

OVERCOMING FATHER-SON CONFLICT IN SELECTED NOVELS OF CLAUDE JASMIN

by

LEONARD MARCEL ARES

METKA ZUPANČIČ, COMMITTEE CHAIR

BRUCE EDMUNDS
CARMEN MAYER-ROBIN
JEAN-LUC ROBIN
THEODORE TROST

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ABSTRACT

This study delves into selected works of the Québécois writer Claude Jasmin that were written between 1972 and 2010. In each novel, the narrator and his father are manifestations of the same individuals; the narrator represents Jasmin and the character of the father depicts Jasmin's own father. These characters indirectly convey Jasmin's evolving attitudes towards his father. Read chronologically, the ever-present father-son tensions depicted in the texts eventually abate, and the recurring narrator is seen to progress from rebellion towards a symbolic reconciliation with the father. The author's perspective towards his father is perceptible through his recurring narrator and reveals that, over time, Jasmin attains a growing overall understanding of him.

The domestic strife in the novels corresponds to the societal situation in Québec around the time of the Quiet Revolution of the 1960s when the Church lost power in the region. Jasmin witnessed the rapid social changes of his province during this era, which included the search for a new collective identity. The designation "French Canadian" no longer seemed appropriate for the dynamic period of modernization, and the people of the province began to refer to themselves as *Québécois*. The recurring narrator's diminishing animosity towards his father in the selected novels can be seen to parallel the Québécois who, as a people, similarly reconcile with their past while continuing to advance and define themselves in their contemporary secular culture.

DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this dissertation to my parents, my son, and my sister Christine Marie, along with Mr. Claude Jasmin, whose work continues to foster the advancement of his native Québec.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CEGEP *Collège d'enseignement général et professionnel*

CEQ *Corporation des enseignants du Québec*

CIEQ-UQTR *Centre interuniversitaire d'études québécoises de l'Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières*

CRILCQ *Centre de recherche interuniversitaire sur la littérature et la culture québécoises*

CSN *Confédération des syndicats nationaux*

DIP *Département de l'instruction publique*

FLQ *Front de libération du Québec*

FTQ *Fédération des travailleurs du Québec*

INRS-UCS *Institut national de la recherche scientifique-Urbanisation Culture Société*

RIN *Rassemblement pour l'indépendance nationale*

UdeM *L'Université de Montréal*

UQAM *L'Université du Québec à Montréal*

UQTR *L'Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières*

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

CLAUDE JASMIN'S WORK: DOMESTIC STRIFE AMID QUÉBEC'S TURBULENT PAST

The seven novels of my study, written by the Québécois author Claude Jasmin, are *La Petite Patrie* (1972), *Pointe-Calumet boogie-woogie* (1973), *Sainte-Adèle-la-vaisselle* (1974), *La vie suspendue* (1994), *Enfant de Villeray* (2000), *Je vous dis merci* (2001) and *Papamadi* (2010). In each work, the narrator is a portrayal of Jasmin and the paternal character embodies the author's father. Through these characters, Jasmin indirectly conveys his attitudes toward both his own father and the people of Québec—attitudes that evolve over time and come to suggest a symbolic reconciliation between the author and his father. The father-son conflict in the selected novels corresponds to the societal situation in Québec around the time of the 1960s, a period when the Church lost power in the province. When the novels are read sequentially, by publication dates, the domestic conflicts depicted are seen to eventually subside, and the recurring narrator's attitudes towards his father progresses from revolt towards thoughtfulness. The author's changing perspectives towards his own father are perceptible through his recurring narrator and show that, with the passing of time, Jasmin attains a better overall understanding of his father. Jasmin also indirectly presents the Québécois as a people who acknowledge their past while continuing to define themselves and refine their secular culture.

The history of Québec is interwoven with the Catholic Church's influence dating back to the province's early years of colonization. The French wanted to bring both European culture

and religion to the continent, which explains the presence of Franciscans, Jesuits, Ursulines and later Sulpiciens in New France in the seventeenth century. The major goal of these religious groups was to promote the Roman Catholic faith in the colony. French-Canadian society grew and matured in tandem with the Church. Catholicism helped preserve the French language in the province and guarded the French-speaking Catholics against total assimilation into the surrounding English-speaking Protestant culture, but it also restrained and controlled the francophone populace.

During the time of the Church's dominion in Québec, religion uniformly framed political, social, educational, and familial aspects of life in the region. The Church's reign and influence lasted until the turbulent era of the 1960s and the Quiet Revolution, the *Révolution tranquille*.¹ My study analyzes, through selected works, a Québécois writer's changing perception of his father as related to the dynamic times of mid-twentieth century Québec when an ultra-religious society quickly transformed into a secular one. Concurrent with the changing atmosphere in the province associated with the Quiet Revolution, the recurring narrator in the selected books often questions and denigrates his father's adherence to Catholic beliefs and traditions. These challenges to their society's long-accepted state of affairs lead to domestic verbal disputes. Jasmin suggests that the father-son discord appearing in his texts is a smaller-scale representation of the people's rebellion around the time of the Quiet Revolution. In a 1979 interview that appeared in *Le Devoir*, the author acknowledges the possibility of a reader's magnification of the unstable father-son relationships within his novels by stating, concerning these tumultuous

¹ According to Françoise Tétu de Labsade in *Le Québec, un pays, une culture* (2001), "On appelle la Révolution tranquille cette période de rupture, aux alentours des années 1960, pendant laquelle des changements radicaux et rapides affectent la société québécoise" (82). ("The term Quiet Revolution refers to the period of rupture, around the 1960s, during which radical and rapid changes affected Québécois society.")

scenes, “Ils sont appuyés sur quelque chose de vécu, de vrai, que tu peux amplifier avec l’imagination” (19).²

An “amplification” of the characters’ tempestuous domestic situations can be viewed as the author’s way of alluding to his recurring narrator’s problematic relationship with his father over religion as analogous to the people’s collective refusal to continue to let the Church dominate their society. Although Jasmin acknowledges that his works dealing with the father-son theme are founded upon actual past experiences with his father, recollections are subjective and not always accurate. Additionally, in accordance with theories that take the emphasis off an author and place the responsibility of the interpretation of a text on the reader, most post-structuralists would question or regard Jasmin’s statement as irrelevant; however, an author’s unavoidable implication in his writings cannot be completely discounted. In the selected novels set against his native milieu of Québec, Jasmin’s evolving mindset is perceptible through his recurring narrator by means of a “vraisemblable” (plausible) perspective. As Jasmin responded in a 1965 interview with Monique Boily that appeared in the Université de Sherbrooke publication *Jeunesse littéraires du Canada français*, when asked about the extent of his influence in his work, “Un écrivain ne livre que lui-même à travers ses personnages, il serait idiot de le nier. Mais cela se fait par l’imagination aussi, par le fictif, en mêlant souvenirs passés et projections, prémonitions sensibles, coups portés par le présent, c’est un amalgame bizarre, la création” (2).³

In the selected novels, Jasmin’s characters’ accounts of the domestic and social situations pertaining to daily life in Montreal reflect the author’s conception of Québec in the throes of a

² “They are based on something from real life, something true, that you [one] can amplify with the imagination.”

³ “A writer delivers no one but himself through his characters; it would be idiotic to deny it. However, this is done through imagination and fiction too, through a mixing of past memories and projections, sensitive premonitions, and influences carried by the present. It’s a bizarre amalgam, creating.”

changing cultural landscape. Jasmin's works illustrate the way in which generations can connect through their society's shared history in periods of extreme change. In his 1996 book *Questions of Cultural Identity*, Stuart Hall, whose ideas on identity are applied in my study, writes of connections between a society's history and identity issues.⁴ Hall demonstrates in his book that collective identities are closely associated to history, language, and culture, and are constantly in the process of transformation (4).

In the 1996 book *Critical Dialogues in Cultural Studies*, Hall also speaks of attempts by power structures and institutions to "distort ideology" for their own benefit (31-32). He maintains that maneuvers of this sort indirectly affect one's sense of identity (32). The Church in twentieth century Québec, with its status as the predominant institution in the region, maintained the status-quo of Catholicism in the province and controlled the people's identity. Jasmin's work affords present-day Québécois the chance to reflect on their contemporary individual and collective identities while non-Québécois readers of the selected novels gain insight into the province's culture, past, and people. The domestic complications in the texts provide a subjective perspective on the unique Québécois societal experience of the recent past, engaging the reader in ways that an objective historical account could not hope to accomplish. Jasmin's work invites a sympathetic and emotional engagement. Furthermore, the author's work depicting waning filial strife indirectly points to the people-Church tensions of mid-twentieth century Québec that have also gradually lessened.

The transformation of the province during the 1960s was represented in the Québécois literature of the period. In his Postface to the 2011 book *La Révolution tranquille en héritage*, the Québécois writer, poet, and filmmaker Jacques Godbout poses the question, "La littérature québécoise a-t-elle donné naissance à la Révolution tranquille, ou est-ce cette dernière qui lui a

⁴ Stuart Hall is a cultural theorist and sociologist.

transmis le souffle nécessaire pour qu'elle devienne littérature nationale?" (271).⁵ Godbout goes on to state that by means of their writings, Québécois authors such as Jasmin, Hubert Aquin, Marie-Claire Blais, and himself participate in an ongoing collective search for identity, helping Québécois readers formulate an idea of what it means to be Québécois. Godbout claims, "Le lectorat se constitue, d'œuvre en œuvre, une conscience de *l'être québécois*" (290).⁶ Identities are subject to change, and Jasmin's writings aid in conceptualizing a modern identity for his francophone compatriots.

Additionally, Jasmin's novels of this study act as a memoir of pre-Quiet Revolution Québec. In his 1980 book *Culture, Media, Language*, Hall writes that texts "produce a representation of 'the real' which the viewer is positioned to take as a mirror reflection of the real world" (159). In this regard, renowned Québécois author Marie-Claire Blais lauded Jasmin in a personal correspondence on December 23, 1961, stating, "J'ai parlé de votre livre avec beaucoup de personnes et nous sommes tous d'accord pour vous reconnaître et le talent, et cette qualité qui importe encore plus que le talent, la vie et le don de la recréer."⁷ Jasmin skillfully recreates pre-Quiet Revolution Québec for his reading public. His works are largely appreciated and sell well in Québec. In his 1979 interview that appeared in *Le Devoir*, Jasmin candidly gives a reason for not feeling offended by a condescending attitude on the part of intellectual writers in respect to his novels when he states, "J'ai été consolé par le succès que j'ai eu" (19).⁸ Jasmin's success is likely due in part to his public's appreciation of the unadorned manner in which he revives the province's past.

⁵ "Did Québécois literature give birth to the Quiet Revolution or did the latter transmit to the former the breath necessary for Québécois literature to become national literature?"

⁶ "The reading public builds for itself, from work to work, a consciousness of the *Québécois being*."

⁷ "I spoke of your book with a lot of people and we all are in agreement as to recognizing your talent and that quality that is even more important than talent, life and the gift to recreate it." (Source: Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec).

⁸ "I was consoled by the success that I had."

In Québec, as in several places around the world, the 1960s were a time of revolt. During this period, new perspectives resulted in a reconsideration of both personal and collective self-perceptions as well as a desire for social and political progress to occur. Marcel Rioux depicts the era's eagerness for change in his 1990 work *Un peuple dans le siècle*:

Au début des années 1960, une espèce de consensus s'est établie au Québec . . . sur la nécessité de changer; cette idée et ce désir se sont diffusés dans l'ensemble de la société, tout le monde contestant qui l'ensemble du passé, qui les grands-pères et les pères, qui tout ce qui avait l'air d'être dépassé. (204)⁹

Jasmin's personal recollections of father-son discord and his interpretations of Québec's recent history aid in understanding the Québécois as a people whose present identity is strongly affected by their region's past.

Although most of Jasmin's works are novels, the author did not focus on the father-son theme during the latter part of the 1970s and throughout the 1980s. His work during the interim consisted primarily of crime novels including his 1984 novel *Le crucifié du Sommet-Bleu*, and journals, such as his 1989 work *Pour ne rien vous cacher*. Although this leaves a twenty year gap in the dates of the selected novels of my study, Jasmin eventually returned to a subject he could not easily abandon: father-son discord over religion. As mentioned earlier, within the selected works, the father-son discourse can be seen to point to societal events related to the people's rejection of religion. Despite his recurring narrator's rejection of Church rule in his novels, Jasmin revealed during a 1986 interview that he never completely expunged Catholicism from his own beliefs. In this interview with American scholar of Québécois literature, Melvin B. Yoken, Jasmin states, "J'étais assez révolté contre ma société parce que j'ai vécu au Québec dans les années 30, 40, 50 et c'était une époque très prude, très timorée. La religion catholique (je suis

⁹ "In the beginning of the 1960s, a sort of consensus established itself in Québec . . . on the necessity of change; this idea and this desire diffused throughout the society, everyone contesting the past in its entirety, the grandfathers and the fathers, all that had the air of being outdated."

toujours croyant) à cette époque-là était une religion de tabous, d'interdits" (76).¹⁰ Despite Jasmin's rebellion, his year spent in a hyper-religious society imprinted the author's writings.

The author's rebellion was fairly complicated. As the interview with Yoken continues, Jasmin speaks of the origins of the revolt found within his work, "Je pense que ma révolte dans mes romans vient surtout de l'environnement social et non pas de ma famille, bien que le fait que mon père ait été un homme si doux et si gentil a peut-être aussi servi à me faire écrire des romans de révolté" (77).¹¹ Although his father's passivity and unquestioning acceptance of Church rule disturbed the author, it was not a major motivation for his rebellion. This lack of "total revolt" against his father would allow Jasmin the opportunity for later reconsideration and reconciliation. Each work of this study delves, to some extent, into the strong attraction to Catholicism on the part of each narrator's father. Through scenes of a tense father-son rapport in novels written over a period of many years, Jasmin presents both his recurring narrator's rejection and later (symbolic) reconciliation with his father.

Along with addressing the father-son rapport in selected Jasmin novels, my study uses Charles Taylor's ideas concerning religion and secularism to investigate the changing nature of social identities in the modern world.¹² Taylor, like Hall, sees the past as an important factor of identity, but additionally stresses the importance of objective self-awareness in contemporary self-perception. In his 1995 essay "The Dialogical Self" that appeared in the book *Rethinking Knowledge: Reflections across the Disciplines*, Taylor states the following:

The post-Cartesian ideal of clear, self responsible thinking is the source of one set of disciplines of reflexivity, one in which the

¹⁰ "I was quite rebellious against my society because I lived in Québec in the 30s, 40s, and 50s and it was a very prudish and fearful era. The Catholic religion (I am still a believer) during that period was a religion of taboos and interdictions."

¹¹ "I think that my revolt in my novels comes mostly from the social environment and not from my family, even though my father, a man so soft and so gentle, perhaps also served as an impetus for my writing novels of revolt."

¹² Charles Taylor is a philosopher and professor emeritus at McGill University.

subject disengages himself from an embodied and social thinking, from prejudices and authority, and is able to think for himself in a disengaged fashion. (57)

Within scenes taking place during the Quiet Revolution, the first-person narration in the selected novels presents a subjective viewpoint of Québec's past. Jasmin prompts his readers to adopt their own perspective of the Québécois through his narrator's memories of domestic discord related to changes in Québec's society.

In this study, alongside the theories of Taylor and Hall, I will take a psychoanalytic approach to the recurring narrator's tenuous relationships with his father through the concepts of Sigmund Freud, Carl Gustav Jung, and Julia Kristeva.¹³ Freud writes in *Totem and Taboo*, published in 1913, that the root cause of many psychological issues can be traced to a "man's relation to his father" (157).¹⁴ In accordance with Catholic tradition, the father of the family is generally viewed as the authority figure, and this was indeed the norm in ultra-religious Québec up until the 1960s. In Jasmin's novels of my study, the Church, with its paternalistic culture and belief system, is often a point of contention between the male protagonists and their fathers.

Though Kristeva's psychoanalytic ideas came years after those of Freud, this study includes her theories on Catholics who undergo psychoanalysis (Catholic analysands), the father figure, and religion. Kristeva considers Catholicism's influence on its followers when dealing with her Catholic patients, stating in 1997, in *Au commencement était l'amour: psychanalyse et foi*, "Je ne crois pas que les catholiques soient inanalysables," but goes on to say that in practice, "Des résistants, oui, et de taille" (68-69).¹⁵ Kristeva puts forth that Catholicism has a strong hold on many of its adherents, which acts as a barrier to outside influences that run contrary to the

¹³ Julia Kristeva is Professor Emerita and Head of the École doctorale Langues, Littératures, Images, Université Paris Diderot, Paris 7.

¹⁴ Titled in the original German: *Totem und Tabu*.

¹⁵ "I do not believe that Catholics are unanalysable." "Well, there are some who are tough, and greatly so."

religion's belief system. Catholicism's authority is facilitated by religious indoctrination that begins in early childhood and carries on into adulthood. This was certainly the case in pre-Quiet Revolution Québec, where the religion was incorporated into the people's collective psyche.

Kristeva's psychoanalytic ideas, in particular those that address father figures and Catholicism's potential to strongly impact its followers, have points in common with those of Freud who preceded her. Freud states, "God is in every case modeled after the father and . . . our personal relation to God is dependent upon our relation to our physical father, fluctuating and changing with him and [so] God at bottom is nothing but an exalted father" (*Totem* 242). The father-religion-God connection that Freud writes of is threaded throughout the selected novels. Additionally, the recurring narrator's youthful rejection of both father and religion transforms into a mature understanding of both over time. The elderly narrator of *Papamadi* (2010) recounts how, as a young man, he felt compelled to convince his father to join in his rebellion, although it would seem that he can't completely understand why it was he wanted his father to harbor his personal religious doubts when he states, "Pourquoi m'être empressé d'en informer mon père?" (102).¹⁶ The narrator of *Papamadi* at times reflects on the mindset of his younger days. The recurring narrator's contemplation of motives manifests itself throughout the selected novels, and with the passing of time, his introspection is seen to grow more profound. Although the novels' main characters are not, strictly speaking, part of a unified series, given the consistency in their psychology, they could be read as one. Jasmin's recurring narrator, over time, mirrors the evolution of the author's sympathies, which include regarding his father and his society with a degree of compassion.

¹⁶ "Why have I been so eager to inform my father of it?"

The Duplessis Era of Jasmin's Youth

In the 2000 text *A Brief History of Canada*, historian Roger Riendeau of the University of Toronto discusses Maurice Duplessis' two terms as premier of Québec, first from 1936 to 1939 and again from 1944 to 1959 (261). A supporter of Catholicism, Duplessis left control of education to the Catholic clergy. During the Second World War, Duplessis consolidated his power by endorsing the people's opposition to compulsory military service in the province. Robert Bothwell, the author of *Canada and Québec: One Country, Two Histories*, published in 1995, states that conscription "symbolized the subordination of French Canadians to the English majority" (71). As did Britain and France, Canada declared war on Germany in 1939, following Germany's invasion of Poland; however, Québec's resistance to conscription delayed its implementation in Canada until the latter part of the war. During the post-war years, Duplessis was instrumental in the adoption of the Québécois flag, the *Fleurdelisé*, a daring reinterpretation of the French royalist symbol. This flag reinforced the Québécois nationalistic spirit and helped garner popular support for his administration.

While Duplessis was premier, Québec was led by conservative Catholics. This quasi-theocratic period of the province's history is commonly referred to as the Great Darkness. The economy, however, was not negatively affected by the political and moral conservatism of the era. According to the 1989 work *Histoire du Québec contemporain: le Québec depuis 1930*, Duplessis' reputation profited from a strong economic situation and a low unemployment rate during the post-war period (206-07). Acting with the support of the clergy, Duplessis encouraged the people to support him and his policies. Riendeau states, "Duplessis and his *Union nationale* party governed Québec as a feudal lord rules over his fiefdom" (261). Together with the Church, Duplessis and his fellow conservatives reigned supreme in the province for many years.

It was within this religiously orthodox and authoritative milieu that Jasmin was raised. As prime minister, Duplessis resisted journalists, liberals sympathetic to communism, unionization, and those who questioned the Church. Québécois professor Françoise Tétu de Labsade states of the premier, “Il s’appuie sur la puissante hiérarchie catholique, redoute le socialisme et les communistes, bien peu actifs, et impose la ‘loi du cadenas’ en mettant des scellés sur les locaux de groupes soupçonnés de communisme” (180).¹⁷ This social setting, described through first-person narrative within the selected novels, serves as a vivid reminder of the past. As Maurice Lemire, of the Université Laval, explains in the *Dictionnaire des œuvres littéraires du Québec* of Jasmin’s work, “Il s’agit moins de raconter une histoire que de faire revivre une époque” (674).¹⁸ Readers of Jasmin’s novels quickly recognize that during the Duplessis era, despite its ultra-conservatism, numerous rules and regulations, the Church’s authority was unquestioningly accepted by the majority of the province’s people.

An article that appeared in the *French Review* in 1998 addresses the people’s complicity in their religious domination during the pre-Quiet Revolution period. In this article, Jean Levasseur of Bishop’s University relates Québécois identity to what he refers to as Québec’s historic love-hate relationship with paternalistic authority, citing, as an example, that Maurice Duplessis was twice elected as premier of Québec. As the majority of the populace had confidence in Duplessis during his terms of premiership, they internalized him as both a political leader and a provincial father figure. Levasseur also speaks of the Québécois search for national identity as prevalent in its literature, “L’histoire de la littérature québécoise est tout entière marquée par une incessante recherche identitaire, distincte de la France et de l’Amérique

¹⁷ “He [Duplessis] leans on the powerful Catholic hierarchy, fears socialism and the barely active communists, and imposes the ‘Padlock Law’ by putting closing legal seals on the premises of groups suspected of communism.”

¹⁸ “It is less a matter of recounting a story than of the reliving of an era.”

anglophone” (972).¹⁹ Ambivalence regarding paternalistic authority, highly represented in Jasmin’s work, can be a constitutive element of a people’s quest for identity.

Duplessis wished to be viewed and accepted by the populace as a humble and virtuous protective father figure. In Jasmin’s *Enfant de Villeray* (2000), the narrator’s father illustrates Duplessis’ status as paternal defender of Québec. When the subject of a left-leaning relative who found employment at Radio-Canada comes up during a family discussion taking place at a point in time between Duplessis’ two terms as prime minister, the narrator’s father states, “Notre premier ministre Duplessis a bien dit, avant de perdre le pouvoir, qu’à Radio-Canada, c’était infesté de rouges communistes! Ah!” (149).²⁰ The character of the father in this novel is clearly echoing the convictions of those who unquestioningly accepted Duplessis and the Great Darkness era’s unbridled clericalism.

One result of the post-war period was that new ideas circulating around the world that were not in line with the Duplessis government’s perspective or Church teachings were slowly finding their way into the province. In his 1988 journal *Pour tout vous dire*, Jasmin’s narrator alludes to this phenomenon when he recalls comparing an old religious book with a work of Ernest Hemingway. He states, during a conversation with his father, “Tout un contraste avec Hemingway donc! Lui, païen avec son culte du seul courage physique” (25).²¹ Although Church censorship in the province rendered many post-war era books difficult to attain, the atmosphere of the time incited the province’s Catholic bishops to publish a collective letter in 1946 denouncing the region’s changing moral climate. In his 1997 analysis of the situation, historian Jacques Lacoursière states, “L’immoralité et l’immodestie dit-on, se répandent de plus en plus

¹⁹ “The history of Québécois literature is, in its entirety, marked with an incessant identity pursuit, distinct from France and English-speaking America.”

²⁰ “Our Prime Minister Duplessis said it well, before losing power, that Radio-Canada was infested with red communists! Ah!”

²¹ “What a contrast with Hemingway, the pagan with his religion of only physical courage!”

chaque jour. Pour les évêques, il est donc important d'organiser une croisade de pureté" (343).²²

The Church was adamant about maintaining its position as Québec's ruling institution, and this would not change until the Quiet Revolution of the 1960s.

²² "Immorality and immodesty, they say, are spreading more and more each day. For the bishops, it is therefore important to organize a crusade of purity."

Jasmin and the Selected Novels

Born in Montreal in 1930, Jasmin directly experienced the authority of the Catholic Church in Québec. As he often mentions in articles and interviews, he felt the Church's influence mainly through daily contact with his devout father. In the selected novels, the scenes dealing with "father and religion" issues can be viewed as indirectly presenting the recurring narrator's changing perspectives on both subjects throughout different stages of his life. Jasmin also witnessed the Quiet Revolution and the subsequent changes that contributed to the forging of present-day secular Québec.

Jasmin is a prolific author. He began his career as a writer in 1959 with his novel *Et puis tout est silence*. The success of this book acted as an impetus for future novels. In his 1970 memoir, *Jasmin par Jasmin*, the author states, "Durant l'hiver '59 - '60, je décidai de rédiger mon premier roman: *Et puis tout est silence*, roman mi-autobiographique, mi-onirique, ce livre 'premier' qui, c'est important, fut assez bien accueilli pour m'encourager à continuer" (5).²³ *La corde au cou*, his second book, was published in 1960. During the following decades, he authored numerous newspaper articles and worked as an art teacher, playwright and stage designer. He was involved in various aspects of radio and television and wrote over fifty novels. Radio-Canada produced a *télé-roman* that ran from 1974 to 1976, based on Jasmin's 1972 novel *La Petite Patrie*, which in large part depicts daily pre-Quiet Revolution life in the Villeray neighborhood of Montreal during the Great Darkness.

With the advent of the Quiet Revolution following the Great Darkness, Jasmin was actively engaged as a writer and, to a great extent, embodied the movement. This is not only because he lived through major events of the era, such the 1967 World's Fair in Montreal, the

²³ "During this the winter of 1959-1960, I decided to write my first book: *Et puis tout est silence*. It's a semi-autobiographical, semi-fantasy novel, this 'first' book that, it's important to state, was well enough received to encourage me to continue."

push for sovereignty by René Lévesque, and the War Measures Act put in place by Trudeau during the 1970 October Crisis, but also because of his political and cultural engagement during this period of transformation. Biographical information in *Canadian Writers Since 1960: Second Series* states that Jasmin participated in many debates on radio and television shows during the Quiet Revolution era (139-45). Jasmin is still active and since 2002 has maintained a highly visited Internet blog that addresses both commonplace and important contemporary issues in the province.

Jasmin's writings often deal with Québec's past, and in so doing, he helps to evoke the collective memory of the province. In *Culture populaire et littératures au Québec*, René Bouchard notes that Jasmin was one of the first authors to react to the Quiet Revolution in a literary manner (153). With his people in mind, Jasmin presents the transformational nature of the 1960s, which includes the separatist movement, clearly shown in his 1964 novel *Éthel et le terroriste*, which relates the story of a member of the Québec Marxist and separatist group FLQ fleeing from the law. The writer and journalist Louis Robitaille states in his 2011 book *Panorama du roman québécois*, "Claude Jasmin is *the* writer of the Quiet Revolution of 1960-1980" (56).

While expressing his interaction with his society, Jasmin uses an unorthodox and varied writing style, which often includes short phrases that keep the flow of described events moving at a rapid pace, holding the attention of the reader. He stated in a 1987 interview with *Québec français* that he always tries to write without "afféterie littéraire" and considers himself a "raconteur d'histoires" (30).²⁴ When asked why he chose a writing career, in a 1986 interview with Melvin B. Yoken of the University of Massachusetts at Dartmouth, Jasmin responded, "Alors, je vois bien que c'est une espèce de vocation ça, de vouloir absolument raconter des

²⁴ "Literary affectation"; "a story-teller."

histoires” (79).²⁵ In *Québec français*, while discussing the subject of social injustice in the world, Jasmin stated that in his opinion, people become conscious of unjust situations at an early age. He continued to point out that despite this social awareness, there are those who selfishly decide to join in with those who profit from unjust societal conditions. He then stated that social injustice enrages him and that he is a writer who strongly affirms, “Je vais fustiger ces inégalités-là!” (31).²⁶

Jasmin’s struggles against societal wrongs are also those of his people, and, as a writer, he was engaged in the events of the Quiet Revolution. During the early 1960s, the magazine *Parti pris*, a political and cultural magazine, was founded by Montreal writer André Major and other young intellectuals of the era who were convinced that Québec needed a revolution to produce an independent, socialist, and secular state (*The Canadian Encyclopedia*). In their opinion, a socialist society would neither neglect the voice of the people nor their means of expression, which in the francophone section of Montreal and elsewhere in Québec includes the nonstandard French dialect *joual*. In the 2007 book *Histoire de la littérature québécoise*, a reference is made to both *Parti pris* and the use of *joual* within the works of Quiet Revolution era writers. The authors of the text state, “Dès 1964, de jeunes écrivains regroupés autour de la revue *Parti pris* décident d’écrire en joual provoquant aussitôt une vaste controverse” (458).²⁷ Jasmin, although not a member of *Parti pris*, is mentioned in this book as one of the young writers who used *joual* within their works (458). Those of *Parti pris* held writers such as Jasmin in high esteem, as they regarded the use of *joual* within literature to be symbolic of a long-repressed people finally being recognized and celebrating themselves.

²⁵ “Well, I see clearly that it is a sort of calling, to absolutely want to recount stories.”

²⁶ “I am going to denounce those inequalities!”

²⁷ “Since 1964, young writers grouped around the magazine *Parti pris* decided to write in *joual*, which quickly provoked a vast controversy.”

Jasmin and his contemporaries promoted the Québécois dialect of the French language. The author demonstrates his commitment to both his origins and his people through the use of *joual* and vernacular in his work. Concerning the craft of writing, he states in an article that appeared in *Littérature et société canadiennes-françaises*, “L’art ne loge pas à l’enseigne des dogmatismes, négatifs ou positifs” (196).²⁸ Jasmin’s novels are written in an unbridled fashion and are representative of both his people and his culture.

Twenty-first century Québécois identity could be generally defined as being a member of the province who is proud of his or her francophone, secular, and inclusive society. In his blog article from 2011, “L’erreur grave du Bloc,” Jasmin displays his sense of identity along with his nationalistic, pro-separatist point of view, “Le Canada est un pays à part et nous sommes différents. Bientôt nous formerons un pays, il va naître tôt ou tard ce Québec libre que l’illustre visiteur, De Gaulle, nous souhaitait en été de 1967” (para. 9).²⁹ Jasmin is well-aware of his people’s uniqueness as a French-speaking North American province whose collective identity was influenced by religion. In the books of this study, Jasmin’s characters subjectively present the experience of being a member of Quebec’s society, while interspersing cultural perspective on Québec’s ultra-religious past. Through his works, articles, and media exposure, this multi-talented and outspoken author plays a significant role in the formation of Québécois identity.

In *La Petite Patrie* (1972), the earliest published novel in my study, the narrator recounts events that took place mainly during his childhood; these recollections describe an upbringing replete with religious traditions and ceremonies, capturing in vivid detail the atmosphere of pre-Quiet Revolution Québec. Although Jasmin published his first work, *Et puis tout est silence* (1959), more than a decade earlier, *La Petite Patrie* was his first work that includes the theme of

²⁸ “The art is not lodged under the banner of dogmatism, negative or positive.”

²⁹ “Canada is a separate country and we are different. Soon we will form a country, it will be born sooner or later, this free Québec that the illustrious visitor, De Gaulle, was wishing us in the summer of 1967.”

a father-son rapport. Within this book, the narrator's memories of family life are not presented in any particular sequential or chronological order. However, some of the sections contain dates or historical references to indicate the time periods in which the stories take place, the Second World War, for example, "Existence calfeutrée, à l'abri des soucis adultes. Un certain Adolf Hitler peut bien augmenter ses pouvoirs en Allemagne, cela, comme tout le reste des affaires du monde, ne concerne pas les enfants" (65).³⁰ In this novel, the narrator lightheartedly relates the memories of his early childhood spent with his devout father in Great Darkness Québec.

In this book, the narrator reminisces about his father's attraction to the stories of the saints and their lives, "Mon père s'excite dans ce monde surnaturel" (52).³¹ The narrator of *La Petite Patrie* recalls that as a young child, he respected and admired his father and was uncomplaining about his religious zealotry. In this work, loving life, living in the moment, and accepting his cultural and social environment is the manner in which the narrator relates the experiences of his early childhood years. Jasmin was a mature man in his early forties when he wrote this novel. His fondness for the years of the past, as well as his memories of time spent with his father, are reflected through his narrator's words, which are free of any caustic or angry tone. The author's revolutionary zeal of the 1960s is seen to have somewhat subsided in 1972, affected by nostalgia. A jovial attitude is exhibited with the narrator's recollection of his response to his father's words, spoken to him at age eight, concerning further studies that could lead to the priesthood, "Si tu veux, tu pourras faire des études classiques, devenir prêtre, peut-être" (*La Petite Patrie* 116).³² Observable in this scene is that Jasmin's narrator of this book seems to relive the childhood moment—he relates his memories of the short conversation with

³⁰ "Sheltered existence, protected from the adults' worries. A certain Adolf Hitler increases his powers in Germany. That, like all the rest of world affairs, does not concern children."

³¹ "My father gets over-excited in this supernatural world."

³² "If you want, you could do some classical studies, become a priest maybe."

his father in the present tense. The narrator puts forth that, being at an age too young to profoundly contemplate major life issues, he evasively responded to his father, “On verra, dans le temps comme dans le temps! Et je me jette dehors par la porte restée ouverte. Dehors, c’est l’été qui est commencé et il faut en profiter. Toute la bande est là!” (116).³³ The author’s recurring use of the present tense to relate the past through his characters will be addressed in further detail later in this study.

The themes of summer and the Great Darkness era are also found in the second novel chosen for this study, *Pointe-Calumet boogie-woogie*, published in 1973, a year after *La Petite Patrie*. In this novel, Jasmin’s narrator recounts events of summer vacations during his adolescence spent at a lake in Pointe-Calumet, a short distance from Montreal. The novel starts with the death of the narrator’s grandmother in 1940, progresses into an illustration of the Great Darkness culture and continues throughout the years of the Second World War. The narrator references well-known people of the time such as Duplessis and Lionel Groulx, an historian and priest who advocated French-Canadian pride as well as Catholic-Nationalism. In this novel, the narrator recalls that at age sixteen, he reflected on his school year and his *études classiques*,

Une sorte de danger fatal plane sur la nation canadienne-française
jamais assez catholique au goût de ces curés-phares nationaux. Nos
enseignants lisent *Le Devoir* et écoutent les directives
nationalistes-chrétiennes de l’historien chanoine Lionel Groulx.
(65)³⁴

The above citation speaks of Groulx, a notable cultural spokesperson with nationalist desires; it also makes a reference to religious order teachers reading *Le Devoir*, an intellectually-gear

³³ “We’ll see, time will tell! Time will tell! I fly outdoors by the door left open. Outside, summer has begun and it must be enjoyed. The whole gang is there!”

³⁴ “A sort of fatal danger hovers over the French-Canadian nation never Catholic enough for the tastes of those illuminating nationalistic priests. Our teachers read *Le Devoir* and listen to the Christian-Nationalist directives of the canonical historian Lionel Groulx.”

publication that at times criticized the Duplessis government. *Pointe-Calumet*'s narrator recalls and interprets the uncertain atmosphere of the Great Darkness era in Québec.

Social aspects of popular culture in the 1940s, such as the jitter-bug and the boogie-woogie, are also found in the backdrop of this novel. However, this is not done to the exclusion of acknowledging Catholic traditions, the Church's influence, or the paternalistic atmosphere of this period. In *Pointe-Calumet* (1973), the narrator relates the routine of the evening rosary, a Québécois pre-Quiet Revolution family tradition, which included the specific requests, "Bon Saint-Joseph protégez-nous, grande Sainte-Anne veillez sur nous, Jésus apportez du succès au commerce de papa" (21).³⁵ In the 1970s, through his narrator of *Pointe-Calumet*, the author reminisces about his youth during the Great Darkness. Throughout the novel, memories of people and events from the narrator's immediate society are presented in a positive fashion. Jasmin's earlier works of a violent nature, such as *Et puis tout est silence* (1959) and *Éthel et le terroriste* (1964), ceded their place in the 1970s to works presenting the author's thoughtful perspectives on the past and his father. *Pointe-Calumet*, a work of a somewhat wistful nature, shows that as time passes, a change of attitude on Jasmin's part occurs.

The recollections of *Pointe-Calumet*'s narrator, presented mainly in an upbeat manner, contain summertime scenes of ice cream cones and crudely constructed outdoor movie theaters at lake area vacation cottages. These summer memories include the (present-tense) narration of adolescent firsts and excursions into the world of adults. "La cigarette et le sexe! On en parle, on en parle et puis il faut bien être sérieux et passer aux actes" (91).³⁶ However, accompanying these lighthearted recollections are the memories of the early stages of the narrator's disenchantment with Catholicism and Catholic inculcation. When recalling the education system

³⁵ "Good Saint Joseph, protect us. Great Saint Anne, watch over us. Jesus, bring success to Papa's business."

³⁶ "Cigarettes and sex! We talk about it and we talk about it and then it's time to get serious and get to doing it."

of the time and the religious order men who were his teachers, the narrator states, “Tout collège est une prison. Eux-mêmes prisonniers d’une culture particulière” (99).³⁷ The adult narrator of this novel presents his reminiscences of his youthful point of view as a young school-boy during the stern and austere Great Darkness era. In the preceding citation, the mature narrator’s recollections show empathy for the teaching priests and brothers of his childhood years—empathy that perhaps did not exist when he was one of their students. Additionally, Jasmin’s narrator recalls the summer seasons of his youth at which allowed him brief respites from the strains of the religious culture of the era, pauses he evidently much appreciated.

In the 1974 novel *Sainte-Adèle-la-vaisselle*, the third novel of this study, published when the author was in his mid-forties, the narrator recounts memories of his twenties working in a hotel as a dishwasher in exchange for low pay and lodging in a nearby loft, which he turned into his personal art studio. Apart from dealing with the narrator’s desire to lose his virginity and his subsequent romantic liaisons, the story touches upon the social situation of 1950s Québec and provides insight into the early murmurings and rumblings that eventually resulted in the Quiet Revolution, “À vingt ans, à cette époque-là, Don Quichotte était notre étendard. Duplessis? Nous irons le descendre un de ces bons matins” (54).³⁸ As seen in the above citation, the author at times utilizes *nous* (we) and *notre* (our) in this novel to share, through his narrator, his memories of both his youthful rebellion and his perception of the collective consciousness of the era. The narrator continues in a similar anti-establishment vein later in the book, and with present-tense usage revealing a temporary reliving of the era, states, “Finissons-en de toute religion. C’est partout le réveil des esprits libres” (103).³⁹ In this work, memories of the buildup to the Quiet

³⁷ “School is a prison. They too [religious order teachers] are prisoners of a particular culture.”

³⁸ “At twenty years of age, during that time period, Don Quixote was our banner. Duplessis? We are going to take him down one of these fine days, yes.”

³⁹ “Let’s have no more to do with anything religious. The awakening of free spirits is everywhere.”

Revolution work in conjunction with narrative of personal and domestic details to revive the decade preceding the transformational 1960s in Québec.

