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Quebecois languages and cultures in conflict

Gail Erica Simmons-Axvig

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QUEBECOIS: LANGUAGES AND CULTURES IN CONFLICT

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In order to understand how French evolved from the predominant language of Canada in the seventeenth century to a hybrid variety of French, similar to, but different from "le français standard" and known as "le québécois" in the latter half of the twentieth century, one must consider the fact that French Canadians, as distinct from their conquerors the English Canadians, were faced with a common dilemma of the colonized people: whether to assimilate and accept the language and culture of the colonizer, or to resist melding with the other by taking protective actions to try and preserve their heritage. Over the course of more than 200 years, from 1763-1989, Quebec has steadfastly resisted pressure to conform to acculturation dictated by outsiders, not however without paying the price. Social oppression and economic sanctions have often been the results of this struggle for identity. A turn of events awaited by some and unexpected by others in Canada culminated in a period of turmoil as well as partial liberation for Quebec during the 1960's termed "la Révolution Tranquille" or "the quiet revolution."

The purpose of the following study is to address the principal reasons why the French Canadians developed power over their cultural destiny and how the question of their "own language," both spoken and written, was critical to it. Then as now, a linguistic identity was highly significant. Whereas in the past, a national French identity had held together a fledgling nation, feelings of difference from the English Canadians later helped to awaken individuals' quests for identity. In order to analyze these events, key language legislation dating back to the imposition of British rule on the French will preface the events and trends to be explored in modern times. Acts of legislation, historical documents, and counterculture poetry and manifestos will serve to support the statements in this work.
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INTRODUCTION

Two unlike cultures and languages have survived side by side in Canada, under one central government, for over one hundred years. Almost two and a half centuries before the formation of the Canadian nation in 1867, French settlers had established themselves, their religion and their civilization on the North American frontier. The British presence after the conquest of la Nouvelle France in the eighteenth century was a fact, but legislative victories like the passing of the Quebec Act forestalled complete British domination of the French Canadian way of life.

There were several critical conjunctures in the history of the French Canadian people which dictated their eventual successes and failures. The American Revolution was one of these turning points. Because it chose to refuse alliances offered by the Americans, even though France was in no position to rescue it, Quebec initially remained a strong player in the politics between Upper and Lower Canada. French Canadians found themselves in a strategic position between the old rebellious colonies of England and a new and struggling colony of England. What France could not provide French Canadians in military and monetary support, the
Catholic Church tried to provide in spiritual strength and sense of duty. Resistance to Protestantism and the English language strengthened the sacred hegemony of the Catholic Church, which needed the support of the people as much as the people needed the Church. The French language became a symbol and guardian of faith as well as a blanket for survival. The Church seemed omnipresent, and the national zeal which it supplied protected the people from the outside world. In time, however, the people were to suffer from their subservience and psychological isolation.

The twentieth century brought many pressures to bear on rural French Canadians. Changes from country to city after World War II sent gentle shock waves through society. Artists began to react to the confining spirituality of the Church and the passive and sometimes paranoid survival it had engendered in its followers. The cultural upheaval during the 1960’s called the Revolution Tranquille brought people from every walk of Quebec society out of a period of hibernation. The Catholic Church fell from its place of preeminence and was forced to compete with other institutions to fulfill the modern needs of French Canadians. Through a complex process of personal and social examination, the modern Quebecois character was born.

The question of linguistic influence on the Quebecois character is inextricably tied to the history of the people’s beliefs about their language and way of life. Considering
the Anglophone forces constantly at odds with French culture in North America, the emergence of an assertive Québécois way of life was not a trivial matter. In support of a need to break with the past, yet still preserve the future of the Québécois character, political separatist movements gained strength during the 1970's. Many Québécois believed that preservation and extension of the French heritage could be achieved only by creating formal political boundaries against Anglicization.

When the Parti québécois (PQ) came to power in 1976, it wanted to continue revolutionary restructuring of Québécois society to meet the needs of the Québécois citizen, especially the Franco-Québécois. The importance of just how different the Québécois was from his counterparts in the rest of Canada was a highly political issue. The PQ proposed to have the people of Quebec vote on a referendum to separate from the rest of Canada. Canada was thus very interested in the exact strength of this new people who called themselves Québécois. In a survey in the May 1977 Toronto Star (table 1.), respondents were asked if they thought of themselves as Québécois. The monolingual Francophone population overwhelmingly answered "yes" to the question, but only 42% of the Anglophones in Montreal said "yes" and a majority 54% said "no." Within the monolingual Francophone group, 44% said they were Québécois by language, 40% by heritage and only 23% by attitude. In the Anglophone group only 7% felt
they were *Quebecois* by language, 36 % by heritage and 52 %
by attitude, (5 % didn't state). The dichotomy between the
reasons for Francophones thinking of themselves as *Quebecois*
and Anglophones thinking of themselves as *Quebecois* is almost
an inverse proportional relationship. Among these same two
groups, 80 % of Francophones feel "Quebecois first" and 96 %
of Anglophones feel "Canadian first." These statistics
support the idea that both the young *Quebecois* and the
monolingual Francophones, prior to the 1980 referendum,
associated themselves most strongly with the term *Quebecois*.

From French, to French-Canadian, to *Quebecois* civilization,
a deeply rooted power evolved in the people. In action and
reaction to the control imposed by Anglophones, French
Canadians have retained their most prized possessions: their
language and culture. Religion helped them assert their
first liberties as a vanquished people, yet it sealed their
lives, committing them to ignorance. The quest for liberty
in the second half of the twentieth century contributed to
the hardy character of the people to be explored in this
paper. The evolution of the French Canadian language and
culture is a reflection of the people, their ancestors, their
history. An analysis of the circumstances -- from
language legislation to artistic expression -- that
nurtured the genesis of the *Quebecois* identity (suggested by
the statistics in Table 1.) will be surveyed from the British
conquest of North America to the 1980 separatist referendum.
Table 1. Percentage of Quebec Adults who Identify with the Term Québécois

| Question: Do you think of yourself as a Québécois? (Y = yes, N = no, D = didn't state) |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Total                          | Urban | Rural | Montreal Uniling. | Und. 45& | Extreme | Over Separat. |
| Y                              | 86    | 85    | 89               | 42      | 97      | 100             | 89             | 84             | 98             |
| N                              | 13    | 14    | 9                | 54      | 3       | --              | 11             | 15             | 2              |
| D                              | 1     | 1     | 2                | 2       | --      | --              | 1              | --             | --             |

If "yes": do you consider yourself to be...
Q = Québécois first?
C = Canadian first?

| Q                              | 64    | 66    | 51    | 4     | 80    | 56   | 81   | 44   | 98   |
| C                              | 36    | 34    | 49    | 96    | 20    | 44   | 19   | 56   | 2    |

Are you a Québécois because of...
L = language? (more than one answer possible)
H = heritage?
A = attitude?
D = didn't state

| L                              | 37    | 40    | 23    | 7     | 42    | 44   | 40   | 32   | 39   |
| H                              | 47    | 47    | 54    | 36    | 55    | 40   | 52   | 40   | 59   |
| A                              | 26    | 24    | 23    | 52    | 23    | 26   | 18   | 38   | 22   |
| D                              | --    | --    | --    | 5     | --    | --   | --   | --   | --   |

Source: Toronto Star, What Quebec Wants, 1977
CHAPTER II
FROM CONQUEST TO CONFEDERATION

It would not be possible to understand the fate of La Nouvelle France and the factors that influenced how the language of its colonists evolved without first realizing the background of weakness and crisis that faced la mère-patrie (mother country), France, during the period just prior to the British conquest of Canada. Likewise, an overview of particular political events and legislation such as le Traité de Paris, l'Acte de Québec, and l'Acte de l'Amérique du Nord Britannique, will provide the necessary link in the English -- French -- French-Canadian language continuum to be discussed in this paper. A familiarity with this material is necessary in order to piece together the historical tapestry behind the linguistic conflicts to be treated in Chapters III and IV. In addition, this background will enable us to verify or counter differing points of view held by those who have partisan interests in this discussion.

Since the sixteenth century the kings of France had sent explorers to North America, the most famous being Jacques Cartier. Samuel de Champlain, however, is the man credited with having founded Quebec in 1608, and it is he who
persuaded its settlement by soliciting the help of Cardinal Richelieu and an association of notables La Compagnie des Cent-Associés (1627), amongst whom were: "'trente seigneurs de cour, douze gentilshommes, trente-huit marchands bourgeois, un notaire, un médecin, un imprimeur et plusieurs religieux'" (Lacoursière 61). Collectively, these stockholders contributed 300,000 pounds to the colony that stirred up interest in the development of La Nouvelle France.

Of major importance to the present discussion are the results of the war of the succession of Austria in which Frederic II of Prussia, previously the adversary of England and of Maria-Theresa of Austria, decided it was in his interest to side with England. France’s attempted efforts to defend its interests on three military fronts: India, Europe and North America, would fail, weakening its military strength to the extent that England took possession of the Saint Lawrence valley, Quebec and Montreal included.

Le 16janvier 1756, l’Angleterre et la Prusse signent un traité d’alliance. Le but de l’accord est clair: créer un front sur le continent pour laisser l’Angleterre libre d’agir sur mer. La France devra donc diviser ses forces: lutter contre la Prusse en Europe, contre l’Angleterre aux Indes et essayer de conserver une certaine puissance sur mer pour courir à la défense de ses colonies. (Lacoursière 167)

It is pointless to speculate about what might have happened to New France had conditions been otherwise; but we can attempt to gain a better understanding of the positive and negative effects that the conquest had on the inhabitants of
Canada. Let us keep in mind that prior to the conquest, France and New France shared many cultural and linguistic attributes. France, *la métropole*, served as a pace setter in multiple areas of interest to New France.

"En dépit de l'absence d'imprimerie, on lit beaucoup au Canada, au XVIII siècle. On achète toutes les nouveautés littéraires importées de la métropole, même les travaux des Encyclopédistes" (Lacoursière 184). Advanced courses in theology, medicine and jurisprudence were not available in New France and thus pupils who sought a higher education were forced to return to France for their schooling.

The impending deterioration in the French monarchy during the last quarter of the seventeenth century must be noted if only to point out that it was difficult for Canadians to obtain much solace from a country which a mere twenty years later, in 1789, would be on the verge of revolution against almost everything it had stood for for the last few hundred years. France herself would throw off the yoke of the elite *ancien régime* in a quest for liberty and equality for every French citizen. French-national feelings mirrored only too well the sentiments of Americans who in 1776 declared their independence from the British Crown. Some of the reasons that had precipitated seventeenth century colonization had to do with people's desires to escape unrest in France: civil war, famine, Catholic and Protestant agitation, and events such as *la Fronde*. In an interview with *Radio-Canada Internationale*,
Jacques Lacoursiere, a French-Canadian historian, describes the northern frontier as "une terre de liberté" where the average person would be free to hunt and fish. Later in the paper we will consider the ramifications of Canada's geographical isolation from France, especially after the conquest, and how the French language gradually diverged, mainly along phonetic and lexical lines, only to become a bone of contention between French and French Canadians as well as between Anglophones and Francophones. The following quote by Jacques Lacoursiere describes some already present feelings of distance between the French and French colonists.

