forty-five years after Garneau, Louis Plamondon, deputy for Le Bloc Québecois, ignoring the facts that by 1990 French Canadians had flourished for ten generations and, at almost seven million, were a people who lived freely and prosperously, summed up Quebec's history since 1760 in one word: "l'humiliation":

> Ce pays, nous l'avons bati par nos sueurs et notre sang. Et toujours, on nous a remerciés en nous humiliant, en nous traitant de peuple sans histoire et sans littérature. Jamais, en tant que peuple fondateur de ce pays, nous n'oublierons pas les nombreuses humiliations que nous avons subies au sein de ce grand pays que l'on croyait nôtre: l'humiliation de la Conquête, l'humiliation des patriotes, l'humiliation de l'Acte d'union, l'humiliation de Louis Riel, l'humiliation des deux circonscriptions, l'humiliation des mesures de guerre, l'humiliation de 1982 par le rapatriement de la Constitution sans le Québec, l'humiliation de l'échec de l'Accord du Lac Meech.[11]

Plamondon's speech shocked many Canadians. English Canadians could not but wonder at what they saw as Plamondon's blatant disregard for the truth, while separatists and Quebec nationalists embraced his words and felt centuries of oppression swelling within them. Plamondon's speech makes reference, one hundred fifty years after the fact, to Lord

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[10] François-Xavier Garneau, L'Histoire du Canada de sa découverte jusqu'à nos jours, t. II, ed. Hector Garneau (1845; Paris: Félix Arcan, 1920) 300-301.

[11] Débats de la Chambre des Communes, 26 juin, 1990, p. 13 087.

Durham's Report in which the Governor General claimed that French Canadians were a people without a history or a literature. This was the comment that fired the imagination of François-Xavier Garneau, the man who set out to prove that Durham was incorrect, the man many believe to be the most important and influential historian of French Canada.[12]

Michel Brunet, a past Professor and Director of l'Institut d'histoire et la Faculté des Lettres at l'Université de Montréal, offers the basic definition of the role of the historian as an objective interpreter of the past:

> L'historien, interprète du passé, n'est ni un juge, ni un prédicateur, ni un prophète. Il se limite à décrire aussi exactement que possible ce qui s'est réellement passé. Sans préoccupations apologétiques ou patriotiques. Il n'a pas la mission d'accuser, de condamner, d'excuser ou de louer.[13]

Although such a definition could never be used to describe Garneau's work, critics maintain that Garneau is French Canada's national historian. *La Minerve*, a newspaper that reviewed Garneau's *Histoire* in 1845, claimed it to be "[un] ouvrage [qui] formera une époque remarquable dans les annales de la littérature canadienne, et va opérer une

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[12] Pierre Savard, "François-Xavier Garneau," L'Encyclopédie du Canada, ed. vol.2 (Montreal: Stanké, 1987) 802.
[13] Michel Brunet, Canadians et Canadiens: Études sur l'histoire et la pensée des deux Canadas (Montreal: Fides, 1955) 36.

révolution étonnante dans la disposition des jeunes gens."[14] In addition to being well received at the time it was written, L'*Histoire*'s importance continues to be recognized by literary critics and writers: "*L'Histoire du Canada* de François-Xavier Garneau est l'ouvrage le plus considérable sinon le plus important de la littérature canadienne au XIXe siècle."[15] William Johnson argues that "Dès la parution du premier tome, la classe instruite du Canada français a reconnu en lui son chantre national. [...] Garneau devait exercer une influence étonnante sur tout ce qui s'est écrit."[16] Hailed as Quebec's national historian then, Garneau has also been referred to as "le père de la littérature canadienne."[17] His preoccupation with national struggle informed his work, a history told around the four primary themes of "le peuple", "la patrie", "la liberté" and "l'inquiétude", terms which are continually used throughout his text.

Garneau's first tome of *L'Histoire du Canada* appeared in 1845 and was inspired by the political climate of the times. The 1837-1838 uprisings and revolts, Lord Durham's Report (1839), and his recommendation of the Act of Union of 1841 inspired Garneau to speak out against the conditions of the

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[14] Julie Potvin, "Relire le Discours Préliminaire," Études françaises 30.3 (1995) 89.
[15] Arsène Lauzière, François-Xavier Garneau, Textes choisis et présentés (Montreal: Fides, 1965) 5.
[16] William Johnson, Anglophobie Made in Québec (Montreal: Stanké, 1991) 37.
[17] Lauzière 6.

French Canadian people. Durham's Report is frequently referred to by Garneau as an unenlightened and somewhat vicious attack on "le peuple canadien". It is in fact the following passage from the report that Garneau uses as fuel for his arguments and to which separatists such as Plamondon continue to refer:

> There can hardly be conceived a nationality more destitute of all that can invigorate and elevate a people, than that which is exhibited by the descendants of the French in Lower Canada, owing to their retaining their peculiar language and manner. They are a people with no history and no literature.[18]

In a letter he wrote to Lord Elgin, Garneau admits that it is no coincidence that his *Histoire* was written following the publication of Durham's report, and claims to have undertaken the work "dans le but de rétablir la vérité, si souvent défigurée, et de repousser les attaques et les insultes dont mes compatriotes ont été et sont encore journellement (sic) l'objet de la part d'hommes qui voudraient les opprimer et les exploiter tout à la fois."[19]

Many of Durham's comments on what he found in Canada remain relevant and serve to underline the conflicts which

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[18] Report on the Affairs of British North America from the Earl of Durham, Her Majesty's High Commissioner, Montreal, The Morning Courier, 1839, 112.

[19] Pierre-Joseph-Olivier Chauveau, Françoix-Xavier Garneau: Sa vie et ses oeuvres (Montreal, 1883) 234.

have plagued Canada since the beginning of time:

> I expected to find a contest between a government and a people: I found two nations warring in the bosom of a single state: I found a struggle, not of principles, but of races; and I perceived that it would be idle to attempt any amelioration of laws or institutions until we could first succeed in terminating the deadly animosity that now separates the inhabitants of Lower Canada into the hostile divisions of French and English.[20]

The Durham Report, which is essentially a record of the governor's personal impressions of Britain's new colony, shows his insight into the battle of the "two races" and suggests that, as far back as 1840, French and English Canadians were, as Chauveau had argued, "mounting a metaphorical staircase", widening the gap between the two groups. Referring to the problem of the different languages spoken in Upper and Lower Canada, a problem that continues to afflict the province of Quebec as well as Canada, Durham wrote:

> As they are taught apart, so are their studies different. The literature with which each is the most conversant, is that of the peculiar language of each; and all the ideas which men derive from books, come to each of them from perfectly different sources. The difference of language in this respect produces effects quite apart from those it has on the mere intercourse of the two races. Those who have reflected on the powerful influence of language on thought, will perceive in how different a manner people who speak in different languages are apt to think; [...] The

[20] Lord Durham's Report on the Affairs of British North America, ed., Sir C.P. Lucas, vol. II (1939; Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1912) 16.

> articles in the newspapers of each race, are written in a style as widely different as those of France and England at present; and the arguments which convince the one, are calculated to appear utterly unintelligible to the other.[21]

Like Durham and Garneau, American historian Francis Parkman also wrote about the inherent differences between the two races. In *The Old Régime,* Parkman states:

> The Germanic race, and especially the Anglo-Saxon branch of it, is peculiarly masculine, and, therefore, peculiarly fitted for self-government. It submits its actions habitually to the guidance of reason, and has the judicial faculty of seeing both sides of a question. The French Celt is cast in a different mould. He sees the end distinctly, and reasons about it with an admirable clearness, but his own impulses and passions continually turn him away from it. Opposition excites him; and he is impatient of delay, is impelled always to extremes, and does not readily sacrifice a present inclination to an ultimate good. He delights in abstractions and generalizations, cuts loose from unpleasing facts, and roams through an ocean of desires and theories.[22]

Parkman, as a romantic historian, was the leading interpreter of French Canadian society to English readers. Like Garneau, Parkman focused on the antagonism of the two races, and his historical narratives influenced early English Canadian fiction writers. Unlike Garneau, however, Parkman has not been felt as an influence by contemporary authors.

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[21] Durham 39-40.
[22] Francis Parkman, The Old Régime, (1874; Boston, 1905) 464-465.

Garneau's work inadvertently illustrated that Durham's, and subsequently Parkman's, observations about the division between French and English Canadians was a significant reality of Canadian life. But Garneau's main objective was to prove that Durham was wrong, that French Canada did in fact have a long and glorious history of which it could boast, and to supply his people with the grounds on which they could continue building a nation. What Garneau did, in the end, was prove that Durham was not only correct in his comments about the warring races but also on the issue of language differences and the resulting way of thinking. Garneau supplied French Canada with literature and history, and he gave it and its descendants "une raison d'être".

Garneau's narrative is worthy of close examination because of its tremendous influence on French Canadian people, their literature, their politics, and their way of thinking. He holds the titles of "historien national" and "le père de la littérature canadienne" because of the undeniable influence his text has had on readers and, subsequently, on writers. An analysis of Garneau's text will enable us to isolate the narrative strategies used by the historian which account for the influence he has had on generations of French Canadian novel writers.

In *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteeth-*

Century Europe,[23] Hayden White supplies readers of history with insights into the nature of the historian's narrative technique which are useful in an attempt to define Garneau's extraordinary influence on his culture. White defines a historical work as a verbal structure or narrative, which combines data, theoretical concepts explaining data, and a narrative structure for the presentation of the data. In the introduction to his study of nineteenth century historians and philosophers of history, White describes the connections between the methodology of writing history and fiction. He analyzes various writers of history according to the narrative form chosen by the historian and examines how traditional "plot" structures used to construct the historical events, be they employed consciously or not, bring about a certain effect in the reader.

Drawing on White's study, I will show how the presentation of information in Garneau's history has not only been a catalyst to French Canadian literature, but, more specifically, for the nationalistic novels of Quebec. Garneau's history is one that describes the events in Canada's past in a way that glorifies French Canadians and their values, often to the detriment of English Canadians. The themes found in Garneau's *Histoire*, as I will demonstrate, are

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[23] Hayden White, Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1973).

found in the novels which began to appear following the publication of Garneau's work and continue to animate contemporary Quebecois literature.

The reader of Garneau's text becomes unconsciously involved in the quest for national identity due to the author's staggering conviction and the narrative devices he uses. One strategy is Garneau's use of the subject pronoun throughout the text. As Julie Potvin argues in "Relire le Discours préliminaire", Garneau interchanges the "je", "on", and "nous" pronouns in a manner which has the effect of drawing the reader into the argument and placing him/her on Garneau's side.[24] In the "Discours préliminaire", Garneau uses the "je" to describe his area of concern as he defines the two phases of the history of Canada as the period of French domination and that of English domination. The "je" is thus found in the first edition of the "Discours" as Garneau's states "La différence des armes entre ces deux époques militantes, nous les montre sous deux points de vue bien distincts; mais c'est sous le dernier qu'il m'intéresse davantage."[25] Although in the revised second edition, the alteration between the "je" and the "nous" gives way to the consistent reliance on "nous", the use of the first person plural pronoun continues to draw the reader into the historian's argument.

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[24] Potvin "Relire le Discours" 30.
[25] Garneau "Discours préliminaire" 20.

François Ricard argues that the same literary manoeuvre is found in nationalist essays written in 1960-1970 and describes it as "une tentative, de la part d'un JE divisé, tendu, d'explorer et de résoudre cette tension en la projetant, par l'écriture, dans un NOUS à la fois réel et mythique."[26] The use of "nous" throughout the text serves to create a subconscious bond between the historian and his readers who inevitably become part of the "nous". Garneau thus ends the "Discours Préliminaire" with the following, using this mythical "nous":

> Dans les observations ci-dessus, nous avons énoncé franchement et sans crainte nos vues sur un sujet qui doit préoccuper tous les canadiens dans la situation exceptionnelle où ils se trouvent comme peuple. Nous l'avons fait, parce que nous croyons que nos lecteurs avaient droit de connaître notre opinion à cet égard; nous avons dû aussi exprimer nos espérances que nous croyons bien fondées, parce qu'elles procèdent des déductions les plus sévères des faits historiques dont nous allons dérouler le riche et intéressant tableau.[27]

The reader is never told who the "nous" is in the passage, but is left with a feeling of determination to join Garneau in his story and enlist as a "canadien préoccupé par la situation exceptionnelle". Once Garneau has secured his reader's support, he moves into dangerous generalizations, using a pontificating tone as he warns against English

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[26] Potvin "Relire le Discours" 30-31.
[27] Garneau "Discours préliminaire" 30-31.

domination and assimilation:

> Nous pouvons dire, toutefois, que dans ce que nous avons écrit nous n'avons été inspiré par aucun motif d'hostilité contre personne. Nous n'avons fait qu'écouter les sympathies profondes de notre coeur pour une cause qui s'appuie sur ce qu'il y a de plus saint et de plus vénérable aux yeux de tous les peuples.[28]

Both the way Garneau structures his story and the content of the story itself account for the enormous influence his history has had on generations of French Canadian writers. Garneau presents the story of Canada as the dramatic tale of the survival of a small and valorous people - "le petit peuple" - against enormous odds. Within this overall conceptualization, his depiction of the events, especially from the time of Durham's report, has given novelists a storehouse of appealing and instantly recognizable images: the value of the land in the fight against English oppression, the uniqueness of the language, and the materialistic threat of the English Canadian. Thus Garneau's *Histoire* instructed its readers to fight against tyranny and the threat of assimilation, and claimed to speak for all those who worry about the future:

> Quoiqu'on fasse, la destruction d'un peuple n'est pas chose aussi facile qu'on pourrait se l'imaginer. ... Néanmoins, il est des hommes que l'avenir inquiète, et qui ont besoin d'être

[28] Garneau, L'Histoire du Canada depuis sa découverte jusqu'à nos jours, t. I, (1845; Montreal, 1882) ix.

> rassurés; c'est pour eux que nous allons entrer dans les détails qui vont suivre. L'importance de la cause que nous défendons nous servira d'excuse auprès du lecteur. Heureux l'historien qui n'a pas la même tâche à remplir pour sa patrie![29]

Following White's paradigm, we can see how Garneau organized the events which he felt were necessary from the "chronicle" stage into a story that has a discernable beginning, middle and end. Chronicles are usually, according to White, historical data taken from documents and archives. In this case, Garneau had no access to such formal information, and the source of his information remains ambiguous. As he states in the preface to the fourth edition:

> Lorsque nous avons commencé cet ouvrage, nous n'avions pas la correspondance officielle des gouverneurs français avec la métropole, jusqu'à la conquête, et nous ne possédions qu'un petit nombre de documents relatifs à notre histoire sous la domination anglaise.[30]

But, as White argues, the status of the historical representation depends not on the nature of the data but on the "consistency, coherence, and illuminative power" of [the] respective vision of the historical field."[31] Garneau's vision

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[29] François-Xavier Garneau, "Discours préliminaire," L'Histoire du Canada depuis sa découverte jusqu'à nos jours, t. I (Quebec, 1845) 20.
[30] Garneau t. I v.
[31] White 4.

remained consistent as he transformed the chronicle into a "story" which is, as White demonstrates, affected by the characterization of some events in the chronicle in terms of inaugural and terminating motifs. In Garneau's history, the inaugurating event is the Union of the Canadas for which Durham wrote his report in which he stated that French Canadians were a people without a history and a literature. It was with this moment in mind that Garneau set out to write the "story" of Canada:

> Les auteurs de l'union des Canadas, surtout, projetée en 1822, et exécutée en 1839, n'a été qu'un moyen adopté pour couvrir d'un voile légal une grande injustice. L'Angleterre, qui ne voit, dans les canadiens français, que des colons turbulens (sic), entachés de désaffection et de républicanisme, oublie que leur inquiétude ne provient que de l'attachement qu'ils ont pour leurs institutions et leurs usages menacés, tantôt ouvertement, tantôt secrètement par l'autorité préconsulaire.[32]

L'Abbé Henri-Raymond Casgrain, an influential pundit of the 1860 Mouvement Littéraire, wrote passionately about Garneau's work and was one of the many intellectual elite of the time to be inspired by *L'Histoire du Canada*. Casgrain confirms Garneau's inaugural event:

> [Garneau] traçait les premières pages de son Histoire au lendemain des luttes sanglantes de

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[32] Garneau, "Discours préliminaire" 21-22.

