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RELIGION AND NATIONALISM IN QUEBEC:
THE SAINT-JEAN-BAPTISTE CELEBRATIONS
IN SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

Donald Luc Boisvert

A Thesis Presented to the
School of Graduate Studies and Research
in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for
the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Department of Religious Studies
University of Ottawa, Ottawa, Canada



Donald Boisvert, Ottawa, Canada, 1990



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ABSTRACT

This thesis is a sociological study of la Fête de la Saint-Jean-Baptiste in Québec, from its beginnings until the present. It argues that la Fête was a stage for the expression and unification of three sets of polarities found within Québec society: nationalism vs. religion, the elite vs. the masses, and popular religiosity vs. clerical authority. Its five chapters can be divided into three general parts: the historical (Chapters I, II and III), the theoretical (Chapter IV) and the analytical (Chapter V). The Introduction, in addition to summarizing the contents of the thesis, briefly discusses some major theoretical contributions to the sociology of religion and the rapport between religion and the feast.

Chapter I is a review of the relationship between the Catholic Church and Québec society. This is meant to provide the basic foundation for subsequent analyses. The history of Québec Catholicism is considered in terms of the customary breakdown: New France, post-Conquest, ultramontanist and the Quiet Revolution. Particular attention is paid, in this chapter, to the manner in which the Church had an impact

upon structures of belief, both religious and secular.

The next two chapters deal specifically with the celebrations and the group with which they are most often associated. Chapter II discusses la Fête itself, both in terms of its history and its symbolic and ritualistic components. The celebrations are analyzed on the basis of three historical periods: the Patriotes, ultramontanism or the period of clerical domination, and the Quiet Revolution and its aftermath. Chapter III takes a look at the Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste de Montréal, not so much in terms of its detailed history as its ideological profile and influence.

Chapter IV concentrates on examining the central theoretical concepts which run throughout the thesis: nationalism, ideology, class, secularization and popular religion. In the last two sections of this chapter, a sociological perspective on the notion of the feast is suggested, and the three sets of polarities are introduced.

The concluding chapter, Chapter V, attempts a systematic analysis of the polarities, as these were reflected during each of the three historical periods associated with la Fête. There is a brief discussion of rituals in the opening pages. The formal Conclusion to the thesis summarizes the central arguments, in the context of some of the themes introduced earlier.

An appendix discusses three topics in greater detail:

participation rates in the public gatherings, other associations spawned by the Société, and membership figures.

A la mémoire de ma mère

Lucienne Boucher Boisvert
(1929-1965)

"Tu deviens responsable pour toujours
de ce que tu as apprivoisé."

- Antoine de Saint-Exupéry
Le Petit Prince

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

When I was significantly younger and my mother was still alive, I recall that, on June 24th, our family would visit an aunt who lived close by, in order to watch "la parade de la Saint-Jean" from her front porch. Everyone would anxiously await the arrival of "le p'tit saint Jean" on the last float. As nostalgic as one invariably is about the years of childhood, those moments remain precious for me. This thesis is dedicated to the memory of my mother, for it was she who instilled in me a sense of the religious and who gave me the intellectual confidence needed to reach this important goal in my life. In writing about this particular topic, I also wish to pay tribute to my cultural heritage, which has influenced me far more than I am sometimes prepared to admit.

I am most grateful to my thesis supervisor, Dr. Roger Lapointe, for his guidance and support. He was patient with me, and often more confident than I in my abilities to complete this work. I particularly appreciated his respect for my autonomy. His comments were always just and insight-

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Very special gratitude is extended to Dr. Patrick Kenniff, Rector of Concordia University, for his confidence in me and for making it possible for me to devote a full year to the writing of my text. To Dr. Catherine MacKenzie, colleague and friend, I am grateful for having read my manuscript and providing me with many helpful comments, grammatical and otherwise.

Without the love and support of those closest to us, it is sometimes difficult to make sense of what is essentially an exercise in solitude. To Maureen Habib, who never ceased believing in me and who knew how important it was for me to celebrate the multitude of smaller accomplishments along the way, my heartfelt thanks for her generosity and care. Et non le moindre, à Gaston Lamontagne qui, en assumant plus que sa part des choses, m'a permis de me donner à cette thèse, mes remerciements les plus durables. Sa tendresse et le soin qu'il prend de moi me comblent encore.

I actually began my formal doctoral studies at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario. I should like to note the

contributions and support of Dr. Hans Mol, the late Dr. George Grant, Dr. Lorne Dawson and Robert T. Wilson, who were there at the beginning of the process which finds its culmination herein, though each in a different capacity.

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INTRODUCTION

Québec society is a particularly rich and appealing area of study for the student of religion. Yet this richness appears quite overwhelming. So much has been said and written about the pervasive influence of Catholicism throughout Québec history that it becomes difficult sometimes to absorb the sheer volume of basic data, let alone propose any significantly new interpretation of the facts. It is true that one is hard pressed to deny or even minimize the determining role played by the Catholic Church in the shaping of Québec, and this work will certainly not attempt to do so. Quite the contrary: it accepts the conclusions of historical evidence, and places Catholicism at the very centre of any serious study of the development of Québec society. This does not mean, however, that it attempts to expound an apologia for or a theology of Québec Catholicism.

Until quite recently, the Catholic Church in Québec enjoyed the status of an "interlocuteur privilégié." Rarely in the study of societies can one point to such a notable example of an almost perfect symmetry between religion and society. This is not to suggest that the Catholic Church has been the sole (or in the modern period, the most prominent) agent of influence on Québec society, nor that Québec itself has been the perfect model of a "closed society." This would be an inaccurate reading of history. But from the point of

view of methodology, the student of religion is indeed fortunate to have this remarkable example of how religion has acted as a potent and, at times, catalytic force on a society. For there is little doubt that the Catholic Church in Québec has defined, sustained and perhaps even determined the course of Québec history and the texture of its social and cultural fabric over many years.

Any discussion of Québec history, particularly that of the modern period, must deal with that familiar yet problematic concept in the study of political society known as nationalism. The roots of the term nationalism are implied in the word itself: nation. For Québec, nationalism has always been an especially vibrant force. In large part, this stems from the demographic and geographical reality of Québec as the homeland of the descendants of French settlers in North America. It is also a variable of the fact that this homeland has corresponded, at least since the Canadian Confederation, to a distinct political entity.¹

Nationalism is best defined, however, as an ideological concept, i.e., it is a process of thought grounded in social relations.² In this thesis, various forms of Québec nationalism are discussed, particularly in relation to the role and influence of Québec Catholicism.³ At this point, perhaps Ramsay Cook's definition of nationalism in Québec can serve as a beginning: "... French-Canadian nationalism can best be seen as an attempt, repeated in every

generation, to bring past, present, and future into harmony."⁴ This is precisely what the Saint-Jean-Baptiste celebrations have purported to do.

This thesis is a work in the sociology of religion, which implies that its central focus is the relationship between social forces and religious phenomena. As its title suggests, the subject matter of the thesis is the Saint-Jean-Baptiste celebrations in Québec, considered in terms of three sets of polarities: nationalism vs. religion; the elite vs. the masses; and popular religion vs. clerical religiosity or authority. It is argued that la Fête de la Saint-Jean was the reflection of these polarities and also the occasion for their unification. Throughout, my basic concern is to elucidate the dynamic rapport between religion and society, and to indicate how each permeates and even impacts on the other.

It is required, at the outset, to point out what this thesis is not. It is not meant to present a systematic history of Québec Catholicism, the Saint-Jean-Baptiste celebrations or the Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste, though a schematic overview of each is called for, and will be given in the first three chapters of this work. Nor am I attempting to verify or validate any particular set of empirical propositions. I am engaging in a process of sociological enquiry. To this end, my method is synthetic. It is concerned with social change and religious discourse,

and with the symbols and rituals which are their manifestations.

A. Religion and the Social

Since the founding of sociology as a separate discipline in the modern pantheon of intellectual enquiry, religion has held an esteemed place.⁵ It was the contention of the early sociological thinkers that religion, precisely because of its overarching and influential position in society, was an especially rich and promising area of study for the sociologist. Almost from the beginning, therefore, there arose a field known as the sociology of religion. These early thinkers were also perceptive; they sensed that religion, in its historical manifestations, provided valuable clues to the nature of society. Since religion was a remarkably constant and recurrent trait of human social behaviour, they were interested in understanding it for what it was: a human activity worthy of scientific analysis.⁶ Three of the classic thinkers in sociology made especially significant contributions to the study of religion from a sociological perspective: Emile Durkheim, Karl Marx and Max Weber. Major developments in the sociology of religion since then have been, in many ways, attempts at dialogue with

these three men. I should like to review briefly their major intellectual contributions to the social-scientific study of religion, as these serve as the major theoretical underpinnings to this thesis.

It was Emile Durkheim who, in his seminal work entitled The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life, first attempted a systematic sociological reading of religion. His concern was with the "essence" of religion, and he argued that the nature of religious activity could best be understood by studying what he saw as the most primitive form of religion still in existence, that of the Australian aboriginal peoples, or what has been called totemism.

Durkheimian sociology is a system which emphasizes social solidarity and cohesion. The concept of society as a reality sui generis, as the authoritative and quite independent embodiment of mankind's religious impulses, is the cornerstone of his social thought. His definition of religion is a remarkably social one:

"Religious representations are collective representations which express collective realities; the rites are a manner of acting which take rise in the midst of the assembled groups and which are destined to excite, maintain or recreate certain mental states in these groups."⁷

The totemic principle in aboriginal religions embodies a clan's social identity; so religion, as a universal mode of thought, is grounded in the human propensity and need for social order. Religion is therefore a cohesive force, and it reaffirms and sustains this cohesiveness by introducing a

radical dichotomy between what is "sacred" and that which is "profane." The sacred, though "contagious," remains immutable and untouchable. It is society: an objective yet concrete reality.

Durkheim's is a positivistic world-view. It is an attempt at uncovering certain principles, modelled on those of the natural world, which govern human society. Its methodological drawbacks aside, it none the less reaffirms the social nature of religious activity and makes possible, for the first time, a genuine sociological perspective on religion.

The intellectual legacy of Karl Marx to the study of religion is of a quite different sort. Marx's concept of religion cannot be disassociated from his philosophy of man and his sharp indictment of capitalist modes of production. The Marxian⁸ perspective on religion forms part of a distinctive and comprehensive Weltanschauung, and is based on the premise that religion is little more than the creation (the "product") of an alienated being. Religion is made by man, much as man makes the conditions for his own material existence.

Paradoxically, Marx's theory of religion is an almost dualistic one. On the one hand, he clearly states that religion is the creation of a being who has yet to understand the true nature of his activity in history; on the other, he recognizes the critical and necessary role

which religion plays, albeit in a negative way, as a protest against oppression.⁹ The classic and much-quoted passage on religion from his work is particularly revealing in this regard:

"The basis of irreligious criticism is: Man makes religion, religion does not make man. And indeed, religion is the self-awareness and self-regard of man who either has not yet found or has already lost himself again. But man is not an abstract being, crouching outside the world. Man is the world of men, the state, society. This state, this society, produce religion, which is an inverted world consciousness because they are an inverted world. Religion is the general theory of that world, its encyclopedic compendium, its logic in popular form, its spiritual point d'honneur [point of honor], its enthusiasm, its moral sanction, its solemn complement, its general ground of consolation and justification.

(...)

"Religious misery is in one way the expression of real misery, and in another a protest against real misery. Religion is the sigh of the afflicted creature, the soul of a heartless world, as it is also the spirit of spiritless conditions. It is the opium of the people.

(...)

"Religion is only the illusory sun that revolves around man so long as he does not revolve around himself."¹⁰

For Marx, therefore, religion is, at once, the expression of man's alienated state and a system of thought and behaviour which attempts to make sense of this condition. To unmask the true nature of religion as an "inverted world consciousness" is to attempt to overcome the dichotomy between man and the material world, and between man and his deliberate activity in history.

Essentially, the Marxian theory of religion is a philosophical one. From a sociological perspective, however, it reaffirms the nature of religious activity as something which is man-made. It provides a uniquely critical insight, and proposes a theoretical framework wherein religion is described much more in terms of the void which it fills than the human and social good it makes possible. In a word, Marx argues that the modes of production and exchange in a given historical period determine the shape and texture of religious behaviour. Without this Marxian view on religion, it could be said that the sociology of religion would lack the philosophical bases it needs to make sense fully of human social and religious conduct.

With Max Weber, the sociology of religion attained maturity. His classic works, The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism and The Sociology of Religion, stand, to this day, as two of the most systematic and far-reaching attempts at formulating a sociological understanding of religion.¹¹ There can be little doubt of the pervasive and almost determinant influence of Weber on the sociology of religion. Herein was attempted, for the first time, a reading of religion not in terms of its "essence," but properly in terms of its social parameters, of its conduct and purpose. Weber states, at the very beginning of The Sociology of Religion:

"To define "religion," to say what it is, is not possible at the start of a presentation such as

this. Definition can be attempted, if at all, only at the conclusion of the study. The essence of religion is not even our concern, as we make it our task to study the conditions and effects of a particular type of social behavior.

(...)

"The most elementary forms of behavior motivated by religious or magical factors are oriented to this world. (...) Thus, religious or magical behavior or thinking must not be set apart from the range of everyday purposive conduct, particularly since even the ends of the religious and magical actions are predominantly economic."¹²

This concept of "purposive" conduct or behaviour points to the central theme in all of Weberian sociology: that of the increased rationalization inherent to the historical development of societies. Weber argues that religion is subject to a similar process, whether it be the "abstraction" of religious symbols, the "regularization" of cultic practices, the "systematization" of norms of ethical conduct or the "routinization" of charisma. Social actions, including religious ones, are, first and foremost, attempts at making sense of the world and imbuing it with meaning. The fact that they have become increasingly utilitarian in their manifestations is only the reflection of a more fundamental process of social change.¹³

Weber's sociology of religion is particularly rich in methodological constructs. The use of his reputed ideal type, and its discussion in terms of such key concepts as charisma, prophecy, authority, ethos, salvation and asceticism, allows him to delineate certain traits of the

religious experience which, while being historically conditioned, remain persistent. There is, therefore, no grand definition of religion in Weber's sociology of religion. Its strength is its remarkable understanding of the interplay between religious and social change, and its perceptive emphasis on the critical part which religion can sometimes play as a catalyst for such change in history.¹⁴

Much of my thinking behind this thesis acknowledges, implicitly or explicitly, the major contributions of Durkheim, Marx and Weber to the study of religion as a social manifestation. One could argue, not without some merit, that their insights are quite distinct one from the other, perhaps even opposite. I view their contributions as a whole. What one thinker has put forth, another has developed, refined or challenged.

In any discussion of religion from a sociological point of view, certain assumptions about the nature of religious activity need to be stated: that religion is an eminently social phenomenon; that it is socially meaningful; and that it is the reflection of social conditions and forces. In my analysis of the Saint-Jean-Baptiste celebrations in Québec, I attempt to clarify these assumptions in terms of how a particular Feast, at once religious and secular, in a particular society, became a source of identity for that same society, and how it was able to integrate the diverse forces present within the social structure.

B. Religion and the Feast

In the sociological study of religion, a good deal of attention is paid to religion as an integrative or sustaining force in a society. This outlook, which is grounded in the methodological approaches of the earliest thinkers in the discipline, is certainly consistent with historical fact. It is of the essence of religion, both in its institutional manifestations and its impact on the believer, to provide a coherent and consistent array of symbols and rituals which order the social world and infuse it with meaning. All social institutions, whether the family, the law, education and certainly, religion, perform this essential role. When one studies Québec Catholicism, this becomes especially apparent.

This thesis also attempts an analysis of the Saint-Jean-Baptiste celebrations in Québec in terms of their significance as carriers of a concept of what constitutes national specificity. What is notable about the Québec situation is that, historically, the Catholic Church has been in the position, more often than not, of serving as the repository and guardian of political and cultural aspirations, at least until the turn of the century. Thus,

in Québec, nationalism has assumed particular characteristics and been expressed in ways consistent with the history and nature of the society, not the least feature of which is the close association of Québec Catholicism with the process of national or collective assertion. The pages which follow seek partly to delineate this unique fact. It is argued that, in the Québec context, the religious symbolism expressed by la Fête de la Saint-Jean was not antithetical to a sense of national identity and purpose.

There is, of course, a close affinity between religion and the feast. Anthropological and ethnographic studies show that, in most cultures, the feast is associated with a sense of transcendence, of time and history surpassed, recalled and exalted. Individuals break away from routine activity, and social relations become more fluid and less structured. Collective meanings are reaffirmed. Religion, in its origins and its ritual manifestations, can perhaps be said to be the most potent vehicle for the growth and development of a sense of the feast. Precisely because it is concerned with the sacred, religion has a catalytic effect in the elaboration and structure of human celebratory rituals.¹⁵ Quite apart from the religious complexion of many of these rituals, an essential element of their make-up is the sense of collective "dépassement" which they impart.

