Université de Montréal

RESISTANCE AND SYMBIOSIS:

Québec Discourses of Resistance in the Context of Postcolonial Theory

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RÉSUMÉ

Cette thèse étudiera les discours de résistance prédominants dans la construction

des identités québécoise et anglo-québécoise. Elle a comme objectif premier de déterminer

de quelle façon les identités québécoise et anglo-québécoise peuvent s'insérer dans le

champ d'étude postcolonial. Pour ce faire, cette thèse examinera comment l'identité

culturelle en général peut être construite en résistance à une menace d'ordre coloniale.

Richard Terdiman a développé sa théorie du contre-discours selon laquelle tout discours

engendre la production d'un discours de résistance chez l'autre; ces discours de résistance,

ou contre-discours, peuvent servir de fondation à la construction de l'identité. L'approche

de Terdiman est donc foncièrement constructiviste plutôt qu'essentialiste. En employant la

théorie de Terdiman aux théories postcoloniales, nous sommes forcés d'admettre que le

Québec, bien qu'il soit une colonie d'établissement plutôt qu'une colonie d'occupation,

peut également exhiber des instances de contre-discours de type postcoloniale. En effet,

l'identité québécoise semble se construire comme étant quelque chose entre la colonie

d'occupation et la colonie d'établissement. De ce fait, le Québec représente un cas unique

pour la théorie postcoloniale. Les Québécois, se percevant colonisés, ont réussit à

développer une identité culturelle solide et très bien définie. Toutefois la relation entre

l'identité québécoise et l'Autre demeure symbiotique et réciproque. Cette relation est

paradoxale dans la mesure que le discours colonial de l'Autre est représenté à la fois

comme une menace à l'identité québécoise et comme le carburant des discours de résistance qui définissent cette même identité. La résistance discursive québécoise se manifeste dans trois types de processus de construction identitaire: l'indigénisation, l'appropriation et l'institutionnalisation des discours. La force de l'identité québécoise se manifeste dans ces processus. Mais ces mécanismes sont également la source de l'émergence d'une autre identité collective: celle des Anglo-Québécois. Tandis que les Québécois se plaignent d'un manque de reconnaissance de la part du Canada anglais, les Anglo-Québécois se plaignent d'un manque de reconnaissance de la part des Québécois. Les Anglo-Québécois sont alors engagés dans un processus de construction identitaire semblable à celui des Québécois : une construction identitaire fondée largement sur des discours de résistance qui dépendent d'une relation symbiotique avec l'Autre.

MOTS CLÉS

Québec - Postcolonialisme - Identité - Anglo-Québécois - Contre-discours - Résistance - Indigénisation - Appropriation - Institutionnalisation - Néocolonialisme

ABSTRACT

This thesis will demonstrate how identity in Québec is largely constructed by discourses of resistance. Its primary objective is to illustrate how Québec inserts itself in the field of postcolonial studies. To do this, this thesis will first look at how cultural identity in general can be the product of resistance to colonialism. Richard Terdiman's theory of discourse/counter-discourse shows us how counter-discourses can be central components in the construction of identity. Terdiman's views are constructionist rather than essentialist. By applying Terdiman's theories to postcolonial studies, we are forced to accept that the Québécois can also exhibit instances of postcolonial counter-discursive resistance; and this, despite the fact that Québec was originally a settler colony and has never really been a colony of occupation. In fact, Québécois identity seems to be constructed as something between the settler colony and the colony of occupation. As such, the Québécois represent a unique case in postcolonial studies. Seeing themselves as colonized, the Québécois have developed a strong and well defined identity; but this identity is nonetheless involved in a symbiotic relationship with the other. This relationship is somewhat paradoxical in that the colonial discourses of the other are at once seen as a threat to the Québécois and as that which fuels the resistant discourses that strengthen their identity. Québécois discursive resistance is involved in three types of defensive mechanisms: indigenisation, appropriation and institutionalisation. These three

mechanisms contribute to the strength of Québécois identity; but they are also the basis for the construction and emergence of Anglo-Quebecer and Anglo-Québécois identitarian discourses. While the Québécois feel threatened by the colonial discourses and lack of recognition from the other, so does the new Anglophone community of Québec feel threatened by the Québécois. Anglophone Quebecer identity therefore reflects much of the resistance present in Québécois identity. Both communities have constructed their identities in resistance to one another, thereby creating a state of symbiosis.

KEY WORDS

Québec - Postcolonialism - Identity - Anglo-Quebecer - Anglo-Québécois - Counter-Discourse - Resistance - Indigenisation - Appropriation - Neocolonialism

For Magalie,

truly my better half and constant source of inspiration,

and in memory of those who will always be remembered:

Roy F Hicks, Alphé Cyr, René Cyr, Nelly Cyr, and C. Bruce Cushing

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INTRODUCTION

The goal of this thesis will be to develop an approach that might contribute to our understanding of the persistent tensions between the French and English-speaking communities of Canada, and of Québec more specifically. There have already been innumerable works that have tried to achieve the same objectives. This project is intended to add to what has already been said by focussing mainly on how those communities *actually* perceive themselves rather than how they *should* perceive themselves. In the words of Lester B. Pearson, "understanding the nature of conflict leads to peace" (1960). Following Pearson's example, I shall avoid judging or evaluating the validity of resistance or claims to sovereignty to instead look at why such resistance exists. This thesis will thus be a work of *discourse analysis* in the general field of cultural identity. Although cultural identity is intimately associated with politics and socio-economic conditions, I will try to limit my research to how the Québécois and English-speaking Quebecers have constructed their imagined communities, to use Benedict Anderson's term (1991), and their sense of self.

The discourses of identity in Québec have predominantly been discourses of resistance. Identity in Québec has been constructed chiefly in resistance to a significant other. The Francophone population of Québec has defined itself in contrast to what it

considers to be a dominant Anglophone presence. The same, alternately, can be noticed in

the discourses of resistance of the Anglophone population of Québec. As we shall see,

both communities have also defined themselves as victims of colonialism. As such, we are

compelled to look towards the critical field that has most extensively studied the impacts

of colonialism and the various resistant strategies developed to counter them.

Consequently, this thesis will analyse Québec's discourses of resistance in relation to

postcolonial theory. The inclusion of Québec in the postcolonial field is controversial, to

say the least. However, this thesis will contend that Francophone and Anglophone cultural

identities are inescapably linked in Québec, in ever shifting patterns of postcolonial

resistance, indigenisation and appropriation. Studying these patterns can not only

contribute to our understanding of the identity crises in Québec, but of postcoloniality

itself.

There have been many terms designating the French speaking population of

Canada. Before the Conquest, there were essentially only French colonists living here.

After the Conquest the French settlers who stayed were called *Canadiens*. After the Union

Act of 1841, when the Upper (English) and Lower (French) Canadas were united, and

especially when Canada became a country in 1867, the *Canadiens* became French

Canadians or *Canadiens français*. The French Canadian community included the *Franco-

Ontariens, Franco-Manitobains*, and the rest of the French-speaking diaspora in Canada.

But ever since the Quiet Revolution of the 1960's in Québec, a majority of French-

speakers of Canada started progressively referring to themselves as Québécois. This shift

in nomenclature was not necessarily meant as an exclusion of Francophones living outside

Québec; most of French Canadian history took place in Québec and the vast majority of

French Canadians reside in that province. Although Québec nationalism and resistance are

typically perceived as forms of rejection by the French Canadian communities living

outside Québec, the Québécois will often refer to those communities as *les Québécois

hors-Québec* (this, perhaps curiously, does not usually include the *Acadiens* who are

generally recognized as having their own unique culture as well as their own distinct

history and origins). The various shifts in nomenclature of the French Canadian

community is, in itself, an extremely interesting phenomenon from a postcolonial

perspective, and worthy of in-depth study; however in order to facilitate my task, I shall

refer to French Canadians simply as 'Québécois' throughout this thesis. So when I refer to

certain moments in Québécois history, these can include events pre-dating the Quiet

Revolution. Also, I shall refer to English Canadians simply as Canadians. I must

emphasize that using the Canadian/Québécois dichotomy is not intended as a political

statement but is merely a way of making the text more readable. Finally, I shall use the

term 'Anglo-Quebecer' or 'Anglo-Québécois' to designate those Anglophones who have

chosen to stay in Québec to form a new community.

I should also note that this thesis will not deal directly with the issues concerning

the First Nations or Native communities of Québec or Canada. I believe that focussing on

the conflict between the two dominant linguistic groups of Canada will already take much

time and space. I do however concede that there are indeed three distinct national

communities in Canada, and that the Aboriginal peoples question will have to be further addressed in the near future by Canadian and Québécois scholars.

As mentioned earlier, this will be a work of discourse analysis. The discourses I will be most interested in are the discourses of resistance or counter-discourses that construct and defend the community's identity against the threat of assimilation or what has been called cultural genocide. The terms 'community' or 'collective' will be used as synonyms of 'social group,' and 'identity' as that which defines the community and its boundaries, as well as creates a sense of belonging in its members. The discourses of resistance I will examine are found in the literatures of the respective communities. Literature here is used in its broadest sense. Following the current trends in comparative literature, a community's literature can include not only its poetry, prose and plays, but also its music, its films and its essays. Although I will refer to and quote from all six of these literary genres, most of my research will be focussed on non-fictional genres (critical essays, editorials, social commentaries). Discourses of resistance and identity are generally more intensely clustered and most clearly articulated in the essay format. I believe that the essay usually offers a more direct or efficient route to observing identity than other literary genres. In other words, a community's literature, as seen especially in its essays, is one of its most important tools of resistance and one of the more observable facets of its identity.

This thesis will be divided into five chapters. Chapter 1 - Counter-Discourse and the Politics of Identity in the Postcolonial Context - will look at how Québec Studies can

be included within a postcolonial framework. It will further develop the approach to postcolonial theory that can include settler colonies within its theoretical boundaries. The first chapter will establish the theoretical groundwork from which I will analyse both Francophone and Anglophone identities in Québec. Chapters 2 to 5 will examine how the dominant identitarian discourses of resistance are constructed in Québécois culture. Chapter 2 - The Indigenisation of Québécois Identity - will look at how the Québécois have constructed their identity as that of a colony of occupation. Chapter 3 - The Appropriation of Counter-Discursive Resistance in Québec - will examine how the Québécois, seeing themselves as a colony of occupation, have appropriated many of the resistant tactics prevalent in other colonized societies. Chapter 4 - The Institutionalisation of Québécois Counter-Discourses - will demonstrate how the Québécois have created institutions that support their resistant identitarian discourses. Yet, despite the existence of these institutions, the Québécois nonetheless still construct their identity as that of a colonized people. These institutions have nevertheless instigated the emergence of another collective identity, which brings us to the final chapter. Chapter 5 - The Construction of Anglo-Quebecer and Anglo-Québécois Identities - will use the same approach as the previous chapters in understanding the genesis and appropriation of discursive resistance but in the context of Anglophone Quebecer identity. Here I will attempt to demonstrate, in opposition to the standard perspective on the subject, that there are indeed the signs within the English-speaking community of Québec of the emergence of a distinct identity rather than the mere remnants of a dominant Canadian presence.

CHAPTER 1

COUNTER-DISCOURSE AND THE POLITICS OF IDENTITY

IN THE

POSTCOLONIAL CONTEXT

Postcolonial theory is a relatively new area of study. We find its origins mainly in the anti-colonial writings and theories of the 1940's to the 1960's. This era was largely defined by the historical shift from the predominance of European colonies found around the globe to the newly-formed independent nation-states that we know today. European colonialism has had, above all other types of colonialism, the greatest impact on the entire planet and its geopolitical structure. As Ania Loomba pointedly remarks in her work *Colonialism/Postcolonialism*, 84.6 percent of the inhabited world was still under the direct influence of European colonialisms in the 1930's (Loomba 15).

Since then, the former colonies, whether or not they fought revolutionary wars of independence, have been struggling to define themselves and create sovereign identities. This task has been difficult for many reasons. Among these is the question of authenticity: how can a people retrieve its pre-colonial identity after having been displaced or heavily tainted by a colonial presence that has dominated them for centuries? Even if the colonizer's presence has been mostly expelled, its influence is still felt in many (if not all) "postcolonial" societies today. Similarly, language is another problem. Having adopted the colonizer's language and rejected traditional linguistic forms, it is that much more difficult for postcolonial societies to create a proper sense of self and unrealistic to revert to a pre-colonial language that has perhaps been unused or extinct for several generations.

In addition to these problems (and many others), there is the question of neocolonialism. Where the European colonialisms of the nineteenth century are now gone, their impact has arguably paved the road for other so-called super powers. During the cold war, the US and USSR basically divided up the world in a manner much akin to that of their European predecessors. Although the techniques used during the cold war era were different, the influence they generated had essentially resuscitated an old and all too familiar monster. And, especially since the collapse of the Soviet Union almost every culture has had to contend with, in one way or another, the persistence of what has frequently been described as American neocolonialism and global hegemony.

What aroused the interest of seminal scholars in the anti-colonial movement, such as Frantz Fanon, Albert Memmi or Amilcar Cabral, was not only the political and economic impacts of colonialism, but the cultural implications of colonial oppression; how culture can be an important tool of resistance. As Cabral states in one of his speeches,

> The value of culture as an element of resistance to foreign domination lies
> in the fact that culture is the rigorous manifestation on the ideological or
> idealist plane of the physical and historical reality of the society that is
> dominated or to be dominated. (Cabral 54)

The value of literature in anti-colonial struggle is a prevalent theme in Fanon's ground-breaking and influential work *Les Damnés de la terre*:

> C'est la littérature de combat proprement dite, en ce sens qu'elle convoque

tout un peuple à lutter pour l'existence nationale. Littérature de combat

parce qu'elle informe la conscience nationale, lui donne forme et contours

et lui ouvre de nouvelles et illimitées perspectives. (Fanon 179)

Anti-colonial theorists could therefore analyse the effects of colonial experience on the

collective and individual psyches of the colonized and how they would subsequently react,

by studying the colonized's cultural production or lack thereof. Both Fanon and Memmi

(*Portrait du colonisé; précédé de portrait du colonisateur*, 1957) analysed the damage

sustained by the collective and individual psyches of the colonizer as well.

Postcolonial theory began as a way of furthering the research and analyses initiated

in the anti-colonial era. The study of literature, cultural identity and their relation to a

colonial past became increasingly popular. While it was originally a field uniquely

concerned with the former colonies of the Third World, many theorists have felt that the

presence of neocolonialism has broadened the scope and the potential applications of the

theory. In concert with post-structuralist theories of history and discourse, postcolonialism

has become fashionable all around the world. Even the wealthiest of nations have been

able to relate to colonial alienation and have produced instances, albeit moderate, of

postcolonial resistance. Therefore, where the 'post' in postcolonialism used to only signify

'after,' it is now often interpreted as a more dynamic and flexible prefix (Loomba 12). As

Stephen Slemon, a Canadian critic, writes: "The 'post' in postcolonialism is inherently a

responsive term; it names a promise that (neo)colonial violence *genuinely* is being

responded to within at least one field of academic enterprise" (Slemon, "English Side" 275). The debate over the more historical and purist approach to postcolonial theory versus its more critical post-structuralist tenants is still very much alive and active today. This thesis will obviously lean towards the latter approach to postcolonialism and how it can be applied to Québec Studies.

This chapter will first explore the post-structuralist approach to postcolonial theory. This approach relies almost entirely on theories of discourse and how discourse relates to, or influences, the production or construction of identity. In 1985, Richard Terdiman published *Discourse/Counter-Discourse: The Theory and Practise of Symbolic Resistance in Nineteenth-Century France*. In the first part of his work, Terdiman develops his views on how discourses can generate resistance or rather how discourses always contain within them the means of their own subversion. Terdiman's theory of symbolic resistance or counter-discourse allows us to see how postcolonial theory can no longer be limited to the study of former colonies of occupation. This chapter will thus examine Terdiman's theory and expand on it in order to determine how discourses *always* impose themselves and can have a colonising effect on *any* community, regardless of its historical past. I shall explore Terdiman's views on how hegemony is established today through discursive influence and how subsequent discourses of resistance or counter-discursive strategies are generated. The importance of doing this lies in the fact that typical settler colonies like Québec, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa (etc.), which have

contributed greatly to the postcolonial field, have not always been included as major

producers of postcolonial identities or resistance. I will argue that settler colonial identities

and their discourses of resistance (counter-discourses) are best studied in the context of

postcolonial theory. In fact, as we shall see, settler colonies can actually produce some of

the more enlightening forms of discursive resistance.

1.1 Constructionism and the Agency of Discourse in the Politics of Identity

The previously mentioned rift in postcolonial studies between its more purist

tenants versus the post-structural perspective is similar to the rift that exists between

essentialists and constructionists in the politics of identity. Here, I am borrowing

terminology that has been developed mainly in social theory. For the past decade, social

theorists have grouped post-structuralist and other neo-Nietzschean approaches to the

politics of identity into what they have labelled *Constructionism*. Constructionists are

defined as being those theorists who reject the concept of an essence behind culture and

identity. As Craig Calhoun writes in his introductory essay to *Social Theory and the*

Politics of Identity (1996),

> Social constructionism has become extremely widespread, well beyond
>
> sociology. It challenges at once the ideas that identity is given naturally and
>
> the idea that it is produced purely by acts of individual will. At their best,
>
> social constructionist arguments also challenge "essentialist" notions that
>
> individual persons can have singular, integral, altogether harmonious and
>
> unproblematic identities. And by the same token subtle constructionist
>
> arguments challenge accounts of collective identities as based on some
>
> "essence" or set of core features shared by all members of the collectivity
>
> and no others. (Calhoun 13)

The constructionist approach is the approach I will be adopting in this first chapter and

throughout this thesis. While it may be unjust to accuse the more purist postcolonial critics

of being essentialists, it is difficult not to see a certain kind of essentialism in their

exclusion of certain identities in their field of inquiry.

Richard Terdiman and the authors he frequently refers to, fall into Calhoun's

constructionist category. As such, his essay is of direct relevance to the question at hand.

One of the common threads linking the theories of Terdiman and the other authors I shall

refer to shortly is that they all reject the concept of a primordial or essential core to

identity. Constructionists will see essentialism in the study of identity as being very

dangerous in that it can easily lead to the justification of intolerance, oppression and

exclusions. If there is no primordial, essential or stable identity, then identity must be and

will always remain in a constant state of flux. Their view of identity attempts to disengage

us from what they see as the domineering tendencies of modernism and universalism.

Being unable to locate an essential core to identity, all we can perceive then are *discourses*

of identity. The study of these discourses and how they create *the illusion of stability* in

identity will be of primal interest in the next sections.

In his essay, Terdiman relies heavily on the post-structuralist theories of Michel

Foucault. Foucault's *L'ordre du discours* is one of the best known works on the relation

between power and discourse. For Foucault, discourse is omnipresent in all that is social

and consequently in all that is written, spoken, constructed (etc.) by human beings. As

Foucault writes: "discourse is not simply that which expresses struggles or systems of

domination, but that for which, and by which one struggles; it is the power which one is

striving to seize" (Foucault 12). Foucault suggests that discourse is a kind of violence that

we impose on things, it is our way of ordering the world. But this violence does not only

order the material/physical world, but also generates cultural production and identity. In

other words, according to authors like Foucault, Calhoun or Terdiman (or constructionists

in general), we are constantly being pressured to think, express or act in a certain way by

the dominant discourses of our community. A discourse is dominant when it is

successfully reproduced by the majority or at least the most powerful few of a given

community. Discourse is not only present in speech, but also in the cultural institutions of

the community. Therefore, dominant discourses tend to remain dominant because they end

up controlling the institutions that disseminate cultural production. This is the link

between discourse and power according to Foucault; only the most dominant discourses

will have the tools necessary to be heard, read or seen and consequently to influence the

largest group of people.

From a constructionist's point of view, a strong identity will depend on how

dominant certain discourses become within a community. Dominant discourses and

cultural identity are always intrinsically linked together because a sense of identity is often

created around the same establishments that reproduce discourses. Referring to Foucault's

work, Terdiman explains in *Discourse/Counter-Discourse* that:

> Engaged with the realities of power, human communities use words not in
>
> contemplation but in *competition*. Such struggles are never equal ones. The
>
> facts of domination, of control, are inscribed in the signs available for use

by the members of a social formation. The weight of tradition, the promise

held out by reputation, the fear of repression, all contrive to establish what

we call an 'establishment' and an established language. (Terdiman 38)

Here, we begin to see why certain critics like Charles Taylor (in "The Politics of

Recognition" for example) have problems with neo-Nietzschean or post-structuralist

approaches to history, discourse and identity. If the nature of discourses is to compete,

then the concepts of social stability or the resolution of conflicts between social groups

become relatively hard to envisage. If we are always being influenced in one way or

another by the establishment or established language (or what I would call the dominant

discourses) of our community; and if these are produced in competition with the

discourses of others, then we must always be (to varying degrees) in competition with

others. But as Terdiman suggests, it is that very same competition that tends to create

cohesion and a sense of belonging within the community:

> [...] discourses are the complexes of signs and practises which organize
>
> social existence and social reproduction. In their structured, material
>
> persistence, discourses are what give differential substance to membership
>
> in a social group or class or formation, which mediate an internal sense of
>
> belonging, an outward sense of otherness. (Terdiman 54)

Therefore, according to authors like Terdiman or Foucault, where a certain level of

stability can be - albeit only temporarily - achieved and maintained within a single

community, there will always be clashing identitarian discourses *between* different

communities.

In "The Politics of Recognition," Taylor does not reject the above mentioned concepts of dialogically constructed identities (Taylor 32, 34). However, although he definitely suggests that competing discourses are important to identity, Taylor seems to be reluctant to recognize the primordial importance of discourse and its agency on human will or initiative:

> Deriving frequently from Foucault or Derrida, they [neo-Nietzschean
>
> theorists] claim that all judgements of worth are based on standards that
>
> are ultimately imposed by and further entrench structures of power [...]
>
> Then the question is no longer one of respect but of taking sides. But this
>
> is hardly a satisfactory solution. (Taylor 70)

Taylor's reluctance opens him to criticism from the constructionist camp. Constructionists (or Taylor's neo-Nietzscheans) are not necessarily trying to find a solution, but are rather trying to determine what it is that we are forced to work with. Perhaps the reason Taylor discards neo-Nietzschean or constructionist perspectives on the matter is that if we cannot escape the power of dominant discourses, we cannot escape conflict. Nevertheless, even though conflict may be unavoidable, avoiding *certain kinds* of conflict is still quite feasible. Although discourses can generate a violent climate in certain communities, it remains possible, as we will see further on, to resist another's influence through discursive means.

The agency of discourse in social experience has been studied in the works of

many authors that, I believe, cannot be discarded or ignored. In *L'institution imaginaire

de la société*, for instance, Cornelius Castoriadis suggests that:

> Everything that is presented to us in the social-historical world is
>
> inextricably tied to the symbolic. Not that it is limited to this. Real acts
>
> whether individual or collective ones - work, consumption, war, love,
>
> child-bearing - the innumerable material products without which no society
>
> could live even an instant, are not (not always, not directly) symbols. All of
>
> these, however, *would be impossible outside of a symbolic network.*[my
>
> italics] (Cartoriadis 117)

Castoriadis clearly demonstrates how the very fabric of society is structured by discourse

(*le réseau symbolique*). This is why Castoriadis can assert that "[t]he 'real social

relations'[...] are always instituted" (Castoriadis 124). Not unlike Foucault, Castoriadis

believes that the discourses of a society are fused with its institutions and establishments,

and the latter often serve as vehicles of diffusion for the former within the community.

Although discourses are not the be-all and end-all of social experience or language, their

influence is always present. Jacques Derrida goes a step further than Castoriadis when he

writes, in *Writing and Difference*, that the moment when we ceased to look for a centre

or an essential core to meaning and existence, was "the moment when language invaded

the universal problematic, the moment when, in the absence of a centre or origin,

everything became discourse" (Derrida 280). Here, Derrida explains well the emergence

of constructionist theories; and these basically state that there is no way of expressing or

perceiving oneself, not even in thought, outside of a preestablished language; language

being necessarily always a social phenomenon.

American pragmatism, through the works of Richard Rorty in particular, seems to

align itself along the same argumentation. Rorty writes that

> there will be no way to rise above the language, culture, institutions, and
>
> practices one has adopted and view all these as on par with all the others
>
> [...] Or, to put it in Heidegger's way, "language speaks man," languages
>
> change in the course of history, and so human beings cannot escape their
>
> historicity. (Rorty 50)

Once again, this expresses the view that we are dominated by discourse rather than the

other way around. Rorty is careful in choosing the word 'adopted' over 'chosen.' We do

not, according to Rorty, 'choose' our language, institutions or practices because 'we' do

not fully exist outside of them. It is, according to Rorty, the competition between the

various discourses of the community that create the appearance of freedom of choice.

According to American pragmatists, human beings are never 'free agents.' Here, I feel

that Rorty should be read in conjunction with Castoriadis who suggests that:

> It is one thing to say that we cannot choose a language with absolute
>
> freedom, and that every language encroaches on what 'is to be said'. It is
>
> something else again to believe that we are fatally subject to language and
>
> that we can never say anything except what language makes us say. We
>
> can never get outside of language, but our mobility within language is

limitless and allows us to question everything, including language itself and

our relation to it. (Castoriadis 126)

In other words, there is of course a certain measure of freedom, but we must realize that

this freedom is limited to the options presented to us within the framework of the

languages and discourses we have adopted.

I believe that Marc Angenot also aligns himself with the thoughts of the above

mentioned authors when he defines *social* discourse as

tout ce qui se dit et s'écrit dans un état de société; tout ce qui s'imprime,

tout ce qui se parle publiquement ou se représente aujourd'hui dans les

médias électroniques et, [au-delà de ce *tout* empirique] les systèmes

génériques, les répertoires topiques, les règles d'enchaînement d'énoncés

qui, dans une société donnée, organisent le *dicible* - le narrable et

l'opinable - et assurent la division du travail discursif. (Angenot 368).

According to Angenot's description, it is difficult to imagine ourselves expressing ideas of

any kind outside the influence - if not control - of social discourses. Given the inherent

social nature of discourses, I shall not differentiate discourse from *social* discourse as does

Angenot.

It is important to notice the extent to which so many theorists believe that it is

conceivably impossible to escape the grasp of, and, the power connected to discourse.

Being part of a community, we will necessarily express the views and perspectives

associated to that community. An author is always, in one way or another, reproducing

the discourses (whether they are dominant or not) of his or her community. An awareness

of this has considerable implications as to *how* divergent identitarian discourses from

different communities will compete and potentially oppress or repress one another. Thus,

understanding that the agency of discourse is an important premise to the constructionist

approach to theories of identity, we can examine the implications such an approach will

have in colonial discourse and postcolonial theories.

1.2 Colonial Discourse and Censorship

We have seen how the constructionist approach supports the idea that discourse is present in every part of social existence, and especially in questions of identity. But if identity is constructed dialogically or in contrast to others, this implies that the other's discourses are always present, to varying degrees, in the cultural space of the community that is trying to define itself. Thus discourses do not only function within a single group but bleed out, potentially assimilating or at least alienating surrounding communities. As Terdiman writes:

> In our period, dominant forms of discourse have achieved unprecedented
>
> degrees of penetration and an astonishingly sophisticated capacity to
>
> enforce their control of the forms of social communication and social
>
> practise which provide the configurations of modern existence. (Terdiman
>
> 39)

This phenomenon is significant as to how many communities, even post-independence and sovereign communities, *still* perceive their cultural identity as being under constant discursive, cultural assault from others. The competition among the discourses of different communities usually draws far more attention and is perceived as representing a far greater threat than the competition among the discourses within a single community. When perceived as originating from another social group, such discourses are labelled as being *colonial* discourse.

Edward Said was one of the first authors to have applied Foucault's theories of discourse to the colonial context. In *Orientalism* (1978), Said uses the term *colonial discourse* to designate how the West has used discursive strategies to order, represent and subsequently dominate the cultures of the Orient. This imposition of Western interpretations of the Orient has locked the Orient in Western stereotypes, and has consequently eroded the Orient's capacity of self-representation. Thus Orientalism is more a reflection of the West and its prejudices than an accurate depiction of Oriental cultures. By controlling the representations of the Orient, the West has essentially attempted to control and subdue the Orient's identity. As such, Orientalism has been an extension of Western discourses to Oriental cultures (Said 6). Colonial discourse designates the discourses that invade (often subtly) and control the other's cultural space while subjugating its identity. In other words, we can study and detect the power of discourses within every society, but we can only study colonial discourses in the context of what Samuel P. Huntington calls "cultural fault lines" (Huntington, 1997). The study of how colonialism manifests itself today through discourse rather than through military or political occupation, has become the primary focus of at least one approach to postcolonial studies.

But Said adds another interesting element to his description of colonial discourse. He writes that "culture, of course, is to be found operating within civil society (as opposed to political society), where the influence of ideas, of institutions, and of other persons works not through domination but what Gramsci calls consent" (Said 7). By invoking

Gramsci's concept of hegemony, Said suggests that colonial discourses are not always easy or obvious to detect in the colonized's culture. Hegemony is defined in Gramsci's writings as ruling by coercion *and* consent rather than ruling by coercion only (Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks* 1971). Hegemony is central to our understanding of modern colonialism. Traditional colonialisms would overtly take over or even create the cultural institutions of the colonized in order to disseminate the colonizer's culture and ensure its dominance. Colonialism today, by means of hegemony, is far more potent in that it covertly subdues the colonized social group by making it *desire* and support the colonizer's dominance of their cultural space. This makes the submission and subsequent assimilation of the colonized a far easier task.

The connection of hegemony to colonial discourse is extremely well encapsulated in Terdiman's work. Terdiman writes:

> The concept [of the hegemonic] attempts to take account of the
> increasingly intricate means by which the social force of dominant interest
> in society could be extended over larger and more diverse populations than
> could ever have been coerced by the older mechanisms of the traditional
> oppressive state. (Terdiman 53)

In this passage, the author describes the shift from European colonialisms to contemporary colonialism. The discourses of a society will more often today be extended to other communities, not because they are already dominant, but in order to create dominance. Stephen Slemon has appropriately remarked that it is easy to find major

American consumer products, like Coca-Cola or Levis jeans for instance, all over the

Third World and even see starving children in Bombay wearing Harvard or UCLA T-

shirts (Slemon, "English Side" 275). The manifestation of colonial discourse in India, does

not mean that India is no longer an independent community; but it does suggest that

Indian culture, like so many others, is under the pressure of *Americanization*. Modern

colonialism, or what many authors have called neocolonialism, as opposed to older forms

of colonialism, is a battle fought to a large extent on the discursive level. This battle can

instigate older forms of military and political domination, as we have recently seen with

the war in Afghanistan. The difference however is that warfare today is more a result of

discursive colonialism than ever before.

It is important to note that the struggle for domination among the competing

discourses of different communities is not as conscious or willful in the *new global order*

as it was with the old European colonialisms. The transformation of the world into a

global village implies that the discourses of any society or nation could more easily

penetrate the cultural space of others. The predominance of the United States in global

telecommunication networks inevitably marks American culture as being guilty of

producing hegemonic neocolonial discourses even though it may not be America's intent

to colonize. If we accept that we live in a *new* global order, we should be compelled to

distance ourselves from the more temporal or historical interpretation of postcoloniality;

as Ania Loomba suggests:

The new global order does not depend upon direct rule. However, it does

allow the economic, cultural and (to varying degrees) political penetration

of some countries by others. This makes it debatable whether once-

colonized countries can be seen as properly 'postcolonial' [in the

temporal/historical sense of 'post']. (Loomba 7)

In other words, former colonies *still* suffer from colonial alienation; only they suffer more

from indirect colonial discursive rule (cultural hegemony). And the realities of colonial

discourses and hegemony are not necessarily limited to Third World societies. The new

global order has added an extra degree of agency to discourses. The discourses of the

powerful, whether it is their intent or not, will have a colonizing influence on the cultural

identities of the less powerful (who, it should also be noted, are not always limited to the

Third World).

Colonial discourses have the effect of creating a hegemony of the powerful over

the production of discourse - and subsequently the identity - of the powerless. Terdiman

summarises what we have seen up until now when he writes:

In Gramsci's notion of hegemony the whole question of rule or domination

of one group over another is radically transformed. The multilayered,

palimpsest discourses which we saw critics in diverse traditions striving to

conceptualize begin to be comprehensible as the traces of the competitive

process of domination and contestation by which society is constituted in

the modern period. (Terdiman 43)

Colonial discourses will become dominant when they are being reproduced by the majority

of the colonized community or when the colonized community is unwilling or unable to

resist them. When this happens, the colonizer's dominating discursive strategies create a

state of hegemony in which the colonized and its production of discourses are

subordinated to the other's colonial presence.

When discourses compete, the dominant discourse uses a variety of social

mechanisms to marginalise and repress what subsequently become discourses of alterity.

These mechanisms have been largely defined as forms of censorship. Foucault's work is

once again of relevance here. Terdiman reads three modes of ordering of discourse in

Foucault's *L'ordre du discours*. The first being "the coercive taboo upon the forbidden,

the irrational, the mad, and the false," the second is "the internalization by individuals of

such outward authority in the form of 'naturalized' habits and practices," and the third, the

"material control over access to or production of discourse through barriers to

appropriation, circulation and so on" (Terdiman 56). Here, we see how established

discourses will maintain their dominance over alternative discursive strategies. These three

modes of ordering ensure the production of a certain type of knowledge, thus generating

power and control over divergent views. If one does not subscribe to the dominant point

of view, he or she will be excluded or ignored by the community.

Foucault's three modes of ordering are very close to what has been described as

the three types of censorship. The first mode is similar to *proscriptive censorship*; Pierre

Hébert has defined proscriptive censorship as "la censure répressive, qui s'attaque à

l'hétérodoxe, et ses moyens sont l'exclusion, la mutilation, la condamnation" (Hébert 12).

Foucault's second mode is partly what Hébert calls *autocensure* or *self-censorship*. Self-

censorship is almost impossible to study or detect because, as Foucault points out, it is

internalized; it happens before the subject exteriorizes his or her thoughts. What Hébert

defines as *prescriptive censorship* appears to be a combination of Foucault's second and

third modes of ordering. As Hébert writes, "cette censure [prescriptive] vise à faire croître

l'orthodoxie dans un sol fertilisé par les intitutions, les relais de dissémination de

l'imprimé" (Hébert 12). Prescriptive censorship is a mix of Foucault's second and third

modes of ordering in that prescriptive censorship influences the subject (through

established language and institutions) to think a certain way. While self-censorship is a

conscious internalization, prescriptive censorship happens at a subconscious level. Thus

prescriptive censorship is considered the most efficient form of social control because the

censored individual is made completely unaware of the forces at play. If the individual *is*

aware, and chooses to conform to the dominant discourse, he or she is then practising

self-censorship. Proscriptive censorship is consequently seen as the weakest form of

censorship because it only happens when the two others have failed. Being forced to

reveal proscriptively what is not permissible to say or write, one is still disseminating

alternative and subversive discourses.