"Le Canadien de 1760 n'est plus le Français venu s'établir au Canada. Il s'est acclimaté. Il a entrepris de dompter un continent, développant de nouvelles techniques. Sa manière de penser n'est plus la même que celle du Français de la même époque. Les rivalités entre Français et Canadiens à l'intérieur des communautés religieuses, tout comme l'opposition entre Montcalm et Vaudreuil, illustrent cette différence (187).

As a corollary to the tension between the French and their colonial population, a new geographical variable presents itself — the increasing proximity of English. During the period following the American Revolution, there was an exodus of 6,000 British loyalists from America to the province of Quebec. The consequences of increasing numbers of British loyalists and immigrants and the imposition of British law and its new provisions raised many questions concerning the freedoms of a conquered people, as well as the choices that
they must make. Would they be able to maintain the right to practice the Catholic faith? And how would the new government rule and convey the laws of the Crown to a people who speak French? To inquire more deeply into these issues, let us look at the document of capitulation, Le traite de Paris, signed into law February 10, 1763.

Le Traite de Paris

To start this new era for both the English and the French Canadians, and to put an end to the Seven Years War, a formal treaty of peace was signed by Louis XV of France, King George the III of England, Charles the III of Spain and King Joseph the I of Portugal. Although Quebec had fallen to General Wolfe's army on September 13, 1759, the troubles in Europe lingered and the terms of le Traite de Paris peace were delayed until 1763. Thirty Articles make up the body of the treaty -- La Proclamation Royale. Article IV describes the capital loss on the part of the king of France which included the valuable swath of land covering nearly half of North America.

Sa majeste Tres Chretienne renonce a toutes les Pretensions, qu'Elle a formees autrefois, ou pu former, a la Nouvelle Ecosse, ou l'Acadie, en toutes ses Parties, & la garantit toute entiere, & avec toutes Dependances, au Roy, de la Grande Bretagne. De plus, Sa Majeste Tres Chretienne cede & garantit a Sa dite Majeste Britannique, en toute Propriete, le Canada avec toutes ses Dependances, ainsi que l'Isle du Cap Breton, & toutes les autres Isles, & Cotes, dans le Golphe & Fleuve St. Laurent, & generalement tout ce que depend des dits pays.... (196)
More important for our discussion is the next section of Article IV which outlined one of the first regulatory measures concerning the practice of Catholicism in the British realm. According to its wording, the French Canadians would be allowed freedom of religion; given the restriction imposed by British law, they would not.

De son Côté Sa Majesté Britannique convient d'accorder aux Habitants du Canada la Liberté de la Religion Catholique: En Consequence Elle Donnera les Ordres les plus précis & les plus effectifs, pour que ses nouveaux Sujets Catholiques Romains puissent professer le Culte de leur Religion selon le rite de l'Église Romaine, en tant que le permettent les Loix de la Grande Bretagne — (Lacoursière 196)

The stipulation, "as permitted by the laws of Great Britain" [my translation], legally meant that since the free exercise of Catholicism was entirely forbidden in Great Britain, it would not be permitted in the colonies either. However, in an attempt to placate the conquered people and to encourage them to accept the new situation, the practice of Catholicism was permitted in spite of the home policy. It was, apart from their language and their system of law, the only institution providing social cohesion. It was felt by those in Great Britain, as can be seen in the Instructions (203) given to the new governor of Canada James Murray, that the Canadians ought to be gradually induced into embracing the Protestant religion and raising their children according to its tenets. Accordingly, it was deemed neccessary for the
French Canadians to learn English, as attested by Francis Brooke:

Il faudrait que les sujets d'un même Souverain n'eussent que le même langage: c'est un lien d'affection & de fraternité, cela cimente les unions. Il ne serait pas difficile d'exciter les Canadiens à parler notre langue, & à leur faire faire tout ce qui pourroit contribuer au plus grand bien de la Colonie. Il faudroit, peu à peu, rendre l'Anglois le langage de la Cour du Gouverneur. La Noblesse, qui ne peut obtenir de faveurs que par lui, le rendroit bientôt le langage universel...

This vision was naïve in two respects. First, the British idea of the good of the colony was sure to be different from that of the disinherited French Canadians, and second, the terms of the treaty had explicitly stated that anyone who wanted to serve in the new government would have to swear an oath of anti-papacy: "Tous les fonctionnaires supérieurs sont tenus de prêter le serment du Test par lequel ils nient l'autorité du pape, la transsubstantiation dans le sacrement de l'Eucharistie, le culte de la Vierge et des saints" (204). The result of this demand on "La Noblesse" was that cultivated French Canadians were prohibited from representing their people in the new Murray government on the basis of a difference in faith.

Whether the historian Fernand Ouellet is right in claiming that French Canadian nationalism did not exist per se prior to the British conquest, it is not hard to verify that most of French colonists who settled Quebec in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were a people whose propounded heritage
stemmed from an intensely Catholic monarchical tradition. For centuries, French subjects had worshipped God and the king according to the divine right of kings (le droit divin) as if they were one and the same. The nobility had been granted aristocratic privileges through bloodlines which ostensibly emanated from God-given authority. The French language became a vehicle for the glorification of both the king and his noble servants. Royal patronage accounted for the continued purification of the French language and an ascendant literary canon. Not surprisingly, the seminal documents and birth certificate of the French language, *Les Serments de Strasbourg*, written in 842 A.D., originated with the monarchy. These documents are attributed to the grandsons of the emperor Charlemagne (Carolus Magnus): Charles le Chauve, Louis le Germanique and Lothaire. Charlemagne had helped to establish a Christian foothold in the western world and had also laid down one of the cornerstones of future national feelings of pride. Although these same sentiments had caused controversy throughout the ages, their promulgation by missionaries in North America helped to imprint them in the minds of generations of French Canadians. By the grievances expressed in a document signed by ninety-four French Canadian notables, it is obvious that the encroachment of Protestantism on Catholicism was just as much a threat as the shadow cast by the imposition of English
in legal matters over a monolingual French Canadian community:

En effet que deviendroit le Bien Général de la Colonie, si ceux, qui en composent le Corps principal, en devenoient des Membres inutiles par la différence de la Religion? Que deviendroit la Justice si ceux que n'entendent point notre Langue, ny nos Coutumes, en devenoient les Juges par le Ministre des Interpretes? Quelle confusion? Quelles frais mercenaires n'en resulteroient-ils point? de Sujets, protegés par Votre Majesté, nous deviendrons de véritables Esclaves... (qtd. in Bouthillier et Meynaud 98).

Sir Guy Carleton, who replaced Murray in 1766 was more aware of the necessity to lessen such intolerances and safeguard the colonists' interests than was his predecessor. French Canadians constituted a strong majority in the region of the St. Lawrence Valley (some 60,000 total) and Carelton hoped to secure the trust of the people with respect to the protection of the colony. The advocates of Carelton's viewpoint realized that that they might use the French Canadians to strengthen their geographical advantage against rebellion in the thirteen older colonies of New England; they saw the potential of uniting French and English Canadians against a common enemy: American revolutionaries to the south. This particular stance on the issue led in part to the legislative actions of 1774 which favored the rights of French Canadians and increased their feelings of empowerment. Neither side could have known that these decisions were to start the French Canadians on an erratic trajectory with an unknown destination.
1774 — L’Acte de Naissance du Canada Français

Lord North initiated the bill that would modify the governmental structure in Quebec Province. Among some other conciliatory measures of the act, the French Canadians were granted the free exercise of Catholicism by the annulment of the infamous oath — *Le serment du Test* — mentioned earlier. Under the law, the more supple English criminal law was maintained but French civil law was restored, assuring the French Canadians of their property rights as dictated under the previous French regime.

Coincidentally, it was also in 1774 that Britain penalized Boston merchants by closing Boston harbor until they agreed to pay for the tea they had destroyed during the Boston Tea Party. For good reason, an oath in the Quebec Act stipulated that French Canadians show allegiance to King George the III, to "His Person, Crown and Dignity" (Coupland 212). New England declared war against Britain in 1775 and approved its Declaration of Independence in 1776. The Americans, convinced that the Quebec Act was designed as a "lure and perfidy" (Lacoursiere 227), wrote a letter to the French Canadians pressing them to separate from England and join as the fourteenth United State. Very few rebels chose to join the ranks of Ethan Allen, Montgomery and Benedict Arnold as they invaded Quebec. In actual fact the Carleton government was deceived by the display of neutrality shown by most
French Canadians. "'On a recours sans succes a tous les moyens pour amener le paysan canadien au sentiment de son devoir'" (Lacoursiere 227). Carleton himself was pulled from command on the pretext that he had neglected his duties. His successor, Burgoyne surrendered to the Americans at Saratoga and because of this loss, England ceded the richly commercial region of the Great Lakes to the Americans.

The most significant result of the American turmoil for the French Canadians was that fleeing British loyalists flooded into Canada to rebuild the lives that they had begun in New England. It quickly became apparent that legislative questions were becoming much more complicated. An investigatory committee, in 1787 felt that although it seemed natural to protect the rights of loyalists that, "en adoptant les lois pour cette province il faut plutot tenir compte des opinions des 113,000 natifs plutot que de l'opinion de 6,000 etrangers" (Lacoursiere 240). French Canadians felt strongly that they deserved all rights granted to them under the Quebec Act. The exigencies of living as hostile neighbors became rapidly apparent as did the possibility of geographical division and two separate legislative bodies.

Le Haut-Canada — Le Bas-Canada

On December 26, 1791 the royal proclamation officially divided the colony into two provinces: le Bas-Canada (Quebec)
and le Haut-Canada (Ontario). This benevolent solution was meant to allow each people or "race" (Lacoursiere 251) to develop according to its own aspirations and to enact laws appropriate to its nature. Each province had a governor presiding over administrative duties, a lieutenant governor, a legislative council named by the king and an assembly elected by the people. The king reserved the right of veto both for himself and for the governor. Thirty-five of the deputies in Lower Canada were French speaking and fifteen were English speaking. At the first session of Lower Canada’s Parliament, Pierre-Louis Panet spoke for the English when he suggested that the speaker should use the language of the Souverain, proclaiming "'la nécessité absolue pour les Canadiens d’adopter avec le temps la langue anglaise’" (qtd. in Bouthillier and Meynaud 116). The question of language statutes had to this date not been addressed; no mention of it was made in the constitutional act of 1791. Official documents had been published in both languages. The issue of which language should be the official language was debated at these meetings not without conflict. The Minister of the Interior, Henry Dundas, decided the discussion and called for all laws to be written in English and translated into French, making English the official language of Lower Canada and French merely the language of translation. This decision was seen as a step towards assimilation and seemed to foreshadow the increasingly rigid British policy.
As British merchants expressed their enmity towards French Canadians in the newspapers like the Montreal Gazette and the Quebec Mercury, French Canadians tired of unjust accusations and formed a newspaper of their own called Le Canadien. This paper, founded by François-Xavier Blanchet, was accused of being a "libelous and seditious publication" [my translation] (Lacoursière 268) and was shut down for its anti-British treachery. Great spokesmen for the French-Canadian cause like Louis-Joseph Papineau took on some of the essential grievances of the Canadians when it became obvious that more was at stake than just the form of government.

