

The Question of Quebec Identity in French-Canadian Literature

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Abstract

The question of identity is not simple and has always remained one of the most serious problems that man has to think about consciously or sub-consciously. The question of identity is part of human life, and without a doubt, it will always be an inseparable part of our existence. The question of Quebec identity is widely discussed in the Quebec literature. Quebec literature does not avoid the question of identity, especially since it is a significant part of Quebec society. Several works addressed this question directly or indirectly and in future many more will try to explore it as the notion of Quebec identity is not static and it is evolving continuously. In this paper, we present a detailed diachronic study of identity paradigms from author to author, from period to period till our days. However, the purpose of this study is not to present short literary history, but rather to offer another look at certain elements of this notion. The question of identity does not represent the bulk of literature but is only a component that gains particular importance at certain times in literary history. The approach to identity discourse analysis requires selection. It will be surprising, no doubt, by the absence of certain significant names – Gaston Miron or Victor-Lévy Beaulieu. Detailed analysis will however concern the works of Michel Tremblay, Marie Rose Emma Gabrielle Roy, Yves Theriault, Jacques Ferron, Jacques Poulin, Monique La Rue, Jacques Godbout, Lise Tremblay, and others. The selection will also try to respect the diversity of genres – novel, story, theatre, poetry. This exemplification will make it possible to examine, successively, the image of oneself according to the other – English and Canadian-English, French, American, Indian, immigrant.

Keywords: French language; Identity; Quebec; Quebec identity; Quebec literature.

Introduction

From the beginning, literature has played a significant role in society. Literature does not avoid the problem of identity, especially since this question always arouses the interest of readers. Several works offer, directly or indirectly, answers to these questions. In short, literature influences the identity of readers, presenting models through its positive or negative characters. The question of identity is part of human life, and without a doubt, it will always be an inseparable part of our existence. When we talk about identity, there are many definitions for this notion. Identity is a polysemic and multi-referential notion. Behind this word hides a reality, and there is no fixed definition. When we try to define identity, we fix it to a limited area. The elusiveness of identity can be understood by its multifaceted character. From birth, man builds a point of view about himself, as well as about others. This vision is constantly evolving since our perception of ourselves and of others undergoes different influences coming from outside, as well as from within our personality. Self-identification is a long (apparently lifelong) and complex process. And when we talk about Quebec identity, there is no definitive and static definition. Many researchers have studied this subject and there are several interpretations of the Quebec identity. We have discussed some of the interpretations in brief.

The Quebec Identity

The question of identity is not simple and has always remained one of the most serious problems that man has to think about consciously or subconsciously. The word "identity" comes from the Latin "idem" (the same). To define this notion, Richard Jenkins, an English sociologist, proposes two basic meanings: the similarity of objects and the constancy or continuity in time, which is the basis for defining and grasping the definitive character and the particularity of something. According to Jenkins, the notion of identity involves two criteria for comparing people or things: similarity and difference. The verb 'identify' also implies two additional points: to classify things or people and to associate or attach someone to something or someone else. Identity is not a static notion, but a continually developing process. In short, identity is our understanding of who we are and who others are, and, conversely, the understanding that others may have of themselves and of others (including us).

Identity formation employs a process of simultaneous reflection and observation, taking place on all levels of mental functioning, by which the individual judges himself in light of what he perceives to be the way in which others judge him in comparison to themselves and to a typology significant to them; while he judges their way of judging him in light of how he perceives himself in comparison to them and to types that have become relevant to him.¹ P.15

Due to the disciplinary transversality of identity and the several paradoxes that cross it, identity is a multi-referential and complex notion at the same time. So, the French sociologist Jean- Claude Kaufmann points out : "Le mot identité se retrouve partout, c'est une espèce de mot valise dans lequel chacun met son propre contenu" (P. 55)². For several decades, identity has been one of those versatile concepts that practitioners of the humanities and social sciences like to discuss. It is sometimes difficult to bring coherence to the reflection on this theme because of the diversity and contradictory nature of the approaches to this complex concept.