> 1837, au moment où l'oligarchie triomphante [...] croyait avoir mis le pied sur la gorge de la nationalité canadienne. La terre était encore fraîche sur la tombe des victimes de l'échafaud, et leur ombre sanglante se dressait sans cesse devant la pensée de l'historien; tandis que du fond de leur lointain exil, les gémissements des Canadiens expatriés, leur prêtant une voix lugubre, venaient troubler le silence de ses veilles. L'horizon était sombre, l'avenir chargé d'orages, et quand il se penchait sur sa fenêtre, il entendait le sourd grondement de cette immense marée montante de la race anglo-saxonne qui menaçait de cerner et d'engloutir le jeune peuple dont il traçait l'histoire [...] . Parfois il se demandait si cette histoire qu'il écrivait n'était pas plutôt une oraison funèbre.[33]

Unlike the novelist who creates events in the order of his/her choice, the historical writer confronts a clutter of events which have already occured, out of which must be chosen the elements of the story to be told. The story is created by including some events and excluding others. This process of exclusion, stress, and subordination is carried out in the interest of constituting a story of a particular kind. White uses the term "emplotment" to describe this process used by the historian. Because historians emplot their stories differently, emphasizing different people, events and circumstances, readers find divergent and sometimes contradictory facts within the historical document. For example, Michel Bibaud's three volumes of history, appearing in 1837, 1843, and 1844, also depicted the history of the

[33] Henri-Raymond Casgrain, Un contemporain: F.-X. Garneau, (Quebec, 1866) 69-70.

colonies; however, as Johnson argues, Bibaud's version of history was not popular due to its author's view of England's generosity, and the absence of the conflictual theme found in Garneau.[34] Bibaud set out to prove that England's actions regarding the rights and freedom of its colonies were commendable, and he reprimanded the patriots for their uprisings, especially Louis-Joseph Papineau. Readers, however, took more passionately to the idea of French-Canadians being mistreated and misguided by the supposed benefits of the Act of Union, which Garneau refers to as a way to destroy "la nationalité française et la religion catholique"[35] through "l'abolition de leur langue, et la restriction de leur franchise électorale, pour les tenir, malgré leur nombre, dans la minorité et la sujétion."[36]

Garneau uses what White would term a Romantic mode of emplotment. His is a drama of self-identification symbolized by the hero's transcendence of the world of experience, his victory, and his final liberation from it. As such, Garneau's drama illustrates the triumph of French Canadians over the English, of good over evil, of virtue over vice, of light over darkness, and the ultimate transcendence of man over the world in which he was imprisoned by the Fall. As such, Garneau's "Canadiens faisaient de continuels efforts pour sortir de

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[34] Johnson 36.
[35] Garneau t. III 392.
[36] Garneau "Discours préliminaire" 25.

l'oppression sous laquelle ils gémissaient."[37]

The Romantic mode of emplotment can be located in Garneau's constant juxtaposition of French and English Canadians, an element which has become a foundation of the French Canadian fictional plot. Garneau's English Canadians are seen as the enemy - the evil, the vice, the dark factor that is a constant threat to the survival of French Canadian traditions:

> Le colon anglais était principalement dominé par l'amour de la liberté et la passion du commerce et des richesses. Tous les sacrifices pour obtenir ces trois objets, vers lesquels ses pensées tendaient sans cesse, étaient peu de chose pour lui, car en dehors il ne voyait que ruine et abjection.[38]

Garneau's French Canadians, on the other hand, are substantially different. It is they who have triumphed over the powers that are a constant menace to them:

> Les Canadiens, peuple de laboureurs, de chasseurs et de soldats; les canadiens, qui eussent triomphé, quoique plus pauvres, s'ils avaient été seulement la moitié aussi nombreux que leurs adversaires! Leur vie, à la fois insouciante et agitée, soumise et indépendante, était plus chevaleresque, plus poétique que la vie calculatrice de ces derniers.[39]

Garneau describes "le peuple" as an independent, strong and

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[37] Garneau t. II 320.
[38] Garneau t. I 317.
[39] Garneau t. I 317-318.

unconquerable entity whose nationality, consisting of three essential elements, cannot be altered:

> [...]il a combattu seul toutes les tentatives faites contre son existence, et il s'est maintenu à la surprise de ses oppresseurs, vaincus et découragés. Admirable de persévérence, de courage et de résignation, il n'a jamais un moment cessé d'espérer. Fidèle à la religion de ses pères, révérant les lois qu'ils lui ont laissées en héritage, et chérissant la langue dont l'harmonie a frappé son oreille au berceau, cette langue qu'adoptent de nos jours les grands philosophes et les diplomates étrangers, pas un seul Canadien français, de père et de mère, n'a encore, dans le Bas-Canada, désavoué ces trois grands symboles de sa nationalité: sa langue, ses lois, sa religion.[40]

Casting his story in the Romantic mode, Garneau describes the time after the conquest as a period in which his people were most vulnerable under the new English regime, a regime which sought to destroy French Canada:

> Les marchands et les fonctionnaires anglais [...] concertèrent la destruction de la langue, des lois et des coutumes des Canadiens, comme le moyen le plus sûr de dominer ce peuple et de l'exploiter.[41]

Garneau's opening "Discours préliminaire" warns his people of the perils of decolonization. Suggesting the transcendence of the French Canadian nation, Garneau states: "La nationalité d'ailleurs n'est pas un fruit artificiel;

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[40] Garneau t. III 78.
[41] Garneau t. III 78-79.

c'est le don de Dieu; personne ne peut l'acquérir, et il est impossible de le perdre."[42] Ironically, the remainder of his work thus becomes a contradiction if it is in reality impossible to lose one's nationality; nevertheless, Garneau continues to describe the threats facing the French-Canadian people, and it is this work, read and acclaimed by the intellectual elite of the province, that propelled nationalist sentiment and literature.

In addition to the level of conceptualization on which the historian emplots his narrative account, White describes "explanation by formal argument". Here the historian seeks to explain "the point of it all" or "what it all adds up to" in the end.[43] On this level of conceptualization, the historian explains the events in the story by constructing an argument which can be analyzed into a syllogism containing a putatively universal law of causal relationships as a major premise, a "minor premise of the boundary conditions within which the law is applied, and a conclusion in which the events that actually occured are deduced from the premises by logical necessity."[44] Garneau's major premise can be viewed as being something as simple as "All French Canadian people are innately valorous and courageous," and, the minor premise, "English Canadians do not belong in the classification of French Canadian." It thus

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[42] Garneau "Discours préliminaire" 25-26.
[43] White 11.
[44] White 11.

becomes part of the logical conclusion that the English are not valorous and courageous, and, because English is the "opposite" of French, ultimately their qualities become the opposite of all that is "French Canadian/valorous and courageous."

Garneau, like most Romantic historians and great historical narrators, follows White's Formist mode of articulation. Garneau can thus be seen as an historian whose aim is to identify the unique characteristics of objects inhabiting the historical field. The vivid descriptions of the French Canadian people, the valorous and independant nature they display in their struggles, are assigned to an entire group of people and are consequently negated in the opposing group, which is, in Garneau's case, English Canadians. As is characteristic of a Formist historian, Garneau tends to make generalizations about the historical field but makes up for the vacuity of his generalizations by the vividness of his reconstructions. Correspondingly, readers of Garneau's *Histoire du Canada* have not spent great amounts of time and energy questioning the authority of the writer and they assume that his narrative is truthful. However, the fact remains that Garneau's history was written under questionable research circumstances. As Marcel Trudel argues, Garneau had no access to official bibliographical documents and archives; universities were not yet in

existence, and, unlike members of the clergy, Garneau was not admitted in the Seminaries of Quebec or Montreal which were the only places where extensive libraries were found. Public archives were in the possession of the Parliamentary Library which followed a somewhat nomadic path over the years: In Quebec until 1841, in Kingston from 1841 to 1844, in Montreal from 1844 to 1849, in Toronto from 1849 to 1853, back to Quebec from 1853 to 1857, and finally to Ottawa in 1857, where they remained.[45] He was not, as were his successors, educated or trained in the study of history. Regardless, Garneau managed to write his *Histoire*, a document which puts into question the mere possibility of his being able to achieve his intention of "rétablir la vérité, si souvent défigurée."[46]

Marcel Trudel, commenting on Garneau in 1995, admits that the authenticity of the work must be called into question and that, although it has value, it is not what Garneau claimed it to be:

> Son oeuvre peut, à certains points de vue, nous éclairer sur lui et sur son époque, mais, dans l'ensemble, elle demeure un article précieux du patrimoine national. On la regarde, on l'admire, on la conserve avec soin: elle n'est plus un outil de travail.[47]

As Trudel argues, Garneau's history has been carefully

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[45] Marcel Trudel, "Témoignagnes d'historiens," Études françaises 30.3 (1995) 111.
[46] Garneau's letter to Lord Elgin, cited in Pierre-Joseph-Olivier Chauveau, François-Xavier Garneau: Sa vie et ses oeuvres, (Montreal, 1883) 234.
[47] Trudel 116.

conserved because of what White describes as the structural components of the historical account. Garneau's Romantic emplotment and Formist mode of argument are combined with a third tactic referred to by White as "emplotment by ideological implication."

White describes the way in which the ideological dimensions of an historical account reflect "the ethical element in the historian's assumption of a particular position on the question of the nature of historical knowledge and the implications that can be drawn from the study of past events for the study of present ones."[48] White draws on Karl Mannheim's *Ideology and Utopia* to describe four basic ideological positions and how they are meant to serve as designators of general ideological preference rather than as "emblems of specific political parties". As such, they are not to be confused with an historian's consciously held political position.

Of White's four possible positions, Garneau uses the "Anarchist mode of ideological implication", as his history is one that recognizes the need for social change and structural transformations and looks to abolish society and substitute for it a community of individuals held together by a shared sense of their own humanity. In Garneau's case, this shared sense of community is based on the idea of a nation,

[48] White 22.

identified by language, religion, traditions, and laws, while "society" becomes synonymous with the English conqueror. White describes the Anarchist position as one that calls for "cataclysmic" transformations but which is somewhat unaware of the power needed to bring about these changes. Anarchists, states White, are inclined to idealize a remote past of natural human innocence from which men have fallen into the corrupt social state in which they currently find themselves. They project this utopia onto what is effectively a "temporal plane" and view it as a "possibility of human achievement at any time, if men will only seize control of their own essential humanity, either by an act of will or by an act of consciousness which destroys the socially provided belief in the legitimacy of the current establishment."[49] White argues that Anarchists believe in the need for structural transformations in the interest of abolishing "society" and substituting for it a "community" of individuals held together by a shared state of existence. As such, Garneau emphasizes the symbols of French Canadian nationality as the basis of "community". He idealizes a time before the conquest as the period of natural human innocence, from which men have fallen into the corrupt social state in which they find themselves as part of a British colony. At the end of his history, Garneau warns his people of the dangers of city life and of "society",

[49] White 25.

and advises them to stay on the land to foster this sense of "community" based on French Canadian traditions:

> Les Canadiens-Français forment un peuple de cultivateurs dans un climat rude et sévère. [...] ils ont de la gravité, du caractère et de la persévérance. [...] Que les Canadiens soient fidèles à eux-mêmes, qu'ils soient sages et persévérants, qu'ils ne se laissent pas séduire par le brillant des nouveautés sociales ou politiques! Ils ne sont pas assez forts pour se donner carrière sur ce point. C'est aux grands peuples à faire l'épreuve des grandes théories: ils peuvent se donner toute liberté dans leurs orbites assez spacieuses. Pour nous, une partie de notre force vient de nos traditions; ne nous en éloignons, ne les changeons que graduellement.[50]

Michel Brunet argues that French Canadians did not fully understand the implications of the conquest and truly believed that their power would someday be restored:

> Les Canadiens ne doutaient pas que, tôt ou tard, ils reprendraient le contrôle politique et économique du pays qu'ils considéraient toujours comme une patrie leur appartenant en propre. Selon leurs plus secrets calculs, les Londoniens n'auraient pas toujours le dessus. Un jour viendrait où ils seraient encore les maîtres de leurs destinées. Ils caressaient ce fol espoir qu'ils croyaient légitime et réalisable parce qu'ils refusaient de voir, ou n'avaient pas vu, qu'un autre Canada, un Canada anglais cette fois, était en train de se bâtir sur les ruines de l'ancien Canada français.[51]

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[50] Garneau t. III 396-397.
[51] Brunet 19-20.

This statement is one that is often paraphrased in political rhetoric and is found in French Canadian literature. The idea that French Canadians long to be in control of their own destiny and essentially "maître chez nous" and that only the canadiens "pure laine" belong in Quebec is an age-old refrain. Garneau himself inspired French Canadians to believe in the possibility of returning to such a past state of existence. Accordingly, Garneau's description of the 1774 charter, which gave French Canadians political power and allowed them to practise their faith in the Catholic religion, is described not as a fair deal by the English but, rather, as a victory on the part of the French:

> L'acte de 1774, passé pour attacher les Canadiens à l'empire, rétablit les lois françaises et mit ce peuple, pour ses droits politiques, sur le même pied que les Anglais, qui, voyant déjà leur domination s'évanouir, y avaient apporté une résistance opiniâtre.[52]

Garneau's description of French Canadians thus suggests that they retain a power and the possibility of returning to a previously held state of existence. In his *Histoire du Canada,* Garneau's Canadiens are courageous warriors who, from the beginning of their time in New France, have fought passionately and consciously. They are loyal by nature, and

[52] Garneau t. III 79.

their nationalistic allegiance allows them to transcend political powers and physical battles. They are continually described as virtuous pilgrims who live in the shadow of English tyranny:

> Tout démontre que les Français établis en Amérique ont conservé ce trait caractéristique de leurs pères, cette puissance énergique et insaisissable qui réside en eux-mêmes, et qui, comme le génie, échappe à l'astuce de la politique comme au tranchant de l'épée. [...] on dirait qu'une énergie qui est comme indépendante d'eux-mêmes, repousse les attaques dirigées contre leur nationalité. Leurs rangs se resserent; la fièrté du grand peuple dont ils descendent, laquelle les anime alors qu'on les menace, leur fait rejeter toutes les capitulations qu'on leur offre; leur nature gauloise, en les éloignant des races flegmatiques, les soutient aussi dans des circonstances où d'autres perdraient toute espérance. Enfin cette force de cohésion, qui leur est propre, se développe d'autant plus que l'on veut la détruire.[53]

In terms of historical documentation, Garneau offers no proof for his theories. In fact, his entire *Histoire du Canada* makes up in conviction what it lacks in evidence. Throughout the book, generalizations are made and stories are told without the examples or official testimony that would render the information credible. The story is, nevertheless, believable. Garneau's style is persuasive, and his constant juxtaposition of the treacherous and unscrupulous English with

[53] Garneau t. I xix-xx.

the illustrious French Canadians inspires even the most objective reader. One cannot help but be drawn into the romantic narrative which holds up "le peuple canadien" as the virtuous hero, the conquered "good guy", the ever-loyal habitant of New France. Garneau's conclusion is yet another testimony of French Canadian ideology, to the extent that the reader is likely to ignore the outcome of the guerre de la Conquête:

> Nous avons donné l'histoire des émigrants français qui ont fixé les destinées de leur postérité à l'extrémité septentrionale de l'Amérique du Nord. Détachés comme quelques feuilles d'un arbre, ces émigrants ont été jetés dans un monde nouveau pour y être battus de mille orages, orages excités par l'avidité du négoce et de la barbarie, orage de la décadence d'une antique monarchie et de la conquête étrangère. [...] Il [le peuple] s'est resserré en lui-mêmes, il a rallié tous ses enfants autour de lui, et a toujours craint de perdre un usage, une pensée, un préjugé de ses pères, malgré les sarcasmes de ses voisins.[54]

Garneau never specifies what the "efforts incroyables" were, but he clearly suggests to the reader that English Canadians did what they could to avoid giving French Canadians any power. Garneau accomplishes this by telling a highly believable story in what White calls a historiographical style that influences and essentially convinces the reader of the

[54] Garneau t. III 394-395

historian's sincerity.

White explains how a historiographical style represents a certain combination of the modes of emplotment, of argument, and of ideological implication. He describes how certain "elective affinities" among the possible combinations render a text more cohesive and credible, and how dialectical tension occurs when an historian attempts to combine inconsonnant modes of emplotment.