From a sociological perspective, however, the fundamental purpose of a feast, at least in its modern

sense, is not to undermine or radically transform a society, but rather to provide a sort of safety-valve for the release of potentially disruptive forces. In so doing, feasts can ensure a smooth reintegration and absorption of these forces, the better to reinforce the social edifice and the power relations which underlie it. Viewed from this angle, religion and the feast are functionally quite similar. Each is a call to transcendence, but only in the sense that such transcendence is itself a factor in the maintenance of social stability and cohesion.

The rituals and celebrations surrounding the June 24th feast-day of saint Jean-Baptiste in Québec contain characteristics which are at once religious, cultural, social and political. The Feast has itself undergone a series of transformations, reflective of the changes which have occurred in Québec society. Agrarian and religious in origin, the Feast became highly political in the early nineteenth and late twentieth centuries, was religious for over a century, and became increasingly secular in tone from the 1970s onward. This fact makes la Fête de la Saint-Jean an especially important indicator of social and religious change in Québec. As well, it presents the student of religion with an opportunity to study the interplay between religious and political beliefs, and their manifestations in collective human celebrations.

C. Thesis Summary

The thesis consists of five chapters. Chapters I, II and III put forth the general historical framework which serves as the basis for the analysis contained in the fifth chapter. Chapter IV discusses the major theoretical issues which need to be addressed in a study such as this. The Conclusion summarizes the main argument of the thesis.

In the first three chapters, the historical data is surveyed, with a view to highlighting the key elements in the development of the celebrations. At the outset, there is a discussion of the role of the Catholic Church in Québec society. This is essential, as it provides the backdrop against which subsequent analyses can be made. This survey of Québec Catholicism is painted in broad strokes. The central aim is one of sociological extrapolation: a review of the dynamics of religion and society in Québec. The following two chapters analyze the origins of the celebrations and their development over time, as well as the nature of the organization which played a key leadership role in the institutionalization of the celebrations, the Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste. The most influential Société, that of Montréal, is the one discussed.

The first two sections of Chapter II are specifically

concerned with interpreting the multitude of symbols and rituals associated with the Saint-Jean-Baptiste celebrations. The figure of saint Jean-Baptiste, as icon and national symbol, is discussed, and the changes which have taken place in Québec in representations of the Saint are analyzed. A number of important religious and civic rituals and symbols linked to the celebrations are reviewed, and their purpose and meaning are delineated. The chapter also addresses the structural transformations which have occurred in the Feast, as these relate both to religious requirements and to socio-political forces.

Chapter IV examines some of the important theoretical issues which underlie the whole reasoning of the thesis. Such concepts as nationalism, ideology, secularization and popular religion are analyzed, and their salient characteristics, as these relate to Québec society, are reviewed. The fourth section of this chapter discusses, in a preliminary fashion, a possible sociological perspective on the notion of the feast. It raises some basic questions about the function of celebration in human social intercourse, and the ways in which celebration serves as the expression of certain collective and historical aspirations. Reference is made to the manner in which la Fête de la Saint-Jean-Baptiste has assumed this role.

The concluding chapter of the thesis, Chapter V, discusses the celebrations as social representations, in

terms of the three sets of polarities and the three historical periods. It is pointed out that the celebrations were instrumental in the propagation of certain ideological understandings of Québec society, and that they were themselves subject to a process of mutation consistent with religious, cultural and political transformations occurring in the society. In essence, la Fête de la Saint-Jean-Baptiste has been a mirror of Québec society.

I do not pretend, in this work, to formulate any definitive understanding of religion and society in Québec. In that this thesis deals with a seldom explored area of study about Québec, I can only claim this effort as a beginning.

ENDNOTES

¹This statement is not meant to minimize the historical reality of French settlements in Canada's Atlantic region, Ontario and the west, or in other areas of North America, notably Louisiana and certain parts of New England. It reflects a fact: that the vast majority of French-speaking people in North America live in Québec.

²It remains one of the great contributions of Karl Marx to sociological theory that he emphasized the social and material bases for the production of thought. See Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, The German Ideology, C.J. Arthur, ed. (New York: International Publishers, 1970).

³The natural affinity between religion and nationalism, and the role of religion as a catalyst for social change, is an especially promising area of study. See Guenter Lewy, Religion and Revolution (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974).

⁴Ramsay Cook, ed., French-Canadian Nationalism: An Anthology (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1969), p. 14.

⁵See Bryan Wilson, Religion in Sociological Perspective (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), Chapter I.

⁶There is no doubt, of course, that sociology was a product of the Enlightenment and the consequent emergence of modern scientific thought. In analyzing religion, sociology was also intent on calling into question the monolithic hold of theology on contemporary thought.

⁷Emile Durkheim, The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life (New York: The Free Press, 1915), p. 22. For an excellent overview of Durkheim's sociology of religion, see José A. Prades, Persistance et métamorphose du sacré (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1987).

⁸The use of the term "Marxian", as opposed to the more common one of "Marxist", is meant to differentiate Marx's own thought from the specific ways in which it was developed and applied by subsequent thinkers.

⁹It is indeed unfortunate that this latter theme of religion as a protest remains undeveloped in Marx's thought. It could be argued that therein lay the kernel of a rich and much more refined theory of religious activity.

¹⁰Karl Marx, On Religion, Saul K. Padover, ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, The Karl Marx Library, 1974), pp. 35-36.

¹¹Three other important works complete Weber's sociology of religion. See The Religion of China (New York: The Free Press, 1951), Ancient Judaism (New York: The Free Press, 1952), and The Religion of India (New York: The Free Press, 1958).

¹²Max Weber, The Sociology of Religion (Boston: Beacon Press, 1963), p. 1.

¹³While Weber writes of the almost inevitable march of "the rational" in human societies, he also raises a fundamental question as to its eventual impact: "No one knows who will live in this cage in the future, or whether at the end of this tremendous development entirely new prophets will arise, or there will be a great rebirth of old ideas and ideals, or, if neither, mechanized petrification, embellished with a sort of convulsive self-importance. For of the last stage of this cultural development, it might well be truly said: "Specialists without spirit, sensualists without heart; this nullity imagines that it has attained a level of civilization never before achieved"." The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1958), p. 182.

¹⁴See Max Weber, ibid. The stature of this work as a sort of response to the Marxist theory of "economic determinism" is well recognized. See also N. Birnbaum, "Conflicting Interpretations of the Rise of Capitalism: Marx and Weber", Bobbs-Merrill Reprint from The British Journal of Sociology, Vol. IV, June 1953.

¹⁵Anthropological science has contributed much to our understanding of ritual behaviour. For two of the more prominent modern theories, see Clifford Geertz, The Interpretation of Cultures (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1973) and Victor Turner, Dramas, Fields, and Metaphors (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1974). See also Reader in Comparative Religion: An Anthropological Approach, Third Edition, William A. Lessa and Evon Z. Vogt, eds., (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1972), Sections 2 to 6. For a study of myth in relation to collective ritual behaviour, see Mircea Eliade, Myth and Reality (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1963). For a sociological perspective on ritual, see Robert Bellah, Beyond Belief (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1970). For a theological reading of the sense of feast, see Harvey Cox, The Feast of Fools (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1970).

CHAPTER I
CHURCH AND SOCIETY IN QUEBEC

This first chapter presents a general survey of one of the salient historical elements which provide the focus of the thesis. Its five sections discuss the role of the Catholic Church in Québec society, its development, contributions and influence as a dominant institution. The chapter is meant to be synoptic. Its intent is more to introduce the essential historical data and perspectives, than to give a minute and exhaustive account of dates, public figures and events which have marked the long history of Québec Catholicism. My purpose, in this chapter, is not to rewrite history, but to draw from it in order to sketch out a succinct yet fair portrait of a society and a church over time.

I am aware that there are certain difficulties associated with any attempt at historical summary, particularly in the context of a sociological analysis such as this. In presenting nothing more than a mass of detailed facts, one can sometimes lose sight of the broader social issues and themes. Conversely, it would be quite difficult to engage in any type of serious theoretical reflection without some clear sense of the historical background to the subject. This opening chapter, it is hoped, strikes a delicate balance between these two poles. What I wish to bring to my

discussion of la Saint-Jean is a feel for the larger historical picture within which the feast assumes its full significance.

A. General Observations

The history of the Catholic Church in French Canada, or more recently Québec, is often described in almost stereotypical terms. We have the picture of an institution, omnipresent and powerful, which stands in a quasi-mediaeval relationship to the society of which it constitutes such a prominent feature. Such an image of the Catholic Church, inherited in part from some of the more distinguished historians of French Canada,¹ contains, as with all such clichés, a degree of truth as well as a good deal of misperception.

The two things which can be stated with some degree of certainty are that Catholicism in Québec has been an extremely potent social force and that it has wielded, for the better as well as for the less good, extraordinary influence over the development of Québec society. This can be accounted for by the type of Catholicism found in Québec and the nature of the society itself: "Si celle-ci [l'église catholique] a joué le rôle que l'on sait, c'est qu'elle a

bien voulu s'assurer cette prééminence; il n'en est pas moins certain que le contexte social l'exigeait."² Another equally obvious aspect of this church-society equation is the manner in which Catholicism in Québec has been influenced, in turn, by the social and cultural milieu in which it found itself. It could not be otherwise. An institutionalized religion, despite its claims to universality, forms part of a given time and place. As such, it is partly the reflection of this temporality. Church and society in Québec have stood in a mutually advantageous relationship, each influencing and defining the other.

"On l'a répété de toutes les manières: dans l'histoire de notre société, l'Eglise a joué un rôle tout à fait essentiel. On oublie souvent de souligner (...) que l'inverse est également vrai: l'Eglise d'ici a été marquée en profondeur par les traits de notre société. S'il est vrai que l'Eglise s'est en quelque sorte approprié notre société, celle-ci s'est aussi approprié l'Eglise. Il faut le rappeler fortement si on veut saisir l'originalité de notre héritage religieux, ce mélange de grandeurs et de misères qui tient au passé tout entier de notre peuple."³

Our traditional conceptions of Roman Catholicism as a monolithic and domineering force in Québec society represent the generalization of a specific historical time. The approximately one hundred year period from the mid-19th to the mid-20th centuries, which is described as the triumph of ultramontanism, does not give an accurate view of the whole panoramic development of the Catholic Church in Québec. Yet it is this period which often colours our overall outlook. The fact that ultramontanism was so pervasive and absolute

an influence in Québec might account for this tendency to see it as the perfect embodiment of the whole history of Québec Catholicism. The Church, however, existed well before and after this one hundred year span, and it assumed different roles conditioned always by the developing larger society. The Catholic Church in New France, after the Conquest of 1760 and the Rebellion of 1837-38, as well as in the latter part of this century, was a Church with some diverse and unique characteristics.

Most analyses in the sociology of religion acknowledge the fact that institutionalized religion, as found in a church, generally acts as a very strong stabilizing force in society. The nature and influence of a church, conditioned as these are by a given cultural and political context, necessitate a reaffirmation of the bases of the social structure. A church's emphasis on the transcendent makes this task necessary and relatively natural, due to the fact that it can speak with the voice of sacred authority in justifying a given situation, and in encouraging its followers to accept it quite readily. On the other hand, precisely because of this claim of partaking of a supra-natural order, no church can limit or bind itself to shoring up society in an uncritical manner, nor can it do this at every turn.⁴ To do so leads to a jeopardizing of the church's inspiration for its founding charisma as well as its continued credibility in the world. This institutional

dilemma is not always easily resolved.

All religions, in becoming institutionalized, generally need to accommodate themselves as regards the established political authority in a given society. Thomas F. O'Dea, citing the example of the early Christian Church, remarks:

"An important aspect of this problem of accommodation, of fitting into the established society while remaining apart from it, concerns the attitude of the new group toward the political authorities. It is an interesting fact that the Christian church, while often persecuted (and at times bitterly) in its early history, never denied the legitimacy before God of the established governmental institutions of the Roman Empire. Here too we see the early appearance of an ambivalence and ambiguity in the Christian attitude which will continue in varied forms under changing historical conditions down through the centuries. The new body asserts its own superiority over the established authorities, but in a way that does not challenge their effective operation or legitimacy. While becoming a community unto itself, the church at the same time recognized and came to terms with the legitimate political authority. (...) The radical implications of the new religious organization are confined to other-worldly implications, and accommodation to and recognition of "earthly authority" are justified and made legitimate."⁵

At a relatively early stage in its history, the Christian Church, with the conversion of Constantine in the fourth century, found itself in the enviable yet problematic position of being the "official" religion of a vast and powerful empire.⁶ It now became an extension of the political arm, and hence found itself directly confronted with that dilemma which has persisted, as O'Dea notes, in some form or another down through the centuries. How could the Church remain faithful to its original revelation and purpose, whilst also

enjoying the full benefits of authentic political recognition? For some, renunciation of the world was a response to this dilemma, thereby giving rise to the monastic movement; for others, there was a need to formalize the Church's internal structures in light of this new relationship to "the City of Man,"⁷ resulting in the flourishing of the institution of the papacy.⁸

If there is one predominant theme which runs through much of the history of Roman Catholicism in Québec, it is the manner in which the Church was able to adjust itself to and take advantage of different forms of legitimate political authority. In doing so, there is no doubt that the Church was properly defending its own interests, whether these were political, economic or strictly ecclesiastical. On the surface of things, this history is one of remarkable survival and consistency in the face of incessant change. At a more meaningful level, however, the question can be legitimately asked whether this tacit alliance between the Church and the political order in Québec was always best for the development of the society and the full participation of its citizens in this process. The question is sometimes phrased in more direct terms: Did the Catholic Church, in acting as the "officious" agent of political authority, seriously retard Québec's social and cultural maturity? Herein is found a veiled accusation which needs to be addressed. The Commission d'étude sur les laïcs et l'Eglise, a task

force set up by the Québec Catholic bishops as a means of taking up the challenges posed by the Second Vatican Council, acknowledged, in its report of the early 1970s, the pertinence of such a question:

"Il est de coutume chez nous, surtout depuis le début de la Révolution tranquille, de faire subir à l'Eglise un procès sans appel où elle est reconnue coupable de toutes nos faiblesses collectives passées, de notre situation de tutelle, de notre pauvreté économique, etc. Une telle attitude constitue en partie une riposte à l'apologétisme historique dont avaient été truffées jadis maintes présentations du passé religieux québécois. En phase de défrustration et de libération collectives, la satisfaction est grande de pouvoir désigner du doigt quelque bouc émissaire sur qui faire porter l'odieux d'un passé dont on a honte. Surtout que vers le début des années 60, l'Eglise du Québec n'avait pas encore perdu son statut de puissance sociale et économique; ce qui en faisait une cible idéale pour les dénonciateurs de toutes sortes."⁹

It is never easy to blame a religious institution for the errors which may have been committed in its name in the past, nor is it always possible or necessary to do so in the light of historical evidence. Generally, religious institutions will play ambivalent roles in society. They form part of the social and cultural milieux, while clearly standing outside them by virtue of their ultimate loyalties. Much as it is valuable and necessary to turn a critical eye on the Catholic Church's influence over Québec's development, it is equally important to admit that the Church nurtured and sustained the essence of Québec's collective identity throughout the centuries. This can hardly be minimized. Lionel Groulx, the most nationalistic and ethnocentric of

French Canadian historians, put the matter quite succinctly: "Le catholicisme va dominer notre vie entière. A toutes les époques d'une existence particulièrement laborieuse, il sera la force la plus active de celles qui nous ont façonnés."¹⁰

The Catholic Church in Québec, at least until the changes of the mid-20th century, was generally in a privileged position vis-à-vis the larger society. As an institution, it enjoyed a great deal of autonomy and prestige (with the possible exception of the French era, when it was still jostling with the colonial authorities for influence). Strengthened by this relative freedom, it could claim for itself the responsibility for safeguarding the interests, both religious and secular, of its flock. The results were mixed: while certainly acting as a hindrance in some aspects, the Church nonetheless served as guardian and refuge in times of rapid change.

Schematically, the history of the Catholic Church in Québec can be divided into four periods, each corresponding to a significant phase of Québec's own historical development: New France (ca. 1534 to 1760); the Conquest and its aftermath (1760 to ca. 1840); the triumph of ultramontanistism and the consolidation of the Canadian Confederation (ca. 1840 to 1960); and the Quiet Revolution and its aftermath (1960 to the present). The breaks between each period are more often fluid than hard and fast; they are meant to suggest a transition, in the Church's own modus vivendi,

from one social role to another.

B. The Church Exported

Three words characterize the self-identity of the Catholic Church in New France: missionary, Gallican and Counter-Reformation. Historians differ in their interpretations of the role played by the Church during this period. Those who were influenced by the ideology of ultramontaniam, such as Lionel Groulx, view New France as a glorious time for the French "race" in the New World. The Church is seen as the perfect embodiment of this glory, and the early settlers as devout and righteous people guided by the loving protection of Church authorities. More contemporary historians,¹¹ oriented to a more secular and critical reading of history, emphasize the dominant political position which the Church occupied in the French colony, and the conflicts which surfaced regularly between the Bishop and the Governor in all spheres of colonial life. In their view, the power and influence of the Church were not always so absolute, and the colonists not always a subservient lot.