In *Sainte-Adèle* (1974), Jasmin's narrator recalls his displeasure with Québec society during the 1950s:

Il nous semblait que Maurice Duplessis régnait dans la capitale des temps immémoriaux et qu'il y serait encore à l'heure de notre mort. Rien autour de nous ne paraissait vouloir changer d'aspect. C'est cette sorte de prison, cette manière d'enfermement, cette espèce de marais social qui jetait sur nous cette angoisse. (67-68)⁴⁰

Ironically, despite his rejection of Québec's conservative, religious society and the devout ways of his "pauvre papa naïf" (poor naïve Papa), *Sainte-Adèle*'s narrator at times uses Church-related language when referring to himself, which exhibits an internalized Catholic mentality (46). In this novel, when speaking of his libido and sexuality, the narrator recalls, "Ah bien non, je ne ferais pas un saint, j'aime trop les filles" (103).⁴¹ While presenting memories of his past in this novel, the narrator does not fail to also address the issue of his people's identity during the Great Darkness era. When speaking of a French artist acquaintance, Pierre, who decided to leave France to immigrate to ultra-Catholic Québec, the narrator states, "Et il sera fait comme un rat, comme nous tous, 'éjarré' entre Amérique et Europe française!" (90).⁴² In *Sainte-Adèle*, Jasmin's narrator presents his memories of growing up during the Great Darkness as well as his perception of his people's collective identity during that period.

In the fourth selected novel of this study, Jasmin's 1994 *La vie suspendue*, death takes center stage, particularly the death of the narrator's father. Although somber in nature, this novel exhibits the author's evolving considerate attitude towards his father. The scenes taking place at

⁴⁰ "It seemed to us that Maurice Duplessis reigned in the capital since time immemorial and that he would still be there at the time of our deaths. Nothing around us seemed to want to change aspects. It's that sort of prison, that manner of imprisonment, that type of social marshland that imposed this anguish upon us."

⁴¹ "Ah well, no, I will never be a saint, I like girls too much."

⁴² "And he will turn into a rat, like all of us who are 'torn' between America and French Europe!"

the father's deathbed are interspersed with the narrator's seemingly frank recollections of his attitude towards his father during the times of their tense father-son rapport related to religion, "Adolescent, je le détestais. Pire, j'en avais honte. Un dévot" (56).⁴³ This 63 year old narrator of this book does not solely dwell on negative memories, but also empathetically ruminates on how his father may have suffered from their tenuous father-son relationship. The narrator states, after recalling a conversation wherein he spoke well of a notable Socialist to his father, "Papa avait eu tant de peine à me voir suivre tous ces leaders à la mode des années cinquante et soixante. Il me jetait des: 'Continue de la sorte, tu iras en prison et tu seras brûlé. Fini, sans avenir, sur les listes noires!'" (*La vie suspendue* 62).⁴⁴ This novel's narrator speaks without malice or judgmental commentary of past stressful domestic situations and his father's reactions to his revolt; this indirectly reflects the author's progressively softening stance towards his own father and Catholicism.

The Quiet Revolution that affected both domestic life and greater Québec society is the milieu for the novel, *La vie suspendue* (1994). The narrator exhibits compassion towards his father despite their father-son strife in this work, which is in line with Jasmin's own evolving sentiments. In this book, when recounting the suicide of his first wife, the narrator presents his father's uneasy efforts at comforting him, and compares the latter's situation with other fathers of the same age group in the province. The narrator shares, "Papa est mal à l'aise. Il lève les mains, les garde au-dessus de ma tête. Il est paralysé. Lui qui jamais n'a eu une caresse, un mot doux, un geste tendre, semblable à tous les pères québécois de sa génération" (*La vie suspendue*

⁴³ "As a teenager, I used to hate him. Worse, I was ashamed of him, a devout man."

⁴⁴ "Papa suffered so much seeing me follow all those leaders in fashion during the 50s and 60s. He would say things like: 'Continue like that and you will go to prison and you will burn, finished, without a future, on the black lists!'"

21).⁴⁵ What is evident through the present-tense usage in the above citation is that Jasmin's narrator not only recalls, but also relives, the moment with his father, belatedly sympathizing with the latter who endured an extremely austere life. The mature, non-judgmental narrator of *La vie suspendue* ultimately does not begrudge his father's past lack of affection.

La vie suspendue (1994) does not give free-reign to despair, despite solemn scenes incorporating the theme of death while the narrator reflects on his father-son relationship and Québec's past. In this book, Jasmin's adult narrator, although still missing his father, is seen to maintain his internal fortitude and resilience when he states, "Oui, il m'arrive de me sentir subitement mal en songeant à papa mort. Je me trouve chaque fois plutôt sénile. Alors, je me masque. Je fais des blagues. Je joue le pitre. Santé mentale oblige" (71).⁴⁶ The father still has a strong influence on the older narrator, on both the emotional and intellectual level. The narrator does not simply classify his father's death as something to be casually accepted as an inevitable event.

In Jasmin's 2000 novel *Enfant de Villeray*, the fifth novel of this study, the narrator depicts domestic and neighborhood life in the pre-Quiet Revolution Villeray neighborhood of the 1930s and 1940s. This tableau is intertwined with text presenting the narrator's changing perspectives concerning religion and his devout father. In this work, Jasmin's narrator retrospectively presents a deteriorating filial situation that began with a renouncement of both father and Catholicism. In a scene from this book, while preparing for another trip with his father to the Saint Joseph Oratory, the narrator recalls, "Depuis plusieurs mois, j'avais pris mes

⁴⁵ "Papa is ill at ease. He raises his hands and places them over my head. He is paralyzed, he who never had a caress, a kind word, a tender gesture, just like all the Québécois fathers of his generation."

⁴⁶ "Yes, I find that at times I suddenly feel bad thinking of Papa dead. I find myself each time rather senile. So, I hide it. I make jokes, I play the clown. Mental health requires it."

distances avec la religion de mon père” (375).⁴⁷ The elderly narrator also recollects that in the early stages of his rebellion, he kept his aversion to Catholicism to himself, mainly in order to avoid hurting his father.

The 70 year old narrator of this book exhibits more compassion for his paternal figure than during his early adult years. In *Enfant de Villeray* (2000), the narrator reminisces about a childhood moment when his father spoke with him of the many miracles associated with the Saint Joseph Basilica, “Je n’avais pas le cœur de lui dire que je n’y crois plus” (388).⁴⁸ This phrasing shows that the narrator’s recounted memories include a fond regard for his father. What cannot be known for certain, however, is whether Jasmin’s recollections, related through his narrator, had been affected and altered by strong sentiments of remorse combined with a twilight years’ affection for his deceased father.

In *Enfant de Villeray*, Jasmin’s narrator also recounts how secular interests started to replace religion in his life at a young age. In this work, the narrator recalls clandestinely reading (unspecified) poetry and novels of Guy de Maupassant in the company of his friends during Mass, books, he explains, “que nous cachions parmi nos missels” (375).⁴⁹ The narrator recollects that, as a result of his strict religious upbringing, guilt presented itself and he was haunted by culpability. Later, on the same page, he refers to this situation as a “*crise religieuse*” and reveals that he went to discuss it with an “*intelligent professeur laïque*” (375).⁵⁰ The teacher compassionately advised him, “Considère la messe comme un moment de réflexion” (375).⁵¹ With that, within the same paragraph, the narrator expresses that he felt consoled, “J’en avais été

⁴⁷ “It has been several months now since I’ve started to distance myself from my father’s religion.”

⁴⁸ “I did not have the heart to tell him that I no longer believed in it.”

⁴⁹ “. . . that we would hide among our missals.”

⁵⁰ “Religious crisis”; “intelligent lay professor.”

⁵¹ “Consider the Mass as a moment of reflection.”

rassuré. Je n'étais donc pas un monstre."⁵² In this novel, Jasmin's narrator remembers that as he grew up, he started to solidify his negative regard towards his society's predominant religion. He recounts a revelation that occurred during a visit to the Saint Joseph Oratory with his father, stating, "Je découvrais, dans ce sanctuaire vénéré, que je ne croyais plus en Dieu!" (390).⁵³ In this work, an aging narrator recollects his journey from childhood religious inculcation, which led to youthful acceptance, to overt rejection of religion. However, the narrator's memories of his dismissal of his culture's religion are free of any mean-spiritedness directed toward his devout father, a man whom he increasingly appreciates.

In the 2001 novel *Je vous dis merci*, the sixth novel of this study, the narrator's memories of his attitude towards his father, as compared to Jasmin's earlier novels, are presented in an even more compassionate tone. In this text, when reflecting on the manner in which he treated his father during the turbulent Quiet Revolution era, and relaying his memories once again in the present tense, the narrator states:

On s'enhardit alors et, au père, le chef renié, on lance: "Pauvre papa croulant, t'es tellement 'vieux jeu.' Les temps d'aujourd'hui t'échappent." Lui aussi, il se tait. Prudent. Méditatif. Il baisse les bras, pauvre papa perdu devant tant de changements autour de lui. Aucune réplique? Il avoue? (75)⁵⁴

In this book, the narrator is placatory, and acknowledges his father with a conciliatory tone. This narrator is presented as far from bitter and as one who displays gratitude for those with whom he has shared his life—his father included. Jasmin's narrator states, "Ce père peureux, frileux, méfiant, trop pieux à mon goût, a pourtant été un père hors du commun" (222).⁵⁵ At the turn of

⁵² "I had been reassured that I was not, therefore, a monster."

⁵³ "I was discovering, in this venerated sanctuary, that I no longer believed in God!"

⁵⁴ "One becomes bolder and, to the father, the renounced leader, one exclaims: 'Poor crumbling Papa, you are so old-fashioned. You do not understand today's times.' He remains quiet, prudent, and meditative. He is giving up the fight, poor Papa lost in face of all the changes around him. No reply? He admits it?"

⁵⁵ "This fearful, timid, suspicious father, too pious for my taste, had, however, been an extraordinary father."

the twenty-first century, the author continued to display compassion for his father through a narrator's reminiscing. With text such as the above, the narrator's charitable position towards his father once again conveys the author's affection for a person who was a major influence in his life.

Jasmin, in his senior years at the time of this novel's composition, cannot classify the memories of verbal abuse directed at his father as simply youthful rebellion and arrogance. Through this novel's narrator, a contrite author expresses remorse for his years of filial disrespect. The emphasis has been redirected from the father's short-comings and naïveté to focus rather on the paternal figure's willingness to be there as a supportive person for the narrator and his siblings. In this 2001 work, *Je vous dis merci*, the elderly narrator's sense of culpability is apparent and finds expression when he states, "J'ai déjà écrit quelques petites choses dures à l'égard de ce papa ultramontain" (221).⁵⁶ However, the narrator follows this statement on the same page by positing, "Les enfants ne pensent pas à dire merci à leurs géniteurs."⁵⁷ Although Jasmin indirectly thanks many who played important roles in his life through his narrator, perhaps the main motivation for this novel was a desire to appease guilt and accept responsively for past disputes with his father.

The narration in the seventh novel of this study, *Papamadi* (2010), begins with the narrator's recounting of events that occurred at age eight. Although the chapters do not follow a chronological sequence, the narrator of this text gives information such as dates or his age at the start of each section. Additionally, the father-son rapport, related to religious differences, can be found to make up the major part of this novel. Along these lines, the narrator's recollections reveal that he was both enthralled and terrified as a young child by his father's stories of the lives

⁵⁶ "I already wrote a few little harsh things concerning this ultramontane Papa."

⁵⁷ "Children do not think to say thank you to their fathers."

of the saints. The elderly narrator recollects that at age eight, as a result of his father's anecdotes, "La nuit, dans mon lit, je craignais la visite d'un démon" (*Papamadi* 13).⁵⁸ Eventually, the narrator shares that his enchantment with Catholicism abated and turned into a rejection of the same, "Je me mis à maudire *la religion de mon père*" (101).⁵⁹

In *Papamadi* (2010), the narrator recalls that as he grew into young adulthood, he mercilessly harangued his father, specifically on the subject of the validity of the stories of the saints, stories that intrigued his father to a great degree. In this particular novel, the narrator remembers that he repeatedly showed his father a book that presents the mysterious events of Fatima, Portugal, as fictitious.⁶⁰ The narrator recollects proposing to his father, book in hand, that Fatima is "une entreprise religio-touristico-politique, une organisation planifiée par des ultras conservateurs s'alliant au clergé" (102).⁶¹ The narration continues to relate that the father categorically refused to acknowledge the text, which elicited this comment from the narrator, "Papa, as-tu peur de le lire?" (103).⁶² *Papamadi* appeared in print in 2010 when the author was eighty years old, and verb tense usage reveals that Jasmin's sentimental narrator, along with reliving the past, at times cathartically releases long-deferred sentimentality and self-reproach. Later, the narrator shares his guilt-laced memories of filial impiety in the present tense, "J'ai honte de moi en rentrant avec le livre de ce De Sède. Une voix me dit: 'Vas-tu lui ficher la paix?'" (104).⁶³

Jasmin's elderly narrator of *Papamadi* exhibits an understanding and empathetic attitude towards his father. This is often subtly done with affection perceptible within gentle wording,

⁵⁸ "At night, in my bed, I was afraid that a demon would visit me."

⁵⁹ "I started to curse *the religion of my father*."

⁶⁰ Reference to the book *Fatima: enquête sur une imposture* (1977) by Gérard de Sède.

⁶¹ "A religious-touristic-political enterprise, an organization planned by ultra-conservatives aligned with the clergy."

⁶² "Papa, are you afraid to read it?"

⁶³ "Returning with this book of de Sède, I'm ashamed of myself. A voice says to me: 'Are you ever going to leave him in peace?'"

such as when the narrator mentions his elderly father's fondness for the Saint-Joseph Oratory and his elation at obtaining employment in its kitchen. "Ce sera son bonheur. Plaisir de travailler dans un environnement qu'il estime tant. Celui du monde des miracles. Le monde d'un grand thaumaturge, le célébrissime frère André. . . . Mon père avait toujours la nostalgie de ce lieu" (83).⁶⁴ In this recent 2010 work, the author's sentiments towards his father are seen to have ultimately passed through stages of childhood adoration to youthful disdain to mature, caring affection.

⁶⁴ "It will be his happiness and a pleasure for him to work in an environment that he esteems so much, that of the world of miracles. It's the world of a great miracle-worker, the super-celebrated Brother André. . . . My father always had nostalgia for this place."

Jasmin's Place in the Literature of Québec

The first major theme in Québec's literature was the land, *le terroir*. The text *History of Literature in Canada* (2008) dedicates a chapter to this "farm novel" genre of Québec's early francophone literature. This book refers to Patrice Lacombe's 1846 novel, *La terre paternelle*, as the prototype of this genre (12). *History* also refers to the French writer Louis Hémon, who settled in Québec in 1911, and lauds his 1914 work *Maria Chapdelaine*, which describes French Canadians' struggles in early twentieth century Québec as "perhaps the most famous farm novel" (242). Other major works of the farm genre that followed were Claude Henri Grignon's novel *Un homme et son péché* (1933), *Menaud maître draveur* (1937) by Félix-Antoine Savard, Louis-Philippe Panneton's *Trente arpents* (1938), and *Le survenant* (1945) by Geneviève de Guèvremont. Lacombe refers to these novels as "original and serious depictions of the customs and lifestyle of the rural inhabitants of Québec" (243). The *terroir* novel phase began in the middle of the nineteenth century and extended to the Second World War era. Jasmin's books of my study are part of the province's literature depicting urban life that followed the *terroir* period.

The urban life literary phase was ushered into Québec in 1945 with *Bonheur d'occasion* by Gabrielle Roy. The reference source *History* classifies *Bonheur d'occasion* as "the seminal urban novel that also substantially raised public awareness of this genre" (250). In her novel, Roy describes the working-class neighborhood of Saint-Henri, Montreal. Many of Jasmin's books also embrace the urban theme and provide insight into the experiences of some of Québec's less fortunate inhabitants of the past.

Québécois writers born outside of the province, however, have also depicted the experiences of their lives in Québec, and these artists too have found a place in Québécois literature. The theme of multiculturalism is associated with Québec's "migrant literature" that

developed in the 1980s and became popular with the arrival of numerous French-speaking immigrants, such as Dany Laferrière, of Haitian origin. The 2007 text *Histoire de la littérature québécoise* states, “Au Québec, l’écriture migrante n’est pas restée dans les marges où se tiennent par exemple les productions littéraires des minorités en Europe” (561).⁶⁵ Laferrière’s first and perhaps most well-known text on the experience of adjusting to life in Québec is his 1985 book entitled *Comment faire l’amour avec un nègre sans se fatiguer*. Laferrière won the French Prix Médicis in 2009 and is now a member of the Académie française. Another newly arrived writer to the province, and Ying Chen, born in China, was nominated for another French prize, the Prix Fémina, in 1995.

The government of Québec awarded the Prix Athanase-David in 2004 to Naïm Kattan, born in Iraq. The 1996 book *Littérature québécoise: des origines à nos jours* states:

Cette littérature migrante qui ne connaît pas de frontières nous fait participer à une expérience interculturelle permettant de mieux saisir la complexité de civilisations très différentes de la nôtre, tout en mesurant leurs points de convergence et de divergence avec la culture québécoise. (279)⁶⁶

The recognition of migrant authors shows, at the literary level, the cultural transformation from a closed to an open Québécois society. In this regard, generally speaking, the notion of “interculturalism,” wherein all groups would come together as one Québécois culture, could be viewed as an integral part of the province’s present collective consciousness.

Jasmin portrays urban life with first-person narration, animated dialogue, and working-class language. In this manner, he indirectly incites his people to contemplate their social status and self-perception. In *Écrivains contemporains du Québec*, published in 1989 and co-authored

⁶⁵ “In Québec, migrant literature did not stay on the sidelines where, for example, remains the literary productions of minorities in Europe.”

⁶⁶ “This migrant literature that does not know any borders makes us participate in an inter-cultural experience that permits us to better seize the complexity of civilizations very different from ours, while at the same time measuring their points of convergence and divergence against the Québécois culture.”

by Québécois writer, literary critic, and Professor Emerita of Literature at the Université de Montréal, Lise Gauvin and the highly esteemed Québécois poet Gaston Miron, Jasmin is described thus, “Écrivain d’instinct, Claude Jasmin se reconnaît à son style nerveux, au rythme saccadé de ses phrases, au mouvement rapide de ses scènes” (292).⁶⁷ Mentions of Jasmin’s adroitness at his writing craft continue on the same page with, “Ses textes visuels . . . ne sont jamais aussi éloquents que lorsqu’ils s’attachent à la reconstitution des lieux saisis dans l’émotion du souvenir.”⁶⁸ Jasmin includes narrative portraits of Montreal’s neighborhoods combined with the imagery of Québec’s history to inform his work and promote continued deliberation and discussion of Québécois identity.

In contemporary Québec literature, most authors are contextualized by their historical proximity to the transformational era of the Quiet Revolution. In the 1979 book *Contemporary Quebec Criticism*, Larry Shouldice, author and translator, places Jasmin in the category of “the new novelists, circa 1960” (110), and speaks of a different sort of hero within these novels—a hero figure who has broken free of absolute values and now struggles in a world void of meaning (110). Often Jasmin’s stories are upbeat and light, but this is not always the case. The recurring scenes of rebellion reveal an opposition to the Church that sometimes evokes anguish, what the Québécois writer Gérard Tougas refers to as “le vague désespoir” within Jasmin’s novels (198).⁶⁹ Although Jasmin is part of the urban genre, German literary scholar Reingard Nischik reminds us of the author’s participation in the “psychological novel” movement of the 1960s, a genre that places an emphasis on characters’ internal motivations. Nischik states that this movement “revalued the status of the individual, as opposed to society” and makes reference to Jasmin’s

⁶⁷ “An intuitive writer, Claude Jasmin is recognizable by his vigorous style, by the clipped rhythm of phrases, and by the rapid movement of his scenes.”

⁶⁸ “His visual descriptions . . . are never as eloquent as when they attach themselves to the reconstitution of places seized in the emotion of memory.”

⁶⁹ “The vague despair.”

1960 novel *La corde au cou* as well as his 1966 work *Délivrez-nous du mal* (258). A study of Jasmin's work reveals a successful Québécois writer who holds to no specific literary genre or style.

The literary work of Claude Jasmin is abundant and varied. He has written *nouvelles* such as *Les cœurs empaillés* (1967), has published journals that include *À cœur de jour* (2001), and *Écrivain chassant aussi le bébé écureuil* (2003), and has penned detective novels such as *Alice vous fait dire bonsoir* (1986), and *Safari au centre-ville* (1987). His works also include the essays *Jasmin par Jasmin* (1970) and *L'État-maquereau, l'État-maffia* (1984), amongst others. Jasmin was, and still is, very much involved in Québécois society. In 2005, he co-signed an anti-media/pro-secessionist manifesto called *Manifeste lucide pour la fin de l'hégémonie fédéraliste sur l'information*, with over twenty other well-known Québécois personalities including the writer Victor Lévy Beaulieu.⁷⁰ In the novels of this study, the cultural experiences of a generation are portrayed. Especially noticeable is the Quiet Revolution's shaking of the province's Catholic foundation, and Jasmin, a versatile writer representative of this epoch, elucidates this period through his writing.

⁷⁰ The manifesto has been put into book form, edited by Patrick Bourgeois and Pierre-Luc Bégin (2006, Éditions du Québécois).

General Objectives of the Study

The novels of my study depict urban life and illustrate the Church's impact during pre-Quiet Revolution Québec. In the novels, Jasmin often depicts the pre-Quiet Revolution lives of the working-class residents of Montreal whose experience is punctuated by religious rituals and traditions. Jasmin's ultra-religious childhood, as well as the Quiet Revolution period, are reflected in his writings. As a result of the changes that occurred in the 1960s, the religious and paternalistic culture of the Great Darkness era stands in stark contrast to present-day secular Québécois society. Jasmin's writings remind readers of the daily conservative state of affairs that preceded the more open-minded and liberal Québécois society, a transition which began during the Quiet Revolution and continues to the present day. These selected novels use domestic disputes to highlight the tensions associated with adapting to a secular society that had recently rejected a religiously-imbued culture. The social dominance of religion in Québec played a role in shaping present-day Québécois identity. At present, the Québécois have a worldview incorporating both a commitment to retain Québec's heritage and distinctness along with an openness to those from other cultures.

At present in the province, Québécois identity remains an important topic. This is in no small part reflected in the recent call for a commission, in which Taylor took part, to study the extent to which Québec should accommodate immigrants into their society, especially as it concerns religious issues. Charles Taylor's and Stuart Hall's ideas, employed alongside psychoanalytic approaches pertaining to religion and father-son conflict in Jasmin's work, help us formulate and entertain new perspectives of the Québécois, especially in light of the province's 1960's collective revolt against the Church's hegemony in favor of a secular society.

My twenty-first century analysis of a broad range of Jasmin's works provides information that can facilitate a better overall understanding of present-day Québécois identity.

This study treats selected novels written over an extensive period of time, from 1972 to 2010, and proposes that the religious and secular issues of twentieth century Québec are still relevant today. Additionally, my study based on Jasmin's novels contributes to the base of knowledge of his work and indirectly promotes interest in the connection between Québécois literature and Québec's changing society. This twenty-first century study will hopefully inspire others to focus not only on other Québécois novelists, but also on the Québécois writers of other genres, such as poetry and theatre. This contemporary examination of Jasmin's work will be particularly useful as a supplementary educational tool for those outside of Québec who may not be familiar with the Québécois and their unique culture and history. Additionally, this analysis of seven of Jasmin's works will be advantageous in both the long-term and the short-term to students, teachers, and professors of French, as it will contribute to their overall familiarity with Québec culture, literature, and history. Jasmin was an eyewitness to life before, during, and after the era of the Quiet Revolution, and his recounting of events within these novels gives first-hand insight into the metamorphoses that took place in the province during this period.

CHAPTER 2

THE QUÉBÉCOIS, RELIGION, AND FATHER FIGURES

RECEPTION OF JASMIN: A BODY OF WORK PRAISED FOR ITS INSIGHT ON QUÉBEC

Since the beginning of Jasmin's writing career, discussions of his writing have appeared in journals, newspapers, theses, and reviews. Over the years, Jasmin has received much positive reception of his works. In the 1961 article "Littérature: découverte de l'humain," André Belleau addresses a specific issue in Jasmin's novel *Délivrez-nous du mal*, stating, "À vrai dire, il m'a enthousiasmé sans réserve. On y retrouve Jasmin, avec son authentique tempérament de romancier, utilisant une langue et une imagerie . . . qui ne cessent point, pour autant, de jaillir comme la parole" (791).⁷¹ Belleau continues on the same page to state that Jasmin presents a rich ambiguity with his portrayal of the rapport between the two main characters.

Jasmin's early works were well received. In the publication *Le Petit Journal*, André Major, one of the author's contemporaries, commended *Et puis tout est silence*, Jasmin's first novel that was published in 1959. Major writes, "*Et puis tout est silence* est largement autobiographique, faisant entendre la voix de notre enfance et de notre adolescence permanente . . . Jasmin est l'auteur, le personnage et le spectateur de son passé" (32).⁷² Major referred to Jasmin as one of his favorite Québécois authors and concluded his article with high praise of both the writer and this particular novel.

⁷¹ "Honestly speaking, it wholeheartedly delighted me. One finds therein Jasmin, with his authentic novelist temperament, using a language and imagery . . . that does not cease, so much as to gush out, like speech."

⁷² "*Et puis tout est silence* is largely autobiographical, making heard the voice of our childhood and our permanent adolescence . . . Jasmin is the author, the character and the spectator of his past."

Literary representations of the past, such as those of Jasmin, can be seen to ultimately foster connections between the Great Darkness era and contemporary Québécois identity. In his 1976 journal article “Claude Jasmin’s Fictional World,” David Bond of the University of Saskatchewan puts forth the following concerning Jasmin’s novels, “Worse than playing a role is having one imposed, and the characters who cast aside their fathers are also rejecting an imposed identity, and an upbringing which predetermines what they are to be” (115). The rejection of a predetermined identity, however, would presuppose the need for a new identity—perhaps a collective one. In this respect, Bond goes on to propose that the lack of filial piety in Jasmin’s novels signifies something larger and more aggregate. He states, “[It] seems legitimate, therefore, to see Jasmin’s characters as symbols of the situation of the Québécois” (117). In effect, Bond sees the paternal issues in Jasmin’s novels as pointing to experiences shared by all Québécois; a perspective that rings harmoniously with my study. However, in my approach, Jasmin’s characters and the father-son issues in the selected novels represent a Québécois identity that acknowledges the past while still partially retaining elements related to paternal figures.

From among Jasmin’s novels, Bond addresses the following: *Et puis tout est silence* (1959), *La Corde au cou* (1960), *Délivrez-nous du mal* (1961), *Éthel et le terroriste* (1964), and *Pleure pas, Germaine* (1965). Bond’s 1976 study mainly analyzes the violence within the novels—violence directed mainly against the rich (115). These references to destructiveness include allusions to Jasmin’s representations of the province’s social changes that included the tearing down of the old order in preparation of a new society. Bond also relates Jasmin’s characters to the Québécois and views them as “lost children,” presenting the city as an environment unfavorable to the formation of a strong and positive identity (115).

With this theme of flight applied to selected Jasmin novels of the 1960s, Bond regards the characters' voyages away from city life towards a rural environment as "the search of some ideal" (113). Bond's article also includes a reference to a father figure, a representative that Bond associates with the image of God. Bond states, "André in *Délivrez-nous du mal* (1961) tries to replace a repressive father, remembered as a cruel vengeful god . . . by the loving Father/God of Christianity" (113). Bond's analysis contrasts with my approach, as he sees Jasmin's character André of *Délivrez-nous* choosing Christianity instead of rejecting it. Additionally, Bond concentrates on physical violence in Jasmin's novels, relating that theme to Québécois rebellion in general. Bond puts forth, "Above all, the revolt of Jasmin's characters against their situation represents the will of Québec to live and maintain its heritage" (117). In the article, Québécois identity formulation is related mainly to self-perception difficulties encountered because of harsh urban settings. The Quiet Revolution is not mentioned and, although reference is made to Québec's religious past, it is not regarded by Bond as a major factor behind his perception of the Québécois as a threatened "fugitive" minority (118). As I do in my study, Bond emphasizes and lauds Jasmin's faithfulness to his people and culture. However, my contemporary look at a wider range of Jasmin's work brings even more light to Jasmin's attitudes and representations of the Québécois.

Bond concludes that, by means of Jasmin's work, non-Québécois are better able to comprehend the people of Québec. Bond advances, "Whoever reads his novels . . . knows how it feels to be part of a minority whose existence is threatened and is therefore closer to understanding Jasmin and *Québécois* like him" (118). Bond links Jasmin's novels to Québécois identity and alludes to the history of oppression suffered by the Québécois. Through Jasmin's writings, subjugated groups worldwide can correlate their own struggles to those of Québec's

francophone people. As does Bond in his article, my study advances that Jasmin's work aids in gaining a better understanding of the Québécois, but delves further through different theoretical approaches and inclusion of more recently published novels.

Women authors of the province have also utilized themes related to fathers and father figures in their works. In his 1980 text, René Bouchard discusses Claire Martin's 1965 novel *Dans un gant de fer: la joue gauche*, highlighting another example of the unflattering representation of the father in Québécois literature of the Quiet Revolution period. Bouchard refers to this novel as being autobiographical and connects the anti-father sentiment found in this, and other works of the 1960s, to a Québécois Oedipal complex. Bouchard, like Bond, links the Québécois collective self-perception to the province's history of repression with the following:

C'est à croire que les Québécois souffrent d'un complexe d'Oedipe collectif, semblables en cela à bien des minorités opprimées ou colonisées. Qu'elles le soient effectivement ou pas n'importe guère, seule compte la perception qu'elles ont d'elles-mêmes. (197)⁷³

Bouchard, while not dealing directly with Jasmin, writes of paternal themes related to a collective identity, a literary phenomenon not uncommon to Québécois literature. These themes are also addressed in my study focusing solely on Jasmin's works.

In his 1988 article "Tant qu'il y aura des fils," ("As Long As There Will Be Sons"), Yvon Bernier reviews Robert Lalonde's 1988 book *Le Fou du père*. Bernier refers to the father-son relationship theme of the novel as an unresolved subject in the Québécois literature of the era,

⁷³ "It is as if the Québécois suffered from a collective Oedipal complex similar to many oppressed and colonized minorities. Whether they would indeed be so barely matters, what counts is solely the perception they have of themselves."

“Certes, par les temps qui courent, il s’agit là d’un sujet qui flotte dans l’air” (21).⁷⁴ Bernier gives a positive review of the book and ends the article by connecting the filial themed novel with the search for an identity: “Un beau livre que celui-ci, où s’exprime une quête d’identité propre à notre époque” (22).⁷⁵ In dealing with unsettled filial issues in Québec’s literature, Bernier’s review of *Le Fou du père* correlates with the recurrence of this theme in Jasmin’s novels.

Tumultuous father-son relationships are universally relatable, and as two of Jasmin’s most successful early novels, *Et puis tout est silence* (1959) and *Éthel et le terroriste* (1964), have been translated into English, his depictions of domestic issues in a Québécois context can be found around the world. Jasmin is among the few Québécois novelists whose works are sold internationally. In a 1989 article, Claude Martin and Vincent Nadeau state the following:

Le nombre des auteurs québécois publiés en français à l’étranger est assez réduit. Les plus connus sont Gabrielle Roy, Anne Hébert, Jacques Godbout, Claude Jasmin, Marie-Claire Blais, Réjean Ducharme, Antonine Maillet et Yves Beauchemin, sans compter les nombreux poètes qui ont réussi à s’assurer une certaine diffusion internationale. (226)⁷⁶

These authors aid readers from different cultures to conceptualize Québécois identity by providing insight into Québec’s culture and unique past. In Jasmin’s case, this is accomplished in large part through presentations of domestic tensions that parallel the societal changes associated with the Quiet Revolution.

⁷⁴ “Certainly, with the present times, it’s a matter of a subject that is floating around in the air.”

⁷⁵ “A beautiful book, this one, wherein is expressed a search for identity suitable for our era.”

⁷⁶ “The number of Québécois authors published in French in other countries is rather limited. The most known are Gabrielle Roy, Anne Hébert, Jacques Godbout, Claude Jasmin, Marie-Claire Blais, Réjean Ducharme, Antonine Maillet and Yves Beauchemin, without counting the numerous poets who succeeded in assuring themselves a certain international diffusion.”

In a 1992 article, Maryse Leduc-Cummings also correlates Québécois identity and Jasmin's writings. She speaks of Jasmin's urban life novels as well as of other Québécois authors whose stories take place in the province's cities. She states: "Montréal, c'est une foule d'écrivains qui se sont identifiés (en tout ou en partie) à une rue, à un quartier ou encore à un fragment de ville, réel ou imaginaire: le Villeray de Claude Jasmin . . ." (10).⁷⁷ The article goes on to make a connection between the Québécois urban novels of Jasmin, other writers, and the formation of an identity. Leduc-Cummings advances:

À travers le roman, la ville se construit un sens et un lieu dans l'imaginaire. À partir du moment où l'on nomme les lieux, ils sont dès lors investis d'un sens nouveau, d'une reconnaissance qui permet l'identification. Et l'identité se forge à partir de signes reconnaissables. (12)⁷⁸

The presentations of Québec's culture and city life in Jasmin's work make an imprint upon readers' minds. The urban conceptualizations dispersed through the novels are easily understood by those of the province and also facilitate an understanding of the Québécois and their environs for non-Québécois.

In addition to representations of urban Québécois culture, reviews of Jasmin's works include addressing the subject of the role of the father—with allusions to Freud. In a 1998 article that appeared in the *French Review*, Jean Levasseur mentions that in the wake of the Quiet Revolution, the majority of both male and female Québécois writers often renounced and symbolically killed the father within their novels: "Pour la grande majorité des écrivains et écrivaines qui se véhiculèrent dans le labyrinthe des valeurs dichotomiques de la Révolution

⁷⁷ "Montreal is a crowd of writers who identified (totally or in part) with a street, a neighborhood or even with a fragment of a city, real or imagined: the Villeray of Claude Jasmin . . ."

⁷⁸ "Throughout the novel, the city constructs a sense and a place in the imagination. From the moment one names the places they are invested with a new sense, with a recognition that allows identification. The identity thus forms itself from recognizable signs."

tranquille, le père était, plus souvent qu'autrement, des êtres [*sic*] à rejeter, à détester, à tuer symboliquement” (973).⁷⁹ In this article, Levasseur addresses Jasmin’s novels containing themes of violence connected to male characters, in particular, the 1960’s novels *La corde au cou* and *Éthel et le terroriste*. Levasseur also cites Marie-Claire Blais’ classic 1965 work *Une saison dans la vie d’Emmanuel*, a novel that portrays the sufferings endured by a poor family in pre-Quiet Revolution Québec. Levasseur suggests that the portrayal of the Oedipal complex in Blais’ novel is similar to the filial tensions found within Jasmin’s works and other Québécois literature. The article addresses a plethora of novels that suggest the Oedipal complex, “Les exemples pleuvent” (973).⁸⁰ Levasseur also notes that Jasmin and other Québécois writers associate a rejection of the father figure with the Quiet Revolution and Québécois identity. Jasmin often states that Blais was an inspiration for him, a writer who, in similar fashion, contributes to his society through work utilizing the theme of the father figure.

Robert Major’s 2001 article in the journal *Voix et images* makes a connection between fathers, nationalism, and the Quiet Revolution. Within this article, Major mentions that the theme of rebellion found in Jasmin’s 1964 novel *Éthel et le terroriste* can also be found in Hubert Aquin’s 1965 novel *Prochain épisode* and in Pierre Gravel’s 1969 book *À perte de temps*. While Jasmin’s novel is not the central part of Major’s study, it is included because of its “violence révolutionnaire” (revolutionary violence) that correlates with the article’s theme of a patriot’s love of nation (540). Major also makes connections between paternal issues and societal events of the 1960s in Quebec, such as the drive for secession, which are illustrated in the works of the above listed authors. To this effect, Major makes the following statement:

⁷⁹ “For the grand majority of men and women writers who move about in the labyrinth of dichotomous values of the Quiet Revolution, the father was, more often than not, one to reject, to detest, to symbolically kill.”

⁸⁰ “Examples abound.”

Effectivement, si la patrie est la terre des pères, la présence des pères doit y être tangible, dominante, irrécusable. À défaut de pères, il faut du moins une patrie. Et peut-être touchons-nous ici une des caractéristiques essentielles du patriotisme des années soixante. (552)⁸¹

Major goes on to associate lack of paternal allegiance to a Québécois preoccupation with identity: “On pourrait dire que toute la littérature québécoise, depuis les tous premiers textes . . . est préoccupée par la question de l’identité collective, du pays à nommer et à habiter” (541).⁸² Major thus correlates the theme of paternal issues in Québécois literature with provincial society and identity.

Francine Allard, a prolific Québécois author in her own right, also correlates Jasmin’s work to Québécois culture and identity in a 2007 article.⁸³ Additionally, Allard addresses Jasmin’s writing style, declaring, “L’écriture y est fluide et riche” (152).⁸⁴ She later refutes an unflattering label—popular writer—often attached to him, and, with words directed to Jasmin, mentions his name alongside one of the most famous Québécois writers, Marie-Claire Blais. Allard declares, “Bien sûr, il y a le style Jasmin comme il y a le style Marie-Claire Blais. Mais je te refuse l’appellation d’auteur populaire quand on sait à qui les médias apposent ce genre. Tu n’es pas un auteur de romans populaires” (153).⁸⁵ Another article on Jasmin is found in *Le Devoir* in 2010. In his review of *Papamadi* (2010), Louis Cornellier speaks highly of Jasmin’s writing. Cornellier states, “Écrivain naturel, ennemi de la prose, auteur de livres vivants au sens

⁸¹ “Indeed, if the fatherland is the land of fathers, the presence of fathers should be tangible there, dominant, indisputable. In the absence of fathers, at least a fatherland is necessary. Perhaps we are touching upon here one of the essential characteristics of the patriotism [nationalism] of the 60s.”

⁸² “One could say that all Québécois literature, since the first texts, is preoccupied with the question of collective identity and of a country to name and inhabit.”

⁸³ Francine Allard states in a recent email message: “Je suis sans équivoque la personne qui connaît le plus Jasmin au Québec.” (“I am unequivocally the person who knows Jasmin the best in Québec.”)

⁸⁴ “The writing therein is fluid and rich.”

⁸⁵ “Of course, there is Jasmin’s style as there is Marie-Claire Blais’ style, but I refuse for you the appellation of popular author, when one knows to whom the media affixes this genre. You are not an author of popular novels.”

le plus profond du terme, Jasmin est un des plus grands romanciers québécois contemporains” (para. 10).⁸⁶ This is followed by yet another positive 2010 commentary on *Papamadi* that appears in the newspaper *Le Canada français*, wherein Jean-Francois Crépeau writes, “Je constate avec plaisir que l’écrivain manie toujours une ironie affûtée et un humour rieur” (8).⁸⁷ Reviews such as these confirm that Jasmin’s novels are accepted as positive representations of the Québécois and their culture, by both the province’s people and literary critics.

⁸⁶ “A natural writer, enemy of prose, author of living books in the most profound sense of the word; Jasmin is one of the greatest contemporary Québécois novelists.”

⁸⁷ “I state with pleasure that the writer still wields a sharpened irony and a laughing humor.”

Literature Review: University Studies Presenting Jasmin's Work as Social Commentary

Elements of Québec's European origins remain entrenched in the province's culture. Certain studies of Jasmin's work concentrate on a link between Québécois identity and the official language of the province, French. Maurice Arguin, in his 1970 master's degree thesis, addresses Jasmin's use of language in the 1965 novel *Pleure pas, Germaine*.⁸⁸ Arguin lauds Jasmin for daring to use *joual*, a working-class French dialect particular to the francophone section of East Montreal, and considers Jasmin to be "le champion du joual" among Québécois writers (63).⁸⁹ In conjunction with the use of *joual*, Arguin remarks that the father figure in *Pleure pas, Germaine* is dispossessed and lacks a stable identity, which he views as representing the people of Québec (164). As in my study, Arguin sees a relationship between the influence of a paternal figure and the populace of Québec, albeit in a single Jasmin novel of the fiction genre from the 1960s.