Although the desire for self-representation was not exclusive to the French colonials, the elected members of the assembly became largely split along lines of national origin; the British group became known as the tories, and the French Canadians as the parti canadien and then the parti patriote. The patriotes were led by the first great rhetor of French-Canadian Nationalism, Louis-Joseph Papineau. (Oliver 102-103)

Attacks from writers for the Quebec Mercury represented a group known as the "Château Clique," namely the British governor, the English-Canadian merchants and French-Canadian elite (particularly the Catholic Church). Papineau was one of the first vocal supporters of a "nation canadienne" and gained backing from the other French Canadians newspapers: Le Canadien, La Minerve, Le Libéral and L'Écho du Pays. Because he and others like Elzer Bedard shared the feeling that the elite "Château Clique" was an "aristocracy of bankruptcy" (Oliver 106), whose only mission was to Anglicize the
province, he took an active if not rebellious part in upholding the spirit of the constitution of 1791. The principal dictum of the French Canadians who were slowly teaching themselves about the workings of Parliamentary government was "Notre langue, nos institutions et nos lois'" (Smith 19). The idea that French Canadians should be able to govern themselves and look out for their own interests by the use of their own tongue was part of a growing national sense of solidarity. Although their dreams of living in the North American frontier did not constitute cutting all ties with the past, they had to use a well thought-out strategy in order to adapt.

Now the Act of 1791, by dividing the Executive and Legislative Councils for the first time in colonial history, and by creating an Assembly, made possible the belief that the constitutions of the two Canadas had been modelled on that of Great Britain. As a result an attempt was made in Lower Canada, as it had been the United States, to apply a formula for liberty and stability which had descended from Montesquieu. (25-26)

The innate characteristics and values of a civilization may cause it to strongly resist the pressure of change. The one established by the French in North America, although it had been conquered by the British, seemed to thrive on nationalistic feelings and the will for autonomy. In as much as these sentiments of separatism echoed the Parti québécois' desire for autonomy from the Canadian Federation during the 1970s, the voice of Louis-Joseph Papineau is reminiscent of the eloquence of Rene Levesque, who was Prime
Minister of Quebec from 1976 to 1984. These two important activists were charismatic defenders of the French Canadian language, laws and way of life.

The Quebec Act had been drawn up with the intention of providing a system of government for a majority of settlers with French as their common language who, although obligated to live in close relation to a dominant minority fluent in English, would nonetheless be able to be relatively productive and peaceful. If French Canadians had been frequently portrayed hostiley through stereotypical references such as "excessivly indolent" and "plunged in ignorance," they had been admired by those same observers as being "hardy" and imbued with "great sentiments of honor." These seemingly surface cultural differences, almost curiosities, at the time of the conquest, had hardly threatened the French Canadians. Comparatively grave disputes seemed to multiply with the American Revolution and the loyalist exodus to Canada because now the real issue had become which cultural community would wield its tools of power the most effectively. And to confuse the issue, the manifesto of independence from America and the one of democracy from France served to rekindle French Canadians' feelings of alienation in their situation as a colonized people. Between the impending Confederation in 1867 and La Revolution Tranquille, sparked in the early 1960s, no single event would more clearly symbolize the unique feelings of
willful identity and difference that propelled Quebec toward modern times than the rebellion of 1837-1838.

Brutal accusations had been launched by Papineau and his cohorts in the Lower-Canadian government against the corruption of the appointed legislative council which according to them was looking out for the interests of the British minority in Lower Canada. The British ripost to these "liberals" was powerful and biting:

Nous sommes prêts à résister jusqu'à la dernière extrémité aux efforts des Canadiens français que — sous le specieux déguisement de promouvoir des institutions libérales, démocratiques et populaires — nous feraient tomber dans une servitude intolérable. (Lacoursière 302)

Their principal objections seemed to be against allowing their neighbors equality. In the Montreal Gazette more angry cries were heard from the English after a concessionary bill was passed to render the executive council elective and lessen the possibility for corruption: "Le temps d'indécision est passé, peut on y lire. Les Britanniques doivent ou écraser leur oppresseurs, ou se soumettre tranquillement au joug qui leur est préparé" (Lacoursière 304).

Upon the request of the governor in 1838, the British Parliament suspended the constitution of Lower Canada. Gosford asked for permission to invoke martial law after a group of French Canadians had taken up arms against the state. Some were arrested and executed as a result of their civil disobedience.
The Durham Report was instigated in order to investigate what could be done about eliminating the conflicts and lines of separation between these divided peoples who were at different stages of social and economic development and who made up the Canadian Empire:

As a result of the rebellion in 1837-38, Britain sent Lord Durham to Canada to try to find the causes of discontent, and to recommend a solution. His famous report, in 1840, which resulted in the Act of Union (joining Upper and Lower Canada), became the basis for the very devisiveness that it sought to eliminate. To the French Canadian it has become a lasting and constant reminder of the English attitude of superiority and of the constant threat of assimilation (Oliver 113).

For Britain the only obvious way to save Canada was to appease the fast growing population of English, soon to be the majority, and reduce the separatist feelings among French Canadians who were both in literal and figurative respects becoming the minority.

The L’Acte d’Union of 1840 represented consolidation of the two provincial governments into one colony; this was the intermediary step to the Confederation. It was believed to be the only feasible solution to problems of conflict between the two cultures which had existed for the last eighty years of British rule. Upper Canada with a smaller population (450,000) gained equal representation to its counterpart Lower Canada (650,000). The debt incurred by Upper Canada was shared equally between the two. Although French Canadians initially resented the unequal
representation and monetary burden, they would gain the advantage once British population outnumbered them. However, as Maurice Seguin noted, the federation of the two groups was in many respects detrimental, "Depuis ce jour, les Canadiens français survivent annexés, provincialisés dans un grand 'British Canada' (qtd. in Lacoursière 319).

The teeter-tottering effect of power seemed to surge up and down and while it was not entirely surprising that new concessions would be made, it was contrary to most assimilatory trends when French as well as English was recognized as having official status.

L'Acte de l’Amérique du Nord Britannique

The second half of the nineteenth century was a time of major change and expansion in Canada. The British North America Act which went into effect July 1, 1867 was effectively the Dominion of Canada made up of the provinces of Quebec, Ontario, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. A system of centralized federal power was modelled on the British system; partial powers were granted to each provincial government. In 1871 there were approximately 1,108,940 Francophones in Canada which was 31 percent of the total population. Seventy-nine percent of these were living in Quebec, 15 percent in New Brunswick 4,7 percent in Ontario and 1,4 percent in Nova Scotia.

The chances of the one third of Canada’s French speakers
gaining autonomy for themselves at this time seemed doubtful. Given the previous battles they had lost, given the new government favoring Anglophone over Francophone, and given their insular tendencies predicated on a faith in their French-Catholic heritage, French Canadians would undergo a period of relative withdrawal from their previous independantiste tendencies until the middle of the twentieth century.

With the loss of the Rebellion went any hope of a militarily derived independence. With the devasting commentary of the Durham Report in front of them, the rhetors of French Canadian Nationalism largely shifted away from arguments of political independence, and embraced a cultural nationalism, the main objective of which was "la survivance" (the survival) of this special "race élue" (Oliver 116).

The cultural nationalism that Oliver speaks of was to take firm root at the end of the nineteenth century and finally blossom in the twentieth century by a complicated and variegated progression.

Some of the historical conflicts touched upon in this chapter will resurface and be discussed in light of the the interim period and the Quiet Revolution. It is clear that deeply rooted problems grew out of the juxtaposition of British and French under one government and two languages in Canada. Next we will discuss the dynamics that led to linguistic change and literary creativity prompted by the aforesaid conditions.
The Continued Discourse of Quebec Nationalism

Alexis de Tocqueville's observations in his letters of the early nineteenth century leave little room to doubt that he approved highly of the class of people who were to be the guardians of the French way of life in North America for some time to come. He found the clerics to be well-lettered and worthy disseminators of the French language.

Nous avons vu un très grand nombre d'ecclesiastiques depuis que nous sommes dans le Canada. Ils nous a semblé qu'ils formaient évidemment la première classe parmi les Canadiens. Tous ceux que nous avons vus sont instruits, polis, bien élevés. Ils parlent le français avec pureté. (qtd. in Bouthillier and Meynaud 144)

The polished language that Tocqueville heard the clergy speaking met French prescriptive standards for correct usage: it was pure and unspoiled armor against English; it upheld the idealized image of the French language as it had been inscribed in the annals of L'Académie française in 1635. Tocqueville however did not fail to point out the "degenerative" sounding speech he attributed to French Canadian lawyers, whose turn of phrase was aberrant and cluttered with Anglicisms. He commented harshly on their courtroom language which carried "l'accent normand des
classes moyennes...Leur style était vulgaire et mêlé d'étrangetés et de locutions anglaises. Ils disent qu'un homme est chargé de dix louis pour dire qu'on lui demande dix louis. -- Entrez dans la boîte, crient-ils au témoin pour indiquer de se placer dans le banc ou il doit déposer" (qtd. in Bouthillier et Meynaud 141). Even though he noted that in Montreal French was the most widely spoken language, he found many of the newspapers to be in English. Posted advertisements were in English as were the signs belonging to French merchants. Tocqueville recognized the necessity for strong leadership amongst a vanquished people. Indeed, he dreamt of the emergence of a figurehead (a savior) capable of upholding and developing "les passions nationales" of this naïve people with great potential, whom he likened to the Americans. If they lacked a state of their own on which to base national pride, they had access to spiritual unity which was of a higher order.

The literary activity that took place in Quebec during the first half of the twentieth century was unable to escape the ongoing current of religious domination. In a sense, this was a positive motivation for writers because they struggled to create within the limitations of their religious upbringing. The educated were encouraged to derive inspiration from the language and literature of le Grand Siècle, "...parce que nulle plus toi, ô littérature de Corneille, de Racine, de Molière, de Boileau, de Pascal, de
Bossuet, nulle plus que toi n’est... canadienne!” (qtd. in Bouthillier and Meynaud 341). Ripples of reaction against the imitation of the past and the myth that French Canadians were the keepers of their French forebearers’ souls would later be two of the keys to the maturation of the / Québecois character. Whatever the consequences for future generations, excitement of national consciousness revolved around the Catholic Church’s desire to retain French as the medium of Catholic doctrine in North America.

On one hand, French-Canadian beliefs initially thrived and were strongly supported by the Catholic Church; past battles won against the British through the Quebec Act provided positive incentives against a defeatist attitude that might lower French Canadians’ resistance to assimilation. The Catholic Church continued to pursue its sacred pilgrimage, as fervently as it had since the colonization of North America, and generation after generation was introduced to its unchanging doctrines which offered spiritual salvation and a social voice, albeit somewhat muted. The badge of "race élue" among clerical leaders was a metaphor for their hegemony.

On the other hand, the church shunned socio-economic growth, and it branded its people in the eyes of the British, and eventually in the eyes of the French, as being chained to an anachronistic way of life, rooted to the land and antithetical to progress:
...les clercs tenteront alors de s'opposer à ce mouvement de progrès; il présenteront la grande ville comme un lieu de perdition, et nous inventeront une illusoire vocation agricole; ils feront même de cette opposition une idéologie, qu'on a fort justement appelée agriculturiste. (qtd. in Boismenu et al. 119-120)

The French Canadians, as fiercely proud of their language as were the French, preferred to suffer silently the persecution of their language rather than to adopt English. Their variety of French and their manner of expression began to be noticed as it deviated from the continental French norm. The language, which had been evolving since the seventeenth century in reaction to different forces than the French of France, was constantly scrutinized in relation to "pure French," the Parisian dialect emanating from "L'Isle-de-France." Regardless of the educational efforts of the schools, which were dominated by the Church, French Canadian came to bear the cross of being merely "patois" and "folklorique," in other words, highly provincial. To the Parisians, who classed French Canadian as a "patois."