Therefore, when we talk about Quebec identity, there is also no definitive one-dimensional definition. Moreover, before looking at the Quebec identity we must consider the fact that a collective identity like the Quebec identity cannot be considered as a static entity, something given once and for all. Many researchers have constantly studied this subject. There are several interpretations of the concept of Quebec identity. Jacques Bouchard published *les 36 cordes sensibles des québécoise*³ in 1978. In this book, Jacques Bouchard lists the six vital traits of Quebecers, which are: de souche terrienne, en état de minorité, géographiquement nord-américains, de religion catholique, d'origine latine et d'ascendance française i.e native, minority, North American, Catholic, Latin origine and French roots. This book helps us better understand French-speaking Quebecers. According to Jacques Bouchard, " Nous sommes

« uniques », aucun autre peuple au monde ne possède le même bagage génétique. Nous sommes la conséquence de notre environnement singulier et de nos 400 ans d'histoire."

What do we consider when we talk about a Quebec identity? The views of two social scientists, Léon Dion and Christian Dufour, on this subject, are very important and deserve to be mentioned here. Dion chose an unusual tactic as a social scientist to study the concept of Quebec identity. He attempted to study Quebec identity through a non-systematic study

of Quebec poetry, song, and novels. He presented the concept of identity through the prism of imaginary thought in the works of Hubert Aquin, Gaston Miron, Félix Leclerc, and others. He emphasized that “ que la plupart des analystes sociaux ou néglige d’intégrer l’imaginaire dans leur appréhension de la société, ou encore ne lui réservent que quelques paragraphes hors textes.”⁴ Léon Dion and Christian Dufour insist on the need to analyse these imaginary messages on the real issue of identity.⁵ They say «laissé la bride au cou de notre imaginaire», This means that through the prose, poetry, and song of the literati they are searching for the self-perception of the Québécois. And they highlight that the French language and Catholic religion are the main poles of Quebec identity : « Catholiques et français, auxquels traits il faut ajouter celui d’habitant ou de cultivateur tels, en effet, furent les fondements apparemment immuables de l’identité québécoise ».⁶

Since the Quiet Revolution of the early 1960s, Quebec has developed as a collective society. It has moved from a French-Canadian ethnic society to a territorial society that brings together Quebecers of all origins around a new and inclusive civic sense of nationhood. Over the past six decades, this gradual transition has provoked increasingly intense questioning of identity and this question is at the heart of Quebec’s academic, intellectual, and political milieu. In recent years, we have seen an increase in the number of speeches by politicians and academic intellectuals about the meaning, nature, or desired structure of Quebec identity. The growing socio-demographic pluralism of Quebec society, and the acceptance, and celebration of identities have led many to revisit past clichés about the foundations of the Quebec community. Today, the question of identity is one of the dominant research themes in social and political philosophy, comparative politics, and literary theory. For some people, it may seem like a fantastical and unsubstantial subject created by men of letters. But for most, including us, the question of identity is inevitable.

Language and Quebec Identity

Canadian-English speakers are others for Quebecers, the one in relation to which French-Canadian identity is primarily defined. Language is a force that polarizes individuals, families, and societies. Although this fact is not always explicitly inscribed in the literary discourse, its traces are always visible. We believe that the teaching of the French language and the history of Quebec is a very important pillar of the valorization of the Quebec identity. Chantal Bouchard, in her book on the relationship between language and Quebec identity, emphasized that “ [...] pour comprendre l’his-

toire d'une collectivité, il est nécessaire de savoir comment s'est formée son identité collective et comment cette identité s'est adaptée aux changements et aux pressions qu'elle a subis. (p.31)"⁷ Over the course of its history, Quebecers have experienced many changes and have thus developed their own identity over time. Jacques Mathieu and Jacques Lacoursière summarize the evolution of the identity of "Quebecers" in this way.

À compter des années 1670, le mot "Canadien" désigne les Français qui ont fait souche en Nouvelle-France, ceux qui y "sont installés à demeure" ou qui "se sont habitués au pays" comme on dit à l'époque, les distinguant ainsi des immigrants récents. L'expression "Canadiens français", elle, a été popularisée à la fin des années 1810. À cette époque, les immigrants anglophones commencent, à leur tour, à s'appeler "Canadiens" ou "Canadians". Peu à peu, on en vient à distinguer les "Canadiens anglais" et les "Canadiens français", mais les expressions "canadien" et "canay-en" continuent à désigner le groupe de souche francophone ancienne. [...] Au tournant des années 1960, les appellations changent d'une façon spectaculaire. Le mot "Québécois" prend alors une coloration politique, mais il conserve une valeur plus large, à la fois territoriale, sociale, idéologique et sentimentale. L'expression "Canadien français", elle, en vient à s'appliquer surtout aux francophones hors Québec [...]⁸.