Historian Michel Brunet, in explaining how the Conquest of 1760 coloured subsequent understandings of New France, describes the process of glorification of the history of

this period by the early historians:

"Cependant, les défis que présentait l'occupation anglaise obligèrent les Canadiens à des prises de position et à des actions collectives qui développèrent chez eux une nouvelle conception de leur histoire. Celle-ci vint se superposer à la tradition orale qu'avait laissée le régime français. Les classes dirigeantes idéalisèrent encore davantage l'histoire de la Nouvelle-France qui leur apparut comme une succession de tableaux épiques illustrant l'héroïsme empanaché des militaires, le dévouement des missionnaires, la gentilhommellerie rustique des seigneurs, la frugalité spartiate des paysans et l'audace pittoresque des coureurs de bois. Toute une galerie de héros, aux vertus exceptionnelles, se constitua à la gloire de la race française en Amérique."¹²

This tapestry of heroic deeds and virtuous figures served an important purpose: it snored up an identity shattered by the new political reality of the Conquest, and was instrumental in consolidating a sense of pride following an otherwise unsettling and humiliating historical episode. The reflected glory of New France burned bright at a time of legitimate despair.

If the Catholic Church in New France was anything, it was a French Church in all senses of the words: an export of the mother country, just as the colony was an extension of the metropolis. As a colonial power, France primarily viewed its possessions as just so many replicas of itself, meant to serve the expansionist needs of the homeland. These needs were varied, inspired partly by material gain and also by genuine missionary fervour. "When we speak of the church in New France," notes Cornelius J. Jaenen, "we are dealing with a missionary enterprise to which was added, and upon which

was superimposed, an overseas extension of the French institutionalized church."¹³ The missionary impulse is underscored by Etienne-Michel Faillon, one of the earliest historians of French Canada, in his reference to the supposed motives of François I^{er} and his successors in encouraging exploration on the North American continent:

"Il est certain, & personne ne l'a nié jusqu'ici, que, se glorifiant du titre de Rois très-crétiens (sic) & de Fils aînés de l'Eglise, ces princes eurent pour motif principal, dans les dépenses considérables qu'ils firent, l'espérance de porter en Canada la connaissance du Rédempteur, & d'y étendre les limites de l'Eglise catholique."¹⁴

Though Faillon's history is written in terms of a mythic or providential justification for French efforts in the New World, it does emphasize an important theme seldom denied by subsequent historians, namely that religious sentiment and missionary determination played a central role in the initial settlement of New France.¹⁵ If, however, the conversion of souls for the greater glory of God and the Catholic Church was a core element in France's colonial aspirations, it cannot be said to have been the primary one. Material gain, if not the official French position, was certainly paramount: "The motive that brought most Frenchmen to North America was not zeal for either souls or honour but the hope of making money."¹⁶ Missionary efforts were often caught in the middle of conflicting political, commercial and even religious interests.

"Fluctuations in the energy and effectiveness with which missions were prosecuted can be traced back

in many cases to the interplay of these three factors: the missions themselves, the state, and commercial interests. When lust for gain and the glory of God conflicted, human nature being what it is, the former usually won out. They did not always appear to conflict, for Canada was never regarded only as a means to profit but also as an opportunity for the extension of French (and later British) prestige and honour. When profit was emphasized, there was likely to be friction and jealousy. When other motives came to the fore, there might be close collaboration. The Company of Merchants and that of the One Hundred Associates have already introduced both possibilities."¹⁷

Regarded initially as a missionary enterprise, the young Church in New France carried many of the traits of the more institutionalized Church back home. It was, in orientation and structure, an exported Church. Foremost among these was its Gallican character. Gallicanism refers to the belief that the sovereign (in this case, the French King) possesses ultimate authority over all affairs in his domain, including religious matters. He alone was empowered to enact requests and decisions emanating from the Church of Rome. In Gallicanism are found the seeds of the political philosophy based on the divine right of monarchs.

"Les gallicans (...) proclament l'indépendance complète du pouvoir temporel par rapport au pouvoir spirituel et d'autre part, ils affirment qu'il n'y a pas d'intermédiaire entre Dieu et le prince qui détient son autorité directement de Dieu sans la médiation de la souveraineté populaire. Voici les trois règles fondamentales de la doctrine gallicane: 1 - les papes ne peuvent commander pour les choses temporelles dans le royaume de France; 2 - en France, la puissance du pape, même en matière spirituelle, n'est pas absolue, elle est limitée par les règles et canons des anciens conciles; 3 - ce sont les rois qui sont chargés de faire exécuter ces canons. Les rois étant des êtres sacrés, ils ont donc juridic-

tion sur l'Eglise de France et sur son clergé. En d'autres mots, le roi est le maître souverain de l'Eglise gallicane et n'a que Dieu comme supérieur. Il a donc le pouvoir de nommer les évêques et de lever des impôts sur le clergé. On peut résumer ainsi les principales thèses du gallicanisme: négation de toute autorité du Pontife romain sur le pouvoir temporel des rois, affirmation de la suprématie conciliaire sur le Pape, les décisions du Pape sont réformables même en matière de foi, son infaillibilité n'est pas reconnue."¹⁸

This view of the relationship between the temporal and the spiritual domains is the opposite of the ultramontane ideology, which affirmed the primacy of the Roman pontiff in both spheres, and which was to dominate Québec society at a later time. Gallicanism encouraged the establishment of forms of "national" churches, and it emphasized the preponderance of the political authority over the ecclesiastical authority. This would lead inevitably to power struggles, as borne out by the conflicts between governors and bishops in New France.¹⁹ In the minds of the supporters and defenders of Gallicanism, and hence to the French political establishment, it was the proper role of the Catholic Church to sustain the social and economic order of the colony.

"Gallican officials desired the church to fulfil its role and mission as a dutiful agency of social order. According to this view, no state agencies other than the Catholic Church could bring salvation and a proper understanding of and reverence for the established order of the realm. The state must support and protect the church in proportion to the efforts made by the ecclesiastical community to sustain the political and social establishment."²⁰

This Gallican principle of the Church's subservience to

secular authority is best expressed in Louis XIV's instructions to Jean Talon upon being named the first intendant of New France:

"Il est absolument nécessaire de tenir dans une juste balance l'autorité temporelle, qui réside en la personne du Roy et de ceux qui la représentent, et la spirituelle, qui réside en la personne du dit sieur Evesque et des Jésuites, de manière toutefois que celle-cy soit inférieure à l'autre."²¹

The Catholic Church's authority, in theory as well as in practice, remained limited by the constraints imposed upon it by the political administration of France as well as, by extension, that of the colony. Its influence, whether in terms of the colonial power structure or of its impact on the lives of the sparse population, was never complete, even in spite of the remarkable dedication and heroism of the early missionaries and members of religious congregations. Gallicanism held the Church's power in check, never quite ignoring it, but never allowing it to flourish completely of its own accord.

As with the mother Church in France, the Catholic Church in New France was characterized by the Counter-Reformation ethos which infused it. The Catholic Counter-Reformation of the 16th century, whose spirit is best expressed by the founding and remarkable growth of the Jesuit Order (a group which was to have a profound and enduring influence on the Church's development in North America), and whose tenets were formalized in the decrees of

the Council of Trent, gave rise to a renewed Catholicism marked by its dogmatic purity and its emphasis on spirituality.²² Missionary works were seen as the natural impulse and consequence of the new Catholic confidence. John Webster Grant provides a thumb-nail sketch of the roots and effects of the Counter-Reformation:

"Both European and Christian expansion were made possible by a growing sense of confidence that marked the beginning of the modern era. In the secular realm this expressed itself in the renewal of arts and letters, along with the scientific advance, that is generally known as the Renaissance. In the church it led to the movement of Catholic reform, which was in part a response to the Protestant Reformation but had roots in a deepening of popular piety and a determination to rid the church of inefficiency and corruption that had begun some decades earlier. An important ingredient in the revival was simply a growing conviction that despite the scandalous behaviour of some popes and bishops, despite the Turks, and despite Luther and Calvin, Catholicism could and would make it. The resulting mood, on the part of zealots who made the missions possible, was one of unquestioning loyalty to the church and its dogmas, of unbounded confidence in its future, and of dedication to the point of readiness for martyrdom."²³

The spirit of the Counter-Reformation -- its exclusivity, righteousness and appeal to a religiosity based on devotionism -- would leave an indelible mark on the future of Québec Catholicism. The progression to ultramontaniam would be remarkably natural, considering the solid foundation provided by a Counter-Reformation Church.

The basic structure of religious organization introduced during the French régime was the parish, which was complemented by the rang as a model of economic and agricul-

tural organization. "The parish was one of the key institutions which the pioneers brought with them to New France. Its development was achieved by a tireless clergy, supported or stimulated in this by the first ecclesiastical and civil administrators of the country."²⁴ Though it was the seigneurial system which was, in fact, the overarching legal structure, its direct impact on the lives of the colonists was limited, and the individual colonist "...will have forgotten long ago the name of his seignior, but whenever he will need to identify himself, he will spontaneously add after his surname those of his rang and of his parish."²⁵ It was at the level of the parishes, few though they were initially, that the settlers had their most direct and intimate contacts with the Church on a daily basis. Due to the prolonged absences of the seigneur, the local pastor or curé, when there was one, became an important personage, for he alone enjoyed a semblance of "official" stature.²⁶ In the realm of manners and morals, the Catholic Church had a crucial function to perform in New France.

"The church was expected to furnish not only spiritual comfort and guidance to the colonists but also to provide an ethical and moral code of behaviour, a sound grounding in the principles of the historic national religion, and to imbue the faithful with a proper respect for all "the powers ordained of God". Its first responsibility was, obviously, to set an example and standard itself, for it was the instrument of human salvation."²⁷

Economic exigencies in New France being what they were, however, the colonists tended to be a self-sufficient lot.

The colony was still a frontier in many ways, and individualism was more the norm than the exception. A cleavage was inevitable between the values espoused and taught by the Church and the lifestyles of the colonists as constrained by the requirements of livelihood. Only after the Conquest would the Church be in a real position to consolidate its moral authority. Describing the behaviour of the inhabitants of New France as regards religion, Denis Monière remarks: "Il est donc plausible d'affirmer que ce qui caractérise principalement l'attitude des Canadiens envers la religion c'est l'esprit d'indépendance et non pas une soumission aveugle comme cela sera le cas plus tard."²⁸

The Catholic Church in New France was not the monopolistic power it has often been portrayed to be, neither in terms of the colonial political apparatus nor in terms of its influence over the lives of the colonists. It was a French Church in its adherence to Gallican principles, and a Roman Church in partaking of the spiritual zeal of the Catholic Counter-Reformation. Primarily missionary in orientation, the French Canadian Church had not yet become an indigenous force. New France was a society characterized by a certain amorphous structural quality: "Certes la Nouvelle-France, étant une société en voie de structuration, ne peut être décrite comme une société originale se développant par ses propres forces."²⁹ So the Catholic Church, as a social institution, was like the society in many ways. It would

soon be in a privileged position, however, to impose its ideological will on this society which was about to change so dramatically.

C. The Church as Bulwark

With the Conquest of 1760 which inaugurated the British régime, the Catholic Church suddenly found itself in the enviable yet difficult position of being the only viable institution which remained from the French era.³⁰ Nationalistic interpretations of Québec history tend to equate the Conquest with a break, claiming that it was responsible, in large measure, for the retard which was to characterize Québec society for approximately the next two centuries.³¹ This society did, however, continue to evolve, despite the fact that it was now subjected to the laws and political institutions of an alien power. Even though French Canadians would ultimately be allowed to maintain certain rights such as the Catholic religion and French civil law, there was no denying the fact that they were now living in a totally new political environment. What marked the evolution of French Canada henceforth was a spirit of isolationism and a defiant reaffirmation of the traditional values and aspirations which were thought to be the very essence of what set French

Canadians off from the British conquerors. This frame of mind is called la survivance, described by Michel Brunet as "l'un des plus grands mythes-consolations...."³² He sums up the sort of political outlook which typified it:

"(C'est) une pensée incomplète, tronquée, souvent puérile, à la remorque des influences étrangères ou se réfugiant dans un isolationnisme stérile, impuissante à saisir les problèmes complexes du milieu et incapable de les définir, sujette à se nourrir d'illusions et de vastes synthèses divorcées de la réalité quotidienne, portant toutes les caractéristiques d'un infantilisme indûment prolongé."³³

Only the Church could now effectively act as the intermediary between the new political authorities and the French-speaking subjects of the British crown. Though not fully equipped to do so, neither in terms of manpower nor infrastructure, the Church did not hesitate to take up the challenge and to make the best of what it saw as a difficult situation. It preached submission to the British, and, in conjunction with the seigneurial class, it pursued a policy of collaboration with them. In doing so, it can be claimed that the Church was intent, in the first instance, on its own institutional survival. This was justified by equating the interests of the Church with those of French Canadians as a whole.

"Il y a une communauté d'intérêts évidente entre les seigneurs et le clergé, à la fois sur le plan économique et politique. Il s'agit pour eux d'obtenir la reconnaissance des lois et coutumes françaises, ce qui assure le maintien du régime seigneurial, le droit de dîme et des places dans l'administration publique. Les trois thèmes majeurs de leur idéologie seront: notre langue,

nos droits, notre religion. Cette idéologie sera essentiellement défensive. Elle cherche à conserver les privilèges d'une classe particulière en les présentant comme l'intérêt de la nationalité canadienne-française. Par l'appel à la solidarité nationale, l'idéologie traditionnelle tentera de masquer les rapports de classe de la société canadienne-française et d'entraver la pénétration des idées nouvelles."³⁴

The policy of collaboration was not only beneficial to the Church. The traditional political and social structures of the former French colony had been altered irreversibly by the victory of the British forces on the Plains of Abraham. As distant as this victory was in its immediate impact on the everyday lives of the French inhabitants, it nonetheless established a radically different political reality. It was difficult, if not impossible, to ignore this new reality. If by collaborating, the Church could also ensure, on behalf of the inhabitants, the preservation and consolidation of certain limited rights, the policy appeared to be a legitimate one.

In emphasizing the maintenance of "notre langue, nos droits, notre religion," the Church achieved two essential aims. First, it provided a sense of security and a focus of identity for the people, however much it may have been inspired in this by an enclave mentality. Second, the Church effectively challenged the British authorities to accept certain realities in the governance of their new colony, and this was reflected partly in the provisions of the Québec Act of 1774.³⁵ This Act formalized the effects of the

Conquest, i.e., the transformation of the traditional class structure of French Canadian society and the recognition of a subsidiary, though certainly important, leadership role for the Church. "La Conquête a eu pour effet de modifier la structure de classe de la société canadienne et de conférer à l'Eglise un rôle de suppléance qui n'aura d'efficacité réelle qu'après l'échec de la rébellion de 1837-1838."³⁶

The Conquest was instrumental in changing the ideological profile of the Catholic Church in French Canada. The most immediate and obvious impact was the separation of the colonial Church from Paris -- from the French Gallican Church -- thereby bringing it more directly into the axis of the Church of Rome. The important long-term effect of this break would be the resurgence and consolidation of ultramontanism as a central force in the Church in Québec: "...la Conquête aura comme conséquence de forcer l'Eglise à mettre en veilleuse son orientation gallicane et de favoriser le retour aux principes ultramontains."³⁷ It would also shelter the Church from the liberal-democratic thinking inspired by the French (and to some extent, American) Revolution. A further result of the spread of ultramontane principles would be the Church's isolation from Enlightenment ideals, and this would have a direct bearing upon its inability to comprehend the true significance of the Rebellion of 1837-38.³⁸

In the seventy-five year period from the British

Conquest to the outbreak of hostilities in 1837, the Québec Catholic Church was slowly but certainly becoming a power with which to reckon. It was able to position itself advantageously in terms of the British political authorities, primarily because it was the most stable institution left from the French régime and because it espoused a policy of submission and collaboration. Its roots in what was now British North America were deep, and its influence over the French inhabitants became that much more significant because of the social and political mutations brought about by the Conquest. With the failure of the 1837-38 Rebellion, the Church's hegemony would be both complete and lasting.

The Rebellion of 1837-38 in Lower Canada is a critical time in the history of French Canada, and represents an important turning-point for two reasons. First, the Patriotes can be considered the true architects of modern French Canadian nationalism: "...les Patriotes vont structurer l'idéologie nationaliste et la rendre dynamique."³⁹ They were to become the symbols of the nationalistic struggle which would imbue Québec society down to the present day. Second, the failure of the Rebellion would profoundly mark Québec for close to a century by reasserting, in a quasi-absolute way, the power and pre-eminence of the Catholic Church in all aspects of life. The demise of the liberal-democratic ideology of the Patriotes would ensure the triumph of ultramontaniam.⁴⁰

The Rebellion can be understood as the manifestation of two forces: 1. the crisis of limited representative government, and 2. the emergence of a native middle-class bourgeoisie. Under the political and ideological leadership of Louis-Joseph Papineau, the Patriotes emphasized political liberalism and republicanism (inspired by the success of the young American Republic), as well as the need for self-government and ministerial accountability. Certain elements of their discourse were considered anti-clerical in tone, insofar as these called for a greater separation between church and state. The issue which best embodied these principles, and which was to spark the crisis, was that of the subsidies for the administration of the colonial government of Lower Canada. In staking their claims, the Patriotes were also participants in a larger current of liberal thought in the West.