Oscar Dunn pointed out a more dangerous enemy: English.

Que notre confrère américain veuille nous en croire, notre ennemi n'est pas le patois, c'est l'anglais qui, maître du commerce et de l'industrie, met le dessaroi dans la langue de l'ouvrier et du négociant; son influence sur la langue politique ne laisse pas non plus d'être redoutable. (qtd. in Bouthillier and Meynaud 202)

French Canadian was not considered a distinct dialect of French in its own right, a linguistically natural outcome of a geographically separate people who, like the Americans, had been able to exorcise the ghosts of class and of the elitist
norms of their ancestors. The French Canadians, although culturally nationalistic, lacked the solidarity that an autonomous state with French Canadian interests in mind would have provided. The causes that the Catholic religion trumpeted in Canada after the conquest provided iron bonds and feelings of nationality, but their initial offense had turned to defense, and even though it made inroads into commercial enterprise, French Catholicism feared change. The Church took pride in controlling the thoughts and expressions of its followers to suit a morality of subservience, one that invoked the fear of God, one that was dictated by the necessity for "la survivance" in a sea of Anglophones, both British and American. The Church would eventually pay a price for the limitations it had placed on individual freedom of expression.

Several early socio-political events spurred a renewed need for French Canadians, to define their rights in terms of the rest of Canada. The first of these took place outside of Quebec province near what is now Winnipeg, Manitoba. The outcry surrounded a martyred Metis named Louis Riel, whose mother was French Canadian. In 1868 the federal government had bought western Canada from the Hudson Bay Company, and the territory which had previously been occupied by a group of 10,000 Metis was now threatened by developers. In the interest of these people, Riel had formed a government for them which helped plead their cause against British
surveyors who wanted to divide up the land into parcels and sell it. In an unfortunate event, Riel's government had tried and executed Thomas Scott, who had been captured with a group of other Canadians. Scott had apparently refused to disperse quietly with the others and began to verbally assault Riel's men. This incident was not forgotten by the English Canadians when, in 1885, the nomadic Metis again called on Riel to help them establish a sedentary way of life. They wanted to obtain land rights in light of the impending progress of the Canadian Pacific Railway. In a battle against the government Riel was captured and subsequently brought to trial. Six English-speaking jurors found him guilty of high treason and he was hanged in November of 1885. This decision on the part of the federal government brought a public outcry which seemed to cut to the quick of previous bonds.

Le 22 novembre 1885, se tient au Champs de Mars, à Montréal, la plus grande assemblée populaire jamais vue dans le Quebec. Quarante à cinquante mille personnes se rassemblent pour entendre une suite ininterrompue d'orateurs. Tous expriment leur sentiment de solidarité avec Riel et attaquent violemment le gouvernement fédéral. Riel, notre frère est mort... (Vaugeois et Lacoursiere 440).

Clearly the cultural solidarity that French Canadians felt with Riel and with the Metis was the expression of common identity with French-speaking Canadians outside of Quebec province. Other ethnic communities in Canada, who also had reason to question the biassed policies of the federal
government, would consciously carry out efforts to attain equal rights.

One of the most outspoken religious activists concerned with the preservation of the French language and culture was L'abbé Lionel Groulx (1878-1967), a professor of history at the University of Montreal. He and Emile Chartier founded "l'Association catholique de la jeunesse canadienne-française," an organization that was influential in political, educational circles. The A.C.J.C. conducted inquiries into the state of Anglicization of Quebec and measured the progress of "la résistance aux infiltrations étrangères" (qtd. in Bouthillier et Meynaud 429).

Selon l'historien Mason Wade, 'l'A.C.J.F. fut le berceau du nationalisme canadien-français du vingtième siècle et le mélange de religion et de patriotism qu'elle engendra fut porté dans tous les milieux de la vie canadienne-française par l'enseignement passioné que recevait la jeune élite que passait par ses rangs.' (Bouthillier et Meynaud 465)

One of Groulx's endeavors that would survive into the second half of the twentieth century was the magazine "L'Action Nationale" which started under the auspices of a group who initially called themselves the La Ligue des droits du français, and later La Ligue d'action française. La Ligue was a linguistic pressure group initiated in 1913 by le Père Louis-Joseph Papin-Archangault (1880-1966). He, along with prominent laymen and clerics, was interested in drafting laws ordaining the use of the French language in commerce and industry, where English was still the locus of
attention. In 1917 Groulx inherited the direction of La Ligue's magazine "L'Action française". La Ligue organized many colloquies on the status of French: "'La Langue, gardienne de la foi,'" "'La Valeur économique du français,'" "'Notre avenir politique,'" "'Notre intégrité française'" et "'l'ennemi dans sa place'" (qtd. in Bouthillier et Meynaud 357). Groulx's nationalism encompassed a reverence for his French heritage and a staunch will to preserve the language and the morality of Catholicism. He was an advocate of French literature of the Classical period in France (1610-1715) and felt that French Canadians should emulate the superior "antique race" over the comparative poverty of eighteenth and nineteenth century literature in France. In a series of addresses at Laval University called "La Naissance d'une race," Groulx defined his vision of the French Canadian identity by saying "qu'il ne prend pas le mot 'race' dans son sens rigoureux mais dans celui de la 'personnalité bien nette' [...] d'un groupe ethnique qui est le notre" (Lemire 2: 740). Regionalist essays of the time span between 1900 and 1939 by Samuel Bellavance, Paul Gouin, Lionel Groulx, Camile Roy, Albert Levesque, Wilfred Morin and others, epitomized nationalist propaganda.

A regionalist literature was born at the same time as the nationalist movement, though not necessarily in order to advocate that political point of view. Marie Chapdelaine, the first and most memorable work of this genre, was written
by Louis Hemon (1880-1913), a Frenchman from Brest who emigrated to Canada in 1911. This work was first published as a serial in the Parisian daily *Le Temps*, in 1914, after the premature death of Hemon. It was two years before the novel *Marie Chapdelaine* appeared in Montreal. The author, who had spent a winter working in the service of a farmer in Peribonka, loyally described the typical rural way of life in French Canada. This book captured the collective experience of French Canadians before urbanization, and their struggle for "la survivance nationale." The exodus to the cities during the 1920's imposed major changes in lifestyle on French Canadians, in work, customs and living arrangements, despite the omnipresence of the Church and the dominance of a conservative political climate which continued to harbor nationalistic feelings.

The era of conservative thinking, i.e. of conservation of things French Canadian, often associated with the political regime of Maurice Duplessis (1933-1960), was deeply rooted in French Canadian values and nationalism. Duplessis continued to veil Quebec's character to the rest of Canada in a supposed attempt to protect her interests. He has been accused, at least in history books, of being a marionette — *le petit dictateur Québécois*:

Duplessis ne cédait qu'à Dieu. Il était le sauveur de la race, de la langue, des institutions et des traditions constamment menacées, laissait-il entendre, par les centralisateurs canadiens-anglais de la capitale fédérale et les requins de la finance de Montréal et
Toronto. (Boismenu et al. 101)

The socio-political tenor of the conservative period inhibited but did not preempt a new movement of ideas. A spiritual transformation began to affect the city dweller still nostalgic about his hometown but confronted with finding a job in industry and submitting to living space walled in by the city.

Toutefois, le nouveau citadin, qu'il le veuille ou non, est confronté à une autre réalité qui le force à se définir d'une façon différente. Sans préparation technique, sans adaptation psychologique, sans relation de travail, il apparaît comme la victime toute désignée des fluctuations économiques. (Lemire 3: XIX)

Quebec was rapidly becoming a consumer society with the increasing popularity of the car, the advent of the radio and the rural expansion of roads and electricity. Women in Quebec attained the right to vote in 1940 and public instruction became compulsory in 1942. Communications had a phenomenal affect on culture in Quebec as elsewhere: "La véritable révolution culturelle sera accomplie par la télévision" (Lemire 3: XVI). The television, more so than the radio, became the medium through which controversial topics and ideas reached the public.

Poetic Rebellion: The First Wave

The rate at which French-Canadian literary activity advanced could not equal the rate at which industry and commerce were moving, especially with the increased
economic demands of World War II. The German occupation in France opened up an avenue to Quebec intellectuals that might have remained closed had the war been averted.

La défaite de la France en juin 1940 contribue également, plus qu’on ne saurait le dire, à l’émancipation intellectuelle du Québec. Par un concours de circonstances tout à fait inespéré, le Québec prend le relais de la France libre pendant le régime de Vichy (Lemire 3: XV).

During World War II, French publishing houses were forced to close, thus cutting off the publication of major French authors to the French market. In Quebec, there was an eagerness to respond to the problem. With the support of the Société des Éditeurs Canadiens du Livre Français (1943), previously censored works listed on the Catholic Index by such authors as Sade, Rimbaud, Proust and Gide, were reprinted. Book publishing rights were transferred to Quebec for a short-lived but fruitful period. In the flurry of interest over French writers, a handful of French-Canadian newspapers promoting new ideas and democratic values appeared: L’Ordre, Le Clarion, Le Jour and La Releve. The press started by Robert Charbonneau, Les Éditions de L’Arbre, which published little-known Quebec authors as well as the likes of Fernand Léger, was one of the seminal houses to survive after the war. The dissemination of intellectual material from France had pumped fresh blood into the veins of Quebec writers. However despite the notoriety that underground publishing had brought to the French-Canadian artistic scene,
only a "regionalist" literature was saleable in the houses that remained open in Quebec after the war.

It was clear, though, that modern Quebec literature was still very much in the embryonic stage, and with France insisting upon absolute control over its intellectual property and regarding Quebec as a mere extension of its market, the implications were clear: only a "regional" literature, by definition of little interest outside the province...would be left uncontested. (Schwartzwald 37)

Pierre Maheu, founder of the magazine "Parti pris", which published experimental writing during the 1960’s, comments bitterly on the extension of clerical power into the commercial sector of Quebec between 1940 and 1960.

Le clerge controlait deja l’education et l’hospitalisation...il crea les ‘ Syndicats Catholiques’, et y imposa un paternalisme dont notre syndicalisme ne s’est pas encore tout a fait remis. Elle a pris en mains l’administration de tout le bien-etre social...elle a cree des maisons d’édition, revues, fonde ses propres imprimeries, s’est assure le monopole de la production des manuels scolaires, etc. (qtd. in Boismenu et al. 120-121)

Even though reforms to equalize competition between publishing companies would not occur until the 1960’s, a transformation of the French Canadian identity seemed to be gaining momentum, with its primary axis being poetry.

In an article by Eva Kushner called "La Poesie, pierre de touche de la Revolution Tranquille," she identifies two different aspects of the spiritual development of Quebecois writers. Both of these developments of consciousness coincide with the visceral side of the Revolution Tranquille, which was a requisite stage of social enlightenment and political
action. The first group of writers she mentions precedes the Revolution Tranquille and as such participates in its birth.