From the beginning, The English or the Canadian English constitute causa prima for the question of identity in Quebec literature. We are mentioning three plays from the very first French-Canadian texts which substantiate this fact: *L'Anglomanie* a comedy drama written by Joseph Quesnel and published in 1802, *Une partie de campagne* penned by Pierre Petitclair (This Play produced in 1842 and published in 1865), and *Le Jeune Latour (1844)* of Antoine Gérin. Joseph Quesnel's comedy-drama is one of the first texts which present English speakers as others. As Monsieur de Primembourg who awaits the visit of the English Governor hesitates on the language of the welcome formalities whether he should use French or English. His Family is also divided on this question. While Mr. de Primembourg's mother advises the French tradition, the others - aiming for their social ascent - intend to follow the new English fashion. Son-in-law Beauchamp goes so far as to propose the exclusion of the pro-French part of the family. This comedy-drama shows the society of that era and criticizes the chameleonism of the French-Canadian Novelty. *L'Anglomanie* demonstrates how the presence of others contributes to the emergence of collective consciousness - us. *Une Partie de Campagne* of Pierre Petitclair shows the con-

trast between a French-speaking village and an English-speaking city. He associates French speaker people to villages and English Speaker people to the cities. Whereas in the work of Antoine Gérin-Lajoie '*Le Jeune Latour*' demonstrate the exclusion of other- theEnglish- by his absence. In the previous plays, the English were in the subject position as characters who act and, possibly, have the right to speak. *Le Jeune Latour* relegates them offstage while representing them as collectively different, as enemies. Co-existence yields to conflict. The identity attitude is based on the history and on the development of the characteristic of the national defensive model: antiquity of colonization/usurpation, Catholicism/Protestantism, fidelity to the king (of France), protection of the territory.

The example of the three plays from the first half of the 19th century shows the difficulties posed by the image of the English and the Canadian-English. A century later, the malaise is no less. The Quiet Revolution stirs up the problem of identity and the theatrical production is marked by this new wave and the theatre becomes a public space in the broad sense like an agora where the exchange of ideas and discussion happened at a larger scale with the traumatic presentation of history and present. It is worth mentioning here the works of Robert Grik *Hamlet, prince du Québec* (1968), *Les Tas de sièges* (1971)⁹, *Allo... police!* (1974). We should also remember Francoise Loranger's psychodrama *Le Chemin du Roy* (1969), stages in the form of a hockey match the conflict between the Quebec sovereignists and the English Canadians during the visit of General de Gaulle in Quebec. Another play *Médium saignant* (1970) presents the confrontations of the district of Saint-Léonard in Montreal concerning the language of instruction.

Gurik's and Loranger's plays tune with the national defensive paradigm. At the same time, the theatrical productions reconcile with the national integrating model. This is the case with two plays of Jacques Ferron *Les Grand Soleils* (1958) and *La Tête du Roi* (1963)¹⁰. The question of national identity is treated from a historical perspective. History and traumas of the past have jointly reinterpreted the image of the English and the English Canadian, the ones with whom French-Canadians have shared the territory for more than two centuries. The common point of *Les Grand Soleils* and *La Tête du Roi* is the construction of steps between oneself and the other that would lead to dialogue and understanding. In the two cases, québécoisité and angelicity are non-univocal, differentiated. The same difference we find in the novel of Jacques Godbout '*Les Têtes à Papineau*'.¹¹ The novel tells us the sad and funny story of Charles and François Papineau, two brains, two consciousnesses but with only one body. They are different in many

ways: temperament, tastes, and professional aspirations. Charles admires only what is Anglo-Saxon, François swears by his French roots. A famous Anglo-Canadian surgeon proposes an operation to save them from the difficulty of being two-headed in a world of one-headed people. We find the head of Charles on the left and that of François on the right. These two heads have a different personality than the other. Godbout wrote this book just after the failed referendum of 1981. Through his two-headed character, Jacques Godbout introduces us to dual Canada. Charles represents English-speaking Canada and François represents French-speaking Canada, that is, Quebec. He presents the links between fiction and reality and analysis of the opposing attitudes between the two realities.