Among the possible "elective affinities", then, one finds that Garneau's combinations of the Romantic mode of emplotment, the Formal mode of argument, and the Anarchist mode of ideological implication reveal the structure that underlies Garneau's historical account. His choice of narrative style was perhaps unconscious, but nevertheless his prose has had such an effect on his readers that his ideology can be recognized in French Canadian literature from 1846 to the present, and he has held his title of "historien national" despite the fact that his narration of history has been questioned, challenged, and refuted by accredited historians. As William Eccles argues, Garneau's history served, in 1845, to bring the past to life, but it cannot be viewed as an objective version of Canadian history:

> Son histoire n'est plus une histoire du Canada pour notre temps, mais elle le fût certainement pour le sien. Elle a aujourd'hui une valeur inestimable, mais pour l'historiographie plus que pour

> l'histoire. [...] C'est seulement au cours des années 1940, lorsque les Guy Frégault, Marcel Trudel, Maurice Séguin et quelques historiens anglophones commencèrent à publier leurs versions révisionnistes de l'histoire de la Nouvelle-France, qu'apparaîtra une interprétation plus critique.[55]

While there is little doubt about the fact that Garneau's work had a great influence on French Canadian literature, what is left to be determined is the kind of effect, specifically, Garneau's history had on the writers of fiction in the province of Quebec. In the following pages, I will examine a selection of French Canadian novels and trace throughout a period of one hundred thirty-four years the ideology found in Garneau's version of history which combines an emplotment that is fundamentally a drama of self-identification and glorification of his people and their collective past. Specifically, the thesis will examine the nature of Garneau's influence on three types of novels.

Patrice Lacombe's *La terre paternelle* (1846) initiated le roman de la terre in which Garneau's influence clearly dictates plot values and discourse. *La terre paternelle* warns readers of the dangers of abandonning the land which became symbolic of the French Canadian nation. Antoine Gérin-Lajoie's *Jean Rivard* (1874) also glorifies an agricultural existence and is a testimonial account of the role the land

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[55] William J. Eccles, "Un homme de son temps," Études françaises 30.3 (1995) 116.

plays in the protection of French Canadian values, tradition and religion.

Joseph Marmette's *Jean de Bienville* (1870) picks up the drama of Garneau's history in an historical novel rooted in the 1690 siege of Quebec. Marmette's novel, as well as other historical novels written in French Canada, portray both historical and fictional characters who adhere to Garneau's views on the differences between English and French Canadians. As such, French Canadians are portrayed as courageous warriors whose loyalty to the French Canadian nation, just as Garneau had described, is intrinsic and inspiring, while the English are portrayed as floundering in deviousness and shame.

Finally, Yves Beauchemin's *Le Matou* (1980) moves French Canadian culture far from its traditional association with the land to a modern, urban "binerie". Even here, however, the ghost of Garneau animates the text as Beauchemin's characters learn to value ideals in a language that echoes the historian's interest in national survival. Following the failure of a business association with an English Canadian, the Quebecois hero reestablishes himself by turning to the past and becoming an antique dealer. Only by learning to adhere to ancestral traditions and establishing close ties with his community, all lessons taught by Garneau, does the hero find success and happiness, exhibiting what Garneau claimed to be the essence of French Canadians: "...cette

force secrète de cohésion et de résistence qui maintient l'unité nationale à travers les plus cruelles vicissitudes, et la relève triomphates de tous les désastres."[56]

[56] Garneau t. I xix.

Chapter I - Le roman de la terre

Fiction writing in French Canada began in 1837 with the publication of Aubert de Gaspé's *L'Influence d'un livre*. As André Vanasse states in the introduction to *La terre paternelle*, de Gaspé and other novelists of the period such as Joseph Doutre (*Les fiancés de 1812*, 1844) and Eugène Lécuyer (*La fille du brigand*, 1844) were strongly influenced by French Romantic novelists and consequently adopted plots structures that revolved around fantastic adventures and unrealistic story lines.[57] These novels, written prior to the appearance of Garneau's *Histoire du Canada*, were significantly different from the novels written after Garneau which offered novelists new patriotic themes needed for nationalist literature.

After the publication of Garneau's *Histoire du Canada*, novel writing in French Canada changed direction. Novels about the land and its importance to French Canadian survival began appearing and continued to do so for over a century. "Le roman de la terre," as this type of novel is called, has its roots in Garneau's history, which advised French Canadians to stay on the land and embrace the ideals which would ensure the survival of "le peuple canadien".

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[57] André Vanasse, introduction, La terre paternelle, by Patrice Lacombe (1846; Montreal: Bibliothèque québecoise, 1993) 11-12.

In the preface to his history, Garneau describes the threat of extinction as the reason for his undertaking the writing *L'Histoire du Canada*:

> A la cause que nous avons embrassée dans ce livre, la conservation de notre religion, de notre langue et de nos lois, se rattache aujourd'hui notre propre destinée. En persévérant dans les traditions de nos pères, nous nous sommes fait l'adversaire de la politique d'Angleterre, qui a placé les deux Canadas sous un même gouvernement, afin de faire disparaître ces trois grands traits de l'existence des Canadiens...[58]

Garneau uses what White would term an Anarchist mode of ideological implication in writing a history that recognizes the need for social change and structural transformation. Using language, laws, and traditions - symbols of nationalism - Garneau promotes the ideology of a community held together by a shared sense of its existence. This sense of community was to be cultivated and protected by the intellectual elite who promoted the notion of living on the land. Devotion to the agrarian way of life guaranteed French Canadians the independence that they would not have were they to live in English urban centres. As White argues, the Anarchist is inclined to idealize a remote past from which men have fallen into the corrupt social state in which they currently find

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[58] Garneau t.I ix.

themselves.[59] Garneau thus idealizes a past, the time prior to the conquest, and he places great value on rural life as he cautions his people to beware of losing sight of the supremely important elements of French Canadian nationalism which were to become synonymous with independence from the English conqueror. As he states in his history, "Les Canadiens-Français forment un peuple de cultivateurs dans un climat rude et sévère. [...] Que les canadiens soient fidèles à eux-mêmes; qu'ils soient sages et persévérants, qu'ils ne se laissent pas séduire par le brillant des nouvautés sociales ou politiques!"[60]

William Johnson argues that Garneau's ideals, promoted in les collèges classiques run by the church, had a profound influence on French Canadian literature for over a century.[61] Graduates of these colleges, the new French Canadian elite and the guiding force of the nation, believed it to be their mission to glorify the ideals expounded by Garneau. Garneau's *Histoire* gave French Canadians their needed place in history and exalted their ancestors and their shared sense of the past. As Garneau's ideals were promoted in colleges around the province, young French Canadians gratefully accepted the historian's account of the past. With this acceptance came a unified belief that Garneau's history was the one to which

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[59] White 25.
[60] Garneau t. III 396.
[61] Johnson 37.

they would turn for study. As the 1860 mouvement littéraire began to develop, its leader l'abbé Henri-Raymond Casgrain acknowledged Garneau's important contribution to the creation of national pride in young intellectuals:

> Nous n'oublierons jamais l'impression profonde que produisit sur nos jeunes imaginations d'étudiants, la parution de L'Histoire du Canada de M. Garneau. Ce livre était une révélation pour nous. Cette clarté lumineuse qui se levait tout à coup sur un sol vièrge, et nous en découvrait les richesses et la puissante végétation, les monuments et les souvenirs, nous ravissait d'étonnement autant que d'admiration.[62]

Thus Garneau's ideology was studied and accepted, and his ideas were adopted by the writers of the nineteenth century. Using White's paradigm of the Anarchist emplotment, we can see that Garneau's faith in the importance of the land as a means to return to a past state of existence is consistent throughout his text. As Garneau declares in his *Histoire*, French Canadians clung to the belief that one day their country would again be under their control: "Cependant les Canadiens persistaient à croire que la France ne les abandonnerait pas, et qu'elle se ferait rendre le pays à la fin de la guerre."[63] In fact, historian Michel Brunet argued in 1955 that French Canadians always believed that they would

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[62] Henri-Raymond Casgrain, Oeuvres Complètes de l'abbé Casgrain, t.I, (Montreal: Beauchemin, 1873) 353.
[63] Garneau t. II, 298.

sooner or later regain control of New France and return to their past state of existence as it was a country "qu'ils considéraient toujours comme une patrie leur appartenant propre."[64]

Faithful to this conviction of the significance of the land, Garneau describes how French Canadian soldiers took refuge in the land following the conquest, a move that isolated them and allowed them to live apart from their "new masters":

> Les habitants ruinés, décimés par tant de combats, ne songèrent plus qu'à se réfugier sur leurs terres pour réparer leurs pertes ; et, s'isolant de leurs nouvaux maîtres, ils se livrèrent entièrement à l'agriculture.[65]

Garneau's words depict both his perception of events and a warning to his people. His observations lead him to conclude that French Canadians turned to agriculture as a way of life. But more importantly, his statement suggests that such a move "isolated" French Canadians from the conquerors who represented a threat to them. Garneau's historiographical style, idealizing a return to past ways of living on the land, leads to a perceived guarantee of independence and protection from the English, an independence which was vital to the subsistence of "le peuple".

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[64] Brunet 19.
[65] Garneau t. II 296.

Influenced by Garneau's arguments, French Canadian leaders advised their people to stay on the land, to have large families, and to remain faithful to the Catholic church. Garneau's ideology, involving a love of the land and a sacred respect for the agrarian tradition, essentially marked the birth of nationalist sentiment. As Georges-Étienne Cartier said in his speech delivered on la fête nationale in 1855:

> Il ne suffit pas, pour les membres d'une nationalité, d'avoir contribué à son existence par leur travail et par leur bonne conduite, il leur reste encore une grande oeuvre à accomplir; il leur reste à en assurer la permanence. Inutile d'indiquer le moyen d'obtenir cette permanence. Vous le connaissez comme moi. L'histoire de toutes les nationalités, et surtout de notre propre histoire, le fait connaître suffisamment. La population ne suffit pas à constituer une nationalité; il lui faut encore l'élément territorial. La race, la langue, l'éducation et les moeurs forment ce que j'appelle un élément personnel national. Mais cet élément devra périr s'il n'est pas accompagné de l'élément territorial. L'expérience démontre que, pour le maintien et la permanence de toute nationalité, il faut l'union intime et indissoluble de l'individu avec le sol.
>
> Canadien français, n'oublions pas que, *si nous voulons assurer notre existence nationale, il faut cramponner à la terre.* Celui qui n'en a point doit employer le fruit de son travail à l'acquisition d'une partie de notre sol, si minime qu'elle soit.[66]

The territorial element held a promise of permanence for French Canadian nationalism. Along with language and

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[66] in Michel Brunet, Histoire du Canada par les textes, t. II, (Montreal: Fides, 1967) 11-12.

religion, the land was to be the bulwark against the perceived threat of English assimilation and domination.

French Canadian writers paid close attention to the words of their leaders and soon found themselves faced with a literary mission. Reading Garneau had convinced them that French Canadians had a glorious history and were the descendants of a dignified race worthy of celebration. Novels would thus be written to inspire French Canadians to stay on the land, to adhere to the traditions of their ancestors, and to maintain a safe distance from the English who were populating the cities. These factors lead to the publication, in 1846, of the first roman de la terre: *La terre paternelle* by Patrice Lacombe.

La terre paternelle introduced a theme that would dominate French Canadian literature for over one hundred years. As Mireille Servais-Maquoi indicates, the message of the roman de la terre changed over the century, but the land continued to play a prominent role in French Canadian fiction until 1947.[67] Early novels, such as the ones I will be discussing, *La terre paternelle* (Patrice Lacombe, 1846) and *Jean Rivard*, tomes I & II, (1862 and 1864), preach that happiness can be found only in a life spent in the country, working on the land and following the traditions of ancestors.

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[67] Mireille Servais-Maquoi, introduction, Le roman de la terre au Quebec, (Quebec: les presses de l'Université Laval, 1974) 1-20.

Later novels, such as *La Scouine* (Albert Laberge, 1918) and *Un homme et son péché* (Claude-Henri Grignon, 1933), expose the land as a symbol of French Canadian stagnation that keeps "le peuple" out of the financial empire run by the English. Novels situated in the middle of the range include *Maria Chapdeleine* (Louis Hémon, 1916) and *Menaud, maître-draveur* (Félix-Antoine Savard, 1937), and are novels that portray both the beauty and the ruthlessness of the land and the ultimate dilemma facing those who consider abandonning "la terre paternelle" in order to find success elsewhere. Despite the variations of the "roman de la terre", these novels consistently reflect ideals put forth in Garneau's *Histoire du Canada* and reveal the theme of "génie national" that he had dramatically described. Such ideals were to be the model image of life in French Canada, an image prescribed by the literary movement of 1860 governed by Casgrain:

> Si, comme il est incontestable, la littérature est le reflet des moeurs, du caractère, des aptitudes, du génie d'une nation, si elle garde aussi l'empreinte des lieux où elle surgit, des aspects de la nature, des sites, des perspectives, des horizons, la nôtre sera grave, méditative, spiritualiste, religieuse, évangilisatrice commes nos missionnaires, généreuse comme nos martyrs, énergique et persévérante comme nos pionniers d'autres fois [...] chaste et pure comme le manteau virginale de nos longs hivers [...]. Ainsi sa voie est tracée d'avance; elle sera le miroir fidèle de notre petit peuple dans les diverses phases de son existence avec sa foi ardente, ses nobles

> aspirations, ses élans d'enthousiasme, ses traits d'héroisme, sa généreuse passion de dévouement.[68]

La terre paternelle, the inaugural novel of the land which has been referred to as "une sorte de matrice des romans du terroir à venir,"[69] followed Casgrain's prescription and was a prototype for the novels that would follow. The novel lays out, as André Varnasse points out, the ideological ingredients required in the romans de la terre: "il n'existe qu'une réalité, celle de la collectivité franco-québecoise, qu'une activité qui lui soit propre, l'agriculture, et qu'une religion qui supporte le tout: la catholique."[70] This is the same collectivity described by Garneau, held together by "ces trois grands symboles de la nationalités: langue, lois, religion."[71]

It is important to recognize Patrice Lacombe's only novel as the first literary manifestation of the ideology found in Garneau's history. Lacombe himself admits to wanting to move away from the "extraordinary" themes adopted from France by his literary counterparts Aubert de Gaspé (fils) and Doutre. His intention was to write about the values that were strictly French Canadian because he was writing "dans un pays

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[68] Casgrain Oeuvres complètes 368-369.
[69] François Paré "Identité et filiation dans La Terre paternelle" in Solitude rompue, ed. Cécile Cloutier Wojciechowska and Réjean Robidoux (Ottawa: Éditions de l'Université d'Ottawa, 1986) 294.
[70] Vanasse 17.
[71] Garneau t. I ix.

où les moeurs en général sont pures et simples."[72] Lacombe's expression mirrors Garneau's frequently used phraseology describing French Canadians as "ces paysans d'un grand courage et de moeurs simples."[73] Similar to Garneau's French Canadians who "détachés, comme quelques feuilles d'un arbre [...] ont été jetés dans un monde nouveau pour être battus de mille tempêtes,"[74] Lacombe paints the resigned and persevering "enfant du sol, tel qu'il est, religieux, honnête, paisible de moeurs et de caractère, [...] sans orgueil et sans ostentation, supportant avec résignation et patience les plus grandes adversités."[75] Lacombe deliberately moves away from French themes in an attempt to create a literature that would be, as Casgrain said, purely French Canadian:

> Quelques-uns de nos lecteurs auraient peut-être désiré que nous eussions donné un dénouement tragique à notre histoire; ils auraient aimé à voir nos acteurs disparaître violemment de la scène, les uns après les autres, et notre récit se terminer dans le genre terrible, comme un grand nombre de romans du jour. Mais nous les prions de remarquer que nous écrivons dans un pays où les moeurs en général sont pures et simples, et que l'esquisse que nous avons essayé d'en faire, eût été invraisemblable et même souverainement ridicule, si elle se fût terminée par des meurtres, des empoisonnements et des suicides.[76]

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[72] Lacombe 80.
[73] Garneau t. II 305-306.
[74] Garneau t. III 394.
[75] Lacombe 80.
[76] Lacombe 80.

Thus Lacombe began the tradition of the didactic roman de la terre, a genre that fostered a love of rural existence which would keep French Canadians away from the evils of the city, perceived as the dominant site of English culture. Remaining on the land and living a prosperous life ensured French Canadians their independence from English Canada, and the land became, in itself, symbolic of the French Canadian nation. If, as Garneau had claimed, English domination was a serious threat to the survival of the French Canadian culture, the roman de la terre offered readers a view of the freedom they could enjoy while living life according to their traditions, values, and religion.