"Au XIX^e siècle, deux principes menaçaient l'ordre traditionnel: le principe de la souveraineté populaire, qui tendait à remplacer les monarchies de droit divin par des républiques et le principe de la séparation de l'Eglise et de l'Etat, qui mettait en cause le pouvoir temporel de l'Eglise. (...) c'est sur ces deux principes que se fondait l'idéologie libérale de la petite bourgeoisie en lutte à la fois contre l'aristocratie cléricale et la bourgeoisie marchande."⁴¹

Being primarily the dénouement of a class struggle in French Canada, the Rebellion of 1837-38 was likewise a nationalistic conflict. The Patriotes issued a call for representative government as understood in its most fundamental sense, and some even went so far as to plead for

political sovereignty. The liberal-democratic basis of this nationalism was best expressed in the 92 résolutions, which can be seen as the platform of the Parti canadien-patriote and the equivalent of a Bill of Rights. These résolutions were a call for reform, and their support among the people of Lower Canada is reflected in the large number of signatures which they garnered as well as by the outcome of the legislative election of 1834.⁴² Further manifestations of the growing nationalistic fervour were the founding, by Ludger Duvernay in 1834, of the Société "Aide-toi et le ciel t'aidera," the forerunner of the Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste, where a toast was proposed at the first banquet in honour of "[le] peuple source primitive de toute autorité légitime,"⁴³ and the 1845 publication, a few short years after the defeat of the Patriotes, of the first volume of François-Xavier Garneau's Histoire du Canada, a response of sorts to the gratuitous remarks contained in the infamous Durham Report. A legacy of the nationalism which the Patriotes gave French Canada was the historical consciousness of itself as a distinct cultural entity.⁴⁴ The intellectual and political effervescence of this period was akin, in many ways, to that of over a century later following the changes brought about by the Quiet Revolution.

The nationalism enunciated by the Patriotes, though modern in its rhetoric, was not without foundation in the more traditional thematic forces which had guided French

Canadian society up to this point. The Patriotes at once expressed and transformed the dormant feeling of separateness and distinctiveness which was a mark of this society. Essentially, they empowered French Canada politically -- or, more precisely, they presented French Canada with the possibility of attaining political power for the first time in its history. Historian Gérard Filteau remarks:

"Ce nationalisme canadien n'était pas une nouveauté dans la vie du pays. On peut en retracer les premières manifestations dès les débuts de la colonie française. La Conquête n'avait fait que lui inspirer une direction nouvelle. La législation de 1774 en avait reconnu la légitimité et celle de 1791 l'avait admis comme un fait naturel. L'idée nationale, un peu vague jusqu'alors, se trouva précisée par le régime parlementaire. Le peuple resserra ses rangs autour des députés qu'il s'était donnés. Il vit bientôt en eux les défenseurs des souvenirs ancestraux, de son amour du sol, de l'ensemble de ses croyances et de son idéal. Les députés, de leur côté, devinrent les hérauts de l'idée nationale. Appuyés par le nombre, et surtout par la volonté collective de la nation, les politiques avaient vite pris conscience de leurs forces et avaient affirmé comme un dogme le droit à la survivance nationale. Pour les Patriotes, tout le reste se subordonnait à cette aspiration."⁴⁵

The reaction of the Catholic Church to the ideals defended by the Patriotes, particularly the call for armed struggle, was very negative. With some exceptions at the level of the local clergy,⁴⁶ the Church hierarchy refused to support, indeed condemned outright the efforts of the Patriotes. In October 1837, following the popular assembly held in Saint-Charles, Bishop Jean-Jacques Lartigue of Montréal would admonish his flock in the following words:

"Ne vous laissez donc pas séduire, si quelqu'un voulait vous engager à la rébellion contre le gouvernement établi, sous prétexte que vous faites partie du "peuple souverain" (...) L'Eglise est ennemie des révolutions...."⁴⁷ The Church's opposition highlighted the conflict in early 19th century French Canadian society between, on the one hand, a conservative clerical ideology and, on the other, a liberal lay ideology.⁴⁸ There can be little doubt that the Patriotes were threatening the power and authority of the Church as an institution, at least from the perspective of the hierarchy, and their demands were a clear challenge to the policy of collaboration which the Church had pursued since the Conquest. Cognizant as it was of the ultimate futility of the nationalist cause, and eager to solidify its power, the Church was not about to lose this critically important ideological battle.

"Les hommes d'Eglise constituaient dans la société canadienne-française de la première moitié du XIXe siècle le groupe le plus politiquement averti. Lorsque les agitateurs laïques de la période 1823-1837 furent réduits au silence ou forcés de réévaluer la conjoncture, le clergé apparut de nouveau, à l'instar de ce qui s'était produit durant les années qui suivirent immédiatement la Conquête, comme le principal intermédiaire entre le gouvernement et la population canadienne. Le vacuum laissé par la décadence de la classe seigneuriale et l'échec du parti de Papineau, situation qu'avait amenée l'absence d'une véritable bourgeoisie capitaliste canadienne, offrait aux administrateurs ecclésiastiques l'occasion de participer à une redistribution du pouvoir politique. Ils s'étaient depuis longtemps préparés à cette échéance qu'ils avaient d'ailleurs prévue. Leur stratégie qu'avait surtout mise au point Mgr Lartigue, observateur lucide de

la scène politique, se ramenait à deux objectifs: prouver au gouvernement colonial et à la bourgeoisie britannique de la vallée du Saint-Laurent que l'Eglise avait besoin de son autonomie pour exercer une influence modératrice auprès de la population canadienne-française et obtenir la confiance de celle-ci en lui démontrant que le clergé était entièrement à son service."⁴⁹

The failure of the 1837-38 Rebellion effectively thwarted any possibility for the rise of a liberal nationalistic movement in French Canada for some time. It further strengthened the colonial power structure imposed by the Conquest: "C'est après 1837-1838 que la défaite de 1760 prend toute sa signification pour l'avenir des Canadiens français. Elle renforce toutes les tendances inhérentes à la situation coloniale imposée par les armes en 1760."⁵⁰ In addition, and precisely because of this solidification of the colonial situation, the Catholic Church entered an era of veritable ideological monopoly over almost every aspect of Québec society.

"L'idéologie de collaboration pouvait renaître. Elle était présentée comme la seule solution possible pour la survie des Canadiens français. Le nationalisme de dynamique et progressiste qu'il était, deviendra défensif et conservateur. La défaite de 1837-1838, en rendant possible la mainmise du clergé sur la société canadienne-française, érige en système idéologique dominant la fixation idéologique portée par l'élite cléricale. A cet égard, on peut aussi dire que l'échec de la Rébellion est une victoire pour le clergé, car il lui permet de neutraliser son ennemie, la petite bourgeoisie radicale et anticléricale, de s'assurer la collaboration des éléments modérés et d'imposer un système de valeurs rétrogrades dont les thèmes dominants seront l'agriculturisme, le messianisme et l'anti-étatisme. L'idéologie dominante allait désormais refléter la vision du monde du clergé, ses

intérêts et les sources de son pouvoir. Un siècle d'obscurantisme débutait."⁵¹

D. The Church Triumphant

In terms of the influence of the Catholic Church in Québec society, the one hundred year period running approximately from 1840 to 1960 is unparalleled in its importance. It was during this time that the Church was to exert the greatest political dominance, and that it would put in place the vast network of social institutions which would mark generations of Québec citizens and which would be irremediably altered by the secular winds of the Quiet Revolution. The ideology which, above all others, best suited this remarkable epoch was that of ultramontanism. Deeply rooted in traditional Catholic doctrine, ultramontanism was essentially a clerico-religious Weltanschauung. Its opposite, and the ideology against which it constantly railed, was liberalism, the main current of political and social thought of the 19th century.⁵² Ultramontanists were also anti-Gallican; they rejected the French doctrine of the subservience of religious institutions to civil authority which had been the rule in New France.

"La grande tâche des ultramontains au XIX^e siècle était la lutte contre le gallicanisme qui tendait à soumettre l'Eglise au pouvoir civil. Contraire-

ment à l'idéologie libérale, qui au nom de l'individualisme et du rationalisme pose l'autonomie de la personne vis-à-vis son milieu et celle de la société civile par rapport à la religion, l'idéologie ultramontaine démontre la nécessaire dépendance de l'homme à l'Eglise et celle de l'ordre temporel à l'ordre spirituel. Puisque Dieu est à l'origine de toute chose, des hommes, de la société et de l'Etat et que l'homme travaille et vit pour retourner à Dieu, il est donc logique que l'Eglise qui le représente sur terre, soit la seule mandataire pour interpréter la volonté divine et juger de la conformité des lois civiles avec les fins spirituelles de l'humanité. De cette thèse, il résulte que la politique ne peut se séparer de la religion et que l'Etat doit être soumis à la direction et au contrôle de l'Eglise, gardienne infaillible de la morale, monopolisant les voies d'accès à l'éternité paradisiaque."⁵³

The consolidation of ultramontanism in Québec was heralded by an important revivalist movement in the early 1840s known as le grand réveil.⁵⁴ The central figure in this upsurge of religious zeal was Monseigneur Charles-Auguste de Forbin-Janson, exiled bishop of Nancy, France, whose oratorical skills became legendary from Montréal to the Beauce region, and who was instrumental in the rapid spread of the temperance movement then gaining popularity in many areas of Québec. The French prelate was greatly supported in his efforts by two Montréal bishops, Monseigneur Jean-Jacques Lartigue and Monseigneur Ignace Bourget. What is interesting about this movement is the fact that it follows almost immediately upon the Rebellion of 1837-38, and is therefore most indicative of the fundamental shift about to occur in French Canadian society.

Ultramontanism, as a religious and political doctrine,

originated in France.⁵⁵ It arose in reaction to Gallicanism and the virulent anti-clericalism inspired by the French Revolution. In affirming the primacy of the Roman Catholic pontiff over all forms of secular government, and his independence from these, ultramontanism responded most obviously to the imprisonment of Pope Pius VII by Napoléon in 1804 and, more generally, to the attempts by Garibaldi to limit the temporal and territorial power of the pope in the movement for Italian national unification. It was during the papacy of Pius IX, from 1846 to 1878, that the liberal-ultramontane antagonism reached its pinnacle, with the publication of the Syllabus in 1864 and the declaration of the doctrine of papal infallibility in 1870. The papacy of Pius X, from 1903 to 1914, with its condemnation of modernism, would only serve to consolidate the hold of ultramontanism over traditional Catholic doctrine. The emphasis placed on the Thomistic method in theology and philosophy would stand as ultramontanism's most persuasive and lasting ideological justification.

As a form of ideological discourse,⁵⁶ ultramontanism rejected any separation between church and state -- one of the tenets of 19th century liberalism. On the contrary, as Monière remarked above, it declared that the secular world was to be guided by the dictates of religion. Both the individual and society as a whole needed the superior moral guidance and authority of the Church, particularly as

embodied in the person of the pope, heir to Jesus Christ, and as expressed in papal teachings. The Church not only had a duty to exercise its dominion in all things spiritual and temporal; it also had an inalienable right to do so. In its rejection of the so-called evils of the modern world, and their liberal justifications, ultramontanism was profoundly conservative and clerical in its outlook. It saw the return to the principle of authority as a means of counteracting the anti-religious bias of modernity:

"...les "ultra-catholiques" mettaient l'accent sur l'aspect autoritaire de l'Eglise. Ainsi, dans tous les domaines, politique, scientifique et religieux, les catholiques intransigeants se plaçaient au centre du principe autoritaire. Cette position leur paraissait seule capable de sauver le christianisme de "l'esprit moderne," de "la société moderne," de ce qu'il y avait "d'anti-chrétien au fond de tous les systemes actuels" (...) Il ne pouvait être question pour eux d'alliance ou de compromis. La vérité avait des droits imprescriptibles que l'autorité avait mission de faire respecter. Chercher des accomodements avec un siècle foncièrement antichrétien était illusoire."⁵⁷

The right to pronounce itself on all matters, whether directly religious or not, would lead the Church, particularly in Québec, to a position of pre-eminence in the areas of education, the family and social welfare work. The logic behind such control was straightforward: since the Church had a divinely-ordained responsibility to guard the morals of society, and since these three sectors were ideal for the transmission of sound Christian values, and also because education and the family should be founded on the principle

of authority, the Church could therefore claim the right of exclusive management, without interference from government.⁵⁸ The local parish would become the hub of intense religious and social activity, supplemented by an impressive complex of social agencies at the level of the diocese. Most importantly, the ultramontane principle of the supremacy of the Catholic Church over the secular state would lead naturally to the involvement of the former in the affairs of the latter hence the existence of a form of theocracy in Québec which, while not official policy in any way, was certainly a fait accompli.⁵⁹ In Québec, until the mid-20th century, the Church was not shy to assert its influence in the political sphere, and it would avail itself of the pulpit, on more than one occasion, to declare its political allegiances and to ensure that others thought likewise. The Church would use politics as a privileged means of furthering its own vision of what the society should be like.

"En outre, et c'était infiniment plus grave encore, l'Eglise canadienne fut petit à petit incitée, sous l'effet de la crainte que lui inspirait le radicalisme de certains libéraux, à assurer son efficacité religieuse en employant la politique, ce qui, en plus de certains principes de base tels que la suréminence de l'Eglise par rapport à l'Etat, explique l'existence de la théocratie."⁶⁰

In Québec, ultramontanism enjoyed far more prestige and exerted greater influence than it did in France. The architect of French Canadian ultramontanism was Monseigneur Ignace Bourget, second Bishop of Montréal from 1840 to 1876.

Successor to Bishop Jean-Jacques Lartigue, and greatly influenced by his ultramontane views, Bourget would fashion his diocese into a true centre of ultramontanism, endowing it with all the institutions, including newspapers, necessary to guarantee its success and ensure its continuity.⁶¹ But among ecclesiastics, the great ideologue of French Canadian ultramontanism was Monseigneur Louis-François Laflèche, Bishop of Trois-Rivières from 1870 to 1898.⁶² It was Laflèche who, through his writings and sermons, best expressed a systematic and coherent vision of the specificity of French Canadian ultramontanism, and who would endow it with the rich themes which influenced and guided Québec nationalism for close to a century. Foremost among these were traditionalism and providential destiny. As with most clerical thinkers of this period, Laflèche believed that only by remaining faithful to their traditions could French Canadians ensure their future. He wrote:

"Pour nous, Canadiens, qui avons le bonheur de posséder la plénitude de la vérité dans l'enseignement catholique, affermissons notre foi dans le dogme si consolant de notre sainte religion, et si rassurant pour notre avenir national. Tant que nous serons fidèles à la mission qu'ont reçue nos pères, tant que nous marcherons, sans dévier ni à droite ni à gauche, vers le but que la Providence nous a assigné, nous n'avons rien à craindre. Nulle puissance, nulle sagesse humaine ne pourra réussir à nous arrêter dans notre marche, à nous empêcher d'accomplir ici notre destinée comme peuple."⁶³

And in a sermon delivered on the occasion of la Fête de la Saint-Jean-Baptiste to papal zouaves, he stated:

"Ne voyez-vous pas, maintenant, le rapport qu'il y a entre la mission du Précurseur du Christ et celle de nos pères? Il me semble entendre Zacharie dire à nos ancêtres par la bouche de leurs souverains, comme à Jean-Baptiste: "Et toi, petit peuple, tu iras préparer les voies du Seigneur sur les bords lointains de l'Amérique. Va éclairer les tribus sauvages qui s'y trouvent assises à l'ombre de la mort et dans les ténèbres de l'infidélité". Nos pères, à l'exemple du Précurseur du Messie avaient été préparés à cette noble mission... Aussi ils n'ont pas failli à leur noble mission."⁶⁴

Laflèche also enunciated, quite explicitly, the basic ultra-montane view of the necessary dependence of society upon religion:

"L'une des erreurs les plus graves du libéralisme moderne, dans l'ordre social, est d'avoir voulu déplacer la société de la base sur laquelle elle repose nécessairement, l'ordre religieux. En dehors du principe religieux, non seulement il est impossible d'édifier aucune société quelconque, mais les sociétés même les plus florissantes et les plus solidement établies, doivent nécessairement éprouver de profondes perturbations, de violentes convulsions, et s'écrouler bientôt avec fracas, si on leur donne pour point d'appui un autre terrain. De cette erreur fondamentale découlent, comme de leur source, la plupart des autres erreurs sociales de la démagogie."⁶⁵

The appeal to tradition, which also included a glorification of agriculture and an emphasis upon the duty to colonize the uncharted northern regions of Québec, went hand in hand with a strong social and political conservatism. "Basée ainsi sur une nécessaire immuabilité des structures sociales traditionnelles, la doctrine nationale des ultra-montains débouchait de ce fait sur un conservatisme, non seulement religieux ou moral, mais aussi politique et social."⁶⁶ In the political sphere, such conservatism would

be the hallmark, years later, of the almost absolute power enjoyed by Maurice Duplessis, Premier of Québec from 1936 to 1939 and from 1944 to 1959. Duplessis' years in power, what is called la grande noirceur, represent a unique symbiosis between church and state. Though in no way subservient to the Catholic Church, Duplessis knew how to use its prestige and influence to affirm his own stature. He was the personification of the messianic, authoritarian ideal of ultramontaniam.