Clerical domination of publishing houses was a roadblock to writers' access to impartial editors. Religious supremacy had put a damper on social behavior and its logical outlet, linguistic expression. The authors in question, most of whom had received their training from Catholic fathers or sisters, attempted painfully to wrestle themselves free of the nightmares of history. To accomplish this was not an easy or rapid process. It was not possible nor perhaps was it desirable to arrive at complete liberation from the Church's influence; its presence was fast and indelible and not easily removed. What it did mean was that there were no easy answers in the quest for French-Canadian identity. Poets like Saint-Denys Garneau, Alain Grandbois and Anne Hebert were born into a world suspicious of change: steeped in nationalism and threatened by Anglophones. These poets treated the themes of dispossession and alienation, themes inherent in existential philosophy, themes also relevant in a vast, still wild country. The crisis of "being" represented a defeat for the Church because a dangerous redefinition of perception was occurring. The imprisoned soul of the poet recoiled from reality in order to find comfort in the innermost reaches of the psyche; this mental reflection, often obsessive, found temporary relief from contradictions
of the outside world but no escape. The poets’ rejection of the exterior allowed their inner world to expand, but this new spiritual realm, dark and isolated, offered entry but no exit.

De la part du poète lui-même, le refus n’est pas encore révolte; il ne s’adresse pas à un adversaire symbolique ou réel, mais interiorise plutôt cet adversaire; sa violence se retourne alors contre lui-même, alienant d’autrui du même coup, entravant l’amour d’autrui et attirant l’amour du pays. (Kushner 447)

On the eve of the Revolution Tranquille, many writers, out of renewed hope for uncompromised freedom of expression and a new direction for collective action, began to show more optimism. Writers expressed a willingness to explore and recognize social perspectives other than those of the upper class. The 1960’s ushered in an era of demystification and rebellion for Quebec writers, some of whom, like Michel Tremblay and Marie-Claire Blais, would choose to write in joual, the language of working people.

The social fabric of the general public of Quebec would begin to change as well. In an attempt to break with the past, French Canadians began to openly accept themselves as Québécois and speakers of le québécois, an expression of their américanité (Schwartzwald 40). The old Canadien-français, a former speaker of le français canadien or French Canadian, no longer needed to define him or herself in terms of a dichotomy. The split between English and French Canadian was replaced by the affirmation of a North American
identity. Due to events during the 1960's-1980's, liberal political groups like the Parti québécois headed by René Levesque would seek to use the Québécois identity to support so-called indépendantiste rhetoric, preaching legitimate reasons for Quebec's separation from Canada. Clashes between political figures like Pierre Trudeau and René Levesque would polarize the issues for political groups for or against Quebec separatism.

One of the pressing issues hotly debated at the beginning of the 1960's was the question of how to reform education. The issue of language was finally brought to the attention of the public where it evoked feelings of ambivalence, from both the old guard and progressive thinkers. A more honest appraisal of the linguistic situation would allow latent social and political tensions to rise to the surface.

Les Insolences du Frère UnTel — The Impertinences of Brother Anonymous

Whenever discussing the concept of the identity of a people in a sociological context, language and paralinguistic communication stand out as being necessary tools. To possess a sense of self in modern society, one must have a command of spoken and written language. These skills become an extension of one's control over his or her identity. For languages to be effective, they must be universal, that is mutually intelligible to the participants. Without mutual
understanding it is almost certain that social activities will become strained. This is what happened to the French culture in North America when the British superimposed their language and customs on the seventeenth century French. During the 1960’s English was the predominant language of business in Quebec, yet in the schools that were ostensibly teaching Francophones their native language, teachers were having a difficult time coming to terms with the fact that the "standard" or "Parisian French" language taught differed greatly from the language spoken by the students. In other words the teachers were teaching a foreign language to their students. The language that youths spoke at home and with their peers was not "standard French." This inability of the school system to effectively convey knowledge to the students indicated deep problems: the schools’ goals, and thus the intended goals of society, were at odds with the needs of the students.

Les Insolences du Frère Untel, published by the editor of Le Devoir, André Laurendau, quite by accident became the key to unlocking major problems at the level of French-Canadian civilization and culture. To explain the outlook of the unsung or anonymous voices associated with the phenomena described in the little book written in 1960, we need only to look at this excerpt from an essay by Pierre Maheu:

Le système [school] exigeait dans l’absolu un adhésion totale et ontologiquement impossible; aussi vivions-nous notre singularité (le simple fait d’être autre que tous
Maheu's perception of the isolationist attitude of Catholic schooling in Quebec sets the tone for the world humbly painted by the frank, yet amusing, Frère Pierre Jérôme Desbiens (alias le Frère UnTel). Desbiens, who before the success of his book was just another Catholic priest, sounded a public cry of alarm in order to salvage the school system and thus Quebec society in general.

It is ironic but perhaps fitting that a Catholic brother should be the one to voice his disapproval over the state of disarray in the Quebec school system. To his credit he also broached the subject of how absurd it was that instructors were trying to teach speakers of joual, a language they neither wanted nor were easily able to learn. The book caused a stir among secular and religious instructors alike. The general public rushed out to buy the little book. Once le Frère Untel had defined joual, people were much more ready to accept it. André Laurendeau explains the origin of the identity of brother anonymous in his preface to Les Insolences du Frère Untel:

Je me souviens d'une lettre reçue l'automne dernier, après un billet assez aigre sur la langue que parlent les jeunes. C'était d'un petit Frère et d'une région lointaine.... Nous l'avons publiée.... Pourquoi, l'avoir baptisé Frère Un Tel?.... Il était une voix pour tous ceux qui travaillent dans l'ombre et le silence, ceux que nous n'entendons jamais. C'est-a-dire: Frère Un Tel, (sic)
Le Frère Lintel was speaking for "All those that worked in shadow and in silence" [my translation]. This is a tone reminiscent of the above excerpt by Maheu, of his religious education in which "nous" or as certain Québécois say "nous autres" often represents the ubiquitous "être-pas-comme-les-autres." The predisposition to not recognizing or wanting to voice problems was a feature of the Catholic religious system which seemed to prefer to leave those questions, as well as questions of salvation, up to God.

Joual, Québécois, French Canadian, Qu'est-ce c'est?

Le Frère Jerome defined joual in order to bring it into the open, that is to bring it to the attention of the powers that be along with the paradox of language learning in Quebec, "...parler joual c'est précisement dire joual au lieu de dire cheval." He described joual as being a decomposition, a language whose consonants had been "deboned." "Le joual est une langue desossee: les consonnes sont toutes escamotees,... On dit: 'Chu pas apable', au lieu de: je ne suis pas capable; on dit 'L'coach m'enweille cri les mit du goleur', au lieu de: le moniteur m'envoie chercher les gants du gardien, etc" (Desbiens 24). Desbiens attempted to explain to some extent the psychological background behind what it meant to be French Canadian and to speak joual. He pointed out that the mistakes students made were at the level of syntax not just at the level of lexicon;
they had serious difficulty with points of grammar. Curiously he spoke of this language as being deprived and impoverished at the level of civilization, "Cette absence qu'est le joual est un cas de notre inexistence, à nous, les Canadiens François... Notre inaptitude à nous affirmer, notre refus de l’avenir, notre obsession du passé, tout cela se reflète dans le joual, qui est vraiment notre langue" (24-25).

Far from taking a defeatist stance in the book, Desbiens was optimistic and ready to promote positive changes. He supported the belief that it would take legislation concerning the limitation of English in business to see improvements in the system. He referred to the language as "un bien commun," belonging to all. As such it could be protected in the same way that endangered species were protected. In the last analysis, Desbiens seemed to prefer to see joual disappear and be absorbed into québecois. He felt that education would only be able to function smoothly if le français canadien were to supercede joual, "Je veux bien que mes élèves disent poudrerie pour une tempête de neige... Je ne me suicide pas quand ils débarquent de l'autobus, ou embarquent dans le train, bien que débarquer et embarquer doivent rigoureusement ne se dire qu'en parlant de barque" (31).

The question of le québecois had not yet troubled le Frère Jerome, but later on in the 1960’s and even the 1970’s, the
question of how Quebec and the people of Quebec were going to identify themselves, either as a separate entity from the federal government or as part of the same group, gained momentum. What had previously been referred to by Desbiens as "notre français canadien" became "le québécois". As the people affirmed their differences as being new elements of their Canadian character, their language also attained selfhood. As an offshoot of this, in the 1970's, certain counter culture groups changed the spelling to "Kebekois" to draw even finer distinctions of sub-culture.

Once again this renaissance of national feeling would be the prime motivation behind educational and language reforms. As we will see in the next chapter, the fight had only just begun. It is hard to believe that a small book such as the one mentioned could have rallied so much interest toward change: "La publication des Insolences du Frère Untel coïncide, l'été 1960, avec l'arrivée au pouvoir de Jean Lesage à la tête du parti liberal, et c'est l'aube de la Révolution tranquille" (Michaud 53).
CHAPTER IV

THE QUIET REVOLUTION: A VIGOROUS DIALOGUE

Prior to the Quiet Revolution proper, isolated voices both inside and outside the literary community suggested a gradual murmur of change. The stage was set to overturn the longstanding hierarchy of "passeisme" of French Canadian culture, at once ethno-centric and preservational. It is inconceivable to modern minds that a healthy culture, one with strong foundations and mechanisms facilitating social stability, should remain unchanged for hundreds of years and experience neither decadence, nor corruption, nor totalitarian control, or all three. Cultures, unlike puzzles, do not have predesigned pieces which fit together perfectly; such a picture would defy history. A culture, completely frozen in time and place, would consign intellectual analyses and inquiry, experimentation, philosophy and art, to obsolescence.

The heretofore tidy trappings of "French Canadian culture," enshrined as nationalism, were on a descendent trajectory; the ascendent path would inevitably be risky and disruptive, initiated by an antagonistic subculture of the intelligensia. Its principal weapon was sometimes violence, resulting in
terrorism, and sometimes reason resulting in verbal defiance and refusal: as such they believed in a refus global. The "Refus global" was a collective surrealist manifesto authored by Paul Emile Borduas and signed by a group of artists known as the Automatistes. The work, published in 1948, was comprised of nine essays and diverse illustrations and photographs. What follows is an excerpt from the essay by Borduas -- an engaged motto -- a rejection of the past:

D'ici là notre devoir est simple.

Rompre définitivement avec toutes les habitudes de la société, se désolidariser de son esprit utilitaire. Refus d'être sciémment au-dessous de nos possibilités psychiques et physiques. Refus de fermer les yeux sur les vices, les duperies perpétrées sous le couvert du savoir... Refus de se taire... Refus de toute INTENTION, arme néfaste de la RAISON...

Au refus global nous opposons la responsabilité entière...

Le passé du être accepté avec la naissance, il ne saurait être sacré. Nous sommes toujours quitte envers lui. (qtd. in Boismenu et al. 145-146)

Artists began to rehabilitate language, at least in the beginning, by widening the range of its use. French Canadian had been torn apart by the Catholic Church, which wanted to preserve it, and by the people, who spoke it freely without concern for written forms. The former had abused it, brandishing it as a political weapon against the Anglophones and protestantism, calling it "gardien de la foi." The latter, who at times during the twentieth century had suffered from alphabétisme or illiteracy, had spoken a
living language, and allowed it to evolve spontaneously, regardless of possible mutations. The concerns of rural farmers had not included the economic viability of their language until they were uprooted and moved to cities. English and Anglophones remained the common enemy.