Literature was one of the main mediums through which ideas of this identity proliferated. As a result, the literary works of this period reflect the conditions of the society that was facing two cultures. The themes of identity, cultural pluralism, and the intercultural condition thus became a recurring issue in Canadian francophone literature. Michel Tremblay's theatre symbolizes the struggle for Quebec's linguistic emancipation through jòal (*Gervais* 2000), while Pierre Vallières' pamphlet, *Nègres blancs d'Amérique* (1968), or Michèle Lalonde's iconic poem, *Speak White* (1970), focused on the socio-economic and linguistic aspects of Quebec's emancipation. According to Jacques Godbout for the writers of his generation, the theme of the emancipation of Quebec society, both in the field of language and secularism, determines commitment. He wrote in *Cite libre*: « [...] si la France a perdu des colonies, les français n'ont pas perdu, je le crains, le goût de l'exotisme, ou celui des grandes simplifications auxquelles conviennent leurs hebdomadaires politiques. »¹² Godbout observes in the article *L'entêté de la famille* that; « La littérature, au Québec, devenait l'aspect fondamental d'un discours politique'.

» (p. 109)¹³ Same way In the novel *Salut Galarneau!* (1967) with the help of the protagonist François, Godbout illustrates how the people of Quebec emerged from the "Great Darkness" and embraced modernity thanks to the rise of neoliberal nationalism. This novel illustrates well the importance of the French language for the Quebec identity. In this novel he criticizes authors who do not talk about the values of society:

[...] François se fait alors emmurer vivant chez lui et s'écrit des lettres qu'il poste dans sa salle de bains ou dans son réfrigérateur. Il regarde la télévision, surtout les messages publicitaires. Cette scène fameuse illustre bien la situation de l'écrivain québécois qui ne peut opposer au mur des lamentations, commun à toute

la collectivité, qu'un autre mur, celui de l'écrivain martyr qui ne veut plus jouer à l'ethnographe de service, et quise révolte en se séparant physiquement des autres. ¹⁴ (P. 424)

In his first novel "*L'Aquarium*" he has presented his own experience: « "Dans *L'Aquarium*, je décrivais un groupe de canadiens vivant à l'étranger. Je m'étais inspiré de ce que j'avais vécu en Afrique. »¹⁵ The aquarium is a story about the unnamed character, a French Canadian (not a Quebecer) who works as a volunteer in a colonized country. The Aquarium is the story of an observation of the world. He sees his country as immensely frozen and pale. The aquarium demonstrates the collapse of the colonial system without ever directly mentioning the case of Quebec: « [...] C'était en 1962. Dans les premières pages, on voyait un missionnaire faire une visite au bordel, à Addis-Abeba. C'était un personnage peu reluisant - Révolution tranquille oblige -, fornicateur et voleur, qui donnait au narrateur, jeune coopérant en Éthiopie, l'occasion de faire un de ses meilleurs coups. »¹⁶

Godbout's second novel "*Le couteau sur la table*" was published in 1963. This novel was an allegory of contemporary Quebec, a testimony of its time. The novel is structured ideologically around two women, Patricia, an English-speaking Canadian, and Madeleine, a Québécoise. This novel presented the ideas of Quebec nationalism and a critique of American commercial values, a value that Patricia represents. The characteristic ideas of the Quiet Revolution are recognized in the relationship between the narrator and Patricia, for example, returning to the motif of Quebec's colonization by Britishers. Most critics suggest this work as an allegory related to current political events; « Godbout voit en deux femmes le pays qui n'existe pas, [...] le Québec. »¹⁷ In his essay Gilles Marcotte highlights that *L'aquarium* is a French Canadian novel that speaks about experience of Quebecers: « [...] le roman de Jacques Godbout, *L'Aquarium*, bien que l'action s'en déroule sans cet ailleurs dont nous avons dit tout à l'heure qu'il pouvait être, pour les romanciers canadiens-français, le lieu des valeurs retrouvées. [...] *L'Aquarium*, malgré son exotisme d'apparence, transpose une expérience fondamentalement canadienne-française. »¹⁸

In his novel '*Salut Galarneau!*' Godbout presents the life of an extraordinary family 'the Galarneau' and in particular the main character and narrator François Galarneau. This work illustrates the life of Galarneau as an individual and the contemporary Quebec society of the nineteen-sixties. This Godboutian character is inspired by Quebec in general, and by its history, religion (Catholic), education (the lack of education, literature), imagination, language (the polished French and colloquial French used

by François, the origin of the French language, the influence of English), and identity (which includes Quebec society, his family). In this novel, through a small shopkeeper who shows our attachment to the American way of life, the novelist exposes the rupture between the two Canada. Quebec rejects the idea of an English-speaking nation and culture. This novel is a classic in Quebec literature. "*Salut Galarneau!* Godbout's funny, anarchic 1979 tale of a French-Canadian dropout who sells chips and hot dogs from a van, became a Canadian classic."¹⁹