"Duplessis est très attaché à la religion; il n'est pas soumis à l'Eglise. Jamais il n'acceptera une directive ou une orientation quelconque de l'épiscopat. Ce qu'il attend d'une alliance avec le pouvoir ecclésiastique, c'est une sacralisation de son propre pouvoir. L'Eglise, de son côté, ne peut manquer de reconnaître en Duplessis une authentique incarnation de la culture canadienne-française-conservatrice-catholique. Et le cardinal [Villeneuve], homme de pouvoir lui-même, sympathise inévitablement avec cet homme d'Etat qui, à l'heure des grandes dictatures, sait s'imposer comme Chef de la nation."⁶⁷

What ultramontaniam represented, ultimately, was the triumph of a retrograde, religious world-view over a more liberal, secular one. Due in part to the effective absence of other types of ideologies in French Canadian society, and considering the central place occupied by the Church, what emerged was a form of religious ideology. The sacred and the profane were coextensive, the latter being subordinate to the former, and religion became the condicio sine qua non of national identity and survival. The clerical elite assumed the role of saviour and guardian of "la nation." The

Catholic faith and the French language, the two most traditional elements of the inheritance of French Canada, became the pillars of national distinctiveness. A universal religious vision (Catholicism) was transformed into a particular, territorially-bound nationalism.⁶⁸

"Le peuple québécois s'est rabattu en conséquence sur une idéologie de type religieux. Ce qui a signifié qu'il adossait ce monde-ci, économique, social, politique, etc., à un autre monde, surnaturel et eschatologique. Qu'il relativisait la valeur du monde présent par rapport à un au-delà censé supérieur et la véritable patrie des êtres humains. Qu'il fondait le pouvoir sur le sacré et le divin. Qu'il concevait le salut de la nation comme devant être l'oeuvre d'un messie (chef, élite); ou celui du monde comme devant s'effectuer par l'intermédiaire de la nation canadienne-française (messianisme national)."⁶⁹

Many of the more potent and enduring themes of Québec's collective consciousness found their expression in the ultramontane ideology: the family, the land, the faith as the bulwark of the nation, the providential mission of the French Canadian "race", the necessary affinity between language and religion. In this sense, ultramontanism, like most forms of ideology, regardless of their origins, played an indispensable role in building and legitimating a national identity for Québec. Though this identity may have been regressive and defensive in its particular ethos, there is little doubt that ultramontanism was instrumental in la survie of le peuple canadien-français, for that was its ultimate purpose and justification.

"En tant proprement qu'idéologie, l'ultramontanisme a défini, légitimé, constitué la réalité

nationale des québécois, sur des points par exemple comme la vocation agricole, la dévalorisation de l'état politique, l'exaltation du modèle familial et communautaire, l'étroite imbrication de la langue et de la foi, etc. Quoi qu'il en ait été de la valeur en soi de ces déterminations, ou de leur signification face aux déterminations différentes des colonies anglophones, et même à supposer que d'autres choix aient véritablement et réalistement pu être retenus, reste que, à ce premier point de vue, le discours ultramontain a joué un rôle essentiel et vital pour toute société, celui de lui conférer une identité reconnaissable, de lui en faire prendre conscience et même de la rendre, cette société, contente et fière de soi. On n'existe pas à moins. Cette idéologie se faisait du reste moins d'illusions qu'on ne le croit souvent, puisqu'elle ne prétendait pas à plus qu'à assurer la survivance du Canada français."⁷⁰

In the social and cultural sectors, the Church, in this period, succeeded in putting in place an impressive network of institutions designed to serve the population of Québec. From schools to hospitals to specialized charitable agencies, it was the Church which proudly assumed the function of social provider which would later be retrieved by the State. In so doing, the Church was able to exert a direct and almost exclusive influence over the daily lives of people, and it jealously guarded its prerogative from any intrusion by government. The values which infused all these institutions were rigidly Catholic. People therefore naturally came to see the Church as a solace in their time of need, and as the closest and most important agent for the definition and transmission of their collective identity. In its task, the Church had at its disposal considerable human resources, consisting mainly of members of religious

congregations, many of which were brought over from France and some of which were founded here. In this regard, a telling statistic will reveal the extent of the Church's human assets compared to those of the Québec government: "...en 1898, alors qu'un Etat squelettique peut à peine mobiliser une poignée de députés et 200 fonctionnaires, l'Eglise affiche fièrement près de 10 000 cadres: 10 évêques, 1 529 prêtres séculiers, 330 prêtres réguliers, 1 500 frères et 6 500 religieuses."⁷¹ At the dawn of the 20th century, consequently, the Catholic Church in Québec had managed to impose itself on the society by virtue of its dominant presence in all facets of life and by its claim to be the triumphant voice and guardian of the nation.

"Libérée de la tutelle du pouvoir politique et bien servie par des chefs entreprenants, l'Eglise du Québec est devenue une Eglise nationale et une puissance politique majeure. Liée étroitement à Rome et réveillée par un vent de renouveau, elle a créé un climat de chrétienté où se retrouvent à la fois l'unité de croyance et de conception de l'homme, l'imprégnation chrétienne des usages, des institutions et des lois et une compénétration étroite des hiérarchies religieuses et séculières, avec prépondérance cléricale.

(...)

"Ce triomphalisme affiché occulte cependant des faiblesses qui menacent déjà le bel édifice: la difficile adaptation de ce style de catholicisme à la vie urbaine, les effets stérilisants d'un cléricalisme prépondérant, l'activisme d'une partie du clergé, la peur de la modernité ou des simples nouveautés...."⁷²

In 1891, Pope Leo XIII published his momentous encyclical, Rerum novarum, in which he advocated a form of social Catholicism and the involvement of Catholics in

workers' organizations. Though written primarily as a response to the rise of socialism, and certainly more conservative in orientation than is generally acknowledged in certain Catholic circles, this document would have a far-reaching impact on the Church in Québec. Influenced also by the social teachings of Pius XI, Pope from 1922 to 1939, and notably his endorsement of corporatism as an appropriate form of Christian social order, Québec Catholicism, in the first half of the 20th century, would enter a period of fermentation.⁷³ In response to these calls of involvement from Rome, ecclesiastical and lay leaders in Québec expended a great deal of time and energy in establishing a vast array of Catholic organizations, from youth and student groups, to women's circles, to financial institutions (les caisses populaires), to agricultural and trade unions. The goal was none other than to catholicize society, and also to transform it without resorting to the solutions proposed by socialism and communism (ideologies officially condemned by the Vatican) in response to the growing crises engendered by the spread of industrialization and urbanization. The Church in Québec was well aware that the social forces of the modern era were hemming it in; its solution, as ambitious as it may have appeared to be, was one of recuperation, thereby hopefully controlling the ravages of social change.⁷⁴ The Asbestos Strike of 1949 would mark the end of this illusory hope and a realignment of the Church's strategy and

interests.

The strands of nationalism running through Québec society from the 1867 Canadian Confederation to the dawn of the 1960s were many and varied.⁷⁵ Henri Bourassa, founder of Le Devoir, would emphasize a conservative pan-Canadian type of nationalism, where French Canadians were the proud and faithful guardians of their language and religion.⁷⁶ Lionel Groulx, on the other hand, was more confined in his approach, opting for a nationalism centred on the themes of race and the traditions of past generations. In the political arena, Maurice Duplessis was heir to this vieux nationalisme, though his long years in power were characterized more "par un peu de nationalisme mais beaucoup d'habileté politique et un contexte de prospérité tout à fait exceptionnel."⁷⁷ There were some attempts made at a more liberal, social-democratic form of nationalism stressing government reform, such as l'Action libérale nationale in the early 1930s and le Bloc populaire canadien in the early 1940s, but these were generally unsuccessful.⁷⁸ After the Second World War, in the period from 1945 to 1960, there arose a conflict between neo-nationalists, intent on giving Québec the tools it needed to become a modern state, and what can be called anti-nationalists, those, such as Gérard Pelletier and Pierre Elliott Trudeau, who blamed the retard of French Canadian society on the powerful influence of nationalism and clericalism.⁷⁹ Not until 1960, of course,

would there emerge a type of nationalism able to express the full impact of the important social changes taking place -- a nationalism for new times, whose source of legitimacy was the State itself.

"Mais pour que ce nationalisme apparaisse clairement, il faudra en outre que les Québécois se donnent un véritable instrument de contrôle. Cet instrument ne pourra être autre que l'Etat du Québec puisque les autres points de rassemblement de cette société, l'Eglise, la religion, le village, devaient perdre leur signification dans un univers de mobilisation sociale. C'est donc par le biais d'une sorte d'étatisme, d'une responsabilité accrue accordée au gouvernement de la province de Québec se traduisant par une intervention plus grande du pouvoir politique dans divers secteurs de la société québécoise, que devait apparaître un nouveau phénomène: le nationalisme québécois."⁸⁰

Québec Catholicism in the late 19th and early 20th centuries is distinguished by its mass appeal and its emphasis on public and popular forms of religious expression: "...le catholicisme québécois est devenu un phénomène de masse qui répond aux attentes de la multitude, une religion populaire où ce qui est présenté par les clercs est largement accepté par les gens ordinaires."⁸¹ Conscious as it was of the need to demonstrate the triumph of religion in all aspects of social life, ultramontanism had a marked propensity for public feasts and celebrations, where was exhibited "l'unité du catholicisme et son caractère national."⁸² Guy Laperrière speaks of three successive waves of such collective displays from the turn of the century to shortly after the Second World War.⁸³ One of the highlights

was the 1910 International Eucharistic Congress held in Montréal, described as "l'une des manifestations les plus grandioses que le Québec ait connu" and "le sommet de la puissance de l'Eglise du Québec."⁸⁴ The public festivities surrounding la Fête de la Saint-Jean-Baptiste of June 24th also attained, during this period, the height of their splendour, for "nulle figure ne peut mieux évoquer les liens historiques entre l'Eglise catholique et la société traditionnelle du Québec que celle du saint patron des Canadiens français."⁸⁵

Ultramontane popular religiosity, closely linked to a multitude of Catholic feast-days, consisted of many public and private devotional and cultic practices.⁸⁶ Among these were devotion to the person of the pope, to the Eucharist,⁸⁷ to the Sacred Heart and to Christ the King, "qui célèbre le règne social de Jésus-Christ et marque l'aspect le plus poussé de la volonté d'affirmation (sic) du catholicisme dans la société."⁸⁸ Equally popular were the cult of the Virgin Mary, particularly the rosary, and pilgrimages to religious shrines, notably those of Sainte-Anne-de-Beaupré and l'Oratoire Saint-Joseph du Mont-Royal. Religious retreats and an interest and involvement in missionary endeavours were also common.

It is sometimes claimed that all these public and private expressions of religious fervour were only a demonstration of the Church's power and control over a credulous

population. This is not, however, quite accurate. While it is certainly true that ultramontanism advocated a "sacralized" social order under clerical influence, its religious impulse, as reflected in the everyday beliefs and practices of Québec Catholics, was consistent with the aspirations of the population, though it should be remembered that the purpose of many public devotions was to reconcile and minimize class differences. What ultramontanism did leave as a legacy to Québec Catholicism was a religiosity rich in its myriad forms and reassuring in its claims to tradition. Nive Voisine is most perceptive when he writes:

"Mais il faut (...) voir l'adéquation qui existait entre le discours des clercs et ce que réclamait le peuple chrétien. Les ultramontains (sic) ont, en effet, réussi à colmater la brèche qui commençait à se creuser entre l'Eglise et les masses populaires au début du XIXe siècle. Un clergé plus nombreux, "issu du peuple qu'il sert et qui le vénère, directement solidaire des problèmes les plus divers", a proposé une religion active et omniprésente qui parlait aux gens de solidarité, de fidélité, de pratiques connues et qui acceptait la familiarité avec les saints, la célébration des fêtes et tout un lot de manifestations collectives rejoignant "le besoin de visualiser d'un peuple à la tradition orale déjà éprise de merveilleux et de spectaculaire". Ici comme en France, les grandes dévotions (...) ont contribué également à développer, dans un continent si majoritairement anglo-saxon et protestant, une chrétienté vivante -- l'élan missionnaire qui la secoue en est la meilleure illustration -- et originale...."⁸⁹

It would, however, be inaccurate to leave the impression that ultramontanism enjoyed absolute intellectual control in Québec from the 1840s to the 1960s, and that

there were no criticisms levelled at the clerical domination of the society during this very long period. In the opening decades of this century, the 1930s and 1940s, both within and without the Church, thinkers and activists were beginning to challenge some of the traditional assumptions about French Canada. In 1948, the painter Paul-Emile Borduas, along with fifteen other intellectuals, issued Refus global, a manifesto calling for the emancipation of all forms of artistic expression from traditional norms, religious or otherwise. A short time later, in 1960, a religious brother, Jean-Paul Desbiens, would publish Les Insolences du Frère Untel, a series of straightforward critiques of different aspects of Québec society, notably education and clericalism, and which had remarkable commercial and popular success.⁹⁰

1949 was a watershed year in Québec history. In the influential book which Pierre Elliott Trudeau edited on the 1949 Asbestos Strike, he writes, at the end of the first chapter:

"Certes, il y avait eu d'autres grandes grèves au Canada français avant celle de l'amiante, et il y en aurait d'autres par la suite. Mais celle-ci fut significative parce qu'elle s'est produite alors que nous vivions la fin d'un monde, précisément au moment où nos cadres sociaux -- vermoulus parce que faits pour une autre époque -- étaient prêts à éclater.

"C'est donc la date qui fut déterminante, et non tellement le lieu, ni l'industrie particulière: le hasard aurait bien pu faire que la grève éclatât ailleurs qu'à Asbestos. Car à cette époque le prolétariat québécois avait été amené, par la

logique de son développement, à se tailler dans la communauté une place en rapport avec son nombre et son utilité sociale.

"Mais il s'est trouvé que c'est dans l'amiante que le feu a pris!"⁹¹

The Asbestos Strike would mark the transition from a traditional society, with its old guard style of politics and its disregard for elementary social justice, to a society on the verge of entering the modern age. What the bitter conflicts of the Strike brought out were the long-festering contradictions between traditionalism and modernism -- most specifically in the area of labour, but more generally at the level of the whole of Québec's social and economic structure. The Strike, which represented at once a sort of vindication and last gasp of the Catholic model of syndicalism, also proved the Church's capacity to predict and to adapt itself to social change.⁹² The decade of the 1950s was the last stage of the passage from the old to the new. With the 1960s would come a rapid transformation of Québec society, and also a profound universal metamorphosis of the Catholic Church's identity. The 1960s also saw the emergence of the term québécois as a legitimate expression of national assertion and pride. The time had come for Québec to move beyond its past.

E. The Church in the New Québec

When the Liberal Party of Jean Lesage won the Québec election of June 1960 under the slogan "C'est le temps que ça change!", few could then predict the full impact of this historic event. Yet the Liberals' brief years in power, from 1960 to 1966, were momentous for Québec society. This short span of time would initiate la révolution tranquille, and its reverberations would be felt down to this day. In the immediate, the election of the Lesage government put an end to the "dark days" of the Duplessis era and, most importantly, it signalled the appearance of a renewed confidence in the political apparatus of Québec. Of the many transformations, large and small, which took place during this period, two are especially significant in terms of the role of the Catholic Church in Québec: the emergence of the State as an agent of social and political change, and the rise of a new, aggressive type of nationalism.⁹³

Louis Balthazar has written: "S'il est un point majeur des critiques formulées par la nouvelle génération de l'après-guerre à l'endroit de l'ancien régime canadien-français, c'est bien la valorisation de l'organisation étatique."⁹⁴ And Jean Lesage would declare, in 1961:

"Il faut bien comprendre que l'Etat québécois, c'est le point d'appui collectif de la communauté

canadienne-française et, à l'heure actuelle, l'instrument nécessaire de son progrès culturel, économique et social. Il nous faut savoir l'utiliser sans excès, mais asusi sans fausse crainte. L'Etat québécois n'est pas un danger parmi nous, au contraire, il est à nous. Il nous appartient et émane de notre peuple."⁹⁵

This belief in the State as the means of national affirmation and as the guardian of Québec's collective destiny was the dominant theme of the Quiet Revolution. The term rattrapage, indicating the need for Québec to modernize its economic and social structures, is often associated with this process of national awakening. It was the State which now became the source of cohesion and the provider of the social good, thereby displacing the Church which had long served in these capacities. In light of the increased secularization of Québec society, and the resulting breakdown of religious cohesiveness, "l'Etat devient la seule organisation capable de répondre, de façon globale, aux besoins sociaux des individus et de créer une nouvelle solidarité à un niveau plus large et plus neutre."⁹⁶

Concretely, this meant that the State now controlled Québec's cultural, social and educational institutions and services. The Ministère des affaires culturelles was created in 1961, and the Ministère de l'éducation in 1964. Almost overnight, the power and influence of the Catholic Church in the important institutions of collective life, particularly education and social services, were greatly diminished.