Garneau's generalizing claim that "pas un seul Canadien français, de père et de mère, n'a encore, dans le Bas-Canada, désavoué ces trois grands symboles de sa nationalité, sa langue, ses lois et sa religion"[77] is essentially the theme in the novels of both Lacombe and Gérin-Lajoie. As Servais-Maquoi argues, "l'agriculture est le fondement de la survie nationale,"[78] a national survival whose success depends upon the territorial element. Both novels demonstrate that "le bonheur parfait" can only be achieved by living on the land and adhering to "ces trois grands symboles de [la] nationalité". Those who defy this edict live to regret it, as

[77] Lauzière 86.
[78] Servais-Maquoi 15.

we will witness in *La terre paternelle;* and those who believe in it and make a life respecting the land are blessed, as we will see in *Jean Rivard.*

La terre paternelle, as the title suggests, tells the story of a plot of land owned by the Chauvin family - "une des plus anciennes du pays"[79] - which has been in the family for many generations. The importance of living according to ancestral traditions promoted by Garneau is described at the onset of the novel as the Chauvin household is described:

> Le bon ordre et l'aisance régnait dans cette maison. Chaque jour, le père, au-dehors, comme la mère, à l'intérieur, montraient à leurs enfants l'exemple du travail, de l'économie et de l'industrie: et ceux-ci les secondaient de leur mieux. La terre soigneusement labourée s'empressait de rendre au centuple ce qu'on avait confié dans son sein.[80]

All goes well until Charles, the young and adventurous son, leaves home to work for a North-West company in the trading of furs. His departure causes his father great anxiety and, in an attempt to encourage his children to stay on the land, Chauvin transfers his farm to his eldest son. Chauvin's disloyalty toward the land, symbolized by this transfer of ownership of an entity that embodies the nation, leads to unhappiness and eventual tragedy. In a seemingly

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[79] Marmette 28.
[80] Marmette 30.

vengeful act, the land punishes Chauvin for his "donation" and becomes the source of family disputes:

> Ce nétait plus, en effet, le père qui gouvernait alors: il n'était plus chef que de nom. [...] On ne fut pas longtemps sans s'appercevoir des grands changements dans cette famille, naguère si étroitement unie. Ce n'était plus ces rapports familiers et intimes entre le père et le fils, mais une certaine réserve, de la froideur, de la défiance même que l'on surprenait entre eux; c'était alors le créancier et le débiteur qui s'observent mutuellement.[81]

This description of the land as it moves from a den of love and support to a cold, commercial-like venture brings to mind Garneau's depiction of the disparity between the French and the English. With the transfer of the land comes a transfer in values, from a united "community" to one which is held together by cold commercialism. The result reminds us of Garneau's claim that the English in Canada were dominated by their love of commerce and that anything outside that realm left them indifferent.[82]

Jean-Baptiste (the son) is not as capable and hard-working as his father, and, within five years, the land deteriotes greatly. Chauvin, who is by then older and less interested in the long hours of work needed to save the farm, decides to move to the city. Lacombe does not miss

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[81] Lacombe 52.
[82] "Le colon anglais était principalement dominé par [...] la passion du commerce et des richesses" Garneau t. I 317.

the opportunity to remind readers of the difference between life in the country and that in the city as Chauvin makes his decision: "Sourds à tous les conseils, et entrainé par la perspective de faire promptement fortune, il se décida donc à risquer les profits toujours certains de l'agriculture contre les chances incertaines du commerce."[83] Again, urban life is associated with commerce and the making of money, values Garneau links to his definition of the English. Chauvin loses sight of the importance of the land and of abiding by Garneau's warning to remain a French Canadian "d'un grand courage et de moeurs simples,"[84] and falls into the urban abyss, a fall due to "un fol orgueil."[85]

Chauvin's move to the city is exacerbated by his motivation to make money, an economic value that Garneau associates with English Canadian tradition. The novel demonstrates that not only is moving to the city a risk, but that the Chauvins do not belong there, rich or poor. When Mme Chauvin is reduced to seeking financial assistance at "Le Bureau des pauvres", she is told that help is usually restricted to "city" people: "Mais sur les observations qu'on lui fit, que le bureau avait été établi principalement pour les pauvres de la ville, et qu'étant de la campagne,

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[83] Lacombe 56.
[84] Garneau t. II 305-306.
[85] Lacombe 56.

elle aurait du y rester et ne pas venir augmenter le nombre."[86]

Migration to the city proves to be catastrophic for Chauvin and ends tragically. Within ten years, he is completely ruined: he is broke, in debt, and must sell his "terre paternelle". When Jean-Baptiste (son) dies of a sickness due in great part to malnutrition, Chauveau cannot even afford to pay for a funeral mass. Here, in the contrast between urban and country life, material values are portrayed as having infected even the Church: Chauveau is urged to pay money to have the church bells rung and have a mass sung for his son. Failing this, he must accept having his son brought directly to the cemetary to be placed in a common grave. Chauvin's experiences in the country limit his understanding of such ways, and he questions the priest about the reasoning of the process only to be told coldly: "Que voulez-vous que j'y fasse: c'est la règle."[87] The body of the young man is consequently brought directly to the cemetery without making the necessary stop at the Catholic church. Garneau's dire predictions prove all too true: the initial move has triggered a loss of the fundamental symbols of the nation.

Five years after the death of his brother, and after having been away for fifteen years, the young Charles

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[86] Lacombe 62.
[87] Lacombe 65.

returns, buys back his father's land and restores the peace and tranquility Chauvin thought had been lost forever: "Après quinze ans d'exil et de malheurs, [la famille] rentra enfin en possession du patrimoine de ses ancêtres."[88] Significantly, upon his return to la terre paternelle, unaware of the unfortunate events of the past fifteen years, Chauvin finds that the land has been tainted by the presence of "un étranger", an Englishman. The purchase of the land is then an example of what Garneau refers to as "Les Canadiens [qui] faisaient de continuels efforts pour sortir de l'oppression sous laquelle ils gémissaient."[89] The victory over the English hence involves a return to the land, realizing the joy involved in being "maître chez nous", and the "cramponnement au sol" described by Georges-Etienne Cartier. The novel ends on a happy note, as Lacombe warned it would, and readers are left to ponder the bitter consequences of Chauvin's actions as proof of the author's theory, stated at the onset: "Heureux, oh! trop heureux les habitants des campagnes, s'ils connaissaient leur bonheur."[90]

Novels idealizing the role of the land in patriotic narratives continued to flourish in the latter half of the

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[88] Lacombe 79.
[89] Garneau t.II 320.
[90] Lacombe 30.

19th century, with the firm belief that only possession of the land could guarantee the survival of the French Canadian "peuple", its language, laws and religion. Antoine Gérin-Lajoie, a young, educated French Canadian disciple of Casgrain, and founder of *Les soirées canadiennes*, published *Jean Rivard, le défricheur canadien* in 1862, and *Jean Rivard économiste* two years later. The story begins in 1843 in the small village of Grandpré. Jean Rivard, the eldest of twelve children, must abandon his studies and make a career choice following his father's death. His parish priest advises him to embrace "une carrière agricole" and, in a dream, Jean sees his future:

> Il se crut transporté au milieu d'une immense forêt. Tout à coup des hommes apparûrent, armés de haches, et les arbres tombèrent ça et là sous les coups de la cognée. Bientôt ces arbres furent remplacés par les moissons luxuriantes; Puis des vergers, des jardins, des fleurs surgirent comme par enchantement. Le soleil brillait de tout son éclat. Il se crût au milieu du paradis terrestre. En même temps, il lui sembla entendre une voix lui dire: il ne dépend que de toi d'être un jour l'heureux et paisible possesseur de ce domaine.[91]

Thus begins Rivard's adventure. With the little sum of money left him by his father, he leaves Granpré with a faithful worker, Pierre Gagnon, and purchases a large plot of

[91] Antoine Gérin-Lajoie, Jean Rivard, défricheur, (1862; Montreal, 1874) 16-17.

forested land in the Eastern townships owned by an Englishman. Robert Smith begrudgingly sells his land: "l'Hn. Robert Smith, lequel, tout en manifestant d'abord une sorte de répugnance à se déssaisir d'une partie de son domaine inculte, finit par concéder à Jean Rivard cent acres de terre."[92] Rivard's dream comes true and the land, which he must clear alone, becomes the centre of fertility and success. Pierre and Jean spend their early days clearing the land and making maple syrup, and later the land supplies them with abundant produce which they sell at a profit. Within two years, a community of défricheurs begins to flourish, new habitants purchase adjacent plots of land, and Rivard marries his childhood sweetheart, Louise, whom he has faithfully loved during his long days and nights on the land.

Jean Rivard is the epitome of the self-made man, a loyal, honest and courageous worker whose steadfast dream of creating the ideal parish, "une paroisse modèle [...] une petite république, pourvue de toutes les institutions néccessaires à la bonne administration de ses bonnes affaires, au développement de ses ressources, aux progrès intellectuels, sociaux et politiques de sa population"[93] is never out of sight and is finally fulfilled. Rivardville, named after its founder, becomes "une paroisse comme on en voit peu,"[94] a

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[92] Gérin-Lajoie défricheur 24.
[93] Antoine Gérin-Lajoie, Jean Rivard, économiste, (1864; Montreal, 1876) 201.
[94] Gérin-Lajoie économiste 198.

parish which is to be an example to its neighbouring communities.

Garneau's influence on Gérin-Lajoie is most easily recognized at the end of Tome I (*défricheur*) when, as curé Labelle is blessing the newlywed couple, he states: "Vous, mon jeune ami, ne vous laissez jamais séduire par l'appat des honneurs et des richesses."[95] This passage is much like the one cited earlier in which Garneau warns his French Canadian readers to be faithful to themselves and to their ancestral traditions.[96] Rivard follows this advice and, although he does become involved in "le brillant des nouvautés sociales et politiques," he does so with the sole intention of promoting the survival of the French Canadian people, their language and their religion.

Rivardville is the perfect example of what Garneau described as the development of the nation through the attachment to the land:

> Ne connaissant pas la langue du peuple conquérant, les Canadiens repoussèrent les juges éperonnés qui furent placés ainsi au milieu d'eux; et sans se plaindre, car ils étaient peu accoutumés à solliciter, ils réglèrent leurs différends (sic) ensemble, ou ils les firent régler par le curé et les notables du lieu, dont l'influence augmenta ainsi dans chaque paroisse. Par un heureux effet de circonstances, le peuple et le clergé se trouvèrent unis d'intérrets et de sentiments, et,

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[95] Gérin-Lajoie défricheur 172.

[96] "Que les Canadiens soient fidèles à eux-mêmes, qu'ils soient sages et persévérants, qu'ils ne se laissent pas séduire par le brillant des nouveautés sociales ou politiques!" Garneau t. III 396.

> sous le règne de l'épée, l'expression de la morale évangélique devint la loi de chacun.[97]

This clerical influence is present in *Jean Rivard* as Père Landry, with the help of Jean, represents the central core of the community and plays a momentous role in all facets of his parishioners' activities: "On a déjà vu aussi et on verra plus tard, que le curé de Rivardville prenait une part plus ou moins active à tout ce qui pouvait influencer directement ou indirectement sur le bien-être matériel de la paroisse."[98]

Gérin-Lajoie's depiction of rural life, like that of Lacombe, portrays the land as the source of happiness and prosperity, and is accentuated by Rivard's correspondence with his former fellow student and friend Gustave Charmenil. Leading a struggling existence in the city, Charmenil represents one of the many men who toil in what Gilles Marcotte argues is a "société désaxée, privée d'assises économiques et sociales, mise en état d'infériorité par la conquête, à peine capable de s'inventer des fins et des moyens."[99] The extensive correspondence between the two men serves to show the reader the difference between the paradise of the land and the misery of the city. Charmenil takes an

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[97] Garneau t. II 297.
[98] Gérin-Lajoie économiste 84.
[99] Gilles Marcotte, Une littérature qui se fait, (Montreal: Éditions H.M.H., 1962) 12-13.

interest in Rivard's life and admits that he too should have followed the example of his friend when he was young and strong enough to clear the land. Although his opportunity has passed, Charmenil predicts his offspring will follow in Rivard's footsteps and perhaps enhance the future of the nation by supplying it with enthusiastic land owners. He declares:

> Que sommes-nous, en effet, nous hommes du monde [...] à coté de vous, héros de la civilization, modèles de toutes les vertus, qui ne vivez que pour faire le bien? Nous sommes des nains et vous êtes des géants.[100]

Adhering to Garneau's portrayal of the land as a symbol of the nation, Gérin-Lajoie also associates living on the land as a vehicle toward independence and claims that the hero's thoughts of abandonning his farm are unpatriotic: "La pensée d'émigrer, de s'expatrier, lui venait bien quelquefois, mais il la repoussait aussitôt comme anti-patriotique, anti-nationale."[101] As Charmenil writes in one of his letters, ownership of land is synonymous with independence: "Chaque fois que je pense à me faire payer, j'envie le sort du cultivateur qui, lui, ne tourmente personne, mais tire de la terre ses moyens d'existence. C'est bien là, à mon avis, la seule véritable

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[100] Gérin-Lajoie économiste 91.
[101] Gérin-Lajoie défricheur 16.

indépendance."[102] And so Jean Rivard works to create a flourishing parish and succeeds with an abundance of "manufactures" which are "un excellent moyen d'arrêter le courant d'émigration vers les villes, [...car] nul n'est oisif et personne ne songe à quitter la paroisse."[103]

Another striking similarity to Garneau's ideology can be found in Gérin-Lajoie's frequent use of the terms "courage" and "persévérance" in his descriptions of Rivard and other pioneers in Rivardville. Jean Rivard "faisait preuve d'un courage plus qu'ordinaire,"[104] a courage so inspiring that it even impresses God who sends him a message:

> ...Dieu, touché de son courage, lui dit: vois cette terre que j'ai créé; elle renferme dans son sein des trésors ignorés; fais disparaître ces arbres qui en couvrent la surface; je te preterai mon feu pour les réduire en cendres, mon soleil pour échauffer le sol et le féconder, mon eau pour l'arroser, mon air pour faire circuler la vie dans les tiges de la semance.....[105]

Gérin-Lajoie claims that "[chez] le colon, le courage et la persérance sont les principales qualités de l'homme,"[106] and Jean Rivard is no exception. He works with courage "[il] se

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[102] Gérin-Lajoie défricheur 248.
[103] Gérin-Lajoie économiste 202-203.
[104] Gérin-Lajoie défricheur 34.
[105] Gérin-Lajoie défricheur 118.
[106] Gérin-Lajoie défricheur 103.

mit avec courage à ses travaux de défrichement,"[107] and warns other pioneers that perseverance and courage are the key to independence:

> Voulez-vous, répétait-il à chacun d'eux, parvenir à l'indépendance? Vous avez pour cela une recette infaillible: abattez chaque année dix arpents de forêt et dans cinq ou six ans votre but sera atteint. Un peu de courage et de persévérance, voilà en définitive ce qu'il vous faut pour acquérir l'aisance et le bonheur qui découle.[108]

Gérin-Lajoie's utopic vision portrays the land as the saviour of the French Canadian people as he describes devotion to the land as a sacred choice, comparable to one's entry into the priesthood: "C'est par un choix initial, délibéré que Jean Rivard entre dans la vie agricole comme on entre en religion: la vocation d'agriculteur est l'alpha et l'oméga de la grandeur morale et la prospérité matérielle."[109] Gérin-Lajoie's vision, like Garneau's, is romantically described, and both are inspiring despite their seemingly distorted views of reality. Gérin-Lajoie even goes so far as to claim that the establishment of English-speaking habitants in Rivardville does not cause even the slightest ripple of dissension. The arrival of "les familles irlandaises" into the community has no effect and "l'accord le plus parfait n'a cessé de régner

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[107] Gérin-Lajoie défricheur 152
[108] Gérin-Lajoie défricheur 155.
[109] Gérin-Lajoie défricheur 156.

entre elles et le reste des habitants."[110] Despite a superficial harmony, however, there lies a reality: No matter how ideal the community seems to be, the hero does ponder what Garneau describes as "l'oppression de la domination anglaise" when he purchases the land from Robert Smith and asks himself:

> Devons-nous attendre, interroge fougueusement le héros, que les habitants d'une autre hémisphère viennent, sous nos yeux, s'emparer de nos forêts, qu'ils viennent choisir [...] les régions les plus fertiles, les plus riches [...]. Devons-nous attendre que ces étrangers nous engagent à leurs services? Ah! à cette pensée, ma mère, je sens mes muscles se roidir et tout mon sang circuler avec force.[111]

The author's descriptions are similar to Garneau's depiction of French Canadians' "puissance énergétique et insaisissable qui réside en eux-mêmes."[112] Garneau, asserting that French Canadians' power was innate, claimed "on dirait qu'une énergie qui est comme indépendante d'eux-mêmes, repousse les attaques dirigées contre leur nationalité."[113] This "énergie" takes the form of a voice which speaks to the French Canadian hero and warns him to stay on the land. It is the spirit of the nation, the one developed in Louis Hémon's *Maria Chapdeleine* when the heroine, faced with the choice of leaving the land which has claimed the lives of both her

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[110] Gérin-Lajoie défricheur 30.
[111] Gérin-Lajoie défricheur 20.
[112] Garneau t. I xix-xx.
[113] Same passage as above.

mother and Francois Paradis, or remaining to live "une vie de labeur grossier dans un pays triste et sauvage"[114] with Eutrope Gagnon, listens to the voice that is "à moitié un chant de femme et à moitié un sermon de prêtre.[115]" It is the message of the nation, similar to that described by Garneau, which stresses the importance of living according to ancestral traditions:

> [il faut] rester dans la province où nos pères sont restés, et vivre comme ils ont vécu, pour obéir au commandement inexprimé qui s'est formé dans les coeurs, qui a passé dans les notres et que nous devons transmettre à notre tour à de nombreux enfants: Au pays de Québec, rien ne doit mourir et rien ne doit changer...[116]

For Jean Rivard, the voice of the nation takes on the voice of God, and speaks to the hero about the values set forth by Garneau. Thus the hero finds solace in the thought that he is living according to the traditions of his ancestors and aspiring to the ambitions of the nation:

> Il est fier de lui-même. Il sent qu'il obéit à la voix de Celui qui a décrété que "l'homme gagnera son pain à la sueur de son front." Une voix intérieur lui dit aussi qu'il remplit un devoir sacré envers son pays, envers sa famille, envers lui-même; que lui faut-il de plus pour ranimer son énergie?[117]

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[114] Louis Hémon, Maria Chapdeleine, (1915; Montreal: J.A. Lefèbvre, 1946) 30.
[115] Hémon 186.
[116] Hémon 187.
[117] Gérin-Lajoie défricheur 89.