In his thesis, along with the issue of *joual* and the subject of father figures, Arguin addresses *Parti pris*, both a magazine and a popular movement promoting the principles of the Quiet Revolution. *Parti pris* basically adopted *joual* in the 1960s, linking this manner of speaking French to Québécois identity, regarding it as a linguistic symbol of the people's distinctiveness from the rest of Canada. Arguin concludes that *joual* is a result of the linguistic breakdown of the French language among the francophone proletariat of Montreal, and that this breakdown is caused by social, political, and economic conditions. He also views Jasmin's use of *joual* as appropriate, stating that the province has historically been negatively influenced by the politically and economically powerful English-speaking Canadians and Americans.

⁸⁸ Arguin, Maurice. *La société québécoise et sa langue jugée par cinq écrivains de "Parti pris,"* M.A., Université Laval, 1970.

⁸⁹ "The champion of *joual*."

Aside from linguistic approaches, Jasmin has been studied through the lens of Québec society and politics with connections made to paternal issues. A master's degree thesis by André Payette from 1974 addresses the role of the father in three of Jasmin's novels of the 1960s.⁹⁰ Payette's study analyzes the father figure in relation to the Church and political powers of the pre-Quiet Revolution era, specifically Duplessis. Although the breadth of Payette's study from the 1970s is limited to three early Jasmin novels, it could serve as a reference source for further analysis of the father-son rapport in the author's work. My twenty-first century study differs, as it is an analysis of the father-son relationship in Jasmin's novels written after the 1960s and over a much wider time frame, that of thirty-eight years. These factors allow a glimpse of the recurring narrator's evolving attitude over time. Additionally, my more recent study utilizes psychoanalytic, religious, and cultural studies approaches, some of which were not available in the 1970s.

Payette writes, based on the novels of his study, "Ce choc père-fils est fréquent lors de l'adolescence. Ce choc pouvoir-peuple existe toujours quand le peuple se réveille" (13).⁹¹ This statement rings true for both Jasmin's early and more contemporary writings concerning the father-son rapport within the novels as relates to the Quiet Revolution. However, what could not have been foreseen or taken into account in the 1970s was how Jasmin would present older and more mature narrators' perspectives towards the father figure in his novels. In Jasmin's 2010 *Je vous dis merci*, the narrator reflects, "C'est long une vie, tout un pèlerinage fait de stations moroses et d'autres plus joyeuses. Un homme était à nos côtés, un adulte, il était 'le' père et

⁹⁰ Payette, André. *Le père dans trois œuvres romanesques de Claude Jasmin*, M.A., McMaster University, 1974.

⁹¹ "This father-son shock is frequent during adolescence. This power-people shock always exists when the people wake up."

semblait jouer, en ce temps de niaise pudeur, un rôle obligé” (223).⁹² Within Jasmin’s more recent novels, an older narrator considers that during the Great Darkness, devout father figures were simply acting in compliance with the culture of the region and the mores of the times by keeping their families well immersed in Catholicism.

Payette examines three of Jasmin’s first novels: *Et puis tout est silence* (1959), *La Corde au cou* (1960), and *Pleure pas, Germaine* (1965). Payette poses a rhetorical question concerning Québécois father-son relationships and the societal situation of the Quiet Revolution, “Combien de jeunes Québécois se sont heurtés à un père intransigent qui se retrouve habituellement désespéré dans ce monde de vitesse? Les ponts coupés entre le père et le fils sont ceux que toute une génération de Québécois a coupés avec le duplessisme” (11).⁹³ Payette’s thesis, although written four decades ago, has a point in common with my study: the viewing of the filial rapport within some of Jasmin’s early works as a parallel of the larger revolt in the francophone province of Québec. Building upon this theme with contemporary source material and some of Jasmin’s later novels, my analysis continues to examine the author’s work and suggests an authorial change of attitude towards his father and his society, as gleaned through his recurring narrator. It is more than fitting to explore Jasmin’s writings with a twenty-first century study that goes beyond analogy, includes some of the author’s more recent novels, and delves deeper into correlations between filial rebellion and the people’s rejection of the Church.

⁹² “Life is long, a pilgrimage full of some morose stations and others that are more joyful. A man was by our side, an adult. He was ‘the’ father and seemed to play an obligatory role during that time of ridiculous modesty.”

⁹³ “How many young Québécois ran up against an intransigent father who found himself habitually disconcerted in this fast [changing] world? The bridges cut between father and son are those that an entire generation of Québécois cut with Duplessism.”

In another master's thesis from 1976, Renald Dussault uses an approach that analyzes the use of physical space in Jasmin's early novels.⁹⁴ The five novels of his study are *Et puis tout est silence* (1959), *La corde au cou* (1960), *Délivrez-nous du mal* (1961), *Éthel est le terroriste* (1964), and *Pleure pas, Germaine* (1965). Dussault discusses how travel and flight connect with individual introspection relating to certain characters and their search for a sense of self. Along with the dilemma of identity, Dussault sees the narrators of these novels as fleeing an oppressive reality both physically and mentally. Dussault's study also analyzes the narrators' weaknesses, changing self-perceptions, and personal motivations.

Some twenty-first century studies on Jasmin's work have already been done, but unlike my study, they have an accent on violence associated with the transformational period of twentieth-century Québec. A 2005 master's thesis by Pierre-Luc Bégin makes connections between the main characters of *Pleure pas, Germaine* (1965) and the Front de libération du Québec (FLQ), a radical splinter group of the Rassemblement pour l'indépendance nationale (RIN) party that employed terrorism in its quest for an independent Québec.⁹⁵ In his study, Bégin questions the ethics of the revolutionary magazine *Parti pris* and its publishing house *Éditions Parti pris*. In particular, Bégin takes umbrage to Jasmin's dedication of *Pleure pas, Germaine* to imprisoned FLQ members and suggests that the novel's publication by *Éditions Parti pris* may have been an overt endorsement of the FLQ's terrorism.

In addition, Bégin sees correlations between FLQ manifestos and Jasmin's *Pleure pas, Germaine* (1965). This association is made by comparing the manifestos, events of the novel, and traits of the characters. To this end, a linguistic approach is also employed. Bégin addresses

⁹⁴ Dussault, Renald. *Recherche d'identité et perception de l'espace dans cinq romans de Claude Jasmin*, M.A., Université Laval, 1976.

⁹⁵ Bégin, Pierre-Luc. *Le roman aux éditions Parti pris et les écrits felquistes: analyse comparative des personnages du roman "Pleure pas, Germaine" de Claude Jasmin et des "personnages" de Québécois des manifestes du FLQ*, M.A., Université Laval, 2005.

the usage of *joual* and anglicisms within the novels, concluding that Jasmin's work follows FLQ ideology, perhaps suggesting indirect support for "necessary" violence on Jasmin's part (127-29). It is also important to note that at the time of the Quiet Revolution and the publication of *Pleure pas, Germaine*, other radical groups and movements such as the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) and the African-American Civil Rights Movement were active over the border in the United States. Jasmin was surely aware of these groups who communicated with the FLQ and were often in the news during the 1960s.

An even more recent work done in 2008 also sees an indirect connection between violence and the ever changing and evolving sense of Québécois collective selfhood. The author of this thesis, Daniele Pinese, concentrates on the theme of terrorism in Jasmin's 1964 novel *Éthel et le terroriste* and two other Québécois novels.⁹⁶ In this study, the protagonist of *Éthel et le terroriste*, an FLQ terrorist, is regarded as symbolizing an igniting spark for a Québécois nationalism that exists in conjunction with a quest for a national identity (9-14). Pinese also speaks of the role of history in determining Québécois identity, basically restating the axiom that ignoring one's history leads to repeating it (65).

Being mindful of the past is important for any society, and as seen in other studies, Pinese regards the terrorist violence of Québec's past as the recourse of an alienated people searching for an identity while struggling against injustice imposed by others. Pinese writes, "The moment of terror is not only a confrontation with feared forms of otherness: rather, the encounter with the unknown is a simultaneous recognition of the societal boundaries which define the self. In the moment of terror, self-definition is expanded as the other is re-excluded" (34). Pinese's study is similar to mine in regards to taking the province's history into consideration and relating it to

⁹⁶ Pinese, Daniele. *A Terrorized Literature: Terror, Terrorism and Locating Identity in Three Québec Novels*, M.A., Concordia University, 2008. Note: The other two novels of Pinese's study are *Prochain Épisode* (1965) by Hubert Aquin and *Black Bird* (2003) by Michael Basilières.

Québécois identity. However, our studies also differ, especially given that my dissertation addresses several of Jasmin's novels written over a period of many years. Additionally, my study does not concentrate on terrorism, fear, or actual violence in Jasmin's work, but rather addresses the evolution of the author's attitude towards both his father and his people through his recurring narrator's father-son relationship.

Methodology

Freud, Jung, Kristeva: Psychoanalytic Theory

Freud, who is widely considered the founder of psychoanalysis, used doctor-patient dialogue as a method of treatment. A major part of Freud's work deals with the unconscious, which affects both our conscious life and our sense of self. Freud states in 1930 in *Civilization and its Discontents*, "Normally, there is nothing of which we are more certain than the feeling of our self, of our own ego" (12).⁹⁷ He continues to write on the same page that there is no sharp line of delineation between the ego and the id, and that the ego melds with the "unconscious mental entity which we designate as the id and for which it serves as a kind of façade."

Freud believed the unconscious to be an essential component of a person. He was convinced that repressed thoughts, brought to the surface through conversation, would lead to recognition of the problem and potential treatment. Years after Freud, Kristeva is seen to also regard psychoanalysis as an objective and beneficial means to help people realize and change problem situations. She asserts in *Cet incroyable besoin de croire* (2007), "La psychanalyse n'explique ni ne juge rien, elle se contente de transformer" (155).⁹⁸ Considering the theme of the rejection of religion, as well as Jasmin's narrator's changing image of his father in the selected novels, psychoanalytic concepts are appropriate and fitting for a study of this Québécois author's work.

In his 1927 book *The Future of an Illusion*, Freud presents his thoughts on the relationship between God and the father figure in a straightforward manner.⁹⁹ He writes:

Thus, religion would be the universal obsessional neurosis; like that of the child, it arose from the Oedipus complex, from the

⁹⁷ Titled in the original German: *Das Unbehagen in der Kultur*.

⁹⁸ "Psychoanalysis neither explains nor judges anything. It is content to solely transform."

⁹⁹ Titled in the original German: *Die Zukunft einer Illusion*.

relation to the father. Given this view, we would predict that the turning away from religion must occur with the fatal inexorability of a growth process. (103)

Freud, with his atheistic bent, includes along with the rejection of a father the denunciation of religion in the process of growing up, and this occurs within the books of my study. However, a lessening of defiance against both a father and religion while maturing into adulthood can also occur, and this is perceptible within the selected novels, as will be shown later. Jung did not agree with Freud's perception of religion nor with his many theories linking the father with religion. In his 1933 *Modern Man in Search of a Soul*, Jung advances, "Or should we see in the father complex which shows itself in all members of the Freudian schools . . . convincing evidence of any release worth mentioning from the inexorable family situation?" (122).¹⁰⁰ It is evident that there exist points of disputation between the two men, even though Jung announces earlier in the same text, "I am no opponent of Freud" (117). One main difference between the two psychoanalysts is that Jung did not put as much emphasis on sexuality as did Freud.

Despite their conflicting points of view concerning sexuality, Jung's later ideas generally coincided with those of Freud concerning the ego and the unconscious. Jung, however, went further, affirming the brighter side of human nature, which stands in contrast with Freud's perception of an individual as a prisoner of impulses and reactions—linked to youth—to which he or she is condemned to submit and repeat until death. Freud's theories, centered mainly on developmental stages, are more limited than Jung's later notions that include an emphasis on self-awareness. Jung believed that a person can objectively view oneself and react to life's situations accordingly, making one's own decisions. Jung labels this process of personal evolution "individuation." In his 1921 book *Psychological Types*, he defines this term as, "The

¹⁰⁰ *Modern Man in Search of a Soul* was originally published in English.

process of forming and specializing the individual nature; in particular, it is the development of the psychological individual as a differentiated being from the general, collective psychology” (361).¹⁰¹ According to Jung, personality and character influence a person’s response to stimuli. This premise stands in opposition to Freud, who advanced that one is controlled by impulses and is strongly impacted by the interchange between the ego and the superego when choosing how to act in any given situation. As Jasmin’s characters are presented throughout various transitional periods and life-stages, psychoanalytic notions aid in understanding the selected novels, as will be demonstrated when they are applied in Chapter 3 and Chapter 5.

Psychoanalysts Calvin Hall and Gardner Lindzey state, “Although Freud regarded the ego as the executive of total personality, at least in the case of the healthy person, he never granted it an autonomous position; it always remained subservient to the wishes of the id” (62). With Freud, besides the id, ego, and superego, a father-son relationship includes the Oedipus complex: a son’s unconscious desire to replace his father in search of the mother’s affections. In a reference to the Sophocles play, Freud describes the Oedipus complex as a stage in a boy’s life in which he would desire to possess his mother physically. Freud writes of this in his 1915 book, *The Interpretations of Dreams*.¹⁰² He posits:

His [King Oedipus’] fate moves us only because it might have been our own, because the oracle laid upon us before our birth the very curse which rested upon him. It may be that we were all destined to direct our first sexual impulses toward our mothers and our first impulses of hatred and violence toward our fathers. (29)

For the recurring narrator in Jasmin’s novels, feelings and attitudes towards his father go through changes over time. Every father-son relationship is unique and the characters in Jasmin’s novels are not the first or the last to have problematic rapports with their fathers. However, the tense

¹⁰¹ Titled in the original German: *Psychologische Typen*.

¹⁰² Titled in the original German: *Die Traumdeutung*.

domestic situations deeply affect the narrator for many years and on several levels, including personality. Freud asserts that an adult's character is influenced by the manner in which one passes through developmental stages. Jung's later ideas, however, leave open the possibility of continual change.

Hall and Lindzey present the following concerning Freud's ideas, "For Freud, the first few years of life are decisive for the formation of personality" (50). As mentioned earlier, this strict interpretation of Freud stands in contrast with Jung's later ideas; Hall and Lindzey state in the same book, concerning Jung:

That personality has a tendency to develop in the direction of a stable entity is a central feature of Jung's psychology. Development is an unfolding of the original undifferentiated wholeness with which man is born. The ultimate goal of this unfolding is the realization of selfhood. (100)

To illustrate a differing perspective between the two psychoanalysts, Freud would put forth that a son could utilize "identification" in order to resolve a problem, imitating what he believes his father would do in a similar situation. Freud writes in "The Dissolution of the Oedipus Complex" in 1924, "The authority of the father or the parents is interjected into the ego, and there it forms the nucleus of the superego, which takes over the severity of the father" (664).¹⁰³ According to Jung, however, the young man could just as well attempt to resolve his problem through individuation, by individual growth. It is important to note that even though individuation is a process that can last a lifetime, Jung does not believe that every adult manages to progress to this level (383). Freud placed the individual at the mercy of the ego, while Jung later advanced that the individual is capable of realizing a more optimistic and free existence. Regardless of differing theories, both men would agree that psychoanalysis helps individuals

¹⁰³ Titled in the original German: *Der Untergang des Oedipuskomplexes*. It is reprinted on pages 661-65 of *The Freud Reader* (1995).

overcome obstacles encountered throughout life. Kristeva's more recent writings indicate that she concurs with her predecessors. As Catherine Bouthors-Paillart states in her 2006 book *Julia Kristeva*, "Aux yeux de Kristeva, excepté la psychanalyse, aucune autre expérience moderne n'offre à l'homme la possibilité de faire l'épreuve de son autonomie et de sa liberté" (49).¹⁰⁴

Freud and Jung had a tenuous working relationship, and its eventual dissolution, in part, included tension and unkind remarks over religion. Bearing in mind that Jung was a former student of Freud, their personal rapport shared aspects of Jasmin's recurring narrator's later relationship with his father within the selected texts. In Deirdre Bair's 2003 book *Jung: A Biography*, the author gives Jung's response to Freud's accusations of anti-Semitism. Bair writes that Jung "countered the first [anti-Semite] accusation by saying that if Freud insisted on branding him as such, he would call him 'anti-Christian' because his 'every second word was always a quote from Voltaire'" (119). Later in the book, Bair states that Jung described himself as a "Christian-minded agnostic for whom God was a certainty as well as a mystery" (127). Although Freud may have been an atheist, this did not prevent religion from exacerbating existing tensions between him and Jung. Along these lines, in his 1933 work *Modern Man in Search of a Soul*, Jung attacks one of Freud's major theories. Jung writes, "As for Freud's idea of the 'super-ego,' it is a furtive attempt to smuggle in his time honored image of Jehovah in the dress of psychological theory" (125).¹⁰⁵

Jung also uses religion to indirectly support his disapproval of Freud's frequent and almost ubiquitous use of libido and Oedipal Complex notions within psychoanalytical theories. In *Why Freud was Wrong: Sin, Science, and Psychoanalysis*, published in 1995, the cultural historian Richard Webster writes, "Jung [later] expressed the view that the rigidity with which

¹⁰⁴ "In Kristeva's eyes, besides psychoanalysis, no other modern experience offers to humankind the possibility of testing one's autonomy and liberty."

¹⁰⁵ *Modern Man in Search of a Soul* was published in English.

Freud upheld the sexual theory was a substitute for the rigidity of the God he no longer worshipped” (379). Oedipal theories even played a role in Freud’s personal and professional associations with others. In the 1983 book *Jung's Struggle with Freud*, George Hogenson, a Jungian analyst, speaks of a connection between Freud’s 1913 book *Totem and Taboo* and Freud’s relationship with Jung. Hogenson writes, “Freud was sensitive to the Oedipal forces at work in his group insofar as they reflected a supposed desire to displace him as the leader of the horde of psychoanalysts” (76). It is interesting to note that Freud believed that his theories applied as much to him as they did to others.

As were Freud and Jung, Kristeva is a psychoanalyst. She is also, among other things, a philosopher and literary critic. John Lechte, in the Preface of his 1990 book *Julia Kristeva*, states that Kristeva is “influenced by psychoanalysis” and “inspired by Freud” (xii). He goes on to speak of Kristeva’s interest, during the 1980s, in both Freud’s works and religious conventions and beliefs (6). Kristeva does not dismiss or minimize the influence of religion in modern Western societies and, as was the case with Freud, her ideas employ paternal themes. She writes in her 2007 work *Cet incroyable besoin de croire*, “La Foi chrétienne repose sur une confiance indélébile dans l’existence d’un Père Idéal, et un amour absolu pour ce Père aimant” (98).¹⁰⁶ As will be shown in my study, Kristeva’s ideas on the father figure and religion often harmonize with Freud’s notions.

Charles Taylor’s Perspectives

During the Great Darkness, daily life in Québec included rigorous adherence to Church rules and regulations. Jasmin’s narrator of *Sainte-Adèle* (1974) alludes to this by making a

¹⁰⁶ “The Christian faith rests upon an indelible trust in the existence of an ‘ideal father’ and an absolute love for this ‘loving father’.”

tongue-in-cheek reference to “le puritanisme de ma bonne éducation” (40).¹⁰⁷ The ubiquitous influence of the Church affected daily life as well as one’s identity. For the majority of the populace, being immersed in Catholicism resulted in the internalization of all aspects of the religion. This was the case for Jasmin’s recurring narrator and his family in the selected novels that take place during this period of Québec’s history. Taylor addresses religious indoctrination in his 2007 work *A Secular Age*, referring to it as the “embedding” of religion. He also states that religious inculcation can, however, be undone through “disembedding” (157). In Jasmin’s novels, the recurring narrator breaks free, at least superficially, from the authority of his religion; his father, however, remains strongly tied to Catholicism throughout his life. Taylor’s notions concerning embedding and disembedding will be addressed in greater detail in Chapter 4 of this study and will help elucidate the complicated domestic tensions related to religion in Jasmin’s novels.

Mark Redhead, in his 2002 work *Charles Taylor: Thinking and Living Deep Diversity*, writes that Taylor is a social democrat who grew up in a bilingual and bicultural household in Québec with an English-speaking father and a French-speaking mother, and that along with being a practicing Catholic, growing up in this sort of mixed domestic environment influenced Taylor’s perspectives and theory of “deep diversity” (1). Deep diversity is a concept in stark contrast to what both Jasmin and a large part of the Québécois populace would actually desire, which is an independent Québec. Redhead states of Taylor’s deep diversity, “[It] embraces an openness to the diverse array of collective and individual rights demanded by Canada’s various citizens while promoting allegiance to the [Canadian] national state . . . recognizing particularity and promoting unity” (2). Taylor wishes to see an easing of frictions related to cultural

¹⁰⁷ “The austerity of my good upbringing.”

differences between various ethnic, linguistic, and religious groups within a unified Canada, a perspective that would negate a need for Québec nationhood.

Although Taylor's deep diversity and social-democratic egalitarian ideas generally correspond with secular perspectives, his preference to see Québec remain part of a united Canada is not shared by Jasmin, an author whose work at times reflects his separatist desire. In *Comme un fou*, published in 1992, the narrator recalls learning the results of the 1980 Québec referendum on the subject of separation. Jasmin's narrator shares, "J'avais surtout mal au cœur, mal partout en ce 20 mai 1980. Un 'non' masochiste grave! C'était le pénible moment d'avoir appris qu'un Québécois francophone sur deux avait dit, la veille, non à sa libération, non à une patrie" (131).¹⁰⁸ Regardless of the different political perspectives between the philosopher Taylor and Jasmin the writer, both are interested in Québécois identity and its relationship to the greater society.

Taylor mentions in his 1995 article "The Dialogical Self" that we often identify ourselves by our principals, functions, or social spaces related to profession or family. He writes, "Human beings always have a sense of self, in the sense that they situate themselves somewhere in ethical space" (58). What he refers to as the social "spaces" (with which one identifies) can be associated with religious, secular, or political groups, or with the greater society to which one belongs. Nicholas H. Smith, in his 2002 book on Taylor, speaks of conditions necessary for defining one's identity as a member of society and for having the perception of a meaningful life. These conditions include "belonging to or participating in some life larger than the individual's own" (3). For the people of the province of Québec, the quest for a meaningful life and

¹⁰⁸ "I was above all nauseous. I hurt all over that twentieth of May, 1980. A seriously masochistic 'no!' It was the painful moment of having learned that one out of two French-speaking Québécois had said, the day before, 'no' to his/her liberation, 'no' to a fatherland."

Québécois identity takes place, at present, within a unified Canada. Smith, however, questions Taylor's anti-separatist stance. Smith declares:

Taylor underestimates the capacity of individuals to stand back from their surrounding culture and decide for themselves their own allegiances. In a free, liberal society, individuals are able to determine for themselves the kind of life that is right for them. (146)

This brings to mind the referenda on Québec separation that took place in 1980 and again in 1995. According to the results of the 1995 referendum, nearly half of the population of the province preferred to view themselves as members of a sovereign Québec rather than as citizens of a Canadian province. These results signified dissatisfaction with their status as Canadians and a refusal of this pre-determined status. Although Taylor prefers a unified heterogeneous Canada that respects all cultures and religions, continued membership as a part of Canada is not desired by all Québécois, including Jasmin. For many Québécois, the "Canadian" part of their identity would be willingly thrown off and invalidated through secession.

As to Québécois self-perception, although Taylor prefers a united Canada, he appreciates the separatist desire on the part of those who wish to see Québec secede. He understands the drive for self-determination held by Québécois who seek to establish their own unfettered path for the future. However, in his 1989 *Sources of the Self*, he portrays the longing for autonomous control as bourgeois, although undeniably an integral part of the modern Western world (14). In this book, he also speaks about stepping outside of ourselves to formulate an objective perspective of our self-hood (27). Besides promoting a rational contemplation of self-perception, Taylor writes of the yearning to autonomously develop one's identity and decide one's moral perspective independently, free of any external influences or "traditional frameworks" such as religion or society (31). On the same page, he labels a person with these self-determining

tendencies a “utilitarian ideologue.” These types of people would, generally speaking and in a utilitarian sense, seriously consider their conception of the greater good for both themselves and others. By challenging the religion of his family according to his own untraditional perspective, Jasmin’s recurring narrator is an ideologue whose actions change his relationships with his father in negative ways. In Chapter 4 of my study, Taylor’s ideas on frameworks, as well as his thoughts on the drawbacks of modern Western society’s acceptance of self-centeredness and narcissism, will be discussed and correlated to Jasmin’s work.

Stuart Hall: Cultural Studies

Hall realizes that identity can change or transform, and in his 1990 article “Cultural Identity and Diaspora,” writes that cultural identity is always formulated with the aid of elements of collective memory (237). In Jasmin’s novels, scenes of familial conflict related to religion revive the memories of Great Darkness Québec and the subsequent Quiet Revolution era. In his 1996 work *Questions of Cultural Identity*, Hall suggests that self-perception not only involves who we are at present or where we came from, but also, “what we might become, how we have been represented and how that bears on how we represent ourselves” (4). Jasmin’s seven books of my study aid readers in formulating a conception of Québécois cultural identity through the prism of his recurring narrator’s personal perspectives on the past.

The Québécois have a unique identity, based, in large part, on their status as members of a North American region that differs linguistically from the majority of its neighboring provinces, as well as the United States. In Jasmin’s novels of my study, although the recurring narrator rejects the Church’s domination, he does not abandon the French language. This is also the case with the populace of Québec who hold on to this element of pre-Quiet Revolution

culture and identity. Not to be overlooked is that one component of identity is regarding oneself in comparison to what one is not. The Québécois are ever conscious of their French origins and that they differ from most of their neighbors. In Jasmin's 1988 journal *Pour tout vous dire*, the author writes of his love for both France and the French language. While speaking of a radio discussion pertaining to a 1980's movement that promoted the idea of allowing the Québécois to obtain dual French and Canadian citizenship, the narrator states, "J'aimerais, retournant en mère patrie, me trouver comme 'chez moi' avec ce deuxième passeport tout français! En avant et vive la France! Vive le Québec, France d'Amérique!" (408).¹⁰⁹

A rejection of the influence of French culture in the province would leave little difference between Québec and most of its surrounding regions. Without its affinity for its linguistic distinction, Québec's present separatist movement would not have its main motivating factor: the French language. However, it is important to note that language can also serve as a useful tool for maintaining dominion over populations. In *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*, published in 1997, Hall states that dominant powers within a culture control and manipulate the act of representation (the depiction of words, images, or concepts) through language, discourse, and the media (258-59). A hegemonic culture, religious or otherwise, can influence the meanings given to words within a language and indirectly control the populace. Although the Church ruled virtually unchallenged during the Great Darkness, the people were cognizant of their religion's major role in protecting and preserving their beloved French language from the more powerful English-speaking Protestant powers. This undoubtedly contributed to the people's general acceptance of the Church, so that it maintained and exercised its authority as would a domineering, over-protective father figure.

¹⁰⁹ "I would like to find myself 'at home' when I return to the fatherland with this second French passport! Charge! Long live France! Long live Québec, France of America!"

Meanings given to words by dominant institutions within any given society become ingrained in the collective consciousness of those who, over time, accept them without question. The control of language is an influential tool within a society. Hegemonic systems and institutions reinforce their power by exercising authority over the accepted conceptions of words, phrases, and ideas. Jasmin's recurring narrator in the selected novels presents his father as a reactionary who would prefer to ward off the 1960's societal transformation to safeguard the status quo. Hall would also see the narrator's father as complicit in the Church's Great Darkness era dominance, as he speaks of powerful institutions gaining consent through coercion, as opposed to simply ruling from above. Hall puts forward that both the powerful and powerless play their proper roles in a "circulation" of power (*Representations* 261).

In a 1996 article by Hall appearing in *Stuart Hall: Critical Dialogues in Cultural Studies*, he gives "democracy" as an example of a word whose representation is manipulated by conservative hegemonic groups in Western discourse in order to support bourgeois political systems and ideologies. The cultural theorist writes:

"Democracy" in the discourse of the "Free West" does not carry the same meaning as it does when we speak of 'popular democratic' struggle or deepening the democratic content of political life. We cannot allow the term to be wholly expropriated into the discourse of the right. (41)

As representation by powerful forces or institutions can be biased, self-serving, or even distortions of reality, the diffusion of the misrepresentation of meaning is capable of guiding thought processes in pre-determined directions.

The Church's former control of the act of representation of spiritual, moral and even political concepts in Québec is related to what Hall refers to as the dominant culture's "play of power to the lines of force and consent" (*Cultural Identity and Diaspora* 242). While proceeding

under the guise of operating according to accepted norms, dominant power systems and institutions are able to manipulate representations, thus controlling individuals, groups, and nations through various forms of media. To their own detriment, citizens' common interpersonal discourse sometimes actively perpetuates misrepresentations. Hall suggests a direct link between the common discourse that leads to what he terms knowledge, and powerful institutions' control of the meaning of words and concepts. Hall states, "All knowledge, once applied in the real world, has real effects, and in that sense at least, 'becomes true'" (*Representation* 49).

Although the general media serve to transmit representations, meanings are also diffused within a society through common discourse. In daily conversation, people often reinforce the collective representations of word meanings. Hall views meaning as both dependent on historical and cultural context and a process of interpreting what is represented (*Stuart Hall: Critical Dialogues* 26). On the same page, Hall speaks of the "mental frameworks and imagery of thought" that different classes and social groups use in order to render intelligible the way society works (26). Religious institutions contribute to popular conceptions circulating through common discourse by means of continued reinforcement of precepts and dogmata; this was the case in pre-Quiet Revolution Québec. However, through media, personal communication, and discourse, representations are often synthesized into vague concepts—and sometimes thoughts and conceptions are also altered through these same means. Literature of the Quiet Revolution era, such as the early writings of Jasmin and others, contributed to the people's changing perceptions of society and the rejection of the Church's hegemony and its control of the act of representation.

An Author's Intention, Freud, and Jasmin's Novels

Literary notions that move the emphasis from an author to the text, which is treated as a separate entity, challenge the perception of an author as connected to and controlling his or her text. In view of that, the concept of the Intentional Fallacy enters the discussion. According to the 2006 text *Literary Theory and Criticism: An Oxford Guide*, literary critic William K. Wimsatt and the philosopher Monroe C. Beardsley coined this term in a co-written article in 1946 (177). The definition of Intentional Fallacy, as found in the 1998 *A Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory*, is, "The error of criticizing and judging a work of literature by attempting to assess what the writer's intention was and whether or not he has fulfilled it rather than concentrating on the work itself" (421). Along these lines, in the 1960s, French literary theorist and philosopher Roland Barthes broke with accepted literary beliefs and separated the author from the text, even in the case of a seemingly autobiographical work, a category wherein Jasmin's novels of my study could be placed.

For Barthes, the text and the reader are the critical elements in literature. In the last paragraph of his 1967 essay "La mort de l'auteur," Barthes proposes:

Ainsi se dévoile l'être total de l'écriture: un texte est fait d'écritures multiples, issues de plusieurs cultures et qui entrent les uns avec les autres en dialogue, en parodie, en contestation; mais il y a un lieu où cette multiplicité se ressemble, et ce lieu, ce n'est pas l'auteur, comme on dit jusqu'à présent, c'est le lecteur.¹¹⁰

According to Barthes' ideas, the importance of the reader takes precedence over the author, who becomes less and less relevant to the interpretations of a text. Barthes' essay presenting novel

¹¹⁰ "Thus is revealed the total existence of writing: a text is made of multiple writings, drawn from many cultures and entering into mutual relations of dialogue, parody, contestation, but there is one place where this multiplicity is focused and that place is the reader, not, as was hitherto said, the author."

ways of interpreting texts appeared during the Quiet Revolution era when access to European ideas of the post-war years was no longer subject to censorship in Québec.

Barthes proposes in his 1973 book *Le plaisir du texte* that, “Il n’y a pas derrière le texte quelqu’un d’actif (l’écrivain) et devant lui quelqu’un de passif (le lecteur); il n’y a pas un sujet et un objet. Le texte périmé les attitudes grammaticales” (29).¹¹¹ Similarly, the French philosopher Michel Foucault questioned an author’s influence on his or her writings and believed that not everything a writer presents should be accepted as true or taken seriously. In his 1969 article “Qu’est-ce qu’un auteur?,” Foucault poses the question, “Mais supposons qu’on ait affaire à un auteur: est-ce que tout ce qu’il a écrit ou dit, tout ce qu’il a laissé derrière lui fait partie de son œuvre?” (143).¹¹² For both Foucault and Barthes, the emphasis is not on the author, but on the elements within the text. According to their perspectives, the author of a work would have no real advantage over the reader, nor would the former know much more than the reader concerning the characters he or she creates. Perceptions are relative and subjective; an author’s conception of a character does not always conform to that of the reader. Nonetheless, an author’s impact and influence on any given work could not be said to be completely non-existent. Through his narrators within the selected novels, Jasmin’s perspective is often apparent, albeit if only to an immeasurable degree.

Freud’s 1908 paper “Creative Writers and Day-Dreaming,” which precedes the ideas of Barthes and Foucault by many years, addresses the relationship between literature and readers. Freud states, “He [the creative writer] creates a world of fantasy which he takes very seriously—that is, which he invests with large amounts of emotion—while separating it sharply from

¹¹¹ “Behind the text there is not someone active (the writer) and in front of him, someone passive (the reader). There is not a subject and an object. The text invalidates restrictive regulations and attitudes.”

¹¹² “Even when an individual has been accepted as an author, is everything that he wrote, said, or left behind part of his work?”

reality” (174). Freud also suggests that in the course of writing, events often occur that elicit the memories of past experiences. A present event that triggers a specific recollection would inadvertently cause the written recounting of a past event to be affected by the immediate stimulus and situation. Freud states, concerning a creative work, “The work itself exhibits elements of the recent provoking occasion as well as of the old memory” (177-78).

Jasmin’s novels of my study, wherein the recurring narrator relates past events in the first-person, bring to mind the ideas of Freud, Barthes, and Foucault regarding the extent to which an author is implicated in his or her proper text. Within the selected novels, Jasmin presents the religious culture and events of the Great Darkness. However, he wrote the selected novels after the Quiet Revolution period, and situations triggering his memories of past events while he was writing undoubtedly affected his recollections. Freud’s notions addressing the relationship between the reader and the text include connections to the libido. He proposes that the reader undergoes a release of mental tensions from imaginative literature, experiencing what he terms “fore-pleasure” (183). These elements of Freud’s paper, concerning the intent of the author and the participation of the reader, precede the later similar concepts of Barthes and Foucault. In particular, Freud’s fore-pleasure finds parallels with Barthes’ later 1973 work *Le plaisir du texte*, wherein the latter also makes connections between literature and sexual activity.

Freud also writes within this particular work that male writers often have a “hero” figure for which the author “tries to win our sympathy by every possible means” (179). An occurrence such as this appears in Jasmin’s 2010 novel, *Papamadi*. When recalling his growing courage during his younger years regarding both his father and life in general, the narrator states, “J’étais pas mal moins peureux vers vingt-six ou vingt-sept ans” (100).¹¹³ In accordance with both Barthes’ and Freud’s literary theories, a reader could vicariously experience courage that may or

¹¹³ “I was quite a bit less fearful at around twenty-six or twenty-seven years of age.”

may not have existed. If adhering to Barthes' ideas contained within his essay "La mort de l'auteur," the extent of any courage to be found within the narrator's aforementioned quote would be decided by the reader.

Autobiography and Autofiction

The word “autobiography” is defined in the 2003 edition of the *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary* as “the biography of a person narrated by himself or herself” (60). An autobiographical novel then supposedly recounts the life and personal experiences of the author and is usually written in the first-person singular. Philippe Lejeune, in his 1996 work *Le pacte autobiographique*, defines autobiography thus: “C’est une biographie, écrite par l’intéressé, mais écrite comme une simple biographie” (16).¹¹⁴ In his book, Lejeune considers an autobiographical work to be a “pact” between the author and the reader, wherein the reader trusts that the author is recounting the truth in his work (18). Lejeune goes on to emphasize the confidence in the writer’s faithfulness and authenticity as concerning this unwritten contract between the author and the reader (26). As previously mentioned, literary theorists Barthes and Foucault assert that an author’s influence on the interpretation of his or her work is minimal, even in works considered autobiographical. Lejeune, however, acknowledges an authorial influence to a greater degree. Along these lines, the recurring narrator in the novels of my study reflects in a subjective and *vraisemblable* manner both the author’s changing perspectives of his father and his province’s society. Lejeune’s figurative agreement between an author and his reader finds a place in an analysis of the selected books of my study. Jasmin’s evolving attitudes towards his father and his people are indirectly presented in the seven novels through his recurring narrator, despite the indistinct line of demarcation between fact and fiction. This brings to mind the term *autofiction*.

Le Petit Robert defines *autofiction* as “un récit mêlant la fiction et la réalité autobiographique” (24).¹¹⁵ Similarly, *Le Petit Larousse* gives the meaning of autofiction as

¹¹⁴ “It is a biography, written by the concerned party, but written as a simple biography.”

¹¹⁵ “A narration mixing fiction and autobiographical reality.”

follows: “Autobiographie empruntant les formes narratives de la fiction” (37).¹¹⁶ Factual as well as fictitious elements are threaded throughout an autofictional novel, with both playing integral and complementary roles. Concerning autofiction, Lejeune states, “Le héros d’un roman déclaré tel, peut-il avoir le même nom que l’auteur? Rien n’empêcherait la chose d’exister, et c’est peut-être une contradiction interne dont on pourrait tirer des effets intéressants” (31).¹¹⁷ In principle, autofiction differs from autobiography in regards to faithfulness to veracity, as the former is regarded as the mixture of truth and fiction.

In his 1966 book *Pourquoi la nouvelle critique*, Serge Doubrovsky affirms the author’s influence in a work, stating, “Il ne s’agit pas pour autant de renoncer, chaque fois que possible, à une mise en rapports intelligibles entre écrits et écrivain” (209).¹¹⁸ On the same page, Doubrovsky goes on to claim that the author naturally plays a role in a novel, stating, “Il va de soi que sens littéraire et sens biographique doivent . . . coïncider à un certain niveau.”¹¹⁹ A writer’s autofictional work is not bound by any sort of implied agreement with readers, leaving the author free to embellish. In the past, the novels chosen for my study would have been labeled as autobiographical in nature, but at present, they would be more appropriately referred to as works of autofiction.

The term autofiction is often associated with Doubrovsky and his 1977 novel *Fils*. Doubrovsky employs the word on the back cover of this novel, writing, “Autobiographie? Non, c’est un privilège réservé aux importants de ce monde, au soir de leur vie, et dans un beau style.

¹¹⁶ “Autobiography borrowing the narrative forms of fiction.”

¹¹⁷ “The protagonist of a novel declared as such, can he have the same name as the author? Nothing would prevent it from existing and it is perhaps an internal contradiction of which one could draw some interesting effects.”

¹¹⁸ “It is not a matter of renouncing each possible time an intelligible connection between the written work and the writer.”

¹¹⁹ “It is a given that literary sense and biographical sense should . . . coincide at a certain level.”

Fiction, d'événements et de faits strictement réels; si l'on veut, autofiction."¹²⁰ Regardless of the extent of the author's influence and the degree of accuracy of recounted events, the first-person autofictional novels of this study link the reader to both Québec's past and its culture. In an article that appeared in *Québec français* in 1987, Gilles Dorion, a Québécois literature specialist at the Université Laval, implies that determining the amount of truth found within Jasmin's novels of pre-Quiet Revolution Montreal is of little importance. Dorion states: "Il ne s'agit pas ici de confronter les romans dits autobiographiques à la vie de Jasmin pour en découvrir l'authenticité ou la véracité" (35).¹²¹ Perhaps nothing can ever be fully autobiographical, and more than clarifying that the selected Jasmin novels are autofictional in nature, the basic concern of my study is what ideas the author brings forth in his work.