"Le retrait de l'Eglise comme puissance temporelle et son remplacement par l'Etat comme institution

centrale de la collectivité provoquent une baisse de son influence comme source d'inspiration morale pour les individus et une vague de désacralisation et de sécularisation des institutions et de la vie sociale. Au spiritualisme séculaire de l'idéologie dominante succédait une philosophie sociale plus matérialiste et rationaliste."⁹⁷

The Québec of the 1960s, defining itself in terms of the primacy of the State, saw the growth of a bold new nationalism. No longer did this nationalism find its inspiration in the religio-cultural traditions of French Canadian ethnicity; rather, it looked to politics and the territory of Québec as its driving themes. The ideals of political independence and sovereignty became especially credible and important. The first political party advocating independence, the Rassemblement pour l'indépendance nationale, was founded in 1963.⁹⁸ This was followed by the Mouvement souveraineté-association, set up by René Lévesque in 1967, and by its transformation into the Parti québécois a year later. This new nationalism would also have a violent side, as witnessed by the Front de libération du Québec and the October Crisis of 1970.⁹⁹

Québécois nationalism effectively replaced religion as the source of authority and legitimacy in the new Québec. It was no longer possible for the Church to offer any believable and all-encompassing vision of society, considering the vigorous presence of the State and the influence of secularization in Québec. Religious fervour gave way to nationalistic fervour, and even la Fête de la Saint-Jean-Baptiste

became an occasion for the display of pride in one's identity as Québécois. This does not mean that modern Québec nationalism was a new sort of religion, as Balthazar points out. Rather, this nationalism was, in and of itself, and as distinguished from all its predecessors, the reflection of a collective will and maturity.

"Le déclin de la légitimation religieuse laissait un vide qui devait être comblé. Ce sont l'étatisme et le nationalisme qui occupèrent très tôt, presque spontanément, la place abandonnée par l'Eglise. L'Etat entraît graduellement dans les sphères de l'éducation, de la culture et des affaires sociales. La ferveur jadis entretenue par l'allégeance religieuse fut remplacé (sic) par la ferveur nationale. Les congrès eucharistiques et les défilés de la Fête-Dieu n'existaient plus. Les Québécois s'adonnaient à d'autres célébrations alimentées par leurs chansonniers presque tous inspirés par le nouveau nationalisme. Les fêtes de la Saint-Jean prirent la place des grands ralliements religieux.

"(...) Car le passage du collectivisme religieux au nationalisme signifie bien plus qu'un simple changement de religion. Le Québec a cessé d'être dominé par l'autorité religieuse, non pas tellement par lassitude à l'endroit de cette autorité, ni en raison des critiques qu'on pouvait lui adresser, mais surtout parce que la mobilisation sociale ne permettait plus l'exercice d'un tel type d'autorité. Le Québec des années soixante ne peut plus définir son identité par référence au religieux. Le nationalisme moderne est un phénomène d'affirmation d'une identité collective laïque. Il se situe à un niveau autre que l'allégeance religieuse. En parler comme d'une nouvelle religion, c'est utiliser tout au plus un langage métaphorique. Car si le nationalisme remplace la religion comme point de rassemblement d'un peuple, c'est qu'il apporte autre chose que la religion."¹⁰⁰

Not only was the Québec Catholic Church subject to the external forces of change in the 1960s; it was also under-

going, as a religious institution, an internal transformation of its own. When John XXIII became Pope in 1958, he declared that he wanted the Catholic Church to enter into a dialogue with the modern world. In convening the Second Vatican Council in 1962, and placing it under the sign of aggiornamento ("a bringing up to date"), he set in motion a process which was to shake the very foundations of Roman Catholicism. The Council sought to make the Church relevant to contemporary society. The reforms which it initiated and instituted, whether in the liturgy, the role of the clergy, ecumenism or the Church's social teachings, had a profound effect on Catholics the world over, including the Church in Québec: "Partout dans l'Eglise catholique soufflait un vent de renouveau. (...) Il était inévitable que ce nouveau courant produise un effet profond sur l'Eglise québécoise...."¹⁰¹ As part of this process of reform and self-analysis, and out of concern for the role of the layperson in the Church, the Catholic bishops of Québec established, in 1968, the Commission d'étude sur les laïcs et l'Eglise, also known as the Commission Dumont.¹⁰²

What the Council did, in its emphasis on the Church's openness to the world, was basically to abandon the traditional attitude of Catholicism as a social and political power "unto itself," removed from the world of human concerns and problems. It thereby accentuated a crisis of faith, reflected most clearly in a rapid decline in reli-

gious observance and a decrease in vocations. For the Church in Québec, its stature and influence already undermined by the nationalism inspired by the Quiet Revolution, the time had come to reappraise its relationship to the society of which it had always been such an important part. It did so with a great deal of ease, conscious that it could never return to its glory of old.¹⁰³

On November 15, 1976, the Parti québécois, under René Lévesque, won an astounding electoral victory. For the first time, a political party calling for Québec's political sovereignty was in power. Social democratic and moderate in its ideology, the Parti québécois government represented, for many, the long awaited fulfilment of nationalistic aspirations.¹⁰⁴ One of the most daring and controversial acts of its first mandate was Bill 101, the law establishing French as Québec's only official language. In making language one of the cornerstones of its nationalism, the Parti québécois government became heir to a strong nationalistic tradition which had always seen the question of language as a key element in the creation and protection of a collective identity for Québec. The old equation between religion and language was no longer valid; now it was the State which came to the defence of the beleaguered French language, and it did so with the full weight of legitimate power.¹⁰⁵ The single, most important event of the Parti québécois years, however, and the most historically

significant, was the 1980 Referendum on sovereignty-association.

In late 1979, the Parti québécois government published its White Paper on sovereignty-association, entitled La nouvelle entente Québec-Canada.¹⁰⁶ The document was a critique of the Canadian federal system and Québec's place within it, and it called for a radically new constitutional arrangement, based on Québec's political sovereignty and an economic association with the rest of Canada. The intent of the Referendum of May 1980 would be to obtain the democratic endorsement of Québec's population for this proposal, and to give the government a mandate to negotiate it. In August 1979, the Catholic bishops of Québec issued a pastoral message "sur l'évolution politique de la société québécoise," entitled Le peuple québécois et son avenir politique. The tone of this document is measured and cautious, "...careful not to make a choice among the different options offered to the people of Quebec."¹⁰⁷ It reveals just how far the Catholic Church had come since the days of its interventions in the political arena and its outright condemnation of any type of significant change.

The bishops' message makes two important points: that Québec francophones constitute a distinct people ("peuple"), though not to the exclusion of other Québec residents, and the Québec citizens are entitled to choose the sort of political system within which they wish to live. The

document states:

"Les francophones du Québec constituent sûrement un peuple par leur langue, leur personnalité, leurs traditions, leur génie propre, leur sentiment de solidarité et leur "vouloir-vivre collectif". A l'intérieur de la population canadienne, leur histoire et leur culture se distinguent non seulement de celles des Canadiens de langue anglaise, mais même de celles d'autres concentrations francophones importantes, comme les Acadiens, par exemple. Les francophones du Québec sont, avec raison, fiers du peuple qu'ils forment. Mais, ils n'épuisent pas la réalité québécoise.

(...)

"...le peuple québécois conserve son droit à disposer de lui-même et à revoir ou remettre en question, s'il le veut, les liens qui l'unissent à ses partenaires.

(...)

"Le Québec peut choisir, en exerçant son droit à l'autodétermination, de se maintenir dans un cadre de type fédéral qui reconnaîtrait concrètement sa spécificité. Il peut, aussi, se déclarer souverain en exerçant ce même droit à l'autodétermination."¹⁰⁸

In their conclusion, however, the bishops limit themselves to their evangelical mission, careful to point out that either political option is legitimate:

"Nous répétons, cependant, qu'aucun des choix politiques qui s'offrent présentement au Québec pour son avenir constitutionnel ne s'impose au nom de l'Evangile et que nous poursuivrons notre tâche d'évangélisation, quelle que soit l'option démocratiquement choisie."¹⁰⁹

In endorsing neither the federal status quo nor a new form of political arrangement, the Catholic hierarchy of Québec was adopting an attitude very much in line with the redefinition of the Church's role in society supported by

the Second Vatican Council and reinforced by current papal directives. With reference to the Church, the Council's Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World states: "...in virtue of her mission and nature, she is bound to no particular form of human culture, nor to any political, economic, or social system."¹⁰ The Church's responsibility in responding to the problems of society is best ensured by the involvement and dedication of her members, notably the laity: "Since they have an active role to play in the whole life of the Church, laymen are not only bound to penetrate the world with a Christian spirit. They are also called to be witnesses to Christ in all things in the midst of human society."¹¹ It is this type of formal detachment from the political order which characterizes the Church's posture today. Not that the Church does not sometimes speak out forcefully on important social issues, such as poverty or abortion.¹² But it always does so from the perspective of their moral and ethical implications, interpreted in light of the Christian gospels.

"Between 1960 and 1980 a new dimension became discernible in the language of the Quebec bishops: the Church wants to be a part of the new society Quebec is trying to establish and wants to help make it a success, but she prefers to exercise her role not so much by negotiations at upper levels as through the everyday mediations of lay people who are in the midst of temporal tasks of all kinds, "especially in those areas of heated debate in our day -- labour relations, families, centers of learning and communication, the world of the underprivileged, the poor, the neglected" (Pastoral Priorities, the Quebec Assembly of Bishops, March 1978)."¹³

Louis Balthazar, in Bilan du nationalisme au Québec, makes the observation that only twice in the history of Québec has there been a genuine effort to alter profoundly the shape and direction of Québec society: the Patriotes of the 1830s and the Parti québécois of the 1970s.

"A deux reprises seulement au cours de deux cents ans d'histoire, des élites ont voulu donner le grand coup. Deux grands projets politiques ont été conçus dans des circonstances fort différentes et selon des formes aussi différentes. Mais le rêve était sensiblement le même pour les Patriotes et pour les indépendantistes du Parti québécois: assurer à une classe proprement québécoise et francophone le contrôle plus ou moins complet de la société du Québec. Les deux mouvements ont engendré beaucoup d'enthousiasme, beaucoup de passion mais ils se sont développés tous les deux au-delà de ce qu'une majorité de la population voulait bien endosser. En conséquence, et bien contrairement à leur mission initiale, ils ont contribué à polariser, à diviser la population qu'ils devaient rassembler. A chaque fois, le nationalisme souverainiste s'est résorbé en autonomisme, c'est-à-dire en une affirmation de l'identité à l'intérieur d'un cadre plus vaste."¹¹⁴

It is interesting, by way of summary, to recall briefly where the Québec Catholic Church stood in relation to these two historic events. With reference to the Rebellion of 1837-38, the evidence is incontrovertible. The Catholic Church, via its hierarchy, was clearly opposed to the liberal ideology espoused by the Patriotes, all in the name of submission to the political authority and out of fear of the implications of modern liberalism, particularly as would affect the social privileges of the Church.¹¹⁵ As concerns the 1980 Referendum on sovereignty-association under the Parti québécois government, the Church's stance was nothing

if not neutral. The rationale was one of faithfulness to the gospel imperative and to the teaching of the Church -- much the same argument as was used in 1837-38, but with the opposite result. In both cases, the Catholic Church, historically an important agent of Québec nationalism, found itself unable or unwilling to endorse the political juncture which was the logical end-product of this nationalism.¹¹⁶

ENDNOTES

¹The tendency to idealize or "mythologize" the role of the Catholic Church in French Canada is most typical of such historians as Etienne-Michel Faillon and Lionel Groulx; it is less so of François-Xavier Garneau, the father of French Canadian historiography.

²Commission d'étude sur les laïcs et l'Eglise, L'Eglise du Québec: un héritage, un projet (Montréal: Editions Fides, 1971), Volume 0, p. 65.

³Ibid., p. 63.

⁴For a further discussion of this idea, see Chapter IV, section A of this thesis.

⁵Thomas F. O'Dea, The Sociology of Religion (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey : Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1966), p. 49. Emphases mine.

⁶See Henry Chadwick, The Early Church (Harmondsworth, England: Penguin Books, 1967, The Pelican History of the Church, Volume I), Chapter 8.

⁷The expression is found in the writings of St. Augustine. See The City of God (Garden City, New York: Doubleday Image Books, 1958).

⁸See Henry Chadwick, op. cit., Chapters 12 and 16.

⁹Commission d'étude sur les laïcs et l'Eglise, op. cit., p. 71. The report of the Commission then goes on to state: "La faiblesse d'un tel procédé, outre le fait qu'il répond beaucoup plus aux impulsions de l'affectivité qu'aux exigences critiques de l'intelligence, c'est qu'il accepte au départ deux postulats: notre passé est honteux; l'Eglise est responsable de ce passé que nous renions. Or nous voyons mal en quoi il est honteux pour une collectivité d'avoir été

opprimée plutôt que colonisatrice, d'avoir patiemment et progressivement résisté à l'exploitation plutôt que de s'y être livrée, d'avoir subi l'injustice plutôt que d'en avoir fait supporter aux autres le poids. Quant au rôle de l'Eglise, une investigation un peu attentive nous force à dresser un bilan positif de son activité; ce qui ne nie d'aucune façon des lacunes sur lesquelles nous avons insisté et sur lesquelles nous reviendrons." Although this clarification is certainly valid, the argument behind stating that Québec's past is not shameful because it is that of an oppressed society which successfully resisted exploitation and assimilation is somewhat gratuitous; it echos the sort of "historical apologetics" which the Commission decries in the first place.

¹⁰Lionel Groulx, Notre maître, le passé (Montréal: Editions Alain Stanké, 1977), Volume I, p. 271.

¹¹See especially selected works of such scholars as Michel Brunet, Fernand Dumont, Fernand Ouellet, Robert-Lionel Séguin and Marcel Trudel.

¹²Michel Brunet, Québec, Canada anglais: Deux itinéraires/un affrontement (Montréal: Editions HMH, 1968), p. 33.

¹³Cornelius J. Jaenen, The Role of the Church in New France (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson Limited, 1976), p. 39.

¹⁴Etienne-Michel Faillon, Histoire de la colonie française en Canada (Villemarie: Bibliothèque Paroissiale, 1865), Volume I, p. 3.

¹⁵On the question of Faillon's Histoire as mythic construction, see the interesting article by Louis Rousseau entitled "La naissance du récit mythique des origines québécoises", in Religion and Culture in Canada/Religion et culture au Canada, Peter Slater, ed. (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1977), pp. 43-63.

¹⁶John Webster Grant, Moon of Wintertime: Missionaries and the Indians of Canada in Encounter since 1534 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984), p. 14. As its subtitle indicates, this book is an historical study of

the impact of missionary efforts on Canada's native peoples, an important subject but one which is beyond the immediate purview of this thesis.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 15.

¹⁸Denis Monière, Le développement des idéologies au Québec des origines à nos jours (Montréal: Editions Québec/Amérique, 1977), pp. 44-45.

¹⁹See Cornelius J. Jaenen, op. cit., Chapter III.

²⁰Ibid., p. 47.

²¹As quoted in Commission d'étude sur les laïcs et l'Eglise, op. cit., p. 64. Emphases mine.

²²For an historical summary of the Counter-Reformation, see Owen Chadwick, The Reformation (Harmondsworth, England: Penguin Books, 1972, The Pelican History of the Church, Volume III), pp. 251-320.

²³John Webster Grant, op. cit., p. 10.

²⁴Jean-Charles Falardeau, "The Seventeenth-Century Parish in French Canada, in French-Canadian Society, Marcel Rioux and Yves Martin, eds. (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1964), Volume I, p. 23. It is important to note that the parish also became, over time, a unit of municipal life.

²⁵Ibid., p. 32.

²⁶The stature and influence of the cure will increase significantly after the Conquest of 1760, due, in large measure, to the vacuum created by the departure of French colonial administrators and the consequent isolation from the mother country and her traditions.

²⁷Cornelius J. Jaenen, op. cit., p. 120.

²⁸Denis Monière, op. cit., p. 70.

²⁹Ibid., p. 75.

³⁰The seigneurial system still existed, but it no longer was an effective or influential force in French Canada. Initially, the Church allied itself with members of the seigneurial class, if only because this class was a remnant of a once glorious French colonial organization and they shared similar political and economic interests under the new rulers.

³¹See Michel Brunet, op. cit., pp. 30-42, particularly pp. 34, 37 and 38.

³²Ibid., p. 10.

³³As quoted in Denis Monière, op. cit., p. 77.

³⁴Ibid., p. 91. Emphases mine.

³⁵The Québec Act of 1774 also represents an attempt by England to counteract, in Canada, the type of unrest beginning to be felt in the American colonies. See ibid., pp. 93-95.

³⁶Ibid., p. 85.

³⁷Ibid., p. 93.

