

with him. He claims, indeed, that for French-Canadian authors the success consists in gaining a place in a Parisian school or movement. This seems impossible to him because "we have not gone through the school of the Resistance" and because "our French language is that which was spoken and written in France prior to the first government of the Front Populaire." What Garneau has to say about the isolation of the French-Canadian author is not entirely groundless; for it is true that, generally speaking, the French and American writers and public take no interest in our literature. But it is by no means essential that our literature should be a mere province of the French letters and that our writers should enlist in one or the other of the various literary schools of France. If the French public does not want to read our best novels and poems, it is entirely free to refrain from doing so. It is not up to us to tell them what they should or should not read. But if a poem, a novel or a play is a masterpiece, it is a success in itself, whether or not it is acclaimed as such in Paris, New York or elsewhere.

René Garneau's position is based on an intellectual colonialism, which in certain circles of our intelligentsia has survived despite Canada's political coming of age, but from which most of our writers now strive to free themselves. Garneau's position is now superseded by the new trends in French Canadian letters.

Robert Charbonneau, in contrast with René Garneau is a firm "autonomist", which does not mean that he is anti-French. During the war, he was the guiding light of the publishing house, Les Editions de l'Arbre, and of the review La Nouvelle Relève, where he proved that he was a staunch defender of the truest French values. He does not ask that his confreres disregard their French fellow-writers nor that they close their eyes on the present trends in France; but he urges them to extend their curiosity to all great literatures and, above all, to find in themselves and in their environment the material and the inspiration for their books.

Separated from France since the middle of the eighteenth century, French-Canada is not, as has been so often maintained, a branch of the French tree. It is, as Etienne Gilson put it very well recently, "a tree of the same species as the French tree, but an independent tree." Sharing Gilson's views, Charbonneau could not help being filled with discontent when he read, over the signature of les frères Tharaud, that our literature was a clear proof of the vitality of the French spirit. Charbonneau - I agree with him on that point - cannot see in our letters anything but a proof of the vitality of our own Canadian spirit.

Speaking the same language, our writers are truly closer to the French authors than to any others; yet by means of this language, which we have inherited from our common ancestors, we have to express realities, events, individual and collective feelings and ideals profoundly different from those of our European fellow-writers. It is obviously not possible for us to silence in a day our European heredity. Three hundred years of life on this new continent, a different climate and the closeness of over one hundred million Anglo-Saxon have made us a people in many respects dissimilar to the French nation.

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