¹²⁰ "Autobiography? No, that is a privilege reserved for the important ones of this world, in the eve of their lives and in a beautiful style. [This would be rather] fiction that is based strictly on real events and actions, autofiction, if you would."

¹²¹ "It is not a matter here of confronting the novels classified as autobiographical accounts of Jasmin's life in order to discover the authenticity or the truthfulness therein."

CHAPTER 3
THE GREAT DARKNESS
CATHOLICISM, WOMEN, AND A PSYCHOANALYTIC APPROACH TO THREE JASMIN
NOVELS

The early French-Canadians were referred to as the *Habitants*; they were basically a rural people who worked the land. They cultivated their own individual plots of territory and fought to protect themselves from the indigenous people. History documents intermarriage between the two groups. The francophones of the province were not the only group to experience resistance, prejudice, and oppression in North America. French-Canadian families resembled the majority of Irish immigrants, also practicing Catholics, who were often illiterate and who experienced dire economic straits. The Irish inhabitants of Québec are mentioned in Jasmin’s texts from time to time, depicted as culturally and religiously similar, but linguistically different—no small matter given that the French language was, and is, a major component of Québécois collective identity.

Although all ethnic groups in Québec experienced the ultra-religious culture of the pre-Quiet Revolution period, my study is concerned mainly with the French-speaking populace, of which Jasmin writes and with which he is most familiar. The period preceding the Quiet Revolution of the 1960s was given the sobriquet The Great Darkness, *La Grande Noirceur*. In the 2008 book *Creating Postwar Canada: Community, Diversity, and Dissent, 1945-75*, the Great Darkness period of the postwar years is described as a “conservative period during which Premier Maurice Duplessis and the Catholic Church exercised considerable, even authoritarian,

control over political and social life in the province” (7). With the help of the Duplessis government, the Church directed Québec’s society in almost all domains until the time of the Quiet Revolution.

In this chapter of my study, after preliminary sections discussing the Great Darkness and Church rule during this period, I will individually analyze Jasmin’s *Pointe-Calumet boogie-woogie* (1973), *Je vous dis merci* (2001), and *Papamadi* (2010) with the help of psychoanalytic approaches. The other four selected novels of the study will be addressed in a similar manner in Chapter 5. Psychoanalytic approaches are readily available tools that work well to elucidate Jasmin’s changing perspective towards his father, observable through his recurring narrator within the selected novels. Paternalistic authority and the rejection of the father are themes found in Québécois literature and particularly in the selected Jasmin novels. Psychoanalytic notions concerning a father figure and religion are utilized in this chapter to address both the author’s and his narrator’s changing and evolving perspectives.

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Unrestrained Catholicism

During the Great Darkness, Québec's society included ubiquitous Catholicism. This setting provides the backdrop for the recurring narrator's disconcertion with religion in the selected novels. Concerning the province's quasi-theocratic state of existence and Catholicism's control over the people, the narrator of *La Petite Patrie* (1972) states, "Malheur à celle ou celui qui sortait de l'ordinaire, des choses de la vie de ce temps-là. Tout était paisible et réglé et les apôtres du moindre dérèglement faisaient mieux de fuir loin, de s'exiler" (33).¹²² Québec was governed in close alliance with the clergy during Maurice Duplessis' rule as premier of Québec. Historian Stephen Graubard writes in his 1988 book *In Search of Canada*, "Before 1960, our English-speaking compatriots referred to Québec as 'the priest-ridden province'" (266). This statement underscores the existence of animosity between the English-speaking Protestants and the francophone Catholics of Canada. Graubard continues on the same page concerning the Great Darkness era, "The Catholic clergy had a tremendous influence on the society of Québec, especially since almost all of the French-speaking Quebecers were Roman Catholics, eighty-five percent of them practicing." Despite the Church's hold on the province, as the recurring narrator in Jasmin's novels passes into adolescence and young adulthood during the Great Darkness years, he strays ideologically from the norms of his culture. Their rejection of religion leads to disputes on the subject with the father who, along with the vast majority of the populace, complies with the status-quo of the Great Darkness.

In the selected novels, the narrator's rebellion against his father does not occur without complications. The narrator recalls experiencing internal discord because of his religious views that stood in opposition to those of his father. Concerning youthful revolt, in his 1985 text *Son*

¹²² "Woe unto those who strayed from the norms of the times. All was peaceful and well-ordered, and the advocates of the least kinds of misbehavior would do better to flee far away into exile."

and Father: Before and Beyond the Oedipus Complex, Peter Blos states, “The conflict of antithetical positions reaches critical acuteness at adolescence and never fails to constitute prominent issues in a boy’s emotional life” (47). In portraying the changing attitudes towards the father figure through his narrator in the selected texts, Jasmin depicts an important turning point—his narrator’s reassessments of his culture’s religion to which his father is closely aligned. When the novels are individually addressed in this chapter, various psychoanalytic concepts will be applied to the narrator’s filial impiety and his rejection of the Church.

Besides influencing society by playing the role of spiritual and moral counselor during the Great Darkness, the Church directed all education from primary school to university. In pre-Quiet Revolution Québec, the average person had limited access to secular culture because of Church censorship restricting reading material, a direct result of the *Index Librorum Prohibitorum* issued from Rome. Accordingly, censorship was directly supported by the clergy. During this time of religious dominance, the French-speaking novelists and poets of Québec, at times purveyors of ideas and attitudes that ran counter to Church doctrine, were also restrained by the precepts of the Church. Volume five of the book *La vie littéraire au Québec*, published in 1991, refers to the *Index Librorum* as a portion of the “encadrement que l’Église multiplie pour préserver son influence sur le lectorat” (213).¹²³ During this time of Church control, books questioning or maligning Catholicism were difficult, if not impossible, to obtain. Eventually, with the onset and progression of the age of cinema, films were also censored.

Secular books, difficult to acquire in the province during the Great Darkness, were regarded as “forbidden fruit” to inquisitive minds. The narrator of Jasmin’s 1973 novel *Pointe-Calumet boogie-woogie* makes a tongue-in-cheek reference to censorship and the ultra-religious atmosphere of his adolescent years, during which he did his classical studies, when he states:

¹²³ “Control that the Church increased in order to preserve its influence on the reading public.”

J'avais découvert et j'appréciais, bien mieux que ceux de Lamartine et Hugo, les poèmes de Verlaine, de Rimbaud et de Baudelaire, tous interdits chez les Sulpiciens qu'on appelait les "suppliciens," car c'était un vrai supplice de les endurer dix mois par année, les dimanches matins compris. (99)¹²⁴

This irreverent statement displays the contempt felt by the narrator and his young classmates for an institution that wished to restrict their intellectual development through censorship and the inculcation of religious doctrines. This contempt would eventually be manifested in filial revolt on the narrator's part. Concerning Church censorship, in the 2004 work *A Concise History of the Catholic Church*, the historian Thomas Bokenkotter describes the *Index* as "a creation of the medieval papacy" (247). He goes on to state on the same page that it "periodically issued a list of condemned books, [which] proved very effective in suppressing heresy." Even though the *Index* was rescinded on the heels of the changes made by Vatican II, residual effects of censorship remained in Catholicism. Bokenkotter puts forth, "Although the *Index of Forbidden Books* was abolished in 1965 by Pope Paul [VI], many theologians claim that an inquisitorial mentality still held sway in Rome" (420). By this time in Québec, though, Church censorship had already been negated with the Quiet Revolution and the secularization of the province.

¹²⁴ "I had discovered and I appreciated, much more than those of Lamartine and Hugo, the poems of Verlaine, Rimbaud and Baudelaire, all forbidden with the Sulpiciens, whom we called the 'torturers' because it was truly torture to endure them ten months a year, Sunday mornings included."

The Great Darkness, Women, and the Church

A woman's role as perceived by the Church in pre-Quiet Revolution Québec was strongly linked to motherhood. Additionally, before the 1960s, women of the province were mainly responsible for the perpetuation of the Catholic faith within their families. Examples of this are found within Jasmin's work. When evoking his childhood in *La Petite Patrie*, the narrator shares that he enjoyed reading his "grand catéchisme-en-images, reçu de grand-mère" (128).¹²⁵ In the novels of this study, a mother during the Great Darkness period is viewed, in the traditional Catholic manner, as a woman who complies with and perpetuates the accepted religious and societal traditions and mores of the era. The narrator of *La Petite Patrie* shows appreciativeness towards women, in particular those of the neighborhood who, besides fulfilling the obligatory roles of mothers, played a major part in the collective effort of watching over their children of the *quartier*. The narrator wonders what became of these gentle women of his youth and touchingly proffers, "Vous faisiez partie intégrante et nécessaire de ce monde clos, tiède, paisible, d'une enfance pas riche, rue Saint-Denis" (62).¹²⁶

In Jasmin's 1994 work *La vie suspendue*, the narrator reveals his affection for his mother. The narrator of this novel, upon retrospection, indirectly shows his distaste for his father's approval of his religion's unjust treatment of women during the Great Darkness era. The narrator speaks of the annual New Year's Day blessing of the children by his devout but cold father. "Cet homme, sans jamais un geste d'affection, une parole d'affection, une parole de tendresse, un signe d'amour, bénissait!" (*La vie suspendue* 66).¹²⁷ This narrator recalls that during his youth, what bothered him the most concerning this Québécois Catholic tradition of paternal blessing is

¹²⁵ "Large catechism-in-pictures, received from grandmother."

¹²⁶ "You were an integral and necessary part of this closed, half-hearted, peaceful world of a poor Saint-Denis Street childhood."

¹²⁷ "This man, who never made a single gesture of affection, never uttered a word of affection or gave a kind word or any sign of love, was giving a blessing!"

that he was being blessed by a father who showed a lack of respect towards his (the narrator's) mother. As the narrator continues to describe the blessing, his sense of injustice related to the attitudes held by his father towards women, as well as his aversion to hypocrisy, increases. The narrator reveals, "Nous, les enfants, devions nous agenouiller devant ce père mal rasé . . . toujours prêt à se moquer de sa femme, notre mère! Cette mascarade nous pesait d'année en année, à mesure que nous vieillissions" (67).¹²⁸ As a young child, the narrator could do nothing more than observe a society that facilitated the inequitable treatment of women. Rebellion would come at a later point in time.

Motherhood was not just an option for married women in pre-Quiet Revolution Québec; it was an obligation. Large families were normative and expected by the Church during the Great Darkness. Historian Denyse Baillargeon of the University of Montreal puts forth in her 1999 book *Making Do: Women, Family, and Home in Montreal During the Great Depression* that during the 1930s in Québec, the time of Jasmin's childhood, women were reduced to their biological capacity to bear children. She states:

Exalted again and again, motherhood represented at once the primary reason for marriage, the "natural" and inescapable destiny of women, their unique vocation, the condition essential . . . a noble duty, when it was not seen as a "blessed bondage" that women could avoid only by defying their fundamental nature and endangering their physical and moral health. (67)

Despite the unjust conditions of the era for women, Jasmin's texts show his progressive understanding and appreciation of their courage and perseverance.

The narrator's mother in *Enfant de Villeray* (2000) is shown not only to be a loving person, but also a woman who is not afraid to express her thoughts. In this novel, Jasmin presents

¹²⁸ "We, the children, had to kneel in front of our unshaven father . . . who was always ready to make fun of his wife, our mother! This masquerade started to weigh on us year after year as we got older."

the narrator's mother as possessing a strong character, a personal attribute that perhaps ran contrary to the expected cultural norms for women of the Great Darkness era. During a discussion between family and friends, the possibility of Jewish lineage within the Jasmin family genealogy arises. The father gives a shocked reaction, and the conversation becomes mean-spirited. The character of the narrator's mother is not pleased and questions, "Écoute, sait-on jamais? Pis, ça changerait quoi pour nous autres, ici? Rien! À part ça, il y a des bons et des mauvais chez les Juifs comme chez tous les autres, non?" (148).¹²⁹ Women of the era, familiar with a subaltern status, could perhaps, to a certain degree, identify with the bigotry shown to the Jews. Jasmin's narrator transmits his fond recollections of a courageous woman who addressed and renounced racism to the men in her company during an extremely patriarchal time.

In *La vie suspendue* (1994), the author's narrator praises his long-suffering mother in more than two pages of fond reminiscing. He contemplates the burdens placed upon this mother of nine children during the Great Darkness and concludes, "Nous étions tous endettés. Vingt ans, rue Saint-Denis, moi et les autres" (110).¹³⁰ Then, he starts to calculate:

Sept mille jours à compter sur la mère. Sept mille nuits. Mes vingt mille repas servis. Près de deux cent mille repas si je multiplie par les neuf bouches à nourrir. . . . Mille semaines, mille, d'entretiens de toutes sortes. Mille lavages avec de vieilles machines à laver bruyantes tous les lundis matin de sa vie. (110)¹³¹

Jasmin witnessed the changing dynamics between the masculine and the feminine that occurred during his lifetime, and his perception of women as equals comes through clearly in *La vie suspendue* in scenes presenting his narrator's respect for his mother. Although the author's

¹²⁹ "Listen, who knows and what would that change for us? Nothing! Besides that, there are good and bad among the Jews just like with everyone else, no?"

¹³⁰ "We were all indebted. Twenty years of indebtedness, Saint-Denis Street, myself and the others."

¹³¹ "Seven thousand days counting on the mother. Seven thousand nights. My twenty thousand meals served. Close to two hundred thousand meals if I multiply by the nine mouths to feed. . . . A thousand weeks, a thousand. Upkeeps of all sorts. One thousand washings with old, loud washing machines every Monday morning of her life."

upbringing was in a culture in which a woman's subjugated status existed with society's silent consent, his narrator is an open-minded person who, in 1994, acknowledges the humanity and sufferings of his mother and other Great Darkness era women, "Cette femme avait un cœur, elle pleurait et elle riait. Elle aimait la vie, elle maugréait aussi, mais elle se consolait, avec tout autour d'elle, tant de voisines ligotées aux mêmes corvées" (*La vie suspendue* 111).¹³²

In addition to displaying women of the Great Darkness era in a respectful manner, Jasmin provides insight into the difficult conditions and situations with which these women had to contend. In the 2007 novel *Chinoiseries*, a particularly harsh example of the mistreatment of women during the Great Darkness is found in a recollection of Jasmin's narrator. The narrator describes walking along the Montreal docks as a young child and observing a woman on a public telephone in the midst of a heated dispute with the person to whom she is speaking. The woman states, "T'as été un rat avec moé, j'suis pas une chienne, Fred! T'es pire qu'un rat avec moé. Et tu disais m'aimer, mon salaud! Fred, t'es un vrai démon! T'as pas le droit de me laisser, Fred! T'as pas le droit de me faire ça!" (55).¹³³ Shortly thereafter, a man arrives in a car, and as he approaches the woman, he addresses her derogatively and with several expletives. The shocked young narrator then relates, "Ce grand jaune [il portait un manteau jaune] au nez écrasé de boxeur lui saute dessus et, de sa main libre, lui administre des coups de poing dans le dos, sur la tête et puis des coups de pied" (58).¹³⁴ No mention is made, however, of anyone trying to intercede to stop the man, although neither are references made to others being in the general

¹³² "This woman had a heart, she cried and she laughed. She loved life. She complained too, but she consoled herself with those around her, with so many other women of the neighborhood who were also tied to the same miserable and imposed labors."

¹³³ "You were a rat with me. I'm not a bitch, Fred! You're worse than a rat with me, and you say you love me, you bastard! Fred, you're a real demon! You don't have the right to leave me, Fred! You don't have the right to do that to me!"

¹³⁴ "The big guy in a yellow coat with a boxer's crushed nose, jumps on her and, with his free hand, administers punches to her back, her head and then kicks her some."

vicinity at the time. The narrator quickly returns home, happy to once again be with his “papa adoré” (61).¹³⁵

Women in pre-Quiet Revolution Québec were compelled to comply with the Church’s policy promoting large families. Parish priests often visited homes to ensure that women and their families were in compliance with what was called the *revanche des berceaux*.¹³⁶ The 2009 text *Babies for the Nation: The Medicalization of Motherhood in Quebec, 1910-1970* explains the origins of this expression. Denyse Baillargeon writes:

The term *revanche des berceaux* was used for the first time by the Jesuit Louis Lalonde in a lecture published in 1918 in the journal *L’Action française*, in which he cited the extraordinary fertility of French-Canadian women as an explanation for the nation’s survival, and exhorted them to continue on the same path. (268)

However, the women of the province and the Church did not necessarily view the overemphasis on reproduction in the same manner. The Church in pre-Quiet Revolution Québec, instead of placing women on an equal status with men and being concerned with their welfare and well-being, chose to regard them as a resource. Women were perceived as mainly a means of producing more Catholics in the province to counter, through sheer numbers, the Canadian English-speaking Protestants.

The *revanche des berceaux* policy during the Great Darkness sometimes resulted in the deaths of women from excessive childbearing. Irene Gammel of Ryerson University, Toronto, reinforces this in her 1999 work *Confessional Politics: Women’s Sexual Self-Representations in Life Writing and Popular Media*. She states, “Married women were expected to bear a child almost yearly . . . even women who were warned by their doctors that another pregnancy might be fatal were advised by priests and advice columnists to fulfill their wifely duties” (30). During

¹³⁵ “Adored Papa.”

¹³⁶ “Revenge of the cradles.”

this era of Québec's history, contraceptive measures were forbidden and marital sex was viewed as mainly for procreation; women were expected to deny themselves, without question or complaint, to fulfill predetermined roles given to them by the Church. While extolling the merits of motherhood and reproduction, the Church also avoided the subject of female sexuality. In 1997's *Au commencement était l'amour*, the author and psychoanalyst Kristeva addresses Catholicism, motherhood, and the suppression of women's sexuality without mentioning a specific place or time period:

Quant aux femmes, cependant, la censure de la sexualité féminine a contribué à minoriser une moitié de l'humanité en entravant son expression sexuelle et intellectuelle. Toutefois cette censure (qui n'a pu être en fait levée que par les progrès de la contraception) fut en grande partie compensée par l'éloge de la maternité. (59)¹³⁷

Although Québec's entire population experienced the Church's manipulation and restriction of personal freedoms during the Great Darkness, women were the most affected and constrained.

For the Church, large families were seen as a means of survival for both Catholicism in the region and the French-speaking nation as a whole. The Church perceived the neighboring, economically superior, English-speaking Protestants as a threat to Québec's culture (and religion). Gammel continues, "Women were essential to *revanche des berceaux*; large families were seen as resisting assimilation by '*les Anglais*' (whether English-Canadian, British, or American)" (30-31). To the patriarchal religious institution of pre-Vatican II era Québec, the ends justified the means in this regard, even at the expense of the lives and health of women.

¹³⁷ "Concerning women, however, the proscription of female sexuality contributed to a derogation of half the human race through a hampering of its sexual and intellectual expression. Only advances in contraception technique have finally made it possible to lift that proscription, a proscription that previously was, in large part, only compensated by a praise of motherhood."

In his 1999 *Le Devoir* article “Que l’Église demande pardon” (“The Church Should ask for Forgiveness”), Jasmin reflects on the manner in which the Church of the past vilified women who became pregnant outside of marriage:

La religion catholique enseignée autrefois au Québec diabolisait tant les mères célibataires, faisait tellement honte aux filles tombées enceintes hors du saint-sacrement du mariage (le fruit du péché était le qualificatif pour les petits innocents nouveau-nés!), qu’il a fait naître la terreur et chez les parents de ces filles-mères (expression de l’époque) et chez ces horribles jeunes “pécheresses.” (para. 1)¹³⁸

His position on women stands in stark contrast to the Church’s stance and its institutionalized practice of unfair treatment of women during the Great Darkness. The author pinpoints those of the province he believes were the most responsible for the callous attitudes towards women: the local Church leaders. Jasmin continues in the article, “Les premiers coupables de ce gâchis social sont les évêques du Québec du temps, les chefs hiérarchiques” (para. 2).¹³⁹ Jasmin points out that the bishops of the time consented to, and promoted the existence of, a repressive atmosphere towards women. Action on their part, Jasmin suggests, could have ameliorated conditions for women.

Jasmin also declares in this article that he sees Church teachings during pre-Vatican II Québec as a distortion of Christianity. “[Cet] enseignement anti-charité chrétienne” (para. 3).¹⁴⁰ He refers to the pre-Quiet Revolution period as “Un temps de ténèbres pourris quand l’église québécoise salissait les paroles de l’Évangile” (para. 3).¹⁴¹ The author sympathizes with his

¹³⁸ “The Catholic religion, as taught in the past in Québec, demonized so many single mothers and caused so much shame to girls who became pregnant outside of the ‘holy-sacrament’ of marriage (the fruit of sin was the term used for the little innocent new-born babies!). It instilled terror in both the parents of those girl-mothers (expression of the era) and those horrible young ‘sinners’.”

¹³⁹ “The main guilty ones of this social mess are the Bishops of Québec of the era, the hierarchal leaders.”

¹⁴⁰ “[This] anti-Christian charity teaching.”

¹⁴¹ “Time of rotten darkness when the churches of Québec corrupted the words of the Gospel.”

female compatriots who also lived through the Great Darkness and, in the concluding paragraph of the article, states, “La racine de ces horreurs contre des innocents qui transformait nos bonnes mamans en misérables juges sans solidarité avec leurs filles . . . vient de cette religion catholique défigurée, trafiquée” (para. 5).¹⁴² In this newspaper article, Jasmin does not restrain himself as he addresses women’s oppression during the Great Darkness.

In *Le temps des souvenirs: chroniques des belles années*, a 2010 book relating dialogue between Jean Faucher and Jasmin, the latter makes a statement reflecting an egalitarian perspective towards women. When Faucher mentions that some men utilize the term “mama” when addressing their female companions, Jasmin responds, “Cela aurait tendance à m’horripiler si tu veux mon opinion, ces ‘maman’ émises par de vieux mâles suffisants et infantiles illustrent une conception puérile de la compagne de vie” (210).¹⁴³ Jasmin seemingly places women on a par with men. Although the focus of this study is on the father-son relationship in Jasmin’s novels, an awareness of the author’s general attitudes towards women provides added insight into his mindset.

The Quiet Revolution did not act quickly to address women’s issues. However, the cultural changes during the 1960s in Québec did manage to indirectly help restrain the emphasis on large families. Historian Jacques Lacoursière writes in 1997, “La baisse de la pratique religieuse et de l’influence du clergé a pour conséquence que de plus en plus de femmes se prononcent en faveur d’une certaine limitations de naissances” (101).¹⁴⁴ It was not until 1975, with Québec’s *Charte des droits et libertés de la personne* (Charter of Human Rights and

¹⁴² “The root of these horrors against innocent ones comes from that Catholic religion that was deformed and altered. It transformed our good mamans into wretched judges without solidarity with their daughters.”

¹⁴³ “That would tend to exasperate me. If you want my opinion, these ‘mamas’ emitted by old, smug, and infantile males illustrate a puerile conception of the life partner.”

¹⁴⁴ “The decrease of religious practice and of the clergy’s influence consequently resulted in more and more women favoring a certain limitation of births.”

Freedoms), that women were legally considered equal with men. Concerning the adopted charter, the book *Canada, Adieu: Quebec Debates its Future* (1991) states, “The search for genuine equality between Quebec women and men is one of the fundamental values and objectives found in the Quebec Charter” (287). The patriarchal convention of the Great Darkness was thus not directly addressed with the Quiet Revolution.

A Psychoanalytic Approach to Jasmin's Novels

Pointe-Calumet boogie-woogie (1973)

Breaking Free From External Forces Through Language

With *Pointe-Calumet*, Jasmin indirectly safeguards Québec's collective memory of the Great Darkness period. In his 1973 critique of this novel that appeared in *La Presse*, Réginald Martel states, "Plus que le récit de son adolescence, c'est la chronique d'une époque qu'a écrite Claude Jasmin" (32).¹⁴⁵ Jasmin's recurring narrator's recollections of times past are presented in a subjective manner and correlate a collective identity with an individual sense of self. In *Pointe-Calumet*, when thinking back, the narrator makes references to the stresses of conforming to the Church during the excessively religious pre-Quiet Revolution era. He refers to his society as "La nation canadienne-française jamais assez catholique," inferring sarcastically that the atmosphere of the time made it seem that one could never be devout enough or completely satisfy the many requirements and obligations of the religion (63).¹⁴⁶ With these words, and within the context of the novel, the narrator indirectly links his devout father who never considers himself "Catholic enough" to the ultra-religious province of the time.

The 2006 version of the French dictionary, *Le Petit Robert*, defines religion as, "Reconnaissance par l'être humain d'un pouvoir ou d'un principe supérieur de qui dépend sa destinée et à qui obéissance et respect sont dûs" (2178).¹⁴⁷ This definition could be compared with that of religiosity in the same dictionary, "Scrupule religieux extreme—dévotion. Aspect purement sentimental de la religion chez une personne; attirance pour la religion en général, avec

¹⁴⁵ "More than the narrative of his adolescence, it's the chronicle of an epoch that Claude Jasmin wrote."

¹⁴⁶ "The never Catholic enough French-Canadian nation."

¹⁴⁷ "Recognition by a human being of a superior power or a principle on whom depends the former's destiny and to whom obedience and respect are due."

ou sans adhésion formelle à une religion précise” (2179).¹⁴⁸ In Québec during the Great Darkness, individual religiosity existed in conjunction with pervasive Catholicism. Set in Québec during this era, Jasmin’s 1973 work *Pointe-Calumet* includes a case of religious zealotry with the character of the narrator’s father. In this book, the narrator recalls that his father hoped to see him take an active interest in their culture’s religion. In this regard, the narrator shares the memory of his father speaking to relatives, recounting, “Mon père, fier, affirme que je marcherai sur les traces de son frère aîné, que je ferai un prêtre, probablement missionnaire aussi” (48).¹⁴⁹

In contrast to mentions of religion in the selected novels, examples of Québécois *sacres* (expletives) used in the province’s vernacular are also found. In *Pointe-Calumet*, the narrator speaks of memories of his young adolescent years during the mid-1940s, which include conversations he overhears between unidentified *zoot-suits* late one night on summer vacation with his family.¹⁵⁰ The narrator states, “Les *zoot-suits* en colère ont parfois un langage religieux étonnant” (87).¹⁵¹ Examples of the language follow, “Voyons donc, hostie de kolisse, j’t’l’dis, tabarnac, écoute-moé!” (87).¹⁵² The narrator’s father does not approve and reproaches the men, “Qu’est-ce que ça vous donne de parler de même? Respectez donc les choses de notre sainte religion. Soyez un peu plus distingués” (87).¹⁵³ Crass speech of this sort are not used by the narrator’s father in *Pointe-Calumet*, and in the aforementioned scene, it is clear that disrespect

¹⁴⁸ “Extreme religious scruple, devotion. Purely sentimental aspect of a person’s religion; attraction for religion in general, with or without formal adhesion to a specific religion.”

¹⁴⁹ “My father, proud, affirms that I will follow in the tracks of his older brother, that I will also be a priest, probably a missionary.”

¹⁵⁰ Note: The *zoot-suit* mode of dress for men that originated in the 1930s was prevalent in the 1940s. *The Greenwood Encyclopedia of Clothing Through World History*, published in 2008, puts forth, “The ‘hip’ *zoot-suit* was defiant, often associated with criminality. . . . The *zoot-suit* was possibly the only article of clothing to incite actual riots. . . . [even in] Montreal, where the dominant English attacked minority Italians and French (the seeds of Quebec’s French Separatist movement can be traced to such attacks)” (148).

¹⁵¹ “The angry *Zoot-Suits* sometimes have a shocking religious language.”

¹⁵² Literal translation: “Hey, come on, host of the chalice, I’m telling you, tabernacle, listen to me!”

¹⁵³ “What do you get out of talking like that? Respect the things of our holy religion. Let’s be a little more distinguished.”

for the Church was something that the narrator's father would not allow in his or his family's presence.

Kristeva, in *Au commencement était l'amour: psychanalyse et foi*, addresses language, the unconscious, and nihilism, as related to psychoanalysis (77-83). In *Au commencement*, while not rebuking Freud's theories, Kristeva nonetheless observes a nihilistic quality as regards the basic Freudian process of psychoanalysis. She writes, "En effet, la psychanalyse connaît l'être du sujet subverti en 'objet' psychique" (78).¹⁵⁴ A patient cannot be treated or regarded in a completely respectful and humane way if being objectified. Kristeva continues to state, however, that despite any negative qualities within psychoanalysis, through language as a means of communication between a doctor and a patient, "L'homme analysant se connaît, plongé dans l'immanence d'une signifiante qui cependant l'excède. Elle peut s'appeler un *inconscient*" (79).¹⁵⁵

Kristeva theorizes that as a psychoanalyst conducts his or her psychic inquiry by means of conversation and the use of psychoanalytic knowledge, the analysand, who is both subject and object, "rompt avec l'homme ancien" and becomes "un homme 'nouveau'" (*Au commencement* 80).¹⁵⁶ Kristeva also asserts on the same page that the new man, "se reconnaît tenu par une logique inconsciente qui lui échappe, même s'il peut, sur la scène consciente, la connaître."¹⁵⁷ As Kristeva explains, through discourse and psychoanalysis, a patient finds ways to free himself from the restraint of unconscious chains (*Au commencement* 80). This correlates to the use of *sacres* within the vernacular of the Québécois during the Great Darkness, examples of which Jasmin incorporates within the novels of my study. Concerning the selected texts, to be noted is

¹⁵⁴ "In effect, psychoanalysis does indeed subvert the subject's [patient's] being by viewing it as a psychic 'object'."

¹⁵⁵ "The patient learns to know himself, submerged though he is in the immanence of a signifiante that transcends him. That signifiante can be given a name: the unconscious."

¹⁵⁶ "Breaks with the old man"; "a 'new' man."

¹⁵⁷ "Recognizes that he is caught up in the toils of an unconscious logic, even though he can grasp the nature of that logic on a conscious level."

that the recurring narrator sometimes uses *sacres* during tense moments of conversation with his father. There are no instances or mentions given in the texts, however, of the father responding in the same manner, although assuredly the usage of religious-based expletives would not automatically equate to a lack of a belief in God. Additionally, in both the past and at present, *sacres* are used inadvertently or on occasion without specific meaning or intention in the province.

Although *sacres* are still heard in Québec, the intermingling of Church terms within common discourse during the Great Darkness lent itself to a low-level psychic decompression. This occurred through the temporary easing of tensions related to the ruling religious institution to which the Québécois belonged. The creative linguistic altering of Church terms during the Great Darkness in Québec equated to a mocking that resulted in empowerment for the person employing the *sacres*. When using *sacres* during the Great Darkness, the Québécois both temporarily rebelled and alleviated daily strains related to the seriousness of complying with Church rules and regulations. By using *sacres*, pre-Quiet Revolution era Québécois also recognized and took control of inculcated religious perceptions, indirectly rebuking them. In *Pointe-Calumet* (1973), the narrator alludes to a collective desire among the young of the period for a better future and a new identity, stating, “Nos espoirs secrets nous soutenaient tous au beau milieu d’une existence bien limitée de toutes parts” (113).¹⁵⁸ In this citation, although the *espoirs secrets* (secret hopes) would vary, the Great Darkness era youth’s longing for liberation from such a restrictive society is exhibited. By not avoiding *sacres* in dialogue, Jasmin adds realism to his novels and presents how, through common discourse during the Great Darkness period, the Québécois indirectly called for a new, freer sense of self and society.

¹⁵⁸ “Our secret hopes sustained us all who found ourselves right in the middle of an existence truly limited on all sides.”

Through vivid first-person narrative that includes *joual* and *sacres* within his work, Jasmin describes his society's past. He also includes scenes presenting the joys, pains, and struggles of both his family and larger Québécois society. His *Pointe-Calumet* narrator is a participating member of his immediate environment. In a scene from this text, while at his family's summer cottage during his teenage years, the narrator states of his summer neighbors, "Toutes ces familles se connaissent, se fréquentent, forment un clan, une tribu" (55).¹⁵⁹ Referring to his larger surrounding society in such a manner brings to mind Freud's 1918 work *Totem and Taboo*. In this book, Freud speaks, in a general sense, of a well-adapted person as one who faces society and participates in it. Freud writes, "This real world . . . is dominated by the society of human beings and by the institutions created by them; the estrangement from reality is at the same time a withdrawal from human companionship" (123). Freud basically alleges that a maladapted or indifferent person would not feel a need to be actively connected to others or the larger community.

In *Pointe-Calumet* (1973), Jasmin's narrator is actively engaged in his society—but he also resists one of its institutions. The narrator of *Pointe-Calumet* recalls that as a young man he participated in the immediate society of his neighborhood and summer vacation locale. Additionally, he recollects that as he grew, his disenchantment with the Church, his father, and pre-Quiet Revolution society increased. In later novels of the selected works written after the death of the author's father, Jasmin's narrator remembers his past with his father with increasing affection and understanding, displaying a growing consideration of others that often comes with age.

¹⁵⁹ "All these families know each other, associate together and form a clan, a tribe."

Je vous dis merci (2001)

The Road to Adulthood Passes Through Adolescence

At the age of 70, Jasmin produced this novel that recounts his narrator's memories of those individuals from his past who had strongly influenced him, including his father. The narrator of this text recalls that as he distanced himself from Catholicism, his apostasy precluded a good relationship with his father. What is also observable in this work is that the narrator's changing perspective of his father from childhood admiration to a vacillating disdain eventually evolves into affection and gratitude. Jasmin's later works, such as this novel, show an older, more understanding and compassionate narrator who retrospectively ponders the days of his youth, softens his stance against his father, and seeks to belatedly reconcile with him. As an author's sentiments can at times be perceived through his work, Jasmin's changing attitudes towards his father are observable in the selected texts. However, although most probably based on actual experiences, it is important to bear in mind that the author's memories could be tainted by the sentimentality of his autumn years.

Concerning wavering sentiments, Freud writes in 1918 in *Totem and Taboo* of simultaneous love and hate towards the same object. Freud also applies this notion to cultural institutions. By extension, this concept could be applied to a dominant religion in a culture, such as the Catholic Church in Québec's society during the Great Darkness. Freud states of one's opposing positions towards the same object, "We know nothing of the origin of this ambivalence" (157). However, he continues to surmise, "It may be assumed to be a fundamental phenomenon of our emotional life . . . acquired by mankind from the father complex" (157). The recurring narrator's often conflicting sentiments are observable within the chosen texts and evoke Freud's ideas. In *Je vous dis merci* (2001), set in Québec in the 1950s, the narrator alludes

to his uncertainty regarding his revolt against his father and religion. Temporarily referring to himself and others of his generation in the third person, the narrator states, “Au fond des choses, surpris de sa liberté nouvelle, l’enfant grandi, mieux instruit, ne se sent pas bien du tout. Cette abnégation des parents, trop vite acquise, lui paraît louche. Il s’interroge” (*Je vous dis merci* 75-76).¹⁶⁰ The scenes of inner turmoil and alternating points of view in this work occur within the time period leading up to the Quiet Revolution, when the narrator is in his twenties. At this point, Jasmin’s older narrator recalls being torn between secular ideas and the Church, with the latter influence being strongly associated with his father.

Psychoanalysts regard a tense father-son relationship as fairly prevalent in most societies, and in *Je vous dis merci*, thinking back on his tumultuous days with his father, the narrator explains, “ Nous avons eu des querelles fameuses, lui et moi, nous avons vécu, hélas, de longues périodes de temps en ‘froid’ ” (221).¹⁶¹ Religion undeniably plays a role in the narrator’s rapport with his father. In his 1930 work *Civilization and its Discontents*, Freud connects a concept of God to a father figure, stating, “The common man cannot imagine [this] Providence otherwise than in the figure of an enormously exalted father” (21). In *Je vous dis merci* (2001), a hint of a childhood father-to-God connection is observable when the narrator states, “Ce simple petit boutiquier de la rue Saint-Denis a été ‘l’homme idéal’ durant ma petite enfance, mon modèle” (222).¹⁶² As a young child, the narrator holds his father in high esteem. With the onset of adolescence, however, the narrator’s perception of his father changes for the worse. The drastic

¹⁶⁰ “Deep down, surprised at his new freedoms, the now more knowledgeable, grown child does not feel good about himself at all. This abnegation of parents, too quickly obtained, seems suspect to him. He questions himself.”

¹⁶¹ “We had some notorious quarrels, he and I. We experienced, well, long periods of ‘cold relations’ between us.”

¹⁶² “This simple little shop owner of Saint-Denis Street was the ‘perfect man’ during my early childhood, my model.”

change of attitude towards his father is demonstrated when the narrator refers to his father as “ce père-bigot” and “Édouard-le-pieux” (225).¹⁶³

Jasmin’s narrator recalls in *Je vous dis merci* that during the Great Darkness years of the 1950s, “Nos parents sont donc devenus des ‘étrangers’ et, pire, des incultes marinant, contents, béats, dans leurs sauces d’ignorances. Nous tirons un lourd rideau d’indifférence sur leurs préjugés, leur maudite religion faite de ‘piéticaileries’” (76).¹⁶⁴ The narrator recounts that eventually, his father and Catholicism no longer held sway over him; the growing narrator, during a transitional stage in life, became disenchanted with both. As the narrator grew, he became more self-aware. However, his eventual rejection of both his father and his culture’s religion created a void soon filled with doubt and mixed emotions. Interior conflict is the result of the abandonment of two crucial parts of his identity—the Church and his admiration for his father.

In *Je vous dis merci* (2001), the narrator’s inquietude, frequent self-questioning, and vacillation resulting from his revolt during his younger years indicate a lack of assurance in his rejection of religion in favor of secularity. In the 2008 book *The Religious Case Against Belief*, concerning irresolution in adhering to belief systems, James Carse, of New York University, writes, “The line between knowledge and belief is, of course, vulnerable to sudden shifts. On the slightest provocation, the knower can slip over into the category of believer” (69). This can also work in an inverse fashion; a former believer can slip back and forth into the “knower” category. The narrator of *Je vous dis merci* ruminates retrospectively on his and his generation’s shared sentiments regarding their revolt and abandonment of Catholicism. Experiencing the past once

¹⁶³ “This sanctimonious father”; “Édouard-the-Pious.”

¹⁶⁴ “Our parents became ‘strangers’ and, even worse, content, uncultivated people blissfully marinating in their sauces of ignorance. We pulled a heavy curtain of indifference between us and their prejudices and their damned religion composed of ‘little pious actions’.”

again, he shares from memory, in the present tense, “On a mal, on ne le dit pas. On a des doutes secrets malgré nos attitudes de bravaches. Ce vide fait peur” (77).¹⁶⁵

The narrator’s harsh treatment of his father did not occur without mixed feelings. Despite animosity towards his father, the narrator later recalls expressing gratefulness to him. This apparent contradiction—being grateful to the same person one is persecuting—is similar to the religious theme of gratefulness towards a more powerful, but sacrificed, redeemer-god who is killed by those he seeks to redeem. After acknowledging writing harshly and unkindly about his father, the narrator declares, decades later, “N’empêche maintenant, qu’il faut que je le remercie” (*Je vous dis merci* 221).¹⁶⁶ These words reveal a sense of culpability. The 70 year old narrator’s recollections show belated remorse for cruel treatment of his father. Ambivalence of this sort towards a father figure is in line with Freud’s Oedipal theories—and indirectly correlates to uncertainty concerning the Québécois and their sense of identity, as will be explained.