³⁸John S. Moir's study, The Church in the British Era (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson Limited, 1972, A History of the Christian Church in Canada, Volume II), provides a summary of the period from the Conquest to Confederation. For our purposes, see particularly Chapters 1, 3, 4 and 7.

³⁹Denis Monière, op. cit., p. 123.

⁴⁰A number of important works on the Rebellion and the Patriotes are available. See, among others, one of the earlier ones by Gérard Filteau, Histoire des Patriotes (Montréal: Les Editions Univers Inc., 1980). For a specific analysis of the nationalist ideology espoused by the Patriotes, see Louis Balthazar, Bilan du nationalisme au Québec (Montréal: Editions de l'Hexagone, 1986), Chapter 3, and two works by Denis Monière, Le développement..., Chapter III, and Ludger Duvernay et la révolution intellectuelle au Bas-Canada (Montréal: Editions Québec/Amérique, 1987).

⁴¹Denis Monière, Le développement..., p. 142.

⁴²See ibid., pp. 131-133. The importance of newspapers, notably La Minerve, in furthering the cause of the Patriotes needs to be emphasized. On this question, see Denis Monière, Ludger Duvernay....

⁴³Denis Monière, Ludger Duvernay...., p. 99.

⁴⁴See Serge Gagnon, Le Québec et ses historiens de 1840 à 1920 (Québec: Presses de l'Université Laval, 1978).

⁴⁵Gérard Filteau, op. cit., p. 120.

⁴⁶See Robert Chabot, Le curé de campagne et la contestation locale au Québec de 1791 aux troubles de 1837-1838 (Montréal: Editions HMH, Cahiers du Québec, 1974).

⁴⁷As quoted in Denis Monière, Le développement..., p. 143.

⁴⁸See Fernand Ouellet, "Nationalisme canadien-français et laïcisme au XIXe siècle", in Jean-Paul Bernard, ed., Les idéologies québécoises au 19e siècle (Montréal: Boréal Express, 1973), pp. 37-60.

⁴⁹Michel Brunet, "L'Eglise catholique du Bas-Canada et le partage du pouvoir à l'heure d'une nouvelle donne (1837-1854)", in ibid., p. 86.

⁵⁰Denis Monière, Le développement..., p. 156.

⁵¹Ibid., p. 158. Though the next section of this chapter is entitled "The Church Triumphant", and may therefore leave the impression of absolute ideological uniformity during this critically important period of Québec history, I should like to refer the reader to the opening pages of Chapter V, section C of the thesis for a brief, yet essential discussion of a more nuanced perspective.

⁵²See Philippe Sylvain, "Quelques aspects de l'antagonisme libéral-ultramontain au Canada français", in Jean-Paul Bernard, op. cit., pp. 127-149.

⁵³Denis Monière, Le développement..., p. 216.

⁵⁴See Nive Voisine, "La reconstruction d'une Eglise", in Jean Simard et al., Le grand héritage: L'église catholique et la société du Québec (Québec: Gouvernement du Québec, 1984), pp. 68-75. See also Louis Rousseau, La prédication à Montréal de 1800 à 1830: Approche religio-logique (Montréal: Editions Fides, 1976).

⁵⁵For a discussion of French ultramontanism, see Jacques Gadille, "L'ultramontanisme français au XIXe siècle", in Nive Voisine and Jean Hamelin, eds., Les ultramontains canadiens-français (Montréal: Boréal Express, 1985), pp. 27-66.

⁵⁶For a discussion of ultramontanism as an ideology, especially in French Canada, see Roger Lapointe, "L'ultramontanisme au Québec -- ou quand la doctrine se trouve décalée au rang d'une idéologie", in Sciences religieuses/ Studies in Religion, 8/4, 1979, pp. 419-430.

⁵⁷Philippe Sylvain, op. cit., pp. 129-130.

⁵⁸See Nadia F. Eid, Le clergé et le pouvoir politique au Québec: Une analyse de l'idéologie ultramontaine au milieu du XIXe siècle (Montréal: Editions Hurtubise HMH, Cahiers du Québec, 1978), Chapter V, pp. 201-230.

⁵⁹Roger Lapointe, in op. cit., pp. 428-429, writes: "A un troisième point de vue, l'ultramontanisme était la doctrine officielle du Catholicisme, autrement dit d'une église (au sens de E. Troeltsch). Or, le groupement religieux de type ecclésiastique se caractérise, face à la secte, par le placet fondamental qu'il accorde à la société temporelle, avec la double conséquence de devoir alors composer avec les réalités politiques et de laisser libre cours en son sein à la dynamique du pouvoir. En suite de quoi, on a pu voir au Québec le clergé s'acoquiner avec les gouverneurs anglais et, plus tard, avec le gouvernement provincial du Québec, pour assurer l'influence de la religion et, du même coup, théocratiser l'ordre politique québécois. L'église catholique était inféodée à la société civile au point d'assumer directement la direction des hôpitaux et celle des écoles. Les clercs, d'autre part, jouissaient d'un statut social supérieur."

⁶⁰Philippe Sylvain, op. cit., p. 136.

⁶¹See Nive Voisine, "L'ultramontanisme canadien-français au XIXe siècle", in Nive Voisine and Jean Hamelin, eds., op. cit., pp. 67-104, particularly pp. 71-95. The influence of eminent lay ultramontane leaders, notably Jules-Paul Tardivel, should also be noted. See Jules-Paul Tardivel, For My Country (Pour la patrie) (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1975).

⁶²See Nive Voisine, "L'ultramontanisme...", pp. 92-95, and Nive Voisine, Louis-François Laflèche, deuxième évêque de Trois-Rivières (Saint-Hyacinthe: Edisem, 1980).

⁶³André Labarrère-Paulé, ed., Louis-François Laflèche (Ottawa: Editions Fides, 1970), p. 34. Emphases mine.

⁶⁴As quoted in Nadia F. Eid, op. cit., p. 237.

⁶⁵André Labarrère-Paulé, op. cit., pp. 39-40.

⁶⁶Nadia F. Eid, op. cit., p. 248.

⁶⁷Jean Hamelin and Nicole Gagnon, Histoire du catholicisme québécois: Le XXe siècle (Montréal: Boréal Express, 1984), Volume I. p. 449.

⁶⁸In the perspective of Michel Despland, ultra-montanism could be said to be a mixture of a reified religion, intrinsically worthwhile in and of itself, and a more territorial religion, injected into a culture as a system of morals and values. See Michel Despland, La religion en occident: Evolution des idées et du vécu (Montréal: Editions Fides, 1979), particularly Chapter 8.

⁶⁹Roger Lapointe, op. cit., p. 428.

⁷⁰Ibid., p. 428.

⁷¹As quoted in Nive Voisine, "La reconstruction...", p. 80.

⁷²Ibid., p. 89.

⁷³For a review of the social teachings of Leo XIII and Pius XI, see Jennie Mary Hornosty, The Contemporary Marxist-Christian Dialogue: A Study in the Political Economy of Religion with Special Reference to Quebec (Toronto: York University, Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, 1979), pp. 71-78. Hornosty presents a good analysis of "structure and consciousness in Québec", particularly in the 20th century. See, in this regard, Chapters VI and VII.

⁷⁴It is not easy to summarize the rich history of Québec Catholic social action in the first part of the 20th century. For such a history, see Jean Hamelin and Nicole Gagnon, op. cit., Volume I, Chapters III and IV, and Volume II, Chapters I and II. See also Volume 2 of the final report of the Commission d'étude sur les laïcs et l'Eglise, entitled Histoire de l'action catholique au Canada français.

⁷⁵See Louis Balthazar, op. cit., Chapters 5 and 6.

⁷⁶See Joseph Levitt, Henri Bourassa - Critique catholique (Ottawa: La Société historique du Canada, Brochure historique no. 29, 1977).

⁷⁷Louis Balthazar, op. cit., p. 108.

⁷⁸See Ibid., pp. 98-101.

⁷⁹See the excellent study by Michael D. Behiels, Prelude to Quebec's Quiet Revolution: Liberalism versus Neo-Nationalism, 1945-1960 (Montréal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1985).

⁸⁰Louis Balthazar, op. cit., p. 122.

⁸¹Nive Voisine, "L'ultramontanisme...", p. 102.

⁸²Guy Laperrière, "L'adaptation à de nouveaux modes de vie", in Jean Simard et al., op. cit., p. 160. Emphases mine.

⁸³See ibid., p. 160. The three waves were: 1900 to 1910, marked by the celebrations of historical anniversaries, particularly in Québec City; 1920 to the early 1930s, culminating in the 19th centenary of the Redemption and the 400th anniversary of Jacques Cartier's arrival in Canada; and post-World War II, reaching its high points with the Holy Year of 1950 and various anniversaries associated with the Virgin Mary.

⁸⁴Ibid., p. 134, photo caption. It was during the Eucharistic Congress that French Canadian nationalist Henri Bourassa pronounced, in Montréal's Basilique Notre-Dame, his famous speech on "la langue, gardienne de la foi", in response to the claims by the Archbishop of Westminster that English was the best guarantee for the survival of Catholicism in Canada.

⁸⁵Ibid., p. 161, photo caption.

⁸⁶See ibid., pp. 163-169. See also Jean Simard et al., Un patrimoine méprisé: La religion populaire des Québécois (Montréal: Editions Hurtubise HMH, Cahiers du Québec, 1979).

⁸⁷Public devotion to the Eucharist was best expressed in the Feast of Corpus Christi (la Fête-Dieu), normally celebrated in late May or early June. But the cult of the Eucharist took a variety of other forms, from regular communion to perpetual adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. A religious order, the Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament, had, as its specific ministry, the propagation of the cult of the Eucharist. Founded by Saint Peter Julian Eymard in 1856 in France, the Congregation arrived in Montréal in 1890.

⁸⁸Guy Laperrière, op. cit., p. 165.

⁸⁹Nive Voisine, "L'ultramontanisme...", pp. 102-103.

⁹⁰See Paul-Emile Borduas, Refus global & Projections libérantes (Montréal: Editions Parti pris, 1977). See also Alain Fournier, Un best-seller de la révolution tranquille: Les Insolences du Frère Untel (Québec: Université Laval, Centre de recherche en littérature québécoise, 1988).

⁹¹Pierre Elliot Trudeau, ed., La grève de l'amiante (Montréal: Editions du Jour, 1970), p. 90.

⁹²For a review of the Church's involvement in and attitude toward the Asbestos Strike, see Gérard Dion, "L'Eglise et le conflit de l'amiante", in ibid., pp. 239-262.

⁹³Perhaps one of the more interesting accounts of the development of Québec from the 1960s to the early 1980s, from the perspective of an insider, is contained in René Lévesque's autobiography, Attendez que je me rappelle... (Montréal: Editions Québec/Amérique, 1986). Lévesque was Premier of Québec from 1976 to 1985 and a key figure of the Quiet Revolution. He died on November 1, 1987. For a more detailed history of the impact of the Quiet Revolution on the Church in Québec, see Jean Hamelin and Nicole Gagnon, op. cit., Volume II, chapters III and IV. See also the article by Claude Ryan, "The Church in Quebec: The Catholic Church and the Political Evolution of Quebec, 1960-1980", The Canadian Catholic Review, Volume 2, no. 1, January 1984, pp. 17-24. Ryan, politician and former editor of Le Devoir, was actively involved in a variety of Québec lay Catholic movements in the 1950s and 1960s.

⁹⁴Louis Balthazar, op. cit., p. 124.

⁹⁵As quoted in ibid., p. 126.

⁹⁶Ibid., p. 128.

⁹⁷Denis Monière, Le développement..., p. 328.

⁹⁸The Rassemblement pour l'indépendance nationale was actually founded in 1960. It became a political party in 1963. See André d'Allemagne, Le RIN et les débuts du mouvement indépendantiste québécois (Montréal: Editions l'Étincelle, 1974).

⁹⁹See Ron Haggart and Aubrey E. Golden, Rumours of War (Toronto: New Press, 1971).

¹⁰⁰Louis Balthazar, op. cit., pp. 130-131.

¹⁰¹Ibid., p. 129.

¹⁰²See Jean Hamelin and Nicole Gagnon, op. cit., Volume II, pp. 351-356. For a critique of the report of the Commission, see Roger Lapointe, "Chassez le national et il revient au galop", Sciences religieuses/Studies in Religion, II/3, 1972, pp. 210-225.

¹⁰³The leadership role played by Cardinal Paul-Émile Léger of Montréal in the adaptation of the Québec Catholic Church to the changes brought about by the Quiet Revolution requires mention.

¹⁰⁴For a preliminary analysis of the Parti québécois government, see Denis Monière, Le développement..., pp. 371-377, and Louis Balthazar, op. cit., pp. 165-186, dealing specifically with the 1980 Referendum. See also René Lévesque, op. cit., Chapters VII and VIII.

¹⁰⁵For a brief discussion of the Québec Catholic hierarchy's response to Bill 101, see Claude Ryan, op. cit., pp. 22-23. While supportive of the government's legislation, the Québec bishops did emphasize the basic principle of respect for the rights of minorities.

¹⁰⁶See Gouvernement du Québec, Conseil exécutif, La nouvelle entente Québec-Canada (Québec: Editeur officiel du Québec, 1979).

¹⁰⁷Claude Ryan, op. cit., p. 23.

¹⁰⁸Assemblée des évêques du Québec, Le peuple québécois et son avenir politique (Montréal: Assemblée des évêques du Québec, 1979), points 7, 11 and 13.

¹⁰⁹Ibid., point 29.

¹¹⁰Walter M. Abbott, S.J., ed., The Documents of Vatican II (New York: The America Press, 1966), p. 242.

¹¹¹Ibid., p. 244.

¹¹²See, in this regard, the 1983 document of the Canadian Catholic bishops on the economy and capitalism, "Ethical Reflections on the Economic Crisis", in Canadian Churches & Social Justice, John R. Williams, ed. (Toronto: Anglican Book Centre and James Lorimer & Company, 1984), pp. 88-98.

¹¹³Claude Ryan, op. cit., p. 21.

¹¹⁴Louis Balthazar, op. cit., pp. 209-210.

¹¹⁵Just how much the attitude of the Church has changed is revealed by the recent agreement of Catholic authorities to allow religious burials in Saint-Eustache for key leaders of the Patriotes, thereby commemorating the 150th anniversary of the uprisings.

¹¹⁶See Chapter IV, section A of this thesis, "Nationalism, History and Religion", for some development of this theme.

CHAPTER II

THE SAINT-JEAN-BAPTISTE CELEBRATIONS

The Fête de la Saint-Jean in Québec, celebrated on June 24th, the liturgical feast-day of the birth of Saint John the Baptist, has a long and rich history, even though its true institutionalization can only be dated back to 1834. In a subsequent chapter,¹ an analysis of the social role of a feast, its parameters and purpose, is presented. The point is made that a feast, by a merging of opposing tendencies and social undercurrents, is the expression of a people's sense of identity and its place in the world. It is a synthesis of the many intangible and more obvious traits which make a collectivity what it is. Moreover, a feast will often be the manifestation of an identity or a political maturity not yet fully realized: "Si les fêtes ont comme principale fonction d'affirmer l'identité d'un groupe ou d'une communauté, il n'est pas surprenant qu'on retrouve les gens les plus "fêteux" chez les groupes minoritaires, les gens des îles, les peuples en voie d'affirmation nationale."² If anything, the development of the Saint-Jean-Baptiste celebrations in Québec is the reflection of this continuous search for a place in history.

A. Origins, Symbols and Meaning

The precise origins of festivities marking the arrival of the summer solstice are lost in the mists of time. From humankind's earliest days, the summer solstice, occurring on or about June 21st in the northern hemisphere, would most certainly be the occasion for celebrations honouring the sun as the source of life. The people of pre-Christian Europe worshipped the sun for the many benefits which its warmth brought to humanity, and for its vital energy in ensuring the abundant harvests of the earth. Being the longest day of the year when the sun was at its zenith, the solstice was a celebration of light and fire, as well as of the regeneration of the seasons.

"De tout temps, le jour le plus long a été consacré a la vénération de la lumière, au culte du soleil, principe de vie. Les Perses, les Grecs, les Romains, les Gaulois, les Celtes fêtaient le solstice d'été. Les Germains, les Slaves, les Lithuaniens, les Baltes et les Scandinaves également. C'était en quelque sorte la confirmation du principe de la régénération périodique du temps. Ces divers peuples célébreront d'une même façon ce jour de fête en élevant des bûchers sur les hautes terres, les collines et les bords de mer. On prétend qu'à l'origine il y eût des sacrifices d'êtres humains, mais qu'avec le temps, on en vint plutôt à brûler des chats, des serpents des vipères et parfois des renards."³

The June solstice had a seasonal and a religious character.

It announced the beginning of summertime, and it provided an

opportunity for rejoicing in the natural and supernatural forces of the world, and for reaffirming humanity's continuous dependence upon them. The cycle of life as demonstrated by the seasons, ever dying and being born again, reminded people of their place in an harmonious cosmic order.