This voice, temporarily ignored by Chauvin but heeded by Jean Rivard, is presumably the same one that inspired Garneau to write about a glorious people who, despite opposition of all kinds, clung to the symbols of their nationality: their language, their laws, their religion, their traditions, their values, and their relentless struggle for independence from a dominant minority.

Chapter 2 - Le roman historique

In studying the fictive nature of historical reconstructions, Hayden White states that a historian's status depends less on the data he uses than on "the consistency, coherence, and illuminative power of [his] visions of the historical field."[118] Garneau's vision of the historical field has been compared to that of the French historian Augustin Thierry whose writing of the history of France focused on the antagonism between England and France.[119] Maurice Lemire argues that Garneau, who had studied European masters of history, adopted Thierry's methodology:

> Une hypothèse de Thierry le [Garneau] frappe en particulier: toute l'histoire de France et d'Angleterre s'expliquerait par l'antagonisme séculaires des deux races, antagonisme constant et indéfectible qui, selon Garneau, ne peut que se perpétuer au Nouveau Monde. Inconsciemment, fort probablement, notre historien poursuit les objectifs du romantisme nationaliste: la mission providentielle de la nation, l'exaltation de la race, le culte du héros.[120]

Gustave Lanctôt maintains a similar theory and adds that Garneau's merit is not so much due to his account of history

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[118] White 4.
[119] Maurice Lemire, Les Grands Thèmes nationalistes du roman historique canadien-français and William Johnson, Anglophobie Made in Québec.
[120] Maurice Lemire, Les Grands Thèmes nationalistes du roman historique canadien-français, (Quebec: Les presses de l'Université Laval, 1970) 5.

but rather to his ability to transmit the idea of French-Canadian destiny through the shaping of historical events:

> Dès l'aube des navigations normandes aux terres d'Amérique, il voit dans le geste du colon à l'assaut des forêts laurentienne la prise de possession du sol canadien par un peuple en germination. Sa destinée sera de lutter inlassablement contre l'Indien d'abord, contre l'Anglais ensuite et finalement contre l'assimilateur. Dans ces luttes, malgré la différence des armes, le but final des Canadiens français reste identique, qui est de conserver leur religion et leur nationalité.[121]

White argues that the historical work represents an attempt to mediate between the historical field, which is the unprocessed historical record and other historical accounts, and an audience. Garneau invokes the spirit of a past age with the ultimate goal of promoting French Canadian nationalism, by mediating between the facts and an audience. Emplotting his story in the Romantic mode, he constructs the relationship between the English and the French as a drama of the triumph of good over evil. His many accounts of the battles between the two races sparked an interest in writers who used this version of history to promote an ideology in their novels.

Historical novels, beginning to appear in the latter part of the nineteenth century, retell Garneau's stories and

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[121] Gustave Lanctôt, "L'oeuvre historique de Garneau," Centenaire de l'Histoire de F.-X. Garneau, (Montreal: Société historique de Montreal, 1945) 20.

emphasize the glorious heroes who shared the mission of defending their colony and, ultimately, their nationality. Just as Garneau's history had as its central element the concept of conflict and battle, French Canadian historical novels depict the conflicts, both physical and moral, that transpired between the French and the English, and weave fact and fiction in order to transmit Garneau's message: "Pendant 150 ans, elle [la nationalité française] a lutté contre les colonies anglaises, trente à quarante fois plus nombreuse qu'elle, et son histoire nous a dit comment elle s'acquittait de son devoir sur le champ de bataille."[122]

Following Garneau's lead, historical novelists used the theme of "le culte du héros" to communicate historical events, and, like the historian, they plotted the English against the French, managing to present history as the victory of the French over the English. Positive characteristics and successes were attributed to the French while the English were endowed with dishonest, cold-blooded and often evil attributes.

Joseph Marmette was one of the first novelists to introduce history to his readers and he produced by far the greatest number of historical novels of his time. Born in 1844, he studied at le Séminaire de Québec and Regiopolis College in Kingston. In 1868, he married Joséphine Garneau,

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[122] Garneau t. III 395.

the daughter of the historian whose work would be the source of his novels. Marmette's novels include *Charles et Éva* (1866), *François de Bienville* (1870), *L'Intendant Bigot* (1872), *Le Chevalier de Mornac* (1873), *Le tomahawk et l'épée* (1877), and *Les Machabées de la Nouvelle France* (1878).

The similarities of Marmette's work to Garneau's are twofold: firstly, it is clear that Marmette used *Garneau's Histoire du Canada* as an historical source, as his novels are imbued with footnotes giving credit to Garneau, as well as to such historians as Charlevoix[123] and Ferland.[124] But, more importantly, and more relevant to my discussion, is Marmette's exaltation of the French Canadian race through the depiction of particular historical events. Marmette's characters are stereotypically those heroes described by Garneau in *L'Histoire du Canada,* and, like the historian's work, Marmette's novels mediate between historical data and an audience, with the intention of teaching history to the reader. Aware of the fine line separating history and fiction, Marmette set out to write historical novels whose balance between reality and myth is obvious to the reader, who would presumably recognize both the historical elements and the added twist of fiction:

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[123] François Xavier de Charlevois, Histoire et description générale de la Nouvelle-France (Paris, 1744).
[124] Jean-Baptiste-Antoine Ferland, Cours d'histoire de Canada (Quebec, 1861).

> D'ailleurs, loin de fausser l'histoire, comme il arrive malheureusement dans de très grand nombre de romans historiques, je me suis au contraire efforcé de la suivre rigoureusement dans toutes les péripéties du drame. De sorte que le lecteur saisira facilement la ligne de démarcation qui, dans ce récit, sépare le roman de l'histoire.[125]

As White indicates, the narrative tactics an historian uses in the constuction of the story in order to make it "followable" are different from the structure of an entire set of events considered as a completed narrative. In the former case, the writer must ensure the clarity and comprehensibility of his text in order for the reader to understand the message. In the latter case, the historian must deal with questions having to do with the relationship between a given story and other stories that might be "found", "identified", or "uncovered" in the chronicle or data. It is in this second area that Garneau excelled, for his story is not only followable, but it answers the kinds of questions that relate to the "meaning" of history, questions that answer what White refers to as "What does it all add up to?" or "What is the point of it all?"[126] In our case, the answers to these questions repeatedly involve French Canadian heroism and valour as they are juxtaposed with descriptions of the English enemy.

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[125] Joseph Marmette, Jean de Bienville, (1870; Montreal: Beauchemin, 1924) 18.
[126] White 7.

Influenced by Garneau, Marmette and other historical novelists wrote novels that deal with the questions that call for what White terms "a synoptic judgement"[127] of the relationship between the finished story and the data. A synoptic judgement involves questions that are combined to make a "completed" story which are answered through what White refers to as explanations by emplotment, by argument and by ideological implication. These questions deal with the overall "point" of the story, a sort of "big picture" that the historian wishes to portray. The relationship between the finished story and the data can be found in *Jean de Bienville*, the novel in which Marmette tells a story which is unlike what the author claimed to have successfully done because it does not clearly delineate the border lines between the facts of the story and the narrative strategies. And, like Garneau, Marmette relies on the "consistency and illuminative power" throughout the text to underline a message which French Canadians eagerly accepted and affirmed.

Jean de Bienville, like most of Marmette's novels, is a story set in a significant historical period, the siege of Quebec in 1690. François (Le Moyne) de Bienville arrives in Quebec City with Frontenac, who has had word of a possible attack by the English army lead by General Phipps. There Bienville meets Louis and Marie-Louise D'Orsy, orphaned

[127] White 7.

brother and sister who arrived in Quebec after having been kept against their will in Boston on their way to Canada from France. While in Boston, the D'Orsys lose their father due to the poor conditions in which they are forced to live. A young English officer named Harthing falls in love with Marie-Louise and asks for her hand in marriage. She refuses him and leaves Boston, thinking that the episode is behind her forever. Harthing, however, does not forget her painful rejection, and his love becomes vengeful.

Years later, Harthing, who is under the command of Admiral Phipps, volunteers to be Phipps's messenger to Frontenac as a way of stealing into the city to abduct Marie-Louise, by then betrothed to Jean de Bienville. A failed kidnapping leaves Marie-Louise desperately worried. The 1690 battle takes place, and the French army, drastically fewer in number than that of the English enemy, manages to repel the English fleet. François is a hero, but, in an unfortunate turn of events, he loses Marie-Louise to the convent, because of a vow she made to God in exchange for her brother's recovery from a battle injury.

Throughout the novel, Marmette's focus is less on the actual events of the siege than on the differences between the English and the French. The former are "consistently" painted as evil and weak, while the latter are glorious and brave. Following one of many comments made by Louis about his hatred

for the English, Marmette inserts a footnote informing the reader that his intention is not to "awaken old feelings of hatred" toward the enemy but, rather, to paint an historical period as exactly as possible. Knowing that Garneau was Marmette's historical source and inspiration, one is not surprised by the novelist's comment:

> Comme je veux peindre une époque, il me faut nécessairement la représenter telle qu'elle était; c'est-à-dire avec ses antiphaties et ses préjugés. Il n'y aura donc pas lieu de s'étonner si l'on voit mes personnages laisser percer, à chaque instant, leur animosité contre leurs ennemis, les Anglais, qu'ils avaient à combattre chaque jour.[128]

Despite his claim, Marmette moves beyond a mere "piercing through" of anti-English sentiment, and it is clear that the racial tension between the characters is central to his novel. Thus, Marmette's description of Harthing, a man who never existed and who is a "truly" fictional character, - Garneau does not name Phipps's messenger - is crucial to a novel whose ostensible aim is to recount a true story. In order to find a sufficiently villainous figure, Marmette must abandon history, even though the history he abandons is a story of warfare and tension supposedly filled with evil English characters.

Harthing is one of the many fictional characters

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[128] Marmette 43.

described by William Johnson who have made their way into French Canadian literature as examples of English depravity and corruption. Johnson argues that the "mythe de l'Anglais" has been central to French Canadian novels for one hundred fifty years and states that it is "sans doute le mythe le plus permanent et le plus profondément enraciné de toute la tradition intellectuelle du Québec."[129] Johnson traces the antagonism between the two races in the literature of Quebec, demonstrating that in all facets of French Canadian literature, there is an evil presence - the English - that ceaselessly threatens the existence of the French Canadian people. Johnson maintains that in historical novels the English serve as antagonists and the source of all evil.[130] As such, Harthing is described:

> C'était un homme de caractère que John Harthing, comme l'indiquaient des sourcils épais et deux plis entamant son front de bas en haut à la naissance du nez, ainsi que des lèvres plates qui semblaient adhérer aux dents. Son front pâle, silloné de rides, étaient comme un voile agité toujours par le souffle intérieur des passions. Et lorsque que ses yeux, d'un gris verdâtre, s'animaient sous leurs paupières inquiètes, on y voyait passer les fauves reflets de ses appétits désordonnés. Une chevelure épaisse et rousse recouvrait négligemment ses tempes et son cou. [...] Malheureusement ses instincts mauvais se faisant jour à chaque instant, la fièvre du mal dévorait aussitôt les bons sentiments qui dormaient en lui.[131]

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[129] Johnson 6.
[130] Marmette 74.
[131] Marmette 95.

Other characters' views of Harthing reinforce the narrator's. Marie-Louise refuses Harthing's proposal not for lack of love but specifically because he is English, stating that "La fille des barons D'Orsy ne peut pas être la femme d'un homme dont les compatriotes ont tué mon père."[132] Louis D'Orsy is equally certain when it comes to his feelings about the English: "...car tu sais que les bonnes raisons ne me manquent point pour hair les Anglais. Aussi ai-je grande hâte de leur payer les dettes de vengeance que j'ai contractées envers eux."[133] Harthing is also painted as evil by Bras de Fer, a French Canadian soldier and good friend of François de Bienville, when he claims "Que je soit brûlé vif si ce n'est pas le diable en personne que ce *goddam*-là. [...] C'est qu'on a pu le retrouver. Il a dû s'enfuir ou s'envoler sur les ailes de Satan."[134]

In contrast to the descriptions of the English as being ridden with faults, both physical and moral, Marmette "consistently" describes his French characters as exemplary human beings who put the English to shame. As we saw in *Jean Rivard*, even God is on the side of the French Canadian Catholic soldiers: "Mais, là-haut, Dieu veillait sur la Nouvelle-France: il la voulait catholique, cette colonie

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[132] Marmette 98.
[133] Marmette 43.
[134] Marmette 147.

destinée à contre-balancer un jour la puissance de ses voisines, et l'Angleterre ne l'était plus."[135]

Marmette adheres to Garneau's description of French Canadians, "un peuple de soldats", and attributes to Bienville what the historian had viewed to be part of the French Canadian tradition: "La gloire militaire était leur idole, et, fiers de marcher sous les ordres de leurs seigneurs, ils les suivaient partout au risque de leur vie pour mériter leur estime et leur considération."[136] François de Bienville is no exception. He is handsome, bright, courageous, and forever described as a hero:

> Le véritable triomphateur était François de Bienville. Fièrement drapé dans le pavillon anglais, les bras croisés sur sa forte poitrine, il semblait se dire que ces honneurs ne lui étaient que justement dus. Aussi jetait-il un regard assez calme sur la foule militaire, de bourgeois, de femmes et d'enfants qui se pressaient sur son passage en le saluant de mille joyeux vivats. Car le français, brave et glorieux par excellence, n'est jamais étonné des honneurs de la victoire.[137]

As Garneau had stated, French Canadian pride and innate patriotism supported the nation's valorous young men throughout their many battles. Danger came to anyone who doubted or refused to acknowledge the power of the French Canadians. Such is the case in another of Marmette's novels,

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[135] Marmette 30.
[136] Garneau t. III 318.
[137] Marmette 88.

Charles et Eva, which is a romance set in 1689. The story recounts the attack on Corlar when thirty French Canadian soldiers burned and destroyed the town, also known as Schenectady, in New England (a retaliation for the Lachine massacre which subsequently lead to the attack on Quebec in 1690). Garneau describes the event as a warning to those who dare underestimate the power of his people:

> Les habitants quoiqu'avertis plusieurs fois de se tenir sur leurs gardes, dormaient dans une fatale sécurité, n'ayant pas même mis de sentinelle à leurs portes. Ils n'avaient pas voulu croire qu'il fût possible aux Canadiens, chargés de leurs vivres et de leurs armes de faire plusieurs centaines de milles en plein coeur d'hiver au milieu des bois, des glaces et des neiges, incrédulité qui leur coûta cher![138]

This English under-estimation of the French is consistent throughout Garneau's text. His glorious French Canadian soldiers never cease to impress and astound the English:

> Cependant les colonies anglaises, menaçées d'une invasion qu'elles ne croyaient qu'ajournée, et tenues continuellement par la crainte des bandes canadiennes, qui portaient la flamme et le fer jusqu'aux portes de leurs capitales, résolurent de faire un grand effort pour s'emparer de toute la Nouvelle-France. Quand elles comparaient leurs forces à celle du Canada, [...] elles s'étonnaient qu'un si petit peuple pût troubler ainsi leur

[138] Garneau t. I 308.