Concerning youthful rebellion as related to Québec, historian and sociologist Gérard Bouchard and author Alain Roy write of similarities between adolescents and the Québécois in their 2007 book *La culture québécoise est-elle en crise?*¹⁶⁷ Roy speaks of phases that the Québécois are passing through as they grow and evolve together as a people. Roy states, “Il y a bien [là], un travers collectif, qui fait penser à cette assurance feinte que prennent les adolescents pour cacher leurs faiblesses et se convaincre qu’ils sont ‘réellement des adultes’” (103).¹⁶⁸ The struggles and insecurities depicted by the recurring narrator in the selected works are, in part, associated with identities still lacking self-assurance. This “identity in progression” portrayed by

¹⁶⁵ “We hurt, but we do not speak of it. We have secret doubts despite our brash attitudes. This void scares us.”

¹⁶⁶ “That does not preclude that now, I must thank him.”

¹⁶⁷ Gérard Bouchard was a member of the 2007-2008 Bouchard-Taylor Commission on Reasonable Accommodation (of minorities).

¹⁶⁸ “There is certainly a collective quirk that makes one think of that feigned self-assurance that adolescents take on to hide their weaknesses and convince themselves that they are ‘truly adults’.”

the narrator parallels the transformational stages encountered by the Québécois, a people who are still on the road to self-discovery—and possible statehood.

Identity for the Québécois during the Great Darkness era included the acknowledgement of both oppressive Church rule and subjugation by the English-speaking Canadians, dating back to the Conquest of 1759-1760. However, since the Quiet Revolution of the 1960s, the Québécois have been proudly presenting themselves. No longer controlled by the Church, the Québécois acknowledge and partake in their modern, secular, and inclusive francophone society. As they proceed forward in the twenty-first century, change continues. Attesting to this are the 2012 provincial elections that resulted in the leader of the separatist party, *Parti québécois*, Pauline Marois, becoming Québec's first woman prime minister. This unprecedented event demonstrates the decisive will of the majority to break with the mentality of the past, a past vividly described and revisited in Jasmin's novels through first-person narration.

While not forgetting the past, the Québécois are moving forward to solidify an established sense of selfhood within a modern and open society. Through his writings, Jasmin is also seen to progress. His most recent novels reveal an appreciative narrator gracious towards his devout father. In *Je vous dis merci* (2001), the narrator expresses to his late father, "Merci pour . . . ce que tu sais bien et qui restera entre toi et moi" (223).¹⁶⁹ The author's evident empathy for his father (many years deceased at the time *Je vous dis merci* was written) is analogous to Québec's contemporary trend towards a coming to terms with the past in order to move forward with a more tolerant society. In the 2004 epistolary novel *Interdit d'ennuyer*, a work presenting the correspondences between two Québécois authors, Francine Allard and Jasmin, the latter speaks of how his sentiments for his father changed over the years; "Ce père, retraité, mort en 1987, devenu un artiste 'primitif,' naïf . . . je l'ai méprisé longtemps, l'ultra-pieux. Et puis je l'ai

¹⁶⁹ "Thank you for . . . that which you know of well and that which will remain between you and me."

admiré. Et aimé” (150).¹⁷⁰ These words, emanating from an aged narrator, suggest that the author now views his father more compassionately than during the days of his youth. The author often recalls Québec’s provincial atmosphere of the past, an atmosphere that contrasts starkly with the general present-day societal acceptance for all members of the province. In this manner, Jasmin indirectly suggests making peace with the past in order for present-day secular and inclusive Québec to continue in a positive direction.

Papamadi (2010)

Liberating out of Love

The title of this recent work is a direct reference to the narrator’s recollection that, as a child, he always started the retelling of his father’s religious stories to his friends with “*Papa m’a dit.*”¹⁷¹ Consequently, the narrator was nicknamed by his young friends, “*Papamadi*” (*Papamadi* 71). The narrator recalls that during his early childhood, he was simultaneously horrified and fascinated by the extraordinary tales of the saints. He also relates that as he grew up, he no longer accepted the stories as true and often refuted these and other related religious issues with his devout father. This situation, as will be seen, resulted in guilt on the narrator’s part.

In this work, one of the father’s favorite saints is Brother André of Montreal. The narrator recalls that his father’s accounts of demons tormenting Brother André shocked him as a young child, “Ça me faisait peur. Les soirs de ces jours de contes, à la lueur de ma veilleuse, j’étais souvent incapable de m’endormir” (99).¹⁷² Nonetheless, Jasmin’s narrator remembers how he sometimes recounted these same stories to his friends with a little embellishment to better hold

¹⁷⁰ “This retired father, dead in 1987, who became a ‘primitive’ artist, naïve . . . I despised him for a long time, the ultra-pious one, and then, I admired him—and I loved him.”

¹⁷¹ “Papa told me.”

¹⁷² “I was scared the evening of the days of stories. By my night light, I was often unable to fall asleep.”

his audience's interest, "Mes amis écoutent, les yeux écarquillés maintenant. Je ne répétais pas tout ce que mon père m'avait conté, juste l'action" (14-15).¹⁷³ Jasmin's tense switching is noticeable in the above citations. The narrator, after recalling with a past tense that his father's stories used to scare him and often prevented him from falling asleep, suddenly utilizes the present tense and speaks of his young comrades actively "listening" to him. Then, in the phrase that follows, the author reverts to a past tense, stating that he did not always repeat all his father told him, only the exciting parts. It is evident through tense switches of this sort that Jasmin, while relying on memory, also relives the past at the moment of his writing.

Although the narrator's friends sometimes found his religious anecdotes interesting, the nickname remained, "Papamadi! me crient par la tête les petits copains de la ruelle" (71).¹⁷⁴ Again, the author's writing style reveals that he is envisioning and recreating his childhood through his narrator, relating that his friends "yell" as opposed to "used to yell" at him. The elderly narrator also fondly remembers that as a youngster, he did not consider the sleepless nights and taunting by his friends as completely negative, stating that his friends enjoyed hearing his father's stories. The narrator remembers his friends requesting, "Pis, ton père, rien de neuf?" (72).¹⁷⁵ The narrator of *Papamadi* (2010) recalls his acceptance of his devout father as a young child; this coincides with the author's golden years' evolving, compassionate perspective towards his father.

While recounting his experiences as a young child, the narrator remembers his father expressing regret at not choosing the religious life. The narrator recalls his father stating, "Tu sais mon garçon, je n'aurais pas dû me marier, ma vraie vocation c'était prêtre, même que je

¹⁷³ "My friends listen, ears wide open now. I did not [would not] repeat all that my father had told me, just the action."

¹⁷⁴ "My little friends of the alleyway yell at me, 'Papamadi!'"

¹⁷⁵ "Hey, anything new from your father?"

dirais moine. Dans un monastère j’aurais été un homme heureux” (45).¹⁷⁶ The narrator reveals that shock and doubt overtook him at that moment, as he wondered how his father viewed having him as a son. Jasmin re-experienced this hurtful incident through his narrator in 2010. At this point in the novel, the narrator remembers Catholicism becoming a threat and a competitor for his father’s attention. Close scrutiny of the text shows Jasmin’s 21st century fondness for his father is expressed, once again, through present-tense verb usage. This is evident when his narrator declares that at age eleven, while spending a day alone with his father, “J’aime avoir mon père à moi tout seul” (53).¹⁷⁷

In *Papamadi* (2010), as the narrator recollects entering into adolescence; he relates memories of reevaluating his father’s points of view, “Voilà, je grandissais, je devenais moins naïf, moins crédule, il me semble” (90).¹⁷⁸ In this citation, besides overtly expressing doubt with the wording *il me semble* (it seems to me), the narrator’s present-tense usage is an indication of his uncertainty, in 2010, regarding his memories of past events. Additionally, along with recalling his changing perspective on life during adolescence, he speaks of the rebellious spirit that started to take over, “Je cherchais des querelles . . . j’étais en colère, j’étais un révolté” (100).¹⁷⁹ The narrator shares the memories of his filial impiety, including questions such as, “Comment ça se fait, p’pa, que quelqu’un peut avoir des visions, guérir du monde, parler avec elle, la Sainte Vierge, hein?” (39).¹⁸⁰

In this 2010 novel, the narrator recalls his strong sentiments connected to his father’s religious devotion. The narrator recounts that his rejection of his father and religion was

¹⁷⁶ “You know, my boy, I shouldn’t have gotten married. My true vocation was to be a priest, or I would even say a monk. In a monastery, I would have been a happy man.”

¹⁷⁷ “I like having my father to myself alone.”

¹⁷⁸ “There you have it. I was becoming less naive, less gullible, it seems to me.”

¹⁷⁹ “I was looking for quarrels . . . I was angry. I was a rebel.”

¹⁸⁰ “How can that be now, Papa, that someone can have visions, heal everyone, speak with her, the Virgin Mary?”

passionate. This is apparent through first-person narration using strong, reproachful wording when expressing his anticlericalism. While making reference to the former Duplessis government, the narrator states, “À une certaine époque, Maurice Duplessis, tyranneau provincial, petit despote conservateur, catholicard, trônait au gouvernement” (*Papamadi* 101).¹⁸¹ However, the narrator also recalls that his past rebellion included mixed emotions and bewilderment. In looking back, the narrator remembers uncertainty concerning the object of his younger, personal revolt, stating, “Aussi contre lui, ce père bigot? Sans doute. Pourtant, ça n’était pas très clair” (100).¹⁸² It is important to note that earlier in the novel, in addition to his puzzlement, Jasmin’s narrator states that during his earliest period of revolt, he did not always give free reign to his rebellion, apparently out of affection and guilt, “Je me promettais bien de ne plus provoquer mon cher vieux papa. Je l’aimais” (52).¹⁸³ Phrases of this sort, apart from expressing the narrator’s search for the reasons behind his past zeal to antagonize his father, also point to the aging author’s change of heart towards him. Although the narrator’s affection and puzzlement are portrayed as occurring in the past, and may have indeed been present years ago, they surely manifested with the author at the time the novel was written.

As an adult in his senior years, the narrator of *Papamadi* (2010) reflects upon the past and his renunciation of his father’s attachment to Catholicism. In thinking back on the numerous disputes with his father, the narrator puts forth, “Aujourd’hui encore, je regrette mes facéties. C’était facile de me moquer de sa foi de charbonnier” (24).¹⁸⁴ At another point, with some of the same wording, Jasmin’s narrator expresses his thoughts on his sardonic remarks to his father

¹⁸¹ “During a certain era, Maurice Duplessis, provincial tyrant, little conservative Catholic despot, was enthroned in the government.”

¹⁸² “Was I also against him, this sanctimonious father? Without a doubt, yes, however, it wasn’t very clear.”

¹⁸³ “I used to promise myself to stop provoking my dear old Papa. I loved him.”

¹⁸⁴ “Even today, I still regret my facetious remarks. It was easy to make fun of his blind faith.”

concerning Catholicism, “Facile, et je le regrette encore” (*Papamadi* 52).¹⁸⁵ Through these scenes, the narrator’s words reveal that the mature, adult author holds affection for his father and is remorseful for having caused him so much anguish and pain. However, the amount of affection the father has for his son is not known, as the former does not openly express love for his family, given his nature and the norm for men of the era. The father’s emotions are mainly directed towards God and Catholicism, a situation the narrator remembers resenting. In his twilight years, the narrator experiences a desire for his father’s affection and attentions that were lacking during his youth.

With the two aforementioned citations, the narrator of *Papamadi* (2010) expresses belated contrition. It could be generally understood that Jasmin’s adult narrator, out of a sense of guilt or maturity, longs to revisit the past in order to reconcile with his father and to interact with him more congenially. However, these same citations could be viewed as the expression of an unconscious desire to relive the past in order to continue fighting with his father. This would be the case if *regretter* were seen to signify that the narrator “misses” instead of “regrets” the disputes with his father.¹⁸⁶ Additionally, the word *encore* is found in close proximity in both uses of the word *regretter* in association with the narrator’s domestic disputes. As the word *encore* can mean “again” or “still,” the narrator could be either “again” or “still” regretting, or missing, the tumultuous days with his father, depending on interpretation.

It is plausible that the narrator may be contending with a latent desire to hurt his father in retribution for what the former would perceive as alienation of affection during his childhood. The narrator recalls in *Papamadi* that as young child, he expected and wanted to be the object of his father’s love. However, for this devout Catholic father, religion and love of God came before

¹⁸⁵ “Easy, and I regret it still.”

¹⁸⁶ The French verb *regretter* can be used to express either “regretting” or “missing”.

all else. Although Jasmin's attitude towards his father is shown through his recurring narrator in the selected novels to become more understanding with age, passages such as the above show that resentment, perhaps often suppressed, could also exist. The author's ambivalence towards his father can be easily understood, given that sentiments towards others are not always exclusively positive or negative, and that Jasmin, as an artist and writer, may be more sensitive and emotional than the average person.

The two above-mentioned citations utilizing *regretter*, however, are most probably expressions of the narrator's remorse—one of his more prevalent sentiments observed throughout this novel as concerns his father. The author, at 80 years of age, is revealing through his narrator that he retrospectively bemoans his filial impiety. Continuing along these lines, the author indirectly proposes that affection for his father was always there, below the surface, despite their numerous disputes over religion. Freudian ideas affirm that the narrator acted in good faith during his younger years and allow that his youthful rebellion be viewed as a selfless attempt to help his father. In his 1910 work "Contributions to the Psychology of Love 1," Freud writes that growing and maturing children have a wish to repay their parents for bringing them life, and that this desire works in conjunction with their rebellion.¹⁸⁷ Freud proposes, "His [a child's] feelings of tenderness unite with impulses which strive at power and independence" (393).

Viewed from an altruistic perspective, the narrator's past revolt would be composed of elements of fondness and benevolence, perhaps in conjunction with a desire to "liberate" his father from the constraints of Catholicism. This particular concept would, in part, explain the extreme frustration the elderly narrator of *Papamadi* (2010) still experiences with his futile

¹⁸⁷ Titled in the original German "Beitrage zur Psychologie des Liebeslebens 1," this compendium of some of Freud's writings, published in 1910, can be found in *The Freud Reader* (1995).

attempts to entice his father to abandon Catholic ways for a more modern and less austere secular life. From this point of view, the aged narrator's mixed emotions and confusion in *Papamadi* are related to his recollection that despite his best efforts during his younger years, he was not able to help his father. Freud continues in this same essay to associate filial gratitude with revolt against one's father by suggesting, "It is as though the boy's defiance were to make him say: 'I want nothing from my father; I will give him back all I have cost him.' He then forms the fantasy of rescuing his father from danger and saving his life" (393). The narrator recalls seeing his father as a victim of religious inculcation from which he could not break free without assistance. In *Papamadi*, the narrator recounts that his attempts at "liberation" were to no avail and only served to upset his father. The narrator's desire to relive the past in order to do things in a different and kinder manner causes remorse. Jasmin's narrator assuages his guilt and re-experiences the past the only way he can—by expiating his past actions through their recounting.

The elderly narrator experiences inner conflict directly related to his youthful criticism of his father because of a manifestation of affection. The following citation uncovers uncertainty concerning the unrelenting attempts of years past at convincing his father to adopt more secular points of view, "Pourquoi vouloir absolument lui ouvrir les yeux? Pour me venger de quoi?" (51).¹⁸⁸ Once again, the use of the present tense in lieu of the past tense reveals the sentimentality of the author's later years. On a larger scale, the narrator also realizes that during Québec's turbulent years, he likewise wished to see his beloved people free themselves from Church dominion, and with this, he recalls, there were no second thoughts or hesitations. The narrator, speaking for himself and his comrades of the late 1950s on the subject of Duplessis, recalls, "Certains entre nous, jeunes révoltés naïfs, souhaitaient devenir des héros et parlaient de

¹⁸⁸ "Why do I want so much to open his eyes? I want to avenge myself of what?"

l'assassiner!" (101).¹⁸⁹ A main complication for the elderly narrator of *Papamadi* (2010) is separating his father, for whom he holds familial affection, from others in positions of authority who stood in agreement with conservative Church rule during the Great Darkness.

In this novel, the narrator recalls that the many disputes with his father were vain efforts to persuade him to view Catholicism differently. The narrator's urgings during his younger years were, in part, motivated by concern that extended beyond the familial domain, to include his society. The anticlerical narrator would likely have concurred with a statement Daniel Pals makes in his 2006 work *Eight Theories of Religion*. Pals writes, after discussing Freud's ideas on religion and civilization, "Religion that persists into the present age of human history can only be a sign of illness; to begin to leave it behind is the first sign of health" (71). In *Papamadi* (2010), besides rejecting the ways of the Great Darkness era, the socially conscious narrator exhibits resentment and disappointment concerning the passivity of both his father and the people when they were confronted with the power of the Church during the pre-Quiet Revolution era.

In broad terms, *Papamadi*'s narrator presents his thoughts on those who complied with Church rule during the Great Darkness, "Mon père, notre peuple, étaient jugés mous, soumis, manipulés, aliénés" (101).¹⁹⁰ Categorical recollections of this sort make a clear connection between the domestic strain related to the narrator's past apostasy and his society. Strong statements such as these also serve to emphasize that Jasmin's texts of father-son discord correlate to the evolving Québécois society that the author cares about deeply, as he did his father. Within this novel, scenes of domestic strife are interwoven with the background tapestry of 20th century Québec; this informs and reminds readers of his people's past oppression, which is integral to Québécois identity. In the next chapter, philosopher Charles Taylor's and

¹⁸⁹ "Some of us, young naive rebels, wished to become heroes and spoke of assassinating him!"

¹⁹⁰ "My father and our people were judged as soft, submissive, manipulated, and alienated."

sociologist Stuart Hall's ideas on identity will serve to expound Jasmin's perceptions of his society and his evolving attitude towards both his father and his people.

CHAPTER 4
THE QUIET REVOLUTION
QUÉBEC IN TRANSITION AND JASMIN'S NOVELS

Jasmin is uncompromisingly direct concerning his thoughts on the Great Darkness and the Quiet Revolution. He writes in his 1970 work *Jasmin par Jasmin*, “Nous sommes en 1959 et, au Québec, bien des choses éclatent. Le vieux Maurice Duplessis, politicien misérable, vient de mourir: notre Moyen Âge expire. On allait respirer un peu” (12).¹⁹¹ Within Jasmin’s novels, the unstable domestic situations resemble the Québécois societal tensions associated with the transition from a Catholic oriented existence to a Quiet Revolution-inspired way of life that allows a sense of self—individual or collective—to to be determined without religious pressures. A present day search for Québécois identity includes navigation through considerations of past and present situations and perspectives. Accordingly, the recurring narrator’s domestic strife within Jasmin’s work points to the larger picture—a culture deciding how to define itself amidst the shift from an ultra-religious society to a secular one.

For many years in pre-Quiet Revolution Québec, the people identified with a North-American francophone culture imbued with Catholicism—and cast a suspicious eye at those who were different. In this regard, Stuart Hall states in *Questions of Cultural Identity*, “In common sense language, identification is constructed on the back of a recognition of some common origin or shared characteristics with another person or group, or with an ideal, and with the natural

¹⁹¹ “It is 1959, and, in Québec, a lot of things are happening. Old Maurice Duplessis, the deplorable politician, just died. Our Middle-Ages comes to an end. We are all going to breathe a little.”

closure of solidarity and allegiance established on this foundation” (2). Jasmin presents the social cohesion of his people through a narrative that conveys a sense of collective identity. In *La Petite Patrie* (1972), the narrator recalls his immediate society in East Montreal, stating, “Le quartier était un village, un monde clos. On y trouvait de tout, les services nécessaires et même les superflus. Aussi, tout ce qui ne nous ressemblait pas était sujet de méfiance. Il fallait être canadien-français-catholique” (33).¹⁹²

With the onset of the Quiet Revolution, conservative Catholic Québec rapidly transformed itself, with difficulty, into a secular society.¹⁹³ Tensions associated with the province’s transitional phase are shown on a smaller scale with the scenes of father-son conflict in the selected novels. In *La vie suspendue* (1994), these tensions are observed when the narrator recalls a dispute with his father in 1960 over the changing times, “J’avais trente ans et lui cinquante. Tristes combats. Papa postillonnait: ‘On ne change pas le monde!’ Je répliquais: ‘Quand tous les lâches crèveront, ça va changer!’ Il me tournait le dos, il s’en allait loin de moi” (62-63).¹⁹⁴ Charles Taylor has much to say about societies in transformation, and not to the exclusion of Québec, given that this is his region of origin. In his 2007 work *A Secular Age*, he posits, “The shift to secularity in this sense consists, among other things, of a move from a society where belief in God is unchallenged, and indeed unproblematic, to one in which it is understood to be one option among others” (3). Jasmin’s novels of this study are woven into the tapestry of Québec’s not so distant past and depict the province’s transition from a religious to a secular society, an event that still affects Québécois identity. After introductory sections on both

¹⁹² “The neighborhood was a village, a closed world. One found everything there, services necessary and even superfluous. Also, everything that did not resemble us was subject to suspicion. One had to be Catholic-French-Canadian.”

¹⁹³ In *Recent Social Trends in Quebec, 1960-1990* (1992), Simon Langlois states that the number of practicing Catholics in Québec decreased by half between 1965 and 1985 (317).

¹⁹⁴ “I was thirty years old and he was fifty. Sad battles. Papa would sputter: ‘One doesn’t change the world!’ I would reply: ‘When all the cowards die, it will change!’ He would turn his back and go far away from me.”

the events leading up to Québec's transformational 1960's era and the Quiet Revolution itself, this chapter will employ the ideas of philosopher Charles Taylor and cultural theorist Stuart Hall to address Québécois identity as well as the recurring narrator's evolving attitudes towards his father figure in Jasmin's works.

Precursors to the Quiet Revolution: Change on the Horizon as a People Awaken

There were three major cultural events in Québec that preceded and acted as impetuses for the Quiet Revolution: the 1948 release of *Le Refus global*, the publication of the magazine *Cité libre* in 1950, and the 1960 novel *Les insolences du Frère Untel*. Artist Paul-Émile Borduas was a supporter of modern art, an art form the religious leaders of the time associated with a loosening of moral restraints. In 1948, to express discontent with the status quo, Borduas, with the assistance of a group of Québécois intellectuals, published a manifesto called the *Refus global*. In the 1982 *Le Dictionnaire des œuvres littéraires du Québec: tome III*, literary historian Maurice Lemire states of this manifesto, “Il s’agit d’une production ronéotypées . . . présentant neuf textes différents ainsi que de diverses illustrations” (853).¹⁹⁵

This manifesto of “refusals” was long and predominantly anticlerical. *Le Dictionnaire* provides the following information:

Refus global fut le point d’aboutissement et la manifestation éclatante d’un processus de transformation idéologique et culturelle vécue par un petit groupe, du reste assez isolé. . . . Les refus sont nombreux et inextricablement enchevêtrés, de sorte qu’il est difficile d’en faire une présentation analytique sommaire qui soit satisfaisante. (855)¹⁹⁶

Lemire goes on to say that the publication was not well received by those in authority: “Avec unanimité, les journaux, les revues et les pouvoirs (religieux, politiques) rejettent le texte” (855).¹⁹⁷ The reaction of those in power resulted in Borduas’ exile to France. However, because of Borduas’ actions, Québec witnessed the first public expression of dissent and discontent with the Great Darkness era. The transformation of the province was being set in motion.

¹⁹⁵ “It was a stenciled work . . . presenting nine different texts as well as diverse illustrations.”

¹⁹⁶ “The *Refus global* was the end result and the dazzling manifestation of a process of ideological and cultural transformations experienced by a small, rather isolated group. . . . The refusals are numerous and inextricably intertwined, which renders difficult the task of making a satisfactory analytical and summary presentation of them.”

¹⁹⁷ “The newspapers, magazines, and religious and political powers unanimously reject the text.”

During the Great Darkness, most of Québec's populace consented to the Church's authority and some were ardent supporters of Catholicism. Eventually, the collective acceptance of religious power was questioned. Lacoursière writes in his 1997 book *Histoire populaire du Québec*, that in 1950, the journalists Gérard Pelletier and Pierre Elliot Trudeau published the first issue of *Cité libre* magazine, a publication that highlighted their views on individual rights, the fight against social inequalities, and the promotion of the State and secularism (384).¹⁹⁸ Lacoursière puts forth, "Rapidement, *Cité libre* devient 'un cas.' Ce qu'elle apporte de nouveau, c'est un commencement, une libération" (384).¹⁹⁹ He adds that the main grievances of *Cité libre* were "envahissement du temporel, oppression de la liberté et inadéquation du ministère" (385).²⁰⁰ Certain individuals of the province, mainly intellectuals, were hoping for change in post-war Québec. With the appearance of the *Refus global* and *Cité libre*, a societal revolt was coming into view on the horizon; the days of conservative rule and Church dominance in Québec were numbered.

Catholicism expects compliance from its adherents; when a member of one of its religious orders publically turns a critical eye towards the institution, it does not go unnoticed. This was the case in 1960 when *Les insolences du Frère Untel* by Jean-Paul Desbiens, a high school teacher and brother in the (religious) Marist order in Québec, was published by Les Éditions de l'Homme. Desbiens' pseudonym, *Frère Untel*, was a creation of journalist André Laurendeau who wrote the Introduction for the book and with whom Desbiens corresponded.²⁰¹ In the Introduction, Laurendeau made it clear that the author was an actual member of a religious order in Québec. He writes, "Je peux rassurer les douteux: il s'agit d'un Frère en chair et en os,

¹⁹⁸ Trudeau became Prime Minister of Canada in 1968.

¹⁹⁹ "Rapidly, *Cité libre* becomes 'a case.' It brings a new beginning, liberation."

²⁰⁰ "Invasion of the temporal, oppression of liberty and unsuitability of the ministry."

²⁰¹ *Frère Untel* is equivalent to "Brother So-and-So" or "Brother Anonymous" in English.

membre d'une communauté précise, chargé d'une fonction régulière dans une ville de province" (16).²⁰² *Les insolences* rapidly became a success. It was regarded as a daring critique of the power of the clergy, Québec society, the province's education system, and the French dialect of Montreal's east-end working-class referred to as "*joual*."²⁰³ Maurice Lemire, in *Dictionnaire des œuvres littéraires du Québec, tome IV*, states, regarding the author, "C'est un humble frère enseignant-religieux laïque au sens canonique, un de ceux que trop de prêtres ont tellement méprisés et que le public identifie à tort, à cause de la soutane, à un clerc" (436).²⁰⁴ Desbiens' book addressed the deep-rooted conditions that existed for many years in the closed society of pre-Quiet Revolution Québec.

One of the reasons that *Les insolences* attracted interest is because it denounced the Church's education system as well as the ubiquitous use of *joual* among students and the populace. On the second page of the book, the reader notes, "Nos élèves parlent joual, écrivent joual et ne veulent parler ni écrire autrement. Le joual est leur langue. On dit: 'chu pas apable' au lieu de 'je ne suis pas capable'" (24).²⁰⁵ This French dialect, which differs significantly from standard French, was a sign of alienation for Desbiens. Historically and linguistically speaking, Desbiens' aversion to *joual* can be linked to the years of influence by the neighboring, economically superior anglophones and the subjugated status of the francophone population. Another point of contention for Desbiens was the province's commercial signage, as well as television commercials for products from anglophone regions, which often contained a mixture of English, French, and *joual*. Desbiens was offended by the ever-present liberal usage of both

²⁰² "I can reassure the doubtful. The Brother exists in flesh and blood and is a member of a specific community, charged with a regular function in a city of the province."

²⁰³ The term *joual* is a deformation of the French word for horse, *cheval*.

²⁰⁴ "He is a humble religious-order teacher, a layman in the canonical sense. He is one of those whom too many priests despised so much and whom the public wrongly identified, because of his cassock, as a cleric."

²⁰⁵ "Our students speak *joual*, write *joual* and want neither to speak nor write differently. *Joual* is their language. They say: 'ain't able' instead of 'I am not capable' [of doing something]."

English and *joual* in the public domain of francophone Québec. Concerning this situation, Desbiens states, “Nous sommes une race servile. Nous avons eu les reins cassés, il y a deux siècles, et ça paraît” (27).²⁰⁶

Desbiens also found fault with his society’s shallowness and lack of interest in properly writing and speaking the French language. “Nos gens n’admirent que les machines et technique; ils ne sont impressionnés que par l’argent et le cosu; les grâces de la syntaxe ne les atteignent pas” (27).²⁰⁷ Additionally, Desbiens suggested that the government of Québec take measures to promote a higher esteem for the French language in the province. He envisioned provincial legislative measures to safeguard the language similar to the manner in which it protects other commonly shared elements of its society. Desbiens declares:

L’État protège les orignaux, les perdrix et les truites. . . . L’État protège les parcs nationaux, et il fait bien: ce sont là des biens communs. La langue aussi est un bien commun et l’État devrait la protéger avec autant de rigueur. Une expression vaut bien un orignal, un mot vaut bien une truite. (29)²⁰⁸

Desbiens also rebuked “l’incompétence et l’irresponsabilité de Département de l’instruction publique” (35).²⁰⁹ In his controversial work, the religious Brother speaks of an ailing system wherein teachers have no choice but to regularly improvise because of poor leadership accompanied by constant changes in the educational programs. He comes to the conclusion, “Le système a raté” (37).²¹⁰ He later suggests other steps towards a solution, “Il faut pourtant fermer

²⁰⁶ “We are a servile people. We had our backs broken two centuries ago and it still shows.”

²⁰⁷ “Our people only admire machines and technology; they are only impressed by money and comfort; the charm of syntax does not reach them.”

²⁰⁸ “The State protects the moose, the partridge, and the trout. . . . The State protects national parks, and it does well to do so, these are commonly shared goods. Language is also a commonly shared good and the State should protect it as well and with as much rigor. An expression is worth a moose, a word is worth a trout.”

²⁰⁹ “The incompetence and the irresponsibility of the Department of Public Instruction.”

²¹⁰ “The system [has] failed.”

le Département” (51).²¹¹ Desbiens’ criticisms of the Church’s education system, written in both a mocking and straight-forward manner, were not well received by ecclesiastical authorities who made unsuccessful attempts to prohibit the book’s publication.

A positive note concerning the Church and education, however, is found in Fernand Dumont’s 1996 *Genèse de la société québécoise*. In this book, it is explained that in the late nineteenth century, the State abandoned education because “L’éducation, dira-t-on, est de nature trop élevée pour être laissée aux mains des politiciens et à la merci des luttes électorales” (231).²¹² Also mentioned is that the Church was a major proponent of, as well as an impetus for, education for the poor francophone children of the province. “L’Église se fait l’apôtre de l’éducation dans des milieux populaires peu enclins à encourager l’instruction des enfants. De nombreux documents de l’époque rapportent l’insistance des curés auprès des parents pour qu’ils envoient leur progéniture à l’école” (231).²¹³ The state of education in the province in 1960, without the Church’s implication throughout the years, would have been even worse. Desbiens, however, was addressing the existing situation with his free-spirited writing style in hopes of improving the system.

In *Les insolences*, Desbiens responds to a friend’s critique of his manner of writing. The unnamed friend comments on Desbiens’ unconventional and anti-establishment societal interpretations and writing style. The Marist brother candidly admits his liberal-minded bent and intentions, stating, “Il [son ami] a bien senti que c’est à dessein que je me permets des digressions, des bouffonneries. Il faut écrire décripé, déconstipé. Il faut lutter contre la frousse,

²¹¹ “It is necessary, however, to shut down the Department.”

²¹² “Education, it will be claimed, is of a too elevated nature to be left in the hands of politicians and at the mercy of electoral battles.”

²¹³ “The Church makes itself the apostle of education in the working-class areas little inclined to encourage the schooling of children. Numerous documents of the era report parish priests’ insistence to parents that they send their offspring to school.”

le formalisme, le conformisme; il faut rejeter la frousse jusque dans son style” (80).²¹⁴ Jasmin speaks in a similar manner concerning the art of writing. In a 1970 article, he agrees with Desbiens’ statements endorsing an anti-conformist writing style. Jasmin writes, “L’écrivain peut mordre la main qui le nourrit” (para 3).²¹⁵ In this article, Jasmin summarizes his thoughts on writers and their craft by boldly declaring in the last paragraph, “Vive les écrivains libres!”²¹⁶ Desbiens though, unlike Jasmin, was a member of a religious order and his unrestrained writing placed him in a precarious position with his superiors and the Church.

Although Desbiens’ bold writing style resulted in a controversial work criticizing established institutions and extreme conservative perspectives, he nonetheless defended the teaching profession. In *Les insolences*, Desbiens asks, concerning teachers, “Sommes-nous des professionnels?” (103).²¹⁷ He renders his question clearer, continuing on the same page, “Voyons maintenant si les professeurs sont des professionnels ou des hommes de métier, ou, en tout cas, de simples fonctionnaires.”²¹⁸ In making this contrast between teaching and other occupations, he insists on the dignity and importance of the former. Desbiens states, “Il est manifeste que le professeur est un professionnel; il a affaire à l’homme et non pas à la matière” (104).²¹⁹ In taking a humanistic tone, Desbiens shared with his compatriots his iconoclastic thoughts and opinions that came forth as a result of his ability to remain a free-thinking religious, teacher, and writer in spite of ultra-reactionary times.

²¹⁴ “He [his friend] picked up on the fact that I intentionally allowed myself digressions and buffooneries. One must write in a loose, un-constipated manner. One must fight against fear, formalism, and conformity. One must reject fear, even to the point of one’s writing style.”

²¹⁵ “The writer can bite the hand that feeds him/her.”

²¹⁶ “Long live free writers!”

²¹⁷ “Are we professionals?”

²¹⁸ “Let’s see now whether teachers are professionals or tradesmen, or, in any case, simple civil servants.”

²¹⁹ “It is obvious that a teacher is a professional, given that he deals with human beings and not with the subject matter.”

Desbiens also wrote of the fearful atmosphere existing among teachers—fear of their superiors in the education system. “La peur est malsaine. Et Dieu sait que nous avons tous peur” (114).²²⁰ With radical wording, he insisted that the trepidation among teachers come to an end. He also alluded to larger scale changes in the province that he believed to be on the horizon.

Desbiens declares:

Finissons-en avec la frousse. C’est le moment ou jamais. La province de Québec est à la veille d’une mue décisive, Nous, les éducateurs, nous devons prendre conscience du mouvement qui s’amorce; nous devons ambitionner de jouer un rôle de premier plan dans l’ébranlement qui s’annonce. (115)²²¹

In September 1960, a critique of *Les insolences* by the poet and literary critic Gérard Godin, appeared in the newspaper *Le Nouvelliste*.²²² In his review, Godin also makes mention of fear. “Dans ses derniers chapitres, le Frère Untel d’abord parle de la grande peur des Canadiens français, que son livre dément” (16).²²³ Besides praising Desbiens’ courage for writing the book, Godin, in concluding, declares, “Ce livre dit la vérité et c’est dangereux. C’est tellement fragile, la vérité. . . . Un livre d’insolence, ça pourrait f. . . le feu à bien des choses au Québec” (18).²²⁴

In the same newspaper, in December of the same year, Godin once again speaks of fear, this time in a review of Jasmin’s *La corde au cou*.²²⁵ This work was Jasmin’s second novel and was published in 1960. In reference to the violent and realistic nature of *La corde au cou*, Godin writes, “Le temps de la peur est dépassé. On blasphème et on fréquente les tavernes aujourd’hui

²²⁰ “Fear is unhealthy and, God knows, we are all afraid.”

²²¹ “Let’s finish with fearfulness. It’s now or never. The province of Québec is on the eve of a decisive transformation. We, the educators, should become aware of the movement that is beginning. We should aspire to play a leading role in the shake-up that is brewing.”

²²² Article included in *Écrits et parlés* (1993) by Gérard Godin.

²²³ “In his last chapters, Brother Untel first of all speaks of the great fear of the French-Canadians, which his book refutes.”

²²⁴ “This book states the truth and that’s dangerous. It’s so fragile, the truth. . . . An insolent book that could f. . .ing set fire to a lot of things in Québec.”

²²⁵ Article found in *Écrits et parlés* (1993) by Gérard Godin.

dans les livres, depuis *La corde au cou*. On sacre et on prend un verre, comme dans la vie” (138).²²⁶ With this statement, Godin credited Jasmin, too, for taking bold steps in his writing, steps that helped effect a liberating change in the literary world. Godin also suggests links between *Les insolences*, *La corde au cou*, and the changing times. Godin writes of *La corde au cou*, “Il paraît la même année que *Les insolences du Frère Untel*. Faudra-t-il commencer de croire qu’il existe des courants souterrains?” (138).²²⁷ With *Les insolences*, Desbiens contributes to the first phase of the Quiet Revolution, as does Jasmin with *La corde au cou*.

²²⁶ “The time of fear is outdated. One blasphemes and frequents taverns today in books, since *La corde au cou*. One curses and has a drink, just like in real life.”

²²⁷ “It appears the same year as *Les insolences du Frère Untel*. Should one begin to believe that there exist some underground movements?”

The 1960s: A Time of Rapid Social Change

The Quiet Revolution is often dated as beginning in 1960, a date marked by two important events: The death of Maurice Duplessis in the fall of 1959 and the subsequent coming to power of Jean Lesage (Liberal Party) as prime minister the following year. However, various sources give different dates for the duration of the Quiet Revolution. As the author Olivier Marcil states, “Les historiens ne s’entendent pas sur la durée de la Révolution tranquille” (11).²²⁸ Most define the era as coinciding with the 1960s. In the article “La Révolution tranquille expliquée aux jeunes” that appeared in the *The Métropolitain* in 2010, poet and novelist Pierre Malouf writes, concerning the end-date of the Quiet Revolution, “Il est moins sûr cependant qu’elle ait pris fin en 1966 avec la défaite des libéraux et le retour au pouvoir de l’Union nationale dirigée par Daniel Johnson” (para. 3).²²⁹ Later on in the paragraph, Malouf states:

Techniquement, la période de réformes accélérées ne dure que quelques années, de 1960 à 1966; certains estiment même qu’elle est terminée en 1964. Elle imprime tout de même un mouvement, une dynamique de changement, dont les effets se font sentir pendant deux décennies. (para. 3)²³⁰

One of the changes of the era involved a commission on the Church’s future called the Dumont Commission (*La Commission Dumont*), held from 1968 to 1972 (*Encyclopedia of Modern Christian Politics* 264). In the 2008 book *Les origines catholiques de la Révolution tranquille*, the author gives another opinion concerning when the end of the Quiet Révolution actually took place, “La Commission Dumont marque la fin de la Révolution tranquille au sens fort du terme”

²²⁸ “Historians do not agree on the duration of the Quiet Revolution.”

²²⁹ “It is less sure, however, that it [Quiet Revolution] would have ended in 1996 with the defeat of the liberals [Liberal Party] and the return to power of the *Union nationale* lead by Daniel Johnson.”

²³⁰ “Technically, the period of accelerated reforms only lasts a few years, from 1960 to 1966; some people even consider that it ends in 1964. This period arouses all the same a movement, a dynamic of change, of which the efforts are felt for two decades.”

(345).²³¹ The period of the Quiet Revolution was, therefore, approximately the decade of the 1960s, with resulting changes, such as the realization of a universal health care system in the early 1970s, continuing for years afterwards.