Jacques Godbout has written his fourth novel *D'amour, P.Q.*(1972)²⁰ in *Joual*.²¹ The acronym

P.Q in the title of the novel denotes *Parti Québécois* and the province of Quebec. In this novel, Jacques Godbout exhibits the position of a young Quebec secretary who, during a radio interview, dares to claim the right to express herself in her ordinary language - a language likely to offend some by its verbosity and others by its incorrigibility.

Language has been a real battle horse in Quebec for decades. When we talk about Joual, it is an integral part of the Quebec identity. Joual became the representation of Quebec's identity during the 1960s. The works of many writers have created a polemic around the language. And Jacques Renaud describes joual as: "langue de révolte, de soumission, de douleur et d'impuissance" du Québécois face à sa situation de colonisé, d'opprimé, d'oppressé." The writers of the Parti magazine such as André Major, Jacques Godbout, Gérald Godin, Victor Lévy-Beaulieu, among others took charge to revolutionize the writing by the use of joual. These writers used to write in all the novel and dialogues in the Joual. These writers question themselves seriously about the future of the literature in Quebec: « Quelle langue doit-on utiliser pour vraiment atteindre le peuple? N'est-ce pas paradoxal de mettre dans la bouche de l'ouvrier colonisé un français raffiné? Et si la langue est le meilleur indice de la santé culturelle d'un peuple, n'est-ce pas le joual plutôt que le français qu'il faut utiliser? »²² (P.144)

In 1972, Jacques Ferron published *Les Confitures de coigns et autres textes* which contains two previously published novels *Papa Boss* (written in 1966) and *La Nuit* (Written in 1965). The problem of identity is the main theme of these different novels. However, in the two fictions, the plot leads to contradictory results. While the experience of anonymous women in *Papa Boss* leads to her ruin, in *Les Confitures de coigns*, the recovery of his soul brings about the salvation of François Menard, the hero with whom Jacques Ferron identifies himself in the autobiographical text.²³ The two novels offer

a double reading. The first – “temporal” – which is related to the political and social situation in Quebec in the 1950s and 1960s. A study by Jacques Pelletier also shows the influence of the state of siege of October 1970 on the revised version.²⁴ The other reading which is psychological; highlights the identity contradictions of Quebecers.

Among Jacques Ferron’s novels, *Le Salut de l’Irlande* (1970) is undoubtedly the one where identity, both individual and collective, dominates. This is a story of an adolescent Connie Haffigan in search of identity who is the youngest child of a poor Irish-Quebec family living on the outskirts of Montreal.

[...]récit fictif qui a pour sujet la double initiation d’un jeune Québécois à la réalité politique et sociale de son pays, ainsi qu’à l’héritage plus spirituel qui lui vient des origines irlandaises de son père.²⁵

Another masterpiece of Jacques Ferron *Le Ciel de Québec* was published in 1940. This satirical and comical novel paints a picture of intellectual and societal aspect of Quebec on the threshold of the 1940s. The enquébécoisement, the hybridization, the composite character, and the cultural and ethnic impurity of Quebec identity are thematized in *Le Ciel de Québec*.²⁶

Jacques Cardinal has analysed several methods of mediation on the question of how to accept English “other” in his work ‘*La paix des braves. Une lecture politique des Anciens Canadiens de Philippe Aubert de Gaspé.*’ The historical novel was published in 1863 shortly before the creation of the Canadian Confederation (1867) and hundred years after the trauma of the Conquest. It tells the major conflicts in the foundation of two Canada one French speaker and another English speaker.