The connection between censorship, hegemony and colonial discourse will be of

central interest to this study. According to Angenot, "l'hégémonie fonctionne comme

censure et autocensure: elle dit qui peut parler, de quoi et comment" (Angenot 382). But

the inherent problem with prescriptive censorship in the colonial or postcolonial context is

that, like self-censorship, it is rather difficult to study or observe. Although we can

acknowledge its presence and that its influence is considerable and undeniable, we cannot

easily distinguish it from common social occurrence. Basically, prescriptive censorship is

in play *only* when the colonized social group is assimilated to the dominant colonial

discourse; whereby a state of cultural hegemony has already been established by that

discourse. Therefore, when a minority group is under the influence of prescriptive

censorship, it has already become a part of the invading community. However, even after

the establishment of the other's hegemony, internal differences will always remain present

- communities are never entirely homogenous, and thus complete assimilation never really

happens. Prescriptive censorship is successful when the diverse factions of that community

still work *together* towards what is consented as a 'common' or 'greater' good.

As such, prescriptive censorship is in effect practically synonymous with those

discourses that construct the community's identity. It defines the community in its

restrictions, its limits and its boundaries. I feel that Stanley Fish paraphrases Foucault

when he writes that "without restriction, without an inbuilt sense of what it would be

meaningless to say or wrong to say, there could be no assertion and no reason for

asserting it" (Fish 103). Fish also argues along the same lines as Castoriadis : "there is no

such thing as free (nonideologically constrained) speech, no such thing as a public forum

purged of ideological pressures or exclusions. That's my thesis, and waiting at the end

(really at the beginning) of it is, as my respondents have said, politics" (Fish 116). In other

words, without prescriptive censorship and subsequent self-censorship, there would be

absolutely no meaning to the concepts of discourse, community, self or other. As Foucault

would suggest, there is no way of escaping the play of power and politics.

This being said, I do not contend that it is entirely futile to study prescriptive

censorship. I am merely stating that it is so intrinsically linked to identitarian discourse in

general that it cannot be studied independently from it. As Charles Grivel comments:

> La «vraie censure» est donc le code idéologique considéré comme
>
> *language de contrainte du sujet et exprimant ce sujet* (le sujet a pour
>
> language les propres termes de sa répression) [...] La censure [...] est alors
>
> obtenue: c'est une *nature*, elle existe là où on ne l'aperçoit pas. (Grivel
>
> 102)

But all of this goes almost without saying. By definition, prescriptive censorship only

works when we are not aware of it. Becoming aware of it implies that it is no longer

prescriptive, that we have adopted a divergent discourse or perspective to be capable of

noticing it, and what was prescriptive will now have to function proscriptively.

Censorship, then, is most apparent only in its proscriptive form, when colonial

discourses attempt to institute a state of hegemony by repressing the discourses of the

colonized. Where older forms of colonialism would rule by coercion by forcibly imposing

institutions and an established language on the colonized, modern colonial discourses rule

more by consent in that they try to extend the hegemony of a community's dominant

discourses (which are acquired through prescriptive censorship) to the other's cultural

space (that which differentiates it from the colonizer). In other words, what is perceived as

a non oppressive act of cultural exchange by one group can easily be seen, at the very

same time, as the proscriptive censorship of colonial hegemonic discourses by the group

that sees itself as subjugated or at least threatened by foreign influence. As Terdiman

suggests: "the discourses that ensure cultural stability never conceive their actions as

'repression.' From within such discourses it is hard to think that there is anything to

repress" (Terdiman 14). It is very difficult for a community today to see itself as a

colonizer. In the older more coercive forms of colonialism, colonizers would actually see

themselves censor proscriptively, but for the good of the colonized (we see this in the

Victorian concept of 'the White man's burden'). To reiterate, proscriptive censorship can

manifest itself as colonial discourse, and Hébert's prescriptive censorship is indissociable

with discourses of identity. What is most important is that discourses can always be seen

as *both* prescriptive *and* proscriptive. Discourses will be prescriptive to the community

whose identity is shaped by it - and consequently, as Terdiman would suggest,

imperceptible as an act of repression - and proscriptive to the community that feels its

cultural space invaded or threatened by it. Only in the latter case will the invaded

community label such a discourse as colonial discourse.

The most common effect of the proscriptive censorship of colonial discourse on a

community, and this is especially relevant today, is *silence*. When a community's

discourses are dominated by others, the members of that community find it impossible to express themselves in their own distinct way. Sue Curry Jansen explains this phenomenon:

> The powerful require knowledge to preserve, defend, and extend their
>
> advantage. For them, knowledge is power. The way the powerful say
>
> things are is the way they are, or the way they usually become because the
>
> *powerful control the power to name* [my italics] (Jansen 6)

In this context, it is easy to see how a dominating discourse will alienate and marginalise those with divergent views. Terdiman also adds that censorship, as the stabilising mechanism of social discourse, and however innocent in its intentions, "functions to exclude the heterogeneous *from the domain of utterance* [my italics]" (Terdiman 14). At first glance, it would certainly appear that the only option left to the marginalised, being excluded from the domain of utterance, is silence.

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak is undoubtedly the most famous critic to have written on the theme of silence. As Spivak puts it: "For the 'true' subaltern group, whose identity is its difference, there is no unrepresentable subaltern subject that can know and speak itself" (Spivak 27). For Spivak, the subaltern group is condemned to silence because there can be no language, no discourse available to them that is entirely free from the dominant's influence or prescriptive censorship. However, in spite of the threat of alienation and subsequent silence, the subaltern can voice opposition if it is aware of its subordination. What I mean here is that if one is aware of oppression or of the repressive mechanisms of the other's colonial discourses, one has already *a fortiori* articulated a

divergent and subversive discourse to that of the dominant. Even though the problem of

influence still remains, as does the threat of silence, I believe that being conscious of

difference automatically shields you from the prescriptive control of a dominant discourse.

Silence is nonetheless still a real threat because even if your identity is constructed in

difference to the other, you are still (and even more so) vulnerable to proscriptive

censorship. Hébert's proscriptive censorship can impose silence in that it can deny the

subaltern access to the proper podium needed to be heard. So the question, as I have

always felt, is not so much 'can the subaltern speak?' but 'can the subaltern be heard?.'

1.3 Counter-Discursive Resistance and the Construction of Identity

The play between prescriptive and proscriptive censorship can, I believe,

contribute to our understanding of identity. I have argued that the discourses of a

community will function prescriptively by influencing its members to think, act and

especially define themselves in a certain way. This also creates a sense of membership,

inclusion and identity. When discourses are met with resistance, they begin to function as

proscriptive censorship, or they are at least perceived as such by the resisting group.

Therefore, when we encounter acts described as proscriptive censorship, we begin to see

the cultural fault lines that distinguish one community from the next. Colonial discourses

act as proscriptive censorship, in that they exclude or repress difference, thereby

attempting to silence the colonized, forcing upon them discourses that are not their own. I

believe that the connection between proscriptive censorship and colonial discourse and

subsequent counter-discursive resistance makes the whole theme of censorship

considerably relevant to postcolonial studies.

Proscriptive censorship and cultural fault lines are of course not always limited to

the relations between national communities. Cultural fault lines can as easily appear within

a single community as well. This can explain the inclusion of feminist studies in the field of

postcolonialism, as well as the inclusion of the cultural resistance of immigrant minorities.

These fault lines appear when the cohesion of the community, that which tries to make it

homogenous (i.e. that which functions as prescriptive censorship), starts to break down.

Dominant discourses are obviously never truly successful in establishing a state of perfect homogeneity over others because the threat of hegemony and assimilation will always create resistant discursive strategies. Assimilation happens when the discourses of a community become subordinated to the colonizing discourses of the other; the (formerly dominant) discourses of identity of the colonized community will consequently become discourses of resistance, or what Terdiman has called *counter-discourses*. Counter-discourses are the discourses produced by the community that resists the hegemony of dominating discourses, and their production is the only recourse the colonized culture has to escape the threat of silence. Counter-discourses are therefore what make it impossible for any discourse, however dominant it may be within a community or several communities, to fully ensure homogeneity:

> In modern societies the loci of individual discourses are simply too diffuse [...], the social interests in play are simply too divergent, for any policy of discursive policing ever fully to expunge the subversive. The space for the counter-discourses [...] is opened in that structural limitation of social control. (Terdiman 56)

As I see it, in the colonial or neocolonial context, counter-discourses are seen in moments of postcolonial resistance. Postcolonial theory is a field increasingly preoccupied with the production of counter-discursive trends, regardless of the historical context of the communities that produce them.

Counter-discourses function much in the same way as dominant discourses. Their purpose is to become dominant in turn. The only real difference between the two is that dominant discourses control a larger portion of a community's means of cultural production. As Terdiman writes, "counter discourses are always interlocked with the domination they contest" (Terdiman 16), or:

> So no dominant discourse is ever fully protected from contestation. Of course the counter-discourses which exploit such vulnerability implicitly evoke a principle of order just as that which sustains the discourses they seek to subvert. (Terdiman 56)

Terdiman reflects the views that were developed in the anti-colonial era, as we can see in Memmi's work: "à quelque chose malheur est bon: l'existence du colonialiste est trop liée à celle du colonisé, jamais il ne pourra dépasser cette dialectique" (Memmi 78). This emphasizes the point that it is impossible to determine *objectively* - especially in the neocolonial era - who is colonizing and who is being colonized. Both are involved with power, either to acquire it or to keep it, as Terdiman points out: "in instant connection with the power of such an apparatus [of dominant/hegemonic discourse], discourses of resistance ceaselessly interrupt what would otherwise be the seamless serenity of the dominant" (Terdiman 39). For Terdiman, (dominant) discourses and counter-discourses are joined together in a cycle in which one is constantly replacing the other; hence his title *Discourse/Counter-Discourse*. As we have seen with the problem of proscriptive and prescriptive censorship, discourses of identity can also at once appear to be both dominant/colonial discourses and resistant/postcolonial counter-discourses. It will always

depend on the point of view of the observer. Therefore, certain discourses can end up being dominant and even colonial by the out-group while still functioning as counter-discourses from the point of view of the in-group. Given this situation, if counter-discourses can end up becoming dominant, we are forced to ask ourselves important questions: can a community ever see its identity as being shaped by anything other than counter-discourses (discourses of resistance)? And what happens if it does?

Terdiman sees culture as a field of struggle (Terdiman 25). In this, he echoes authors like Frederic Douglass who believed that without struggle there is no progress. As Terdiman writes:

> [...] language intrinsically carries the traces of struggle, and in which such traces can be read. The contradictions of the social world configure themselves as oriented networks of semantic and discursive clashes and campaigns for predominance in such a way that the inscription of conflict is no longer conceived as a contamination of the linguistic but as its properly defining function. (Terdiman 37)

Thus the struggle and resistance against a common threat will create a certain cohesion within a community thereby constructing a sense of identity. This line of thinking is reminiscent of Northrop Frye's *garrison mentality*. Frye argues that

> communities that provide all that their members have in way of distinctively human values, and that are compelled to feel a great respect for the law and order that holds them together, yet confronted with a huge unthinking,

menacing and formidable setting - such communities are bound to develop

what we may provisionally call a *garrison mentality*. (Frye 225)

I would suggest that such a garrison mentality is in fact also what gives the community its

sense of self. Although Frye was working on the construction of Canadian identity in the

hostile physical setting of North America, I believe that the garrison mentality theory can

have broader applications. In the new world order, which is defined partly as an

information age or as a global village, the threat of intrusive discursive influence has

replaced the 'formidable physical setting' of which Frye writes. Every community will

develop its identity around a certain garrison mentality. Cultural identity is largely defined

by the dialogically constructed boundaries which allow us to distinguish who we are from

who we are not. But these boundaries, or the walls of the garrison, are constructed as

counter-discourses, resisting the potentially colonial tendencies that we see in the others'

discourses. Thus, discourses of identity are always at some point functioning as counter-

discourses.

Fanon certainly makes a similar point when he writes that "la mobilisation des

masses, quand elle se réalise à l'occasion de la guerre de libération, introduit dans chaque

conscience la notion de cause commune, de destin national, d'histoire collective" (Fanon

70). In his preface to *Les damnés de la terre*, Sartre goes so far as to suggest that "la vraie

culture c'est la Révolution; cela veut dire qu'elle se forge à chaud" (Sartre 12). So

establishing the connection between cultural identity and resistance is in no way a new

venture. Where there is identity, there is always some resistance.

Although Albert Camus was not writing on colonial discourses and certainly not on postcolonial theory, his *L'homme révolté* can also offer insight into what has been said on the relation between resistance and identity. As Camus puts it:

> La solidarité des hommes se fonde sur le mouvement de révolte et celui-ci,
>
> à son tour, ne trouve de justification que dans cette complicité [...] De
>
> même cette solidarité, hors du sacrée, ne prend vie qu'au niveau de la
>
> révolte. Le vraie drame de la pensée révolté est alors anoncé. Pour être,
>
> l'homme doit se révolter [...]. (Camus 37)

This allows Camus to write the now classic line: "[la révolte] est un lieu commun qui fonde sur tous les hommes la première valeur. Je me révolte, donc nous sommes" (Camus 38). Transposing Camus's view on individual identity to cultural identity, we can see how the community's existence relies on a certain degree of resistance. It is important for a community to at least see itself as resistant to some threat in order to construct strong discourses of identity. Strong discourses of identity, functioning as prescriptive censorship, will be capable of maintaining cohesion and stability within the community. The more efficient or dominant the discourses of identity are, the more homogenous the community will seem.

But, as I have already suggested, true homogeneity is illusory and is short lived at best. Societies are always changing. Even though certain discourses may be dominant within a community at a certain point in time, counter-discourses are always present to varying degrees. No two people will reproduce the discourses of identity in exactly the

same way, and therefore a community's identity is constantly fluctuating. If certain identitarian discourses are very successful, temporarily creating the semblance of homogeneity, the *raison d'être* of the community can become compromised. As Claude Lévi-Strauss argues, "the more a civilization becomes homogenized, the more internal lines of separation become apparent" (Lévi-Strauss 20). The more a community and its discourses becomes dominant, the less its members will feel threatened. Ernest Renan suggests that the nation is built when its citizens consent to remember their similarities (that which unites them) and forget their differences (that which drives them apart) (Renan *Qu'est-ce qu'une nation*, 1992). When the discourses of the nation or community are dominant in its own cultural space and especially when they successfully dominate the cultural space of others, the *raison-d'être* of its foundational resistance becomes more abstract. As its core identity becomes weaker, its cohesion will consequently begin to waver. The point I am trying to make is that without a common unifying threat, the discourses of resistance that are necessary to identity will gradually become meaningless. Therefore the community's identity will risk becoming meaningless as well. In which case the discourses that would unite by making the members of the community forget their differences will lose their dominance to the counter-discourses that promote difference; thereby fragmenting the larger community into smaller groups. And the discourses of these smaller groups will follow the same process as those of the former community, that is, prescribing within the group and proscribing without.

The case of the United States illustrates this point quite well. American culture was born as an act of anti-colonial resistance. Its discourses of identity were basically counter-discourses to those of the British empire. It has been argued that the concept of *Manifest Destiny*, although formulated as a way of preserving American culture, was in actuality merely a way of justifying American dominance over others. During the Cold War, American identity was defined by its resistance to a communist global conspiracy. The majority of Americans rarely saw their own culture as oppressive or repressive, but rather as being constantly threatened by others. And in the 1990's, after the fall of the Soviet Union (America's significant other in the Cold War), American culture was desperately seeking a common threat that could maintain its cohesion and justify its cultural dominance all over the world. But the American community in the 1990's was becoming increasingly heterogeneous. The rise of special interest groups, individuality and the critique of American hegemony were far more important than during the Cold War era. In response to this, American culture increased its production of works in which the major theme was alien invasion or, less frequently, the conquering of new frontiers (namely Mars). The threat of alien invasion and subsequent human resistance would justify America's role as world-leader. In these works, the world would acquiesce to American dominance in order to better counter the threat of a new significant other that would threaten us all. And the American community would once again become united, cohesive, and would consequently reach a higher level of homogeneity and stability. Also, such a threat would help secure its global hegemony. This is clearly demonstrated in the 1996

blockbuster film *Independence Day*, when the character playing the president of the

United States makes his pre-battle speech:

> We can't be consumed by our petty differences anymore. We will be united
>
> in our common interest. Perhaps it is fate that today is the Fourth of July,
>
> and you will once again be fighting for our freedom. Not from tyranny,
>
> oppression or persecution, but from annihilation. We are fighting for our
>
> right to live, to exist. And should we win the day, the Fourth of July will no
>
> longer be known as an American holiday but as the day when the world
>
> declared in one voice, we will not go quietly into the night, we will not
>
> vanish without a fight, we are going to live on, we are going to survive.
>
> Today we celebrate our Independence Day. (*Independence Day*, 1996)

A community has to be pretty desperate to not only produce such a film but also to flock

in vast numbers to see it. All of this has changed, of course, since the events of September

the eleventh 2001. In the months following, America was more united than ever (as

President Bush would ceaselessly tell us), American flags - symbol of the community -

were flying high everywhere in the United States *and* abroad. Almost every nation in the

"free" world was happy to step in line behind American interests and even lend a hand. In

a sense, the Al-Qaeda terrorists had given Americans precisely what they most needed: a

reason to unite, to justify their hegemony, a way of escaping decadence. The recent crisis

with Iraq might also serve as an example of my point. President Bush has painted the

attack on Iraq as an act of resistance against future acts of terrorism. The rest of the

world, seemingly, was not so ready to agree with the American point of view. Now, more

than ever perhaps, the other communities of the world see American policy as oppressive

and American cultural identity as hegemonic. By much of the world, an American attack

on Iraq was seen as an act of aggression, of repression and, as it is already frequently

being said, of colonialism. What should be equally disconcerting to American policy-

makers today is that a significant portion of their own population is also beginning to see

the war on Iraq as an act of colonialism.

Therefore it is important for a community to see itself as resistant if it is to have a

strong identity. Since we cannot detect the prescriptive pressures of censorship, we can

only see the limits of the community when we detect proscriptive censorship. A

community is in trouble when it sees *itself* as committing acts of proscriptive censorship;

this is always indicative of a significant inner crisis. The shift from stability to crisis, like

the shift between Terdiman's discourse and counter-discourse, almost seems to be

cyclical. Once a community is too strong, it begins to fall apart. Resistance to colonial

discourses is an important driving force behind cultural identity. It is, I believe, essential to

the construction and sustenance of identities. The need to be resistant to a threat in order

to have a strong identity is a rather paradoxical phenomenon (even if it is quite real). The

paradox is that the more a community is threatened, the more united and strong it will

become - but if it becomes too united, homogenous and strong it will no longer be

threatened and will consequently lose its *raison-d'être*. When there is no apparent threat

of some colonizing discourse, and no subsequent resistance, the community develops an

identity crisis and begins to collapse. Smaller communities are then formed in resistance to others and the whole cycle of resistance is renewed. While I believe that a community must resist in order to have a strong identity, this however does not imply that a community will always become stronger when threatened; as seen in the previous sections, a community must be aware of the threat in order to counter it. The insidious nature of neocolonial discourses and hegemony specifically targets such an awareness.

To reiterate, I have argued that discourses of identity can often be interpreted as either counter-discourses or colonial discourses simultaneously, depending on the context and the point of view of the observer. What one community perceives as counter-discourse, another can perceive as colonial discourse. The only real constant - other than change, of course - is, by definition, resistance. Using this analytic framework, without resistance there is no cohesion, and without cohesion there is, again by definition, no community. So the problem becomes one of perception. When you can perceive the discourses of another community infiltrating your own, these discourses are not functioning prescriptively but proscriptively. They are therefore perceived as colonial discourses. You then perceive your own discourses of identity (which function prescriptively) as discourses of resistance or counter-discourses. Rifts appear in the community when it has either (a) unsuccessfully resisted colonial discourses, thereby allowing them to function prescriptively - in which case those for whom the discourses are acting prescriptively will have adopted the same perspective as the colonizer; or (b) so

successfully eliminated the threat that the members of the community begin to perceive

their own discourses as functioning proscriptively, that is, colonizing (proscriptively)

without and censoring (prescriptively) within. In the former case, the community is

typically split into what its members will define as collaborationist groups and resistant

groups, and this seems common in colonized societies; and in the latter case, more

common in colonizer societies, we typically see a relentlessly resistant establishment and

an increasing number of anti-establishment subgroups.

Up to this point, I have attempted to push the premisses of constructionist

theories, especially those of Richard Terdiman, to their logical conclusion within the scope

of the politics of identity. For such theorists, identity is a construct which is built upon

foundations of resistance rather than upon some sort of essential core. Postcolonial critics

like Stephen Slemon or Helen Tiffin have already applied Terdiman's counter-discourse

theory to postcolonial studies, but they have not really explored its full implications. If

nothing else, Terdiman's counter-discourse theory should help put an end to the

essentialist/historical approach to postcolonial theory. Admittedly, the problem with the

constructionist approach is that every culture or community can be in some way studied in

postcolonial terms. But this is in fact precisely my point: postcolonial theory should not

limit itself to post-independence states, it should be the study of certain specific

movements or discursive trends which can be apparent in any community. Therefore, the

development of a community, society or culture will always be punctuated by instances in

which it will define itself as resistant to the colonial discourses of others, in which it

develops counter-discourses to resist the hegemony or at least the threat of the other. I

believe that postcolonial theory has often been, and should especially continue being, a

field of academic enterprise that attempts to analyse such instances. Thus no society is

ever truly *post*colonial, but any society can exhibit instances of postcolonial resistance.

1.4 Settler Colonial Resistance and Québec

We have seen how discourses and identity are linked together. Also, we have seen how resistance is necessary to identity. To study colonialism or neocolonialism today is therefore a study of discursive interaction rather than a study of political, economic or military occupation (even though none of these elements are ever entirely mutually exclusive). Colonial discourses, as we have seen with Terdiman, can threaten *any* community; it can subjugate a community to a foreign power without the need of military force or political/economic sanctions.

For the past twenty years, postcolonialists have been studying the impacts of colonialism on the cultures and communities of the Third World (mainly), of communities that have been or are still colonies of occupation. It is undoubtedly true that colonies of occupation have suffered most from, and have resisted the most against, colonial alienation, as Stephen Slemon writes: "the most important forms of resistance to any form of social power will be produced from within the communities that are most immediately and visibly subordinated by that power structure" (Slemon 106). Despite this, as I have attempted to demonstrate in this chapter, colonialism should no longer be seen only as a historical event, but as an ongoing process that can be felt (admittedly to varying degrees) everywhere in the world. Canada or Australia are but two national communities that are constantly struggling with their colonial past and present that are still nonetheless

excluded from the typical canon of postcolonial theory. This exclusion is clearly suggested in the works of authors such as Ania Loomba:

> White settlers were historically the agents of colonial rule, and their own subsequent development - cultural as well as economic - does not simply align them with other colonized peoples. No matter what their differences with the mother country, white populations here were not subjugated to the genocide, economic exploitation, cultural decimation and political exclusion felt by indigenous populations or other colonies. (Loomba 9)

Here, Loomba exhibits the approach to postcolonialism that I have been trying to avoid. It suggests a stability where there really is none. The mantle of the powerful and the powerless, of the colonizer and the colonized, is constantly shifting. No one would suggest that Canadians (for instance) have suffered the same amount of hardships as people from colonies of occupation, but it can be suggested that the alienation prevalent in Canadian culture does indeed stem from similar sources. The question of authenticity is often invoked in this problem, as Diana Brydon writes: "the authentic colony is implicitly defined as poor, nonwhite and resistant, and the inauthentic as rich, white, and complicit" (Brydon 11). But the question of authenticity takes us back to the old problem of essentialism. It is not because Canada has never been a colony of occupation that Canadians cannot or could never relate to postcolonial resistance.

It is obvious that settler colonies offer a different perspective on postcolonial issues. Settler colonies have a colonial past in common with one another that does have an

impact on their colonial present. When European settlers established themselves around the world, they were doing so in the name of European expansionism. At the time these settlements were mere extensions of European cultures, dominating and almost eradicating the indigenous cultures of the colonies. However since then, and especially since the anti-colonial era, settler colonies have felt increasingly different from, and even ostracised by their European origins. As Alan Lawson writes, "settler post-imperial cultures are suspended between 'mother' and 'other,' simultaneously colonized and colonizing." (Lawson 25). Although clearly not a part of the Third World, the *in-betweenness* of settler colonies also prevents them from truly belonging to the First World (i.e. the culturally dominant). For this reason, many scholars see settler colonies as belonging to a Second World (which is not to be confused with the Second World of the Cold War era). Lawson suggests that postcolonial theorists should

> recognize the Second World of the settler as a place caught between two
> First Worlds, two origins of authority: the originating world of Europe, the
> imperium, as source of the Second World's principal cultural authority; and
> that other First World, that of the First Nations, whose authority the
> settlers not only effaced and replaced but also desired. (Lawson 29)

But the inclusion of settler colonies in postcolonial studies is still met with considerable hostility. And this is always due to the fact that a dominant trend in postcolonialism is still to fixate on a more historical approach rather than on a historiographical approach to colonialism. A historiographical approach implies that the study of an *actual* history and

colonial past is not as useful or interesting as how communities (especially settler

colonies) *construct* their histories and identities in relation to a colonial past.

Basically, the inclusion of settler colonies in postcolonial theory implies a rhizomic

approach rather than a monolithic approach. Many theorists have applied Deleuze and

Guattari's critiques of psychoanalysis to postcolonialism (Deleuze and Guatari, 1972). In

this, we can suggest that colonial discourse and power do not stem from a single tap root;

power and discourse are more dynamic and are not necessarily anchored in

centre/periphery models. What is considered to be the centre and periphery is constantly

shifting and always dependent on the point of view of the observer. According to

Ashcroft, Tiffin and Griffiths, a monolithic approach has been "less than successful in

combatting older colonialist legacies and neocolonialism whose practises inherit the

rhizomic operations of imperialism itself"(Ashcroft *et al.* 1998: 207). As such,

postcolonial theory can be extended to those cultures that are not and were never colonies

of occupation. Brydon writes that "to argue that postcolonialism must always be

'subversive' and limited to adopting a 'position of resistance to the metropolis' (Bennett

198, 199) is, however, to oversimplify potentially more complex relations" (Brydon 10).

What makes settler colonies interesting from a postcolonial perspective is that their

resistance is constructed almost entirely on a discursive level. Canadians, Australians or

New Zealanders are, after all, amongst the wealthiest people of the world, but on a

cultural level they all feel oppressed by the overbearing influence of either their European

mother-land (England) or by the bombardment of neocolonial discourses from the United

States (Americanisation). Furthermore, there is a certain purity to the discursive resistance

of settler colonies in that settler colonial alienation is limited largely to the

discursive/cultural plane while Third World alienation is felt first and foremost in a

physical/material context. I believe that Alan Lawson explains it best when he writes: "In

explicitly or implicitly enacting this exclusion [of settler colonial resistance] they [certain

theorists] have bracketed off from examination the very place were the process of colonial

power as negotiation, as transaction of power, are most visible" (Lawson 22). Due to its

ambivalence, to its intimate connection with the colonizer, settler colonial alienation is

often limited to culture - to the production of discourses - and is never really extended to

the same depths and realities as in colonies of occupation. Nevertheless, settler colonial

alienation allows us to see how colonial discourses can have devastating effects on a

community even outside the scope of wars, genocide or occupation; Québécois critics

often refer to themselves as victims of *cultural* genocide.

The passages previously quoted from Brydon's text suggest that settler colonies

are not resistant or subversive. I would however reformulate this by stating that settler

colonies are not *as* resistant or subversive. As Alan Lawson proposes, "the settler subject

is signed, then, in a language of authority *and* resistance [my italics]" (Lawson 26). The

difference between settler colonial resistance and the resistance from colonies of

occupation is that settler colonial resistance is usually textual rather than *real* in any Third

World sense of the term. Because settler colonies feel threatened mainly on a discursive/cultural level, their resistance will likewise be cultural and discursive. Although you may not see a revolutionary war taking place in a settler colony (with the obvious exception of the United States), you will nonetheless notice a considerable production of counter-discourses. In Canada, for instance, Dennis Lee has written texts that can, I believe, only be properly interpreted in the framework of postcolonial theory. In "Cadence, Country, Silence: Writing in Colonial Space" Lee writes that

> to speak unreflectingly in a colony, then, is to use words that speak only
>
> alien space. To reflect is to fall silent, discovering that your authentic space
>
> does not have words. And to reflect further is to recognize that you and
>
> your people do not in fact have a privileged authentic space just waiting for
>
> words; you are, among other things, the people who have made an alien
>
> inauthenticity their own. You are left chafing at the inarticulacy of a native
>
> space which may not exist. So you shut up. (Lee 529)

Lee's text is typical of settler colonial resistance in that it creates an awareness of colonial alienation without actually proposing any aggressive gestures or strategies to respond to what he perceives as the colonial establishment. Colonial alienation in Canada, although real, is not quite real enough to initiate extreme measures of resistance. The level of resistance produced by a community will be determined by the threat that is perceived by that community. Settler colonies, like Canada, have produced what can only be described as passive resistance in their literature. The literature from colonies of occupation have indeed produced far more active or combative/revolutionary resistance.

The problem with postcolonial critics like Loomba is that they are willing to concede that colonialism still manifests itself today, albeit in a far more moderate and subtle fashion, or that settler colonies have not really escaped the yoke of colonial oppression, but they still refuse to acknowledge the possibility that settler colonies are important producers of postcolonial counter-discourses. If colonialism is still present today in the shape of neocolonialism, then there is no reason why its impact must be limited to former colonies of occupation. In fact, settler colonies are especially interesting in the neocolonial context because their politics of identity have almost always been limited to the discursive/cultural plane in which neocolonialism manifests itself. Settler colonies have always resisted discursive intrusions and subordination. But being part of the colonial establishment, settler colonies were always and only indirectly victims of colonial oppression. Therefore, in the neocolonial context of the new world order, it would be important to look at those societies that have struggled the most and the longest against neocolonial discourse-based hegemony; and those societies are settler colonies.

The real question at hand for this thesis is to determine how Québec situates itself in the postcolonial context. Is Québec a settler colony or a colony of occupation? Has Québec been producing postcolonial counter-discursive resistance? To the first question, one could say that Québec is a settler colony because the Québécois are of French descent, and that they originally came to North America as settlers. They also, like the British, had been involved with the brutal subjugation of the Native peoples in the area.

On the other hand, the Québécois were also conquered by the British in 1759, and in this sense they became a colony of occupation. So really, Québec has a unique position in the postcolonial framework. In this, the Québécois are in a similar situation to that of the United States: neither fit into static or fixed categories very well. Although the US is by definition a former settler colony, we never study American culture in this respect. Even if there is still maybe an underlying settler mentality in American culture, Americans are never seen as being colonized but rather as the modern day colonizer. How Americans perceive themselves is, however, an entirely different question; as we have briefly seen, Americans can see themselves as a resistant community, and when they do not do so, they begin to wonder what it means to be American. Therefore, just as American culture can be seen a being somewhere between the colonizer and the settler colony, it is part of my thesis to suggest that Québécois identity is constructed as being somewhere between the colony of occupation and the settler colony. And in this respect, the Québécois are quite dissimilar to Canadians.

The next chapters will focus on how Québécois identity is constructed in resistance to Canada, and how English-speakers in Québec construct their identity in resistance to the Québécois. But the point I have been trying to make here is that postcolonial theory should always focus on understanding rather than legitimizing. My thesis is about how these communities produce postcolonial resistance, not about the merits of doing so. I am far more interested in finding out why and how these communities do so. Regardless of

whether or not it is justified, I will analyse how Québécois and Anglo-Quebecer cultures

have constructed their identities in resistance to what they perceive as colonial discourses.

This, I hope, will lead us to us to a greater understanding of the conflicts that surround

these communities.

CHAPTER 2

THE INDIGENISATION OF

QUÉBÉCOIS IDENTITY

Canadians and Québécois have shared a long history of tense relations. The Québécois have always feared that Canadians, and more broadly the Anglophone hegemony in North America, would eventually engulf and destroy their distinct identity. Thus the theme of *survivance* is generally seen as a dominant theme in much of Québec literature and cultural production. In this, we can certainly see how Québécois identity is shaped by its resistance to others. Its discourses of identity have more often than not been counter-discourses to the alienation bred from a colonial relationship with the other.

This is what should allow us to examine Québec writing and Québécois identity within the scope of postcolonial studies. But as mentioned in the previous chapter, it is not easy nor is it as obvious as it may seem to place Québécois identity within the postcolonial field. At first glance, Québec is a settler colony, like Canada; but upon further analysis we quickly see that the Québécois often tend to define themselves as a colony of occupation. In this, the Québécois serve as an excellent example of how static categories or definitions are misleading and inefficient, especially in postcolonial studies.

It is this ambiguousness of Québécois identity that is the foundation of what Charles Taylor would call the misrecognition of Québec by Canada. Taylor believes that misrecognition generates tensions between communities (Taylor 1994). Taylor would

reject most of the theories developed in the first chapter because they suggest that the politics of identity is an ongoing struggle for power rather than a sincere quest for true recognition. He is careful to warn us that *his* concept of recognition is not a form of condescension.

> A favourable judgement on demand is nonsense, unless some such theories are valid. Moreover, the giving of such a judgement on demand is an act of breathtaking condescension. No one can really mean it as a genuine act of respect. It is more in the nature of a pretend act of respect given on the insistence of its supposed beneficiary. Objectively, such an act involves contempt of the latter's intelligence. (Taylor, "Politics" 70)

Taylor feels that a neo-Nietzschean perspective, such as the one developed in my first chapter, is unable to see recognition as anything other than condescension. This however is not entirely true, depending on your definition of recognition. Like Taylor, I feel that recognition is not something to be granted from above; but to truly avoid condescension, it must be *taken* by the misrecognized community as an act of catharsis or collective affirmation. This way, the community creates a situation in which recognition by the other becomes inevitable. Although this type of recognition is often achieved through revolutions, it can also be achieved through more subtle and less violent forms of counter-discursive practises. Québec, as we shall see further in this chapter, serves as a good example of this.