Education changed during the Quiet Revolution as a result of the Parent Report (*Le rapport Parent*) on education, commissioned in 1961 and completed in 1963. In the 1999 text *Histoire du Québec contemporain*, the authors write of this commission, “Elle dispose d’un mandat très large pour étudier l’organisation et le financement de l’enseignement à tous les niveaux” (660).²³² The Parent Report resulted in education for all. Before the report, instructors were mainly members of religious orders, schools were segregated by sex, and few children from poor families could continue their education. In *Pointe-Calumet* (1973), Jasmin’s narrator is concerned that his father, unenthusiastic about formal education, would forbid him to continue his studies. “Chaque été terminé, toujours cette crainte d’entendre mon père me menacer de ne plus me permettre de poursuivre des études plus avancées” (70-71).²³³

The Parent Report reemphasized the value of public education at all academic levels. Shortly thereafter, a Ministry of Education was formed. Educational changes brought about by this report included mandatory education up to age 16 and the creation of *Cégep* schools to replace schools taught by members of religious orders.²³⁴ In 2001, Tétu de Lapsade of the Université Laval states, “Aujourd’hui, la gratuité scolaire est totale y compris jusqu’au cégep. À l’université, les droits de scolarité (de 2 000 dollars à 3 000 dollars par an), tout en étant plus importants que dans certains pays européens, sont les plus bas de toute l’Amérique du Nord”

²³¹ “The Dumont Commission marks the end of the Quiet Revolution in the strict sense of the term.”

²³² “It commands a very large mandate for the study of the organizing and financing of education at all levels.”

²³³ “At the end of each summer, there was always the same fear of hearing my father threaten to no longer permit me to continue pursuing more advanced studies.”

²³⁴ Collège d’enseignement général et professionnel (CEGEP) (Comparable to a two year community college in the United States).

(235-36).²³⁵ Society was also modified with a universal health care plan, as well as widespread support for the right to collective bargaining.

The progressive radicalization of labor unions in the province also occurred during the 1960s. Tétu de Labsade lists the three major collective bargaining groups as the CSN, the FTQ, and the CEQ (83).²³⁶ The revolutionary spirit of the 1960s was present among Québec's working population, and unions found their overall goals to be similar to those of the Quiet Revolution. In *Histoire du Québec contemporain*, the authors state:

Au début des années 1960, les centrales, en particulier la CSN, partagent les grands objectifs de la Révolution tranquille, participent aux débats qui agitent la société et collaborent avec l'État, qui a besoin de leur appui pour réaliser ses réformes. (572)²³⁷

Finding ideological common ground between trade unions and the Quiet Revolution resulted in an increased advocacy for workers' rights as unions solidified a position in the changing times. In the 1974 *Les Québécois*, literary historian and professor emeritus at the University of Laval, Marcel Rioux, states, "Les centrales syndicales québécoises ont joué un rôle d'une importance extrême dans le nouveau Québec" (167).²³⁸ These unions, strengthened indirectly by the Quiet Revolution era, remain strong to this day. During the 1960s, aside from the fortification of unions, Québec experienced the nationalization of electricity (Hydro-Québec). The province

²³⁵ "Today, education is completely free up to CEGEP. At the university level, the cost of tuition (from 2,000 to 3,000 Canadian dollars per year), while being higher than in certain European countries, is the lowest in North America." Note: Attempts to slightly raise tuition costs in 2012 resulted in massive demonstrations in the province. Tuition hikes were cancelled shortly after Prime Minister Pauline Marois took office.

²³⁶ Confédération des Syndicats Nationaux (CSN), Fédération des Travailleurs du Québec (FTQ), and Corporation des Enseignants du Québec (CEQ).

²³⁷ "In the beginning of the 1960s, the trade unions, in particular the CSN, share the big objectives of the Quiet Revolution. They participate in debates that stir up society and collaborate with the State, which has need of their support in order to accomplish its reforms."

²³⁸ "The Québécois trade unions [labor unions] played an extremely important role in the new Québec."

benefits from an ample supply of electricity and has been selling it to the United States for years—a continuing economic gain resulting from the changes of the Quiet Revolution.

Other more humanistic changes in Québec also came about in the 1960s. Artistic activity increased, as novelists, poets, playwrights, and entertainers began to freely express themselves. The 2007 text *Histoire de la littérature québécoise* confirms the impact of changes in the province:

Les changements à partir de la Révolution tranquille sont si nombreux et si spéculaires que l'année 1960 est vite devenue le symbole par excellence d'une modernisation qui embrasse tous les aspects de la vie sociale, politique, économique et culturelle.
(361)²³⁹

The transformational era also fostered a collective review of long-standing attitudes towards Church rule. During this time of new-found freedoms in the province, the francophone populace began to envisage a collective identity not dominated by the Church's influence. The authors of the 2003 book *Les idées mènent le Québec: essais sur une sensibilité historique* aptly refer to Catholicism and its relationship to the people's self-perception as, "Cette religion, facteur d'identité fondamental depuis l'arrivée des Français en Amérique du Nord" (118).²⁴⁰

The people's identity was in a state of rapid transformation in the 1960s. The Québécois constructed their sense of selfhood not only in respect to their increasing distance from the Church, but also, in large part, to distinguish themselves from those outside their province. Pride in being Québécois eventually led to the passing of a new law protecting the French language in the province. A dramatic political act with respect to language was the adoption of the Charter of the French Language in 1977, *La Charte de la langue française*, commonly known as Act 101.

²³⁹ "The changes from the Quiet Revolution are so numerous and so spectacular that the year 1960 quickly became the symbol par excellence of a modernization embracing all aspects of social, political, economic and cultural life."

²⁴⁰ "This religion [that has been a] fundamental factor of identity since the arrival of the French in North America."

This law was enacted by the *Parti québécois* government of the time with René Lévesque as prime minister. With this act, French was established as the only official language of Québec. One reads in *Histoire de la littérature québécoise* on this subject, “La langue devient le ciment de la nation, reçoit ainsi un surcroît de sens comme si elle résumait elle seule les aspirations les plus profondes de la société québécoise” (456).²⁴¹ The Quiet Revolution inspired a francophone pride that led not only to efforts in the 1970s to protect the language of the province, but also to secession movements.

Much basic, general information on the Quiet Revolution remains part of the collective memory of Québec’s populace. In 1960, the RIN (Rassemblement pour l’indépendance nationale), Québec’s first independence-seeking political party, was formed. As previously mentioned, the terrorist splinter group the FLQ originated from the RIN. The FLQ’s goal was to advance the cause of independence for Québec. In *Le temps des souvenirs: chroniques des belles années* (2010), Jasmin makes a statement about the FLQ. This book, co-written by Jasmin and Jean Faucher, contains nostalgic recollections in the form of dialogue between the two life-long friends.²⁴² In this work, Faucher inquires of Jasmin, “Le FLQ, de sinistre mémoire?” (171).²⁴³ Jasmin responds, “Pour certains de ces très jeunes gens-là, la parole ne suffisait pas, il leur fallait agir, poser des bombes. Il y eut des morts, comme tu le sais” (171).²⁴⁴ Jasmin never endorsed the FLQ, but evidently understands the rationale behind their action. During the early years of the Quiet Revolution, the author expressed the desire to formulate a new collective Québécois

²⁴¹ “The language is becoming the cement of the nation, receiving thus an increased significance, as if it alone summarized the deepest aspirations of Québécois society.”

²⁴² Note: Jasmin did not wish to speak of his childhood with Faucher in this book, stating in his section of the Introduction, “Cher Jean, promets-moi qu’on ne parlera pas de mon enfance. J’ai pas mal tout dit là-dessus” (9). (“Dear Jean, promise me that we will not speak of my childhood. I pretty much already said everything about that.”)

²⁴³ “The FLQ, is it a bad memory?”

²⁴⁴ “For some of those very young people, words did not suffice. They needed to act, plant some bombs. People died, as you know.”

identity. One notes in *Littérature et société canadiennes-françaises* that during a 1964 colloquium of sociology and literature, directed by the intellectual and priest Fernand Dumont, Jasmin proposed:

Notre collectivité a bien du mal à se refléter pour la simple et bonne raison qu'elle a bien du mal à être, à avoir son un visage réel, personnel, une figure propre et autonome. Nous ne sommes pas, surtout nous n'étions pas. Pas encore. Pas vraiment. Mais patience, courage, ça vient à ce qu'il paraît. (282)²⁴⁵

As the preceding citation shows, Jasmin, in the early 1960s, while not being unmindful of the past, looked towards the future with optimism, hoping to one day see Québec become a sovereign nation.

Support for an independent Québec also came from other countries. In 1967, the president of France, Charles de Gaulle, was enthusiastically cheered in Montreal when he gave his “*Vive le Québec libre!*” speech, which was an indirect call for Québec to become independent. There were, however, ulterior motives to De Gaulle’s stirring of anti-Canadian sentiment and his desire for Québec independence. He hoped to find an ally in a sovereign Québec that would become a source of uranium for France’s nuclear power program. In his 2012 book *With Friends Like These*, David Meren writes of De Gaulle’s motivations and the 1960’s issue of nuclear power. Meren speaks of the United States’ strong influence in world affairs at the time, mentioning “Washington’s efforts to deny Paris access to uranium sources owing to American opposition to the *force de frappe*” (192). He also writes later, on the same page, of “Ottawa’s stance interpreted in French circles as being conditioned by its relations with the United States.” In line with the increasing number of Québécois contemplating secession, the

²⁴⁵ “Our collectivity has difficulties visualizing itself for the simple reason that it has difficulties in being, in having a real and personal countenance, its own autonomous face. We are not, and above all, we were not. Not yet, not really. However, patience, be strong! It is coming, it would seem.”

following year, 1968, René Lévesque founded the *Parti québécois*, a pro-separatist political party still strong to this day. Two years later, terrorism aligned with separatist yearnings and the Québécois witnessed the October Crisis, wherein the federal government of Trudeau passed the War Measures Act following the kidnapping of a British diplomat and the assassination of a Québec government minister by the FLQ. Consequently, civil rights were temporarily suspended and several people were arrested and arbitrarily detained.

Jasmin, born in 1930, experienced first-hand the transformational 1960s in Québec. He witnessed the societal permutations brought about by his people's desire for emancipation. In his 1988 journal *Pour tout vous dire*, Jasmin writes of the Quiet Revolution period, "Oui, mais c'était en 1960 et alors tout se mettait à bouger au Québec, c'était le début du grand ménage antipasséiste" (17).²⁴⁶ This period brought about major modifications to life in Québec, including the secularization of institutions. Marked both by the past influence of the Church and the era's new social situation, Québécois identity was also evolving in conjunction with the changing times.

²⁴⁶ "Yes, but it was 1960 and everything was starting to happen in Québec, it was the beginning of the great anti-backward-looking cleanup."

Charles Taylor, Stuart Hall, and Jasmin's Novels

Taylor's "Frameworks"

In his 1989 work *Sources of the Self*, in reference to the democratic tendencies of the modern Western world, Taylor affirms, "But everyone in our civilization feels the force of the appeal to accord people the freedom to develop in their own way" (12). The people of Québec were denied the freedom to manage their own society for many years. In this regard, Taylor writes of an internal force that compels individuals and groups to choose what they perceive as correct perspectives and attitudes towards life. Taylor often utilizes the term "framework," a term he admits is "vague" (*Sources* 17). However, he does go on to clarify the concept, stating:

What I have been calling a framework incorporates a crucial set of qualitative distinctions. To think, feel, judge within such a framework is to function with the sense that some action, or mode of life, or mode of feeling, is incomparably higher than the others which are more readily available to us. (19)

With the Quiet Revolution, the people, en masse, changed their society by breaking free from the ultra-religious and controlling existing culture in order to choose a secular way of life. In accord with Taylor's ideas, the people believed they were making the correct choice in rejecting the religious for the secular. They felt compelled to drastically change their social situation and their identity. In Jasmin's *Sainte-Adèle* (1974), when recalling his people's desire for a clear sense of collective self-perception during the Quiet Revolution, the narrator shares, "Alors, nous nous inquiétions, nous nous interroignons. Qui sommes-nous donc? Qui sommes-nous?" (63).²⁴⁷ Jasmin indirectly presents the Québécois as searching for a definitive sense of self after their rejection of religious domination through his recurring narrator in the selected novels.

²⁴⁷ "So, we were worried, we were questioning ourselves. Who are we then? Who are we?"

Taylor also writes of modern frameworks that incorporate “an affirmation of ordinary life,” referring to an emphasis on daily, worldly affairs as opposed to metaphysical concerns (*Sources* 23). In *Sources*, he makes a connection between this contemporary convention and Protestantism, stating that Reformation ideas “are the main source of the drive to this affirmation in modern times” (23). In contrast, religion was not allocated to only Sundays and Holy Days during the Great Darkness, but was also a part of daily life in the province. In his 1972 novel *La Petite Patrie*, the author writes of this era, “Toujours la prière. Elle est partout, la prière, cette ambiance, faites de la bonne volonté de Dieu ou de l’un des saints, règne partout” (52).²⁴⁸ In a chapter found within the 1994 text *Philosophy in an Age of Pluralism*, the philosopher Jean Bethke Elshtain concurs with Taylor’s take on Protestantism. She writes, “And, Taylor is quite right, Luther dignifies the everyday, the bodily, the homey varieties of mothers, fathers and children, of friends drinking beer and taking sup . . .” (74). This modern type of framework was part of the Quiet Revolution mentality, as the populace sought to be liberated from Church control in order to conduct their lives in an unrestrained manner. Elshtain also relates everyday life with the greater society, stating on the next page, “Luther had unleashed more than he knew, helping to set in motion a theory of self-sovereignty that mirrors the sovereignty of the State.” With the end of the Great Darkness era came the rejection of Catholicism and a greater appreciation of humankind and human endeavors, a situation not dissimilar to events that took place in sixteenth-century Europe.

Luther destabilized the Western world of his time. The Québécois, centuries later, also rebelled against Catholicism and effected great change in their particular region. Large scale societal upheavals such as these are what the cultural theorist Hall defines as “cultural

²⁴⁸ “Always prayer, it is everywhere, prayer, and this atmosphere, made of the good will of God or of one of the saints, reigns everywhere.”

transformations,” collective phenomena generally resembling Taylor’s frameworks (*Stuart Hall: Critical Dialogues* 143). When speaking of Rastafarians in Jamaica, Hall writes, “They remade themselves; they positioned themselves differently; they reconstructed themselves as blacks in the new world: they *became* what they are” (143). Hall’s discussion of the Rastafarians’ makeover brings to mind the collective change of status accomplished with the Quiet Revolution. Although the Rastafarians include religion in their collective identity and do not seek a secular culture, their quest for what they perceive as their true identity is comparable to that of the Québécois, a people who also drastically changed their self-perception and society.

The populace of Québec replaced the conventional conceptions of Duplessis-era morality with modern perspectives, and through the use of first-person narration depicting past problematic filial situations, Jasmin’s writings depict this era of social revolt in Québec. The narrator of *Sainte-Adèle* (1974), while reflecting on his personal revolt against Catholicism and his father’s devoutness and conservatism, echoes the changing sentiments of the Quiet Revolution period, “Mon père en sera bouleversé, choqué souvent devant l’énoncé impétueux de mes blasphèmes. Brisez les statues!” (100).²⁴⁹ This decisive period in the province’s history is tied to identity for both this novel’s narrator and the Québécois. In addition, the narrator’s consideration of his revolt from his father’s perspective reveals the extent of his father’s influence on his self-perception. With their eventual rejection of the Great Darkness era mentality in quest of a better future, identity changed course and underwent alterations for both the Québécois and *Sainte-Adèle*’s narrator. At the present time, identity for the Québécois includes an honest acknowledgement of their collective past. As Taylor states, “I can only know myself through the history of my maturations and regressions, over comings and defeats. My self-understanding necessarily has temporal depth and incorporates narrative” (*Sources* 50).

²⁴⁹ “My father will be devastated and shocked because of my impetuous blasphemies. Break the statues!”

The past and the Church's influence are part of Québécois identity, and Taylor, a citizen of Québec, is familiar with the province's history. Although he is a practicing Catholic, not all view Taylor as too religiously oriented to be objective in his writings. In a chapter found in *Philosophy in an Age of Pluralism*, Michael Morgan of Indiana University states, "Taylor is too historical, too hermeneutical and too liberal for conventional orthodoxies" (61). It is also important to note that although Québec's conservative pre-Quiet Revolution society was overturned in favor of secularism, religion and leftish philosophies are not necessarily mutually exclusive. Morgan submits, "The constraints that the liberal tradition places on moral reflection and deliberation need not be incompatible with a variety of religious traditions which are distinct and yet can accommodate its principles" (65-66). In this regard, Taylor writes in *A Secular Age* (2007) of the Church's transformation from a Middle Ages mentality to a modern day "Christian Democratic philosophy," wherein all are considered equal in the eyes of the Church (443).

History, however, shows that the Great Darkness era Church in Québec was oppressive and far from egalitarian, a fact especially evidenced in its treatment of women. Additionally, the populace had to contend not only with a domineering Church, but also with a subaltern status allotted to them by their neighboring English-speaking Protestants. This combination resulted in the people possessing a subordinate self-perception. The conservative pre-Quiet Revolution era, which included subjugation and mistreatment of the people, especially women, was a de facto unjust period. Eventually, as history shows, the Quiet Revolution resulted in a collective change of frameworks and identity. To be noted is that although the Quiet Revolution traded religion for secularity, the two are not always dissimilar. In the Introduction to *A Secular Age* (2007), Taylor states, "For one thing, the way I'm defining it, secularity is a condition in which our experience of and search for fullness occurs; and this is something we all share, believers and unbelievers

alike” (19). The collective change of frameworks that accompanied the Quiet Revolution, although mainly instituted by the young people of the era, was generally accepted by all, as the time was ripe for change in the province.

The people’s intent with the Quiet Revolution was to reform their society for the greater good. Religion was rejected, and a new order was in the making. The effects of the rapidly changing times on the people’s identity are seen in Jasmin’s work when the narrator of *Sainte-Adèle* (1974) speaks of the changing Québécois attitudes and self-perceptions during the 1960s. He recalls, “Nous étions intraitables, hautains. Un certain snobisme s’était emparé de nous tous. Tous les modèles se trouvaient en Europe, en France. Les Américains? Peuh! Une populace grossière, inculte!” (63).²⁵⁰ Despite the overthrow of the Church as an authority in the province, the Quiet Revolution did not include an overt rejection of God or a complete dismissal of religion. Along these lines, Hall speaks negatively of the complete dismissal of religion in the name of secularism. He states in a 2007 interview with Colin MacCabe:

All our notions of modernity and of progress are harnessed to secularization, the secular. I must say, I never quite liked secularization in that sense. I’ve always understood that religion came from very profound roots. I’m not religious myself, but I’m not a militant humanist, a militant atheist, but in terms of our intellectual work, we just didn’t give it a second thought. (38)

Given the stances of both Taylor and Hall viewing secularism and religion as capable of functioning in conjunction with each other, the change in Québécois identity that started in the 1960s is perhaps less extreme than might be imagined. Present day Québec incorporates elements of its religious past with its secular ideals, as demonstrated by the province’s desire to

²⁵⁰ “We were inflexible, haughty. A certain snobbism took hold of us all. All the models were to be found in Europe, in France. The Americans? No! They were an uncouth and uncultivated populace!”

show consideration towards others, especially immigrants, as well as with its universal health care and assistance programs for the poor and unemployed.

Like Taylor and Hall, Jasmin came to the realization that religion and secularism can have similar goals, and that one does not have to be vilified in order to favor the other. Jasmin's later years' more open-minded perspective is seen not only in the evolution of his recurring narrator's attitude towards his father figure in the selected novels, but also in his public statements. In his 2010 article "Toutes les soutanes dans le même sac?" ("All the Cassocks in the Same Bag?"), the author applauds the many Great Darkness era conscientious religious order teachers and references the Church's beneficial role in having provided equitable education for Québec's youth. He writes, "Ce 'tous les curés dans le même odieux sac' accable des gens âgés ayant consacré une vie en dévouement. Toute une existence à enseigner aux enfants du peuple Québécois [*sic*], sans aucune discrimination" (20).²⁵¹ With age, Jasmin's outlook is tempered with compassion and consideration towards those for whom he had less tolerance during his younger years.

Utilitarian Ideologues

Taylor sees the contesting of imposed moral viewpoints as normal. He states in *Sources*, "What is, of course, easily understandable as a human type is a person who has decided that he ought not to accept the traditional frameworks . . . the traditional definitions of virtue, piety, and the like" (31). Taylor refers to people of a contentious nature as "utilitarian ideologues" (31). He uses the term utilitarianism in its most common sense, which is choosing of the "right" action to take in any given instance based on expected outcomes and the best possible results (31). A

²⁵¹ "This 'all the priests in the same despicable sack' burdens some elderly people who consecrated and devoted their lives to others. They spent an entire existence teaching the children of the people of Québec without discrimination."

utilitarian ideologue's search for the greater good can include a desire on his or her part to possess a positive self-perception. In this regard, Taylor states that one's search for identity—in line with choosing the appropriate action to take in any given circumstance—includes an “orientation to the good” (*Sources* 33). Jasmin's young narrator of *Sainte-Adèle* and his comrades identify with the moral standards to which they adhere, standards that exist, however, in stark contrast to those of the Great Darkness era. In the fashion of a utilitarian ideologue, the protagonist of this novel speaks of what he and his young revolutionary friends desired, which was, in effect, a secular belief system: “Nous avons besoin d'absolu, d'une haute cause laïque pour laquelle nous nous dévouerions sans compter. Pour le salut des hommes! Pour le salut des âmes!” (100).²⁵² The narrator of *Sainte-Adèle* (1974) falls into the category of a utilitarian ideologue, as did, on a collective level, the population of Québec during the 1960s.

Hall addresses the issue of a people's collective renunciation of existing oppressive systems and ideologies. In a section dealing with Marxism, he writes that, at times, “new conceptions of the world arise, which move the masses of the people into historical action against the prevailing system” (*Stuart Hall: Critical Dialogues* 27). An historical action occurred when an expansion of consciousness compelled the people of Québec to reject a traditional religious society in hopes of a freer future, in the belief that it would result in positive changes for all. With this major societal change, a more modern sense of identity for the province's people developed.

In the 1960s, the people's identity was affected by a transformation of frameworks. The populace refused to allow a conservative and ultra-religious force to continue to dominate their lives; this rebellion was altruistic, as it was done to create a modern shared future and to view

²⁵² “We needed an absolute, a high, secular cause to which we would tirelessly devote ourselves for the salvation of man and for the salvation of souls!”

themselves in a better light. Hall characterizes collective identity as comprised of both past and future elements. He writes that cultural identity “is a matter of ‘becoming’ as well as ‘being’” (*Cultural Identity and Diaspora* 236). The Quiet Revolution was a beneficent collective action intent on rendering Québec a freer province and improving education and health care; the populace envisioned and sought after a better collective future. The selected novels, placed within the historical setting of mid-twentieth century Québec, illustrate the province’s progression towards a less oppressive state. In *Sainte-Adèle* (1974), when speaking of controversy surrounding Modern Art in the 1950s, the narrator recalls, “Plus tard, dans les années qui suivirent, il y eut des Salons du printemps contestés. Il y eut de la polémique. Des manifestations. Le Québec marchait vers sa révolution pacifique” (60).²⁵³

Although the narrator of *Sainte-Adèle* and the people of Québec could be regarded as utilitarian ideologues, there was not any strong desire for an exclusive adoption of a utilitarian philosophy in the province. Taylor, in *Sources*, brings a critical light to an adherence to utilitarian perspectives. He states that with utilitarianism, “A good, happiness, is recognized. But this is characterized by a polemic refusal of any qualitative discrimination” (78). In this sense, Taylor sees a tendency towards close-mindedness in adopting utilitarianism as a framework to the exclusion of all other options (*Sources* 78-79). The Quiet Revolution, however, was not one-sided or solely focused on a single perspective. Historian Leslie Tentler puts forth that with Québec’s changes of the 1960s, there was actually a mixture of both utilitarianism and individualism, writing of this specific combination of ideals, “In the Quiet Revolution Quebecers opened themselves to this complex set of values” (272).

²⁵³ “Later, in the years that followed, there were controversial spring art exhibits with polarized opinions, resulting in demonstrations. Québec was heading towards its peaceful revolution.”

Taylor also writes of contemporary Western societies' emphasis on individualism, individual worth, and self-fulfillment that almost necessarily relegates collective goals and values to a position of secondary importance. Additionally, Taylor questions overall relativist perspectives that often work in conjunction with an accent on egocentricity. He sees this mentality as leading to conditions that would leave little time or interest for common concerns. Taylor states in his 1991 work *The Ethics of Authenticity*, "In other words, the dark side of individualism is a centering on the self, which both flattens and narrows our lives, makes them poorer in meaning, and less concerned with others or society" (4). In his later 2007 work, *A Secular Age*, Taylor defines his use of the term "authenticity," stating, "Each of us has his/her own way of realizing our humanity, and it is important to find and live out one's own, as against surrendering to conformity with a model imposed on us from outside, by society, or the previous generation, or religious or political authority" (475). For Taylor, one's authenticity would take into account both private concerns and those of his or her larger society. Indirectly, Taylor implies that adopting a self-centered perspective or lifestyle would be reproachable (*Ethics* 15-16).

Taylor believes that ideally, one should be concerned with, and active within, one's society. He sees a complacent attitude as a hindrance to collective efforts to ameliorate a society in need of improvement. In the 1996 book *Genèse de la société québécoise*, Dumont concurs with Taylor, writing:

Ou bien l'individu se réfugie dans l'enclos de la vie privée et, croyant ainsi jouir de sa liberté, il abandonne aux pouvoirs anonymes le soin de déchiffrer l'histoire. Ou bien il décide de contribuer à l'édification d'une *référence* habitable autrement que dans les coutumes devenues insuffisantes. Alors, il devient le

citoyen d'un pays, le responsable d'une histoire, le participant à un imaginaire collectif. (352)²⁵⁴

Jasmin, through his writings, stays engaged in his society. He does not exhibit an apathetic or laissez-faire attitude towards others. The author displays a profound attachment to both his father and his people through his recurring narrator's memories of his relationship with his father that, over time, took on the quality of forbearance.

Taylor contrasts his concept of a moral ideal, which contains communitarian aspects, with the contemporary Western world's stress on individual achievement and self-satisfaction. He also discounts "ignoring whatever transcends itself" and "rejecting our past as irrelevant, or denying the demands of citizenship or the duties of solidarity" as misguided and egocentric (*Ethics* 22). Accordingly, the actions taken by the people of Québec during the time of the Quiet Revolution were the living out of an authentic choice—with a moral ideal—as the changes of the era and the quest for more individual rights and freedoms coincided with collective goals. The same could be said for the individual narrators in Jasmin's novels, who, through their reminiscences, remain both cognizant of and implicated in their greater community. Their tales of tempestuous relationships with their father figures over religion are not separate from their rapport with their society and are actually directly tied to it.

Taylor proposes that "the more self-centered and narcissistic modes of contemporary culture are manifestly inadequate" (*Ethics* 35). Concern for others and a spirit of egalitarianism were part of the general philosophy of the Quiet Revolution. Taylor states in the same work that "To shut out demands emanating beyond the self is precisely to suppress the conditions of

²⁵⁴ "Either the individual takes refuge in his/her enclosed private life and, believing thus to be enjoying liberty, abandons to anonymous powers the care of deciphering history, or, he/she decides to contribute to the edification of an acceptable *reference* other than that of customs that have become insufficient. Thus, he/she becomes the citizen of a country, the person in charge of a history, the participant in a collective imagination."

significance, and hence to court trivialization” (40). In this regard, Taylor stresses the importance of seeking to step outside of oneself in order to objectively and rationally determine proper perspectives and in so doing, to act in an appropriate and unselfish manner. The father-son conflict within Jasmin’s novels eventually lessens in amplitude; this is tied to the recurring narrator becoming more objective as well as more compassionate with time, which, however, did not diminish his concern for his fellow francophone members of the province. This change of attitude is seen in *Je vous dis merci*. In this 2001 novel, the author presents a belated regard for his father with his narrator’s self-reproaching, remorse-tinged recollection of the younger generation’s overall attitude towards their parents during the Quiet Revolution:

En ce temps-là, nous nous instruisions, nous en arrivions à ne plus avoir rien en commun avec nos propres parents. C’était un drôle de drame. Cruels, ingrats, nous tournions le dos à nos géniteurs, ces “ignorants.” C’est bientôt décidé: nous nous passerons d’eux, ces adultes incompetents. Jugement rapide, définitif et bête. (75)²⁵⁵

The author’s softening stance towards his father, as relayed over time through his recurring narrator, displays an unselfish choice. Jasmin’s thoughtfulness would correlate to his increasing consideration and overall growing appreciation for others. His changing perspectives also indirectly present his view of his people who put aside extreme Catholicism for the greater good, and whom he sees as similarly acknowledging their past while continuing to formulate a collective identity that includes concern and openness for newcomers to the province.

²⁵⁵ “During that time, we were instructing ourselves and we were ending up no longer having anything in common with our parents. It was an odd drama. Cruel, ingrates, we turned our backs on our progenitors, those ‘ignorant ones.’ It is quickly decided: we will do without them, those incompetent adults. It was a rapid, definitive, and foolish judgment.”

“Disembedding” Religion

In a scene recalling memories of family vacations spent at rented summer cottages during his teenage years, the narrator of *Pointe-Calumet* (1973) refers to his fellow Montreal vacationers as “la mafia inoffensive de Saint-Laurent” (55).²⁵⁶ He remembers that during this period of his life, he was happy and satisfied with his immediate community and his family—his father included. In *A Secular Age* (2007), Taylor claims that our first perception of self is as a member of society, and that identity is not a constant. A changing identity is the case with the narrator and his people, who both underwent a drastic transformation with the Quiet Revolution. Taylor puts forth, “Our essential identity was as fathers, sons, etc., and members of this tribe. Only later did we come to conceive ourselves as free individuals first” (157). The narrator of *Pointe-Calumet* (1973) recalls that as a child, he clearly identified with his father, family, and immediate society (tribe). He also recalls his adolescent years when his attitudes towards his father and religion changed. During the recollection of a moment at sixteen with his father, the narrator relates that after his uncle tells an off-color joke, “J’ai ri sans honte. Mon père m’a jeté un ‘dirty look’! Qu’est-ce qu’il imagine? Je n’ai plus dix ans!” (*Pointe-Calumet* 129).²⁵⁷ With this uncomfortable father-son moment, the narrator presents a point in his adolescence to which many people can relate—the early stages of rebellion against a parent.

In *Sainte-Adèle* (1974), the narrator leaves memories of his teenage years and summer vacations aside to recall his twenties, and provides some insight into his people’s docile acceptance of each other and their 1950s’ society. While speaking of the general unquestioning attitude of the era, he states, “À cet âge, on s’accepte tel que l’on se trouve” (89).²⁵⁸ Through

²⁵⁶ “The inoffensive mafia of Saint-Laurent.”

²⁵⁷ “I laughed without shame. My father gave me a ‘dirty look’! What does he think? I’m not ten years old anymore!”

²⁵⁸ “At that time, we accepted ourselves and each other as we were.”

daily adherence to Catholicism's many rules, regulations, and traditions, the people took an active part, in word and in action, in their domination by the Church. Their pre-Quiet Revolution era passive acceptance of the status-quo affected their self-perception. Hall speaks of how identities are connected to and reinforced by common discourse that bolsters a hegemonic power. He writes, "Precisely because identities are constructed within, not outside, discourse, we need to understand them as produced in specific historical and institutional sites within specific discursive formations and practices" (*Questions* 4). The people's submissive attitude—and discourse—would change, however, in the 1960s.

In *A Secular Age* (2007), Taylor uses the term "embedding" to describe how one's self-perception is tied to early indoctrination into a society. On the same page, he employs the term "disembedding" as the freeing of oneself from a society's religious hold. He further states that disembedding is a "revolution in our understanding of moral order" (157). Disembedding results in a liberation of sorts that includes a change in self-perception. These concepts are observable through the father-son religious disputes within the selected novels—disputes that correlate to the Québécois' rejection of Church rule and which indirectly aid the reader to better understand the unique Québécois experience.

Disembedding, however, is not necessarily a clear-cut phenomenon without complications, second thoughts, or regrets. The narrator of *La vie suspendue* (1994) states, concerning the province's collective rejection of religion during the Quiet Revolution, "Nous avons été trop cruels et sans bon sens au Québec dans les années 60. On a tout jeté par-dessus bord et nos parents se sont tus. Je suppose qu'ils ont eu confiance en nous, de là leurs bras baissés" (71).²⁵⁹ Although he recalls strong convictions that led him to an anti-religious stance,

²⁵⁹“We were too cruel and without common sense in Québec in the 60s. We threw everything overboard and our parents said nothing. I suppose they had confidence in us, for that reason they did not try to stop us.”

the narrator of this novel expresses some remorse and ambivalence related to his secular outlook. Along with indirectly reflecting the author's changing perspectives over time, the narrator's uncertainty underscores that disembedding from Catholicism can be, at the very least, problematic. Ironically, however, Christianity itself is associated with a disembedding from Judaism. Taylor refers to this in *A Secular Age*, writing, "If the Samaritan had followed the demands of sacred social boundaries, he would never have stopped to help the wounded Jew" (158). The narrator of this novel seeks to view himself as one who freely formulates his own opinions on religious, political, and ethical matters. Regardless, as shown in the preceding citation from *La vie suspendue*, at times he deliberates his rejection of Catholicism. Contemplation and introspection of this sort is testimony of the recurring narrator's maturation and increasing consideration and acknowledgement of his fathers' ways and beliefs.

Sainte-Adèle's narrator, in 1974, remembers that the tactics he employed to convince his father to objectively reconsider Catholicism caused discord in their relationship. Nonetheless, the narrator relates that he did not hesitate to regularly confront his father with secular and atheistic opinions that directly contradicted his father's beliefs. He remembers thinking, "Dieu va mourir, oui, même ici dans cet Himalaya du catholicisme" (101).²⁶⁰ The elderly narrator of *Papamadi* (2010) however, also recalls that despite his repeated verbal criticisms of his father over religion, he found his own secular views and defiance of religion perplexing; he shares his bewilderment at how he and his Quiet Revolution era friends were able to put aside, in a short period of time, "tant de bonnes leçons de pieux enseignements, d'exhortations sans cesse répétées" (114).²⁶¹ These phrases expose the older narrator's growing sentimentality concerning his past, of which religion and his father played major roles.

²⁶⁰ "God is going to die, yes, even here in this Himalaya of Catholicism."

²⁶¹ "So many good lessons of pious teachings and exhortations incessantly repeated."

The recurring narrator's strongly held secular beliefs that led to the verbal harassment of his father are linked to self-perception. Taylor states, "Our identities are formed in dialogue with others, in agreement or struggle with their recognition of us" (*Ethics* 45-46). The narrator remembers refuting his father for his religious beliefs and sees himself as free from external manipulation. However, the narrator may be in need of disembedding himself. Although with time he is more accepting of his father's perspectives, the narrator seemingly venerates his adopted secular beliefs, and these values are associated with his identity. Author and Presbyterian pastor Timothy Keller proposes in his 2008 book *The Reason for God: Belief in an Age of Skepticism*, "Our need for worth is so powerful that whatever we base our identity and value on, we essentially 'deify.' We will look to it with all the passion and intensity of worship and devotion, even if we think of ourselves as highly irreligious" (169). In a sense, Jasmin's characters replace one belief system and identity for another, rendering broad-ranged freethinking problematic. In their younger years, they are seen to apotheosize the secularism with which they strongly identify while at the same time denigrating their fathers' adherence to religion. Only with time is the recurring narrator able to allow his convictions room for consideration of his father's perspectives.

The people of Québec disembedded from religion with the Quiet Revolution, but only partially. Although the Church's authority was overthrown in the 1960s, religion's influence remained. Along these lines, Taylor states in *A Secular Age* (2007), "I cannot see the 'demand for religion' just disappearing like that" (435). In Québec, Catholicism still exists as part of its culture and traditions. Babies are often baptized, and, as mentioned earlier, expletives of religious origin, *sacres*, still remain part of the region's vernacular. Taylor, referring to an ironic phenomenon on the part of Quiet Revolution era Québécois who later became parents, writes,

“They had utterly ceased to practice themselves, but they were reluctant to abandon religious education in schools, lest their children lose their sense of values” (*A Secular Age* 598).

Regardless of the residual effects of Catholicism’s long reign in the province, the seriousness of disembedding for the people of Québec is illustrated in the wording of the recurring narrator’s reminiscences in *Sainte-Adèle*, “Nous avons osé cesser d’aller à l’église, nous avons même osé proclamer autour de nous un athéisme provocateur pour nos familles” (68).²⁶² The stance taken by the populace against the religious institution that dominated the region for many years is aptly described as daring.

In the selected novels, the recurring narrator’s father hold fast to his religious beliefs that seem to comfort him, despite his son’s haranguing. Although disembedding started early with the recurring narrator, it will definitely not occur with his father figure. The narrator of *Papamadi* (2010) recalls his early stages of disembedding. He shares that at age twelve, he had an aversion to his father’s many stories about the lives of the saints, “Je n’aimais pas trop cette naïveté” (60).²⁶³ The narrator’s standpoint concerning his father’s beliefs resembles the author Richard Dawkins’ skeptical viewpoint. Dawkins writes in his 2006 *The God Delusion*, “Religion’s power to console doesn’t make it true” (394). The father in *Papamadi*, however, is a product of his environment and is not willing to entertain ideas contrary to those of his religious upbringing.

Catholicism was part of the province’s culture for many years, and most people were consequently well indoctrinated into it. However, the Church was also an entity operating under English State control. In *Genèse de la société québécoise*, Fernand Dumont addresses both positive and negative aspects of the Church in Québécois society:

²⁶² “We had dared to stop going to church, we even dared to proclaim to those around us an atheism that provoked our families.”

²⁶³ “I did not like that gullibility too much.”

Pour sa part, l'Église a été une composante de cette société. Après la Conquête, elle a constitué le facteur principal de sa survie. Cependant, elle aussi a connu la domestication: en Nouvelle-France, l'État l'a mise très tôt sous sa coupe; après la Conquête, le pouvoir britannique l'a maintenue longtemps en servitude. (322-23)²⁶⁴

The English were the behind-the-scenes powers for many years in the region. Without going as far back as the 1763 conquest, Marcel Rioux mentions British control in the province in his 1974 work *Un peuple dans le siècle*. Rioux writes, referring to the 1841 *Acte d'Union*, "Le Québec était alors devenu une colonie du Canada qui, lui-même, était une colonie britannique" (205-06).²⁶⁵ Although the Quiet Revolution resulted in a break and a disembedding from Church dominion, the province remained, and still remains, tied to English power.

Jasmin's novels represent how Québécois identity is related to both English and Church domination. The people's self-perception drastically changed during the era of the Quiet Revolution, and this transformation is still in progress in the twenty-first century. It is important to note that Québec's relationship to the rest of Canada could change in the future as secession is still a valid option for the people, even if it is unlikely to happen in the near future. In post-Quiet Revolution Québec, nationhood, identity, and the influence of religion are still current issues and will be discussed in greater detail in the following chapter.

²⁶⁴ "For its part, the Church was an element of this society. After the Conquest, it constituted the principal factor of its survival. However, it also knew domestication. In New France, the State put it very early under its control; after the Conquest, British powers kept it in servitude for a long time."

²⁶⁵ "Québec at that point then became a colony of Canada that, itself, was a British colony."