After English, Canadian-English or their substitute, it is France that represents the determining identity factor in the French-Canadian and Quebecois literature. But at the beginning of the 20th century and especially after the ‘Quiet Revolution’ Quebec’s writers and intellectuals tried to free Quebec literature from the subordination of the Francité of France. The project of the nationalist Camille Roy, who in 1904 proposed the “nationalization of Canadian literature” by refusing the status of “colonial literature”. In 1946 and 1947 Catholic modernist, Robert Charbonneau, defends in *La Nouvelle Relève* and in other journals, the autonomy of French-Canadian literature against the pretensions of French writers. Two decades later the intellectuals were in the same boat. Although they probably did not rep-

resent a majority movement, their radical words contributed greatly to the affirmation of Quebec's identity. The radicals of the Parti pris (1963-1968) refused traditional historical-religious argumentation and resort to the decolonization theories of Jacques Berg, Albert Memmi, and Frantz Fanon. Indeed, the other (French) is considered an integral part of the French-Canadian. These (French) values are moreover considered as a primary, natural, source, whereas the Canadian francité risks being labeled as secondary. This flaw was felt by Jacques Ferron, who sought to reverse the relationship through fiction: that we see in *La Tête du Roi* and in *Le Saint-Élias* (1972).

Two authors Jules-Paul Trudel and Michel Tremblay present this problem in their works. Jules-Paul illustrates the conservative nationalist position that takes a critical look at republican, secular, and modernist France in his story of political anticipation *Pour la partie* (1895). Michel Tremblay's hexalogy *Les Chroniques du Plateau-Mont-Royal* (1978-1997) offers an analysis of Quebecers' view of France and French culture and allows us to address the question associated with the relationship between the elites and popular culture, a time when Quebec culture aspires to autonomy - and be seen as independent of France. The relationship between Quebec and France is treated differently and at a different level by Michel Tremblay. His theatre has been critically acclaimed, since the overwhelming response of *Les Belles-Sœurs*, published in 1968, and the introduction of Jodel in Quebec literature.

Quebec Identity and Americanisation

Apart from the two colonial powers, France and Great Britain, French-Canadian literature (and later Quebec literature) also drew its inspiration from the culture of Canada's only powerful neighbour, The United States. The US has influenced all aspects of Quebecers' lives in recent years, notably through his films and television programs. The politicians of Quebec talked a lot about the U.S from the very early of the 19th century but in literature, we see a whole series of novels devoted to the city of Montreal, which is presented as an American metropolis only after the Second World War. Among the most famous works the following are worth mentioning here: Ringuelet's *Le poids du jour* (1949), *Alexandre Chenevert* (1954) by Gabrielle Roy, *Les Inutiles* (1956) by Eugène Cloutier and Gérard Bessette's *La bagarre* (1958).

In contemporary Quebec literature, we find many characters, plots, and images influenced by the United States. We can name those works under

the following categories : Le voyageur distrait (Gilles Archambault, 1981), Petites violences (Madeleine Monette, 1982), Volkswagen blues (Jacques Poulin, 1984), Une histoire américaine (Jacques Godbout, 1986), Copies conformes (Monique La Rue, 1989), La pêche blanche (Lise Tremblay, 1994), Petit Homme Tornade (Roch Carrier, 1996), Fou-bar (Alain Beau-lieu, 1997) and Chercher le vent (Gilles Vigneault, 2001).

Godbout sees the excessive American influence as a threat to Quebec identity. He thinks that the American influence was one of the reasons for the failure of the referendum. So he writes:

En réalité nos Idées' viennent de la France, mais nos mythes, nos fictions, nos cartes de crédit, notre confort, viennent des États-Unis. Au référendum c'est de cela qu'il s'agissait. Ceux qui ont voté avec leur tête ont choisi de dire oui. Ceux qui ont voté avec leur corps ont dit non. S'il est une leçon tirer de tout cela, pour nous intellectuels, c'est qu'il faudra désormais proposer une nouvelle théorie et de nouveaux récits, dans lesquels désormais la tête et le corps seront réunis (P. 81).²⁷

The American dream is rooted in the mentality of every Quebecer through popular songs, history, and literature. Since the 1980s, this dream has also become a theme in Quebec literature. Jacques Godbout's novel *Une histoire américaine* (1986) illustrates the influence of the United States on Quebec. Dans *Une histoire américaine*²⁸, the main character, Gregory Francoeur, is a Quebec professor who works for the sovereigntist movement in Quebec but just after the failed referendum, leaves his family and political career in Montreal to move to San Francisco where he becomes an assistant to a prominent university. He moved to San Francisco to rebuild his life amidst the tumultuous luxury of the United States. But he finds himself, because of a misunderstanding, in a dark and dangerous business of trafficking and illegal immigration. This novel illustrates the failure of the American dream through the descriptions of California as a consumerist society in which money rules everything.