The approach I have developed in my first chapter suggests that to have a strong, viable identity a collective will tend to see itself as being somehow threatened by the potentially colonial discursive influence of an other. This, however, does not imply that every collective will necessarily have to resist or develop counter-discourses in exactly the same way. A community seeking to be recognized is still capable of seeing that it not the only one that is threatened. A community seeking to be recognized can still, although with greater difficulty, accept that *its* discourses can also be the source of an other's resistance. I would argue that peaceful co-existence happens when there is a balance between a community's own resistance and acceptance of the other's resistance. The danger, as seen in the previous chapter, is that if such a balance is not achieved the community will either become decadent (if it no longer has a unifying threat against which it needs to resist) or it will become a colonizer in turn (if it is unwilling to recognize that it too can have a dominating influence on others). A perfect balance between the two seems practically utopian, and has rarely occurred in our history, but it is when we are closest to it that we see true moments of, or at least the hope of, peace. As I see it, the politics of recognition is not only a question of collective affirmation, but also one of recognizing oneself as a potential colonizer. In other words, a community always functions, from a more detached point of view, as both colonizer and colonized.

So one of the problems with Canada, for instance, is that Canadians have been unable to recognize themselves as a threat to Québécois identity. Canadians are willing to see their identity as being somewhat colonized by American cultural hegemony or, once,

by an overbearing British heritage. As such they function as a typical settler colony. But

when it comes to the Québec question, they tend to see just another settler colony

struggling for cultural survival. The problem lies partly in Canada's production of counter-

discourses that encourage the creation of a new and distinct Canadian identity, allowing

Canadians to break away from the British North American identity that preceded it. There

is much evidence suggesting that the Québécois, on the other hand, have not forgotten

Canada's past and are unwilling to do so. Most Québécois today will not refer to

Canadians as *les Canadiens Anglais* but simply as *les Anglais*. To the Québécois,

Canadians are therefore still the same colonizers who conquered their land 243 years ago.

Instead of understanding that they are perceived, still today, as colonizers,

Canadians are more likely to try and find ways of invalidating the Québécois's claims.

Canadian theorist Linda Hutcheon writes that

> Quebec may align itself politically with colonies such as Algeria, Tunisia
>
> and Haiti, but there is a major political and historical difference: the pre-
>
> colonial history of the French in Quebec was an imperialistic one.
>
> (Hutcheon 132)

By writing this, Hutcheon is basically stating that the Québécois should not define

themselves as anything other than a settler colony, like Canada, and it implies that

Québécois counter-discourses, those that strive for sovereignty, are not as legitimate as

they would be in colonies of occupation. By doing this, authors such as Hutcheon are,

from the Québécois perspective at least, relieving themselves of the burden of being

colonizers. In a sense, they are recognizing the Québécois as being *equally* colonized and

colonizer as they are. To many Canadians, the only legitimate claim to being a colony of

occupation in Canada comes from the peoples of the First Nations. In Jocelyne Doray and

Julian Samuel's coedited work *The Raft of Medusa*, Mawan Hassan states that "we

cannot, nevertheless, situate the Québécois within the same trajectories as the Palestinians

or Vietnamese or South Africans or Algerians, because the Québécois are not an

autochtonous people. The question of colonialism has much to do with indigenous status"

(Hassan, qtd in Doray 91). But the Québécois clearly do not see things this way and tend

to hold Canada accountable for much of their alienation. What Canadians should be doing

is recognizing the fact that they are also colonizers from the Québécois's point of view.

Canadians need to understand that, unlike themselves, the Québécois will often portray

themselves as a colony of occupation (this chapter will examine how they succeed in doing

this). The question becomes not one of determining *if* the Québécois have the right to

such claims but one of accepting *why* the Québécois claim them.

Even though I feel that Québec could hold a rather unique position in the

postcolonial field, it is by no means the only wealthy western society that sees itself as a

colony of occupation. We see a similar phenomenon with the Scots, the Irish, the

Basques, or the Corsicans. Cases such as these also destabilise the static definitions we

often have in postcolonial theory. Profound alienation is a phenomenon that is not at all

limited to the typical former colonies of the Third World. Irvine Welsh's novel

Trainspotting (1993) is a beautiful example of cultural alienation among young Scots:

Fucking failures in country ay failures. It's nae good blamin it on the

English fir colonizing us. Ah don't hate the English. They're just wankers.

We are colonized by wankers. We can't pick a decent, vibrant, healthy

culture to be colonized by. No. We're ruled by effete arsewholes. What

does that make us? The lowest of the low, the skum of the earth. The most

wretched, servile, miserable, pathetic trash that was ever shat intea

creation. Ah don't hate the English. They just git oan wi the shite thuv

goat. Ah hate the Scots. (Welsh 78)

In his protagonist's rant, Welsh describes the Scots as a truly and thoroughly colonized

people by invoking Fanon's famous title *The Wretched of the Earth (Les damnés de la

terre)*. On a passing note, in using a heavily accented English, Welsh's work reminds us of

the Québécois's usage of *joual* as a means of cultural resistance. Also, the self hatred felt

by Welsh's protagonist is also quite common throughout the literatures of colonized

peoples, including the Québécois. It is in this respect that the Québécois can more easily

be compared to the above mentioned cultures than to settler colonies like Canada or

Australia.

In an interview published in Marcos Ancelovici and Francis Dupui-Déri's

L'Archipel identitaire, Charles Taylor distinguishes alienation from oppression:

Il y a des cas où il n'y a pas d'oppression bien qu'il n'y ait pas non plus de

reconnaissance, comme c'est aujourd'hui le cas au Canada puisque certains

Canadiens anglais ne reconnaissent toujours pas le caractère distinct du

Canada français. Bien que l'ancienne situation de domination n'existe plus,

le manque de reconnaissance continue à favoriser un sentiment d'aliénation

sans pour autant qu'il se traduise par une oppression. (Ancelovici, 33)

Of course, there are degrees of oppression that are felt on much deeper levels than could

ever be felt in Québec. The Québécois will likely never starve or be arbitrarily imprisoned

as a consequence of their colonial reality - not today in any event. And in this sense, it

would be a mistake to compare the Québécois to what others might refer to as 'real'

colonies of occupation. This is also why I insist on situating Québécois culture as being

somewhere *between* the settler colony and the colony of occupation. But can we really

distinguish alienation from oppression, or should we not instead make a distinction

between cultural and physical oppression? Alienation or cultural oppression may not be as

destructive as physical or violent oppression in any 'real' sense, but it too can have

incredibly devastating effects on a community's identity.

In contemporary Québec, those who feel that they are still colonized, feel it

uniquely on a discursive/cultural level. They, in their every day lives, are not physically

oppressed by Canadian or Anglophone hegemony; but they still see their identity as

something that is at risk of disappearing through assimilation and other neocolonial

practises. Québécois authors today will still portray themselves as victims of *discursive*

violence. Taylor would link this discursive violence to Canada's lack of recognition

towards Québec. In this, I am in full agreement with Taylor's views. My insistence on

what he calls neo-Nietzschean theories is more an attempt to strengthen his approach than

being an objection to it; I see it as a *mise-en-garde*, as the only real way of not falling back

on old essentialisms and the only way to truly avoid condescension.

The discursive violence felt by the Québécois has led them to produce strong

identitarian counter-discourses. Just as their alienation is felt mostly on a discursive level,

their resistance to that alienation is also mostly discursive. The relation between discourse-

based colonialism and counter-discursive resistance is central to our understanding of the

neocolonial tensions prevalent in the new world order. This is why I feel that studying

Québécois counter-discourses within the scope of postcolonial theory is so important; I

feel that Québécois resistance epitomises a style of resistance that is already becoming

wide-spread throughout the world.

In *Les damnés de la terre*, Fanon theorizes that in the anti-colonial era the

colonized culture had to go through three stages in order to properly counter the

colonizer's presence:

> Dans une première phase, l'intellectuel colonisé prouve qu'il a assimilé la
>
> culture de l'occupant [...] Dans un deuxième temps le colonisé est ébranlé
>
> et décide de se souvenir [...] Enfin dans une troisième période, dite de
>
> combat, le colonisé après avoir tenté de se perdre dans le peuple, de se
>
> perdre avec le peuple, va au contraire secouer le peuple. (Fanon 166)

In this passage, Fanon is referring to colonialism on a cultural level. Therefore in the

neocolonial context, in which discursive violence is felt on an identitarian/cultural level

and is responded to with counter-discourses, Fanon's writings are still relevant. In

Québec, we can see the same three above mentioned stages, and I would add a fourth one

in which the colonized manages to institutionalise or create viable establishments based on

the efforts produced in the third stage. I will not develop Fanon's first stage in this thesis

because of its omnipresence in the three others; it is a necessary precursor to them. The

first stage is basically definable as cultural alienation, and without it the three other stages

are unnecessary. What will interest me in the next chapters, is how the Québécois have

constructed their identity in a large measure by producing counter-discourses which

correspond roughly to the three latter stages.

In this chapter, I shall examine the counter-discourses that fall into a category that

I have called discourses of indigenisation. This first mode of counter-discourse, similar to

Fanon's *souvenir*, is comprised of discourses that construct a sense of belonging and

emphasize the feeling of invasion by the other. These counter-discourses construct a

history that establishes the Québécois as an indigenous people on a land that was

subsequently conquered by the other.

As I have already mentioned, many of the problems that exist between much of

Canada and Québec stem from the fact that the Québécois do not generally define

themselves, as do many Canadians, as just another settler colony. By failing to recognize

this most important point Canada has failed to understand, as I see it, one of the most

fundamental sources of the tensions between the two communities. Even Charles Taylor, a

noted and respected figure in Québec studies, also makes this fundamental mistake:

> Quebec was a colony. But are we Quebeckers "colonized" now? This
>
> would be the shortest way to demonstrate that we must become a
>
> sovereign state. Well, we obviously are not in some straightforward sense,
>
> not as the Thirteen Colonies were in 1776; nor as, say, India was in 1947.
>
> (Taylor, *Reconciling* 44)

Taylor is without a doubt a Québec theorist with a great understanding of Québécois (or

what Taylor refers to as 'Quebecker') identity. However, in this passage, he repeats the

point of view so typical to Canadians when looking at the Québécois. He does not seem to

take into account the ways in which the Québécois in general have, and still do,

constructed their identity by emphasizing similarities with other colonies of occupation. It

is because they still construct their identity in this fashion that sovereignty, or at least

sovereignty-association, is still such an important theme in Québécois culture today. In

Taylor's defence, I agree that Québec is not a colony in 'some straightforward sense', but

I would put more emphasis than Taylor on how the Québécois, in 'some sense,' see

themselves as a colony.

It is therefore important for Canadians, if they truly want to understand the nature

of the Canada/Québec conflict, to recognize that the Québécois have constructed their

identity by grounding it in the traumatic events of their past. It is these events, and

especially the emphasis placed on them, that have allowed the Québécois to see

themselves as a colony of occupation rather than as a settler colony. In order to understand this aspect of the construction of Québécois identity, we must look at how the Québécois have constructed their history. I am not alone in seeing history as a field of study heavily influenced by discourse or discursive trends. This, nevertheless, does not make the study of history any less interesting, it merely implies that history is less a revelation of a *true* past than it is a revelation of a present identity. Historians Guy Rocher, John Meisel and Arthur Silver point out in *Si je me souviens bien/As I Recall* that:

> Pour tous les peuples et pour toute collectivité, comme pour toute
> personne, le passé est à la fois mémoire et miroir. L'histoire, qu'elle soit la
> mémoire d'une personne ou celle d'un peuple, est la source première de
> l'identité, individuelle ou collective; elle fournit la matière de la
> construction identitaire. Et cette construction est en même temps en
> constante reconstruction. (Meisel et al. 11)

In this chapter, I shall look upon the works of Québécois historians as works that have helped construct Québécois identity, giving it meaning by anchoring it in the past. Rocher, Meisel and Silver also remark that

> Les événements et les interprétations rapportés ici n'ont donc pas à être
> connus de tous ni à faire partie de la mémoire immédiate de chacun pour
> être signifiants. Ils le sont parce qu'ils esquissent le contour d'une identité
> collective. (Meisel et al. 5)

In other words, even if an individual is not fully aware of the constructed history of his or her community, he or she - being a willing or even unwilling member of that community - will still be affected by it. Some events in history are highlighted by a community as foundational moments that helped define their identity. Here we have an example of how a community can *create* an essence in order to create a sense of self. As mentioned in the previous chapter, although I believe that such essences are constructed rather than 'real', they can still have a real impact on the collective and (consequently) individual psyche.

This chapter will analyse the works of many Québécois historians in order to examine how Québécois identity has been, and is still, constructed as something indigenous to this land, rather than being something that settled on it. This particular discursive construction, or what I call indigenisation, is a form of counter-discourse in that it defines the Québécois as a people that have always been threatened by the colonial interference of others. It implies that the Québécois have always needed to resist the other to survive. Discourses of indigenisation counter the seemingly dominant discourse from Canada that suggests that despite certain troubled moments, English and French Canadians have more often than not shared a relatively harmonious and productive relationship.

Since the 1930's the dominant trend in Québécois historiography has been to look upon two events in its history as being most important in the understanding of Québécois identity. The first is the Conquest (1760) and the second is the Annexation (1840). As

Maurice Séguin writes: "L'histoire politique du Canada français ne se comprend bien qu'en tenant compte de ce désastre inévitable en deux temps, annoncé dès 1760 par la colonisation anglaise et consolidé en 1840 par l'union des forces anglaises" (Séguin 162). Séguin belongs to a group of historians, prolific in the 1940's and 1950's, based at the *Université de Montréal* and inspired largely by Lionel Groulx. With Séguin, the Montréal historians are Guy Frégault and Michel Brunet. The writings of the Montréal group have been most influential in Québec, and their ideas still dominate to a large degree the way the Québécois perceive their past.

2.1 The Conquest

Although the Conquest and the Annexation have always been interpreted as the

two most important moments in Québécois' past, the Montréal historians had a slightly

different understanding of the Conquest from their more contemporary counterparts. The

Montréal historians saw the Conquest as a cataclysmic event, practically destroying

Québécois culture while it was still in an embryonic state. Hence the commonly used term

survivance, to designate the post-Conquest era in Québec. The British conquest of New-

France was seen as the "arrêt de mort d'une société" (Frégault, *La Guerre de la*

Conquête, 1955). Even though the Montréal historians did put a great deal of emphasis on

the Conquest, an emphasis that portrays the Québécois as a colonized people, their take

on the Conquest was not always successful in portraying the Québécois as an *indigenous*

people. Guy Frégault, in particular, fails to do so by glorifying the society that existed in

New-France, before the Conquest. As Jean Lamarre suggests:

> Mais, à la différence de Groulx, pour qui le caractère idéal de la Nouvelle-
>
> France est avant tout lié à la pureté de nos origines et aux intentions
>
> providentielles qui ont prévalu, Frégault, plutôt que de situer cette
>
> dimension idéale sur un plan absolu, va, pour sa part, la ramener à une
>
> échelle plus humaine en présentant la Nouvelle-France comme un exemple
>
> parfait de société équilibrée et aussi, sinon surtout, remplie de «vitalité».
>
> (Lamarre 246)

In idealizing a pre-Conquest society in Québec, Frégault is basically suggesting that Québécois culture was already established. In doing so, he does not indigenise the Québécois but rather puts them on an equal footing with the British North American invaders. Séguin echoes Frégault's views when he writes:

> [La Conquête] est une catastrophe, qui arrache cette jeune colonie à son
>
> milieu protecteur et nourricier et l'atteint dans son organisation comme
>
> société et comme nation en formation, à la subordination politique et
>
> économique [...] (Séguin 15)

Although he does not idealize the pre-Conquest French community to the same extent as Frégault, Séguin also refuses to create a definitive distinction with the post-Conquest community. As such, the Montréal historians must have thought of the Québécois as being somewhat more akin to the Boers in South Africa than to the Scots or Irish. By their definition, the Conquest was a battle between two colonial powers, where one settler colony prevented another from truly coming into existence (or at least fulfilling its existence).

The Montréal historians' interpretation of the Conquest as the most defining moment in Québécois history, is a discursive strategy that allowed them to explain the misery and alienation of the Québécois. They saw the Québécois of the 1940's and 1950's as a colonized people, and because of the Conquest, unable to come into their own economically, politically or culturally. It was a way of blaming the other for one's misery. In contrast to the Montréal historians, the Québec (city) historians based at the *Université*

Laval opted for a different interpretation of history. Instead of blaming the other, the Québec historians (Marcel Trudel, Jean Hamelin, Fernand Ouellet) chose to blame the Québécois for their own misery. They put the blame chiefly on the fact that the Québécois were too isolationist, inefficient and lazy to join the modern world. In this the clergy had a more negative influence than the Conquest or the British. But the Québec historians did not take into account the *reasons why* the clergy came into such power or *why* the Québécois were so adverse to individual achievement. This explains why the neo-nationalist perspective of the Montréal historians gained more importance later in Québécois culture. In his work, *Making History in Twentieth-Century Quebec*, Ronald Rudin draws similar conclusions. He remarks that the Montréal and Québec historians, while different in their approach and conclusions, shared the view that the Québécois were servile and somewhat backwards. Rudin points out that more contemporary historians are involved in a revisionist approach, to show how the Québécois - throughout their history - did in fact espouse modern values and did evolve in a more or less normal fashion (Rudin, *Making* 172, 220). But contemporary historians in Québec do not contradict the Montréal historians' neo-nationalist thesis that the Québécois are a colonized people. Although they are a little more self-critical than the Montréal historians, they still see the Conquest and the Annexation as the most significant moments in their collective's past. In fact, as I intend to demonstrate, their approach is one the most involved in discourses of indigenisation.

Like the Montréal historians, Fernand Dumont observes that the Québécois today

still see in their history traumatic events that have scarred their identity:

> Aujourd'hui, des francophones ont beau promouvoir la souveraineté du
>
> Québec au nom d'une plus grande efficacité gouvernementale et de
>
> prétendre avoir exorcisé les démons du nationalisme de leurs grands-pères,
>
> ils ne cachent pas que les désirs d'indépendance se nourrissent aussi des
>
> souvenirs des vexations passées. (Dumont, *Genèse* 333-334)

It is not because Québécois nationalism today is far more civic than ethnic, which was not

the case in the 1940's and 1950's, that the Québécois have softened their views on the

Conquest. The prevalent idea today is that, although traumatic and devastating, the

Conquest was also a *foundational* event in Québécois identity. Foundational in that

without it, the Québécois might not have ever been a truly distinct people.

Stéphane Kelly, in *La petite loterie*, remarks that the Conquest forced the people

who would later become the Québécois to see themselves, for the first time, as being alone

in the World:

> Cette image du peuple orphelin est très populaire. Le Canadien, après la
>
> Conquête anglaise, est seul au monde. L'histoire de la nation canadienne
>
> [québécoise] accordera, par la suite, une prépondérance au motif de
>
> l'abandon. La Conquête, en tant que grande défaite, devient l'évenement
>
> organisateur de l'histoire nationale. (Kelly 81)

Being 'orphans', the new community had to depend on its own means to survive. According to Kelly the Conquest, and the subsequent feeling of being abandoned, is what helped create a national sentiment in Québec. Therefore before the Conquest there was not a *Canadien* or Québécois national community.

This idea is also seen in Fernand Dumont's *Genèse de la société québécoise*: "[...] le sentiment national est renforcé par la Conquète [...] Elle [la coupure avec la métropole] renvoie à eux-mêmes ceux qui restent au Canada et leur donne l'impression qu'ils sont abandonnés à leur propre destin" (Dumont, *Genèse* 103). Dumont, however, does not see the Conquest as the definitive starting point of Québécois society. He theorizes that the community that would become the basis of Québécois society found its origins before the Conquest:

> Nous avons pu observer en Nouvelle-France la germination du sentiment
>
> national; le Canadiens de l'époque formaient indubitablement une
>
> communauté distinct [from the French]. Il reste que les similitudes de
>
> coutumes, de langages, d'institutions entre la France et la colonie
>
> empêchaient la rupture qui eût permis de parler de *nation*. La Conquête
>
> crée cette rupture [...] (Dumont, *Genèse* 117)

Although the origins of the community or nation were already there, it is only after the Conquest or, in a sense, because of the Conquest that the national community truly took shape.

In *Du Canada au Québec, Généalogie d'une histoire*, Heinz Weinmann reiterates

the point of view expressed by most contemporary authors of Québec historical writing.

He also sees the Conquest as something, albeit traumatic, that helped shape Québécois

identity:

> Or, le conquérant donne aux *Canadiens* un territoire certes rogné, mais en
>
> contrepartie, nettement délimité. C'est lui qui crée l'entité territoriale, le
>
> «pays», au sens premier, la «Province of Québec» dont les Québécois
>
> oublieront ensuite qui en a été l'instigateur. [...] La présence de l'Autre
>
> anglais, contrairement à ce qu'on a pu affirmer, aiguise la différence donc,
>
> par contre coup, l'identité nationale des *Canadiens*. (Weinmann 336)

The birth of what the Britrish had called Fifteenth Colony was, in other words, also the

birth of what would become Québécois society. Although it was interpreted as an act of

colonial subordination by the Québécois, one cannot deny that it was also a foundational

moment for them. Insofar as indigenising discourses go, Weinmann even suggests that

"[g]râce à la défaite, [il y eu] une presse et une culture autochtones" (Weinmann 338). So

it is mainly in contemporary historical writing that we truly see discourses of

indigenisation. Even though contemporary Québécois historians and social theorists were

more heavily influenced by the Montréal group, they were really the first to see the

Conquest as a starting point for an indigenous Québécois culture.

Marcel Rioux, a well known separatist writer, goes a step further than Dumont

when he writes: "En gros, on peut dire que les Français, ceux qui l'étaient demeurés,

quittent la colonie, tandis que les Québécois restent, c'est-à-dire les Français qui étaient

devenus Québécois" (Rioux 122). We see here that for Rioux, the Conquest is a pivotal,

transitional moment in which the community is defined more as a settler colony before but

shifts to become a colony of occupation after. A colony of occupation comprised of a

people indigenous to the land, as Rioux writes: "Ce sont les habitants qui, après la

Conquête, continueront la nation québécoise" (Rioux 39). The usage of the term *habitant*

is important here. It is a term commonly used in Québécois culture to designate the

agrarian heritage of the Québécois. It also stresses an attachment to the land.

Other than the *habitant*, the other image that dominates Québécois mythology is

the *coureur de bois*: "Dès les débuts de la Nouvelles-France, le *coureur des bois* est un

personnage à part. [...] il adopte plus ou moins les moeurs des Indiens, apprend les

langues indigènes, obéit à ses propres normes" (Dumont, *Genèse* 65). Here, Dumont

shows us how the image of the *coureur des bois* helps the Québécois construct discourses

of indigenisation. Even though the Québécois were not actually indigenous, they became

indigenous later on by developing a *coureur de bois* or, alternately, a *habitant* mentality.

Heinz Weinmann aptly describes this duality in Québécois self-representation when he

writes:

> Mais étant donné que la civilisation de l'*habitant* agriculteur chasse le
>
> castor chassé, un conflit irréconciliable naîtra entre l'espace cultivé,
>
> cultivant, de l'*habitant*, et l'espace sauvage de la chasse au castor. Bien
>
> plus, ce conflit sera responsable de la naissance et de la coexistence de

deux types d'homme parfois dans la *même* personne: l'*habitant* sédentaire

cultivateur civilisé vivant dans un pays (pagus), et le *coureur des bois*

sauvage, le *voyageur* nomade, parcourant un territoire sans feu ni lieu.

(Weinmann 193)

Weinmann treats the *coureur des bois* and the *habitant* as two archetypes ever present in

the Québécois collective psyche. Whether or not we actually agree with this, we can

observe that contemporary authors are putting forward the idea that there were three

types of individuals living in New-France: French colonials, *habitants* and *coureurs des*

bois. While the former would return to France, the latter two would found Québécois

society (and form the basis of what is often considered the *Québécois de souches*). Both

are immersed in an imagery of belonging, of being inextricably attached to the land (as

opposed to the French colonials) and, in this respect, indigenous to it. Although the

habitant and *coureur des bois* are of course mytho-poetic constructions, they are

nonetheless very much a part of Québécois identity.

Regardless of the Montréal historians' slightly divergent interpretation of

Québécois identity before the Conquest, Québécois historical writing and interpretation

has been more or less unanimous in its understanding of what happened after. The

Québécois were placed in a position where they had to redefine themselves as an occupied

people and had to struggle for their survival. This era is the beginning of *la survivance*, a

trait or mentality that has always been seen as central to Québécois culture. After the

Conquest, afraid that the *Canadiens* might join the Thirteen Colonies in their revolt, the

British created the Quebec Act (1774), which gave the *Canadiens* linguistic as well as distinct legal rights (based on the French system the *Canadiens* were accustomed to), and gave them a certain measure or self-governance. As Séguin writes: "Le Quebec Act légalise la survivance. Il encourage les Canadiens à continuer de se considérer comme le peuple de la colonie" (Séguin 36). Here, Séguin's stress on *le peuple* of the colony is also an interesting example of indigenising discourse. He does not even mention the Native people as a presence on the land. The Quebec Act does not only legitimize *la survivance*, it legitimizes the Québécois (*les Canadiens*) as the true and *authentic* people of the land. The Québécois today appear to have construed the Quebec Act as an important moment, following the Conquest, in which they were longer seen as settlers to the British, but more as an indigenous people.

2.2 The Annexation

Another important historical moment highlighted by the Québécois, is the 1791 Constitutional Act. The Constitutional Act defined Québécois territory in the creation of Upper and Lower Canada (Ontario and Québec). To many Québécois, the Constitutional Act is seen as the first and only recognition by the English of the two distinct national identities in Canada (British North America). With the Constitutional Act the Québécois not only had a recognized identity, they also had recognized borders. Some Québécois authors will interpret the 1791-1840 period as an ideal moment in their history. It was a time when they felt more in control of their destiny and less threatened by others. As Séguin writes: "Ce Bas-Canada, biethnique, biculturelle et bilingue, leur apparaît [aux Canadiens] comme une merveilleuse réussite humaine" (Séguin 135). The Constitutional Act established a balance in Canada between the French and English speaking populations (between Upper and Lower Canada) that, in several ways, the many Québécois have idealized and are still trying to recreate.

From its inception, the Constitutional Act was perceived by the English minority in Québec as a slap in the face. The English population of Québec after the Conquest was actually divided into two main groups with very divergent traditions and divergent views towards the Québécois. The first group, comprised of the British military conquerors, were usually more conciliatory and surprisingly more inclined to protect the Québécois people. The military governors were more often than not willing to give more power the

Québécois, power that would allow them to survive, in order to avoid uprisings and to

ensure peace. But after the Conquest, an English merchant class established itself in

Québec with the sole purpose of reaping the spoils of war. It is this second group that

objected most adamantly to the Québec Act, and especially the Constitutional Act. Both

of these treaties were seen by the English merchants as unacceptable obstacles to the

growth of their own fortunes in favour of the survival of an already conquered people. As

Canadian historian Arthur Lower suggests: "The Constitutional Act took the commercial

men of Montreal out of the frying pan [the Quebec Act] and put them into the fire"

(Lower 202). Those English merchants in Québec are viewed by most Québécois today as

a powerful lobby group that pressured the English governors to repeal the Constitutional

Act and with it, all of the rights accorded to the Québécois. The English merchants of

Lower Canada finally found the right man in Governor James Craig, and as of 1822 there

was a concerted effort by English speakers to unify the two Canadas in order to place the

Québécois in a more controllable minority status. Hence the actual minority of Lower

Canada, which was English, would then become a majority that could finally truly benefit

from the Conquest. This English effort to unify the Canadas was met with considerable

resistance by the Québécois politicians of the time. It led eventually to the *Patriotes*

rebellions of 1837-1838. Thus, as Lower claims, "Sir James Craig must be considered one

of the founders of French-Canadian nationalism" (Lower 158).

Perhaps more so today than ever before, theorists feel that Québécois identity has

suffered more from the Annexation than it ever did from the Conquest. As Weinmann

writes:

> [La Conquête] est une construction *après coup* (*nachträglich*), au sens
>
> freudien du terme, élaborée à la suite d'un *autre* traumatisme, d'un impact
>
> *psychologique* infiniment plus retentissant: l'insurrection de 1837-1838.
>
> (Weinmann 271)

Contemporary historians and Québécois social theorists will tend to look at the rebellion

and the ensuing Annexation as being far more significant to Québécois identity today than

the Conquest was in the 1940's and 1950's. As Weinmann points out, " [...] il ne saurait

plus faire de doute que la crise d'octobre plonge ses racines jusqu'à cette autre grande

crise du Canada français: la Rébellion des Patriotes" (Weinmann 461). We can see how

Québécois revolutionaries in the 1960's and 1970's could easily ground their resistance to

Anglo-Saxon hegemony in the *Patriotes* rebellion. As Louis-Joseph Papineau (the leader

of the insurrection) writes after the *Patriotes*' failure:

> Aussi, parmi les acteurs de ce drame sanglant, n'y en a-t-il aucun qui se
>
> repente d'avoir tenté la résistance; et parmi leurs concitoyens, il n'y en a
>
> pas un sur mille qui leur reproche de l'avoir fait. Seulement il y a dans
>
> l'âme de tous un chagrin profond que cette résistance ait été malheureuse,
>
> mais en même temps un grand espoir qu'elle sera reprise et prévaudra.
>
> (Papineau, qtd in Rioux 131)

The FLQ genuinely believed that they were fulfilling Papineau's prophecy. Like the

Conquest, the Annexation is, yet again, still an event that establishes the Québécois as a

colony of occupation. Highlighting the rebellion and its aftermath (the Annexation), is

another way of constructing Québécois identity as that of a truly colonized people.

The failure of the rebellion led to the infamous Durham Report and the Union Act

of 1840. Lord Durham felt that the *Canadiens* were a backward people who would benefit

from being assimilated into British culture. The Union Act, to most Canadians is not seen

as an act of colonial occupation, but as just another step towards the formation of their

country. As Arthur Silver remarks:

> De nos jours, la plupart des Anglo-Canadiens ne savent sans doute même
>
> pas qu'il y ait jamais eu un Canada-Uni. Mais s'il est vrai, comme le dit
>
> Samuel LaSelva, qu'ils voient dans la Conquête l'événement qui «a fait du
>
> Québec une partie du Canada», l'Union devrait leur prouver qu'il est
>
> possible pour les Canadiens - francophones et anglophones - de travailler
>
> ensemble à l'intérieur de ce pays, dans le respect mutuel et pour leur bien
>
> commun. (Meisel et al. 58)

Silver underlines that most Canadians are often ignorant of the significance the 1840

Annexation holds for the Québécois, that it is seen as a traumatic event in their collective

memory. When they are not ignorant, Canadians will see the Union Act as an event that

led to a more positive alliance between French and English Canada; it led to the

Lafontaine-Baldwin partnership, to responsible government and to the Confederation. To

the Québécois, however, the union of the two Canadas is almost always seen as an

attempt by Canadians to assimilate and destroy Québécois identity. While the term

'Union' can be seen as a positive term, the Québécois will often use the term 'Annexation'

in its stead.

The Annexation, like the Conquest, plunged the Québécois into yet another phase

of *survivance*. And it is this last phase of *survivance* that led the Québécois to the Quiet

Revolution and the instances of self-affirmation that we have witnessed in the past forty

years. This interpretation of the Union Act as an annexation is not by any means limited to

sovereigntists or separatists in Québec; it is a view also shared by most federalists.

> Fédéralistes ou séparatistes, les Canadiens français ne pouvaient rester
>
> indifférents au souvenir de Lord Durham, lui qui avait proposé l'Union
>
> comme moyen d'éradiquer leur nationalité. Son nom continue de
>
> symboliser pour eux une politique d'anglicisation ainsi que l'hostilité des
>
> anglophones à l'égard de leurs traits distinctifs. (Meisel et al. 56)

Upon closer inspection, we see that most discursive strategies in Québec, whether they be

sovereigntist or federalist, actually attempt to reach very similar objectives; it is only in the

means by which these objectives are reached that we see a real difference. The Québécois

do not want to return to a pre-Conquest state; the majority of Québécois want to retrieve

a pre-Annexation state of affairs in which they feel they were recognized as equals and

were (relatively) autonomous. The pre-Annexation state of affairs was the first and only

time when Canada, as seen by the Québécois point of view, was a binational state. The

1840 Annexation took that away from the Québécois, and it is that injustice that they are
still striving to rectify today.

It is interesting to see how the Conquest and the Annexation are not only seen as
traumatic events in Québécois identity, but as events that have forced Québécois identity
to redefine itself. Up to this point, I have mainly used the term 'Québécois' to designate
the French speaking people living in Canada; but as I have already mentioned, the
nomenclature 'Québécois' was not always commonly used. Michel Brunet explains it best
when he writes:

> [After the Conquest the] Canadiens pouvaient au moins se dire qu'ils
>
> avaient prouvé au monde entier et à eux-mêmes qu'ils étaient capables de
>
> défendre leur patrie et qu'ils méritaient de la conserver. [...] [After the
>
> Union Act of 1840] Ce fut alors qu'apparurent les Canadiens français. Mis
>
> en minorité dans le Canada-Uni, les anciens Canadiens avaient dû renoncer
>
> à leur ambition de former une nation distincte dans la vallée du Saint-
>
> Laurent. (Brunet 166-170)

Brunet is demonstrating here one of the only instances in which a member of the Montréal
group does not interpret the Conquest as an entirely devastating event. This is however an
exception that confirms the general rule. The transition from *Canadiens* to *Canadien
français* is marked by instances of colonial oppression. But the transition from *Canadiens
français* to Québécois is seen, by Brunet and most others since, as an act of positive
affirmation:

[...] Les Canadiens français du Québec ont découvert entre 1942 et 1960
que, s'ils étaient une minorité en Amérique du Nord et au Canada, ils
formaient la majorité des citoyens sur le territoire québécois.
Graduellement, ils ont abandonné la mentalité de minoritaires qu'ils avaient
acquise après les tragiques événements de 1837-1838 et leur annexion
forcée au Canada anglais. La première phase de cette mutation s'est
traduite par la nationalisation du gouvernement québécois. Celui-ci, depuis
l'adoption du drapeau fleurdelisé en 1948 jusqu'au projet actuel de
proclamer une politique linguistique favorable à la langue de la majorité, se
voit de plus en plus comme la voix autorisée d'une collectivité distincte.
Parallèlement à cette évolution, les Canadiens français du Québec se sont
transformés en Québécois. (Brunet 166-170)

Brunet's reference to 1942 is invocative of the year in which the Québécois first voted
together as a bloc and were able to resist the will of the central government in Ottawa. In
that plebiscite, 85% of the Québécois voted to prevent Prime Minister King from going
back on his word concerning conscription. To Brunet, this was an empowering moment
for the Québécois, in that they realized that, although forced into minority status in
Canada, they were a majority in Québec. This allowed them to realize for the first time
since the Annexation that they, as a people, could effect real change.