> repos, et elles en venaient à penser qu'elle pourrait faire la conquête du Québec.[139]

Juxtaposed with François de Bienville is not only Harthing but Admiral William Phipps, leader of the English fleet and the person responsible for taking Port Royal a few months prior to the 1690 attack on Quebec. Again, Marmette adheres to Garneau's description of Phipps as an "heureux aventurier [qui] eut le commandement de la flotte destinée à s'emparer de l'Acadie et de Québec"[140] and adds a few characteristics of his own, creating another weak Englishman for the purpose of retelling history:

> C'est que William Phipps n'était en résumé qu'un de ces hardis et heureux aventuriers que la Providence agite un moment au-dessus des masses afin d'attirer sur eux l'exaltation de la foule et de faire surgir aussi, par ce moyen, de nouvelles ambitions. Doué d'une intelligence assez bornée, d'un jugement des plus médiocres, il s'éleva tant que ses succès furent dans le plan providentiel; mais une fois livré à ses seules ressources, William Phipps, incapable de se maintenir par lui-même sur les hauteurs, perdit l'équilibre et se cassa les reins dans la lourde chute.[141]

In addition to the "consistency" of a text, an element found in both Garneau's and Marmette's narratives, historical novels hold what White labels "illuminative power".

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[139] Garneau t. I 333.
[140] Garneau t. I 334.
[141] Marmette 63.

Depictions of the English and French soldiers in the historical reconstructions serve to emphasize Garneau's underlying message of English weakness. Significantly, Marmette describes Phipps's retreat, using Garneau's theory that the failure of the English attack, thought to be an easy feat, lead to the humiliation of the English: "Les colonies anglaises avaient cru la conquête du Canada assurée et facile. Le retour de leur flotte vaincue et désemparée, les plongea dans la stupeur et les humilia profondément."[142] Here, we witness the turning of the tables as the French Canadians, described by Garneau as being deeply humiliated by English domination, are no longer the ones humiliated, for it is the English who find themselves humiliated by the strength of the French. The consequent empowerment of the French thus became the plot structure for the novels that retold the stories of the battles which were won by the English. In these novels, we see English characters who, although part of the conquering people, find themselves at the mercy of French Canadian characters. Thus the illuminative power of Garneau's text, his portrayal of the great French Canadian spirit, lives on in the historical novels whose themes continued to be "les nombreuses et éclatantes victoires."[143]

As stated earlier, Garneau's *Histoire* is cast in the Romantic mode which is fundamentally, as White states, "a

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[142] Garneau t. I 344.
[143] Garneau t. III 319.

drama of self-identification symbolized by the hero's transcendence of the world of experience, his victory over it, and his final liberation from it."[144] White argues that historical reconstructions cast in the Romantic mode dramatize the triumph of virtue over vice and the ultimate transcendence of man over the world in which he was imprisoned by the Fall.[145] Garneau's *Histoire du Canada*, glorifying French Canadian ideals, is such a drama because it continuously serves to empower French Canadians and belittle the English enemy. Consequently, in French Canadian historical fiction, the reader witnesses this transcendence as battles are depicted in terms of French victory over English vice. As Chauveau stated in the eulogy he delivered at Garneau's funeral: "Il [Garneau] voulut avant tout effacer ces injurieuses expressions de race conquise, de peuple vaincu. Il voulut faire voir que, dans les conditions de la lutte, notre défaite fut moralement l'équivalent d'une victoire."[146]

Maurice Lemire argues, "Une certaine interprétation de l'histoire offre seule des possibilités de défoulement. On punit les Anglais en écrivant des romans."[147] Accordingly, novelists created plots in which French and English characters come face to face and in which the English character, although

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[144] White 8.
[145] White 9.
[146] Pierre-Joseph-Olivier Chauveau, F.X. Garneau - sa vies et ses oeuvres (Montreal, 1883) 272.
[147] Lemire 81.

the conqueror, comes to recognize his own moral inferiority. Frequently the plot involves a love story, as we saw in Marmette, where the English man falls in love with a French Canadian woman for whom he is willing to sacrifice his position and often his life. In *François de Bienville*, Harthing is in love with Marie-Louise to the point where he is at her mercy:

> L'éloignement ni le temps n'ont pu diminuer l'ardeur de mes sentiments à votre égard, confesse Harthing. Et malgré le refus cruel et la malheureuse scène qui précédèrent votre départ de Boston, je vous aime encore avec au moins toute la passion d'autrefois.[148]

Try as he may to forget Marie-Louise, Harthing remains unable to extricate himself from the relationship that exists between them: "En vain ai-je voulu étouffer en moi votre souvenir par les moyens les plus énergétiques et souvent hélas! les plus opposés à ce culte idéal que je vous avais voué, non seulement je n'ai jamais pu l'éteindre mais encore a-t-il vaincu toute ma force et ma fierté."[149] His love for her becomes torturous and leads him to dishonourable actions. After Marie-Louise tells him that she can not marry an Englishman, Harthing asks a question that could be easily asked of Garneau's philosophy and of the ideology found in

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[148] Marmette 92.
[149] Marmette 93.

French Canadian literature:

> Pourquoi donc faut-il qu'une simple question de nationalité mette entre nous deux une muraille plus dure que le fer? Hélas! mon seul nom d'Anglais amena sur vos lèvres un méprisant sourire, alors que je vous ai fit, là-bas, le premier aveu de mon affection pour vous.[150]

Although Marmette explains why he included in his novels a harbouring hostility against the English, he does not attempt to defend his choice of having an Englishman at the mercy of a French woman. This "psychological revenge", as described by Lemire, involves a feeling of shame on the part of the English, and Harthing feels it after he is rebuked by his love: "Celui-ci veut répondre, mais la honte de sa déconvenue et la rage qui le domine l'en empêchent; les mots l'arrêtent dans sa gorge désséchée."[151] Such a reaction is comparable to Garneau's description of the "shame" and "stupor" in which the English were "plunged", following the unsuccessful 1690 attack on Quebec.[152]

Similar power struggles are found in other historical novels in which English characters are reduced to feelings of inferiority in the face of their English enemy. As Lemire argues, the theme of moral victory can be found in many historical novels, including Laure Conan's *La sève immortelle*

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[150] Marmette 92.
[151] Marmette 98-99.
[152] See note 25.

(1925), in which the author depicts post-conquest Quebec. English troops occupy le manoir de Tilly, the residence of the seigneur Major de Muy, and he and his family must live in the mill buildings. A young English officer named lieutenant Laycraft helps the family by supplying them with horses, gun powder, and agricultural tools at unusually low prices. His kindness is fuelled by his love for Major de Muy's daughter, Guillemette de Tilly. When Laycraft asks for Guillemette's hand in marriage, the family becomes divided as to what is the right and noble decision. The opposing camps represent two different attitudes regarding French Canadians after the conquest. Major de Muy, thrilled by the proposal, believes that French Canadians must make a life for themselves in whatever way they can:

> Nous sommes maintenant des enfants abandonnés qui n'ont plus rien à attendre de leur mère. Pour rester Français, il faut repasser en France. C'est clair. Dites-moi, quand ma fille vivrait une quasi-misère jusqu'à sa mort, cela changerait-il les destinées de notre pauvre pays? ... Le Canada appartiendrait-il moins à l'Angleterre?[153]

Guillemete's aunt, on the other hand, represents the opposing camp, and views idea of marriage to Laycraft as nothing but a misfortune:

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[153] Laure Conan, La sève immortelle, (Montreal: Bibliothèque de l'action française, 1925) 157.

> D'abord ce serait trahir notre foi. [...] ce n'est pas en mariant leurs filles à des protestants que les Canadiens conserveront la foi catholique dans le pays. [...] Vous portez un nom trop noble [...] dit la vieille femme, on a des devoirs envers sa race.[154]

Guillemette is caught between the groups. On an emotional level, she is attracted to the idea of a life with a wealthy Englishman: "Se savoir aimée avec un parfait désintéressement est chose douce. La première surprise passée, Guillemette l'éprouva. Elle ne pouvait pas penser à la proposition de Monsieur Laycraft sans une émotion de reconnaissance."[155] But on an intellectual level, Guillemette knows what she must do for her nation: "Nous n'avons rien en commun; la religion, la race, les traditions, l'éducation, les habitudes, tout nous sépare. [...] Quoiqu'il en coûte, je dois rester Française."[156] As Garneau had warned, such a devotion is of utmost importance, and Guillemette de Tilly does not ignore the historian's guidance:

> Il y a quelque chose de touchant et de noble tout à la fois à défendre sa nationalité, héritage sacrée qu'aucun peuple, quelque dégradé qu'il fût, n'a jamais répudié. Jamais plus grande et plus sainte cause n'a inspiré un coeur haut placé, et n'a mériter la sympathie des esprits généreux.[157]

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[154] Conan 135.
[155] Conan 138.
[156] Conan 144-145.
[157] Garneau t. I xvii.

Laycraft must finally admit that Guillemette's aspirations are far more noble than he had anticipated. Thinking that he could offer her everything needed for happiness, Laycraft realizes that there is a nobler cause:

> Le confort, tout démontre ce qui fait la joie, la douceur de la vie, n'était-ce donc rien? Il croyait arriver les mains pleines de dons -- comme les princes des contes de fée -- et quand il lui parlait de son amour, quand il la pressait d'être sa femme, au lieu de penser au bonheur d'aimer, au charme de la vie domestique, à l'enchantement des premières effusions, elle lui parlait de la Nouvelle-France...[158]

Thus the "illuminative power" of Garneau's text lead to French Canadians' belief that although they were a conquered people, they were superior to the English. The "moral victory" described by Lemire is an example of Garneau's ability to influence his readers to assume that the transcendence of the French Canadian people is possible, and thus historical novels allowed French characters to triumph over the "darkness" of the English.[159]

In a plot similar to that of Conan's, Napoléon Bourassa's novel *Jacques et Marie*[160] (1866) explores the differences between the French and the English during the Acadian deportation. Garneau's comments about the deportation

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[158] Conan 143.
[159] See note 29.
[160] Napoléon Bourassa, Jacques et Marie, (1866; Montreal: Fides, 1976)

are such that no other war-time event could ever compete with the cruelty demonstrated by the English at that time:

> Des gouvernements ont commis des actes de cruauté dans des temps de passion, au milieu de révolutions politiques ou religieuses, pour satisfaire des haines ou des vengeances particulères; mais il n'y a pas d'exemples chez les modernes qu'un châtiment ait été infligé à tout un peuple paisible et inoffensif avec autant de calcul et de sang-froid, que celui dont nous devons retracer le douloureux tableau.[161]

In *Jacques et Marie*, the two main characters, Jacques Hébert and Marie Landry, are separated after the Héberts leave the province as a result of the Treaty of Utrecht. During Jacques's absence, Marie prepares her wedding and longs for the day of her lover's return. Soon she is approached by an English officer named George Gordon who has fallen in love with her. Gordon shows kindness to her and her family during this difficult period, and when the deportation of the Acadians is announced, Marie must choose between deportation and marriage to the enemy, which would constitute the betrayal of her country. Jacques is imprisoned upon his return and M. Landry is living "en résidence surveillée", factors that seem to give the forever negotiating Gordon the upper hand. Like Guillemette, the heroine chooses her country, and the conqueror remains at the mercy of the conquered:

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[161] Garneau t. II 227-29.

> Quelle que fût la sympathie qui entourait déjà le jeune officier, il était toujours, aux yeux de la population, un Anglais, un compatriote de ces grossiers petits tyrans; et la personne qui eût osé monter dans sa voiture aurait été chasser du pays comme une fille de mauvais nom.[162]

Gordon feels his inadequacy and realizes the limits of his own race compared to that of the Landry's:

> Je suis resté seul, avoue-t-il plus tard à Marie, avec mon coeur vide et mon esprit impatient et lassé devant les grandeurs de votre continent et les moeurs simples, essentiellement honnêtes de vos compatriotes. Ces deux spectacles m'ont touché: mon esprit laissé sans entraves et mon coeur sans séductios ont retrouvé devant tant de beautés nouvelles de la nature et de l'âme leur voie et leur élan naturel.[163]

Gordon is, to use Garneau's words, an Englishman who was naturally dominated by "la passion du commerce et des richesses. Tous les sacrifices pour obtenir ces objets, vers lesquelles ses pensées tendaient sans cesse, étaient peu de chose pour lui, car en dehors il ne voyait que ruine et abjection."[164] We are not surprised, therefore, to find Gordon attempting throughout the novel to win Marie's hand in exchange for services rendered to her family and friends. Such merchandising is not successful with the heroine, and Gordon ends up losing his love as well as being humiliated by

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[162] Bourassa 44.
[163] Bourassa 97.
[164] Garneau t. I 297.

his own race:

> Il était encore debout, dans l'attitude d'un criminel qui a reçu sa sentence, le coeur déchiré, l'âme accablée d'humiliation devant les grandeurs de cette chaumière. Ces infortunés venaient d'ouvrir un abîme devant ses félicités tant rêvées, mais ils n'avaient creusé d'une main sublime; en le faisant tomber au fond, avec l'édifice écroulé de son amour, cette jeune fille restait à ses yeux toute illuminée sur les hauteurs, gardant sur son front toutes les graces célestes que peut refléter ici-bas la figure d'une femme. Si elle avait blessé si cruellement ses plus purs sentiments, ce n'était pas par malice ou par mépris personnel, ce n'était pas en s'abaissant, mais par grandeur d'âme, en s'élevent au-dessus de lui, parce qu'il portait la réprobation de son pays. George comprenait assez les élans généreux du coeur humain pour ne pas sentir de la haine contre Marie; il rougissait d'être Anglais, mais il aimait plus que jamais... et il souffrait horriblement.[165]

Gordon feels shame and regrets the cruelty of his people. Like Laycraft and Harthing, he feels reduced in the face of the French and is not able to rid himself of the love he feels for a French Canadian. This type of subservience empowers the French and assures the transcendence of the conquered people in a subtle shift of power. This literary slight of hand conforms to Garneau's theory of the triumphant soldier: "les Canadiens, qui eussent triomphé, quoique plus pauvres, s'ils avaient été seulement la moitié aussi nombreux que leurs adversaires!"[166] Garneau's words remind us that he

[165] Bourassa 177.
[166] Garneau t. I 317.

too made a shift when he referred to the French as "vainqueurs" when, in fact, they lost the war.

A final example of a moral victory can be found in French Canada's most celebrated novel, *Les anciens canadiens*[167] (1863) by Philippe Aubert de Gaspé, père. The author, father of the author who published the first novel in French Canada, acknowledges his debt to Garneau for illuminating the events of a glorious past shared by all French Canadians:

> Vous avez été longtemps méconnus mes anciens frères du Canada! Vous avez été indignement calomniés! Honneur, cent fois honneur, à votre compatriote, M. Garneau, qui a déchiré le voile qui couvrait vos exploits! Honte à nous, qui, au lieu de fouiller les anciennes chroniques si glorieuses pour notre race, nous nous contentions de baisser la tête, sous le reproche humiliant de peuple conquis, qu'on nous jetait à la face, à tout propos.[168]

Les Anciens Canadiens takes place during the conquest in Quebec city and revolves around the friendship of two young men, Jules d'Haberville and Archibald de Locheill. Jules represents the Canadian nobility and Arché, the conqueror. The two boys meet at the Séminaire de Québec where Arché has been sent following his father's death in Scotland. The boys immediately become great friends, almost as close as brothers,

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[167] Philippe Aubert de Gaspé, Les Anciens Canadiens (1863; Montreal: Stanké, 1987).
[168] de Gaspé 201.

and Jules, son of le seigneur d'Haberville, brings Arché home for the holidays when he has nowhere else to go. Arché is thus indebted to the French Canadians who shelter him and treat him as though he were one of their own.

When the war breaks out, Jules and Arché find themselves in opposing camps, forced to become enemies. Knowing that Arché is familiar with Canada and the area of Quebec, Arché's superiors order him to burn the villages along the south shore, including the manoir d'Haberville, the home of his generous adopted family. Using the same terms as those used by Garneau to describe the English, de Gaspé depicts Arché's cold-blooded instincts as the reason for his military success: "...il se distingua encore par son sang-froid et sa présence d'esprit en sauvant les débris de sa companie dans la retraite."[169]

When he returns in 1767 to the humble country home that replaces the manor, Arché does so not as a conqueror, but as a humbled man, begging forgiveness. Jules and his father pardon Arché for the role he played in the war, and the reader is witness to yet another scene in which the "vainqueur" implores forgiveness from the "vaincu".

Once again, the conqueror falls in love with a French Canadian girl. Arché, who has loved Jules's sister Blanche for many years, asks for her hand in marriage and is refused.

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[169] de Gaspé 171.