CHAPTER 5

THE POST-QUIET REVOLUTION

IDENTIFICATION, SPIRITUAL BONDING, AND LIBERATING INDIVIDUATION

One result of the Church's hegemonic power in pre-Quiet Revolution Québec was that Catholicism reigned over the province's culture for many years. However, the Church could not have dominated Québec's society without the consent of the people. In Jasmin's novels of this study, the recurring narrator often describe Great Darkness-era Catholics as submissive and complicit in their subjugation. The narrator's anger towards this passive acceptance of Church domination is, however, often directed at his father figure in what could be considered a Freudian-esque fashion. The narrator of *La vie suspendue* (1994), for example, openly expresses his discontent in this regard when referring to his father and his generation as "Vous tous les peureux" (62-63).²⁶⁶

Passive acceptance of a ruling power's authority facilitates its dominance, thus, its manipulation generally lasts only until it is no longer tolerated by a group or a society. This was the case during the Quiet Revolution with the people's rejection of the Church's rule in Québec, an event that drastically altered the province's culture. This chapter applies various psychoanalytic approaches to analyze the evolution of the recurring narrator's perception of his father figure and his people, while bearing in mind the societal changes of the Quiet Revolution.

²⁶⁶ "All you fearful ones."

The novels addressed in this chapter are *La Petite Patrie* (1972), *Sainte-Adèle-la-vaisselle* (1974), *La vie suspendue* (1994), and *Enfant de Villeray* (2000).

Psychoanalytic Approaches to Jasmin's Novels

La Petite Patrie (1972)

Religion and the Father Figure

The francophone population of Québec was greatly outnumbered by neighboring English-speaking Protestant territories during the Great Darkness, and this facilitated the Church's high level of control over the people, given that the Church was the unofficial defender of the French language in the region. The Church also enjoyed the active support of the province's prime minister during Maurice Duplessis' time in power. In *La Petite Patrie* (1972), Jasmin's recurring narrator often recalls the strong influence that religion had on daily life, such as when he states "La religion, ainsi, se faisait bien identifier à toute cette éducation du temps où la moindre liberté de mouvement semblait anarchie et totale décadence" (28).²⁶⁷ This novel revives Québec's ultra-religious past, with which the author was intimately familiar, by including references to the religious environment of the pre-1960s. In this book, the narrator declares, "Nous étions élevés comme dans le temps des 'villes fermées et emmurées' du Moyen Âge" (33).²⁶⁸

During the Great Darkness, most of the province accepted the status-quo. The narrator of *La Petite Patrie* explains, "Comme nos parents en silence, sans jamais nous poser de questions sur la discrimination sociale qui en découlait, nous admirions la richesse de l'Église, le 'triomphalisme' du catholicisme de l'époque" (54).²⁶⁹ References to the pre-Quiet Revolution culture, saturated with religion, are threaded throughout the novels of my study. The narrator of *La Petite Patrie* recalls that as a child, he accepted Catholicism as a part of life and found it not

²⁶⁷ "Religion, thus, really identified itself with all the teachings of the time, where the slightest freedom of movement seemed anarchy and total decadence."

²⁶⁸ "We were raised as if in the times of the 'closed and walled cities' of the Middle Ages."

²⁶⁹ "As our parents did, we quietly admired the richness of the Church, the 'triumphalism' of the Catholicism of the period, without ever questioning the social discrimination that accompanied it."

altogether unpleasant. While reminiscing about his days as an altar boy, he reveals how “Il se dégageait parfois, de ces prières psalmodies, un je-ne-sais-quoi qui nous plaisait, qui m’envoûtait même, certains dimanches” (54).²⁷⁰ As a young child, he accepts both his father and Catholicism.

In Western society during the mid-twentieth century, a father’s role—in keeping with Christian traditions—entailed being the family provider and chief authority figure, while children were expected to show deference to their parents. Filial respect and obedience were the norm, and within a Catholic family, a religious requirement. Paternal rule of a family was seen as a father’s right and obligation. Along with his authority, a father was expected to pass on a sense of conformity to his daughters and sons. At times, a father also sternly disciplined his children if they exhibited any disrespect or non-conformity. The narrator’s father in *La Petite Patrie*, however, never dispenses harsh discipline.

The recurring narrator recalls that during his early childhood, he revered his mild-natured father, even at times regarding him omniscient. In *La Petite Patrie* (1972), the narrator remembers his curiosity concerning a neighbor with Down syndrome and how he declared, “Je vais en parler à papa, il sait tout” (93).²⁷¹ During his early childhood, the narrator respected his father as an authority figure; this is reflected in a scene wherein the narrator, as a child, accepts without protest a scolding from his father. The reprimand occurs because the narrator’s parents did not know where he was one evening. The narrator recounts that while staying out later than normal, playing with his friends in forbidden areas, he and his companions inadvertently found themselves in the vicinity of a man fleeing from the police after a botched bank robbery. After the police sirens ceased and the commotion in the neighborhood died down, the narrator safely returned home, where his father confronted him. “Il me regarde comme il faut et il dit: ‘Écoute

²⁷⁰ “There emerged sometimes, from those psalmodic prayers, a certain something that pleased us, that enchanted us even, certain Sundays.”

²⁷¹ “I’m going to talk about it with my Papa, he knows everything.”

donc toé, où est-ce que t'étais, tu sais que ta mère crie après toé depuis une heure, le sais-tu?' Je serre sa main" (*La Petite Patrie* 98).²⁷²

In this scene, the narrator uses present-tense narration to recount the way his father asserted authority, which the narrator viewed as acceptable and normal. In reliving the experience, the narrator recollects his father's impending reprimand and how his father's gaze seemed "appropriate." The narrative suggests that the admonishment from the father may have, in fact, come at the mother's urging. However, the adult narrator of the novel recalls appreciating such a "fatherly" action, which resulted in the narrator showing affection by squeezing his father's hand.

The narrator's memories of his admiration for his father, as mentioned, coexist with a youthful fondness for Catholicism. The narrator also acknowledges later, again with present-tense narration, that he was, in fact, enthralled the religion of his idolized father. While speaking of his experiences as an altar boy, the narrator explains, "Tout ce faste aux accents mélancoliques me fascine" (*La Petite Patrie* 104).²⁷³ Part of the narrator's youthful identity included strict religious indoctrination, which was part of Québec's culture at the time. Eventually, his reassessment of religion and the rejection of his father strongly impacted his identity, as will be explained.

The narrator of *La Petite Patrie* (1972) explains that during his childhood he loved his father and regarded him as a God-like figure. His sentiments began to change, however, with the onset of adolescence. In *La vie suspendue*, an older narrator recalls his disappointment and discontent with his father, "Moi, j'avais un papa-Saint-François. C'était intolérable" (63).²⁷⁴ The

²⁷² "He looks at me in the appropriate manner and says, 'Listen, you, where have you been? Do you know that your mother has been yelling for you for an hour? Do you realize that?' I squeeze his hand."

²⁷³ "All this pomp with a melancholic accent fascinates me."

²⁷⁴ "Me, I had a Papa-Saint-Francis. It was intolerable."

narrator of *La vie suspendue* remembers viewing his father as an embarrassment because his neighborhood friends' fathers seemed more masculine. "Les autres avaient un père normal, un Tarzan, un Superman, 'plus fort que la police'" (*La vie suspendue* 63).²⁷⁵ The narrator of *La vie suspendue*, by eventually rejecting his father, symbolically killed him.

This figurative patricide, in line with Freudian theories concerning the primordial father, allowed ambivalence related to remorse to belatedly present itself. The recurring narrator, who in his youth once rejected his father, in maturity, now defends him, as shown with the present-tense recollection, "Mon père est un rêveur et il en a le droit" (129).²⁷⁶ In *Civilization and Its Discontents*, Freud addresses paternal ambivalence, writing that with the killing of the (primordial) father:

His sons hated him but loved him too. After their hatred had been satisfied by their act of aggression, their love came to the fore in their remorse for the deed. It set up the super-ego by identification with the father; it gave that agency the father's power, as though as a punishment. (79)

The recurring narrator's super-ego, over time, is affected by the rejection of his father figure. Guilt causes the narrator to both regard himself in an unfavorable light and, through identification, to start seeing things from his father's perspective. The elderly narrator of *Papamadi* (2010) experiences bewilderment and confusion at his past determination to reject and torment his father. The narrator wonders, while reenacting the past through present-tense narration, what motivated him to continually argue with his father: "Qu'est-ce qui me pousse?" (128).²⁷⁷

²⁷⁵ "The others had a normal father, a Tarzan, a Superman, 'stronger than the police'."

²⁷⁶ "My father is a dreamer and he has a right to be that way."

²⁷⁷ "What is pushing me?"

The recurring narrator's image of his father goes through three transitions. First, the narrator of *La Petite Patrie* (1972) recalls that as a young child, he loves and idolizes his father. Then, during adolescence, as recounted in *La vie suspendue* (1994), love and admiration turn into rejection. Finally, because of remorse, the previous two states mix and a father image, through identification, plays a part in the resulting troubled super-ego. In this last stage, the rejected father indirectly influences the narrator's "higher self," and affects the latter's self-perception as well. As an adult, the recurring narrator sometimes shows symptoms of being influenced by his father's attitudes, now active in his super-egos. In *La vie suspendue* (1994), the narrator discloses, concerning his rejection of his father and religion, "Soudainement, mon cœur se serre. Étau stupide. Sentiment d'avoir renié trop vite ses valeurs, sa religion, ses croyances" (71).²⁷⁸ The extent to which his father influences the narrator's super-ego during his later years would be impossible to measure. In any case, the appearance of present-tense narration, as in the above citation, exposes the author's inability to surrender the turbulent years with his father to an unalterable past status.

The recurring narrator's final stage that includes ambivalence parallels the situation of the Québécois in recent times. As Gérard Bouchard and Alain Roy state in their co-authored 2007 book *La culture québécoise est-elle en crise?*, "Il y a un vide identitaire qui reste à combler, le Québec a de la difficulté à se définir" (66).²⁷⁹ As the narrator accepted his father during the Great Darkness, so the majority of the province acknowledged and respected the Church, an institution that played a role in the people's self-perception as "French-Canadian Catholics." Then, as with the narrator's revolt against his father figure, the collective rejection of the Church abruptly ended its authority in the region.

²⁷⁸ "Suddenly, my heart constricts. I have the feeling of having rejected his morals, his religion, and his beliefs too quickly."

²⁷⁹ "There is an identity void that needs to be filled; Québec has a difficult time defining itself."

The Quiet Revolution brought an end to the Great Darkness and the Church's paternalistic dominion over the Québécois, and the symbolic authoritative father was dispatched. Bouchard and Roy continue exploring the topic of an identity void related to the overthrowing of the Church's power during the Quiet Revolution, "La Revolution tranquille a opéré une rupture trop brutale en détruisant tout un héritage sans vraiment le remplacer" (67).²⁸⁰ Considering their history and relationship with the Church, the Québécois also passed through the first two stages of acceptance and rejection. Then, in a manner similar to Jasmin's recurring narrator, the people moved on to the third and present stage of an uncertain but still evolving collective identity. Like Jasmin's narrator, the Québécois do not deal superficially with their past.

In his 1973 review of *La Petite Patrie* (1972), Laurent Laplante acknowledges Jasmin's contribution to collective memory and identity. Laplante writes of Jasmin's novel:

Jasmin, qui a vécu un Montréal précis, francophone . . . nous réconcilie d'un peu plus près avec ce que nous sommes. Qu'un écrivain parle ainsi avec finesse et humour de trottoirs parcourus et de ruelles patrouillées, tout cela rend un quartier ou un peuple fier de ses racines et fort de ses souvenirs. (19)²⁸¹

La Petite Patrie serves as a reference source for the Québécois, in as much as a people's self-perception includes an honest acknowledgement of their past. Québec's religious past is a component of contemporary Québécois identity, and although the Church's dominion ended with the Quiet Revolution, its influence continued. In *La culture québécoise est-elle en crise?*, Gérard Bouchard states, "Il semble bien aussi qu'on ait décrété trop vite la fin ou même la

²⁸⁰ "The Quiet Revolution executed a too brutal break by completely destroying a heritage without really replacing it with anything."

²⁸¹ "Jasmin, who lived in a specific French-speaking area of Montreal . . . reconciles us a little more with who we are. That a writer would speak thusly, with finesse and humor of sidewalks travelled and alleyways patrolled, all that renders a neighborhood as well as a people proud of their roots and strong in their memories."

marginalisation de la religion” (124).²⁸² The province’s religious past remains part of its collective consciousness and, according to Bouchard, its weight is still felt in the twenty-first century. He continues on the same page, “Toute une veine d’études empiriques soutient maintenant que, par des voies différentes, la religion a conservé une forte empreinte.”²⁸³ The Church’s past strong influence is part of the province’s history and as such, continues to be an element of Québécois distinctiveness.

Sainte-Adèle-la-vaisselle (1974)

The Search for Uniqueness

Sainte-Adèle-la-vaisselle’s narrator recalls a period when he lived a bohemian lifestyle while working as a restaurant dishwasher in the town of Sainte-Adèle during the 1950s. He took this job in exchange for free lodging in a neighboring loft that he turned into a personal art studio. While living and working in Sainte-Adèle, he at times missed getting together and conversing with his friends in Montreal. The conversations he appreciated the most revolved around well-known secular French minds of the era. The narrator speaks of enjoying “les écouter discourir sans fin sur les mérites respectifs de Camus, Malraux et Sartre” (14).²⁸⁴ During the Great Darkness in Québec, an interest in the post-war ideas of certain European intellectuals was tantamount to contemplation of anti-Church positions (Sartre was on the Church’s *Index*). The narrator recollects that as a young man with a taste for European secular writings, he was unhappy with the status-quo in Québec.

The narrator recalls his twenties, a time in his life when he was growing intellectually. In a free-spirited way, he was maturing and evolving as a person. Although a part of his personal

²⁸² “It very well also seems that we have too quickly decreed the end or even the marginalization of religion.”

²⁸³ “Several empirical studies now support that, in various ways, religion has maintained a strong control.”

²⁸⁴ “Listening to them discuss without end the respective merits of Camus, Malraux and Sartre.”

development involved his rejection of religion, his father was content with remaining a practicing Catholic. As religion can help believers make sense of daily chaos and cope with life's difficulties, the father, no doubt, found solace in his faith. In a 1993 article that appeared in *La Philosophie de la religion à la fin du XXe siècle*, Robert Lamar and William Sweet propose, “La religion constitue, en effet, une manière de vivre et de répondre au monde. En ce sens, elle n’est certainement pas seulement une théorie et une pratique fondée sur des observations et des enquêtes impartiales” (53).²⁸⁵ For the Great Darkness era population of Québec, most of whom cultivated the land, Catholic teachings perhaps made earthly existence a little less burdensome. Although the narrator of *Sainte-Adèle* (1974) recalls his disquietude in perceiving his father as being fooled and manipulated, religion and religious stories consoled the latter. The narrator grew and developed in a rebellious manner, unlike his father, who perhaps was not afforded the occasion to do the same, having lived with more difficult conditions in an earlier and harsher period.

Nevertheless, the recurring narrator of the selected novels is seen to progressively soften his stance towards his father. Absorbed by memories of his turbulent years, the narrator does not suddenly change his attitude towards his father; the passing of time is necessary for acrimony to be replaced by understanding. In 1974, the narrator of *Sainte-Adèle* is seen to vacillate between understanding and condescension; he does not always take his father’s austere past into consideration. A slight degree of insensitivity is apparent when the narrator describes his progenitor as generally uninformed and credulous, “naïf” (naïve) (46). As they grow out of childhood, Jasmin’s characters express their individuality and reject their parents and their culture’s religion—actions that prove to have profound and long-lasting effects.

²⁸⁵ “Religion constitutes, in effect, a way of living and of responding to the world. In this sense, it is certainly more than just a theory and practice founded upon observations and impartial studies.”

In his work *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, published posthumously in 1962, Jung speaks of individuation.²⁸⁶ He states, “I use the term ‘individuation’ to denote the process by which a person becomes a psychological ‘in-dividual,’ that is, a separate, indivisible unity or ‘whole’” (383). In general, individuation describes a person who is conscious of his or her place in society and who does not react to life’s circumstances without first assessing situations. An “individualized” person is not subject to pre-programmed reactions, stimuli and impulses, but rather is free to act independently. Jung writes that individuation is often “a lifelong process” (384). Consequently, states of individuation would vary from person to person depending on variables such as life circumstances and personality. Jasmin’s novels of this study were written over a long period of time, and as individuation is not measurable by any psychoanalytic standards, judging the recurring narrator’s levels of individuation throughout the stages of his life with a high degree of accuracy would not be possible. Additionally, the unconscious can play unpredictable roles and thus complicates a discussion of individuation.

Psychoanalysts refer to the unconscious in various ways. In *Beyond the Chains of Illusion*, published in 1962, the philosopher and psychoanalyst Eric Fromm states, “The term ‘the unconscious’ is actually a mystification. There is no such thing as *the* unconscious; there are only experiences of which we are aware, and others of which we are not aware, that is, *of which we are unconscious*” (98). The narrator’s father in *Saint-Adèle* (1974) has not progressed and entered into the individuation process as has his son, which is demonstrated through narration that presents the latter’s maturing intellect—he eventually views his society from an ostensibly rational perspective. In this novel, the narrator recalls playing the role of unofficial spokesman for like-minded youth of the 1950s when he declares, concerning Prime Minister Duplessis, “Il mourra sans nous, le détestable despote conservateur à la religiosité parade. Maintenant, déjà,

²⁸⁶ Titled in the original German: *Erinnerungen Träume Gedanken*.

nous avons commencé, chacun pour soi, à mesurer lentement les dures contraintes des réalités” (54).²⁸⁷ The narrator’s advancement into individuation was not an isolated phenomenon for the era, as Jasmin’s novels show the prevalence of rebellious attitudes and perspectives. The narrator’s father shows that adherence to Catholicism is a seemingly conscious decision. However, the unconscious may also play a role in the father’s religious resolve, as will be explained.

In *A General Introduction to Psychoanalysis*, published in 1917, Freud speaks of the “ambiguity of the word ‘unconscious’” (377).²⁸⁸ In the selected novels, the recurring narrator at times mentions Freud and Jung, although the psychoanalytic references within the texts are (appropriately) limited to Freud and the Oedipal Complex notions. In *Sainte-Adèle* (1974), after seeing that he has hurt his father with his diatribe against religion, the narrator states, “Je le tue. Oui . . . il faut tuer son père. Je le tue! Orphelin tout à fait!” (100).²⁸⁹ The narrator is aware of his symbolic killing of his father, although as mentioned elsewhere in my study, his filial rebellion also results in ambivalence and remorse. The father, however, could be seen as living with illusions—illusions linked to his unconscious. The narrator of *Sainte-Adèle* believes this to be the case with both his father and the Québécois of the Great Darkness era. In a scene wherein he calls for the end of a medieval mentality in proclaiming the merits of secular ideas, the narrator states, “Finis les vieux mythes québécois et romains. Nous déambulons maintenant dans un vaste cimetière. Place à la science. Relisons Freud! Tout s’explique” (*Sainte-Adèle* 101).²⁹⁰ The narrator does not specify which books of Freud to read, as he is speaking generally at this point.

²⁸⁷ “He will die without us, the detestable conservative despot of flaunting religiosity. Now, already, we have begun, every man for himself, to slowly calculate the hard restrictions of reality.”

²⁸⁸ Titled in the original German: *Vorlesungen zur Einführung in die Psychoanalyse*.

²⁸⁹ “I’m killing him. Yes . . . one must kill his father. I’m killing him! I’m an orphan!”

²⁹⁰ “The old Québécois and Roman myths are finished. We are meandering now in a vast cemetery. Let’s make room for science and reread Freud! Everything is explained.”

Freud's former student, Jung, would undoubtedly also perceive the narrator's father as one accepting to live out a partially illusory existence. In the 1961 work *Freud and Psychoanalysis*, Jung relates a lack of maturity to unspecified maladjusted adults, writing, "Even very intelligent patients are incapable of seeing that from the very beginning they owe the complications of their lives as well as their neurosis to dragging their infantile emotional attitude along with them" (137).²⁹¹ Jung speaks of individuals who hold on to childhood "fantasies" and "illusions" and suggests that a patient in this category might, nonetheless, "believe himself perfectly adapted" (138). Besides relating his experiences as a young man in the town of Sainte-Adèle, the book's narrator shares the memories of his attitudes towards religion, the Duplessis era, and his father. In an imagined conversation with his father, the 44-year-old narrator, without the acrimony or cynicism of his younger years, describes his progenitor as well-intentioned, referring to him simply as his "pauvre papa l'illusionné" (125).²⁹²

Once again, Jung would agree with the narrator's assessment. Jung addresses the issue of an adult who has the perception of being well-adapted while still living with childhood illusions. He writes, "It never crosses his mind that he still carries with him, in the background, expectations and illusions of which he has never made himself conscious" (*Freud and Psychoanalysis* 138). *Sainte-Adèle's* narrator, influenced by post-war European ideas, experienced ambivalence and guilt for having detached himself from his youthful acceptance of a father who refused to abandon long-held beliefs. Ultimately, the filial revolt related to religion that triggered domestic discord was in vain, as the narrator was unable to broaden his father's perspectives. The narrator of *Sainte-Adèle* (1974) apparently desired to help his father free himself from childhood indoctrination. However, the narrator could also have had self-serving

²⁹¹ *Freud and Psychoanalysis* was published in English.

²⁹² "Poor Papa, the deluded one."

reasons for discussing religion with his father. In trying to persuade his father to accept a secular perspective, the narrator could have been seeking validation of his anticlericalism, through argumentation, at the expense of a readily available and non-threatening person holding opposing views. Regardless of the motivating factors behind the narrator's compulsion to beleaguer his father, it is clear that individuation was at least a partial impetus.

The narrator of *Sainte-Adèle* (1974), in retrospect, understands at least one component of the revolt of his youth: his coming of age. He asks the reader, "Il faut tout jeter par terre à dix-huit ans, n'est-ce pas?" (100).²⁹³ The Québécois experienced a collective sort of individuation and coming of age. The throwing off of Church rule demonstrated a shared maturity and development. In the 1960s, the people made a conscious choice to break with the past in which unquestioning obedience to religious rule was expected of all. The people's attitude and newly found identity during the era of the Quiet Revolution resounds in the narrator's words, "Considère-moi plus comme ton enfant, ton petit garçon, je suis devenu un homme, je n'ai plus besoin de toi!" (*Sainte-Adèle* 100).²⁹⁴ During the 1960s, the narrator and his society were on the same wavelength; both wished to evolve and partake in the revolutionary spirit of the era. With the Quiet Revolution, the narrator and other young members of his society were, as the narrator of *Sainte-Adèle* states, "la première génération depuis longtemps, à oser nier la valeur de l'héritage catholique" (100).²⁹⁵

The narrator's progression into individuation in *Sainte-Adèle* (1974) is comparable to the province's break with the Church. The maturing of the recurring narrator parallels that of the people of Québec. The narrator alludes to the fact that the people of the province, in breaking with the Church, wished to emulate the secular society of France, which escaped from the power

²⁹³ "At the age of eighteen, one must throw everything out the window, right?"

²⁹⁴ "Do not consider me any longer as your child, your little boy. I've become a man! I no longer need you!"

²⁹⁵ "The first generation in a long time to dare deny the value of the Catholic heritage."

of Catholicism long ago. This would suggest a collective yearning to be perceived by others, as well as themselves, as an advanced and progressive North-American francophone people free from Church rule. In *Sainte-Adèle*, the narrator declares, “Nous étions fiers d’être d’origine française, mais honteux d’être Québécois. Paris, notre ‘mecque’ enviable, notre unique idéal” (63).²⁹⁶ The narrator of this novel describes a Great Darkness era Québec preparing to transition from where they were to where they wanted to be.

Steps towards a secular society, similar to that of France, were rapidly instituted in Québec as a result of the people’s shared advancement during the Quiet Revolution. The history and memory of the Church’s dominion in the province nonetheless remain a part of Québécois identity. As Bouchard and Roy state concerning the present state of the Québécois, “Les Québécois restent coincés ‘entre deux imaginaires collectifs’: d’un côté, celui de la Grande Noirceur . . . de l’autre, celui d’une société postmoderne qui se veut parmi les plus avancées” (67).²⁹⁷ At present in Québec, those who hold on to the past are among the minority. The majority of the province’s people seem to have collectively “individuated,” and seek to continue progressing in the spirit of the Quiet Revolution.

Although the narrator of *Sainte-Adèle* (1974) fits into the category of an “individuated” person, this is not the case for the character of his father. This dichotomy is evidenced in the father’s resolve to adhere to Catholicism. While *Sainte-Adèle* is centered principally on the narrator’s memories of forging a new life in his twenties, the father-son conflict over religion is integral. The narrator steps outside of preconceived religious and societal boundaries while the father remains tied to strict religious beliefs and traditions. Jasmin’s growing empathy for his

²⁹⁶ “We were proud to be of French origin, but ashamed to be Québécois. Paris was our enviable ‘Mecca,’ our exceptional ideal.”

²⁹⁷ “The Québécois remain trapped ‘between two collective imaginations’: on one hand, that of the Great Darkness . . . on the other hand, that of a postmodern society that would like to think of itself as among the most advanced.”

own father is observable in his narrator's words. The narrator states, in a moment of understanding concerning his father, "Il avait besoin de ses convictions et je m'en forgeais de nouvelles de mon bord" (*Sainte-Adèle* 68).²⁹⁸ Written in the decade after the Quiet Revolution, the tone and narration of *Sainte-Adèle* (1974) at times reflects the author's growing acknowledgement of those older adults such as his father. Perhaps because of subjugation on several fronts due to their language and culture, these people had little choice but to comply with and endorse the Great Darkness mentality. After the death of his father in 1987, the author's understanding and compassion towards his father and his people increase observably, as seen in his novels.

***La vie suspendue* (1994)**

Identification: A Hindrance to Progress?

In *La vie suspendue*, the narrator demonstrates Freud's Oedipal concepts when he remembers thinking at his father's death bed, "Meurs maintenant papa. Ne traîne pas" (55).²⁹⁹ The narrator does not provide explanation for having wanted his father to die, leaving the subject open to conjecture. Perhaps the narrator recalls retaining contempt from his adolescent days towards his father at the time the latter was gravely ill. Regardless of his motivation, the narrator expresses shock at the recollection that he found it would be convenient for his father to pass quickly. He states with present-tense phrasing, "Je me secoue. J'ai honte de mon détachement" (55-56).³⁰⁰

In this 1994 work, Jasmin's narrator experiences guilt but also acknowledges positive associations concerning his father, "Cet homme m'a enseigné les lettres et les chiffres avant que

²⁹⁸ "He had need of his convictions and, for my part, I was forging new ones myself."

²⁹⁹ "Die now, Papa. Don't drag it out."

³⁰⁰ "I pull myself together. I'm ashamed of my detachment."

j'entre à l'école" (56).³⁰¹ A few lines later, thoughtfulness and understanding manifest when the narrator reveals, "Papa ne savait pas du tout comment être papa. Son père meurt d'une péritonite quand lui n'a pas cinq ans. Il n'a pas vu ça, un vrai père" (56).³⁰² During a traumatic time for the family, when the father's demise was imminent, the narrator experienced thoughts of an Oedipal nature. However, when culpability and compassion surface, the narrator comes to realize that the difficult circumstances his father endured undoubtedly contributed to a lack of paternal skills.

The narrator has a sympathetic understanding of his father when the latter was on the verge of death in a hospital bed. This compassion comes partially as a result of the narrator's recognition of his father as a product of the province's strongly influential culture. Additionally, the narrator correlates his father's formal Great Darkness era attitude with that of all of his generation. "Quoi, tous, nous avons eu un père froid, en ce pays froid" (71).³⁰³ With these words, the narrator, at 64 years of age, is shown to take into consideration the harsh realities of his father's past, as well as human limitations. He exhibits an understanding for both his father and other members of his society who lived through the ultra-religious Great Darkness era.

In *La vie suspendue* (1994), besides speaking of his relationship with his father, the narrator relates memories of a time in the late 1980s when he was confronted by his own progeny. In this text, after his daughter, Viviane, calls to inform him that she wishes to meet and to discuss something, the narrator concludes, in a completely Freudian sense, "Ce sera la mise à mort de papa" (79).³⁰⁴ He guesses correctly because at issue is Viviane's perception of how he conducted himself as a father during her childhood. While on the way to meet his daughter, the narrator considers the manner in which he fulfilled his role as a father. He expresses his thoughts

³⁰¹ "This man taught me letters and numbers before I entered school."

³⁰² "Papa did not at all know how to be a Papa. When he was only five years old, his father dies of peritonitis. He didn't see that, a real father."

³⁰³ "Hey, all of us, we all had a cold father in this cold country."

³⁰⁴ "It will be the execution of Papa."

utilizing what could be viewed in Freudian terms, “N’étais-je pas un père qui avait su se sacrifier?” (79).³⁰⁵ After meeting with his daughter, the narrator also recalls that although well-intentioned, he may have made some errors throughout the years, but only out of love for his children. Similarly, this “best of intentions” parenting style was also the motivation for the narrator’s father who always held his son’s best interests in mind.

The narrator entertains the possibility that he may have subjugated and manipulated his children. He finally concedes, “J’avais été un père masqué, dominateur, doux et rusé à la fois. Une image fausse . . . un papa symbolique. J’avais été un acteur” (*La vie suspendue* 81).³⁰⁶ The man who rejected his father now, years later, must face confrontation and rebuke by at least one of his offspring. As the self-questioning advances, the narrator uses phrases that suggest a parallel between him and Duplessis. The narrator states, while contemplating his past attitude towards his children, states, “Avais-je été ce monstre, gentil en apparence? Ce bon despote égocentrique dont les enfants ne sont que des parures amusantes, des objets facilement manipulables?” (*La vie suspendue* 81).³⁰⁷ The narrator, who in the past admonished his father for being manipulated by the Duplessis regime and a Church-controlled society, many years later realizes that he, too, acted in an authoritarian manner towards his own children. This realization leads the narrator to a better understanding of his father. The similarities between the narrator’s authoritarian nature as a father, and the Duplessis-era theocratic control of the people brings to mind the psychoanalytic theory of identification, which will be explored below.

In *Psychological Types*, published in 1921, Jung describes identification as “an estrangement of the subject from himself in favor of an object in which the subject is, to a certain

³⁰⁵ “Wasn’t I a father who chose to sacrifice himself?”

³⁰⁶ “I was a disguised, dominating father, gentle and cunning at the same time. I was a false image . . . a symbolic Papa, an actor.”

³⁰⁷ “Had I been this monster, gentle in appearance? This good and egocentric despot for whom children are only some amusing trimmings, objects manipulated easily?”

extent, disguised” (551). With identification, one internalizes and imitates authority, acting in ways similar to conceptions of how one’s own authority figures would react in any given situation. The narrator of *La vie suspendue* (1994) recalls being a controlling father. He carries the memories of emulating the domineering ways that he, as well as the populace, rejected with the Quiet Revolution. His adult self-perception and persona as a father figure were influenced by the first-hand cultural experiences of Church domination that he witnessed while growing up in the Great Darkness era. Ultimately, the recognition of the internalization of his father’s generation’s way of parenting leads the narrator to formulate a more compassionate attitude towards both his father and others of the Great Darkness generation.

Passages within *La vie suspendue* (1994) present the narrator’s state of identification with his father. In one scene, the narrator remembers experiencing a sudden, drastic change of perspective at the time of his father’s impending demise. He recalls suddenly being in accord with the more conservative mindset of his father’s generation. He relates:

J’avais l’impression d’avoir été abusé, manipulé par des gauchistes détraqués, des intellectuels désincarnés, des penseurs désaxés. J’allais faire enrager mes anciens camarades de la gau-gauche. Socialistes échevelés pour épater, progressistes creux et tant d’autres meneurs que j’avais suivis candidement. (62)³⁰⁸

Wording such as *abusé* (deceived) and *manipulé* (manipulated) in the citation, along with mocking his Socialist friends, suggests that beyond simply understanding his father’s perspectives and values with the passing of time, the narrator, at least temporarily, seriously considers them as valid. Identification with his father is brought on, at least in part, through guilt and remorse. “Papa avait eu tant de peine à me voir suivre tous ces leaders à la mode dans les

³⁰⁸ “I had the impression of having been deceived, manipulated by deranged leftists, disincarnate intellectuals, and eccentric thinkers. I was going to enrage my old lefty-left comrades, those wild-haired-to-dazzle hollow Socialists and so many other leaders whom I naively followed.”

années 50 et 60” (*La vie suspendue* 62).³⁰⁹ Shortly thereafter, the narrator continues relating his regret that is overtly manifesting itself many years after his father’s passing, “Trop tard pour l’aimer? Mon pauvre vieux héros honni s’en va. Il a été aussi ma victime. Cruauté si bête” (*La vie suspendue* 63).³¹⁰ Compunction such as this towards a father led the narrator to identify with his conservative, devoutly Catholic father.

Psychoanalysis can perhaps help Catholics resolve problems related to a father figure and religion. In this regard, Kristeva writes in *Au commencement était l’amour: psychanalyse et foi*, of her Catholic patients, “Le père tout puissant? Ils en manquent, ils en veulent, ou ils en souffrent” (55).³¹¹ The narrator of *La vie suspendue*, as an adult and a father himself, identifies with the values of his father. Additionally, the narrator shows signs of missing both his progenitor and his Catholic associations. In 1994, an aging narrator laments, “Nous n’irons plus ensemble à l’Oratoire Saint-Joseph” (59).³¹² This would appear incongruous for one who rejected Catholicism and ardently tried during his younger years to convince his father to do the same. The recurring narrator in the selected novels, as an adult, develops a better understanding of his father over time; this is facilitated in large part by identification, in line with the Freudian notions pertaining to a son’s guilt and remorse.

In a manner not dissimilar to the narrator of in *La vie suspendue* (1994) when wishing for his father’s quick passing, the Québécois were anxious to be free of the Church’s control. However, the Church’s influence at the present time, although much diminished, has not completely vanished from the people’s collective mentality. The people’s retention of their society’s past resembles *La vie suspendue*’s narrator whose adult psyche is influenced by

³⁰⁹ “Papa was so upset to see me follow all those leaders who were in fashion in the 50s and 60s.”

³¹⁰ “Is it too late to love him? My poor old denounced hero is leaving. He was also my victim. Such stupid cruelty.”

³¹¹ “The almighty father? They [patients] miss it, want it or suffer from it.”

³¹² “We will no longer visit together the Saint Joseph Oratory.”

memories of his father. As the memory of his father remains and affects the narrator deeply, the Québécois also have internal struggles related to their past. In *Histoire du Québec contemporain: le Québec depuis 1930*, published in 1999, the authors, Paul-André Linteau, René Durocher and Jean-Claude Robert, speak of a modern-day Québécois “absence d’unanimité” and of “facteurs de divisions,” related to internal provincial strife and authoritarian attitudes on the part of some Québécois groups. A desire to control others, in present-day Québec, is reminiscent of the Church’s former dominating ways that led to the Quiet Revolution (810).³¹³ The authors put forth:

On relève en particulier une perception plus aiguë des différences et des oppositions de classe, de régions, de sexes, de secteurs d’activité ou même de générations, avec tout ce que cela signifie des relations de domination et de dépendance, de tentatives d’affranchissement et de quête d’autonomie. (810)³¹⁴

This provincial lack of harmony is a result of parts of the collective whole competing with each other for power. Moreover, echoing the past and exceeding simple competition, the dominant-dependant relationships existing within Québécois society result in, as the citation presents, a situation from which the subjugated groups seek liberation.

In Jasmin’s novels, a lack of provincial unity and internal strife are not addressed per se, but it can be inferred that the author likely believes that solidarity among the Québécois would be necessary for secession. In Jasmin’s 2008 book *Des branches de Jasmin: l’art d’être un grand-père délinquant*, his narrator expresses his disillusionment with the results of the 1995 referendum concerning separation, “En Irlande la catholique, c’est, enfin, la légalisation du divorce. Et puis, voici le deuxième referendum pour un Québec souverain? Perdu de justesse. Ma

³¹³ “Absence of unanimity”; “factors of division.”

³¹⁴ “One notices in particular a more acute perception of the differences and oppositions of class, regions, gender, lines of business or even generations, with all that it signifies in terms of dominant and dependant relations, of attempts for liberation and for a search of autonomy.”

déception, ma tristesse. Première nation au monde qui se dit ‘non’ à elle-même, ‘non’ à sa liberté!” (23).³¹⁵ The lack of unity among the populace in post-Quiet Revolution Québec, which includes relationships involving control and subjugation, recalls the rapport between the Church and the people during the Great Darkness era. During the pre-Quiet Revolution period, the people of Québec were not strongly united, and, consequently, easily dominated.

Although one of the changes of the Quiet Revolution era included a quest for nationhood, Québec, at the time of this writing, remains a province of Canada. This is due, in large part, to a lack of unity on the issue of separation, as reflected in the referendum results of 1980 and 1995. The narrator of *La vie suspendue* (1994) retrospectively laments the unsure post-Quiet Revolution status of Québec with words that, in line with his evolving perspective towards his father, would more than likely reflect the latter’s attitude on the subject, “Nous n’avons pas su construire un pays, une société nouvelle. Notre grand ménage de butors nous a tous conduits . . . à quoi donc? À une sorte de désastre?” (71).³¹⁶ Neither the narrator’s nor the Québécois’ present situation could be considered serene and stable, and both are still strongly influenced by the past. The Church, as a religious institution, still exists in Québec, albeit transformed into more of a dispenser of spiritual services than an authoritative power as was the case before the 1960s. Nonetheless, the Church persists in the collective memory and culture of the Québécois, not unlike the recollection and influence of a deceased father in a rebellious son’s adult identity.

³¹⁵ “In Catholic Ireland, finally, it’s the legalization of divorce. Then, [we hold] the second referendum for a sovereign Québec? It was just barely lost, to my great disappointment and sadness. We’re the first nation in the world who says ‘no’ to itself, ‘no’ to its liberty!”

³¹⁶ “We didn’t know how to construct a country, a new society. Our big group of oafs, we led everyone . . . to what, really, to a sort of disaster?”

Enfant de Villeray (2000)

The Feminine Soul-Image

In Jasmin's novels, the recurring narrator's rejection of his father and his culture's religion produces uneasy domestic situations. Various levels of anger during familial disputes are described in the selected novels. On occasion, the narrator recollects simply having made a few irreverent remarks to his father, with no apparent response or subsequent dispute, such as, "Je lui avais dit en ricanant: 'Juste en 1848, l'eau bénite vendue à La Salette rapportera plus de 10 000 francs-or!'" (*Papamadi* 52).³¹⁷ The narrator also recalls occasionally ceasing his persecutions. During a father-son argument described in *Papamadi* (2010), the narrator relates wishing to bring about an end to the hurt inflicted upon his father by verbal conflict. The narrator recalls ending a verbal joust with his father, stating, "Je l'ai coupé raid, j'ai lancé d'un ton hargneux, 'Bon, ça suffit là, c'est assez, je rentre, moi'" (46).³¹⁸ Periods of calm between father and son resulted in animosity being temporarily replaced by civility. The narrator of *Sainte-Adèle* (1974) describes one of these relatively tranquil times: "La paix était revenue. Drôle de paix. Mon père restait soucieux, je le sentais bien" (68).³¹⁹ The narrator of *Enfant* (2000), however, remembers broaching certain subjects that increased the intensity of quarrels. While speaking of tormenting his father and the latter's disconcertion, the narrator declares, "Ou pire, quand je remettais en cause les enseignements de sa sainte mère, son Église à lui!" (376).³²⁰

Although referring to the Church in the feminine is not unusual, the narrator, with the above statement, sarcastically equates the powerful Church of the Great Darkness era to a feminine mother-figure. In the selected novels, the recurring narrator rejects an important

³¹⁷ "I said to him, snickering: 'In 1848 alone, holy water at La Salette brought in more than 10,000 francs!'"

³¹⁸ "I interrupted him cold, and stated in a bitter tone of voice, 'Alright, that's it, that's enough now, me, I'm going home now!'"

³¹⁹ "Peace returned, but a funny kind of peace. My father remained worried, upset, I could sense it."