2.3 Other Significant Events in Québécois Collective Memory

There were, of course, many other events in Québécois history that are considered to be significant. But none have taken as much place in Québécois historical writing and identitarian theory as the Conquest and the Annexation. The first crisis that arose after the Annexation was the Louis Riel hanging. French Canadians rallied behind Riel and against the federal government's treatment of him. "Quand Riel se fait pendre, le 16 novembre 1885, c'est, à n'en point douter, l'un des compatriotes canadiens-français qui est touché de plein fouet" (Gougeon 60). There was thus an important measure of identification in the Riel affair by the French Canadian population. What they saw in the crisis was the persecution of not only the Métis in Manitoba but of the whole French speaking minority in Canada.

Another important moment was the French school conflicts in Manitoba and Ontario. Both provinces wanted to ban access to Francophone schools. The entirety of the French Canadian population expressed its outrage, but "[l]eurs protestations devant le génocide culturel des minorités francophones dans les autres provinces furent stériles" (Brunet 163). The expression *génocide culturel* used by Brunet will be repeated several times by contemporary Québécois theorists when describing Canada's treatment of its Francophone population. Lionel Groulx's *L'Appel de la race* offers a good example of how the fight for French schools was representative of the cultural survival. The fact that the protests against Manitoban and Ontarian educational policies were ineffectual had a

double effect on the Québécois. It hardened their sentiment of being an oppressed

minority and it sent them the message that the only place in which they might be able to

protect themselves was within the borders of the province of Québec.

One could not forget the conscription crisis during the First World War as another

event that the Québécois will refer to as an example of Canadian (or Anglo-Saxon)

colonial domination. French Canadians did not feel concerned by the war and felt that

their forced participation in it was, once again, the result of British imperialism. French

Canadians (along with other British colonials) were used as canon fodder during the war.

The French Canadian outrage surrounding the War and especially the conscription is what

led them to vote with such a strong majority against King in the 1942 plebiscite. In Roch

Carrier's novel *La guerre, yes sir!*, we get a sense of the Québécois' anger from their

forced participation in the first World War.

The most recent event I would like to mention is the failure of the Meech Lake

Accord. I will not expand on the October Crisis or the two Referendums here, as I will

deal with them in the next sections. The Meech Lake Accord was seen by many Québécois

as a last chance for Canadians to show their good will towards them:

> En fait, l'opposition de plus en plus forte dans le reste du Canada à la
>
> clause de «société distincte» eut pour conséquence d'inciter les Québécois
>
> à resserrer les rangs derrière l'Accord. Malgré ses lacunes, l'Accord du lac
>
> Meech était vu comme une réparation de l'injustice infligée en 1982,

comme un minimum vital répondant aux conditions les plus raisonnables

jamais demandées par un gouvernement québécois [...] un ultime test de la

bonne foi du reste du Canada. (Meisel et al. 350)

Had the Meech Lake Accord been accepted by Canada, with its distinct society clause for

Québec and its veto on constitutional matters, it could at least symbolically have given the

Québécois some of the power it had lost in the Annexation. It would have also erased the

effects of the 1982 *nuit des longs couteaux*. Instead, the failure of the Accord was

interpreted as yet another example of Canada's unwillingness to see the Québécois as

equals. Its failure also pushed many federalists to shift towards sovereigntist alternatives,

Lucien Bouchard is the clearest example of this phenomenon: "Jamais personne n'aurait

pu bloquer l'Accord [...] sans un appui largement répandu [...] dans l'ensemble du Canada

anglais" (Bouchard, qtd in Meisel et al. 354).

All of these events, when compounded with the Conquest and the Annexation,

hold an extremely important place in Québécois history and the construction of Québécois

identity. I have not tried to suggest that these historical events *should* be given such

importance, I have merely been illustrating a trend. What I find interesting is that all of

these events that are so important in Québécois identity also put the Québécois in a

position of being dominated by an other. I feel that it is by putting such a strong emphasis

on these events, that the Québécois are involved in discourses of indigenisation, counter-

discourses that allow them to see themselves as a colony of occupation. From this basis,

the Québécois position themselves in such a way that they can justify the counter-

discursive strategies that I will expose in the next sections.

These discourses of indigenisation create a sense of ownership of the land. The

land itself takes on an almost unparalleled significance as a source of identity or

identification. In Paul Chamberland's famous poem *L'Afficheur hurle*, the author

frequently describes the Québécois as the indigenous people to Québec:

> est-ce ma faute si je souffre d'une terre à naître
>
> d'une terre occupée
>
> d'un mal qui est le bien des autres
>
> d'une nation qui nourrit la vie des autres (Chamberland, *Afficheur* 108)

He expresses an attachment to the land when he refers to it as a "terre maîtresse / terre

matrice" (Chamberland, *Afficheur* 106). Such passages allow the author to blur the

distinction between the Native people and the Québécois. We see this when he writes: "je

suis l'Indien noué au profil détruit de sa terre le / chasseur désarmé et tranqué qui brame

sous les balles / proie lancinante d'une histoire enrayée" (Chamberland, *Afficheur* 110). By

suggesting that his people's history is effaced, Chamberland is really calling for the

construction of the past; which is precisely what I have been documenting in this section.

Without the construction of history, Chamberland compares the future of the Québécois

to that of the Native people in the United States, "qui entendra nos pas étouffés dans

l'ornière américaine / où nous précède et déjà nous efface la mort terrible / et barriolée des

Peaux-Rouges" (Chamberland, *Afficheur* 109). Here, Chamberland is also blurring the

distinction between colonizers, a frequent phenomenon in Québécois literature. Colonial

oppression in Québec is not always seen as something that comes only from Canada but

from Anglo-Saxon hegemony in general.

In *L'homme rapaillé*, Gaston Miron also places a strong emphasis on the land as a

source of identity, rather than being merely something to be settled on or exploited:

et toi, Terre de Québec, Mère Courage

dans ta Longue Marche, tu es grosse

de nos rêves charbonneux douloureux

de l'innombrable épuisement des corps et des âmes [...]

Nous te ferons, Terre de Québec

lit des résurrections [...]

Les hommes entendront battre ton pouls dans l'histoire (Miron 103-104)

Whether it is already a source of identity and inspiration or whether it will become one,

the land is very often a central theme in Québécois literature. This may be common to

many national literatures, but to the Québécois it is expressed as an outcry to those who

have taken the land away from them or threaten their sense of belonging. Gilles Gougeon

remarks on this when he writes:

[...] il y avait les Canadiens [Québécois], d'une part, et les Britanniques,

d'autre part. Pour ces Britanniques, d'une certaine manière, leur

appartenance première n'était pas au territoire d'ici. [...] les conflits

d'influence et les conflits d'aspiration, en ce qui concerne le nationalisme,

se maifestaient entre un groupe, le Parti patriote, qui se réclamait de l'idée

même de territoire canadien et de nation canadienne, et l'autre groupe, qui

avait plutôt tendance à définir le territoire comme une colonie

d'établissement pour une population britannique. (Gougeon 39)

We see here an important difference between the British American (Canadian) and

Canadien (Québécois) experience. In Gougeon's passage, we already see the distinction

between Canada's settler colonial identity and Québec's identity as a colony of

occupation. The Québécois are saying that they are the rightful *habitants* and, *de facto*,

they are acting as an indigenous culture. In an extreme instance of indigenising discourse,

in his famous letter to L'Abbé Casgrain (in 1867) Octave Crémazie goes so far as to

suggest that the Québécois should adopt Huron or Iroquois as their national language

(Siemerling 184). By suggesting this, Crémazie's indigenising discourse is twofold: not

only does it create the illusion of the Québécois as a native people, it also emphasises the

Québécois's distinctiveness from France.

We see discourses of indigenisation occasionally in Canadian literature as well.

Dennis Lee has written several works that function much in the same way as Québécois

identitarian writing. In his *Civil Elegies*, he writes "[w]e live on occupied soil" (Lee, *Civil*

40), or "[m]any were born in Canada, and living unlived lives they / died of course but

died truncated, stunted, never at / home in native space and not yet / citizens of a human

body" (Lee, *Civil* 33). Lee wants to feel a sense of belonging, but always seems to come

short of doing so. Dennis Lee is one of the first Canadian authors to have tried to establish

such an identification to the land. While the Québécois were already doing it in the 19th century (if not earlier), Canadians of that time would see the land as something hostile, as something to escape from. This is Frye's original interpretation of the garrison mentality. Winfried Siemerling observes how nature is described as something hostile in Suzanna Moodie's *Roughing it in the Bush* (1852) and in Catherine Parr Traill's *The Backwoods of Canada* (1836):

> [Canada] is the most unpoetical of all lands; there is no escape for the
>
> imagination; here all is new - the very soil seems newly formed; there is no
>
> hoary ancient grandeur in these woods; no recollections of former deeds
>
> connected with the country. The only beings in which I take any interest
>
> are the Indians, and they want the warlike character and intelligence that I
>
> had pictured to myself they would possess. (Traill, qtd in Siemerling 185).

Instead of identifying with the Native people or indigenising themselves, as the Québécois did, these authors would see the land and the Natives as strange, unfamiliar or disappointing.

So where we often get a sense of belonging or indigenisation in Québécois identitarian discourses, Canadian identity from its onset is plagued with uncertainty and detachment. It is arguable that as a consequence to this, Canadians are more ambivalent, indifferent or occasionally guilt ridden in their interpretation of their past. This is suggested in this next passage:

D'autres pourraient même ajouter que l'histoire est une préoccupation

moins importante dans le reste du Canada qu'au Québec. La romancière

Nancy Huston traduit fort bien cette idée quand elle écrit: «Oui c'est là le

problème que pose pour moi ce pays: il est impitoyablement,

désespérément, dangereusement moderne; il a effacé son passé - déjà

suffisamment mince! - et vit à la surface de son présent» (Meisel et al. 4)

To the Québécois, as we have seen up to here, the past is of primal importance. They see

their nation as being established as early as the Conquest and subsequently colonized with

the Annexation. In *Selling Illusions*, Neil Bissoondath writes:

If the French [in Canada] have never lost the mentality of the conquered,

the English never lost the mentality of the conqueror. [...] It is a subtle

argument, one that makes great sense from the viewpoint of Quebec,

where history lives, and perhaps less sense from the viewpoint of English

Canada, where history is little more than a fading memory of yesterday's

breakfast. (Bissoondath 61)

If the Québécois place such importance on the past, it is to highlight the fact that they are

a colonized people; if, as Bissoondath suggests, Canadians avoid looking at their past, it is

perhaps to forget that they were colonizers. But as Terdiman remarks, "'genesis amnesia'

can never be total, at some level the dominant knows itself to be usurpation" (Terdiman

64). So, for Canadians, the starting point of their national identity is always hard to

determine. Was it in 1760 with the Conquest, in 1790 with the creation of Upper Canada,

in 1840 with the Union Act, in 1867 with the Confederation, in 1931 with the treaty of

Westminster or in 1982 with the repatriation of the constitution? Even though Canada's

national holiday celebrates the Confederation, there is no real consensus as to the

beginning of Canadian identity; after all, Canada Day was still called Dominion Day not

too long ago. This lack of consensus is typical to settler colonies in that they are torn

between identities, between a Eurocentric colonial heritage and a distinct identity in the

New World. It has been my experience that when asking a Canadian when Canada first

came into being, the response will usually be vague and difficult to come by at first,

followed by a very personal answer ("that's a very difficult question to answer... but the

way I see it..."). In Québec, the answers seem to come more easily at first, but are then

expanded on and nuanced afterwards ("we generally agree that... but we mustn't forget

that....").

It's interesting to see how the Québécois have also constructed Canada's past in

their place. Guy Frégault was actually reluctant to do so, not seeing Canada as a nation at

all, "le Canada n'est qu'un État [...]. Contrairement au Canada français, qui est une nation

sans État, le Canada n'est qu'un État sans nation. (Frégault, qtd in Lamarre 261). Frégault

seems a little hard on Canada, but even Dennis Lee paraphrases Frégault when he refers to

Canada's lack of a collective memory: "'Mackenzie knows a word, Mackenzie / knows a

meaning!' but it was not true. [...] / if a country has no past, / neither is it a country" (Lee,

Civil 34). Lee's take on the Upper Canada rebellion, Canada's would-be equivalent to the

Patriotes revolt, shows us how Canadians can be somewhat impotent when searching for

a source of identity in their past.

Frégault's successors were a little more conciliatory towards Canadian identity and
constructed it much in the same way they constructed their own. As Maurice Séguin
writes:

> Il faut dater de 1763 la naissance du Canada anglais, la fondation d'un
>
> deuxième Canada, l'origine d'une autre colonie anglaise s'ajoutant aux
>
> colonies anglaises déjà installées le long de la côte de l'Atlantique. (Séguin
>
> 13)

For Séguin, even though they were just another British settler colony, Canadians still
existed as a distinct entity. He sees Canada as being formed by the same events as Québec:

> Le Quebec Act, en consolidant le Canada français (le peuple vaincu encore
>
> majoritaire) et en insultant le Canada anglais naissant (le vainqueur
>
> minoritaire à cette époque) accentue et aggrave un conflit national né de la
>
> Conquête, conflit qui a sa racine dans l'existence de deux nationalités
>
> distinctes au Canada. (Séguin 37)

By sharing the foundational events of his community's past with Canada's, Séguin is also
constructing the basis for equal association between the two. As I have already mentioned,
this is a common tactic with the goal of returning to a pre-Annexation state of affairs.
Séguin writes:

> Sera-t-il permis au Québec de transformer ses relations de dépendance en
>
> relation d'égalité dans l'interdépendance? Ou sera-t-il possible au Québec
>
> de corriger deux siècles d'histoire? L'Amérique anglaise lui a dit non en
>
> 1760 par la conquête. Le Canada anglais lui a dit non en 1840 par l'union

législative et en 1867 par l'union fédérale. Quelle réponse réserve le

vingtième siècle? (Séguin 210)

What is also interesting in this last passage is Séguin's reference to the 1867 BNA Act

(the Confederation). There is much evidence suggesting that Canadians are not fully aware

that the Québécois will often see the Confederation as a mere extension of the

Annexation.

Many Québécois theorists will see the Confederation as just another way of

putting the Québécois in a minority status - easier to assimilate in the long run. The

Québécois would see the BNA act as a step in the right direction, better than nothing

because it reestablished some of their autonomy. But it was still insufficient in that it did

not give the Québécois what they most desired: that which was taken away from them

with the Annexation, *equality with* Canada rather than only being one fourth and later one

tenth *of* Canada. In *La petite loterie*, Stéphane Kelly is particularly harsh with the

Québécois who supported the Confederation. Pointing out that many of those supporters

were previously members of the *Parti patriote*, Kelly writes:

Cette petite loterie est un système de distribution des faveurs qui vise à

gagner l'adhésion du rebelle et à en faire un parvenu - c'est-à-dire un

membre de la minorité qui sacrifie les intérêts de celle-ci à ses intérêts

personels. (Kelly 16)

Here, Kelly is describing what postcolonialists have called compradors. Compradors are

defined as intellectuals or members of an elite who owe their membership to that elite to

their dealings with a colonial power (Ashcroft et al., *Concepts* 55). Kelly suggests that the

former *Patriotes* became compradors later on by selling out the interests of their

community; and in doing so, established a tradition of colonial patronage that culminated

with Duplessis and *la grande noirceur*. Today, most Québécois share Kelly's or Séguin's

views on the Confederation. Most of them feel that it has to be renegotiated in order to

take into account Québec's distinctiveness and correct past injustices. Canada Day is not

celebrated as a national holiday by most French-speaking Québécois, Saint-Jean-Baptiste

Day is; Canada Day is often seen as Québec's national moving day, in which new leases

are signed and old apartments are abandoned.

*   *   *

The indigenisation of Québec is also involved in a process of symbiosis. We have

seen that the Montréal historians chose to see the Conquest as the end of a society and the

beginning of a long bid for survival. But contemporary Québécois historians will construct

the Conquest as the beginning of their culture. Therefore, without the Conquest, or the

invasion of the other, the Québécois would not exist; there would only be French settlers

living here, not Québécois. The Conquest is what allows the Québécois to see themselves

as something other than the descendants of French colonials, as something indigenous to

this land.

So we see that contemporary Québécois identity is constructed not only in resistance to the other (the conqueror), but also - paradoxically - as dependent on it. While older historians would have avoided this paradox by suggesting that the authentic Québécois identity is found in its pre-Conquest era, modern Québécois historians are beginning to see the paradox as the very source of identity itself. Without the Conquest there would be no Québécois identity. The Conquest allowed the Québécois to see themselves as an indigenous people, the Annexation confirmed this by allowing them see themselves as a colonized people. When Canadians chose to forget their past while not giving the Québécois the means by which they could forget theirs (i.e. by granting them equality) - when Canadians decided to construct their own identity without making amends with the people they colonized - the Québécois, arguably, had no choice but to seek independence.

> [...] ce fut quand le Canada anglais se convertit au nationalisme canadien
> que le nationalisme canadien-français se transforma en un nationalisme
> québécois et que naquirent les diverses tendances indépendantistes. (Meisel
> et al. 15)

Again, a crucial moment in the construction of Québécois identity is determined by the other. Their resistance is what helps define them. Without that resistance they would lose their *raison-d'être*. It is in this sense that they have a symbiotic relationship with Canada.

CHAPTER 3

THE APPROPRIATION OF COUNTER-DISCURSIVE

RESISTANCE IN QUÉBEC

The discourses of indigenisation that I have analysed in the previous section are rampant in the construction of Québécois identity. Or the least we can say is that such discourses are more dominant in Québécois identity than in Canadian identity. They are counter-discourses in that they resist Canada's will to forget, Canada's "genesis amnesia" as Terdiman put it. This genesis amnesia allows Canada to not only forget their own past, but also to discredit Québec's demands for recognition as equals. This has led the Québécois to a second mode of counter-discursive strategy: Fanon's *période de combat* in which counter-discourses are constructed with the objective of "secouer le peuple" (Fanon 166). Unwilling to grant Québec what it wanted, Canada forced the Québécois to take matters into their own hands. While nationalism has always existed in Québec, it is in the 1960's with the Quiet Revolution that nationalism really became a dominant counter-discourse. As we have seen, Brunet felt that 1942-1960 was an era in which Francophones really became aware of their potential dominance and power within the boundaries of Québec; in this we see why the Montréal historians are also known as neo-nationalists. And as Meisel, Rocher and Silver mention, the rise of Canadian nationalism in the 1960's pushed Francophones to shift their identity from the French Canadian minority to the Québécois nation. In a sense, many Québécois ceased to wait for Canada's recognition, and began to develop counter-discursive trends that would impose equality on Canada. Nationalism in Québec is also a form of resistance to outside influence, in that it is

portrayed as a defensive measure against colonial dominance and assimilation. As Alan

Lawson writes: "National identity is a form of identity politics: it is formulated as a

strategy of resistance toward a dominant culture" (Lawson, "Postcolonial" 30). Although

nationalism is often portrayed *après coup* as an act of self-affirmation, its original

motivation is often counter-discursive.

The politics of identity in modern Québec have been comprised of a significant

number of works permeated with counter-discourses of hard and soft nationalism. I use

the term hard nationalism to designate those who have felt or still feel that separation or

sovereignty-association is the only option left to Québec; soft nationalism, which is equally

counter-discursive, includes those who still believe that equality is attainable through

constitutional change. We often get the impression that most Québécois theorists are in

agreement in saying that only a small minority of Québécois felt - or still feel - that no

change at all is needed. Even the Canadian government agrees with this: to sway the vote

towards the No side during the 1980 and 1995 referendums on Québec sovereignty-

association, the Canadian government assured the Québécois that it was aware that

change was needed and would be granted if Québec remained in Canada. So we can safely

say that the vast majority of Québécois identitarian writing contains counter-discourses of

either soft or hard nationalism. These writings resist the current order of things and seek

change, albeit through different methods.

Québécois nationalism could not have taken such a dominant role in Québécois

identity if it were not intertwined with discourses of indigenisation. Castoriadis links the

two types of discourses in this next passage:

> The nation [...] fills this function of identification by means of the threefold
>
> imaginary reference to a 'common history' - threefold, because this history
>
> is sheer past, because it is not really common, and, finally, because what is
>
> known of it and what it serves as the basis for this collectivizing
>
> identification in people's consciousness is largely mythical. This imaginary
>
> characteristic of the nation nonetheless proves more solid than any other
>
> reality, as two world wars and the survival of nationalism have shown.
>
> (Castoriadis 207)

This paraphrases my approach to historical writing and its impact on identity. I have not

been analysing historians and their emphasis on historical events to determine what

actually happened in Québec's past. I have only been interested in how historians in

Québec have perceived their past, or if you will, how they have constructed it. The

construction of history is central to the establishment of a collective memory; and a

collective memory is central to the construction of nationalist discourses (soft or hard). It

has been argued, as we have seen, that Canada's lack of a collective memory is its main

obstacle to the construction of a strong Canadian national identity. This is also Ray

Conlogue's argument in Impossible Nation (1996).

The previous chapter helped expose the ways in which the Québécois have constructed their identity as being colonized by an other. With the rise of Québécois nationalism in the 1950's and 1960's the Québécois began to identify with other societies in similar situations. Thus they were able to appropriate counter-discursive strategies from other colonized societies and the anti-colonial ideals prevalent in them. This chapter will look at how this appropriation took place, and how the appropriation of resistance has shifted in the Québécois politics of identity. In order to make my point more accessible, I will arbitrarily divide modern Québécois identity into two periods: the pre-October Crisis Québec and the post-October Crisis Québec.

Appropriation is a phenomenon studied within postcolonial theory. It is usually seen when a colonized culture takes on some of the traits of the colonizer, and subverts them in order to resist more efficiently. As Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin suggest:

> By appropriating the imperial language, its discursive forms and its modes
>
> of representation, post-colonial societies are able, as things stand, to
>
> intervene more readily in the dominant discourse, to interpolate their own
>
> cultural realities, or use that dominant language to describe those realities
>
> to a wide audience of readers. (Ashcroft et al., *Concepts* 20)

This chapter, however, will demonstrate that the Québécois have not appropriated resistant strategies from their colonizer but from other colonized peoples. By doing so, the Québécois were trying to develop affinities with other colonized societies; or they were at least trying to develop, in their own way, *time-tested* modes of counter-discursive

resistance. As such, Québécois nationalism often shows instances of appropriation, and this appropriation adds to Québec's distinctiveness from Canada and other settler colonial societies. Anglo-Quebecer appropriation, on the other hand, as we shall see in chapter 5, is far closer to the above mentioned definition. Québécois appropriation of resistance is thus much closer to, and can be also be seen as, mimicry than Anglo-Quebecer appropriation. It is crucial to note that it is not because a counter-discourse is appropriated that it is less authentic or meaningful to the culture that has appropriated it. It merely suggests that likenesses can be established between different identities. But as we shall see in this section, certain discourses or counter-discourses have been more or less adaptable to the Québécois context.

3.1 The Appropriation of Anti-Colonialism in Québec

As already briefly mentioned, the anti-colonial works of Frantz Fanon and Albert

Memmi became extremely important to Québécois writers since the 1960's. Québécois

authors like André d'Allemagne, Pierre Vallières, Paul Chamberland, Pierre Maheu, Pierre

Vadeboncoeur and many others applied Fanon's and Memmi's description of colonialism

to their own culture. The appropriation of anti-colonial theories in Québec has been well

documented and I shall not spend much time exposing the extent to which it was done.

Rather, I shall focus on the main themes, on the *ways* in which anti-colonialism was

applied to Québec. I am not suggesting that this appropriation is or was present in every

Québécois discourse of identity, just that it was a popular trend. Being a popular trend, it

requires a closer reading. It is here that we see the extent to which the Québécois see

themselves as a truly colonized people, and why Québec can hold such an intriguing place

in postcolonial studies.

The presence of anti-colonial discourses in Québec is partly what led the

Québécois to the FLQ and the October Crisis. That crisis stands out in recent Québécois

history, and is still very present in the Québécois's collective memory. Louis Fournier is

frequently recognized as an expert on the FLQ and the events surrounding it. Fournier

outlines Fanon, Memmi and Berque's ideological presence in the hard nationalism of the

FLQ:

À la même époque, la montée des mouvements révolutionnaires dans le

monde n'est pas sans influencer les futurs militants du FLQ. [...] La voix la

plus radicale de la révolution algérienne s'exprime dans un petit livre qui

fait sensation lorsqu'il paraît: *Les damnés de la terre* de Frantz Fanon.

L'ouvrage deviendra la bible du mouvement de la décolonisation et le livre

de chevet de plusieurs militant du FLQ. [...] D'autres écrits de la

décolonisation trouveront au Québec un certain écho comme *Le portrait

du colonisé* d'Albert Memmi et les ouvrages de l'ethnologue Jacques

Berque (*Dépossession du monde*), qui séjourne au Québec en1962 à titre

de professeur invité à l'université de Montréal. (Fournier 22-23)

The FLQ was actually modelled around the Algerian FLN (Front de libération nationale),

which was in turn very much shaped by Fanon and Memmi's theories. Jacques Berque's

theories on dispossession and alienation are also helpful in our understanding of both pre

and post-October Crisis Québécois identity.

The appropriation of anti-colonial resistance was not limited to radicals and

revolutionaries. Brunet alludes to potential similarities between Québec and other colonies

of occupation when he writes:

L'émancipation récente et spectaculaire des anciens peuples coloniaux et la

promotion sociale des classes défavorisées ont appris aux Québécois qu'ils

auraient tort de continuer à croire, comme devaient le faire leurs parents

canadiens-français, qu'ils sont «nés pour un petit pain» et condamnés à se

soumettre indéfiniment à la domination d'un peuple étranger que l'histoire

avait momentanément privilégié. (Brunet 8)

So even as early as the 1940's and 1950's Québécois theorists could see parallels between

Québécois alienation and Third World alienation. We could already see the stance

suggesting that 'if others could do it, so could the Québécois'. But unlike typical settler

colonies, the 'others' for the Québécois were colonies of occupation.

One of the earliest references to colonialism in Québécois identity, is in the famous

Refus global by Paul-Émile Borduas. In the opening lines of the poem/essay, Borduas

writes of Québec as a "[c]olonie précipité dès 1760 dans les murs lisses de la peur, refuge

habituel des vaincus" (Borduas 63). Here, Borduas is not only defining Québec as a

colony but is also using the Conquest as an important moment in the establishment of

alienation in Québec. The *Refus global* did not really place the blame on the other; it was

more interested in exposing the extent to which the Québécois were alienated.

Nonetheless, it does end up establishing the Québécois, in that cultural alienation, as a

colonized people.

In Paul Chamberland's essays, the author is already much clearer in his depiction

of the sources of alienation in Québec and its culprits:

la société canadienne-française fut toujours une société mineure,

infériorisée; une société coloniale où le rôle du colonisateur fut joué

d'abord par l'Angleterre puis par le Canada anglais. [...] Cette condition de

colonisés, de minoritaires, nous a faits ce que nous sommes, et c'est en elle

que nous pouvons découvrir la raison première de notre aliénation.

(Chamberland, *Parti* 94)

Hard nationalist authors like Chamberland do not hesitate in defining Québec as a colony

of occupation. They would see colonialism as the definitive source of oppression and

alienation in Québec. Chamberland is also very clear as to where he finds his inspiration

Je recommanderais fort à Peter Elliott [Pierre Elliott Trudeau] de relire

"Les Damnés de la terre" [...] Oh! je sais, ils [anti-nationalists and

universalists] tiennent une réponse toute prête: le Québec, ce n'est pas

comme l'Algérie, comme le Cuba, etc. Nous le savions pas! Ce qu'ils se

refusent à voir, c'est que nous transformons, en l'appliquant à notre

situation, le sens des termes "colonisation" et "décolonisation".

(Chamberland, *Parti* 121)

At least Chamberland is willing to accept that the Québécois are not in exactly the same

situation as other colonized peoples, and that colonialism takes on a specific meaning in

Québec. We also see in this passage that there were many Québécois who refused to

appropriate anti-colonial discourses, thinking them inappropriate to the Québécois

context. The appropriation of anti-colonial discourses was not a 'flash in the pan'

phenomenon, it was extremely present in Québécois identity at the time, and is still present

- admittedly to a lesser degree - in Québécois culture today.

So understanding Québécois alienation as the result of colonialism is central to our understanding of Québécois identity. Pierre Maheu, for instance, writes that "[l]'aliénation dont nous [Québécois] avons souffert individuellement ne faisait que refléter celle d'un peuple qui, relativement au contexte nord-américain, est sous-développé, parce qu'il est COLONISÉ" (Maheu 23). Even though the alienation felt by the Québécois in the 1960's is closer to what Taylor would define as 'oppression', the authors of the day did in fact use the term 'alienation'. This alienation is seen in Paul Chamberland's *L'Afficheur hurle*:

> Je n'aurai plus d'autre discours que mon quotidien
>
> désespoir ce que je suis ce qu'ils ont fait de moi de ma
>
> terre dépossédée mon peuple dépaysé ma chair et ma
>
> substance Québec aux mains des autres livrée prosti-
>
> tuée   (Chamberland, *Afficheur* 128)

Here we see Chamberland's appropriation of Jacques Berque's theory of dispossession, which helps him define his despair. By stating that the only discourse available to him is that of despair, Chamberland is in a sense expressing a view akin to Spivak's silence. Unlike Spivak though, the alienated author does see a recourse other than falling into silence: being aware of his alienation, he can howl against it. This howling may lack coherence, which is a symptom of his alienation, but it is at least a concrete act.

Seeing themselves as a colonized people, and thereby feeling thoroughly alienated, the Québécois have often constructed similarities between themselves and what they call *les nègres*. Given the Québécois context, I believe that the term *nègre* should not be

interpreted as the typically pejorative and entirely offensive term 'nigger.' The Québécois usage of this word is not a way of diminishing other racial communities, it is a way of identifying with them. Max Dorsinville makes a similar observation in *Le pays natal*:

> C'est dans l'optique d'une histoire modelée par l'assujettissement à une puissance étrangère que certains théoriciens québécois de la dernière décennie proclameront leur solidarité avec le Tiers-Monde. Symboliquement, le Québec se reconnaît dans l'image renversée de la «négritude» (Dorsinville 118)

Thus the term *nègre* is commonly used to describe a dominated or subordinated individual or community; it is another way of saying 'member of the Third World.' It is generally accepted today for African Americans to use the term 'nigger' when referring to themselves (this is a more *authentic* case of appropriation). The Québécois, when using *nègre*, are doing a similar thing. This is obviously not always the case; there are racist Québécois, as there are racists all around the world. But it should be noted that the authors who concern me here use *nègre* not in hatred but out of compassion for those who are in similar predicaments.

The best known usage of *nègre* to describe the Québécois would come from Pierre Vallières in 1968 with his publication of *Nègres blancs d'Amérique*. The concept of the *nègre blanc* to describe the Québécois is a fascinating example of appropriation. It exemplifies the Québécois's self-portrait as a dominated, subjugated and alienated community. *Nègres blancs d'Amérique* offers an excellent depiction of Québécois

alienation of the time and describes what many Québécois today are still struggling to escape from.

But Vallières was not the first to use the term *nègre* to describe the Québécois. Amongst the earliest references to the term, is surprisingly from authors who would later become soft nationalists or even federalists. In an article in the *Devoir* in 1958, Andrée Laurendeau - who would later preside over the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism - wrote "La théorie du roi nègre" (Laurendeau 1958). In his article, Laurendeau is critical of the political elite in Québec (Duplessis in particular), the clergy and the French Canadian bourgeoisie who were functioning as a comprador class selling out the Québécois people to gain more wealth or power. What is even more surprising, as Stéphane Kelly points out, is that Pierre Elliott Trudeau, while not using term *roi nègre* specifically, clearly replicated Laurendeau's argument but by being a little more critical of the clergy and the Québécois's subservience to it (Kelly 15). By using the expression *roi nègre*, Laurendeau (and Trudeau by association) portrayed the Québécois as an oppressed people. And by extension, because almost every African community or community of African descent at the time was colonized, both authors were involved in a discourse that suggested that the Québécois were colonized as well. What makes Trudeau different is that, unlike most of his contemporaries, he seemed to be more influenced by the views developed by the Québec (city) historians; views that suggested that the Québécois were to blame for their own alienation and lack of modern values.

Chamberland, also uses the expression *nègre* to describe the Québécois and their

alienation: "[...] je suis le mal que vous m'avez fait je suis ce que / vous avez fait de moi

Dorchester Colbourne Durham / je suis la négraille dans la galère Amérique [...]"

(Chamberland, *Afficheur* 107). Here, we see Chamberland refer to the Annexation as the

event that placed the Québécois in a *nègre* position. Chamberland even uses the term

nègre blanc in this next passage: "je suis cubain je suis nègre nègre-blanc québécois"

(Chamberland, *Afficheur*). By using the term *nègres blancs* to describe themselves, the

Québécois were clearly stating that regardless of their European origins, and even of their

relative wealth, they were still just as colonized as the colonies of occupation which were

found typically in the Third World, or in Third-World-like contexts. As such, the anti-

colonial writings designed to liberate those cultures could also be applied to Québec.

Obviously, Québécois alienation was not felt on a racial level but rather on a

linguistic one. As a linguistic community, the Québécois distinguish themselves from the

English-speaking North American majority. And it was on a linguistic level that the

Québécois felt most threatened by that majority. Again, Québécois theorists could look

towards anti-colonial works for inspiration. In *Peau Noire, Masques blancs*, Fanon

develops the idea that to use a language is to assume a culture. Language is therefore not

seen uniquely as a communicational tool, it embodies and gives shape to the culture that

uses it. In *Le colonialisme au Québec*, André d'Allemagne writes along the same lines:

La langue est sans doute le principal véhicule et le plus fidèle reflet d'une

culture. On sait l'importance que les Canadiens français ont toujours

attachée à ce qu'ils appellent leur «survivance» linguistique: ils en ont fait

le symbole de toutes leurs résistances (D'Allemagne 79)

In other words, when a culture's language is threatened, its cultural existence is threatened

as well. Pierre Vadeboncoeur makes a similar point when he writes: "Il y a ceci de tout à

fait nouveau: langue, culture, liberté et pouvoir sont aujourd'hui absolument

indissociables" (Vadeboncoeur, *dernière* 60).