Blanche's response is similar to those of the heroines of other historical novels, who dutifully put the needs of the nation before their own desires. Claiming that such a union would be unpatriotic, Blanche makes reference to Arché's newly acquired fortune and accuses him of wanting to buy her love, reminding us of Garneau's accusations of the English love of wealth and "une vie calculatrice":

> Vous m'offensez, capitaine Archibald Cameron de Locheill, lui répond Blanche; vous n'avez pas réfléchi à ce qu'il y a de blessant, de cruel dans l'offre que vous me faites! Est-ce-que lorsque la torche incendiaire que vous et les vôtres avez promenée sur ma malheureuse patrie, est à peine éteinte, que vous me faites une telle proposition? Est-ce-que lorsque la fumée s'élève encore de nos masures en ruine que vous m'offrez la main d'un incendiaire? Ce serait une ironie bien cruelle que d'allumer le flambeau de l'hyménée aux cendres fumantes de ma malheureuse patrie. On dirait, capitaine de Locheill, que, maintenant riche, vous avez acheter avec votre or la main de la pauvre fille canadienne; et jamais une d'Haberville ne consentira à une pareille humiliation.[170]

Although Blanche's brother Jules may choose to marry "une fille d'Albion", the heroine's refusal retains its significance, for the female, the repository of the French Canadian culture and nation, declines her chance to embrace a partnership with an Englishman. As Blanche tells her brother, French Canadian men fought for their nation in a way that

[170] de Gaspé 209.

women could not; therefore, a woman's duty involved a different kind of defence and protection of the nation. For Blanche, this entails the refusal to accept a mixed partnership.

In *Les anciens canadiens*, we see, once more, an Englishman reduced in the face of an impoverished but noble French Canadian. Arché is thus refused and must live knowing the woman he loves has dismissed him for her nation. As Lemire argues, the French Canadian historical novel "n'aurait pas connu une telle popularité au Canada s'il n'avait servi de véhicule à une certaine forme de nationalisme."[171] This form of nationalism is, as Lemire states, a romantic nationalism imported by Garneau. Historical novels thus permitted readers to view a certain "aspect" of history. Stories revolve around the theme of the glorification of the nation and its heroes who, although conquered by the English, maintain the upper hand and display, above all else, national solidarity, which is what Garneau described as "cette force secrète de cohésion et de résistence qui maintient l'unité nationale."[172]

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[171] Lemire 1.
[172] Garneau t. I xix.

Chapter 3 - Le roman contemporain

In the introduction to *Metahistory,* Hayden White explains that, as opposed to studying historical reconstructions in order to determine which version of history is more accurate, he remains interested in analyzing a historical account in order to ascertain the relationship between an historian's narrative style and the text's influence on readers. White argues that "history remains in the state of anarchy in which the natural sciences existed during the sixteenth century, when there were as many conceptions of the "scientific enterprise" as there were metaphysical positions."[173] Hence, White explains that historical explanations are destined to be based on different metahistorical presuppositions about the nature of the historical field, which inevitably generate different conceptions of the kind of explanations that can be used in historiographical analysis.

Labelling a historian's style requires the reader to ask questions about the nature of the presentation of the data, which involves a study of the historian's conceptions of "reality" and the different epistomologies generated by these conceptions. Conflicting ideologies appear when two or more historians have different interpretations of the same set of historical events, interpretations that are "different notions

[173] White 13.

of the nature of historical reality and of the appropriate form that a historical account, considered as a formal argument, ought to take."[174] Thus, for the purposes of our study, one may ask of Garneau's historical reconstruction "What is the true nature of the English presence in New France or Canada?" The answer to this question, according to Garneau's *Histoire*, is made clear throughout the historian's text in which he "consistently" dramatizes the English as an ambitious people who are determined to dominate the French. As such, Garneau states:

> De tout temps l'union des Canadas avait été la pensée secrète du parti anglais de Montréal, dont la malveillance envers les anciens habitants augmentait avec le désir de les dominer. L'avarice, autant que l'ambition nourissait cette haine.[175]

Using White's paradigm, we are able to label Garneau's historical explanation as an example of the Formist theory of discursive argument which aims at the identification of the particular characteristics of objects inhabiting the historical field, in our case the identification and portrayal of both the English and the French in Canada. As White argues, the Formist mode of explanation is found in Romantic historians whose depiction of the "variety, color, and

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[174] White 13.
[175] Garneau t. II 574.

vividness" of the historical field is pivotal to the historian's work. Garneau's history plots the English as a race whose characteristics revolve around a love of money and a need to dominate the conquered French Canadian people. Contrary to the English, the French are consistently and vividly depicted as a tightly knit community, held together by their language and traditions, who consistently refuse to be ruled by members of a race perceived as inferior.

As we have seen, the central element of Garneau's work is his depiction of the English and the French as fundamentally different peoples. As a Romantic historian, Garneau focuses on the distinct French Canadian spirit and inner strength, and its battle against the "dark" forces of the English. As White claims of all Formist conceptions, Garneau makes up for the vacuity of his generalizations by the fervor of his reconstructions, the "vividness" and "colour" of the depictions of the historical field. This depiction remains central to French Canadian novels whose main theme involves the notion of national identity, described by Garneau as being symbolized by language, laws, religion and traditions.

As a "national historian", Garneau makes generalizations about the historical field in such a way that readers supported his claims instead of weighing them as propositions to be confirmed or challenged. His ideology is thus imbedded

in the roman de la terre and historical novels, as well as in contemporary novels which depict the "variety", "color" and "vividness" of French Canadians determined to fight against the tyrannical powers of those who cannot claim membership in French Canadian fraternity. In the contemporary novel, "le culte du héros" evolves into "le culte du héros Québecois", heros now rooted in an urban centre who, like Garneau's "Canadiens", remain faithful to the symbols of the nation and fight the powers that are against them, even when there seems to be little hope of victory. Our hero remains French Canadian, and the étranger, unsurprisingly, continues to be a "descendant des races flegmatiques."[176] One such novel is Yves Beauchemin's acclaimed *Le Matou* (1981), a novel whose immediate popularity has made it a literary phenomenon in Quebec.[177]

Yves Beauchemin was born in Noranda in 1941 where he lived until the age of six. His family then moved to Clova, a small town in Abitibi, where he went to elementary school. His mother, daughter of the editor of a local newspaper, loved books and read to him from a very early age. Encouraged by her, Beauchemin discovered in himself a love for literature, an activity which he enjoyed more than any school subject or sport. At the age of 13, Beauchemin and his family moved to

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[176] Garneau t. I xx.
[177] Frances J. Summers, "La réception critique du *Matou*," Voix & Images, 36 (1987) 383.

Joliette, a small city 50 km east of Montreal, where he completed his cours classique at the Séminaire de Joliette, a course of study which, as we saw in Chapter 1, was rooted in the Catholic church and fostered the ideology of French Canadian nationalism.

Beauchemin's first published novel, *L'enfirouapé* (1974), parodies the 1970 October Crisis. The title is the noun form of the verb "enfirouaper", and is a local creation which some believe to have been coined by Beauchemin himself, as it was not accepted into the Académie française as a word until the late 1980s. The verb means to trick someone into believing something that is not true and, as such, has been used by Beauchemin to describe French Canadian alienation as the hero is tricked and manipulated throughout the novel. In *L'enfirouapé*, the narrator himself compares the hero's frustration to a misunderstood Quebec:

> Maurice subissait la lente métamorphose qui fait d'un malheureux incapable de comprendre son sort un autodidacte révolté. Sa lucidité se transformait en frustration et celle-ci servait d'aiguillon à sa curiosité intellectuelle, par un processus où le masochisme le disputait à la soif de comprendre. C'est ainsi que sont bien des Québécois.[178]

The novel was enthusiastically received in Quebec's

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[178] Yves Beauchemin, L'enfirouapé, (Montreal: Éditions La Presse, 1974) 42-43.

literary circles, winning the author "Le Prix France-Québec", as well as an Arts Council Grant which allowed him to write his second novel, *Le Matou*. Significantly, *L'enfirouapé* exposed the notion of Quebec's lack of awareness about "historical reality", a reality which is perceived to be presented in Garneau's *Histoire du Canada*, and suggests that as a "peuple", Quebecers have been, and continue to be, "enfirouapé". Jean-Éthier Blais argues that, as a people, Quebecers have been tricked throughout history:

> Les Québecois se font volontiers enfirouapés. Leurs hommes politiques en sont coûtumiers du fait. Et l'histoire, quelle grande enfirouapeuse ... elle vous enfirouape un peuple en moins de temps qu'il ne faut pour le dire! Plus le peuple est faible, plus rapide le processus. On ne fait que commencer à se rendre compte à quel point les évènements d'octobre relèvent un sensationel enfirouapement.[179]

Ironically, Blais was not referring here to historical recontructions which create a mindset or that depict an historian's "conception" of reality, but his comment suggests the variety of historical explanations found within the realm of "the history of Canada." Blais may be correct in stating that Quebecers have been "enfirouapés", but he certainly was not referring to Garneau's *Histoire* which proves to be, to use his terms, "quelle grande enfirouapeuse."

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[179] Jean-Éthier Blais, Le Devoir, 15 June, 1974.

Beauchemin's *Le Matou* appeared only one year after the highly controversial and emotional 1980 referendum, which served, among other things, to widen the gap between English and French Quebecers. Beauchemin, who is an avid indépendantiste, used *Le Matou* as a creative outlet for his strong political opinions. These opinions are frequently recognizable throughout the novel and have been the source of both praise and criticism. As Graham Fraser argues, "the author's vision remains fundamentally nationalist. Sharp dealer though he is, Florent is engaged in a struggle to succeed against *les autres*."[180]

Within Beauchemin's narrative framework, we are able to detect a surfacing ideology similar to that found in Garneau's *Histoire du Canada*. Like Garneau, Beauchemin sees in Canada a power struggle between the English and the French and refers to the country as "un mariage qui a mal tourné, [dans lequel] on force les deux époux à cohabiter:"[181]

> Nous avons un problème politique au Québec et ça s'adonne que ce n'est pas avec les Turcs que nous avons ce problème, ni avec les Serbo-Croates, mais avec les Canadiens anglais. C'est à la suite d'évènements historiques bien précis. Surtout parce que Louis XV était un esprit médiocre et que Madame de Pompadour, sa maîtresse, dirigeait la politique étrangère, alors qu'en Angleterre il y avait William Pitt, père et fils, qui étaient pas

[180] Graham Fraser, "Quebec's in a Tomcat mood," The Globe & Mail, 21 Sept., 1985.
[181] Frances J. Summers, "Entrevue avec Yves Beauchemin," Voix & Images, 36 (1987) 368.

> mal plus réalistes et futés que cette chère Madame de Pompadour. Ce qui fait que les Français, stupidement, ont perdu leur empire colonial en Amérique et tant pis pour eux. Mais c'est nous qui payons, ce sont nous, les otages.[182]

Beauchemin's views regarding the situation in Quebec are fictionalized in *Le Matou,* which tells the story of a young French Canadian named Florent Boissoneault who becomes partners with an anglophone named Len Slipskin. And, although Beauchemin has claimed that he is in no way "anti-English", he admits to there being traces of his personal prejudices within the novel, partialities that focus on the "vividness" and "color" of the various subjects in his novel:

> Je voulais tout simplement essayer de transmettre des émotions à un lecteur par le moyen d'une histoire et de personnages que j'essayais de rendre les plus intéressants possible. Bien sûr, quand je relis le livre, j'y trouve des idées qui me tiennent à coeur.[183]

Among these interesting characters is Len Slipskin who serves as the primary symbol of English Canada and whose name depicts his dishonest business practices as well as his immoral character. Among other things, Slipskin tries to poison Beauchemin's French Canadian hero. Similar to Garneau's history, which we have seen to be a glorification of

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[182] Frances J. Summers "Entrevue avec Yves Beauchemin," Voix et Images, 36 (1987) 367.
[183] Summers "Entrevue" 361.

the French Canadian race, Beauchemin's novel praises the French Canadian perseverance and determination in the face of an English threat. The novel is an exultation of French Canadians because, in their struggle against "les Anglais", the French characters, depicted as the heroes, manage to avoid being controlled by their enemies. Like Garneau, Beauchemin depicts the "color" and "vividness" of his characters in a narrative in which, as Johnson states, "tous les personnages non francophones sont sinistres."[184]

Slipskin personifies Garneau's claim that "le colon anglais était principalement dominé par la passion du commerce et de la richesse." Slipskin's philosophy, described early in the novel, involves a "natural" inclination for making and having money:

> Slipskin professait qu'un homme placé devant l'occasion de gagner quelques dollars sans peine et qui négligeait de la saisir allait contre la loi de la nature. Lui-même, malgré une certaine timidité causée par un peu de zézaiement, appliquait cette maxime avec une vigueur allègre.[185]

These "vivid" descriptions of Slipskin are consistent throughout the novel. When Florent quits his job at Musipop and informs Slipskin that he is buying a restaurant, the English character quickly sees an opportunity to make money

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[184] Johnson 13.
[185] Yves Beauchemin, Le Matou, (Montreal: Québec-Amérique, 1981) 14.

and eagerly follows Florent to his car: "La boîte est vide, lança-t-il tout essouflé, *it's only an excuse. I wanted to tell you that if you need a partner...* J'ai de l'argent *dans* la banque, moi aussi... Plus il y a de monde dans un *business*, moins il y a *des* risques, hein?"[186] And as time goes on, the reader becomes witness to another "poisoned" English and French association, as Slipskin "slips" barbituates into Florent's food. This sour association is, according to the author, no mere coincidence:

> Il y a également d'autres problèmes qui m'inquiétaient et qui transparaissent dans *Le Matou*. Les problèmes politiques que vit le Québec, par exemple. Ça s'est fait spontanément. Ce n'est pas un hasard, mais en même temps, ce n'est pas le fruit d'un froid calcul que Florent Boissoneault soit associé à Len Slipskin et que leur association tourne mal. C'est une espèce de - je ne dirais pas de "symbole" parce que je n'écris pas de littérature à symboles - mais c'est une espèce de cri que je lançais.[187]

The failure of the association is due to Slipskin's greed as well as to his inability to recognize Florent as an equal business partner. The reader's first glimpse of Slipskin's antagonism clearly shows him to be reluctant to accept Florent's success and authority: "Florent allait et venait derrière le comptoir, essayant de cacher l'ivresse que

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[186] Beauchemin 34.
[187] Summers "Entrevue" 361.

lui procurait sa nouvelle position. - *God damn it,* jura Slipskin intérieurement, *it's like if I hadn't put a cent in the business. He's acting like my boss.*"[188] Slipskin's innate greed is coupled with his constant need to control his partner, both of which are, according to Garneau, part of the English nature.

Slipskin's avaricious nature is constantly stressed in the novel, and he is forever trying to save money. When the chef Monsieur Picquot throws away the instant food he finds in the restaurant kitchen, the author describes Slipskin's secretly taking what Picquot calls "ces ordures américaines" as a gift for his mother:

> Il les fit mettre dans des sacs à ordures qu'il attacha soigneusement, comme s'il s'était agi de substances dangeureuses (-C'en sont! Ces produits-là ont fait plus de ravages que l'arsenic) et les jeta lui-même à la poubelle. Len Slipskin apprit la chose quelques heures plus tard, sortit discrètement dans la cour et alla les porter dans son automobile pour en faire cadeau à sa mère.[189]

Slipskin also resembles Garneau's description of the English Protestant who wants to "decatholicize" French Canadians. As Garneau claimed:

> Les protestants persistaient dans le dessein de décatholiser les Canadiens. (...) Les plus habiles, voyant l'attachement des Canadiens à leur religion, eurent la pensée de dissimuler le but.

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[188] Beauchemin 61.
[189] Beauchemin 72.

> Ainsi une université d'Angleterre proposa le système suivant: [...] engager les personnes du sexe à épouser des protestants ...[190]

Knowing that Garneau's version of history fueled French Canadian literature and created an ideology that warned of the threat of the dominant English, we are not surprised to discover that Slipskin, who is very much like the English described by Garneau, marries a Catholic French Canadian in a Protestant church. Significantly, the bride Josette is a character who has been lured away from Rosario Gladu, a French Canadian Catholic:

> Eh bien! le câlisse d'hostie de tête carrée, je lui ai présenté ma petite amie un lundi soir vers sept heures. A minuit, il m'avait complètement paqueté. A deux heures, elle montait dans son lit. A huit heures le lendemain matin, il m'appellait pour m'anoncer que mon contrat de publicité venait de prendre le bord et qu'il n'aurait plus tellement le temps de me fréquenter, vu son travail. Et quinze jours plus tard, il mariait Josette dans une église protestante.[191]

Unlike the heroines of the historical novels who choose their nation over marriage to an Englishman, Josette serves as an example of what Garneau saw as the assimilation of French Canadians into an English Protestant society. Although she is a secondary character, Josette is clearly described as a woman who has been successfully lured to the "other" side.