The Revolution Tranquille provided the opportunity for problems and questions concerning language to be reconsidered within Quebec and Canada. The internal consistency of the two varieties of French, français canadien and jéoual, would be considered along with the question of unilinguisme; the question of the feasibility of bilinguisme would also confound the government. Not surprisingly, language played plural roles in the restructuring of Quebec culture: on an individual basis, through literature, poetry, and theatre, and on a social basis, through economics, politics and business.

During the period from 1940-1959, the press began to acknowledge the viability of a littérature québécoise by publishing literary criticism. This criticism recognized a literature above and beyond a littérature régionale. Evidence for this is found in the remarks of Robert Charbonneau in 1946: “On peut dès maintenant parler d’une littérature autonome” (Lemire 3: XXXIX). Magazines, though generally appealing to a more limited circle of readers (frequently the elite of the Church), printed literary criticism as well. Independants like "Liaison" (1947-1950) "La Nouvelle Relève"
(1941-1948) and "Amerique francaise" (1941-1956), born of magazines like "l'Action nationale," mentioned earlier, tended to include the critique of politics and society.

Pierre Elliot Trudeau and several compatriots founded their own independent magazine called "Cite libre" (1950-1959). Although not specifically at odds with the doctrine of the Catholic Church, the so-called citelibristes began to espouse a new politics for Quebec: one antagonistic to the psychology of the old nationalism and modeled on a capitalist democracy adhering to federalist tenets. "...pour "Cite Libre" [sic], le developpement des fonctions de l'Etat quebecois doit se faire dans le cadre du federalisme. L'intervention etatique proposee par "Cite Libre" est a la fois limitee par les regles de l'economie capitaliste et par le partage constitutionel des competences" (qtd. in Boismenu et al. 150). This political philosophy has been called that of "rattrapage" or of a modernization [my translation]; however, far from obliterating nationalism, it fostered the revolutionary political outlook of a group in favor of a self-sufficient Quebec apart from the rest of Canada. These liberal/nationalist thinkers were first called the separatists, and later independantistes, and were guided by leaders like Marcel Chaput and Rene Levesque. Chaput was famous for his book Pourquoi je suis separatiste (1961) and his participation in the founding of the Rassemblement pour l'indépendance nationale (RIN) with Andre D'Allemagne. Rene
Levesque, who had long been a respected broadcast journalist for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, founded the Mouvement Souveraineté-Association (MSA) in 1967, became president of the newly formed Parti québécois (PQ), in 1968 and was elected as Prime Minister of Quebec in 1976.

If the 1950's had provided an opportunity for the birth of individual artistic expression and social critique, according to Marcel Rioux, it had also created a desire for those like the citelibristes to seek an ideology that would bridge the gap between "idées, valeurs, symboles, attitudes, motivations" and "technologie, économie, urbanisation, industrialisation" (qtd. in Boismenu et al. 131). Rioux describes the interrelationship of the ideologies of "conservation" and "rattrapage" with regard to the Quiet Revolution that followed them:

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Du point de vue des idéologies globales du Québec... nous avons repéré trois idéologies principales: l'idéologie de conservation qui a été dominante pendant un siècle et dont l'essentiel restait debout à la fin de la guerre; l'idéologie de rattrapage qui devait être, celle vers laquelle la plupart des opposants de la décennie 1950 allaient se tourner; la troisième, l'idéologie de développement et de participation, ne devait apparaître et se cristalliser qu'à la fin de la décennie 1950. En termes néoaliens, on pourrait voir dans la première idéologie une période d'affirmation, dans la deuxième la négation de la première et dans la troisième, la négation de la négation, c'est-à-dire une seconde affirmation. (qtd. in Boismenu et al. 133)

Definitions

In order to understand the formation of the unique
linguistic identity of Quebeckers, it is necessary to analyze the Revolution Tranquille -- the rupture -- the reconstruction. The philosophical sense of une seconde affirmation according to Rioux, was synonymous with the political doctrine of the independantistes in that it paralleled the dream of autonomy held by the Canadians who had first settled La Nouvelle France.

The period between the death of Maurice Duplessis in 1959 and the "october crisis" in 1970 has come to define the time frame of the Revolution Tranquille. It would be dangerous, however, to treat the Revolution Tranquille as beginning or ending because of a specific occurrence. It cannot be attributed to a particular event, for events before and after the dates mentioned have added to its making; it cannot be attributed to a particular person, for writers, politicians, teachers, and Quebec society as a whole, have united to grease its workings. The question then arises, was the Revolution Tranquille a movement? And if so, who or what propelled it? Richard Oliver defines a movement as the following:

The persistent articulation by a rhetorically defined collective of people, of a new set of profane symbols, promulgated metaphorically in opposition to a dominant sacred symbol set, that seeks acceptance as a new set of sacred symbols. (40)

He further states that the "'collective of people' are identified by their rhetorical consistency, rather than any sociological or demographic descriptors" (40). The
Revolution Tranquille was indeed a naissant movement. Quebec was about to embrace a new rhetoric, the most immediate of which was the rhetoric of the Liberal party and Jean Lesage. Lesage was elected Prime Minister of Quebec in 1960. "'Thirty days that shook the Province' was the way that 'Le Devoir' described the first month of the Lesage administration. A "Globe and Mail" correspondent called it a 'quiet revolution'" (Thompson 93). This metaphor, "quiet revolution," was heralded as the new trend in Quebec government and came to name the 1960's in Quebec, "Le Quebec des annees soixante naît dans ce qu'il a été convenu d'appeler la 'revolution tranquille'" (qtd. in Boismenu et al. 207)

In chapter II and III, a survey of the predominant metaphors perpetuated in French Canadian society was investigated. The initial set of sacred metaphors represented the people as a "race élue," with a divine mission dating back to the 17th century and perhaps as far back as Charlemagne. Their sole purpose after the confederation was "la survivance." The English Canadians denigrated the peoples' language as being "folklorique" or "patois." Evidence for the feeling of separation and isolation of French Canadians from the rest of society in Canada is provided by their preferred use of the collective emphatic nous autres as opposed to the standard Parisian French use of the disjunctive pronoun nous.
While Maurice Duplessis and the conservative party, the Union Nationale, were in power, there was a strong atmosphere of complicity between government and the Church. Perpetuation of stuffy nationalist metaphors was suffocating Quebec, "Within the government of Quebec, the slogan 'Notre maître le passé' had usually had more credence than forward thinking. 'You notice that all cars have a rear-view mirror,' the acerbly [sic] witty Maurice Duplessis once commented" (Thompson 3). With the Lesage victory, winds of change were blowing, the new government was called "'l'équipe de tonnerre' --the terrific team" and its moto was "c'est le temps que ça change" (Thompson 85).

The program of this new "équipe de tonnerre" would have wide-ranging effects on every sector of life in Quebec. Religion experienced the most pronounced effects.

Non seulement la pratique religieuse baisse mais les paroisses, presbytères et couvents se vident; l'ex-prêtre, l'ex-religieux ou religieuse, jadis phénomène aussi rare qu'honteux, font maintenant partie de la société québécoise. Les paroisses urbaines des villes, autrefois prospères, se voient forcées de vendre et de démolir leur imposante église qui ne parvient plus à occuper le faible peloton des derniers fidèles. (Boismenu et al. 210-211)

Unions and social groups, previously dominated by the Catholic Church, chose to emancipate themselves from its yoke. In 1960, the Confederation des travailleurs catholiques du Canada (CTCC) became the Confederation des syndicats nationaux (CSN). The Union catholique des femmes rurales became the Association des femmes pour l'éducation et
l'action sociale (AFEAS).

Education, the former deficiencies of which had been brought to light by Les Insolences du Frere Untel, would undergo intense scrutiny, and thereafter change: "'Les Insolences...' deviennent rapidement le symbole meme de la revolution tranquille" (Boismenu et al. 212). General reform throughout Quebec society during these years was unparalleled and was a welcome turning point.

A Second Wave: The Eruption of Physical Violence and Linguistic Protest

Immediate steps were taken to assess the actual conditions and needs of society; for the first time in Quebec history, the government seriously attempted to consider the best interests of its people's future, a future no longer directed by the past. The investigative committees questioned and criticized. Not surprisingly, language and education were two of the most important issues. The following chronology (specifically revolving around language) outlines some of the measures which were taken by the government and other groups:

1961
Sanction de la loi creant le ministere des Affaires culturelles, l'Office de la langue francaise et le departement du Canada francais d'outre-frontieres.

Creation de la Commission royale d'enquete (Parent) sur l'enseignement.
Formation du Mouvement laïque de langue française favorable à la création d’un secteur d’enseignement non confessionel.

À Montréal, fondation de l’Association des universités partiellement ou entièrement de langue française (AUPELF).

Férentation scolaire, obligatoire jusqu’à l’âge de 16 ans et gratuite jusqu’à la fin du secondaire.

Jean Lesage inaugure la Délégation du Québec à Paris.

À Montréal création du Conseil supérieur du livre.

1963

Creation de la Commission royale d’enquête sur le bilinguisme et le biculturalisme (Laurendeau-Dunton).

La Commission Bouchard, sur le commerce du livre, dépose son rapport.

La Commission Parent, dépose son rapport.

Début de la télévision scolaire au Québec.

1964

Creation du Ministere de l’Education.

Formation de la Guilde internationale des écrivains.

Creation chez Fides, de la collection "écrivains canadiens d’aujourd’hui."

Le ministere des Affaires culturelles lance les six premiers volumes de la collection "Art, Vie, et Science au Canada français."

La revue "Parti pris" publie un numéro spécial "Pour une littérature québécoise."

1965

Le Quebec signe sa première entente internationale portant sur un programme d’échanges et de cooperation en education avec la France.
Les étudiants de l'Ecole des Beaux-Arts demandent la création d'une commission royale d'enquête sur l'enseignement.

1966

Définition de la norme du français au Québec.

1967

"Vive le Québec libre!", du général de Gaulle.

Publication du premier rapport sur le bilinguisme et le biculturalisme.

L'enseignement religieux devient facultatif dans les écoles du Québec.

La Corporation des Instituteurs et Institutrices catholique devient la Corporation des Enseignants du Québec.

Ouvertures des douze premiers CEGEPs (colleges d'enseignement général et professionnel).

Création de la bibliothèque nationale du Québec.

Gaston Miron ouvre à Montréal une librairie spécialisée dans la littérature de l'avant-garde.

Formation du Syndicat des Ecrivains.

Debats sur la censure à la suite de l'escouade de la moralité de la ville de Montréal.

1968

Formation de la Commission Gendron sur la situation du français et des droits linguistiques.

Daniel Johnson annonce la mise en Place de Radio-Québec.


1969

Dépôt à l'Assemblée nationale du "bill 63."