In Québec, the presence of the English language has often been seen as an

intrusion, if not an outright invasion. The presence of both French and English has

certainly not always been seen as a happy marriage. As Depuis-Déri writes: "Les langues

ne sont pas neutres, et l'anglais n'est pas un simple outil de communication. L'anglais est

impérialiste, ce qui n'empêche pas d'exercer un attrait véritable auprès de nombreux

individus" (Depuis-Déri, in Ancelovici et al. 213). When given the choice between two

languages, the colonized will more often than not choose the language of the powerful, of

the dominant. In Québec, this meant that too many Québécois would choose to speak and

work in English rather than in French. By immersing themselves in the language of the

colonizer, those Québécois would find themselves stuck in between two realities, between

two frames of reference, no longer feeling quite at home in either. Memmi comments on

this problem: "Si le bilingue colonial a d'avantage de connaître deux langues, il n'en

maîtrise totalement aucune" (Memmi 128). This point of view is also seen in Québécois

texts: "La langue est un instrument de culture [...] Si on ne la possède pas, on a une

culture sclérosée. C'est la langue qui structure la culture. Ainsi, le franglais que nous

utilisons donne une culture "bâtarde" (Jean-Marc Piotte, qtd in Chamberland, *Parti* 66).
The loss of language in Québec, has always meant the extinction of the Québécois as a
community.

In "Décoloniser la langue" and "Le bilingue de naissance," Gaston Miron deals
with the problems surrounding the loss of language in Québec. The strong tie between
language and identity is seen in this next passage: "la langue ici opère dans un contexte
global issu d'un colonialisme qui se prolonge dans des structures semi-coloniales. La
langue, au même titre que l'homme québécois, colonisé, est une langue dominée" (Miron
211). Miron cannot disassociate the French language from the Québécois individual. If
one disappears so does the other. Miron also looks towards Algerian anti-colonialism to
ground his views: "Aujourd'hui, en se décolonisant, ils [les Algériens] réapprennent
l'arabe. Le fait qu'ils ne parlaient plus leur langue, c'était une victoire du colonisateur.
Continuons à parler le québécois, ou bien réapprenons le québécois!" (Miron 218) .
Again, whether or not such analogies are happy or appropriate does not concern me here.
My only interest is in pointing out that such analogies were in fact made. We see in Miron
a general attitude that was present in innumerable Québécois texts since the inception of
Québécois identity, an attitude suggesting that if the Québécois do not preserve their
language they will not survive: "Tant que le Québec ne possédera pas les instruments
politiques de sa culture et de son destin, la contrainte socio-économique anglophone
jouera à toutes fins pratiques ce rôle de coercition et d'unilinguisme" (Miron 232). The

Québécois have always felt threatened by discrimination, but also and perhaps more so by assimilation.

It is this fear of assimilation that allows the Québécois to speak of 'cultural genocide.' As I have already mentioned, cultural genocide is a another theme that is very present in Québécois culture. We've already seen it with Brunet, and we also see it with Chamberland: "[Québécois nationalism] exprime l'acte décisif de légitime défense d'un peuple victime de génocide culturel" (Chamberland, *Parti* 135). But is cultural genocide by assimilation really possible? According to Memmi assimilation does not really happen: "dans le cadre colonial, l'assimilation s'est révélée impossible" (Memmi 140). We must understand that Memmi's views on this matter rely on a specific racial and historical context. Given this context, Memmi suggests that the colonizer will want the colonized to adopt its culture, but it will not let the colonized integrate fully into its identity; the colonized will always be seen as the other regardless of how well it has assimilated the colonizer's culture. But in the case of Québec, true assimilation is a possibility, or rather a threat. If the Québécois chose to speak English instead of French, that they would in fact become a fully functioning part of Canadian identity; and it would certainly be at the cost of a Québécois identity. The threat of assimilation and subsequent cultural genocide is what makes it difficult for the Québécois to see themselves as Canadians.

3.2 The Appropriation of Anti-Colonial Violence

I have shown that the Québécois have often felt alienated and oppressed on a cultural (i.e. linguistic) level. This alienation allowed them to identify with colonies of occupation and the anti-colonial writings that were produced by them. But those colonies of occupation were also alienated on economic and political levels. Being relatively well off, one would think that the Québécois appropriation of anti-colonial theories would have started to break down. But this was not the case. The Québécois also saw their alienation as something that extended beyond the cultural plane. As Lise Gauvin writes: "Cette aliénation existe à tout les niveaux. Politique [...] Économique [...] Culturel [...]" (Gauvin 11) . The best known work on the breadth of colonialism in Québec is d'Allemagne's *Le colonialsme au Québec* in which he precedes Gauvin by almost a decade in describing in great detail the cultural, the social, the political and the economic colonial alienation of the Québécois (D'Allemagne 2000 - originally published in 1966). What interests me the most here is how the political and especially the economic alienation perceived by the Québécois of the pre-October Crisis period led them to the appropriation of *violent* and *revolutionary* anti-colonial discourses.

The pre-October Crisis Québécois produced a great deal of literature that can only be described as combative. Combative literature is defined by Fanon as follows:

C'est la littérature de combat proprement dite, en ce sens qu'elle convoque

tout un peuple à la lutte pour l'existence nationale. Littérature de combat

parce qu'elle informe la conscience nationale, lui donne forme et contours

et lui ouvre de nouvelles et illimitées perspectives. (Fanon 179)

The purpose of combative literature is to incite the people to revolt or at least to react

against the colonizer. It is what Fanon meant when he writes of *secouer le peuple*. Pierre

Vallières saw his own literary activity in much the same way: "J'avais en tête de

transformer cette revue (*Cité libre*), qui avait jusqu'alors servi à promouvoir les intérêts

de la bourgeoisie libérale, en une arme de combat pour les travailleurs québécois"

(Vallières 292). We can clearly see in Vallières's work the same Marxist tone as one can

see in much of the anti-colonial texts of the time. To Vallières and to many of his

contemporaries, it was the masses that were mostly colonized and they had to take charge

of the revolution.

Many of the Québécois of the pre-October Crisis era felt that there was a French

Canadian elite in Québec that benefited from the Québécois' colonial alienation. This

again, was a criticism of a comprador-like situation. It was frequently argued that the

bourgeoisie libérale and the clergy were all too happy to maintain a status quo that

sustained their own economic power and political influence: "tout en s'obstinant à prêcher

'le retour à la terre', 'l'achat chez nous' et 'l'appel de la race', le clergé et la petite

bourgeoisie profitaient de l'industrialisation du Québec, particulièrement dans la région de

Montréal" (Vallières 46). Vallières and many of his contemporaries would echo Fanon's

view that, "[n]ous sommes tous en train de nous salir les mains dans les marais notre sol et

le vide effroyable de nos cerveaux. Tout spectateur est un lâche ou un traître (Fanon 148).

Those who would preach for the status quo were labelled traitors by the Québécois who would appropriate anti-colonial revolutionary discourses.

On a political level, the pre-October Crisis Québécois did have a certain measure of control. But even it was seen as a smokescreen, creating an illusion that the Québécois people could control their destiny:

> l'unique action politique que leur [la population québécoise] permet
>
> d'exercer le système est ce fameux "droit de vote", qui est l'absurde liberté
>
> de choisir entre deux, trois, cinq ou huit voleurs, celui à qui l'on veut
>
> s'accorder le privilège d'exploiter la masse. (Vallières 51)

According to Vallières, true political power had to be given to the workers, the proleteriat, if there was to be a real liberation in Québec. Pierre Maheu, another important revolutionary Québécois author, shared Vallères views:

> L'avènement d'un Québec indépendant dominé par la bourgeoisie
>
> représenterait un grand pas sur le plan politique [...] Mais la lutte elle-
>
> même resterait à livrer. Nous ne serions pas plus avancés sur le plan
>
> économique de l'exploitation coloniale; nous n'aurions fait que passer à
>
> une forme plus subtile de domination: le néo-colonialisme. Si notre lutte de
>
> décolonisation doit être totale, notre adversaire ultime c'est la bourgeoisie
>
> nationale elle-même, et derrière elle le capital canadian et yankee. (Maheu
>
> 237)

So, we can see that a certain group of Québécois writers, who had incidentally all contributed at one point or another to the journal *Parti pris*, did not feel that even political independence was sufficient for Québec. They were critical of the Québécois's Quiet Revolution and of sovereignty-associationists, feeling that a 'real' and consequently 'violent' revolution was the only path to national (cultural, political *and* economic) liberation. They saw the Quiet revolution as the bourgeois' affirmation, not the Québécois peoples', as Chamberland suggests: "La 'révolution tranquille' de Lesage serait tranquille parce que bourgeoise" (Chamberland, *Parti* 45). In other words, the above mentioned authors, as well as a surprising portion of the Québécois population, felt that the anti-colonial revolutionary movements that were prominent at the time in Africa, Asia and Latin America could (and should) also be extended to the Québécois scenario.

In the anti-colonial movement, revolution was seen as an inevitable step towards freedom from colonial domination and alienation. As Memmi writes: "Pour voir la guérison complète du colonisé, il faut que cesse totalement son aliénation: il faut attendre la disparition complète de la colonisation, c'est-à-dire période de révolte" (Memmi 155). Anti-colonial theorists demonstrated how colonialism, by dominating and eroding an other's culture, was an act of violence against the colonized people. This violence was obvious in aggressive acts of repression, or proscription; but violence was also inflicted in more subtle forms of coercion, in prescriptive practises (see chapter 1) that would make the colonized direct acts of violence towards themselves; self-loathing is another symptom of alienation. Vallières felt that the Québécois were victims of this type of violence: "Jouir

de la vie [...] en se saoûlant en fin de semaine, en 'buvant sa paye', en battant sa femme et

ses enfants, et en se détruisant dans des colères inutiles" (Vallières 80). Violence was

therefore theorized as the only means by which a colonized people could exorcize its

inferiority complex and liberate itself from its own alienation. This is made clear in

Fanon's text: "La décolonisation est toujours un phénomène violent" (Fanon 29), or again

"[...] au niveau des individus, la violence désintoxique. Elle débarasse le colonisé de son

complexe d'infériorité" (Fanon 70). Perhaps Vallières summarises this thought best when

he writes: "en somme, une révolution populaire victorieuse, est une psychanalyse

collective" (Vallières 323). Revolution is a counter-discourse to (colonial) violence.

So combative literature promoting violence became quite popular in Québec

during the period leading up to the October Crisis. Authors like Chamberland felt that true

nationalism had to be violent: "Au Québec, le sentiment national est violemment

revendicateur, ce qui en fait un nationalisme" (Chamberland, *Parti* 16). Like Chamberland,

Vallières insisted that the Québécois had to pose concrete acts in order to free themselves

from their colonial alienation, "[v]ous êtes tous complices de l'exploitation, de

l'obscurantisme et de l'injustice tant que vous ne posez pas des ACTES. Des ACTES, pas

des sermons!" (Vallières 192). This type of revolutionary counter-discourse was also felt

in many Québécois novels, an outstanding example of this is Hubert Aquin's *Prochain

épisode* in which the narrator/protagonist was a member of the FLQ: "Seule l'action

insaisissable et meurtrière de la guérilla sera considérée comme historique; seul le

désespoir agi sera reconnu comme révolutionnaire" (Aquin, *Prochain* 90). The theme of

violence as cathartic release from colonial oppression is also very present in Aquin's *Trou de mémoire*. Jacques Cardinal's work *Le Roman de l'histoire* (1993) analyses both these novels and exposes in them the link between colonialism, violence and alienation. Although most of Aquin's writing is permeated with a certain angst and ambivalence concerning actual solutions to Québec's problems, this last passage suggests also that violent action is the Québécois' only true recourse.

In their push for revolution, Québécois writers would often look back to the *Patriotes* rebellion as a source of inspiration. This process is a combination of an indigenising discourse and of counter-discursive violence. Jacques Ferron's play *Les grands soleils* is about the 1837 rebellion and has Chénier as one of its main characters. Ferron wrote the play seeing similarities between the Québec uprising of 1837 and the mounting tension in 1960's Québec. In the play, the author conveys the feeling that it is only in revolt that the Québécois can really come alive:

> Chénier: Qu'est-ce qui t'étonne Mithridate?
>
> Mithridate: Qu'entre le cri de l'enfant et le silence des morts, on soit si futile.
>
> Chénier: Pas toujours.
>
> Mithridate: Par bonheur, il y a des moments comme celui-ci.
>
> Chénier: Si courts!
>
> Mithridate: Inoubliables.   (Ferron 516)

This scene suggests that it is in battle that the Québécois can find meaning in his or her existence. Chamberland's *L'Afficheur hurle* also makes strong references to Québec's past:

> après que nous avons transgressé l'image de nous-mêmes
>
> selon les stauts de sa majesté l'impératrice des Indes
>
> après les dernières réserves et les dernières politesses [...]
>
> alors que nous apprenons l'amérindienne colère
>
> nous apprenons la férocité de nos racines
>
> nous sommes délinquants nous sommes criminels
>
> nous sommes libres de vos lois
>
> nous sommes Riel et Chénier   (Chamberland, *Afficheur* 137)

Here, we not only get a reference to the *Patriotes* but also to Louis Riel, another figure of violent resistance to the colonizer. His reference to an 'Amerindian anger' is yet another interesting example of indigenisation.

These references to the past, and especially to the *Patriotes* rebellion, did not fall on deaf ears. They had a direct influence on the FLQ, as we can see in their manifesto:

> Depuis la Seconde Guerre mondiale, les divers peuples dominés du monde
>
> brisent leurs chaînes afin de conquérir la liberté à laquelle ils ont droit.
>
> Après tant d'autres, le peuple québécois en a assez de subir la domination
>
> du colonialisme. [...] Patriotes du Québec, aux armes! L'heure de la

révolution est arrivée! L'indépendance ou la mort! (*Manifeste du FLQ*, qtd

in Fournier 40-41)

The FLQ bombings began in the 1960's and their targets were the Anglophone

establishment and Anglophone community in Québec. It is safe to say in hindsight that the

majority of the Québécois did not approve of such violent tactics, especially when they

resulted in killings. But it is important to realize that there was a certain climate in

Québec, that did share a likeness to colonies of occupation involved in anti-colonial

warfare, and in which anti-colonial violence did seem appropriate to many individuals.

Whether they were dominant or not, violent discourses were very present in Québec at the

time. The same certainly cannot be said of Canada. The very presence of such active

resistance already establishes a significant difference between Québécois and Canadian

identities. Canadian resistance to colonial influence and cultural alienation has always been

limited, if present at all, to *passive* modes of counter-discursive resistance. For instance,

Canadian authors like Dennis Lee or George Grant may have been involved in certain

discourses of indigenisation and even in discourses exposing their alienation to a dominant

other; but never would they have suggested that it would be acceptable or appropriate to

throw Molotov cocktails at the British and American embassies.

The presence of violent counter-discourses in Québec is an intriguing

phenomenon because it confirms, yet again, that many Québécois did see themselves as a

colony of occupation. However the failure of the FLQ in gaining public support during the

October Crisis is equally as interesting. Whatever support they did have was almost

completely eroded with the killing of Pierre Laporte. In a press conference the day that Laporte's body was found, sovereigntist leader René Lévesque accused the terrorists of being "une bande de voyous" (Spry, 1994). On a side note, Pierre Vallières appears to be convinced still today that Laporte's death was the result of a Canadian conspiracy aimed at discrediting the FLQ who, according to Vallières, had no intention of killing him - what was there to gain? (Lafond, 1994). It is also interesting to note that British diplomat James Cross was set free while Pierre Laporte, a symbol of the comprador class, was assassinated.

During the October Crisis, and even before as was the case with Vallières and Chagnon, most of the authors who had encouraged violent action in their works were arrested. In other words, the appropriation of anti-colonial violence was censored proscriptively by the Canadian (and much of the Québécois) establishment. The only real conclusion to be drawn from this is that although the Québécois did see themselves as colonized and alienated, it was not to an extent that could justify violent or revolutionary tactics. This, nevertheless, did not imply that they were now willing to portray themselves as a settler colony either.

3.3 The African American Connection:

Bilingualism Versus Biculturalism

The complete failure of anti-colonial counter-discourses of violence and revolution in Québec meant that the Québécois had to redefine and reformulate their identitarian resistance. The Québécois could no longer realistically identify with Algerian or Cuban nationalisms as they did in the 1950's and 1960's. Roughly speaking, in the pre-October Crisis years, hard nationalists were revolutionaries (those who would act violently), soft nationalists were sovereigntists (those who would act politically), and anti-nationalists or federalists were those who wanted to maintain the status quo (those who would act only within the framework of a Canadian confederation). After the October Crisis there was a shift in which the mantle of hard nationalism was granted to sovereigntists while federalists became soft nationalists. The camp that had promoted the status quo was infused with those who, shocked by the events leading up to the October Crisis, felt that political change had to happen for Québec but could still be achieved while remaining within the Constitution. The pre-October Crisis status quo had therefore been almost completely rejected; rather than maintaining the already existing structures of power, the new federalists understood that the Québécois had to develop ways to assert themselves *within* Canada as equal partners. Daniel Johnson's theory of *Égalité ou indépendance* (1965) became closer to the norm in Québec. So the goal of soft and hard nationalists became quite similar: soft nationalists felt that equality could been achieved while remaining in Canada while hard nationalists felt that equality without independence was a

pipe-dream. In both cases, the objective was the same, the assertion of Québécois identity by establishing it as an equal partner (at least culturally) to the rest of Canada. Separatists and anti-nationalists of the older sort still existed, of course, and still do today, but they were relegated to extreme ends of the political and identitarian spectrums of Québécois society. Hard nationalists will criticise the soft nationalist camp for their anti-nationalist extremists, and soft nationalists will criticise the hard nationalist camp for their separatist extremists.

Either way, no longer believing in revolutionary violence as a viable solution, the Québécois had to find a new framework from which they could resist. The relative wealth of the Québécois made it impossible for them to truly speak of *economic* alienation and as such they could no longer place themselves alongside Third World communities. Although there were economic injustices drawn on linguistic/national lines in Québec, the Quiet Revolution with its language reforms and the nationalisation of hydro-electricity in the 1960's showed the Québécois that, unlike the Algerian context, the balance of power could be shifted without an actual revolution. But this did not mean that the Québécois felt that the struggle for recognition was over, nor did it mean that they were no longer alienated. It is in the post-1970 period that the Québécois really began identifying with communities like the Irish, or African Americans.

The connection with the Irish was established a long time ago, as Stéphane Kelly remarks:

En effet, de tous les groupes marginaux auxquels s'identifient les patriotes,

le plus souvent évoqué est celui des Irlandais. L'image des catholiques de

l'Irlande exprime avec éloquence le sentiment d'aliénation de la nation

canadienne face à l'Angleterre. Papineau évoque à de nombreuses reprises

la situation commune de ces deux peuples au sein de l'Empire britannique,

situation qui explique pourquoi la communauté irlandaise penche du côté

de la cause patriote. (Kelly 145)

But the connection between African Americans and the Québécois will be what interests

me here. This connection, as seen previously, has considerable precedence. It is in the

references to the Québécois being the *nègres blancs d'Amérique* that we first see it, and

that definition is still occasionally used today to depict Québécois alienation. Of course the

Québécois were never slaves and were somewhat wealthier, so the analogy does not really

work; but the Québécois were used as cheap labour by Canadians up to the 1970's, and

when they were told to speak English by Canadians, they were told to 'speak white.'

Regardless of whether or not the analogy is acceptable or not is irrelevant, what is

relevant is that the Québécois see a connection.

Chamberland writes of a fraternity between the Québécois and African Americans

in this next passage:

Quand j'irai à New York c'est vers Harlem que j'appa-

reillerai et non par exotisme j'ai trop le souci de

parentés précises je connais le goût de la matraque à

Alabama   Il y a des fraternités dans le malheur que

nos libertés civiles savent mal dissimuler (Chamberland, *Afficheur* 130)

This 'fraternity' was confirmed in the dealings between the FLQ and certain African

American movements. In his work, Louis Fournier exposes the ties the FLQ had with the

Black Liberation Front, an organization inspired by the nationalistic and radical stance of

Malcolm X (Fournier 95). Fournier also mentions that Vallières and Chagnon, before

getting arrested in New York, made contact with Stokely Carmichael, a leader of the

Black Power movement, and later of the Black Panther's Party whose philosophy was also

influenced by Malcolm X and Eldridge Cleaver (Fournier 138-139).

There are some interesting resemblances between Québécois and African

American resistance that need to be developed. Like the Québécois, African Americans

went through a revolutionary phase. But also like the Québécois, violent discourses

receded or were not as dominant as discourses of political nationalism. We do not always

realize the extent to which African American nationalism promoted separation; what we

tend to remember are the discourses of integration of the civil-rights movement as

especially seen in the speeches and writings of Martin Luther King Jr. But there were also

organisations like the Nation of Islam that had in its program and position statements such

as: "We want our people in America whose parents or grandparents were descendants

from slaves to be allowed to establish a separate state or territory of their own" (Elijah

Muhammad, qtd in Marable et al. 425) The separatist ideals behind the Nation of Islam or

the Black Liberation Front had seduced an important portion of the African American

community of the time. One of its most important and well-known spokesman was of course Malcolm X. Like in Québec, these separatist ideals stemmed from a strong sense of cultural alienation which was interpreted as the result of colonialism. Anti-colonial rhetoric was also widespread in African American identitarian writing and would be the basis for the Black Liberation front and the Black Panther movement.

But one could argue that Malcolm X's defection from the Nation of Islam towards a softer stance on African American nationalism is somewhat similar to the shift in Québécois society from revolutionary anti-colonial discourses to discourses of political sovereignty - which were nonetheless still anti-colonial. As Malcolm X writes, "[t]he political philosophy of black nationalism means that the black man should control the politics and the politicians in his own community; no more" (Malcolm X, qtd in Marable et al. 433). Despite his shift in stance, Malcolm X would remain a radical and extremely resistant icon, and he often serves as a contrast to Martin Luther King Jr's position on integration.

In a position paper on Black Power by the SNCC (Student *Nonviolent* Coordinating Committee), we can clearly see anti-colonial influences:

> The broad masses of black people react to American society in the same
> manner as colonial peoples react to the West in Africa, and Latin America,
> and has the same relationship - that of the colonized toward the colonizer.
> (SNCC, qtd in Marable et al. 453)

Like in Québec this point of view which had at first led to violent discourses was recycled

to inspire the discourses of self-determination or sovereignty. As the SNCC writes:

> If we are to proceed toward true liberation, we must cut ourselves off from
>
> white people. We must form our own institutions, credit unions, co-ops,
>
> politcal parties, write our own histories. (SNCC, qtd in Marable et al. 450)

We can certainly see a likeness between this type of discourse and the discourses of

Québécois sovereignty. The shift in African American culture from discourses of outright

separation (as seen in the Nation of Islam and in a younger Malcolm X) to discourses of

sovereignty (as seen in an older Malcolm X and in Black Power), is similar to the shift in

Québec from discourses of violent revolution (as seen predominantly with the FLQ and

Parti pris) to discourses of Québécois sovereignty (that dominated the hard nationalism of

the post-October Crisis period). In both cases, although the shift led to less radical forms

of counter-discursive tactics, they were still largely inspired by anti-colonial ideologies.

The advent of Black Power led to a split in African American identity that is also

similar to the split we still see in Québec today. Bayard Rustin was critical of Black

Power. We see this when he writes:

> Indeed, a serious split has already developed between the advocates of
>
> "black power" like Floyd McKissick of CORE and Stokely Carmichael of
>
> SNCC on the one hand, and Dr. Martin Luther King of SCLC, Roy
>
> Wilkins of the NAACP, and Whitney Young of the Urban League on the
>
> other. [...] I would contend that "black power" not only lacks any real

value for the civil-rights movement, but that its propagation is positively

harmful. It diverts the movement from a meaningful debate over strategy

and tactics, it isolates the Negro community, and it encourages the growth

of anti-Negro forces. (Rustin, qtd in Marable et al. 453)

It is interesting to see how both camps are striving for the same objectives - civil-rights -

but have developed divergent views on how to reach them. Stoke Carmichael felt that

African Americans had to assert themselves independently from white America - "Black

people must do things for themselves" (Carmichael, qtd in Marable et al. 447) - while

authors like Rustin, inspired by King, felt that dialogue and collaboration were necessary

to achieve the goals of the civil-rights movement.

After the October Crisis, the Québécois were forced to reevaluate their objectives

since outright revolution or liberation through violence was clearly no longer an option.

The concept of sovereignty-association, which had been developed in the 1960's but was

rejected as too weak a stance by the more revolutionary writers, became the only viable

alternative for the hard nationalist camp. Those revolutionary authors had to admit that

sovereignty-association was better than nothing; Pierre Maheu in 1978 remarks that:

Nous avons gagné? Oui, nous serons «peut-être kek-chose comme un

grand peuple», le Québec un état souverain-associé au Canada et à

l'OTAN, avec son vrai gouvernement, sa baie James, ses centrales

nucléaires, ses compagnies de papier bien subventionnées... mais nous

avons perdu: la révolution, y en a pas eu, y en aura pas de si tôt. En

réalité... (Maheu 286)

Outright separation, albeit still valued as a possibility, became more peripheral to the

central sovereignty-association discourse which had come to dominate hard nationalist

thinking.

The foremost figure of the sovereignty-association movement in Québec was René

Lévesque. After the October Crisis, Lévesque became the recognized leader of the hard

nationalist camp. His main adversary was of course Pierre Elliott Trudeau. We see in

Lévesque and Trudeau's positions on Québécois nationalism and identity a rift that is

reminiscent of the spilt described by Rustin in the African American community. Both

Lévesque and Trudeau were aware of Québec's alienation and the plight of French

Canadians. The difference, once again, between the two is the counter-discursive

strategies that comprised their respective solutions to the problem.

I would argue that the ideologies of both Trudeau and Lévesque were influenced

by André Laurendeau and his views expressed in *the Royal Commission on Bilingualism

and Biculturalism*. Laurendeau and Dunton's report suggested that to save Canada from

the looming political and cultural crisis which would mark its demise, it had to not only

become an officially bilingual state, but it would also have to recognize Canada's national

duality. In its *Preliminary Report*, the B&B Commission states that "Canada, without

being fully conscious of the fact, is passing through the greatest crisis in its history"

(Preliminary Report, qtd in Langlois 4). It is important to remember that the B&B

Commission had already developed the idea that Canada should be defined as a binational

state. And it is interesting to see how Laurendeau's vision for Canada was torn apart *by*

both sides of the nationalist dogma.

In 1968, Trudeau followed some of Laurendeau's recommendations by

establishing the Official Languages Act of Canada. The philosophy behind this was to

ensure that French Canadians could feel at home throughout Canada, and not only in

Québec. Although the Official Languages Act did help the dialogue between Québécois

and Canadians, it was more successful in undermining the discourses of sovereignty-

association in Québec (Langlois 9). By making Canada officially bilingual, many

Québécois feel that Trudeau was basically trying to take the steam out of Québécois hard

nationalism by integrating the Québécois into the rest of Canada.

But as Simon Langlois suggested in a conference commemorating the 40th

anniversary of the B&B commission, we tend to forget Laurendeau's recommendations

concerning biculturalism. It should be noted that the term 'biculturalism' is poorly chosen.

Biculturalism does not mean that Canada is comprised of two ethnically homogenous

groups. Laurendeau was developing the view that is more commonly defined today as

national duality or binationalism. Laurendeau was already fully aware of the increasing

multiculturalism in both Canada and Québec. But there were still two dominant identities

in Canada:

> The chief protagonists, whether they are entirely conscious of it or not, are
>
> French-speaking Quebec and English-speaking Canada. And it seems to us
>
> to be no longer the traditional conflict between a majority and a minority. It
>
> is rather a conflict between two majorities: that which is a majority in all
>
> Canada, and that which is a majority in the entity of Québec. (*Preliminary*
>
> *Report*, qtd in Langlois 4)

It is interesting to see how Laurendeau, a person understood to have supported national

unity by presiding over the B&B Commission, was actually proposing a unity *between two*

nations. The views expressed in the B&B Commission suggest that, by seeing themselves

as a majority, the Québécois were already a separate national community. It is perhaps this

shift from describing onself as a minority, dominated by the other, to describing oneself as

a majority that is the real basis of Québécois nationalism (both soft and hard). In wanting

to be recognized as a majority by the other, the Québécois are struggling to recapture the

position and some of the power they had before the Annexation. This struggle is perhaps

symbolic in that the Québécois are neither demographically nor economically on an equal

footing with Canadians today; but to the Québécois, this does not make the struggle any

less valid or just.

The idea of national duality in Canada was not forgotten by sovereigntists. The

hard nationalism of the post-October Crisis period essentially embodies the

recommendations of a recognized bicultural state. As Langlois mentions, the B&B

Commission's recommendations were corrupted when the idea of national bilingualism

was separated from the ideals behind biculturalism. While Trudeau apparently only took into account the bilingual aspect of the report, Lévesque focussed entirely on its bicultural themes. Lévesque was never interested in a complete separation of Québec from Canada. He wanted sovereignty-association for Québec. The reason Canadians tend to forget this important distinction is that the Lévesque camp also included the separatists and revolutionary extremists of the pre-October Crisis period. Lévesque's views, and those of his followers, push towards a certain segregation while Trudeau and his followers pushed for integration.

The segregationist and integrationist approaches of Lévesque and Trudeau bring us back to the African American connection. I am not suggesting that the politics of identity in Québec are a direct appropriation of the African American experience, but the similarities between the two are perhaps slightly more than coincidental. The Québécois have clearly demonstrated a certain identification with African Americans by defining themselves as the *nègres blancs d'Amérique*; and I have already attempted to establish a connection in both communities' appropriation of anti-colonial discourses as well as in both communities' rejection of violence. Is it so impossible, then, that the very public debates over civil-rights in the United States could have had an influence on the Québec question which was truly taking shape at roughly the same time? I have demonstrated how Québécois counter-discourses bred certain types of nationalisms and how the same sort of counter-discourses had led to similar nationalisms in the African American community. Both communities had gone through a violent phase which then shifted and settled into

similar hard nationalisms that promoted a certain degree of autonomy rather than integration. Would it be so shocking, then, to suggest the Trudeau had been inspired by the same discourses that had been prevalent in Martin Luther King's integrationist approach? As with King in the African American context, Trudeau felt that the Québécois should assert themselves not by taking refuge in isolationism and nationalism, but by imposing themselves and taking their rightful place in Canada. For Trudeau, being inherently adverse to all forms of nationalism, the Québécois had to mix themselves into the rest of Canada, thereby transforming the Canadian identity itself, instead of establishing an equal partnership between the two national identities. Many Québécois nationalists (soft and hard) feel that Trudeau betrayed the Québécois, and would not agree with my interpretation. I, however, feel that connecting Trudeau's position on Québec to Martin Luther King's position on African Americans gives us a fairer picture of Trudeau. As Vadeboncoeur remarks, "Le cas de Trudeau est spéciale. A l'encontre de bien des choses qui s'écrivent contre lui, je n'ai pas la moindre hésitation à affirmer qu'il ne trahit pas, qu'il ne peut trahir, mais qu'il est au contraire scrupuleusement fidèle à sa pensée" (Vadeboncoeur, *dernière* 53); Trudeau just wanted to help the Québécois in the only way he felt possible.

The problem, and this is where the African American connection breaks down, is that although the Québécois and African Americans may share similar forms of alienation, they do not share geopolitical realities. While African Americans were spread throughout the United States, around 90% of Québécois (French Canadians) were localized within the

established boundaries of Québec. As such, while integration was the only plausible solution to the African American problem, it was far less a realistic solution for the Québécois. So in Québec, the sovereignty-associationist, or segregationist approach has been a far more realistic solution than it could ever have been for African Americans. Furthermore, assimilation was never as much an issue for African Americans as it has been for the Québécois. African Americans (with the possible exception of Michael Jackson) cannot choose to abandon that which makes them distinct from the other; in this particular case, I would tend to agree with Memmi's views on assimilation. The Québécois, on the other hand, could decide to live in English instead of in French and were they to do so, they would in fact disappear into the Canadian majority; many of French Canadian descent living outside Québec have made this choice and are no longer seen as, nor do they see themselves as, members of a separate identity. The threat of assimilation has been construed as the strongest argument for the segregation of the Québécois from Canada.

The linguistic aspect of the Québécois context makes it, at first glance, different from the African American context. But upon further reflection, one can yet again draw points of comparison if one chooses to look at the *joual* phenomenon in Québécois language and the rising popularity of African American slang (ebonics). I will not go into any detail here, I merely want to point out the possibility of research on the subject. *Joual*, or Québécois slang, has already been compared to African American slang: "C'est [le joual] pratiquer une obscuration de la langue analogue au jive-talk, pig-latin, dog-latin, ou gumbo que les noirs américains utilisent pour égarer le Blanc dès qu'il s'approche d'eux"

(Gauvin 71). Both *joual* and ebonics have been described as something positive - the affirmation of difference - as well as something negative - as a deterioration of language which can lead to the deterioration of identity. Aware of both possibilities, Gaston Miron suggests that *joual* is nonetheless an alternative to assimilation: "Qu'on dise un arbe, âbe, un arbre, tant qu'on ne dit pas *tree* on parle québécois" (Miron 217). Today the Québécois will often assert themselves by stating proudly that they speak Québécois rather that French. Again, factoring in assimilation, one could wonder if the question of ebonics has the same importance in African American culture as *joual* has in Québec.

Even if we can find similarities between the African American and Québécois contexts, it is practically impossible to suggest that what worked for the former ought to work for the latter. Today, the anti-nationalist stance of Pierre Elliott Trudeau has lost all of the discursive dominance it might have had in the past in Québec. As I have already mentioned, even the federalist camp in Québec is generally not satisfied with the current state of affairs between Canada and Québec. Québécois federalists today are more likely to try to find ways to create a sense of equality between the two communities by attempting to amend the Constitution (i.e. the Meech Lake Accord and even the Charlottetown Accord). It is in this sense that I define these Québécois federalists as soft nationalists, in that they will also believe in the existence of a Québécois national identity. Both soft and hard nationalists are alike in that they seem to be more preoccupied with Laurendeau's biculturalism than with his views on bilingualism; today, more than ever before, it is in their tactics that they differ. There are still, of course, Québécois anti-

nationalists who will see Québec as just another province with its own unique culture, just as there are still many Québécois who feel that outright separation and even revolution are still valid options. But these, I feel, are the exceptions rather than the norm.