³²⁰ "Or worse, when I would call into question the teachings of his holy mother, his Church!"

element of his culture and identity that both of his parents hold dear: their religion. It is important to note that while both of the narrator's parents are connected to Catholicism, the narrator only confronts his father on this highly divisive issue. The narrator does not seem to find his mother's religious devotion a serious concern. The narrator's affection and respect for his mother may in part preclude any argumentation or confrontation. However, from a Freudian perspective, a son's rejection of his father would be caused by a yearning for his mother's attention.

The narrator of *La vie suspendue* (1994) does not hide his partiality for his mother, and an Oedipal suggestion can be found in the narrator's words, "J'ai aimé ma mère bien davantage que mon père" (102).³²¹ His lack of conflict with his mother over religion can be better understood with the help of psychoanalytic theories concerning the development of one's personality. Guy Corneau writes in his 1989 book *Père manquant fils manqué*, "Freud affirme que la sexualité au sens large, l'Éros, est la force qui nous relie au monde, qui nous oblige à sortir de nous-mêmes" (104).³²² Jasmin's extroverted narrator faces the world and those in it without hesitation, in part compelled by Eros and an affinity for the feminine side of life.

In *Enfant* (2000), it is clear that the narrator's mother plays a critical role in her children's conventional Catholic upbringing, consistent with the traditional manner of Great Darkness mothers. In a scene from the 1930s, the family is together on the balcony when the mother declares, "Bon dodo, tout le monde! Demain, dimanche, la messe pour les filles" (67).³²³ After the children are in the bedroom, the mother enters, "Maman vient vérifier si on a fait notre prière du soir. On avait oublié. Tout le monde à genoux autour du lit!" (67).³²⁴ In *Enfant* (2000),

³²¹ "I loved my mother much more than my father."

³²² "Freud affirms that sexuality, in a broad sense, Eros, is the force that links us to the world. It compels us to come out of ourselves."

³²³ "OK, to bed everybody! Tomorrow is Sunday, Mass for the girls."

³²⁴ "Mama comes to verify that we said our evening prayers. We had forgotten—Everyone on their knees around the bed!"

Catholic traditions of Québec are intertwined in the daily activities of the narrator's family, as is the case with the majority of the province during the Great Darkness. Within the novel, the mother's encouragement and enforcement of the religious elements of Québécois culture are amply presented. The narrator describes a typical dinner scene: "Je me suis mis à table. Maman nous a encore forcés à réciter le bénédicité" (*Enfant* 215).³²⁵ Within the selected novels, the mothers' religious promptings and reminders are accepted as a way of life, while the narrative negatively presents the fathers' devoutness.

In *Enfant* (2000), the narrator's apparent fondness for his mother and tolerance for her religious ways have Freudian Oedipal implications. His mother was his first encounter with the feminine, and although his inclination towards the opposite sex includes her, it can be seen to mainly extend beyond her. In this novel, the narrator recalls that at age eight, he had a "béguin précoce pour Micheline Carrière" (309).³²⁶ Then, at age nine, he was captivated by another young girl, Jacqueline Fortin, of whom he states, "Comme je la trouvais de mon goût!" (309).³²⁷ He then shares that when eventually spurned by Jacqueline, he focused his attentions on an even earlier acquaintance, a girl with whom, "à quatre ou cinq ans, on avait partagé un bon copinage" (309).³²⁸ This time, he is speaking of "la jolie Ginette Matte" (309).³²⁹ The narrator makes it clear that at an early age, he was overwhelmingly allured by the neighborhood girls, those from whom the other boys insisted on keeping at a distance. He recollects, "Les filles m'attiraient. Irrésistiblement! Je voyais Ginette avec d'autres yeux" (310).³³⁰

³²⁵ "I sat down at the table. Mama forced us again to recite the [before meal] blessing."

³²⁶ "Precocious crush on Micheline Carrière."

³²⁷ "How I found her to my tastes!"

³²⁸ "At four or five years of age, we had shared a good friendship."

³²⁹ "The pretty Ginette Matte."

³³⁰ "Girls attracted me. Irresistibly! I was seeing Ginette in a different way."

The narrator's fascination with femininity can be understood with psychological concepts related to personality. Jung, in *Psychological Types*, speaks of a "soul-image," which he describes as "a definite image" projected onto another (596). Jung advances:

For a man, a woman is best fitted to be the bearer of his soul-image, by virtue of the womanly quality of his soul; similarly, a man, in the case of a woman. Wherever an unconditional, or almost magical, relation exists between the sexes, it is always a question of projection of the soul-image. (597)

As a child, the narrator of *Enfant* (2000) witnesses his father regularly being on the losing side of conjugal disputes. Seemingly without much effort, the narrator's mother habitually bests his father during verbal altercations. The narrator renders a description of his parents' marital strife and discord, "Mon père en restait muet un long moment et disparaissait, humilié chaque fois. Je trouvais ma mère cruelle. Mon père me faisait pitié" (*Enfant* 199).³³¹ As a young adult, unconsciously emulating his mother, the narrator treats his father in a comparable fashion because of differing religious points of view.

The similarities between the narrator's and his mother's character traits can be explained through Jung's ideas related to a soul-image. In *Psychological Types*, Jung explains his conception of the difference between "psyche" and "soul." He puts forth, "By the *psyche* I understand the totality of all the psychic processes, both conscious as well as unconscious; whereas by *soul*, I understand a definitely demarcated function-process that is best characterized as a 'personality'" (588). In the narrator's case, it would appear that, in Jungian terms, he has "projected" his soul-image onto his mother and in so doing, his personality emulates her behavior. As Jung states, "Whenever a soul-image is projected, a conditional affective tie to the object appears" (598). The narrator of *Enfant* (2000), through the recounting of his childhood

³³¹ "My father would stay quiet for a long moment and then disappear, humiliated each time. I found my mother cruel. My father inspired pity in me."

memories, reveals an early “projection” onto his mother. His words reveal the close attention he paid to her, especially when she scolded his father. The narrator recalls his shock at his mother’s reaction when, at age eleven, he imitated her harsh demeanor and tried to join her in reprimanding his father. He relates:

Encouragé par les critiques acerbes de ma mère, je tentais parfois de me joindre à son chœur de jérémiades. Alors, aussitôt, volte-face de maman! Je ne comprenais plus. . . . J’ai fini par admettre cet étrange principe: maman avait, elle, le droit de l’abimer d’injures, mais nous, les enfants, non. (226)³³²

The feminine element of the narrator’s personality carries over to the manner in which, during his rebellious years, he treats his father. As a young adult, the narrator of *Enfant* finally had the freedom to take on elements of his mother’s personality without restriction, something he refused to deny himself when confronting his father about Catholicism.

Jung proceeds to contend that a soul-image is “never exactly like the object, but at most only similar” (*Psychological Types* 599). The recurring narrator’s personality merely resembles and imitates his mother, especially during religious arguments with his father. During the narrator’s youth, the disputes between his mother and father are not related to religion, as Catholicism was accepted as part of daily life by both parents. Later, religion is the focus of conflict between the narrator and the father, but the two would most probably have quarreled over another subject if this had not been such a contentious issue between them. Regardless, because of his soul-image projection, part of the narrator’s personality remains associated with his mother throughout his adulthood.

³³² “Encouraged by my mother’s bitter criticisms, I would sometimes try to join in with her jeremiad. However, just as quickly, Mama does a change of face! I no longer understood. . . . I finally came to realize a strange conclusion: Mama, she had the right to hurt him with insults, but we, the children, did not.”

The spiritual connection between the narrator of *Enfant* (2000) and his mother is presented in a scene recounting the narrator at twenty years of age making a conscious break with her (and his family) by moving to Sainte-Adèle. The departure scene with his reluctant mother shows that the narrator is parting only in the physical sense. The narrator recalls this moment with present-tense narration, betraying through verb tense choice his ever-enduring connection with his life's main female figure. He states, "Elle plie mon pyjama, renifle fort. Ses mains tremblent un peu et je n'aime pas ça du tout. Je veux m'en aller librement, sans aucun sentiment d'abandon. Elle me complique les choses" (418).³³³ At this point, while leaving home for the first time, the narrator remembers not wishing to openly confront his affection for his mother, nor accept detachment from the origin of his long-held soul-image, a crucial part of his personality.

The Church, too, has feminine aspects. This is mostly observable with Catholic devotion to the Virgin Mary, considered in Catholicism as the "co-redemptrix" of humankind. Theoretically speaking, the Church could be considered a soul-image for the people of the province. During the Great Darkness years, this collective Church-related, soul-image "personality" strongly affected the populace. Identifying with the Church's teachings that encourage passive compliance with ruling powers would, in part, explain the submissive acceptance of a subaltern status by the francophone Catholics when confronted by the economically stronger, non-Catholic anglophones of the region. This, in concert with the religion's emphasis on humility and the spiritual over the temporal world, lends itself to a generally submissive nature.

³³³ "She folds my pajamas, sniffs hard. Her hands tremble a little, and I don't like that at all. I want to go freely, without any sentiment of abandoning her. She's making things hard for me."

In a manner similar to that of *Enfant*'s narrator, whose older adult personality is still affected by his mother, the Church remains an element of the people's essential nature, despite the break that occurred with the Quiet Revolution. The Church, as the people's hypothetical soul-image, still indirectly influences the Québécois. The people's collective personality incorporates basic elements of the Church in present day post-Quiet Revolution Québec. Concern and respect for others, especially the poor, are examples of attributes of Québécois culture and identity comparable with the Church's teachings. These attributes were valued, even after Catholicism itself, with its many rules and regulations, was openly rebuked. This people-religion connection resembles the narrator's continued affection for his mother after the rejection of his father.

In line with a personality influenced by religion, the recurring narrator recalls towards the beginning of *Enfant* (2000) that as a young child, he effectively deified his father: "Papa, lui, était tout-puissant" (58).³³⁴ This perspective eventually changed when as a young man, the narrator, corresponding with his rejection of religion, viewed his father with disdain. With time and maturation, however, and reflecting the author's attitudes, the older narrator comes to view his father without harshness or hardness of heart. The narrator of *Enfant* recalls that his abandonment of both father and religion put him in an uncomfortable frame of mind. In retrospect, he declares, "Je quittais Dieu le père, je quittais le père dieu. Le mien. Au fond des deux choses, la même peine, un détachement, un arrachement plutôt, qui me faisait mal. J'étais si peu sûr de moi encore" (391).³³⁵

In the above citation, the narrator's pain and insecurity associated with his relationship with his father are presented in a past tense. However, through his recurring narrator, the author may have been projecting his feeling at the time of writing—a slight literary dissimulation of

³³⁴ "Papa, he was all-powerful."

³³⁵ "I was leaving God the father; I was leaving the father-god, my father. Deep down, the same grief, a detachment, or rather a tearing apart was hurting me. I had so little self-assurance."

sorts, for reasons perhaps known only to Jasmin. Although the author liberally speaks of his emotions related to his father in the selected works, *when* he wishes for them to appear to occur is under his complete control through verb tense usage. As a man in his golden years, Jasmin may at times choose to disguise his feminine soul-image's strong and growing influence by relegating its effects to the past.

Contemporary Québécois society reflects complexities analogous to those of *Enfant's* narrator who, despite his rebellion and the subsequent domestic discord, remains influenced by a parental figure. Similarly, although the Québécois rejected the Great Darkness era austerity and paternalistic aspects of their culture, they adhered to soul-image elements of their collective personality adapted to a secular society. The narrator of *Enfant* (2000), through his recollections of domestic situations, indirectly uncovers parallels between his personality and that of the Québécois. Both have complicated elements of their identity that remain in flux and with which they must continually negotiate.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

VESTIGES OF RELIGION'S INFLUENCE IN AN EVER-EVOLVING QUÉBEC

Before the changes of the Quiet Revolution period, religion played a major role in the formulation of the people's identity, as the Church's influence was felt throughout Québec's society. The authors of *Histoire du Québec contemporain de la confédération à la crise 1867-1929* state, "L'Église catholique, avec son armée de prêtres, de sœurs et de frères, conserve la main haute sur l'éducation, la santé et les services sociaux" (208).³³⁶ Concerning identity for the average French-speaking member of the province, the historian Lucia Ferretti advances in a recent electronic mail communication, "Avant 1960, vous pourriez dire que nous étions un peuple à l'identité nationale bien découpée: peuple catholique et français . . . une société dominée économiquement par les élites économiques canadiennes-anglaises."³³⁷ Generally speaking, and as Ferretti implies, identity for the rural and poorer francophone members of Québec's society during the Duplessis era included a subaltern status on more than one level.

Identity for pre-Quiet Revolution "French-Canadians" was combined with a second-class citizen status in the eyes of the surrounding English-speaking Canadians. The narrator of Jasmin's 1992 autofictional work *Comme un fou* recalls his fear and hesitancy, at the age of 25 during the Great Darkness, to leave his steady job as a set designer at Radio-Canada for a more

³³⁶ "The Catholic Church, with its army of priests, sisters, and brothers, held the high hand over education, health and social services."

³³⁷ "Before 1960, you could have said that we were a people of a clear-cut national identity: A French-Canadian people . . . a society dominated economically by the Canadian-English economic elite."

prestigious job offer. He describes himself as one among the many francophone members of the province who held tightly to a secure job during the Great Darkness. He states, “C’était la mode . . . de Canadien-français heureux d’être porteur d’eau, né pour un petit pain, content de son sort” (75).³³⁸ The novel’s narrator also expresses his contempt for those of the era, such as his father, who were complicit in their own suppression. His father’s passive and devout ways caused the indignant narrator much anguish, which led to domestic disputes. He expresses his uneasiness and distress concerning his past rapport with his father when he states, “Je le détestais vraiment . . . J’en avais mal. On a mal à haïr et haïr son père rend vraiment malade” (23).³³⁹ The narrator’s verb tense switching from past to present indicates that his anguish, although superficially presented as being experienced in the past, most likely also occurred when recalling his hatred for his father; this resentment was supplanted with fondness over time. Similarly, as has been discussed, Jasmin’s increasing affection for his father is evident with present-tense narration used under the guise of describing the past in phrases found within the selected texts.

In the novels of this study, the recurring narrator and his father have a problematic relationship and agree on little. However, the narrator’s recollections of disputes with his father show that rather than being solely personal attacks, they were highly animated discussions centered on the subject of the Church’s provincial dominance, with which the father figure unquestioningly complied. The father’s religious attitudes were conducive to a tense familial atmosphere in the presence of his revolutionary-minded son. Not to be ignored is that the father’s devout and passive nature made him an easy and safe target for his son. However, with time and retrospection, the aging author’s ongoing change of heart towards his father is observable through his recurring narrator’s recollections. Jasmin’s narrator, who becomes a father himself,

³³⁸ “It was the way . . . of a French-Canadian happy to be a water-carrier, born into poverty, content with his fate.”

³³⁹ “I truly hated him . . . It hurt me though. Hating hurts the one who hates and hating one’s father renders one truly sick.”

discovers that the paternal experience can be difficult. He eventually acknowledges that in trying times, the correct choice of action is not always clear. When reflecting on his own perceived failures as a father, the narrator of *La vie suspendue* (1994) declares, “Qui peut éviter certains blâmes quand il regarde en arrière? C’était l’amour paternel déployé totalement” (89).³⁴⁰ Acknowledging his own difficulties and deficiencies as a father himself leads the narrator to reconsider his past filial impiety. A mature Jasmin employs his recurring narrator to express belated appreciation for the father figure of his life. The author’s interpretations and comments on the past, transmitted through his recurring narrator, are imbued with affection and understanding concerning his father. Although apparently sincere, they were also likely cathartic and guilt-appeasing for Jasmin. Though still a proponent of a secular society, Jasmin has abandoned a complete rejection of his father’s perspectives. Age would seem to have endowed the author with the capacity to adopt a more compassionate outlook.

Through his recurring narrator, the author’s reconsideration of his past lack of compassion towards his father appears and reappears, especially in his most recent novels. Jasmin’s more lenient attitude in his senior years reflects his conception of his people who, at the present time, embrace a tolerant and inclusive Québec. The narrator of *Papamadi* (2010) questions his impulses to torment his father over religion. He shares, “D’où me vient ce besoin de l’ébranler? Vengeance pour mon enfance remplie de religiosité? Si je le laissais tranquille dans sa foi de charbonnier?” (87-88).³⁴¹ With the Quiet Revolution, the Québécois effectively stated to the repressive Church that a new social order would soon be instituted. Contemporary Québec appears to be progressing without close-minded attitudes towards newcomers to the province.

³⁴⁰ “Who can avoid certain blames when he looks back? It was paternal love, totally deployed.”

³⁴¹ “Where does this need to shake him up come from, vengeance for my childhood full of religiosity? Should I maybe leave him in peace with his blind faith?”

In 2007, the Québec government formed the Bouchard-Taylor Commission on Reasonable Accommodations of Minorities.³⁴² As the title of the commission suggests, the issue was how far Québec should go to accommodate minorities religiously and culturally. The 2011 book *Communication internationale et communication interculturelle*, the authors address some of the major societal questions behind the study, “Qui sommes nous? Sommes-nous racistes? Quelle part de la religion dans nos vies? Quel est le rapport qui nous lie aux autres?” (215).³⁴³ As the above citation shows, this commission was created, in part, because of issues concerning uncertainties related to both religion and Québécois identity. In a 2012 email correspondence, professor and researcher Annick Germain of INRS-UCS in Montreal was asked her opinion of the commission’s report.³⁴⁴ She responded:

Les conclusions n’ont pas plu à tout le monde, mais, en gros, elles semblent avoir calmé la situation pour le moment, surtout à cause du diagnostic plus ou moins optimiste “Il n’y a pas de crise”. Bouchard et Taylor ont recommandé des arrangements entre citoyens plutôt que des actes politiques ou législatifs, l’institutionnalisation du modèle interculturel qui est déjà en place au Québec, et quelques autres mesures qui ne paraissent pas onéreuses.³⁴⁵

Although there is some debate over this commission’s benefits, the fact that it was undertaken by the government shows that maintaining an inclusive society is taken seriously in Québec.

Québec is a nation that has not yet become a state. This situation is similar to other societies in search of their political sovereignty such as the Catalonians, the Basques, the

³⁴² Gérard Bouchard and Charles Taylor.

³⁴³ “Who are we? Are we racist? What role does religion play in our lives? What is our relationship to others?”

³⁴⁴ Institut national de la recherche scientifique-Urbanisation Culture Société.

³⁴⁵ “The conclusions have not pleased everyone, but they seem, generally speaking, to have calmed things down for the moment, especially because of the more or less optimistic diagnosis ‘There is no crisis.’ Bouchard and Taylor recommend arrangements between citizens rather than political or legislative acts, the institutionalization of the intercultural model that is already in place in Quebec, and some other measures, none of which seem onerous.”

Walloons, and the Flemish. Insight into present-day Québécois identity is achieved through an understanding of Québec's past, brought about, in part, through Jasmin's novels. Jasmin helps keep alive the memory of a period wherein not only religion, but language and physical territory, played major roles that to this day strongly affect Québécois identity. Jasmin's personal perspectives are also gleaned through the prism of his recurring narrator's recollections of domestic situations during the province's transformational periods. The history and struggles of the author's people are basic elements of Québécois self-perception and are brought to the forefront through his work.

The Demise of Catholicism in the Province

The Church, as the predominant authority in Québec for many years, was a major part of the province's culture and had a lasting influence on the people. Besides writing of religion in his native Québec, in *A Secular Age* (2007), Taylor references Europe, its religious wars and World War II. Additionally, he underlines the impact that traditional religions have upon societies, explaining, "We have just to think of, for instance, Germany and France, where new 'cults' deeply disturb people. Even French atheists are a trifle horrified when religion doesn't take the standard Catholic form that they love to hate" (529). This was not a problem in pre-Quiet Revolution Québec, where it was a matter of the omnipresent authority of the Catholic Church. With the collective desire to be free of the restrictions of Catholicism that was manifested in the Quiet Revolution, the religious institution took a severe blow in North America.

Taking into consideration the Church's years of domination, author Pierre Côté presents his perspectives on the state of Catholicism in contemporary Québec in his 2012 book *Québécois 101*. He writes, "Cette emprise d'antan se retourne aujourd'hui contre l'Église catholique. La scission, profonde, rend le retour du balancier improbable, voire même impossible" (123).³⁴⁶ Although the Church no longer rules over the province, remnants of religious principles nonetheless remain, as Christian ethics often play a role in Western secular societies such as modern Québec. In line with his softened position towards his father, Jasmin acknowledges religion's usefulness in his 2003 journal *Écrivain chassant aussi le bébé écureuil*. He writes, "Je ne suis plus pratiquant si je ne suis pas athée, mais je sais que la religion n'est pas venue par un tour de sorcier, ni d'une baguette de magicien. Il y a un besoin, une nécessité" (51-52).³⁴⁷

³⁴⁶ "This stronghold of the past comes back today against the Catholic Church. The profound split renders improbable, perhaps even impossible, the return of the swing of the pendulum."

³⁴⁷ "I am no longer a practicing Catholic, if not an atheist, but I know that religion did not come about from a sorcerer's trick or from a magician's magic wand. There is a need of it, a necessity."

Acknowledgement of religion's influence on secular cultures can come from unexpected quarters. In an essay included in the 2010 work *Varieties of Secularism in a Secular Age*, Wendy Brown of the University of California at Berkeley writes that Marx saw a connection between religious principles and capitalist, secular societies, putting forth, "[That is], the bourgeois state's representation of liberty, equality, and fraternity represents an ideal as opposed to actual human experience in capitalist society, just as we are all equals in the eyes of God though unequal on earth" (97). Worldly existence can at times be seen to reference an idealized metaphysical state, especially in cultures that set idyllic standards and ethical guidelines. In this regard, Brown clarifies her statements on Marx's perspective:

In a liberal constitutional state conjoined with a capitalist economy, subjects' relationship to the state is Christian insofar as their freedom, equality, and unity is understood to be conferred by the state and is also unreal in relationship to actual life, life in civil society. (97)

Québec did not adopt an atheistic platform or change its economic system with the Quiet Revolution; therefore, Brown's interpretation of Marx's ideas is applicable. The Church's influence, although much diminished as compared to days past, remains in the background as part of Québec's society and Québécois identity.

In Jasmin's more recent works, in conjunction with his attitude towards his father gradually becoming more understanding and compassionate, the recurring narrator is seen to, perhaps inadvertently, retain Catholic sensibilities. Jasmin's elderly narrator at times seemingly regrets the province's drastic renunciation of Catholicism. The narrator of Jasmin's 2008 *Des branches de Jasmin: l'art d'être un grand-père délinquant* relates his shock at the events of a certain day. The narrator recalls that while walking down a Montreal street in 1997, he encountered a boy who was repeatedly hitting a girl. He stated to the youngster: "Mon p'tit

bonhomme, tu continues de la battre et, sois prévenu, tu finiras en enfer” (116).³⁴⁸ The boy responds, “Hein? C’est quoi ça, l’enfer?” (116).³⁴⁹ The narrator then shares, “Dieu, l’enfer! Je mesure le monde qui a changé” (116).³⁵⁰ In retrospect, the narrator realizes that the extreme, polarized perspectives and the drastic social changes of the Quiet Revolution may have had some unforeseen and surprising consequences, such as the layperson’s total ignorance of basic religious concepts.

The narrator also relates on the same page that, while accompanying his grandson on a walk in the city one day, he was complimented by another young boy on his good physical shape (116). The narrator gave the flatterer a tongue-in-cheek response, “En forme? Mon petit garçon, il y a que, moi, j’allais communier tous les dimanches!” (116).³⁵¹ However, the narrator is taken aback by yet another child’s reaction to Catholic terminology, “C’est quoi ça, *mumunier* tous les dimanches?” (116).³⁵² The narrator continues his lamentations, “Un gamin me dit plus tard, ‘Dieu? Dieu qui, Dieu quoi?’ Je mesure sans cesse de ces distances entre générations, la distance avec l’époque quand nous allions, en rangs domiciles, ‘mumunier’” (116).³⁵³ Although Catholicism’s influence remains as part of the Québécois culture, and despite Marx’s ideas placing Christianity as the unseen model behind idealized secular (capitalist) societies, religion’s sway is diminishing with each passing generation in the province of Québec.

³⁴⁸ “Hey little guy, if you continue to hit her, be forewarned, you’ll end up in Hell.”

³⁴⁹ “Huh? Hell? What’s that?”

³⁵⁰ “God, Hell! I take note of how the world has changed.”

³⁵¹ “In shape? Son, I’ll have you know that I used to receive communion every Sunday!”

³⁵² “What’s that mean, receive *munion* every Sunday?”

³⁵³ “A youngster says to me later, ‘God? God who? God what?’ I incessantly assess the distances between generations, the distance from the time when we used to go, in family lines, ‘receive munion’.”

Contemporary Québec: A Society Faithful to its Language of Origin

The young people of the Quiet Revolution era resented the oppressive, ultra-religious atmosphere of the Great Darkness that they experienced along with their parents' generation. In the 1992 *Comme un fou*, Jasmin's narrator describes himself and his comrades of the 1960s as "des enragés rancuniers face à un Québec émergeant depuis peu d'une époque qu'on avait fustigée du titre de 'la grande noirceur'" (86).³⁵⁴ Rage is visible in Jasmin's work when his recurring narrator becomes incensed with his father over religious differences. However, anger is directed not only at the Church and father figures, but also at the entire Québécois society, a society that passively allowed itself to be controlled during the Great Darkness. The narrator of *Je vous dis merci* (2001) remembers expressing his desire for change by emphatically declaring his contempt for those of the older generation, such as his father, who would have preferred to maintain the status quo of the Great Darkness:

Démolir, démolir! Partons au combat. Lequel? Il y a pire que les parents: il faut abattre les 'installés.' Les gens en place . . . comme nos "vieux" mais plus nuisibles, n'est-ce pas? Dangereux! Tous ceux qui nous précèdent sont fermés, résistent à nos désirs de changements brutaux. Eh bien, qu'ils aillent au diable! (76)³⁵⁵

The narrator of *Je vous dis merci* recalls that at the time of the Quiet Revolution, his sentiments were unequivocal. The members of his parent's generation in positions of power who resisted the younger generation's longing for change were to be deposed and replaced in the quest of a more open society. The narrator recounts that for him and his contemporaries, revolutionary social change was the only acceptable remedy for the years of the Great Darkness.

³⁵⁴ "Enraged, resentful people confronting a Québec that was recently emerging from an epoch that we denounced with the title 'The Great Darkness'."

³⁵⁵ "Demolish, demolish! Let's go fight. But whom? There are those worse than parents. We must bring down the 'installed' powers, the establishment . . . like our 'old folks,' but more harmful, right? Dangerous even! All of those who precede us are closed-minded. They resist our wish to brutally change things. Well, they can go to Hell!"

For the Québécois, the refusal to allow themselves to remain a people controlled by religion resulted in a self-perception more in line with modern times. Their collective identity is often referred to both directly and indirectly in Jasmin's books. A sense of regional pride in belonging to the French-speaking people of the province also presents itself at times in Jasmin's works through references to Québec's history. In Jasmin's 1969 *Rimbaud, mon beau salaud!*, the narrator declares, "On nous a fait ramper assez longtemps, il faut vite se dresser . . . il faut que l'esprit français puisse s'essayer encore une fois de ce côté de l'Atlantique. Debout Français d'ici!" (42-43).³⁵⁶ Dignity related to the fact that the people of Québec are culturally and linguistically different from most of those in the surrounding regions is an integral part of Québécois identity. Taylor states, "People may see their identity as defined partly by some moral or spiritual commitment, say as a Catholic, or an anarchist. Or they may define it in part by the nation or tradition they belong to, as in Armenian, say, or a Québécois" (*Sources* 27). Jasmin indirectly promotes pride in his culture, pride that he shares with his fellow Québécois. This, along with other elements, such as a collective Québécois desire for self-determination, plays a major role in present-day Québécois self-perception.

As Jasmin's work suggests, Québécois identity is directly related to being a francophone people who transformed a conservative Catholic society into a secular society with the Quiet Revolution of the 1960s. Following this revolution, the people relegated Catholicism to a limited role in their culture. Although ultra-religious and closed in the past, modern Québécois society is inclusive, as the province now embodies interculturalism. This societal perspective accepts linguistic diversity while insisting that Québec retain its distinctive francophone culture amidst a majority English-speaking North America. In this regard, in his 2012 work *L'interculturalisme*,

³⁵⁶ "They have made us crawl long enough, we must quickly rise up . . . the French spirit must once again be able to apply itself on this side of the Atlantic. Arise, French of here!"

G rard Bouchard stresses the importance of Qu b cois uniqueness while acknowledging that cultural majority groups at times exaggerate differences between themselves and minority groups to justify and promote discrimination (193). Bouchard writes, “Pour prendre conscience de ce que nous sommes, il est utile, sinon n cessaire de nous r f rer   ce que nous ne sommes pas. Identit  et alt rit  sont donc ins parables” (193).³⁵⁷ Most Qu b cois would undoubtedly consider the French language as a major component of their distinctiveness and a solidifying element of their identity.

When asked about her priorities in a 2008 interview, Pauline Marois, former leader of the *Parti qu b cois* and Prime Minister of Qu bec from 2012 to 2014, responded, “Les questions d’identit . Les gestes de ‘gouvernance nationale’ que nous proposons tournent autour de la langue et de l’identit ” (para. 5).³⁵⁸ She also stated that in her travels throughout Qu bec, people often say, “Madame Marois, n’oubliez jamais de d fendre notre langue!” (para. 5).³⁵⁹ The French language has been part of the Qu bec’s culture for more than four hundred years, and although the language is a major component of Qu b cois identity, fluency in French is not necessarily a requirement for inclusion in the province’s society.

Concerning Qu bec’s open-society status, author and sociologist Jacques Beauchemin asserts in his 2009 article, “L’identit  franco-qu b coise d’hier   aujourd’hui: la fin des vieilles certitudes,” that inclusiveness is a dominant characteristic of today’s Qu b cois identity (32). However, Beauchemin also speaks of a dissonance between Qu bec’s present-day attitude of openness and its desire to incorporate historical elements of the province’s past into Qu b cois identity. He states:

³⁵⁷ “In order to fully realize who we are, it is useful, if not necessary, to refer to what we are not. Identity and otherness are therefore inseparable.”

³⁵⁸ “Concerning questions about identity, the gestures of ‘national governance’ that we propose are centered on language and identity.”

³⁵⁹ “Madame Marois, never forget to defend our language!”

Si, naguère, l'identité canadienne-française était en quelque sorte trop remplie d'elle-même, on peut dire à l'inverse des Québécois d'aujourd'hui qu'ils ne savent plus trop quoi faire de ces traits distinctifs qu'ils savent porter, mais dont ils ne savent plus s'il est légitime de les défendre. (33)³⁶⁰

Jasmin's attitude towards his father, religion, and his francophone people has become more philosophical and kindhearted over the years. The Québécois too have become more understanding of others, and although there is hesitation and uncertainty concerning the link between Québec's past and present, the language of the province is in no danger of losing its prominent role.

Lucia Ferretti, author of several books on Québec's socio-religious history, includes a linguistic element in her definition of a Québécois. She states, "Un Québécois, d'après moi, c'est quelqu'un qui ou bien est né ici ou bien est venu d'ailleurs, mais se reconnaît dans la culture francophone du Québec" (personal interview).³⁶¹ Jasmin's works of this study present both the pre-1960s and the Quiet Revolution period, and both eras are connected to Québécois identity. As author Michel Erman writes concerning Québécois self-perception and novels of the region, "Devenu le genre littéraire majeur, le roman montre comment l'être québécois en quête de son identité et sa liberté s'implique dans l'Histoire" (195).³⁶² Jasmin's novels containing filial tensions are associated with an historical and transformational period, which aids both Québécois and non-Québécois in their formulation and reinforcement of conceptions of Québécois identity.

³⁶⁰ "If formerly French-Canadian identity was in a way too self-centered, one could say the opposite of today's Québécois, that they do not quite know what to do with these distinctive traits they know how to possess, but which they no longer know whether it is legitimate to defend."

³⁶¹ "A Québécois, in my opinion, is someone who was either born here or came from elsewhere, but who identifies himself/herself within the francophone culture of Québec."

³⁶² "Having become the major literary genre, the novel shows how the 'Québécois being,' in the quest of identity and liberty, becomes involved in history."

Identity is not fixed but is always in flux, and this is true for Québécois identity.

Regarding the problem of accurately defining Québécois identity, Beauchemin states, “Depuis les années 1960 jusqu’à aujourd’hui, les historiens et sociologues ne savent plus quoi faire de la différence québécoise” (19).³⁶³ However, with the changes inspired by the Quiet Revolution, the province of Québec went from what was for decades a religiously controlled society to a secular province in a short period of time. These changes had an effect on identity, especially in the sense that a degree of autonomy and pride in standing up to powerful forces resulted in newfound freedoms for the people. Contemporary Québécois selfhood contains elements of the past, the present, and the hope for a better future. As the whole is often more than the sum of its parts, Québec’s current socially progressive, tolerant, and inclusive culture is more than simply a unique North American society.

Just as the recurring narrator’s father in the selected novels is not forgotten, so memories of Québec’s closed-society Great Darkness era remain in the province’s collective mindset. The past indirectly affects present-day Québécois identity, and although the province is in the process of changing, it is doing so slowly. Côté states in *Québécois 101*:

Les Québécois, malgré tout, affichent une certaine ouverture et un bon niveau de tolérance, mais comme pour toute chose avec eux, il faut y aller doucement, progressivement. Il faut la travailler, cette ouverture. Une bouchée à la fois et pas trop piquante, s’il vous plaît. (101)³⁶⁴

While the Pre-Quiet Revolution culture affects present-day Québécois collective identity a return to Catholicism is not anticipated as the province slowly progresses towards a more open society.

³⁶³ “From the 1960s up to today, historians and sociologists no longer know what to do with the Québécois distinctness.”

³⁶⁴ “The Québécois, in spite of everything, present a certain openness and a good level of tolerance, but, as with everything with them, it is necessary to do it slowly, progressively. It is necessary to work the openness. One mouthful at a time, and not too spicy, if you please.”

Côté continues, “La croyance en Dieu s’est évaporée au passage. À peine plus de la moitié des gens interrogés se disent croyants et seulement sept pour cent entre eux sont pratiquants. . . . Les transformations d’églises en condo ne sont donc pas terminées” (124).³⁶⁵ Despite the empty pews, Christian teachings—such as those related to charity and compassion to others, including foreigners—remains part of Québécois consciousness.

Contemporary Québec prides itself on its attitude of openness to the world, a position that stands in stark contrast to the days of the Great Darkness. As mentioned earlier, the term interculturalism is now often used in the province to define the sense of inclusion that the Québécois, in general, would claim to present to immigrants. Interculturalism, however, unlike “multiculturalism,” insists upon assimilation into Québec’s francophone culture—a culture strongly affected by the province’s history—as a prerequisite to acceptance into the greater society. In his 2012 book *L’interculturalisme: un point de vue québécois*, historian and sociologist Gérard Bouchard advances, in reference to Québec interculturalism, “On s’accorde largement pour reconnaître la légitimité de la conscience historique de la majorité francophone et en faire une dimension importante de la culture québécoise” (90-91).³⁶⁶ In effect, only adaptation to the larger content of Québec’s society, which includes its language, past, and traditions, will guarantee acceptance by the general population of the *néo-Québécois*.

Jasmin is a proponent of interculturalism. In his 2010 book, *Le temps des souvenirs: chroniques des belles années*, which is, essentially, the transcription of dialogue between co-author Jean Faucher and Jasmin, Jasmin recounts his sudden unpopularity after publically expressing his opinion on newcomers to the province. He relates that in a 1988 newspaper

³⁶⁵ “The belief in God evaporated along the way. Barely more than half of the people interviewed call themselves believers and only seven percent of them are practicing. . . . The transformation of churches into condominiums has thus not ceased.”

³⁶⁶ “We fully agree to recognize the legitimacy of the historic conscience of the francophone majority and make of it an important dimension of the Québécois culture.”

article, he chastised immigrants for a lack of effort in assimilating into the province's culture. Jasmin recalls, "Quant aux immigrants, je leur reprochais de ne pas s'engager suffisamment, de ne pas s'intégrer dans notre vaste communauté. J'aurais aimé que notre cause leur tienne au cœur, et surtout qu'ils fassent plus d'efforts pour apprendre le français" (179).³⁶⁷ Although Jasmin envisages Québec nationhood and insists on keeping the French language strong in the province, he is without animosity towards others. He later states in the same book:

Personnellement, je ne suis plus contre qui que ce soit. Même pas contre les maudits Anglais que j'aimais si peu lorsque j'étais plus jeune. Je suis toujours pour un pays qui se dirige lui-même, qui ferait sans doute ses propres bêtises, et même quelques conneries, mais cela ne doit pas empêcher une nation d'assumer la responsabilité de son pays. (183-84)³⁶⁸

For Jasmin, interculturalism includes the new arrivals' respect for Québec's culture and traditions, something that would help stabilize and define Québécois identity for all, without bias.

Post-Quiet Revolution Québec resembles the majority of francophone Québécois' country of origin, secular France. In Québec, as is also the case in France, Catholicism played a major role in the region's past, and the religion is still an integral part of family histories for many. The French language is also a major element of the province's past, and something the Québécois have always overwhelmingly wished to retain as a major part of their identity. Despite the disadvantages and abuses resulting from unrestrained rule, the Church in Québec helped protect the people's language. As André Bougaïeff states in his 1980 article that appeared

³⁶⁷ "Concerning immigrants, I reproached them for not sufficiently engaging or integrating themselves into our vast community. I would have liked for them to take our cause to heart. I would have especially liked for them to have put forth more efforts to learn French."

³⁶⁸ "Personally, I am not against anyone at all, whoever it may be, not even the damn English that I liked so little when I was younger. I am, however, still for a country that leads itself. A nation would make, without a doubt, its own stupid mistakes, but that should not hinder it from being responsible for the country."

in the *French Review*, “Depuis les origines de la colonisation française, l’Église a guidé la destinée des francophones du Bas-Canada et a, entre autres, grandement contribué à la survie et au maintien de la langue française” (840).³⁶⁹

As evidenced by national holidays of religious origin, Catholicism has not been completely suppressed in either France or Québec. Additionally, in accordance with an egalitarian attitude towards all, present day secular Québec would not want to view itself, or be perceived by others, as being prejudicial against any given religion, even the openly rejected religion of its culture. Accordingly, fundamental elements of Catholicism persist in Québec’s culture. As Lucia Ferretti puts forth in a 2010 web article:

Par contre, même de nos jours, les Québécois restent largement attachés à la morale sociale catholique, sous sa forme sécularisée. Celle-ci s’exprime d’une part dans leur opposition assez généralisée à la guerre, et aussi dans leur volonté de conserver l’essentiel de l’État providence (redistribution de la richesse, maintien d’un réel filet social et réhabilitation plutôt que répression de la jeunesse en difficulté). (para.12)³⁷⁰

Influenced by both the Great Darkness and the subsequent Quiet Revolution’s rapid secularization, the Québécois are still in the process of defining themselves and determining their future course.

³⁶⁹ “Since the beginning of French colonization, the Church has guided the destiny of the francophones of Lower-Canada and, among other things, has greatly contributed to the survival and maintenance of the French language.”

³⁷⁰ “On the other hand, even at present, the Québécois remain largely attached to Catholic social ethics, but in secular form. This is expressed, in part, by their generalized opposition to war and also in their desire to conserve the basics of a welfare state (redistribution of wealth, safe-guarding of a real social safety net, and the rehabilitation rather than the repression of youth in difficulty).”

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