Le mouvement "McGill français" reclame la francisation de l'Université McGill.
As can be seen from the above list, language provided topical discourse for both Anglophones, and Francophones living in Canada. The English owned businesses and the minority of English speakers had a vested interest in retarding reforms that would jeopardize their privileged status; however, the revival of nationalism in the 1960's was tailored, not to Anglophones, but to a fiercely proud majority of Francophones. They viewed language legislation and reform as quintessential elements and building blocks of their society. They began to ask themselves the question, "Who are we?", and "What kind of society do we intend to become?" English Canada began to scratch their heads and ask "What does Quebec want?" The quest for individual identity as well as national identity was imminent. Francophones agreed on one thing, and that was their majority status. Many were determined to see French become the majority language. They rejected the idea of bilingualism, popular with federalists; from 1960 onward, they claimed the right to *Québécois* as their official language: "La revendication de l'unilinguisme français s'affirme ouvertement avec la création du Rassemblement pour l'indépendance nationale (RIN)" (Bouthillier and Meynaud 44). The adherants of monolingualism were organized around a single principle, but they could not yet agree on
the rules. They wanted to prevent further reduction of French Canadian language rights, they wanted to remove their language from risk of annihilation:

...une idée commune prévaut: le système de la dualité linguistique, tel qu’il fonctionne au Québec, provoque nécessairement une dégradation de la langue française et risque...son écrasement finale. L’épanouissement de la langue de la majorité...exigent l’abandon du bilinguisme foncièrement inégal... (45)

Georges-Émile Lapalme, who had written the Liberals’ election platform, insisted that if Quebec could not assert herself through numbers she could succeed by improving her cultural sophistication. As the ministre des Affaires culturelles, he persuaded Lesage to create the Office de la Langue Française (OLF) which would "‘see to the correctedness and enrichment of the spoken and written French language...’", and establish Quebec as "‘the principal centre of French culture in America’" (Thompson 313). The staff of this team printed Mieux Dire and Guide de terminologie. Once again, language could not avoid politicization in the battle for Québécois identity. Following Lapalme’s resignation in 1964, Pierre Laporte undertook a white paper, "defining Quebec’s cultural policy and setting out a plan of action for the future" (319). The "livre blanc" not only determined that French should be made the "langue prioritaire" in Quebec and that the state should promote a politique linguistique, but it also considered how to develop Quebec’s artistic and literary potential. In 1965, a copy was made available to
Lesage's cabinet. The report reached no further than the eyes of the cabinet because Lesage didn't agree with its conclusions:

Jean Lesage reacted strongly against its cry of alarm about the pitiful state of the French language and culture, and its call for much more vigorous state intervention. It was not true, he noted in the margin... that the French language was continuing to lose ground to English... and to speak of the disintegration of the language and culture was mere defeatism, reflecting an inferiority complex. (Thompson 320)

All factions of the Francophone community continued to disagree about how to reform language laws. Lesage's apparent resignation concerning the need to safeguard French as the primary language of work and as the first language of the state apparatus, dissatisfied many Francophones. He did not win the election in 1966 and the Union nationale enjoyed a four year revival in which it succeeded in strengthening the trend toward the equalization between French and English.

Violent political groups within the Francophone community, notably the Front de Liberation du Quebec (FLQ), responded to what they felt was aggression on the part of the English Canadians dating back to the English conquest of Canada; they believed that "une minorite ne peut dicter ses volontes a une majorite" (Vaugeois and Lacoursiere 564). They believed that the only way to get a fair shake from the federal government and the Angophone bosses was to place demands, and if need be, violent ones. They are attributed with having
blown up monuments in Quebec in the early 1960’s. The kidnapping of the l'attaché commercial britannique, James R. Cross and le ministre québécois du Travail, Pierre Laporte in 1970, were the most serious of their deeds. The FLQ were allowed to express their demands over the air waves. The Bourassa government refused the conditions, and martial law was instituted. More than five hundred people were detained without due process from 2 days to 7 months. Many of these people were artists of the radical left. The FLQ eventually released Cross, but the ordeal of the "october crisis" ended with the assassination of Pierre Laporte. These incidents set a controversial tone for the 1970’s reopening the question of making French the official language.

The Psychology of Dispossession and a New Identity

Movements of protest often start as dialogues, and sometimes violence erupts when those who believe in the established ideology can no longer accept its contradictions. Frequently, it is left to artists to expose social paradoxes and to redefine culture. Art, regardless of the medium, communicates, makes statements, and creates controversy. The period of the Revolution Tranquille was a testing ground for the Québécois culture, which had previously bowed to the great works of France. With the 1960’s came the challenge of redefining the French Canadian identity:
A partir de 1960, l'expression "Canada français", éveille de moins en moins le sentiment d'appartenance des citoyens de la province qui ne se designent désormais plus comme Canada français mais comme Québécois. (qtd. in Boismenu et al. 208)

Québécois artists revolted and used their creative powers to expose their own alienation from society and their half-existence as French Canadians. In time, they began to examine their history. They discovered that the individual helplessness cultivated by the Church had left them with no clothes and no weapons. They recognized themselves as colonized people: denigrated and reduced to an inferior status by the colonizer. Their language was a fractured entity. A search for political identity could not be achieved without individuals freeing themselves from the stereotypes of a history dominated by the English, written primarily with prejudice and condescension.

In Gaston Miron’s poem "Notes sur le non-poème et le Poème," he speaks as a Québécois who is handicapped by a collective inferiority complex which he calls "CECI." He identifies it as his language, his broken attempt to express himself:

Le non-poème

* c'est ma langue que je ne sais plus reconnaître
* des marécages de mon esprit brumeux
* à ceux des signes aliénés

(qtd. in Boismenu et al. 374)

He laments over his condition and his creation -- le non-poème -- which cannot be a "poème" per se until it coincides with a renewed state of affairs:
"Je me hurle dans mes harnais. Je sais ce que sais, CECI, ma culture polluée, mon dualisme linguistique, CECI, le non-poème, qui a détruit en moi jusqu'à la racine l'instinct même du mot français. Je sais, comme une bête dans son instinct de conservation, que je suis l'objet d'un processus d'assimilation... Je parle de ce qui me regarde, le langage, ma fonction sociale comme un poète, à partir d'un code commun à un peuple. je dis que la langue est le forgement même de l'existence d'un peuple parce qu'elle refléchit la totalité de sa culture en signe, en signifie, en signification. (375)

In 1965 l'Afficheur hurle [The posterhanger screams], a collection of poetry by Paul Chamberland, appeared in the counterculture review "Parti pris," expressing themes very close to those of Miron. For Chamberland, la nature or erasure, was essential to redefining the "French Canadian writer" that he himself had intended to become:

J'allais devenir un écrivain Canadien-français...Je me purifiais avec rage. Je m'avancais d'un pas royal dans son temple adorer l'Eternel. J'allais être sacré: l'élu, rare, l'évade du bourbier commun; j'allais être d'autant plus grand que mon peuple était petit. J'étais déjà l'élite de demain. (qtd. in Boismenu et al. 382)

His failure to attain authenticity by excelling at the traditional models of perfection -- using correct French and adhering to divine guidance -- led him on a secular quest that excluded le bien écrire and l'éternelle qualité française. His past efforts at artistry had become "un tas de branches mortes," to be burned in a bonfire of joy. To all he had learned, he proposed to desapprendre and return to le pays reel and to "une incoherence, d'un désordre inscrits aux sources mêmes de la vie et de la conscience" (383). Le mal écrire was preferable to le bien.
Ecrire; joual was genuine because it was the expression the most compatible with day to day reality: "Ecrire c'est alors choisir de mal écrire, parce qu'il s'agit de reflechir le mal vivre" (383). The Chamberland of the 1960's was a poet who chose to speak to others both about his individual reality and their collective reality; he saw the Quebecois writer's position as an embryonic one: he saw that, "l'humanité québécoise est encore à naitre..." (381).

The title of l'Afficheur hurle belies the literature of resistance of the Revolution Tranquille because the scream of the writer was the symbol of his/her birth. Without the willingness of artists to explode myths, to begin to write in joual, and to relegate the anachronistic image of French Canadians to the past, the naming of the Quebecois identity would not have been possible. The littérature revoltee, often published in "Les Editions du Parti Pris," (founded by André Major, Gerald Godin, Paul Chamberland, Pierre Maheu, Jean Marc Piotte, André Brochu), heralded a remise en question de l'écriture; art itself was called in to question. The above artists and their works exemplify the most radical literary elements of the 1960's. Their works took the first step in recognizing the state of Quebec culture and identifying the need for the redefinition of the self and thus of the collective identity: "Le premier pole espouse fidèlement la problématique que l'on peut trouver dans la revue "Parti pris: il s'agit de présenter le
The End of the Quiet Revolution?

The 1960's saw the realizations of long awaited cultural changes. The Revolution Tranquille did not solve all the problems facing Francophones, but it did provide the essential period of fermentation for future changes. From 1960-1966, the Liberal government unveiled projects to invest the state with a greater sense of responsibility towards Quebec society including: the Royal Commission on Education, the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, the Gendron Commission on the situation of the French language, and many others. Lesage dragged his feet on the issue of French Canadian as the official language by not releasing the white paper. The people's lack of confidence in his leadership dwindled and he lost the election to the Conservatives. "Bill 63," signed into law in the 1969 by the head of the Conservative government Jean-Jacques Bertrand, set the clock back for those groups who envisioned future plans for Quebec as a monolingual province: "l'Union nationale fait voter part l'Assemblee son bill 63 de triste memoire que consacre en definitive l'"egalite" des deux langues, l'anglais et le francais, et le libre choix de la langue d'enseignment au Quebec" (qtd. in Boismenu et al. 218).
One of the most important political phenomena to emerge in the final years of the Revolution Tranquille was the mobilization of political groups who envisioned Quebec as culturally different enough from the rest of Canada to once again desire political and economic autonomy. As independantistes entered the political arena, there was a cry for the "liberation économique du Quebec." In 1968 the Parti québécois (PQ) was formed when the Ralliement national (RN), the Mouvement Souverainete-Association (MSA) and the Rassemblement pour l'independence Nationale (RIN) reconciled their differences and formed one group. Rene Levesque, a pro-separatist, united many Francophones under the umbrella of "Quebec as a Nation." For those in Quebec, a new dialogue had begun, but was hardly over. Levesque and his supporters foresaw the necessity of laying the groundwork for cultural solidarity in Quebec in order to preserve the Francophone identity.
Effects of Recent Language Bills

Despite the efforts of French Canadians to emancipate themselves from their status as a colonized people, through peaceful as well as violent self assertion during the Quiet Revolution, conflicts of language and culture persisted. Risk of acculturation and assimilation into the dominant Anglo-Saxon culture continued to plague them. Would Quebec remain simply another province under federal control? Would Quebec express its will for self-determination and secede from Canada but still maintain economic ties? Would the imposition of bilingualizing trends on Canada diminish Quebec’s linguistic identity and spell the eventual disappearance of the cultural uniqueness that French Canadians had tried so long to preserve?

Conflicts between policies suggested by the Royal Commission of Bilingualism and Biculturalism (B and B Commission) and Quebec’s political parties grew more fierce in the 1970’s, even after the election of Pierre Elliot Trudeau as Prime Minister of Canada in 1968. As a leader claiming to represent Anglophones, Francophones and other linguistic communities, Trudeau encouraged a Pan-Canadian and
egalitarian linguistic viewpoint which elicited resentment and anti-federalist feelings from the Québécois, who asserted their rights to decentralized control. The Parti québécois formed the main constituency, backing the continued preservation of Québécois heritage and monolingualism. A new nationalism emerged from an enlightened Francophone community which no longer defined its needs in terms of a divine mission but instead in terms of democratic principles, liberty and economic self-determination.