*   *   *

By appropriating anti-colonial counter-discourses, and by identifying with colonized peoples, especially African Americans, the Québécois have presented themselves and have constructed their identity as something that is threatened and alienated. But this alienation has paradoxically - in the ways mentioned in chapter 1 - given the Québécois something to fight for. And in this, the same alienation that threatens them also gives credence to their identity. In other words, because they are alienated - or because they fear alienation and assimilation - the Québécois have developed an extremely powerful sense of self. This, I feel, is something Canadians have always lacked. In general, we get the impression that Canadians are fearful of the analogies the Québécois have made in the past (and still make today), because it places them in the role of the 'bad guy.' Understandably, Canadians will sooner want to discredit such analogies instead of trying to understand why they are being made. This chapter has interpreted these analogies as the Québécois's attempt at appropriating the resistant strategies that have worked elsewhere. As we have seen, some of these strategies were more or less applicable in the Québécois context; as was the case with Trudeau's integrationist approach to Québec. The next chapter will look at how the counter-discourses prevalent in the post-October

Crisis nationalisms were institutionalised by the Québécois. We shall see that, by institutionalising their resistance, the Québécois distinguish themselves yet again from typical colonies of occupation. However, as I shall attempt to demonstrate, this demarcation has not prevented the Québécois from producing postcolonial counter-discourses that are rarely found in settler colonies.

CHAPTER 4

THE INSTITUTIONALISATION OF

QUÉBÉCOIS COUNTER-DISCOURSES

After the October Crisis, the Québécois started to create establishments and institutions to express their resistance. The events surrounding the October Crisis made it clear to most Québécois that revolutionary violence was not the way to go. Most of the hard nationalists mentioned in the previous section started rallying themselves around René Lévesque and his sovereignty-association party that would later become the *Parti québécois*. The *Parti québécois*, the many language laws in Québec, and the two Québec referendums, are but a few examples of institutionalised resistance. I interpret them as institutionalised because they take subversive resistance, or counter-discourses, and incorporate them into pre-existing political or legislative systems. Their goal is to beat the dominant other at its own game, working within the power structures that had already been established and that typically controlled them. This chapter will look at how these institutionalised counter-discourses function in part as settler colonial resistance but also how they have retained some of the anti-colonial qualities examined in the previous section.

There are at least seven events that stand out in what could be called the post-October Crisis era in Québec that have either instigated or have been manifestations of the institutionalisation of Québécois counter-discourses. I will mention these events here only in passing, as I am not so much interested in the events themselves, but on how they have

been seen as significant moments to many Québécois authors. To begin, there was the

election of the *Parti québecois* in 1976. For the first time in its history, the Québécois had

voted democratically into power a party whose very objective was to change the

relationship between Canada and Québec; to establish a state of equality between the two

national communities. Many Canadians have forgotten that the objective of the *Parti*

québécois was not to separate Québec from Canada, but to establish an equal partnership

with the rest of Canada; as René Lévesque mentions in one of his speeches:

> Mais c'est aux oubliettes qu'on a renvoyé la question fondamentale de
>
> l'égalité politique [developed by Laurendeau], la seule entre deux
>
> communautés nationales qui puisse sous-tendre et étayer toutes les autres
>
> formes d'égalité dont on peut parler. (Lévesque, qtd in Parti québécois.
>
> *Fier d'être Québécois* 27)

We see here how the Laurendeau-Dunton Royal Commission on Bilingualism &

Biculturalism was important to the post-October Crisis hard nationalists. This is often

surprising to those many Canadians whose image of Lévesque is one of a man driven by a

lust to destroy Canada. Even though Lévesque was a sovereigntist, his views were

inspired by the conclusions of a report commissioned by Lester B. Pearson in the 1960's.

Lévesque was essentially reclaiming Daniel Johnson Sr.'s views of equality or

independence. By ignoring Laurendeau's bicultural recommendations for Canada, Canada

- according to Lévesque - was unwilling to grant Québec equality status; consequently

Lévesque felt that he had to negotiate with Canada to achieve it - this was the basis for the

1980 Referendum. Part of the confusion of the 1980 Referendum was that both sides

(Yes-Sovereigntist and No-Federalist) seemed to be claiming similar objectives. As

Parizeau remarks:

> [Claude Ryan in 1980] leur disait, et je cite: «Un vote pour le Non consiste
>
> à demander aux Canadiens des autres provinces de reconnaître, à l'intérieur
>
> du Canada, deux nations.» Moi et mes collègues pensions que c'était
>
> impossible. Nous pensions, avec René Lévesque, que cette reconnaissance
>
> et cette égalité ne pouvaient être obtenues que par le truchement de la
>
> souveraineté. (Parizeau, qtd in Parti québécois. *Fier d'être Québécois* 67)

Trudeau had made a similar comment to Ryan's when he suggested that a vote for the No

side did not mean that the Québécois were satisfied with their current state of affairs; a No

vote, assured Trudeau, was a vote for change. The fact that Ryan's drive for equality was

not followed through after the No side won the Referendum has been the fuel for many

sovereigntist counter-discourses in Québec.

The language laws in Québec are another good example of institutionalised

resistance. Fearing that the French language - the most important cultural trait in Québec -

was threatened, the Québécois decided to protect it through pre-existing legislative

tactics. In 1977, upon the recommendations of Camille Laurin, the PQ established Bill

101, a more severe version of Bill 22 with broader applications. While Bill 22 had already

recognized French as the only official language of Québec, Bill 101 added certain

protective measures in order to counter the perceived threat of assimilation. These

measures were not seen as repressive by the Québécois, they were seen as defensive:

[...] l'essence de la loi 101 est d'être avant tout un programme d'accès à

l'égalité (Affirmative Action) du type de toutes les mesures législatives

réparatrices et correctrices de torts historiques existant dans le monde. De

plus, elle est une protection exceptionnelle contre une situation culturelle et

géolinguistique qui fait que le Québec de langue française constitue une

majorité-minorité non seulement parmi le Canada anglais mais sur le

continent nord-américain (dans un rapport socio-linguistique de un à

cinquante), face à la domination de l'anglais [...] (Le cercle Gérald-Godin

52-53)

Even though Bill 101 has almost always been seen as oppressive by the non-Francophone

populations of Québec and Canada, it has been supported by every elected government

since its establishment - even the Liberals.

The 1982 patriation of the Constitution without Québec's signature (*La nuit des

longs couteaux*) and the perception that the Meech Lake Accord was rejected by most

Canadians strengthened the counter-discursive trends in Québec. Even though most

Canadian provinces had signed the Accord, the polls showed that most Canadians were

opposed to it while most Québécois were in favour of it (Meisel et al. 345-350). To the

Parti québécois, and to Parizeau in particular, the failure of the Meech Lake Accord was

interpreted as an extension of Canada's general rejection of Québécois identity:

La mort de Meech a démontré que la Constitution de 1982 n'était pas un

accident de parcours, n'était pas le résultat d'une obsession de Pierre

> Trudeau et de son ministre. Meech a démontré, au contraire, que la vision
>
> d'un Canada intolérant envers la différence québécoise, le refus de la
>
> reconnaissance et de l'égalité étaient tellement bien ancrés dans l'opinion
>
> publique canadienne qu'ils étaient désormais les principes moteurs du
>
> nationalisme pancanadien. (Parizeau, qtd in Parti québécois. *Fier d'être*
>
> *Québécois* 71)

By refusing to give Québec distinct society status and the vetos that went with it,

Canadians were seen by the Québécois as unwilling to recognize that the Québécois were

- at least in some sense - their equal partners. So after the Meech Lake fiasco, not only

was Québec still not a full member of the Canadian federation, but it could also say that

they it had been rejected by that same federation. Canadians often tend to overlook the

fact that the failure of Meech Lake pushed many Québécois federalists to the sovereigntist

camp. Again, Parizeau comments on this:

> La mort de l'accord du lac Meech a provoqué le grand rassemblement des
>
> Québécois. Unis dans leur volonté de reconnaissance et d'égalité, ils
>
> avaient jusque-là suivi des parcours différents, choisi, pour certains, la
>
> souveraineté; pour d'autres, la voie du renouvellement de la fédération.
>
> (Parizeau, qtd in Parti québécois. *Fier d'être Québécois* 73)

Here, Parizeau remarks how the soft and hard nationalisms of the post-October Crisis era

had become very close in their objectives. The Charlottetown Accord/Referendum is

almost unworthy of mention next to Meech Lake, in that it was rejected by a majority of

Québécois and a majority of Canadians. It has frequently been argued by sovereigntists

and federalists alike, that the failure of Meech Lake is what led to an increase in support of resistance-based institutions. We see this in the 1993 federal elections in which the Québécois voted massively for the *Bloc québécois*, thereby creating an important voice in the Canadian political structure. The *Bloc québécois*, a prime example of a political institution shaped by resistant discourse, had a sufficient number of seats to form the official opposition in Ottawa. In the 1994 provincial elections, the *Parti québécois* was once again elected into power. And finally, it has also been argued that the failure of the Meech Lake Accord led to the 1995 Referendum.

The failure of the Meech Lake Accord is seen as tragic in that it has been interpreted as the last chance for Canada to give Québec what it needed in order for it to stay within the confederation. What Meech Lake offered was to a large extent symbolic: it created the image of a bilateral relationship between the two linguistic communities of Canada. Its illusory side is what made the Meech Lake Accord unappealing to the hard nationalist camp at the time; but even the sovereigntists felt that it would have been a show of good faith by Canada. Meech Lake's failure has made many federalist discourses untenable in Québec: how can one expect to stay within Canada if one feels that Canadians reject the minimum of what the Québécois require to survive. Many formerly undecided authors and theorists felt that they had no logical choice but to convert to the hard nationalist discourses of the sovereigntists since the failure of the Meech Lake Accord.

Since Meech Lake's failure, the concept of distinct society has generally been abandoned. The only viable option left has been to speak of Québec as a distinct *nation* that is still in the process of forming a partnership with Canada. This partnership is perceived as being achievable either through sovereignty-association (the hard nationalist stance) or through yet another series of constitutional negotiations that could possibly give Québec the recognition it requires from Canada (the soft nationalist stance). But speaking of Québec as a nation has become an increasingly popular trend in the last fifteen years. This has obviously always been the official stance of the *Parti québécois*, as Bernard Landry suggests:

> You must know if you really want to understand Quebec that we are not a distinct society, we are a nation. That's quite different. A Nation just like Scotland. [...] the chief of the Official Opposition in Quebec told me a couple of times: in your policy, do like Ireland, do like Ireland... and he has some Irish roots like a great proportion, by the way, of Quebec population. I cannot do what Ireland does because I have just provincial powers. But give us the same powers et watch us go! (Landry, qtd in Parti québécois. *Fier d'être Québécois* 122-123)

It is important to notice how the dominant discourse in Québec has shifted from a discourse trying to establish a rapport with the colonized cultures of the Third World to a discourse establishing a kinship with the pseudo-colonized cultures of the West. Had Landry referred to Algeria or Vietnam instead of Scotland or Ireland, he would have lost all credibility with the vast majority of Québécois. Although I will examine this shift in

more detail later on, suffice it to say that the official stance of the PQ, of hard nationalists, had become much closer to the discourses found in settler colonies rather than in colonies of occupation.

We see this new settler colonial perspective on Québec in Gérard Bouchard's writings:

> Le Québec est une collectivité neuve, comme toutes les collectivités des
> Amériques et de l'Australasie, mais contrairement à la plupart d'entre elles,
> il n'a pas eu souvent l'occasion d'exprimer pleinement ses rêves du
> Nouveau Monde, de concevoir et mettre en train de véritables projets de
> commencement affranchis à la fois de sa dépendance à l'endroit du monde
> ancien et des contradictions nées de sa propre histoire. (Bouchard, G. 75)

Bouchard places Québec on an equal footing with other settler communities in the 'New World.' What authors like Bouchard are seeking, is recognition of that equal footing; this would allow the Québécois to confront the same problems and advantages as other settler colonies. Bouchard is considered moderate in comparison to the hard-line stance expressed, for instance, by the authors of 'Le cercle Gerald-Godin'. But even these authors only seek an equal partnership with Canada:

> Plus jamais de «société distinct» pour caractériser le Québec français et
> interculturel. Pas de Québec égal «à chacune» des province anglaises. Nous
> n'accepterons qu'une égalité: celle du Québec français et interculturelle
> devant «l'ensemble» des provinces à majorité anglaise qui constituent le

> Canada. [...] c'est la langue qui est au coeur de l'affirmation souverainiste
>
> et de notre identité de peuple. (Le cercle Gérald-Godin 34)

Again, we see that even the hard-liners have opted for a more conciliatory discourse;

although such discourses still function as counter-discourses, these authors apparently no

longer seek a complete separation from what they saw as the oppressive colonizer in the

1960's. Largely due to events such as the failed Meech Lake Accord, hard nationalist

counter-discourses have become more cerebral, rational and less violent in contrast to

their more passionate and radical counterparts of the 1950's and 1960's. Bouchard's

approach is emblematic of this:

> Ce pays n'est jamais parvenu à accommoder les deux grandes
>
> communautés linguistiques anglophone et francophone, à les fondre dans
>
> un même idéal et une même appartenance. Préconiser la souveraineté du
>
> Québec, c'est simplement prendre acte de cette incapacité prolongée,
>
> plusieurs fois démontrée. (Bouchard, G. 76)

Many Québécois share Bouchard's views. They simply feel that time and time again

Canada has shown itself unwilling to offer the partnership they seek. Their only recourse

left has become the sovereignty-association option put forward by the PQ. The view of a

binational, yet pluralist, Canadian confederation has increased its dominance on the

Québécois psyche.

Many Canadians see the institutionalisation of Québécois counter-discourses as

unsuccessful. After all, the Québécois have twice chosen to remain in Canada (in 1980 and

1995). But Canadians do not always realize that the promises they made to Québec to bolster the No sides of both referendums were taken seriously by many Québécois. The fact that these promises were not kept has outraged many Québécois, and has forced them into a position they would rather not be in. Canadians will too often see the lack of success of Québécois counter-discursive institutions (such as the PQ recently) as a sign that all is well in Québec. This view is however not shared by Québécois nationalists, as Landry points out, "[l]e Québec que nous voulons est à portée de la main. [...] De la marginalité en 1960, nous sommes passés à 50% de support en 1995" (Landry, qtd in Parti québécois. *Fier d'être Québécois* 128). So the lack of success of counter-discursive institutions is by no means interpreted here as a sign of the diminishment of Québécois nationalism. D'Allemagne shares Landry's views:

> Quoiqu'on puisse dire, les faits demeurent. En 1960 les indépendantistes
> étaient au plus quelques centaines. Aux élections de 1966, ils receuillirent
> près de 10% des voix. En 1976 le PQ est porté au pouvoir par 41% des
> votes. Au référendum de 1995, le oui obtint presque 50%, selon les
> résultats officiels qui semblent de plus en plus douteux. (D'Allemagne, *idée*
> 239)

We get the same idea from *Le cercle Gérald-Godin*: "Loin d'être sans fin, le tunnel qui mène à l'indépendance est fait de multiples tronçons entre lesquels surgit un air chaque fois roboratif (24%, 40%, 49%...) et éclate une lumière chaque fois plus vive" (Le cercle Gérald-Godin 149). Instead of seeing failures, the hard nationalist camp apparently sees a certain inevitability in the institutionalisation of their counter-discourses. Although this

view is not shared by many Canadians nor by every Québécois, it is foolish to simply

ignore the argument. The hard nationalist stance has been gaining support, and Canada has

done relatively little to reverse the tide.

Up to this point in this chapter, I have attempted to expose how the counter-

discourses of the 1950's and 1960's have since then penetrated Québécois institutions and

have even served as foundations for some of them. Being institutionalised, these counter-

discourses function less violently than in the pre-October Crisis period; they seek peaceful

ways to achieve their objectives. The rest of this chapter will focus on what it is that these

institutionalised discourses are countering. As we shall see, we get the feeling that the

threat has changed in Québec, that the Québécois are resisting a slightly different

phenomenon today than they were in the years leading up to the October Crisis.

4.1 Neocolonialism in Contemporary Québec

Although counter-discursive resistance in Québec has been institutionalised, its objectives have remained roughly the same. Many authors are still pushing for an independent Québécois state, even though they will more often than not acquiesce to the PQ's associationist position. There is a grey zone in which the PQ dream of a binational Canadian confederation does not always concord with the counter-discourses prevalent in the identitarian writings of its intellectuals. In other words, it is not always clear if hard nationalist authors today are seeking more independence for Québec (which can be compatible with the PQ platform) or complete separation. We see this lack of clarity in d'Allemagne's *Le presque pays* (1998):

> Les Québécois et les Québécoises sont-ils encore prêts, en restant dans le
>
> système fédéral canadien, à se contenter d'un statut de minoritaires, d'un
>
> gouvernement entravé, d'un pouvoir atrophié et d'un presque pays... ou
>
> veulent-ils enfin, par la souveraineté, se gouverner eux-mêmes, se doter
>
> d'un État moderne et complet, et se donner un pays normal et bien à eux?
>
> (D'Allemagne, *presque* 95)

There is an ambiguity in this passage that can be disconcerting to many Québécois and certainly most Canadians. This same ambiguity can be found in Pierre Vadeboncoeur's more recent works as well: "De même, il n'y a qu'un moyen pour nous contre la déchéance et c'est de *gouverner*. Gouverner ou disparaître. Il faut actualiser absolument cette disjonction" (Vadeboncoeur, *Gouverner* 29). Both d'Allemagne and Vadeboncoeur

were separatists in the 1960's and 1970's, but both supported and still support the PQ platform of sovereignty-association. Does this imply that there is a hidden agenda behind the PQ's official stance whose real goal is a completely independent Québécois nation-state? While it is true that the official counter-discourses prevalent in the PQ (i.e. those that have been institutionalised) have equality and recognition as their main objective, it is not always clear that this satisfies certain authors of the hard-nationalist camp. Nevertheless, we can see how the tone in the writings of these hard-nationalist authors has shifted from their original pseudo-revolutionary activism; today, these authors tend to avoid such terms as 'separation' or 'liberation' in favour of 'self-governance' or 'independence' (both terms that can be applicable to the sovereigntist platform).

It is the above mentioned discursive shift that make the Québécois so interesting from a postcolonial standpoint. One of the major points of this work is to argue that the Québécois came to realize that the violent actions of the FLQ and the revolutionary discourses that led to the October Crisis were ill-conceived and inappropriate to the Québécois context. Although perceiving themselves as a colony of occupation was appealing to the Québécois at the time, they were eventually forced to accept that they were not quite as colonized as the Third World colonies of occupation that produced the anti-colonial discourses they were so attracted to. Had it been otherwise, the repressive measures taken against the Québécois with the War Measures Act would quite possibly have been the spark igniting a series of generalized violent reprisals leading to a situation similar to that of Northern Ireland. Thankfully, Québec and Northern Ireland are two very

different places with very different cultures. The Québécois had certain tools at their

disposal that most other colonized peoples never had: they could create institutions, a

recognized establishment, that would embody the resistance they saw - and still see today

- as necessary to their survival. As mentioned in the last chapter, this is also the

fundamental flaw in the comparison of African American and Québécois identities; unlike

African Americans, the Québécois *could* form nationalist institutions because they already

had a predefined territory that encompassed the vast majority of the population that shared

Québécois (French Canadian) identity.

So the Québécois are somewhat unique in that even though they still see

themselves threatened by colonial discursive influence, they also had to come to terms

with the fact that their colonial experience is not identical to that of any other 'colonized'

society. As such, they construct their identity as something that is posited between the

typical settler colonial culture and the colony of occupation. We see this in their awareness

that the colonial influence that threatens them has been seen as being largely linguistic and

cultural in the post-October Crisis era; and yet, that discursive influence is also seen as

something that can be equally as devastating to their identity as any form of traditional

colonialism. Even though economic and political colonialisms are still issues today, they

do not seem to have the same weight they had in the pre-October Crisis period. In other

words, the Québécois today construct their identity more in resistance to neocolonialism.

This too is the case with most settler colonial cultures; but the difference with Québec is

that the Québécois perceive neocolonial discursive influence as something that can

exterminate them. Typical settler colonies, like Canada, will fear that their identity is being

eroded by neocolonial pressures; but they will never speak in terms of extermination,

eradication or cultural genocide as do the Québécois. As previously mentioned, the

Québecois have frequently used the term 'genocide' to describe their alienation. Pierre

Vadeboncoeur was the first to fully develop the term in the Québécois context:

> Pour la première fois, on peut parler d'une entreprise de génocide sinon
>
> dans l'intention, du moins dans le fait. [...] Cette politique [de dissolution
>
> culturelle] cohérente n'a qu'une explication: c'est qu'elle est au service des
>
> intérêts américains et *canadian*. (Vadeboncoeur, *Gouverner* 177)

It is interesting to note how Vadeboncoeur's perception of the Québécois's aggressors has

shifted from "l'impérialisme américain" (Vadeboncoeur, *Génocide* 31) in his original work

Un génocide en douce (1976) to the American *and Canadian* interests seen above in the

revamped *Gouverner ou disparaître* (1993). It is as though the author began to

understand the complexities of discursive influence, and realized how Canada has been

playing an inadvertent role in the submission of Québécois identity.

But even Vadeboncoeur tends to nuance his usage of 'genocide' in relation to

Québécois alienation. He is clearly conscious of the term's dramatic value:

> Génocide. C'est bien un grand mot. Ce mot suggère le sang dans
>
> l'hécatombe. On ne voit pas, avec raison, qu'une tragédie subite et
>
> déchirante puisse nous advenir. Aucune politique ne vise directement à

nous éliminer. Mais des intérêts cherchent à nous empêcher de nous donner

les intruments politiques dont notre vie à venir dépend strictement. Cela

officiellement n'a l'air de rien, mais c'est notre existence qui est par là visée

[...] (Vadeboncoeur, *Gouverner* 179)

In using genocide, it is implied by the author that he is speaking in fact of *cultural*

genocide. The cultural genocide perceived by Vadebocoeur is therefore a consequence of

neocolonialism and its insidious nature. Like most Québécois authors today,

Vadeboncoeur does not see the Québécois as being subjugated by the same forms of

colonialism that were so present in the 1950's and 1960's. Even André d'Allemagne has

shifted his perception in this matter:

Il n'est plus guère de mise de parler de colonialisme. Le terme fait démodé,

voire rétrograde. Il désigne pourtant le processus historique qui a amorcé

la décomposition de l'identité québécoise, oeuvre que l'emprise américaine

menace maintenant de mener à terme. (D'Allemagne, *presque* 10)

Although d'Allemagne was in his later years reluctant to use 'colonialism' in the

Québécois context, he still sees the Québécois as victims of colonial-like oppression; what

he is in fact referring to is basically defined by many other authors as neocolonialism. Even

the hard nationalist authors of 'Le cercle Gérald-Godin' will also back away from classical

definitions of the colonized in their reference to the Québécois: "Et aussi cette allure, non

certes pas de *damnés de la terre* mais assurément d'exclus à jamais de la vie

internationale, qui était la nôtre en ce pluvieux samedi 17 avril 1982 [...] [my italics]" (Le

cercle Gérald-Godin 147-148). In the same text, they also refer to Memmi's theories to suggest that they are no longer quite appropriate to the Québécois context. So we see a definitive shift in Québécois thinking about their identity and cultural alienation in the post-October Crisis period. In the years leading up to 1970, Québécois identitarian writing was permeated with references to Fanon, Memmi and other anti-colonial theories; but by rejecting violent or revolutionary actions, the Québécois were forced to realize that they were in a slightly different predicament. The Québécois were amongst the first cultures to realize that they were in fact victims of neocolonialism and its implications.

The idea of economic colonialism therefore receded after the October Crisis; the Québécois, as it turned out, could not generally see themselves as a colonized people akin to most colonies of occupation of the time. As seen in the previous chapter, they began searching for different colonial models to identify with; this led them to stronger identifications with African Americans. But being in a different geopolitical situation, the Québécois, unlike African Americans, could create strong and enduring nationalist institutions to defend their identity. These institutions - which were manifestations of their resistance, the embodiment of their counter-discourses - reinforced the construction of their identity. But these institutions also meant that the Québécois could no longer really speak of political colonialism either. As such, the Québécois were forced to see that their alienation was mostly cultural and linguistic. And it is in this that the Québécois have come closest to resembling the typical settler colony. Like other settler colonies, the

Québécois were not actually starving or being wiped out as a result of colonialism; their alienation, as it turned out, was felt more on a discursive level. What differentiates them from other settler colonies is that neither their nationalist institutions nor their national identity have been recognized by their significant other.

4.2 Anti-Neocolonial Counter-Discourses in Québécois Identity

If it is a fact that the Québécois have become more willing to see themselves as victims of cultural colonialism or neocolonialism does not imply that they have *completely* endorsed the view that they are truly a settler colony like Canada. The fact that they were capable of institutionalising their resistance may suggest a transition to that effect, but the counter-discursive basis of those same institutions depends on the presence of a real colonial threat. Since the failure of Meech Lake, even the soft nationalists of the *Parti libéral du Québec* have refused to repeal the language laws, seeing them as a necessary protective measure against the threat of assimilation. Thus even Québécois federalists are engaged in counter-discursive tactics. So it is important to understand that there is still an anti-colonial trend in Québécois identity which should be defined more precisely as anti-neocolonial.

In the 1990's, understanding 'colonialism' as the source of cultural oppression was still a prominent theme in several essays on Québécois identity. Jean Larose was one of the first to interpret contemporary resistance to colonialism in Québec as a counter-discourse. In *La souveraineté rampante* (1994), Larose writes: "Dans ce livre, j'étends l'idée de l'«esprit de colonisé» à celle de ressentiment. J'avance que le ressentiment a joué chez les nationalistes un rôle analogue à celui de l'esprit de colonisé" (Larose 19). In writing this, Larose was criticising the sovereigntist stance as being too reactionary rather than being a more constructive "amour de la liberté" (Larose 41). Larose would

apparently not agree with the concept that all discourses of identity are *at least at some level* reactionary or counter-discursive. But the important point to remember here is that the author does nonetheless see colonialism as a significant aspect of Québécois identity.

In his compendious work *Récits identitaires* (2000), Jocelyn Maclure remarks on how Serge Cantin perceives the Québécois as being somewhat unaware of their own colonial alienation:

> Ce déni du passé prendrait d'ailleurs la forme du refus des francophones de se reconnaître comme proprement colonisés. Cette négation obstinée témoigne, selon Cantin, d'une colonisation mentale plus grave et sédimentée que l'occupation physique: «[l]e fait pour le colonisé de ne pas pouvoir se reconnaître comme colonisé n'est-il pas l'indice d'une colonisation plus subtile, plus insidieuse, plus profonde aussi peut-être et partant plus indéracinable que celle qu'ont eu à subir, par exemple, les Algériens ou les Vietnamiens?» (Maclure 79-80)

Here, Maclure and Cantin touch on several themes present in almost all discussions on neocolonialism: the insidiousness of neocolonialism and its degradation of collective memory. Cultural alienation, in such cases, is seen as being as devastating to a people, if not more so, than older forms of physical colonial oppression. As such, an author like Cantin would disagree with Taylor in seeing Québécois alienation as a definitive form of oppression.

Perhaps the most outspoken critic of colonialism in contemporary Québec has

been Louis Cornellier. In *Plaidoyer pour l'idéologie tabarnaco* (1997) Cornellier equates

Québécois alienation to colonialism: "Les Québécois souffrent d'aliénation culturelle

aiguë. En d'autres termes, nous sommes une belle gang de colonisés" (Cornellier, qtd in

Maclure 81). In his essay, Cornellier is clearly speaking of neocolonialism; he sees how the

Québécois are not colonized in the typical 'colony of occupation' way. Maclure points this

out well in his work:

> «la tragédie du colonisé, argue Cornellier, c'est que plus son état
>
> s'aggrave, plus les sursauts de conscience lui font défaut». La «colonisation
>
> douce», pour reprendre l'expression de Cornellier, possède comme
>
> corollaire la tragique «indifférence de ses victimes» (Maclure 81)

If for no other reason, Cornellier is interesting in that he offers an excellent description of

neocolonialism and shows us how he feels the Québécois are suffering from it; it may be a

colonisation douce, a term that echoes Vadeboncoeur's *génocide en douce*, but it is a

form of colonialism nonetheless. Cornellier, like Cantin, draws out the same key words in

defining neocolonialism in Québec:

> nous sommes encore colonisés, mais d'une façon différente et plus
>
> insidieuse, car ce n'est plus seulement le fédéralisme canadien en tant que
>
> tel qui se pose en obstacle à notre affranchissement, mais bien plutôt une
>
> tendance mondiale [...] qui érige le flou identitaire en idéal pour rendre la
>
> vie plus facile au rouleau compresseur de l'impérialisme de l'anglo-culture

internationale dont les stratégies sont multiples. (Cornellier, qtd in Maclure

81)

We see in this passage the insidiousness typically attributed to neocolonialism, but also the

reference to the colonizer as being diffused in a global imperial tendency rather than in a

single people. Unlike the Algerians who could easily point their finger to France as their

colonial oppressor, the Québécois today, according to Cornellier, cannot blame Canada

exclusively. Neocolonialism in Québec is seen as a product of the hegemony of

Anglophone culture in the world. This *anglo-culture* may be centred in the United States

but it is helped along by agents or lackeys like Canada. So we see how Cornellier

constructs Québécois identity as being more colonized than Canada's: at least Canada has

a place in, and can benefit from the neocolonial cultural environment prevalent today.

Certain authors like Laurent-Michel Vacher in *Un canabec libre* (1991) will see

the sovereigntist movement as a necessary response to neocolonialism by the Québécois;

he sees the independence of Québec as the only means by which the Québécois will cease

to see themselves as a dominated people:

> Pour tout peuple qui a un jour été vaincu et dominé, l'accession à
>
> l'indépendance apparaît comme une étape rédemptrice de son histoire. Au-
>
> delà de ses manifestations institutionelles et politiques, il s'agit
>
> fondamentalement d'une sorte de psychodrame libérateur, catharsis de
>
> renaissance et de purification de l'inconscient collectif. (Vacher 13)

Vacher is also quite critical of the sovereigntist movement's associationist stance. He, like

Larose, feels that total separation is the only way of ridding Québécois culture of its

colonial alienation: "Aujourd'hui, la perspective d'une souveraineté-association sans

cesse plus imprécise a éclipsé celle d'une pure et simple indépendance, ainsi amputée de

toute sa portée d'électrochoc pycho-historique" (Vacher 15). But what authors like

Vacher fail to recognize, are the ways in which being colonized has also helped the

Québécois construct one of the strongest identities in North America. Practically no other

North American community can say with such clarity what it means to belong to it. Many

Québécois, perhaps understandably, have failed to see that even if they were completely

independent, they would still be under constant pressure of neocolonialism. The advantage

of the sovereignty-*association* movement is that it responds to a prevalent anti-

(neo)colonial strain in Québécois identity while avoiding a move towards a complete

separation which would compromise the *raison-d'être* of so many Québécois institutions;

institutions that have strengthened Québécois identity.

I have discussed in this section a type of counter-discourse in contemporary

Québécois identitarian writing that can be qualified as anti-neocolonial. I would venture to

suggest that anti-neocolonial counter-discourses could be interpreted as being postcolonial

(in the sense developed in chapter 1). These are postcolonial in that they expose newer

forms of colonialism and try to find ways of resisting the hegemony of the other. But such

manifestations of postcolonial resistance are not limited to essays or academic works.

Contemporary Québécois culture is permeated with artists who express similar counter-

discursive strategies. We clearly see this in Pierre Falardeau's movies; Falardeau's *Elvis Gratton* movies are excellent examples of how he sees Québécois culture as being invaded by American discourses. The main character of these movies is a satirical representation of how the Québécois will efface their own identity in favour of the more successful American image. Falardeau's movie on the *Patriotes* rebellion - *15 février 1839* - or on the October Crisis - *Octobre* - are an attempt at reinforcing the Québécois's collective memory while expressing his well-known separatist views. Robert Morin's *Yes sir! Madam...* is a video that explores the difficulties that stem from the co-existence of Canada's two national identities. The protagonist in Morin's video, brought up in both languages, ends up developing a split personality in which his English and French personas end up killing each other. This is somewhat reminiscent of Jacques Godbout's novel *Les têtes à Papineau*, in which the protagonist has two heads - one French speaking (François) and the other English speaking (Charles); the two heads are eventually operated on to be fused into a single Anglophone head (François's language centre of the brain could not be found by the surgeon and was therefore excised). Québécois music is also rife with postcolonial counter-discourses: Guérilla's song *Guérilla: manifeste* was censored in 1995 by *Musique Plus* because it made reference to the FLQ manifesto in its lyrics. More recently, Loco Locass's disc *Manifestif,* works on the themes of alienation to colonial discourse, the necessity of resistance and the promotion of sovereignty:

> [...] Nous défendons notre patrie contre
>
> l'anglosphyxie Tel que le firent les Phrygiens face à
>
> l'Empire Romain Nous avons pris le maquis

linguistique [...]   (Loco Locass, *Malamalangue* 2000)

So postcolonial resistance in Québec is not limited to its intelligentsia; it is also present in Québécois popular culture. This, however, is something that many Canadians refuse to acknowledge. It is much easier for them to think that the counter-discursive trend in Québec is the product of a small, albeit influential, minority.

The works mentioned in this section all have the common denominator of demonstrating how the Québécois are still colonized today; and this despite the institutionalisation of their resistance. The difference between these works and those of the 1950's and 1960's is that they see colonialism in Québec more as neocolonialism. Instead of resisting colonial oppression, they resist the cultural oppression resulting from the neocolonial hegemony of the other. It is in this sense that the Québécois function as both a settler colony and a colony of occupation: it is as a settler colony that the Québécois were capable of establishing institutions to support their cultural resistance - but it is in their relentless production of counter-discursive works, works in which they perceive themselves as oppressed by neocolonial influence, that they most resemble the colony of occupation. It is in their awareness of, and struggle with, necolonial discourses and hegemony that the Québécois can be interpreted as being postcolonial. In other words, while the Québécois may have been unsuccessful at constructing their identity in anti-colonial terms, they have become quite successful at doing so in postcolonial terms.

4.3 The Canadian Response

Canadians in general have developed a rather negative impression of the Québécois institutionalised resistance. There are of course those Canadians who do understand that Québécois language legislation is a protective measure designed to ensure the survival of Québécois identity; and that the sovereignty-associationist stance of the PQ or the *Bloc* is also seen as a protective measure aimed at enforcing the binational aspect of Canadian identity (an aspect that is currently misrecognized by Canada). However those Canadians who do try to understand the Québécois's plight are not as vocal as those who reject the notion of Canada as a binational state. Most Canadians do not share the same concept of Canada as the vast majority of Québécois; these Canadians will thus simultaneously reject both the Québécois soft nationalist option (i.e. renegotiating the terms of a Québec/Canada partnership without a referendum) and the Québécois hard nationalist option (i.e. imposing basically the same partnership after a successful referendum).