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[190] Garneau t. II 308.
[191] Beauchemin 359.

The entire novel is, as Jean Pierre Girard argues, an account of the conflictual relationship between the French and the English: "tout le roman se veut un peu le reflet de la lutte des francophones dans leurs relations avec les anglais."[192] Slipskin, who is repeatedly referred to as "l'Anglais" by the many characters in the novel as well as by the narrator, is characterized as a weak man who is disliked by the French Canadian characters:

> Slipskin, par contre, n'arrivait pas à plaire. D'un commun accord, les employés avaient décidé de lui faire la gueule. Mais ce dernier s'en fichait, car il ne faisait que de courtes apparitions au restaurant vers la fin de la soirée ainsi que le samedi durant la journée. L'essentiel de ses énergies se déployait dans les discothèques. C'était en effet un dragueur virtuose qui passait le plus clair de ses soirées à convaincre des inconnues de faire l'essai de sa virilité. L'alcool devait parfois venir à la rescousse de ses charmes plutôt limités. Il en offrait de grandes quantités, sans vergogne, portefeuille ouvert, braguette frémissante, ne buvant presque pas lui-même, car ses principes naturistes le lui interdisaient.[193]

Like many of the English characters in the historical novels, Slipskin is attracted to French Canadian women; however, unlike the historical novels in which the English characters come to recognize the superiority of the French, Slipskin remains in a state of ignorance. His attraction is

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[192] Jean-Pierre Girard, Le Point, 24 Feb. 1982.
[193] Beauchemin 66.

described strictly in terms of his lust: "Il adorait les Québecoises. - *Those French Canadian girls,* disait-il souvent en riant, *are really good fuckers when you know how to handle them.*"[194] His supposed virility is challenged by the author's descriptions of him as an essentially impotent man. The Englishman, unaware of his inferiority, is reduced to indecent activities. For example, when Slipskin is at the restaurant, he spends his time observing the waitress José Biondi, a relationship that never moves beyond Slipskin's masturbation: "Souvent, après avoir longuement lorgné ses cuisses ou son entre-seins, il descendait aux toilettes pour de courtes méditations solitaires, d'où il ressortait haletant et tout ragaillardi."[195]

In *L'Histoire du Canada,* Garneau claims that "les Canadiens faisaient de continuels efforts pour sortir de l'oppression sous laquelle ils gémissaient."[196] In *Le Matou,* we witness the same efforts being undertaken by Florent when his partner-turned-enemy begins to poison him in order to obtain full ownership of the restaurant. After enjoying just a few prosperous months as owner of "La Binerie", Florent becomes noticeably less energetic and eventually his extreme fatigue forces him to stay at home in bed. Unaware of his partner's activities, Florent despairs:

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[194] Beauchemin 66.
[195] Beauchemin 91.
[196] Garneau t.II 320.

> Florent se laissa tomber sur une chaise et ses yeux s'emplirent de larmes: -Je ne me reconnais plus, tabarnac... Je me sens comme un sac vide... J'ai peur de tout... Je travaille trois minutes et la tête me tourne, mes idées se mêlent... Ce maudit restaurant m'a volé ma santé... Il faut que je dorme...[197]

Slipskin's gossip in the restaurant during Florent's absence is reminiscent of Garneau's words about the English obsession with commerce:

> Slipskin parle de toi au restaurant. Je dirais même qu'il n'arrête pas une seconde... quand ta femme n'y est pas, bien entendu, et que le vieux fricote dans ses chaudrons. - Et qu'est-ce qu'il dit? - Il dit, il dit... il dit, mon ami, que tu n'es pas fait pour le commerce, voilà ce qu'il dit. - Ah bon. Et il a peut-être raison, pensa Florent, morose.[198]

Slipskin's poison makes it impossible for Florent to keep his business. Finally, the plan of "l'Anglais" is successful when Florent acknowledges his inability to manage his restaurant. In an attempt to "dominate" his French Canadian partner, the Englishman will stop at nothing and, eventually, he offers to take over Florent's restaurant, at a significantly unfair price, trying to convince Florent that his actions are fuelled by his willingness to "help" him:

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[197] Beauchemin 122.
[198] Beauchemin 128.

> Il lui proposa d'acheter sa mise de fonds - *But I couldn't give you much more than fifty percent of its value,* se hata-t-il d'ajouter, confus. Tu comprends, c'est surtout pour te rendre service. Je n'ai pas beaucoup d'argent et - *don't take it too hard* - les clients ne *vient* plus comme avant.[199]

Slipskin's miserly personality becomes his trademark as he is repeatedly referred to in terms of his love of money and his obsession with all that is "financial". Monsieur Picquot, Florent's friend and chef at La Binerie, refers to Slipskin as "un fripouillard ... [qui] est plus porté sur le portefeuille que sur la bonne chère,"[200] and later tells Florent "Tu es notre Messie. Depuis ton départ, le restaurant n'est plus le même. Il lésine sur tout, l'Angliche."[201]

Following his discussion with Slipskin, Florent leaves the city to vacation in Saint Sauveur, and, within weeks of his contact with rural Quebec, his health and positive outlook are restored. Upon Florent's return to the restaurant, Slipskin sees that his old partner is feeling stronger and fears that Florent may want to become more active in the running of the restaurant. He therefore resumes his daily poisoning. After asking of Florent's wherabouts one day, and being told that he was at home sick "comme d'habitude", Slipskin condescendingly reflects "Poor chap... I wonder how

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[199] Beauchemin 137.
[200] Beauchemin 137.
[201] Beauchemin 141.

much longer I'll be able to keep him..."[202]

Slipskin's plan to cheat Florent by weakening him until he is completely dominated is exposed when Florent and Monsieur Émile discover the bottle of phenobarbital in Slipskin's car. Florent then realizes that Slipskin has been working with Egon Ratablavasky, the evil and mysterious stranger who torments Florent and Élise throughout the novel. As Garneau said about French Canadians in general, Florent's perseverance and courage are not to be underestimated:

> Personne ne s'imagina qu'une poignée de français qui manquaient de tout, à qui la fortune même semblait interdire jusqu'à l'espérance, osassent songer à retarder une destinée inévitable. On ne connaissait pas leur courage, leur dévouement et les glorieux combats qu'ils avaient livrés et qu'ils pouvaient livrer encore dans ces contrées lointaines, où, oubliés du reste du monde, ils versaient généreusement leur sang pour leur pays. On ignorait que cette "grande querelle" était une guerre de races; que les défenseurs du Canada ne poseraient les armes que lorsqu'ils seraient enveloppés, écrasés par les masses ennemies, et que jusque-là ils ne voulaient point désespérer.[203]

It could be said of Florent "qu'on ne connaissait pas son courage et son dévouement" and that on several occasions in the novel the reader believes Florent to be doomed. Not only must he defend himself against Slipskin, but also against Ratablavasky, a character whose supernatural qualities have

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[202] Beauchemin 149.
[203] Garneau t. II 261.

lead him to be referred to as a symbol of "destiny."[204] Ratablavasky is the mysterious character who is initially responsible for Florent's acquiring the restaurant but whose shifting identity implies a multicultural threat to the French Canadian that contradicts the initial act of generosity that made Florent the owner of the Binerie. Variously described as a Czech, a Polish-Jewish descendant, a friend of Captain von Strohm of the Afrika Korps, and Ernest Robichaud from Ste Anne des Plaines, Ratablavasky is thought to be over one hundred years old, has "des yeux charbonneux", takes an unusual interest in Florent's soul, and strikes back against his enemies by incinerating them. Here, the fear of English domination is extended to the power of an indeterminate "other" to threaten, but not destroy, French Canadian sovereignty. Although it is clear that Florent is fighting an uphill battle when it comes to Ratablavasky, our hero never gives up and never shows signs of weakness in the face of his powerful and intimidating enemy. Such a battle is comparable to Garneau's descriptions of the French Canadian army's unending dedication fighting an English army ten times its size:

> Quant à l'armée, le simple récit de ses combats et de ses travaux suffit pour faire son éloge. Jamais la France n'a eu plus intrépides ni plus dévoués. Dix faibles bataillons, obligés le plus souvent de se recruter dans le pays même, faute de secours d'Europe, eurent à défendre cet immense territoire

[204] Frances J. Summers, "La réception critique du *Matou*," Voix et Images, 36 (1987) 388.

> qui s'étend depuis l'Acadie jusqu'au Lac Erié, et à lutter les forces décuples que les Anglais présentèrent au combat.[205]

Thanks to Slipskin and Ratablavasky, both non-francophone "étrangers" discovered to be working together, Florent and Élise lose the restaurant, their downpayment, their savings and find themselves broke and homeless. They never give up, however, and are surrounded by friends who support them through all their hardships. When a pregnant Élise loses her baby, both she and Florent suspect foul play on Ratablavasky's part, but this does not deter them from moving on and trying again. It is this aspect of French Canadian nature that Garneau had so vividly described in his history when he wrote: "Ce qui caractérise la race française par-dessus toutes les autres, c'est cette force de cohésion et de résistance, qui maintient l'unité nationale à travers les plus cruelles vicissitudes, et la relève triomphante de tous les obstacles."[206] The French speaking characters in the novel stick together, and it is due to this sense of community that they manage to survive. It is, as Garneau claimed, "une force de cohésion, qui leur est propre, [qui] se développe d'autant plus qu'on veut la détruire."[207] Thus we see in Florent this same perseverence and resistance:

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[205] Garneau t. II 282.
[206] Garneau t. I xix.
[207] Garneau t. I xx.

> Vieux câlisse d'émigré de brasseur de marde, ajou-t-il brusquement en tournant ses pensées vers Egon Ratablavasky qui, à cette heure, devait dormir paisiblement, le visage illuminé par un noble sourire. Chien galeux d'Anglais de visage à deux faces, continua-t-il en pointant maintenant ses canons vers l'heureux propriétaire de La Binerie, en train sans doute de siroter son café matina; en companie de sa douce épouse. Je finirai bien par l'avoir ta peau, mon hostie! Que la chance me fasse tomber sur trois ou quatres belles armoires et tu vas savoir comment je m'appelle![208]

As Garneau had stated of French Canadians, Florent's tenacity is rewarded. He moves to the country, fulfilling Garneau's claim, "[pour] se réfugier sur [la] terre pour réparer leurs pertes; et [pour s'isoler] de leurs nouveaux maîtres," and is successful in his venture of selling antiques. Significantly, the hero's recovery involves a return to the land and an association with past traditions as he becomes involved in rural life and the search for antiques. After a few months' stay in Sainte Romanie he ventures back to the urban centre with enough capital to buy a new restaurant. He is ready to do battle with Slipskin and he does so on the Englishman's terms. He rents a site on the same steet as his old restaurant, just a few doors away. He then, with the help of his faithful friends, sabotages Slipskin's business until the Englishman is no longer able to keep the restaurant open.

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[208] Beauchemin 384.

The reader witnesses a change in the hero as his values temporarily shift and he decides to fight Slipskin in the manner learned from the Englishman. As this is happening, Florent's new restaurant flourishes and our hero finally experiences the sweetness of his long-awaited victory. Florent's realization that he has won the battle comes when he discovers that Slipskin has moved to Toronto:

> Slipskin était réapparu sur la rue Mont-Royal pour procéder à la liquidation de ses affaires. Il venait d'ouvrir un restaurant à Toronto. Florent se permit une dernière malice et acheta par personne interposée l'enseigne de *La Binerie* qu'il fit transporter chez lui. On trinqua au champagne toute la nuit.[209]

Florent's victory over Slipskin is clear; however, he is not certain about whether or not he has seen the last of Ratablavasky. Vanquishing the English is just one step in the ongoing, contemporary battle for a French Canadian culture. Despite this new threat, Florent carries on, a little older and a little wiser:

> Ses déboires lui avaient durci la peau. Élise constatait, non sans mélancolie, que sa candeur de jeune homme s'était envolée pour faire place à une ambition sèche et nerveuse. -J'ai pris le goût de gagner, disait-il, quitte à me salir un peu les mains.[210]

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[209] Beauchemin 581.
[210] Beauchemin 581.

Although Beauchemin's contemporary characters and urban setting differ from those found in le roman de la terre and le roman historique, *Le Matou* adheres to the historian's theme of French Canadian triumph, involving a cohesive bond with those who share what Garneau saw as a symbol of the nation; language and traditions. As well, the novel adheres to the historian's "vivid" characterization of the historical field; that is, the descriptions of the English and the French. Florent's story, taking place in an urban centre, reminds the reader that the French Canadian hero can and will triumph over the powers of the English, if he follows the "honourable path" of his ancestors. Thus Florent's success is due to the bond he shares with the French Canadian characters in the novel, a tightly linked connection directed at maintaining unity despite the never-ending attacks of the "étrangers". It is as Garneau had claimed, almost one hundred fifty years before *Le Matou*:

> Nous sommes consolés par la conviction que nous suivons une voie honorable, et nous sommes sûr (sic) que, quoique nous ne jouissions point de l'éclat de la puissance et de la fortune, le conquérant ne peut s'empêcher de respecter le motif qui nous anime.[211]

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[211] Garneau t. I x.

Conclusion

Garneau's *Histoire du Canada* has had a profound influence on the novel writers of Quebec. His text depicted the French Canadian people's struggles throughout history and gave Quebecers a vision of their past which can be summed up by Garneau's statement: "Pendant cent cinquante ans, il [le peuple] a lutté contre les colonies anglaises, trente ou quarante fois plus nombreuses, et son histoire nous dit comment il s'acquittait de son devoir sur le champ de bataille."[212] This "histoire" tells of French Canadian heroism in the face of the English people who sought to destroy and conquer a small but determined race. Although "les colonies anglaises avaient cru la conquête du Canada assurée et facile,"[213] Garneau's French Canadians clung to their loyalty to the "nation", symbolized by their language, their religion, their laws and their traditions, and fought for what they believed was "une voie honorable." Disregarding the consequences of the battle on the plains of Abraham, French Canadians turned to Garneau's text and were inspired by the historian's tale of the great spirit and unconquerable inner strength.

White's theory of the writing of history clarifies the

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[212] Garneau t. III 394.
[213] Garneau t. I 344.

nature of Garneau's historiography and provides a structure for reading Garneau's influence on Quebec fiction. Garneau's text is saturated with images of French Canadian heroism and it is this "illuminative power" that spurred an entire nation to view history as a battle of the races. Garneau's story supplied French Canadians with a reason to be proud of their ancestors, and writers followed the tradition by creating narratives that glorified their people and their collective past. Garneau's greatest achievement was to write a story which, despite its being challenged and even refuted, cultivated what has come to be known as a "distinct society" in the heart of North America.

As stated at the onset, a national literature is informed by cultural and historical identity. French Canada's national literature has been inspired by François-Xavier Garneau, by the anxiety and concern he instilled in his people over one hundred fifty years ago:

> En persévérant dans les traditions de nos pères, nous nous sommes fait l'adversaire de la politique d'Angleterre, qui a placé les deux Canadas sous un même gouvernement, afin de faire disparaître ces trois grands traits de l'existence des Canadiens [...][214]

Garneau's constant avowal of the importance of the symbols of

[214] Garneau t. I viii

the nation and the fear of extinction lead to the apprehension of an entire people: "[...] les Canadiens jetèrent les yeux sur l'avenir avec inquiétude."[215] Amidst these grave concerns, Garneau supplied his readers with an alternative to assimilation. Only by adhering to the symbols of the nation could French Canadians hope to rise above a government and a people that sought to dissolve and assimilate them.

Writers in the province of Quebec adopted Garneau's message and moved beyond history to the realm of fiction where they repeated Garneau's message to their readers. The message has remained clear over the century and a half since fiction writing began in French Canada: French Canadians must tenaciously hold on to the symbols described by the historian, the distinct language, traditions and culture of their forefathers.

Within the narrative framework of French Canadian novels, Quebecers can relive Garneau's anxiety and grasp the message that the English race is a threat to the survival of the nation, a nation whose strength lies firmly in tradition. Garneau's message of the humiliation that the French endured at the hands of the English continues to reverberate in contemporary politics, but he offers the alternative of the cohesive bond which will allow the "peuple" to unite and survive: "[...] notre sagesse et notre ferme union adouciront

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[215] Garneau t. I xx.

beaucoup nos difficultés[...]"[216] Thus, French Canadian writers of Quebec have been inspired by the historian's eternal words: "Mais, quoi qu'on fasse, la destruction d'un peuple n'est pas chose aussi facile qu'on pourrait se l'imaginer."[217]

[216] Garneau t. III 397.
[217] Garneau t. I xviii.

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