Conclusion

We can say that question of identity is a major and recurring theme in Quebec literature. We also observed the evolution of the identity of the main characters. The marginalized seek their place in society and finally find a position that satisfies them. This is the result of a long initiatory journey during which the different characters undergo successive meta-

morphoses to finally realize the final knowledge. These different writers offer their readers an opportunity to reflect on the difficult process of personal identification through all the conditions of life. These works generally reveal the interests, aspirations, and issues of Quebec society and are an instrument to analyze the individual and collective identity of Quebecers.

Notes:

¹ Erikson, Erik H. *Identity: Youth and Crisis*. Norton, 1968. Web

² Kaufmann, Jean-Claude. *L'invention de soi. Une théorie de l'identité*. A. Colin. 2004

³ Bouchard, Jacques. *Les 36 cordes sensibles des Québécois*, Éditions Héritage, 1978, Print

⁴ Dion, Léon. *Québec 1945-2000 Tome 1 – À la recherche du Québec*, Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 1987.

⁵ Ibid p. 56

⁶ ibid

⁷ Bouchard, Chantal. "La langue et le nombril : Histoire d'une obsession québécoise", Fides, 1998., Web, <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/037343ar>

⁸ MATHIEU, Jacques et Jacques LACOURSIÈRE, « *Les Mémoires québécoises* ». Québec, Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 1991. p. 100-02

⁹ Robert, Gurik. *Hamlet, Prince du Québec*. Éditions de l'Homme [1968], Print

¹⁰ <https://numerique.banq.qc.ca/patrimoine/details/52327/3659660>

¹¹ Godbout, Jacques. *Les Têtes à Papineau*, Édition du Seuil, 1981. Print

¹² ---. "Lettre a des amis français de ce qui nous arrive", *Cite libre* 55, 1963

¹³ ---. "Le murmure marchand 1976-1984", Edition de Boréal, 1984, p-153

¹⁴ Biron, Michel. Dumont, François. and Nardout-Lafarge, Elisabeth. *Histoire de la littérature Québécoise*, Les Éditions du Boréal, Print

¹⁵ Luc, Perrault. "Je recule dans le temps", *La Presse*, vol; 83, no; 221, 23 sept. 1967, p. 29. Web

¹⁶ Marcotte, Gilles. "Deux histoires de révolte", www.lactualite.com, Le 1 mai 1999. Web

¹⁷ Théberge, Jean-Yves. "Le Couteau sur la table" in *Le Canada français*, 1965, p.24

¹⁸ Cité par Gilles Marcotte, dans *Une littérature qui se fait. Essais critiques sur la littérature canadienne-française*, HMH, coll. « Constantes », 1971 [1962], p. 70.

¹⁹ <https://www.irishtimes.com/life-and-style/french-resistance-1.428759>

²⁰ Godbout, Jacques. *D'amour, P.Q.* Hurtubise HMH, 1983. Print

²¹ The word joul comes from cheval, pronounced [jwal] as in 17th century French. The term joul is used in Quebec to designate the overall phonetic, grammatical, syntactic, and lexical differences or deviations (including anglicisms) of Canadian popular French, either to stigmatize them or to make them a symbol of identity. Historically, "Quebec joul" is French that is a mixture of archaic French, popular French, and several anglicisms.

²² Mailhot, Laurent. *La Littérature québécoise*, Typo, 1997. Print

²³ Tibblin, Claudette. " "Les CONFITURES DE COINGS" DE JACQUES FERRON : FORME ET SIGNIFICATION", McGill University Libraries, 1976, Web

²⁴ Pelletier, Jacques. "De la Nuit aux Confi tures de coings : le poids des événements d'Octobre 1970". *Voix etImages* 8, 3, 1983, p. 407-20. Web

²⁵ Gormaille, P. " Jacques Ferron ou la mémoire retrouvée". *Études littéraires*, 23(3), 69-77. Web<https://doi.org/10.7202/500945ar>

²⁶ Ferron, Jacques. *Le Ciel de Québec*, VLB Editeur, 1979. Print

²⁷ Godbout, Jacques. *Le Murmure Marchand (1976-1984)*, Les éditions du Boréal Express, Print

²⁸ Godbout, Jacques. *Une Histoire américaine.*, Éditions du Seuil, 1986, Print

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