Canadians will often see the Québécois's counter-discursive institutions not as counter-discursive at all but as repressive to all those who are not Québécois. They tend to ignore the official PQ stance of civic nationalism developed in the following passage:

[...] the Quebec nation, it is perfectly clear now, is a political and civic nation, not an ethnic one. The reality consolidated itself through a long historical process leading from the notion of French Canadian to that of

Quebecer, [...] for obvious reasons we were not all French Canadians, it's

evident, as obviously now that we are all Quebecers. Nous sommes tous

des Québécois, Québécois et Québécoises. (Landry, qtd in Parti québécois.

Fier d'être Québécois 115-116)

Here, the former sovereigntist premier of Québec, Bernard Landry, explicitly tells the

population of Québec that the PQ does not favour ethnic nationalism. He also confirms

the PQ's rejection of Jacques Parizeau's infamous statement concerning the ethnic vote on

the night of the 1995 referendum. There are, of course, extremists in Québec who do

promote the formation of an ethic state, but such extremists are a minority and are

consistently rejected as political representatives of the PQ.

Canadians have also on occasion been hostile to the federal government's stance

on bilingualism. Mordecai Richler remarks that Ron Leach, the president of the Alliance

for the Preservation of English in Canada (APEC), had been self-admittedly inspired by

his reading of *Bilingual Today, French Tomorrow* [1977] by J. V. Andrew.

Andrew had once told an APEC meeting that English Canada needed the

French language as much as anyone needed the AIDS virus and he

anticipated a French takeover of Canada, propelled by Quebec that has

become 'an impregnable bastion, breeding pen and marshalling yard for the

colonization of the rest of Canada' (Richler, *Canada* 3)

It is interesting to see how authors like J. V. Andrew will fuel the identitarian resistance of

the Québécois, and how Québécois resistance will fuel the opinions of people like

Andrews. We see here, yet again, the symbiotic nature of the Canada/Québec conflict. Just

as the Québécois feel threatened by cultural genocide, so do authors like Andrews; as

Richler points out:

> [In *Enough! Enough French. Enough Quebec.* (1988), J. V. Andrew] had
>
> established that our country was hostage to 'a militant and avaricious
>
> minority [of Francophones] which is sworn by secret oath to the
>
> extermination of English Canada and the English language, province by
>
> province, territory by territory, and municipality by municipality." (Richler,
>
> *Canada* 5)

Just as we should not judge all Canadians by J. V. Andrew's views on the French

Canadian/Québécois question, so should Canadians not judge the Québécois by their

extremists.

But it is curious to see how even a minority of Canadians perceive themselves as

threatened by the Québécois. In his work *The Gaullist Attack on Canada*, J. F. Bosher

suggests that Canada's conflict with Québec has actually been largely the product of some

new kind of French imperialism. In Leo Heaps' novel, *The Quebec Plot*, the French

government financed and encouraged the separation of Québec. It is as though these

authors have a difficult time believing that the Québécois are capable of independent

thought, that they are not the puppets of some other imperial power. Perhaps this is an

example of how Canadians are unable to see the Québécois as anything other than a settler

colony, like themselves; as such, Québécois nationalism must therefore be the product of

an imperial power trying to reclaim its former settler colony. Thus, such works reveal

more perhaps about Canada's insecurities concerning their own capacity of independent

choice; and by denying the Québécois their claims that they are colonized by Canada and

the rest of the Anglophone world, they are at the same time refusing to acknowledge that

Canada can be seen as a threat to another people - after all, to acknowledge such a thing

would mean accepting quite an ugly blemish on an otherwise excellent international image.

Although only a minority of Canadians will feel directly threatened by Québec, a

larger majority will see Québécois institutions as repressive to the Anglophone and

Allophone populations living in Québec. Many Québécois institutions and public figures

have been labelled fascist by authors like Diane Francis or Mordecai Richler. And the

Québécois have become fed up with Canada's criticisms and outright hostility toward their

public figures:

> Pendant que Mordecai Richler nous traitait de fascistes, de nazis, entre
>
> autres insultes, un ou deux autres sires comparaient Parizeau et Bouchard à
>
> Hitler. Je me suis demandé quelle intelligence réaliste présidait ce discours,
>
> car l'ordure relève parfois de la stratégie. C'est très simple. Voici la
>
> formule: on dit des choses comme celles-là, *sans y croire, à des publics qui*
>
> *eux les croiront.* C'est la formule chimique de la *propagande*.
>
> (Vadeboncoeur, *Gouverner* 21)

It is interesting to see how Vadeboncoeur reverses the argument against those who

suggest that the Québécois are fascists; by interpreting such comments as propaganda, he

accuses them of using techniques that were quite prominent in Nazi Europe. The authors

of *Le cercle Gérald-Godin* perceive Canadian hostility to Québécois institutions as a form

of hate crime against the Québécois people in general; and this hatred is seen as something

that fuels separatist arguments:

> Les indépendantistes y verront, pour leur part, motif à sortir d'un pays qui
>
> a un si constant besoin de la calomnie pour se maintenir. Du reste, ils
>
> savent bien qu'à la source de la calomnie d'un peuple par un autre, il y a
>
> toujours quelque rapport inégal («*Vae victis!*» disaient déjà les Romains) et
>
> ils n'ignorent pas que la décolonisation des pays du tiers monde, qui a
>
> rendu illigitime et politiquement incorrecte la calomnie dans laquelle les
>
> Occidentaux maintenaient ces pays, aura ici aussi très exactement le même
>
> effet. (Le cercle Gérald-Godin 154)

We see here yet another reference to Roman imperialism. Such references suggest that the

real threat originates not only from Canada but from a much larger neocolonial

phenomenon centred in the United States. But the most important point to outline is that

the authors see Canada's accusations of fascism in Québec as another form of aggression.

Again, they are reversing the argument and using it against those from whom it originated.

Possibly the best example of this type of reversal comes from Normand Lester is his two

volume series *Le livre noir du Canada Anglais* (2001-2002). Lester firstly exposes in

detail Canada's hostility towards Québec's institutions and Québécois self-affirmation, to

then show how Canada's past should tell them that they have no right to criticise:

> Depuis la Conquête, le Canada anglais s'est rendu coupable de crimes, de
>
> violations des droits humains, de manifestations de racisme et d'exclusion
>
> envers tous ceux qui n'avaient pas le bonheur d'être Blancs, Anglo-Saxons
>
> et protestants. Ceux qui nous attaquent si allègrement oublient leur passé.
>
> Vous lirez ici ce que l'Histoire retient de ces gens et de leur société.
>
> (Lester, *Livre* 27)

Lester does not suggest that two wrongs make a right, but his works do suggest that

Canadian hostility towards Québec may be an act of avoidance that stems from Canada's

own culpability towards its minorities. But such works all function in the same way, they

volley discourses of intolerance and hatred back and forth. The problem is that Canadian

extremists, who are perhaps too present in the Canadian public sphere, construct their

arguments against Québécois extremists, who likewise are also perhaps too present in

Québec's public sphere. Fed up with Canada's lack of understanding and unwillingness to

look at Québécois institutions for what they really are, the Québécois have retaliated by

throwing Canadian extremism back into its face. But this is hardly a productive or useful

situation.

The Québécois language laws are certainly the manifestation of institutionalised

resistance that has provoked the most hostility from Canada. But these, most of all

Québécois institutions, are perceived as a defensive or protective response to the

onslaught of assimilative neocolonial culture: "Quel accroc, n'est-ce pas, que nos

dispositions sur l'affichage! Mais l'entreprise génocidaire en marche contre nous au

Canada et jusque dans nos rangs, ce n'est rien du tout" (Vadeboncoeur, *Gouverner* 23).

Canadian neocolonialism, as it is often interpreted by the Québécois, manifests itself in

Canadian institutions. The concept of Canadian multiculturalism has thus been perceived

as a hostile institution by many Québécois critics. As Jean Larose writes:

> Parce qu'elle est le résultat d'une résistance au long effort canadien pour
>
> éteindre la logique duelle à l'aide d'une «pluralité plus moderne et plus
>
> ouverte», la situation québécoise prend donc valeur de symbole pour toute
>
> notre époque. (Larose 97)

This rejection of the binary vision of Canada in favour of the cultural mosaic is interpreted

by the Québécois as a rejection of Québec's importance in Canada. The Québécois

perception of Canada is that of two multicultural nations within a single state; two distinct

identitarian environments open to plurality and cultural diversity. But they will often see

Canada's insistence on multiculturalism as a neocolonial tactic designed, unconsciously

perhaps, to melt distinct communities into a larger, hegemonic Anglo-centric pan-national

community. In other words, the Québécois fear that Canada's cultural mosaic is in fact an

agent of an American style melting pot:

> Le Canada a inventé l'internationalisme angloplanétaire. [...] L'anglais a
>
> donc changé de nature au Québec, depuis vingt ans. Ce n'est plus la langue
>
> de nos bons vieux conquérants britanniques, même plus celle de nos
>
> puissants voisins, mais le «langage international» de ceux qui veulent
>
> s'entendre. (Larose 101)

Instead of seeing their nationalism as ethnocentric, the Québécois will often now describe

it as a resistance to Anglophone hegemony, and as a something that can actually lead to a

greater respect and recognition of cultural diversity:

> L'attachement naturel de chacun à son peuple et à son pays s'assimile au
>
> chauvinisme et à la xénophobie. En toute logique, on peut cependant
>
> soutenir le contraire: le nationalisme des uns devrait leur faire comprendre
>
> et respecter celui des autres. (D'Allemagne, *presque* 83)

Establishing protective measures to ensure the survival of the French language in Québec,

the most common trait of Québécois identity, has been interpreted by a majority of

Canadians as a Québécois rejection of diversity. In this, these Canadians do not appear to

take into account the reality of the threat posed to the French language in Canada. They

do not understand or even care about the statistics that show the constantly increasing rate

of assimilation by Francophones outside Québec to the Anglophone majority; they do not

seem to appreciate the fact that the language laws are the only thing that have proven

successful at halting that rate of assimilation within Québec (see statistics put forward by

the *Office de la langue française* and by the Canadian Commissioner of Official

Languages). The Québécois, on the other hand, are largely aware of these facts; and this is

arguably why both federalists (soft nationalists) and sovereigntists (hard nationalists)

refuse to retract the language laws. They argue that the language laws, if they continue

being successful at what they were designed for, will end up creating a sense of security

amongst the Québécois which will in turn allow them to feel more comfortable with

cultural diversity. Some Canadians still feel that if a cultural trait requires 'artificial' means

to survive (i.e. language laws), it should not be allowed to survive at all. One can only

assume that these individuals feel completely secure in their identity; and one can only

wonder what will happen when that sense of security is threatened.

* * *

In this chapter, I have attempted to demonstrate how the Québécois in the post-

October Crisis period have constructed institutions to support their counter-discursive

resistance. These institutions tell us two things: that the Québécois do have enough power

to ensure their survival, and that the Québécois have come to terms with the fact that they

are threatened by *neo*colonialism. As such, the Québécois have become more akin to other

settler colonial cultures than ever before. However, unlike any other settler colonial

culture, they still see themselves as oppressed and fear that their survival is threatened.

The resistance to this threat serves two purposes that are in fact intertwined: it nourishes

the institutions by giving them meaning and, at some level, contributes to the strength and

cohesion of Québécois identity. In other words, one could argue, perhaps paradoxically,

that Québécois identity is strong *because* the Québécois are colonized. There is thus a

symbiotic relationship between Québec and Canada. The Québécois have become experts

at defining their identity because they feel it is threatened by Canada; Canada consistently

disapproves of the Québécois institutions that safeguard their identity; this disapproval is

symptomatic of a lack of recognition which is interpreted by the Québécois as a threat to

their identity.

This symbiotic view of the Canada/Québec relationship is only plausible if one does not believe in essentialist thinking in the politics of identity. Many Québécois authors would not agree with the reasoning suggesting that there will always be a symbiotic relationship between Québec and Canada. Laurent-Michel Vacher is one such author:

> *l'autre* y est au coeur de l'attention, le Québec ne s'y pensant jamais que par rapport à sa relation, à la fois *symbiotique et intenable*, avec le Canada anglais et avec les institutions fédérales, comme si existence et identité pouvaient lui être conférées par un partenaire et non par lui-même. En ce sens, le souverainisme en tant qu'idéologie correspond à un complexe réactif, qui ressemble fâcheusement au caprice d'un conjoint vexé d'être négligé mais incapable de s'arracher à sa dépendance. [my italics] (Vacher 78)

Vacher would rather see a completely independent Québec than a sovereign Québec associated with Canada. He does not seem to realize that such independence is, at least from a certain point of view, unthinkable. There will always be an other; there will always be influence.

As opposed to Vacher, Fernand Dumont seemed to be keenly aware of the symbiotic aspect of Québec/Canada relations. He exposes the paradox underlining the symbiosis:

> Ou bien les Québécois acquiesceront au projet de souveraineté. Des luttes qui remontent à la Conquête s'éteindront. Me revient à l'esprit la

constatation désabusée de Salluste dans *La Guerre de Jugurtha*: «Les

citoyens avaient, pendant la lutte, aspiré au repos; quant ils le possédèrent,

le repos devint pour eux plus dur et plus amer que la lutte elle-même.»

(Dumont, *Raisons* 30)

Dumont realizes that if Québec does become sovereign, then the Québécois will truly be

confronted with the fact that they are a settler colony. That the Québécois, by becoming

equals with the rest of Canada, may be forced to share Canada's cultural malaise.

To sum up, we have seen up to here how Québécois identity has depended largely

on its capacity to see itself as a colony of occupation. Despite the institutionalisation of

many counter-discourses in Québec, the Québécois still see themselves as a colonized

people; at least still more colonized than most settler colonies. If Laurendeau's vision of

bilingualism *and* biculturalism (binationalism) had not been warped into the binary

opposition of bilingualism *versus* binationalism prevalent since the late 1960's, we would

likely have seen a different scenario in the construction of identity in Québec. The

institutions and discourses of resistance in Québec are constructed in such a way as to

reclaim the binational ideal proposed by Laurendeau. Without a recognized binational

structure in Canada, Québécois identity has been constructed time and time again as a

pseudo-colony of occupation. As with settler colonies, the Québécois today see

themselves as colonized more on a discursive/cultural level; but what makes them unique,

and *unlike* settler colonies, is that they are convinced that the oppression generated from

neocolonialism threatens their very survival. Whereas typical settler colonies will feel a

certain degree of alienation from neocolonial discursive intrusions, their alienation is always interpreted on a cultural level and therefore manifests itself only as identitarian ambivalence. The same, however, is not true of Québec. Québec discourses of identity, which are prevalent in their institutions and society in general, are entrenched in *active* resistance; they do not suffer from the ambivalence resulting from the *passive* resistance typically found in other settler colonies. Although technically a settler colony, Québec has been constructing itself as a pseudo-colony of occupation, and this despite the institutionalisation of their counter-discourses. Canada has been generally unwilling to understand this fundamental distinction, and has consequently been unable to give Québec the recognition it desires.

CHAPTER 5

THE CONSTRUCTION OF

ANGLO-QUEBECER AND ANGLO-QUÉBÉCOIS

IDENTITY

We have seen how resistance to colonialism has been an important foundation to the construction of Québécois identity. But what is most interesting is how the construction of Québécois identity, as seen up to here, has led to the emergence and construction of an entirely different collective identity. While the Québécois perceive Anglophone hegemony as a serious threat to their future, a new Anglophone community has been constructed partly in resistance to Québécois dominance. Most Anglophone and Francophone theorists would agree that in the past the Anglophone community of Québec could not truly be differentiated from the rest of Canada. But today Anglophones in Québec see themselves increasingly as a distinct community. This view is not shared by many Québécois who erroneously still hold to the perception of the rich Anglo living in Westmount, the "château fort colonial" of Québec (Fournier 43). Most English speakers in contemporary Québec have very little to do with the colonizers of old, and have relatively little power in comparison to the pre-October Crisis era. And they see the institutionalisation of resistance in Québec not as a defensive measure, but as an act of oppression geared towards the eradication of their own community; however, it is interesting to note that the institutionalisation of resistance actually marks the starting point of a distinct identity in Anglophone Québec. So, in Québec, we see an interesting phenomenon in which the two dominant linguistic communities see each other as colonizers and themselves as colonized. From the Anglophone perspective, one could look

to Albert Memmi to explain this phenomenon: "Telle est l'histoire de la pyramide des tyranneaux: chacun, socialement opprimé par un plus puissant que lui, trouve un moins puissant pour se reposer sur lui, et se faire tyran à son tour" (Memmi 45). But Memmi does not take into account intention in his analysis. The institutionalisation of resistance in Québec was not intended by the Québécois to be an act of repression; as we have seen, the intention was aimed at cultural stability.

Before looking at how Anglophones in Québec have constructed their own identity, it is important to understand how they are generally perceived by the Québécois. Perhaps surprisingly, the Anglophone community was already defined as a separate entity from the rest of Canada in the neo-nationalist historical works of Michel Brunet. Brunet speaks of a *minorité anglo-québécoise* (Brunet 170) and already distinguishes it from the rest of Canada: "Les *Canadians* et les Anglo-Québécois auront réalisé le programme de lord Durham" (Brunet 171). Although Brunet sees both communities following the same agenda, he does make the distinction between the two. Already aware of the importance the Conquest had on Québécois collective memory, Brunet foreshadowed the symbiotic impact it would have on the Anglophone community:

> Le phénomène de *conquête* fait partie de l'histoire depuis que l'homme
>
> existe. Au cours des siècles qui nous ont précédés, il y a toujours eu des
>
> gagnants et des perdants, des vainqueurs et des vaincus, des conquérants et
>
> des conquis. [...] Lorsque les conquis survivent comme majorité, ils

réalisent une reconquête et les anciens conquérants deviennent une

minorité quand ils ne sont pas complètement assimilés. (Brunet 33)

In this passage, Brunet seems to see a cyclical pattern in the construction of identity

similar to the one developed in my first chapter. The institutionalisation of Québécois

resistance led English-speaking Quebecers to see themselves as a minority perhaps for the

first time in their history. As Alain Desruisseaux and Sarah Fortin suggest:

> Pour les Anglo-Québécois, toutefois, l'adoption des lois linguistiques a
>
> considérablement modifié le climat politique. Avec l'adoption de la Loi sur
>
> la langue officielle en 1974, leur traditionnelle mentalité de «majoritaires» -
>
> fondée sur leur appartenance à la majorité linguistique de l'ensemble
>
> canadien - fut ébranlée et, sentiment inédit chez eux, ils commencèrent à se
>
> percevoir comme une minorité menacée. (Meisel et al., 253)

So we see how a sense of self-awareness was established in the Anglophone Quebecer

psyche with the establishment of the language laws. As a majority, Anglophones in

Québec were part of the Canadian identity, but seeing themselves as a minority, they no

longer had the choice but to recognize themselves as a distinct community.

But not all Québécois theorists have been willing to see Anglophones in Québec as

a minority. Likewise, most Québécois refuse to recognize the existence of an Anglophone

Quebecer community; all they see is a residual (English) Canadian presence stubbornly

nostalgic of a time when they were dominant. This trend is exemplified in Josée Legault's

work *L'invention d'une minorité: Les Anglo-Québécois*. For Legault, it is difficult to

speak of an Anglophone *community* because she feels that Anglophones still see
themselves as conquerors:

> Ne serait-ce pas plutôt la persistance d'une mémoire collective de
> «conquérant» chez des individus qui font partie de la grande collectivité
> anglo-saxonne nord-américaine qui empêche la construction d'un discours
> de participation à la dynamique québécoise, discours qui ne peut s'articuler
> sans ce fameux sentiment d'appartenance? (Legault 30)

Legault actually questions whether or not Anglophones in Québec see *themselves* as a
minority at all; and she suggests that unless they learn to do so, Anglophones in Québec
will never truly form a distinct community.

> C'est ainsi que les Anglo-Québécois auront mis un peu plus de deux siècles
> à tout le moins commencer de se doter d'une identité collective, c'est-à-
> dire d'un certain sens de la communauté. Par contre, jusqu'à maintenant,
> on ne retrouve pas dans le discours dominant d'indices clairs d'une
> acceptation d'un statut minoritaire; elle devrait découler pourtant
> logiquement d'une identité anglo-*québécoise*... (Legault 58-59)

The problem here lies in the fact that Legault seems to think that a community can be
formed without going through a certain process of 'minoritisation.' In other words, she
should reverse her argument: if Anglophones in Québec do see themselves as a distinct
community, this is because they must see themselves as a minority (regardless of whether
or not they act as 'typical' minorities do). She does make more accurate statements such
as: "Le «problème», si l'on peut dire, c'est que cette conscience collective s'est construite

essentiellement en opposition et en réaction à une majorité s'affirmant de plus en plus"

(Legault 41); but for Legault, because their collective conscience is based in reactionism,

Anglophone Quebecers cannot yet claim to form an 'authentic' community. The most she

is willing to acknowledge is that Anglophones in Québec have the *potential* of *eventually*

becoming a community:

> Il est indiscutable qu'il existe aujourd'hui un discours dominant anglo-
>
> québécois, et qu'il recèle, parmi d'autres éléments, une certaine potentialité
>
> pour l'établissement éventuel d'une identité communautaire *distincte* de
>
> celle de la majorité anglo-canadienne. (Legault 81)

Unlike Legault, I believe that identity is constructed dialogically, that identity

requires an other in order to exist. Legault seems to see things differently: while she

accepts that there is a certain dialogical construction in Anglophone self-perception, she

also attempts to expose the Anglophone community for what it 'really' (essentially) is. As

Gregory Reid writes:

> Throughout the body of *L'invention d'une minorité* Legault juggles
>
> constructionist and essentialist visions of English Quebec pointing to the
>
> constructed, invented, created nature of the community in opposition to its
>
> essential, historic, "true" character and roots [...] (Reid 69)

In other words, Legault is making the common mistake of trying to determine how

Anglophones in Québec *ought* to see themselves rather than how they *do* see themselves.

In this, she reflects the views of Canadian theorists who refuse to try to understand why the Québécois see themselves as a colonized people. The fact is, as we shall see, that the Anglophone population of Québec does actually see itself as a community; and in doing so, it has used many of the same counter-discursive tactics as the Québécois.

Throughout this chapter, I will be using the terms Anglo-Quebecer to designate the English-speaking community that exists in Québec and Anglo-Québécois to designate the new generation of Anglophones that is more fully integrated into Québécois society. But both are nonetheless subtly different facets of the same community. An Anglo-Quebecer, as opposed to a Canadian, is someone who sees himself or herself as a Quebecer first and foremost; these are individuals that cannot see themselves living anywhere else in Canada, regardless of what may happen in Québec. An Anglo-Québécois is a person who goes a step further to being unable to live in an environment where there are no Québécois. Both Anglo-Quebecers and Anglo-Québécois nonetheless have English as their first language, and consequently participate in the Anglophone North American context without fully belonging to it. Also, as was the case with the previous chapters on Québécois identity, I will limit my research mainly to essays written by Anglophone Quebecers on their identity. Much has already been written on Anglo-Quebecer or Anglo-Québécois poetry or prose; what will interest me is how the Anglophone community, like the Québécois, constructs its identity in such a powerful way through its non-fictional genres.

5.1 Discourses of Indigenisation in English Quebec:

The Transition from Canadian to Anglo-Quebecer Identity

The Québécois misrecognition of Anglo-Quebecer identity has the same effect as Canadian misrecognition of Québécois identity: it fuels resistance while at the same time strengthens identity. While André Laurendeau saw in Canada two majorities, it can be argued that in Québec there are two minorities. Both of these minorities suffer from a lack of recognition from their significant others. The Québécois see themselves as a minority in Canada as well as in North America, and Anglo-Quebecers see themselves as a minority in Québec. But both of these minorities function as each others' dominant majority; the Québécois with their institutionalised resistance appear to be threatening to the Anglophone population, and Anglo-Quebecers are seen as an extension of Anglophone North American hegemony by the Québécois.

We have seen how the Québécois have come to interpret the Conquest as the starting point of their identity. A similar phenomenon has happened within the Anglo-Quebecer community. Ronald Rudin explains in *The Forgotten Quebecers* that "[d]uring the 1970s many English-speaking Montrealers saw political factors such as the rise of the *Parti québécois* and the introduction of language legislation as the key to the exodus that took place" (Rudin, *Forgotten* 220). These events had an important impact on the insecurities of Anglophones living in Québec. The institutionalisation of Québécois resistance is seen as the event that triggered the construction of a distinct Anglo-Quebecer

identity. As Rudin suggest: "[t]he threat, however vague, of Quebec's independence brought all of the various English-speaking groups together" (Rudin, *Forgotten* 124). Rudin argues that the Anglophone population in Québec was by no means homogenous. White Anglo Saxon Protestants have been losing their dominance to other Anglophone groups (Irish, Italian, Jewish) since the turn of the century. But the threat of Québécois independence, or even Québécois resistance in general, rallied all of these groups under their common denominator: being Anglophone.

Before the institutionalisation of Québécois resistance, it was admittedly much more difficult to see a distinctly Anglo-Quebecer community, as Reed Scowen writes:

> For *les anglais* themselves, there was no collective identity to speak of.
> They were simply Canadians living in Quebec. [...] It might be said that the
> English "community" in Quebec was invented by the French [...]
> Reluctantly, the English accepted the invitation, and the "community," as it
> is known today, was born. (Scowen, *Different* 25)

So, much in same the way as with the Québécois, Anglo-Quebecers see the other as central to the construction of their own identity. Just as the Conquest led to the exodus of all those French colonists who did not feel a sense of belonging to the land here, so did the 'reconquest' of Québec by the Québécois lead to the exodus of those Anglophones who no longer felt at home in a Québécois dominated Québec. It can thus be argued that those who left in the 1970's turned out to be more Canadian that Anglo-Quebecer, just like those who left in 1760 were more French than they were Québécois (*Canadiens*). Those

who stayed in Québec could subsequently claim to have a special attachment to it. Reed

Scowen's works offer perhaps the best examples of indigenising discourses in the Anglo-

Quebecer community:

> In Quebec however, the English are a minority and unlike the English-
>
> speaking minorities in other parts of the world (France for example), they
>
> are not expatriates living here temporarily, without supporting institutions
>
> and in isolation from the majority group. In Quebec, the English are an
>
> "indigenous" people, or at least as indigenous as the French. (Scowen,
>
> *Different* 16)

Here Scowen appropriates effectively the Québécois counter-discourse of indigenisation.

He rightly claims that certain regions of Québec were settled by Anglophones before the

Québécois had ever arrived; the Eastern Townships is the best example of this. But

Scowen's argument extends itself to all those who stayed in Québec after the

establishment of the language laws, the election of the *Parti québécois* and the subsequent

referendums. These forms of institutionalised resistance did their job well; they gave the

Québécois the illusion of having reclaimed or re-conquered their land from the other. But

in doing so they have alienated a people who feel just as attached to the land as they are.

This is how Scowen asserts that the Québécois created the Anglo-Quebecer: without the

threat of a conquering or colonising other, there was no need do define the self. So the

Québécois, by institutionalising their resistance, have given Anglo-Quebecers what the

conquering British gave them in 1760 - a sense of self. And this identity is constructed to

survive regardless of whether or not Québec separates; as Scowen writes: "But even if

Quebec were to become an independent country, English Quebecers and their language would still be a part of the place" (Scowen, *Different* 61). This sort of comment is what truly establishes the Anglophones that have remained in Québec as a distinct community. They intend to exist independently from the rest of Canada if need be.

But the 1970's was not the first time Anglophones living in Québec had to become aware of their existence as a distinct community. There are in fact many precursors to the 1970's, but the most prominent of these is the election of Honoré Mercier's nationalist government in 1887. As Brunet suggests:

> La politique audacieuse d'Honoré Mercier, son souci de gouverner en
>
> tenant compte des besoins de la majorité canadienne-française [...]
>
> provoquèrent l'inquiétude et la méfiance de la minorité anglo-québécoise.
>
> Habituée à un traitement de faveur, elle se jugea lésée dans ses droits
>
> acquis. Selon elle, Mercier était atteint de la lèpre nationaliste. (Brunet
>
> 178)

Mercier's popularity amongst the Québécois was largely due to the Louis Riel scandal. Riel embodied the general angst and injustice felt by French Canadians at the time. In 1888, Mercier created the *ministère de l'Agriculture et de la Colonisation* which was to be headed by the Curé Labelle. The purpose of the ministry was, in part, to colonize the northern regions of Québec and more particularly its predominantly Anglophone enclaves. The Eastern Townships was thus a prime target for the Mercier government. The government would buy all the free land in the Townships and sell it off cheaply to French

Canadian families; thus contributing to the demographic decline of the Anglophone population of the Townships.

The Québécois colonial efforts in the 1880's served as the backdrop to the story of Donald Morrison, the Megantic Outlaw. Morrison would become a symbol for the English-speakers of the time, just as Riel had been for French Canadians. Donald Morrison was born in 1858 in the Lake Megantic region of the Eastern Townships. Most of the region was populated by Scottish immigrants like Morrison's father Murdo. Murdo lost the family farm to a local loan shark (Malcolm B. McAulay) in 1886. The farm was then sold in 1887 to a French Canadian settler: Auguste Duquette. In 1888, the Duquette farm was burned down and gun shots were fired at the Duquette's house. Donald Morrison became the primary suspect and a warrant for his arrest was immediately issued, curiously, to an American gunslinger - Lucius "Jack" Warren. On June 22, 1888 on Frontenac Street in the village of Lake Megantic a Western-style show-down took place in which Morrison killed Jack Warren. This event would mark the beginning of a highly publicised man-hunt that lasted almost a year. The Scottish population aided and abetted Morrison by hiding him from the authorities. In March 1889, martial law was declared in the region by the Mercier government. Eleven people were arrested for sympathising with and/or helping Morrison. The now famous Megantic Outlaw was finally caught on Easter Monday, 1889. His trial for the murder of Jack Warren would begin five months later in Sherbrooke; the Duquette farm was once again burned to the ground. Morrison was found

guilty of manslaughter and was sentenced to eighteen years of forced labour. He fell ill in

1894 and was released to die in peace, which he did a few hours later on June 19th.

The Morrison affair is important because it represented one of the first times in

which the Anglophone/Francophone roles were reversed. The English of Québec were in a

position in which they were being colonized by a demographically dominant French-

speaking majority; and they could do nothing about it. The government was nationalist

and did not cater to the will of the English minority. So the story of Donald Morrison

became emblematic of the fears the English community of Québec had at the time. It was

perhaps their first glimpse at what was to come. Unlike the *Patriote* rebellion, the

Québécois (French Canadians) were now using institutions to gain dominance rather than

revolt. Against this new tactic, the English community could do nothing but complain and

become aware of its own limits. It could therefore be argued that the Morrison affair was

actually one of the first times the Anglophone population of Québec began to see itself as

a community isolated from the rest of Canada - as a minority. In contrast to Legault's

point of view I would argue that, in Québec at least, the concepts of community and of

minority have indeed always been intertwined; and it is the angst that comes with being a

minority that generates the resistance that has been so important in the construction of

identity.

Morrison's story was the subject of several literary works and newspaper articles

of the time. The English community, as it was to be expected, unanimously portrayed

Morrison as a hero. The French Canadian media, also understandably, portrayed him as a ruffian and a common criminal; they were outraged at the English community's support of the outlaw and sympathised with the Duquette family. In a poem by Oscar Dhu, Morrison's story was a "Tale of the Scottish Pioneers." Author Peter Span labelled Morrison the Canadian Rob Roy. And many newspapers compared Morrison to Louis Riel. A French Eastern Townships newspaper, *Le progrès de l'est*, qualified all those who made such comparisons as "les ennemis de la race canadienne-française." Comparing Morrison to Riel is, in any event, a flagrant act of appropriation; and it can be argued that it was also a precursor to the cultural appropriations made by contemporary Anglo-Quebecers (the next section will focus on these appropriations). Another interesting parallel with more current events is that the Morrison affair happened at a time when there was an exodus taking place of the English speaking population of Québec. In the latter half of the 19th century the proportion of English-speakers in the Eastern Townships dropped from 60% to 32%. This was due to a combination of factors, including the colonial agenda of the Mercier government and the prospects of greater economic opportunities in the West (Rudin, *Forgotten* 195).

On a side note, it is intriguing to notice how Donald Morrison has been more or less forgotten by the English-speaking community of Québec today. But if Morrison is not a hero to the Anglophone population, he has surprisingly become one to the now predominantly Québécois population of Lac-Mégantic. The Lac-Mégantic region is now over 95% French-speaking and many of the surrounding towns have had their names

changed to sound more French. These Québécois have practically no idea that Morrison was a symbol of Anglophone resistance to Québécois colonialism. To them, Morrison is a legendary figure with a story straight out of an American western. The main bar in Lac-Mégantic is called *Le Morrison*, and they even have a *Festival Morrison* every summer.

The Morrrison affair is interesting because it shows us that the 1970's was not the first time Québécois resistance, in the form of nationalism, had been institutionalised. But both periods led to similar reactions in the Anglophone populations. The institutionalisation of resistance in Québec provoked an exodus of Anglophones to other parts of the country and created in those who remained a sense of attachment to the land. This attachment manifested itself in discourses of indigenisation, attempting to expose the other as a colonizing aggressor and the self as the colonized victim.

5.2 Anglo-Quebecers and the Appropriation of Québécois Resistance

Due to the institutionalised resistance of the Québécois, the Anglo-Quebecers who remained in Québec now feel just as indigenous to the land as do the Québécois. As such, Anglo-Quebecers are beginning to distance themselves from the settler colonial mentality prevalent in the rest of Canada. While it was rather difficult to define the Anglophone population before the 1970's as anything other than a Canadian community living in Québec, the Anglophone population has since seen itself more as Anglo-*Quebecer*. Both terms may not be mutually exclusive, but they are not exactly synonymous either. The institutionalisation of Québécois resistance marks the definitive point when the Anglophone population of Québec had to define itself as something more than just Canadian; this was when they became a truly distinct community.

The Anglo-Quebecer community perceived Québécois institutions as a direct threat to their survival. The most outspoken and, perhaps unfortunately, well-known Anglo-Quebecer critics are William Johnson, Howard Galganov and Mordecai Richler. These authors all feel that the *Parti québécois* and the language laws are designed to eliminate the Anglophone community of Québec. They are basically reproducing, or appropriating, the resistant stance of the Québécois. Just as the Québécois feel threatened by cultural genocide, so do many Anglo-Quebecers; as Kenneth Price writes:

> A sense was developing [...] that there was a design for the strangulation of
>
> the English in Québec - indeed that "cultural genocide" was the intent of

the Québec government policy since 1974. [...] The sense that English

tradition was being forcibly eradicated in Québec. (Price 365)

In his notorious 1996 article "The Writing's on the Wall," Robert Lecker goes so far as to

compare Québécois nationalism to the tanks in the Tiananmen Square incident. It is these

sort of writings that have created in Canada the impression that the Québécois are

inherently ethnocentric and 'out to get' anybody who is not *pure laine*. This section will

look at how Anglo-Quebecer identity has often been constructed by discourses of

resistance appropriated from the Québécois. As such, Anglo-Quebecer identity often

appears to be more reactionary than it is constructive.