Canada had become a country of diverse ethnic origins. Language questions affected all the provinces. Committees gathered information to resolve conflicts that might lead to more ethnic tension and violence. In 1972 the Commission d’enquête sur la situation de la langue française et sur les droits linguistiques (Gendron Commission) published a report indicating that most of the immigrant population of Quebec felt themselves Québécois before they felt themselves Anglo-Québécois or Franco-Québécois. In the study, these ethnic groups -- British, German, Israeli, Hungarian, Polish, Greek, Italian, among others -- attached singular importance to the availability of bilingual education for their children. Economic and social success as well geographical mobility within Canada dictated their preferences. For many immigrants, languages other than their native language had more to do with communication and utility than with cultural identity: "La langue est un outil de
communication pour les membres des groupes ethniques, non pas un instrument d’adhésion culturelle" (qtd. in Boismenu et al. 522). Interest concerning language rights in general, but specifically minority group rights and Anglo-Québécois language rights, were hotly debated following the abrogation of the rights of immigrant families in the school district of Saint-Leonard in 1968. The school district, because of a large Italian population, had established a system of bilingual primary schools in order to allow these families the choice of primary school instruction for their children either in French or in English. In reaction to this program, Raymond Lemieux and a group of Québécois formed the Mouvement pour l’intégration scolaire (1968). Through the local school board, the new president of the commission, Jacques Deschenes, passed a resolution requiring mandatory enrollment for children of immigrants; it stated, "'Que dans toutes les premières années du cours primaire se trouvant sous la juridiction de la commission scolaire de Saint-Léonard-de-Port-Maurice, à compter de septembre 1968, la langue d’enseignement soit le français'" (qtd. in Bouthillier et Meynaud 727). The decision to limit minority language rights brought an outcry from both the Anglo-Québécois community and the immigrant communities. Both minority groups responded in protest, marching 4000 strong on the capitol of Canada in hope of obtaining empathy from the English-speaking majority of Canadians. The federal
government did not intervene because it was an educational matter and fell under provincial jurisdiction. The Conservative government in Quebec acted upon the issue following the death of provincial Prime Minister Daniel Johnson. Jean-Jacques Bertrand prepared *le bill 85* with a threefold goal: "de corriger la situation à Saint-Leonard, d’assurer les droits des minorités anglophones, de promouvoir l’enseignement du français" (727). The preparation of this bill evoked vehement protests from the Franco-Quebecois community. Three thousand people protested the bill in December of 1968 in front of the Parliament of Quebec. 1969 saw pro-Francophone protests, this time at McGill University, calling for the francisation of McGill. The final blow was dealt when protests broke out in Saint-Leonard between Italians and Franco-Quebecois, and Bertrand acted to stop the tension. *Le bill 63*, nearly identical to *le bill 85*, was signed into law by Bertrand to give recently arrived immigrants the option of sending their children to schools where English would be taught as the first language; a secondary "knowledge" of French was required by law as well. According to Bertrand, the first goal of the bill was to reinforce the primacy of French Canadian in Quebec, "parce qu’elle est la langue nationale des Canadiens français qui forment 81% de la population québécoise, et ensuite, parce qu’elle est la plus vulnérable dans le contexte nord-american" (729). However, to many Franco-Quebecois, this law
gave tacit support to the idea that children who grew up with English as their first language would have an inherent advantage over those who spoke French, and thus the bill was seen as a protection of the traditional privileges of Anglophones. Jerome Choquette, a Liberal deputy from Outremont, feared that Francophones would be encouraged to attend l'école anglophone. His concern was that the Francophone children, especially in the Montreal area, would remain limited to blue collar job opportunities if in the workplace, English continued to dominate:

"Je pense qu'on met la charrue devant les boeufs... On sait que 65% du capital investi dans le domaine industriel, dans le domaine secondaire, est du capital américain. On sait que les Américains ont 50% de tout le capital investi dans le secteur primaire." (qtd. in Bouthillier et Meynaud 732)

The political proportions of the language problem escalated in the early 1970's. In Quebec, support grew for monolingual legislation. As a consequence of continued foreign domination of business, and lack of regulation of the use of English in these enterprises, the Parti québécois was able to gather support for a radical platform which planned to remove Quebec from being subjected to the pressure of Anglicization by the numerically smaller Anglophone community. Freedom from federal control would allow Quebec to concentrate on Québecois interests instead of constantly guarding against the negative impact of Canadian and American interests. Language had a great socio-economic
impact on the régime commun or everyday functioning of Quebec. It affected the ability of the majority of Francophones to achieve equality with Anglophones.

Soon after the debates about bill 63 in Quebec, and as a result of the findings of the B and B Commission, the federal government began to fear repercussions from both immigrant groups and Francophone groups throughout Canada. It adopted an increasingly active policy concerning bilingualism in government which would gradually develop in scope:

In 1970, the Ontario Legislative Assembly unanimously approved a change in its standing Orders, Rule Thirteen, specifying that members may address the speaker in English or French...In May of 1971 the government began the distribution of French-Language official version laws and rules of general interest. (Bill 14)

This unprecedented action was designed to improve services for Francophones in Canada. It formally stated that French and English were the official languages of Canada. In addition, it served to placate nationalists in Quebec province who, during the 1970's, envisioned an economically strong state supporting its heritage, language and culture. Since the instigation of British rule, Canada had had a vested interest in retaining the territory of Quebec and spreading English as the official language of Canada; assimilation had not however occurred. In theory, by providing a minimum of state services to Francophones throughout Canada, Quebec would have less reason to want to separate from Canada. The indépendantiste argument was
historically strong. The *Québécois* were a people with, "un territoire, une langue, une culture, des institutions, une histoire, et surtout un vouloir vivre et un projets collectifs [sic]" (Laurin 120). The argument in favor of monolingualism supported the idea that language was at the base of the *Québécois* heritage.

In Quebec, a current of renewed hope for a culturally and economically strong future occurred when the Parti *Québécois* won the election in 1976. The genesis of a revitalized economic plan for Quebec was outlined in the economic manifesto of the party. It predicted that Quebec had enough economic resources and enough management capabilities to construct a democratic government based on a socialist model rather than on a capitalist one. It would restrict certain sectors of business in Quebec in order to discourage abuses by American multinational corporations that exploited cheap labor and had given French working class people no chance to rise within the power structure. Business within the country would be carried out in French; English would be a second language for the majority of people.

Between 1970 and 1980 large strides were made to strengthen and standardize the use of French in Canada. The first significant bill passed was *le bill 22* in 1974. It was followed in 1977 by *le bill (1) or 101*, also called *la Charte de la langue française*. In 1973, the Gendron Commission report affirmed:
Nous recommandons que le gouvernement du Québec se donne comme objectif de faire du français la langue commune des Québécois, c'est-à-dire une langue que, étant connue de tous, puisse servir d'instrument de communication dans les situations de contact entre les Québécois francophones et non francophones. La seconde recommandation demande 'proclamer dans une loi-cadre le français langue officielle du Québec, ainsi que le français et l'anglais langues nationales du Québec et de maintenir l'anglais comme langue d'enseignement dans les écoles anglo-protestantes et anglo-catholiques, et comme une des deux langues de communication des individus avec l'État' (qtd. in Vaugeois and Lacoursière 565).

In 1974, after animated discussions on the subject, Quebec signed bill 22 into law. This was the initial step towards making French the priority language of Quebec. The Office de la langue française (OLF), formerly the body responsible for setting the standards and establishing norms for French since 1960, was replaced by the Règie de la langue française (1974-1976). Such official regulatory bodies were vested with the power to stabilize socially dominant forms of the language -- to codify a norm for the language -- in order to improve the efficiency of language: "dans les usages officiels, dans la presse écrite et audiovisuelle, dans le système d'enseignement et dans l'administration publique" (qtd. in Bedard and Maurais 257). The implicit or oral functioning of language is regulated mainly by usage, even though it's less subject to official control. It depends on an individual's ability to perceive appropriate registers in a particular social situation. Thus, there are accepted written codes as well as spoken ones. The Franco-Québécois did not want
English to remain the language of institutional usage while French held a secondary and ultimately subservient role proper only in social contexts and in the home. The importance of language in the operation of society is great because it is "un moyen ou un lieu d'expression de soi qui peut être investi de valeurs stratégiques dans l'interaction des rôles et des statuts sociaux" (263). In the business setting in Quebec continuous use of English as the "standard" for communication constituted continued domination of one linguistic system over the other. This perpetuated the myth that the psychology of the colonizer was superior to the colonized. The Anglophone, as well as the fully bilingual Quebecois, maintained an automatic psychological and socio-economic advantage over the monolingual Francophone.

Rene Levesque and the 1980 Referendum of Autonomy

The answer from Quebec province, to those who asked for broader bilingual services, was that those services might be an acceptable answer for the rest of Canada. For Quebec, a historical attitude of "no compromise" was heard. Culture and language were still the most sacred possessions of the majority of people. Quebec, with the Parti quebecois at its helm, responded to the English contingent:
Aux provinces anglophones qui demandent, "What does Quebec want?" les francophones qui demandent maintenant: "une patrie... Le Québécois francophone est attaché à cette nation par toutes les fibres de son être. Il était canadien alors que le Canada se limitait au territoire du Québec ou se situait dans son prolongement... Le gouvernement dont il se sent le plus proche, c'est le gouvernement québécois. (Laurin 120)

The future aim of Quebec, in essence, would be to aspire to the same vision that America had embraced when it broke away from Britain. It was the dream for a nation. After the Parti québécois victory in 1976, René Lévesque gave a speech in New York explaining the similarity of Québec’s dream of sovereignty with the one which America had clung to and fought for in 1776. Québec wanted to vote on a referendum which, if it passed, would also be a declaration of independence. Québec wanted two things: to have political sovereignty, and to have an economic association with Canada. For Lévesque and the PQ, Québec had achieved maturity:

But now, at long last Quebec is a fully developed society. It has over six million people, 82 percent of whom are French by descent, language and cultural heritage. Montreal, our metropolis, is the second largest French city in the world. Our gross national product would make us twenty-third among the nations of the world, and eleventh on a per capita basis. And as for our territory, its store of resources is even more ample than its quite sufficient size. (A Good Neighbor 284)

The first and perhaps the most enduring success of the Parti québécois was the promotion and preservation of Franco-Quebecois as the langue prioritaire in Québec. The péquistes voice gave Franco-Quebecois and Anglo-Québecois alike the
option of voting on a referendum for or against Quebec's being the director of her own future. Law 101 was adopted in August of 1977, and replaced the authority of law 22. Besides affirming the official status of French as the language of work, commerce and teaching, it laid out linguistic rights, including every person's right to speak and to be spoken to in French during their daily work routine. Services were to be provided in French. Every child had the right to public schooling in French from kindergarten through secondary school. Special stipulations existed for the teaching of English to the children of parents whose native language was English, or children who had siblings whose native language was English. For companies with more than fifty employees, a certification process was specified to increase the use of French at all levels.

Whether it was because of perceived necessity by Anglo-Quebecois and other ethnic groups to safeguard the status quo, or whether the Francophone majority did not feel so strong a dissatisfaction with social conditions as the Parti Quebecois supporters, Quebec voted, by a slim majority, to remain a province of Canada. The changes that had begun in Quebec during the Revolution Tranquille, coupled with language reforms, had caused enough positive change within Quebec's social structure to reduce the danger to Quebecois language and culture. Awareness of endangered cultures and languages around the world has grown as a result of Quebec's struggle.
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