Mordecai Richler's *Oh Canada! Oh Quebec!* is often interpreted as a typical

Anglo-Quebecer work, expressing the fears of the community. Richler can be qualified as

an Anglo-Quebecer rather than a Canadian living in Québec because he frequently states

how he would not want to live anywhere else, and this despite the shortcomings he sees in

Québécois culture: "I live in Quebec because it's home and I like it here" (Richler,

Canada 158). And yet, Richler does not seem to understand, nor does he even try to, the

motivation behind the Québécois institutions he finds so threatening. We see this when he

writes:

My point, briefly, is that our [Anglophone] nostalgia for the 1950s is far

exceeded by an exasperating Francophone failure to grasp that the era in

question skidded to an abrupt end thirty years ago: instead locked into a

time warp, Francophones are still doggedly fighting against injustices that

no longer exist. [...] Anglophone nostalgia for an earlier Montreal is not

necessarily based on a longing for economic dominance but rather for a

time when English, as well as French thrived there and the two cultures

enriched rather than excoriated one another. (Richler, *Canada* 106)

But of what time is Richler speaking of? It certainly is nice to see that he feels that such an

era of peaceful and harmonious co-existence existed, but seldom do you find any

Québécois who would share his views on the matter. If the Québécois would agree with

him on this point, it is likely that they would also agree with most of what he advances in

his book. But unfortunately, the Québécois seem to be practically unanimous in their belief

that no such time ever existed and would go further in stating that the closest we have

ever come to peaceful co-existence was when the language laws were doing their job

effectively.

But instead of trying to understand where the Québécois are coming from, Richler

simply accuses them of racism and anti-Semitism; although there are some exceptions to

this rule, Richler tends to portray the Québécois as a tribalist, bigoted group:

René Lévesque was not an anti-Semite. Neither is Jacques Parizeau. All the

same, Jews who have been Quebecers for generations understand only too

well that when thousands of flag-waving nationalists march through the

streets roaring "*Le Québec aux Québécois!*" they do not have in mind

anybody named Ginsberg. Or MacGregor, come to think of it. (Richler,

Canada 77)

At least he acknowledges the fact that Lévesque or Parizeau are not anti-Semites; his

commentary is aimed rather at the Québécois in general. Furthermore, Richler is not

justified in saying that a Ginsberg or a MacGregor would always be rejected by those

chanting *"Le Québec au Québécois!"*; it is quite plausible that if a certain Ginsberg or

MacGregor were aware of, and concerned with, the problems surrounding Québécois

identity, they too would be included by the Québécois. There are, as always, bigoted

extremists who would immediately exclude anybody who does not conform to their

ethnicity. But did Richler truly believe that these bigots represent the norm rather than the

extreme?

Many Anglo-Quebecer authors will see Québécois nationalism as the true source

of the problem. Again, they tend to only look at how Québécois nationalism might affect

them rather that look at what inspires it; or if they do, they tend to once again extend the

views of a bigoted minority to that of the whole. This is what William Johnson does on a

regular basis:

> All the evidence points to the same conclusion: the objective of current
>
> Quebec nationalism is, as it was in the 1960s, the creation of an ethnic state
>
> of Quebec. [...] The best indication that ethnic nationalism still thrives in
>
> Quebec is the very strength of separatism. (Johnson 389-390)

Johnson equates separatism with ethnic nationalism. While it is true that there are many

such extremists in the separatist camp, it is erroneous to think that they are responsible for

the rise of sovereigntist thinking in Québec. As we have seen in the previous chapters, it is

the more level-headed politicians and theorists as well as a generalised discontentment

with Canada that have contributed the most to the popularity of sovereignty in Québec.

But it is much easier for certain Anglo-Quebecer theorists to blame it all on what they

consider to be an influential minority and a gullible, mindless majority.

The problem, again, stems from the fact that these authors are either unable or

unwilling to look at things from the Québécois point of view. Richler, for instance, is

capable of listening but, as we can see in this next passage, he is less capable of

understanding:

> "Nationalism often has a bad connotation," [Lévesque] said, and then went
>
> on to reassure the students that Quebec nationalism, with laws then already
>
> in place to suppress the English language and deny parents freedom of
>
> choice in education, "is not anti-anyone; it is pro-us." (Richler, *Canada*
>
> 131)

The lack of understanding is actually quite comprehensible here; Richler, Johnson and

many other Anglo-Quebecers are unable to understand Québécois nationalism because

they feel, and indeed are to a certain degree, threatened directly by it. It is, after all,

difficult to want to understand those whom you feel are against you. Thus it is natural to

expect an initial reactionary response from the Anglophone minority. This response

occasionally becomes exaggerated, as in the case of Howard Galganov: "What a bunch of

snivelling pathetic cry-babies are these underachieving, incompetent, no account,

ethnocentric racist Separatist Bastards" (Galganov 148). Galganov even goes so far as to

call Josée Legault a "separatist cow" (Galganov 234). People like Galganov are extremists

in their own right, and it is unfortunate that they are often considered to be representatives

of the Anglo-Quebecer mentality.

Perhaps the most interesting reactionary response, and instance of appropriation,

in the Anglo-Quebecer community is the partitionist movement. The partitionist

movement basically has the same claims as Québécois separatists: if Québec can separate

from Canada, so then can the predominantly Anglo-Quebecer regions separate from

Québec. Therefore, those Anglophones who support partition are only Anglo-Quebecer

insofar as Québec remains in Canada. There is a dual allegiance there that is not

necessarily incompatible, but it does suggest a cleavage and a lack of integration between

those Anglophones who support partition and the majority of Québécois who do not. The

argument for partition would be logical and tenable only if the Québécois were truly

interested in establishing an ethnocentric state. In other words, the existence of the

partitionist movement shows us to what extent those who support it fear ethnic

nationalism; it seems rather paradoxical that they fear it so much that they themselves are

also willing to draw lines based on ethnicity.

But the partitionist movement is another example of extremism, and does not

represent the views of all Anglo-Quebecers. Many Anglo-Quebecers do want to continue

living side-by-side with the Québécois, and would continue doing so even if Québec

separates. A good example of this type of Anglo-Quebecer is Reed Scowen. Unlike the

authors previously mentioned, Reed Scowen's works are not based on an emotional

response. In *A Different Vision* (1991) and *Time to Say Goodbye* (1998), the author

demonstrates a good understanding of the Québécois experience and offers the most

challenging arguments against the excesses of Québécois institutionalised resistance.

Nonetheless, Reed Scowen often ends up presenting much of the same arguments as the

afore mentioned Anglo-Quebecers: "When the premier of Quebec states that the English

in Quebec are the most privileged minority in Canada he should add that it is, for him, an

historical error, and that his government is doing what it can to "correct" the situation"

(Scowen, *Different* 86). Scowen does indeed see the Anglophone population of Québec as

a minority, and he sees Québécois policy towards them as something hostile, engaged in a

discourse of dominance. As others before him, Reed Scowen reverses the argument that

the Québécois are threatened by assimilation against them; he appropriates their discursive

resistance: "The unilingual state sought by Lord Durham in 1839 is now the goal of

others, but on behalf of a different language" (Scowen, *Different* 52). So Reed Scowen's

work presents many of the themes common to what I have called Anglo-Quebecer

identity. This identity is constructed in the same way as Québécois identity, appropriating

the same counter-discursive strategies.

Legault's argument against Scowen is that he, and others like him, does not act as

a member of a minority ought to act. According to Legault, to truly be a minority, Anglo-

Quebecers cannot fall back on the identity of the majority; for her, one cannot belong to

both an Anglo-Quebecer minority and an English Canadian majority at the same time.

Reed Scowen clearly does not agree with this:

> My goal when I began this adventure twenty years ago was to ensure that
>
> the members of the English community would continue to have a place in
>
> the province they had called home for so many generations - as Canadians.
>
> In the face of a tidal wave of French nationalism I was still dreaming of a
>
> bilingual Quebec. (Scowen, *Time* 16)

But as a Canadian, Scowen must agree that it is difficult to claim oneself as a member of a

minority in Québec. As with partitionists, we can certainly see that there is a dual identity

in authors like Reed Scowen; this duality may not present a problem for Anglo-Quebecers,

but it clearly does to critics like Legault who still feel threatened by Canadian dominance.

Typically, minorities are compelled to integrate into the majority. This however

does not mean they have to assimilate to it. Reed Scowen occasionally appears to confuse

the two terms, thus creating yet another point of contention with Legault:

> There is plenty of space between isolation and integration, and somewhere
>
> in this space will be found the *terra firma* of relationships between the
>
> English and French communities in Québec. We see two distinct societies
>
> in one political space. (Scowen, *Different* 64)

But Scowen has no need to fear integration; integration and assimilation being two

different things. Reed Scowen himself is fluently bilingual and is quite integrated into

Québécois society. One can assume that, when referring to integration, Scowen in fact

means assimilation. But it is difficult to confirm this when he makes such statements as: "An English-speaking person, however, has no more responsibility to Quebec to speak French than a French-speaking person has a responsibility to Canada to speak English" (Scowen, *Different* 70) The problem here is that a French-speaking person living outside Québec certainly does have an implicit responsibility to speak English if he or she wants to communicate with the vast majority of their social surroundings - this is just logical. For instance, to Franco-Ontarians, integration is not only necessary, it is also the happy medium between assimilation and isolation. But this does not always seem to be the case with Reed Scowen. It is comments such as the one seen in the previous passage that make the Anglo-Quebecer community a target to authors like Legault; why do self-proclaimed Anglo-Quebecers see themselves in a different situation than Franco-Ontarians, Acadians or Franco-Manitobans? Why do they fear integration?

Reed Scowen does makes certain observations that expose the source of the linguistic tensions in Québec:

> If the English were to see themselves in that way [as a minority], then the
> French would be obliged to behave as a majority. Unfortunately, they did
> not. In fact the very opposite perception was openly encouraged - and still
> is - with the result that French-speaking Quebecers continue to think of
> their community as a minority group as well, weaker and more threatened
> than ever. In such a climate of mutual insecurity, the possibility for

reconciliation and accommodation is practically impossible. (Scowen,

Different 51)

This brings us back to the crux of the problem. As already mentioned, while in the

Canadian context we are dealing with two 'majorities,' in the Québec context we are in

fact dealing with two 'minorities.' Or rather, both Québécois and Anglo-Quebecers can

see themselves and one another respectively as both majority and minority at the same

time. Unlike Legault, I would argue that like the Québécois, Anglo-Quebecers are a

minority but in very unusual circumstances.

The Québécois/Anglo-Quebecer relationship offers us perhaps the best example of

symbiosis. Unfortunately, this symbiotical relationship is rather destructive. True, both

identities feed off one another, and give each other a strong *raison-d'être*; but they also

breed hostility and end up encouraging isolation. It is easy to worry about where this type

of symbiosis in the construction of identity will eventually lead Québec.

5.3 The Emergence of Anglo-Québécois Identity

Just like any community, definitions of identity are never unanimously agreed upon

or homogenous. While in the previous chapters I attempted to reveal a dominant trend, or

a common thread, in Québécois identity based on the resistance to colonial discourses, the

Anglophone community of Québec presents us instead with the beginnings of a *shift* in

identity. In order to make this shift more accessible, I shall call the new - emergent -

Anglophone identity *Anglo-Québécois*. Anglo-Quebecer identity is comprised of a strong

discursive trend which constructs in the minds of Anglo-Quebecers the feeling of being

dominated, or colonized, by another; it also creates a powerful sense of resentment about

not being recognized for its distinctiveness. Again, both of these traits are very present in,

and have been appropriated from, Québécois identity. But there is a new trend emerging in

the Anglophone population which is focussed less on fear or resentment as typical Anglo-

Quebecer discourses. This section will analyse some of the characteristics of this new

Anglo-Québécois identity.

Anglo-Quebecer identity typically relies on the assumption that Québécois

institutionalised resistance has the objective of eradicating the Anglophone population of

Québec. Anglo-Quebecer discourse is fuelled by the fact that many Anglophones feel that

they are perceived as an undesirable subculture by the Québécois. We certainly get this

impression from Mordecai Richler: "Just about everything has been done to make the

Anglophone youth, even those who are fluently bilingual, feel unwelcome in Québec"

(Richler, *Canada* 107). But is it true that the Anglophone youth in Québec feel as unwelcome as Richler suggests? In his work, *Sacré Blues*, Taras Grescoe gives us an enlightening look into an alternative interpretation of the younger Anglophone generation of Québec:

> With their increased intermarriages with francophones, their higher enrolments in immersion schools, and their increasingly organic mingling with French-speakers at work or in ever-more-bilingual suburbs, Québec's adapting Anglos are creating a far less combative linguistic atmosphere. [...] As the voices of the older generation of William Johnsons and Mordecai Richlers start to fade, the new breed of anglophone Québécois will undoubtedly help to attenuate the traditional polarizations. (Grescoe 47)

To Grescoe, the emergence of Anglo-Québécois discourse coincides with a generational shift. The generations following the Baby Boomers do not appear to feel as threatened by the Québécois. Reed Scowen made the same observation in 1991:

> The young and the well-educated found it relatively easy to adapt to a new, bilingual, integrated way of life. They were even, at times critical of those members of their own community who did not want to change or did not know how to. Just as the more nationalist members of the French community were developing their model of a "real" Quebecer, some members of the English elite were busy defining the "real" English

> Quebecer - bilingual, integrated, open to the "new reality" of Quebec.
>
> (Scowen, *Different* 103)

The difference with the younger generations is that they were barely conscious, or not even born, when the language laws came into being and the PQ was elected. Unlike the Baby Boomers or older generations, they did not have to get accustomed to these new forms of institutions.

Many of the younger generations in the Anglophone population are even ashamed to be identified with the older, Anglo-Quebecer population. This is the case with Grescoe:

> In coming to Montreal, unfortunately I became a member of one of the
>
> most strident, self-righteous minorities in North America. Most French-
>
> speaking Québécois will always consider me an Anglo, which means I
>
> sometimes get lumped in with one of the most paranoid bunches of loud-
>
> mouth buffoons on the continent. (Grescoe 46)

Even though Grescoe is a newcomer to Québec, he has nonetheless become a part of the community, and represents it fairly well. But if one wants to find a more 'authentic' example, of an Anglophone born and bred in Québec, one could look to Reed Scowen's son - Peter Scowen. Peter Scowen published several articles in *The Hour*, a Montréal weekly newspaper, that created a bit of an uproar in the Anglophone community. These articles were compiled and translated into French in a book entitled *Trahison tranquille*. Peter Scowen has become one of the strongest voices of what the Montréal *Gazette* has labelled 'the New Anglo,' or of what I call Anglo-Québécois identity. As Peter Scowen

writes: "Voici le nouvel épisode des deux solitudes au Québec: d'un côté, l'élite

grisonnante de chacun des deux groupes linguistiques, pour qui toute autre langue que la

sienne est une sorte de menace; de l'autre, la jeune génération de Québécois bilingues

[...]" (Scowen, P. 24). Peter Scowen is obviously very aware of the destructive symbiosis

between the Québécois and Anglo-Quebecer communities. However, he does not realise

the extent to which Québécois discourses have remained relatively similar in the younger

generation; he seems to project the shift he sees in the Anglophone population to the

Québécois as well. This is perhaps not entirely untrue; even though we find similar

resistant discourses in the younger generations of Québécois, we also get the impression

that they are a little less threatened by Anglophones than the older generation. This

coincides with the fact that the Québécois are today less likely to compare themselves to

typical colonies of occupation than in the pre-October Crisis era.

Whereas the Anglo-Quebecers are undeniably attached to a physical territory, to

the land, the Anglo-Québécois community is attached to the Québécois people as well. In

fact, instead of constantly feeling threatened by them, they will often defend the Québécois

and show a great understanding of their resistance and institutions. They will even be

critical of Canadian intransigence towards the Québécois:

> Maintenant, le Canada anglais continue à déprécier la réputation des
>
> Québécois francophones et les médias anglophones s'évertuent à montrer
>
> le Québec comme une république de bananes en pleine déchéance. Cette
>
> réalité met en relief l'une des plus longues et des plus dégueulasses

campagnes de dénigrement qu'on ait fait subir à un peuple dans toute

l'histoire du pays [...] (Scowen, P. 79-80)

The Anglo-Québécois are more apt to defend the Québécois against what they see as

unjust attacks from Canada:

> In spite of flashes of intolerance expressed by nationalists during the 1995
>
> referendum, Quebec - in a world riven by serious ethnic conflict - is a
>
> paragon of day-to-day racial harmony. [...] There are small-minded thugs
>
> and bigots in every society. Yes, a streak of xenophobia runs through the
>
> dinosaurs of the Parti Québécois, but a younger generation has little time
>
> for the old ethnic shibboleths. (Grescoe 34-35)

We clearly see here a shift from the Anglo-Quebecer stance on supposed Québécois

ethnocentricism. This Canadian negative perception of the Québécois stems from Anglo-

Quebecer discourses; the Anglo-Québécois, on the other hand, will often show signs of

solidarity with the Québécois on this particular matter.

On the question of the language laws, the Anglo-Québécois are also rather more

conciliatory than Anglo-Quebecers. Even though Peter Scowen does see Bill 101 as a

form of censorship, he does not deny its usefulness:

> À vrai dire, la loi 101 est une réussite, parce qu'elle est l'expression
>
> démocratique du désir des Québécois d'affirmer leur statut au Canada. La
>
> loi a corrigé des erreurs du passé en s'adaptant aux directives de la Cour

suprême afin de respecter les libertés individuelles telles qu'elles sont

définies dans notre charte des droits. (Scowen, P. 83)

In this, Peter Scowen and Reed Scowen share a similar point of view. An individual

cannot really be entirely Canadian, Anglo-Quebecer or Anglo-Québécois; one can produce

any one of these three types of discourses. This is the case with Reed Scowen. We have

seen how he has produced what can be called Anglo-Quebecer discourses, but he is also

often involved in Anglo-Québécois discourses:

> [I]f English Quebecers were to analyse the restrictions on the use of their
>
> chosen language, they would discover that those restrictions are really
>
> quite limited and that Quebec holds enormous potential for anyone who
>
> wants a full and satisfying life. Hundreds of thousands of Quebecers like
>
> living here in English, and do so. (Scowen, *Different* 67)

Reed Scowen is also aware of the vicious circle that dominates Québécois/Anglo-

Quebecer relations, and strives to go beyond it:

> If we are blinded by resentment over perceived insults, obsessed by
>
> imaginary plots, or frozen in reaction, we could quite possibly make our
>
> situation worse. [...] If this [the reinforcement of the Francophone presence
>
> in Québec] results in the English community being diminished, it is not
>
> necessarily meant that way, but the result is not an important concern for
>
> the members of the majority group. (Scowen, *Different* 74-75)

So Reed Scowen is a good example of how one can be, or usually is, torn between several identities. He is at times reactionary in his comments but can also be very understanding of the motivation behind Québécois institutions and resistant discourses.

The reason the Anglo-Québécois are capable of not feeling threatened by the language laws is that they have come to realize that, living in North America, assimilation is not really a threat to them. As Rudin writes: "By sharing the language of the majority of North Americans, English speakers will never have to feel the isolation that contributed to the assimilation of many French speakers in the other provinces of Canada" (Rudin, *Forgotten* 289). They realize that in this, they have an advantage over the Québécois. Anglo-Québécois are more capable placing themselves in the Québécois's shoes and seeing that, unlike themselves, assimilation does pose a significant threat to the Québécois:

> This fascination with the English language on the part of French Quebecers
>
> is not reciprocated. Those in North America who speak English do not feel
>
> threatened by the French language; neither do they have the disappearance
>
> of French in Quebec as one of their goals. It is not even an issue. (Scowen,
>
> *Different* 82)

But to the Anglo-Québécois, this *has* become an issue. Having chosen to live among the Québécois, they also want to make sure that Québécois culture does not disappear. They are more willing than ever before to collaborate with the Québécois in order to ensure the survival of their identity. Reed Scowen once again alludes to this when he writes:

> In the eyes of the French majority, the English-speaking community had
>
> existed for generations. Now, for the first time, the English came to
>
> understand this definition of themselves. Accepting it, they agreed to work,
>
> as a minority, within the political and social structures of Quebec. They
>
> accepted the need to protect the French language in Quebec against
>
> erosion. (Scowen, *Different* 33)

Although Scowen's views here are not shared by Anglo-Quebecers, who only feel

threatened by the Québécois, they are quite representative of the new Anglo-Québécois

mentality. The Anglo-Québécois, in other words, are those who are integrated with the

Québécois majority, but have not assimilated to it. The Anglophone minority of Québec is

indeed privileged in that they are perhaps the only minority in North America for whom

integration is not the first step towards assimilation.

Being in favour of integration, it is not surprising to see how the Anglo-Québécois

can be as critical of the Anglo-Quebecer partitionist movement as are the Québécois:

> Il n'y a pas de justification historique à la partition. Le séparatisme
>
> québécois puise ses racines dans la Confédération et l'histoire de ce siècle.
>
> Ce mouvement ne s'arrête pas à la vengeance et à la destruction de son
>
> adversaire politique, il s'est développé lentement, mais sûrement et
>
> démocratiquement. La séparation ne se réalisera peut-être jamais; tout cela
>
> dépend de la volonté des Québécois et les Québécois continuent de se

comporter avec sagesse, tolérance et patience. La séparation est

démocratique alors que la partition est réactionnaire, (Scowen, P. 73-74)

Peter Scowen's adversity towards the partitionist argument is largely due to the fact that

he is not interested in being separate from the Québécois. Again, Anglo-Québécois

identity is not as isolationist as Anglo-Quebecer identity can be. He does however see how

the partitionist argument is an appropriation of Québécois separatism; but the Anglo-

Québécois do not see such appropriations as legitimate. Peter Scowen even goes so far as

to suggest (albeit cheekily) that Anglophones should become members of the *Parti*

québécois - "Sauvons les Anglais - adhérons au PQ" (Scowen, P. 126); this would ensure

that Anglophones have a voice in the future of Québec. If nothing else, such a statement

suggests that the Anglo-Québécois is not inherently opposed to sovereignty-association.

Neither does it mean that to be Anglo-Québécois one must necessarily favour sovereignty;

it simply means that sovereignty-association is becoming an idea to be considered whether

one is Francophone, Anglophone or Allophone - it is not rejected outrightly.

There are many historical antecedents to Anglo-Québécois mentality, that are

generally ignored or simply forgotten by Anglo-Quebecers. As Rudin points out, many

English officials after the Conquest were rather more favourable to the Québécois

(*Canadiens*) than to the new English merchant class:

> [English speakers who belonged to what was known as the "French Party"]
>
> were the advisors of the governor who sat on his council and who
>
> frequently implemented policy which the merchants interpreted as too well

disposed towards the French, thus the name "French Party." (Rudin,

Forgotten 125)

During the *Patriote* Revolt, many Anglophones had taken up arms with the Québécois

against the British. Anglophones of the time are generally remembered as the *Volunteers*;

those individuals who formed militia units to exact revenge upon the Québécois who had,

according to them, forgotten their place as subordinates. But not all Anglophones were

Volunteers:

> Papineau's leading lieutenants were English speakers. There were the
>
> Nelson brothers, Wolfred and Robert, the Irish newspaperman E.B.
>
> O'Callaghan, and the merchant T.S. Brown. Robert Nelson was sufficiently
>
> important in the Patriote movement that he led the 1838 "invasion" of
>
> Québec [from Vermont and New York] (Rudin, *Forgotten* 133)

Even in the heyday of Anglophone economic supremacy in Québec, there were authors

like W. Eric Harris who did not disdain the Québécois (*Canadiens-français*) as much as

his fellow Anglophones are reputed to have. As Ray Conlogue remarks, Harris actually

admired the Québécois for their attachment to their cultural heritage:

> We do not give our French-Canadian brother the credit for being the able
>
> and cultured man he is. We ourselves become more American each day,
>
> and it is well for Canada that we have in Quebec a people who hold fast to
>
> the older, sounder traditions of life. The attractions of materialism do not
>
> take hold of them as they do us. There, there remains a sense of the

beautiful, a love of song and legend, an attachment to duty. (W. Eric

Harris, qtd in Conlogue 28)

Even during the Quiet Revolution and the events leading up to the October Crisis, some

Anglophones in Québec sympathised with the Québécois. True, much of these sympathies

were based on the left wing aspects of Québécois radicalism; but still, many of the

Anglophone community displayed a surprising openness to Québécois nationalist and

separatists ideals. Mordecai Richler refers to such sympathies to Québécois nationalism in

his last novel. In *Barney's Version*, not only does Barney's son get arrested for supporting

the FLQ, but Barney himself is not as hostile to the sovereigntist movement as one would

expect Richler to be. During the 1995 referendum Barney tells his Québécois assistant:

"It would be foolish of you to vote Yes. I don't want you to do it."

"You don't want me to? How dare you! What would you do if you were

young and French Canadian?"

"Why, I'd vote Yes, of course. But neither of us is young and stupid any

more." (Richler, *Barney's* 170)

Although Richler was certainly never supportive of the sovereigntist movement. We do

get a sense here of a compassion and understanding for it. These are but a few examples

of how Anglophones have supported the Québécois' resistance rather than feel threatened

by it. There is considerable space for the construction of an Anglo-Québécois collective

memory. A collective memory to support an emerging community that is demonstrating an

increased solidarity with the Québécois people rather than a mere attachment to a physical

setting in which to live.

* * *

If the Anglophone population of Québec is often seen as being federalist, it is because they see Québec as an important part of Canada's core identity. Many Anglo-Quebecers and Anglo-Québécois are getting frustrated with Canada's slowness or reluctance in recognizing this. In an interview with Taras Grescoe, we get to see some of Charles Taylor's annoyance with Canada:

> "[...] The distinct society is a great reality. Among the people of Quebec, there's a sense that this society is different and a puzzlement that the rest of the country doesn't see this." Taylor confesses his own exasperation over the issue. "It's just so obvious. Sometimes you feel like taking people in the rest of the country and shaking them. 'What's the matter with your head?'" he says, raising the spread fingers of his large hands in mock entreaty. (Grescoe 297)

What is in fact happening is that Anglo-Québécois federalists share their view of Canada with the new federalist or soft nationalist Québécois; a view that firstly clings to the idea that recognition is still possible for Québec if it remains in Canada, and, secondly, believes that Québec is a distinct, national entity. So the Anglo-Québécois tend to follow in the now predominant Québécois perspective, that Canada is a binational state. They, like the Québécois, have become comfortable with Laurendeau's concept of biculturalism (binationalism), and feel that it should be recognized once and for all by the rest of

Canada. Grescoe actually feels that many Canadians do actually share this binational vision
of Canada:

> This is truly the heart of the nation, where the French, the natives, and the
>
> English came together. It's also the place where the three groups have
>
> coexisted, with improbable civility, for centuries. Hence the panic before
>
> the 1995 referendum, the planeloads of earnest federalists who flooded
>
> Montreal with an embarrassing gush of unrequited love: deep down, many
>
> English Canadians realize that if they lose their significant other, Canada
>
> will start to lose its identity. (Grescoe 302)

Ray Conlogue makes a similar point in his work *Impossible Nation*. But where were these
Canadians in the months following the 1980 and 1995 referendums. In both cases, the
Québécois were assured that a vote for No meant a 'yes for change.' Where were these
hundreds of thousand of Canadians when the change did not take place, and in its stead,
federal politics shifted to its hard liner 'plan B' regarding Québec?

To reiterate, the typical Anglo-Quebecer mentality regarding Québécois culture is
symptomatic of a lack of understanding; and regarding Québécois politics is a denial which
manifests itself in the maintenance of a status quo that has been considered obsolete by the
Québécois majority for ages. The Anglo-Québécois tend to be far more active in their
interactions with the Québécois and subsequently in their desire to seek justice for them.
Again, this is due to the fact that the Anglo-Québécois do not feel as threatened by
Québécois nationalism and cultural policies. But even an Anglo-Quebecer prototype like

Mordecai Richler shows moments of attachment to the Québécois rather than a mere

attachment to the land:

> For all my complaints about the PQ, a nationalist aberration now in sharp
>
> decline, I could not live anywhere else in Canada but Montreal. So far as
>
> one can generalize, the most gracious, cultivated, and innovative people in
>
> this country are French Canadians. Certainly they have given us the most
>
> exciting politicians of our time: Trudeau, Lévesque. Without them, Canada
>
> would be an exceedingly boring and greatly diminished place. If I consider
>
> the PQ an abomination it's only because, should their policies prevail,
>
> everybody in Canada would be diminished. (Richler, *Canada* 260)

After having written this, poor Richler had to live through the resurgence of the PQ and

yet another referendum. Despite his love for the Québécois, Richler - along with a huge

portion of Anglo-Quebecers - refused to see that Québécois nationalism and language

policies were representative of a fundamental need in Québécois culture to resist. He

failed to recognize that this resistance was seen by many Québécois as necessary to their

survival; it was not a whimsical break from political monotony nourished by a radical and

delusional elite. It would nevertheless be a mistake to suggest, as does Legault, that

Anglo-Quebecers do not constitute a community distinct from the rest of Canada (and

consequently a minority in Québec). Both Anglo-Quebecer and Anglo-Québécois

discourses function as counter-discourses. The difference between the two is that Anglo-

Quebecer discourse appropriates Québécois counter-discursive strategy and uses it against

Québécois institutions. Anglo-Québécois discourse, on the other hand, tends to participate with Québécois resistance rather than against it.

The Québécois will eventually have to recognize more fully the shift in the Anglophone population from Anglo-Quebecer to Anglo-Québécois identity. Their lack of recognition of the efforts made by Anglo-Québécois gives credence to the sustenance of Anglo-Quebecer identitarian discourses. If there is a symbiotic and destructive cycle that has established itself between Anglophones and Francophones in Québec, it will be largely up to the Québécois to put an end to it. Unfortunately putting an end to the destructive cycle between Canada and Québec will be much more difficult; this is because the Québécois, unlike Anglophones in Québec, have proven to be much more vulnerable to assimilation. In other words, it may be impossible to construct the equivalent of Anglo-Québécois identity amongst the Québécois. Or rather, that equivalent may only come to exist if Canada recognizes Québec as an equal, national partner - i.e. if Canada becomes a binational state, following the recommendation of the B&B Commission.

CONCLUSION

This thesis has attempted to expose a symbiotic process in which identity is developed and shaped in resistance to the other. This does not mean that identity is *always* the result of resistance; it means that resistance can be an important factor in the construction of powerful identitarian discourses. As I have demonstrated, this has certainly been the case with Québec. Québec has offered us an excellent example of how an identity can be constructed in resistance to colonial and neocolonial pressures, and how that same resistant identity can be interpreted as being oppressive by others; but in resisting that oppression, the others create within their own communities a sense of self. Following the same cyclical pattern, these newly constructed identitarian discourses, if successful, will run the risk of being interpreted as colonial discourses by their significant other - and so on and so forth.

Canadianists have too often interpreted Québécois resistance and nationalism as aberrations. They feel that Québécois resistance is inappropriate to how *they* see Québec: Québec is a province of Canada and it should not be acting as a *mis*recognized nation nor as a colonized people. But this, as I demonstrated in my first chapter, is the worst type of essentialism. These Canadianists must begin to understand that their view of Québec is not

shared by a majority of Québécois; that their point of view reflects *their* definition of Canada only, as opposed to a *correct* definition of Canada.

This being said, unless one believes in essentialist definitions of identity, we are forced to acknowledge that a community or nation can be at once colonizer and colonized, oppressor and oppressed. Such definitions will depend entirely on the point of view of the observer. Consequently, as we see in the case of Québec, postcolonial theory can no longer realistically depend on historical criteria to delimitate its field of study. Even though historically Québec was a settler colony, the Québécois are not generally engaged in typical settler colonial discursive practices. Depending on the point of view, Québec can be interpreted as being both a settler colony and colony of occupation. And despite seeing themselves as colonized, the Québécois have nonetheless also played the role of the colonizer in the construction of Anglo-Quebecer identity. So instead of speaking of postcolonial *societies*, the case of Québec shows us that it may be more appropriate to speak of postcolonial *resistance*. Postcolonial resistance, as opposed to anti-colonialism, could then be considered as a counter-discursive strategy designed to circumvent the hegemonising forces at play in neocolonialsm.

Québec offers us a glimpse at the symbiotic process involved in the shift between Terdiman's discourse and counter-discourse. We see this in the emergence of Québécois identity as counter-discursive to Anglophone North American hegemony, and in the subsequent emergence of Anglo-Quebecer identity as counter-discursive to Québécois

hegemony. Discourse and counter-discourse, like the Francophone and Anglophone populations of Québec, are locked in a symbiotic cycle - both constantly feeding off one another. One has to wonder if this cycle extends itself more broadly to social interaction in general; does the example of Québec extend itself to other communities?

As for the future of Québec, it is impossible to predict what might happen. One can just as easily foresee that Canada and Québec will continue to resist one another indefinitely, just as they always have, or that Canada will eventually recognize Québec as an equal partner. This partnership, if ever it will come to be, will be established either through constitutional reform or through Québécois sovereignty-association. But both communities will have to come to terms with the fact that neither one would exist if it was not for the other. Without the Conquest, there would not have been a distinctly Québécois identity; and without the Québécois, Canadians would be hard-pressed to define themselves in contrast to the American juggernaut.

The Anglo-Québécois are becoming aware in this interdependence. Although most North American Anglophone communities may not see themselves as colonizers, we do occasionally sense a certain unease or *malaise* concerning their participation in Anglophone global hegemony. The Anglo-Québécois are perhaps the only English-speaking community that will never need to feel this type of cultural *malaise*. The Anglophone global hegemony protects the Anglo-Québécois from being assimilated, and

their support of Québécois institutions will help prevent them from becoming the agents of assimilation.

Finally, Québec is a fascinating subject to study because it is rife with discursive conflicts. We see in Québec the extent to which discourses have an impact on the life of its citizens. It is an exciting environment in which everybody seems to have an opinion on identity. Québec is also a young society, still in the process of defining itself. Thus Québec offers us a first hand look at identities as they are shaped; and whether you are a postcolonialist, a comparatist, a social theorist or other, there is still much to be learned from what is happening in Québec.

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