Some early studies in folklore, notably a book by P. Saintyves entitled Les saints successeurs des dieux (1907), indicated that the cult of saints is an essential trait of popular religion, and that there may be, from the perspective of believers, some degree of similitude between the veneration of saints and a certain polytheism.⁴ Saints could be said to form a type of link between non-Christian and Christian forms of religiosity; they somehow embody and "represent" those natural forces, and a belief in them, which were shunted aside by the process of Christianization. The power of the sun, and its most visible symbolic representation, fire, could therefore be said to have been transposed onto Christian figures: Christ himself being the most central and important, and John the Baptist being another.

Since the feast of Saint John the Baptist is so close to June 21st, it is almost certain that many of the traditions connected with la Fête de la Saint-Jean-Baptiste, notably that of le feu de joie, are inspired by ancient customs associated with the summer solstice. With the spread of Christianity in the early centuries of our era, the

Church came into contact with many beliefs and practices which it considered pagan, and which it tried to recuperate by giving them a Christian flavour. This was done in the case of the feast of Christmas, which was fixed at only four days from the winter solstice. The Church could not expect to eliminate completely the large number of non-Christian feasts. Its best option was to transform them by placing them under the patronage of Christian figures, or by combining them with established Christian feast-days falling on or about the same date. In view of the growing influence of Christianity at that time, and its claims to universality, this process of co-option became a recurrent pattern, though the Church probably encountered some resistance if one considers the fact that many traditional customs and rituals have survived to this day. In the case of festivities marking the summer solstice, historian Benjamin Sulte notes:

"Le christianisme, prudent et sage, se basant par occasion sur les habitudes enracinées et les faisant tourner à son profit, ne pouvant y voir qu'une fausse croyance et des pratiques souvent immorales, ce qui était vrai, ne heurta point de front ce qui plaisait à l'élément populaire; il se contenta de lui imprimer son cachet religieux, ce qui le rendait doublement cher aux multitudes et relevait les anciennes coutumes en leur donnant un sens mystique. Ainsi, il plaça sous l'invocation de saint Jean-Baptiste les feux de solstice d'été...."⁵

In the Catholic liturgical calendar, John the Baptist is the only religious personage, apart from Jesus Christ and the Virgin Mary, who is associated with so many important feast-days. His birth (June 24th) and his martyrdom (August

29th) are both celebrated. The Baptism of Christ (January 9th) and the Visitation of the Virgin Mary (last Saturday in May) both have him as a central character: the former, in his adult capacity as prophet; the latter, as an unborn child when, according to tradition, he bounced with joy in his mother's womb as Mary, who was carrying the unborn Jesus, approached her cousin, Elizabeth. It should be remembered that Jesus and John the Baptist were second cousins. The fact that the births of these two important Christian figures are celebrated exactly six months apart, each occurring at a solstice, when the sun is either at its height or is on the verge of being "reborn," is deeply symbolic. Both feasts are intimately connected with solar powers, and both can therefore be seen as partaking of the supernatural or magical attributes of the sun.

Some studies indicate that the customs and beliefs associated with the summer solstice and those of la Saint-Jean-Baptiste really have little in common, apart from the actual proximity of the dates.⁶ It was anthropologist Arnold van Gennep who remarked, in The Rites of Passage:

"Rites of passage which conform to the usual pattern are found in the ceremonies pertaining to the seasons which often fall at the time of the summer and winter solstices (the latter being combined in Europe with the ceremonies of the end of the year), and at the spring and fall equinoxes. Often the expulsion of winter is a rite of separation, bringing summer into the village a rite of incorporation; in other cases the winter dies and the summer or spring is reborn.

"The seasons are of no concern to man except for their economic repercussions on the more or less industrial life of winter and the primarily agricultural and pastoral life of spring and summer. It follows that an exact parallel to purely seasonal rites of passage may be found in rites intended to assure the rebirth of vegetation after the transitional period of winter dormancy. These rites also insure the resumption of animal sex life and the resultant increase in herds. All these ceremonies include both rites of passage and sympathetic rites -- direct or indirect, positive or negative -- for fertility, multiplication, and growth."⁷

Analyzed from this perspective, la Fête de la Saint-Jean is considered much more as a passage or a transition in the production cycle, particularly of the farm, than as an event associated primarily with the summer solstice. In 19th century rural life in Québec, as was the case in France, la Saint-Jean was seen as "...l'événement venant officialiser le passage de l'hiver à la saison estivale. Le solstice d'été, à ce point de vue, n'a que très peu d'influence sur le comportement des habitants."⁸ What was important, and therefore of significant influence, was the fact that this day marked the passage from one mode of economic production to another.

Following la Fête-Dieu, June 24th was, for the farmer, the last great religious feast which interrupted the summer agricultural cycle.⁹ After would come the big labours, such as mowing the hay or harvesting the fields. The break associated with la Saint-Jean-Baptiste was important, for it made clear the transition from a time of relative repose to one of intense activity. It therefore served as the occasion

for the community to renew its ties before each individual attended to his or her own pressing duties on the farm.

"...la Saint-Jean est la dernière fête et arrêt important venant interrompre le cycle de productivité de l'habitant. Cette fête est donc l'occasion pour lui de prendre quelques instants pour se divertir et s'amuser en participant aux diverses réjouissances. De plus, cette fête permet de le dégager une dernière fois de ses activités quotidiennes avant que ne débute les gros travaux."¹⁰

In the above citation, van Gennep points out that seasonal rites of passage correspond generally to the times of the solstices and the equinoxes. It is therefore appropriate that la Fête de la Saint-Jean, which initiated the summer months and marked the regenerative cycle of the earth for the inhabitants of rural Québec, should fall near the summer solstice. In a culture subjected to the harsh realities of winter and so dependent on agriculture for its livelihood, it was only natural that its feasts were tied to certain stages in the pattern of production of the people. Such feasts determined and celebrated the transition from one stage to another.

There are, therefore, two levels of meaning which can be associated with the summer solstice: the first, having to do with the supernatural character of the sun as source of life; the second, with its role as a calendric point of demarcation. The former views the solstice in its religious, mythical dimensions, and la Saint-Jean as a feast of light and fire. The latter perspective, more ritualistic and

functional, ties la Fête to seasonal rhythms and passages and to their impact on economic life. Both, it can be argued, are essential to a complete understanding of the Feast in all its manifestations.

During the summer months, there were a number of other religious feasts, apart from la Saint-Jean-Baptiste, which were celebrated by the inhabitants of Québec.¹¹ Not all were equally important, and some were more regional than others, but each was intended to imprint daily life with a religious feeling. Though la Saint-Jean marked the "official" beginning of summer, the clement weather would commence during the month of May, known as le mois de Marie, which featured a variety of devotions honouring the Virgin Mary. La Fête-Dieu, celebrated anytime between late May and late June depending on the date of Easter, was the major religious feast of the summer months. A solemn procession with the Blessed Sacrement would take place through the streets. La Fête-Dieu was especially important because of the fact that it was the most visible public manifestation of a very popular cult.¹² The month of June, analogous to the Month of May, was le mois du Sacré-Coeur. La Saint-Pierre, (June 29th), more para-military in tone, was intended to keep alive the old colonial tradition of a local militia. La Sainte-Anne (July 26th), honouring "la bonne sainte Anne," mother of Mary and grandmother of Jesus, was the expression of a very popular devotion in Québec, particularly among

sailors, fishermen and native peoples. Pilgrimages to the shrine at Sainte-Anne-de-Beaupré were the grandest manifestation of this cult. L'Assomption de la Vierge Marie (August 15th), celebrated particularly in France and among the Acadians, though much less so in Québec, was significant because it marked the end of the agricultural cycle and the onset of the fall harvests. Finally, la Saint-Louis (August 25th), meant to honour the French King during the New France régime, was the occasion for types of country fairs, particularly in those parishes or towns bearing the Saint's name. Because the time of frosts was about to begin, la Saint-Louis was truly the end of the summer months.

All these feasts from the Catholic liturgical calendar were important, not simply because of their obvious religious meanings, but also because they divided and subdivided the pattern of rural life into segments corresponding to the actual cycle of agricultural labour and production. With the onset of industrialization and the growth of urban environments, some feasts fell into disuse, while others were transformed into purely religious or social occasions. La Saint-Jean, for example, would still mark the arrival of summer, whether in the country or in the city, even though, in an urban setting, it became predominantly a civic and a political feast: "Autant la vie rurale tend à sacraliser le temps continu et le cosmos, autant la vie urbaine est prête à précipiter la moindre activité. Les

rites religieux seront plus brefs et les fêtes forcément plus rares."¹³

The number of obligatory religious feast-days when people were expected to attend church services also changed over time.¹⁴ In the 1700s in New France, there were, apart from the fifty-two Sundays of the year, close to forty other mandatory feasts. This number was cut by half in the mid-1700s, primarily because of the constant interruption of the farming cycle. Many of these feast-days were now celebrated on Sunday. In the 1900s, apart from the major religious feast-days such as Easter, All Saints and Christmas, the vast majority of the others were put back to Sunday. Today, very few of the feast-days still observed are not celebrated on Sunday. Even la Saint-Jean-Baptiste is a holiday only by virtue of its status as la Fête nationale. Much as traditional religious feast-days drew their meaning from their association with passages or transitions in the material lives of the inhabitants of Québec, contemporary feasts derive their significance from a legalistic civic context.

Considering this multiplicity of religious feast-days, it was to be expected that there would be different attempts made to name a patron saint for French Canada. The formal designation, by the Vatican, of Saint John the Baptist as "...patron de tous les Canadiens-Français (sic) en quelque endroit qu'ils se trouvent fixés"¹⁵ does not occur until 1908 under Pope Pius X, even though he is chosen as such by

Ludger Duvernay, the founder of the Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste de Montréal, on the occasion of the first banquet of 1834. The very first patron and protecteur of French Canada was Saint Joseph, proclaimed as such by the Récollet missionaries in 1624, and whose feast-day was celebrated on March 19th.

"Aux débuts de la colonie, nos aïeux ont adopté Saint-Joseph (sic) comme patron du pays. En 1624, relate le Père Caron: "Nous avons fait une grande solennité où tous les habitants se sont trouvés (...) par un voeu que nous avons fait à Saint-Joseph (sic) que nous avons choisi pour le patron du pays et le protecteur de cette église naissante". Cependant, c'est en 1638 que pour la première fois on célèbre la fête comme à Paris, par des coups de canon et des feux d'artifices."¹⁶

In 1876, Pope Pius IX would declare Saint Ann to be "...Patronne particulière de la Province Ecclésiastique Civile de Québec."¹⁷ There were also efforts made at instituting la Fête de la race (May 24th) and that of la Saint-Napoléon (August 15th), in honour of Napoléon Bonaparte.¹⁸

Several explanations can be put forth as to why saint Jean-Baptiste should have been chosen as the patron saint of French Canadians. Apart from the fact that la Saint-Jean had been celebrated since the early days of New France, and was consequently firmly established as a tradition, Jean-Baptiste was a common first name among French Canadians, much as Patrick was among the Irish, and they were therefore collectively identified as "Jean-Baptiste."¹⁹ The association of the Saint with the nationality, even though it might be difficult to determine which conditioned the other, was

quasi-natural. The basic reason is precisely that of the prevalence of la Saint-Jean and its general acceptance by French Canadians as part of their culture. When Ludger Duvernay proposed, in 1834, that saint Jean-Baptiste should be the patron saint of les Canadiens, and that the feast-day of his birth, June 24th, should be their fête nationale, he was merely institutionalizing an easily identifiable and generally accepted feast in popular tradition and imagination. As other nationalities have a patron saint, whose feast-day is also their national holiday, so should French Canadians: "Les Anglais fêtent la Saint-Georges, les Gallois la Saint-David, les Ecossais la Saint-André, les Irlandais la Saint-Patrice; les Canadiens célébreront la Saint-Jean-Baptiste."²⁰ In fact, Duvernay, inspired by the nationalism of the Patriotes with which he was very much in sympathy, wanted to instill in French Canadians a sense of themselves as a distinct people and nation in history by giving them a national holiday like other ethnic groups.

The symbolic association between saint Jean-Baptiste and la nation canadienne-française was expanded upon considerably by subsequent generations. Many of the attributes of the Saint, and of his role in Christian history, were portrayed as component parts of the French Canadian identity. In the gospel according to Saint John, John the Baptist is a "witness," come to "speak for the light."²¹ These words were to be used by the Catholic clergy of

Québec, time and again, to construct a purpose and a destiny for French Canada, notably at the time of massive French Canadian emigrations to the New England states. This purpose was a spiritual and a religious one: among all nations, French Canada was chosen, like the Baptist, to bring the light of Catholic Christianity to the New World, to be the precursor of a Christian order. This providential mission, which was seen as having motivated the early settlers, remained as the basic inheritance of French Canadians. A Catholic French Canada was the bridge between a profane and a Christian society in North America, much as John the Baptist was the link between the Old and New Testaments.

"Toutes les caractéristiques de Jean-Baptiste (missionnaire, baptiseur, médiateur, précurseur, éclaireur, témoin) se trouvent projetées dans un premier temps sur l'Ancien Canadien, pour être reportées ensuite sur le présent grâce à l'identification que le Canadien français opère avec ce dernier. On l'aura noté, la mission de l'Ancien Canadien se trouve tronquée de sa partie réelle: coureur de bois, "mission" marchande, conquête militaire. Il ne reste que la mission spirituelle, dénuée de son support matériel, charnel. De même que saint Jean-Baptiste ranime ce passé lointain, révolu, espoir réintégré dans le présent, de même il projette l'image d'un présent idéalisé pour l'intégrer au passé, au risque de le falsifier. Saint Jean-Baptiste est cet idéal vers lequel le haut clergé essaiera de faire tendre le peuple canadien-français."²²

This messianic ideal became one of the predominant themes of ultramontanist following the abortive outcome of the Rebellion of 1837-38.²³ It was an ideal particularly well suited to the type of clerico-religious world-view which ultramontanist epitomized. Messianism in French Canada

had two facets: 1. that the survival of la nation was best ensured by a strong politico-religious leader or elite, and 2. that the French Canadian nation as such had a specific providential mission to bring the virtues and enlightenment of the Catholic faith to the world, thereby offering this secularized world a sort of social redemption. Such a vision was essentially a form of ideological compensation for the position of economic inferiority in which French Canadians found themselves. "Afin de compenser notre infériorité économique," Denis Monière observes, "on nous prédisait une destinée grandiose en Amérique du Nord. Nous étions pauvres, mais élus par Dieu pour une mission spirituelle et morale: christianiser l'Amérique et porter le flambeau de la civilisation."²⁴ It is perhaps more than simply coincidental that John the Baptist, another of whose attributes is his complete disregard for material comfort and gain, should become the patron saint of an economically weak and powerless group such as French Canadians were at this time. The symbol of the Saint was not only a strikingly apt one; it was almost a national archetype.

As master symbol of French Canada, understood in the larger ethnic sense rather than that of being territorially limited to Québec, saint Jean-Baptiste was not, however, quite of the same stature, nor was he the type of highly evocative or emotionally-charged national symbol which is found, for example, in the Mexican Virgin of Guadalupe,²⁵

the Polish Black Madonna of Czenstochowa²⁶ or even the Irish St. Patrick. Sociologist Everett C. Hughes remarked, in 1943, that "St. Jean-Baptiste is not a favorite object of personal devotion, nor is Mass obligatory on his day."²⁷ This is a significant observation, revealing, as it does, the total absence of any cult of John the Baptist in French Canadian popular religiosity. Nor was there any shrine dedicated to him. Indeed, many other saints, some quite minor in Catholic hagiology, enjoyed a wider devotional appeal.²⁸ Rather than being an evocative national symbol, saint Jean-Baptiste was more a manipulated national symbol. He was chosen and imposed as patron saint by a particular elite in 1834, and later recuperated by another elite, that of the Catholic clerical establishment. What the Saint represented in terms of the French Canadian national "character" was essentially what this clerico-political elite desired that he should represent, whether it be missionary zeal, sobriety and moderation, self-effacement, patriotism or religious ardour. This provides the key to an understanding of the contradictions expressed in la Fête de la Saint-Jean, and may help explain, in part, the ease with which the symbol of the Saint was discredited at a later time. But there can be no denying that la Fête itself retained its importance as a culturally significant indicator and stimulant, despite the fact that John the Baptist may have been himself a less than perfect national symbol.

B. Beliefs and Customs

The earliest mention of la Fête de la Saint-Jean-Baptiste being celebrated in North America, according to Jean Provencher, comes from the historian Marc Lescarbot, who describes the arrival, on June 23rd, 1606 off the shores of Newfoundland, of a group of French settlers bound for Acadia:

"Le point du jour venu, qui était la veille de la saint Jean-Baptiste, à bon jour bonne oeuvre, ayans mis les voiles bas, nous passames la journée à la pécherie des Moruës avec mille rejouissances & contentemens, à cause des viandes fresches que nous eumes tant qu'il nous pleut (...) Sur le soir nous appareillames pour notre route poursuivre, après avoir fait bourdonner noz canons tant à cause de la fête de saint Jean, que pour l'amour du Sieur de Poutrincourt qui porte le nom de ce saint."²⁹

Thirty years later, in 1636, the Jesuit Louis Lejeune, in his Relation, recounts that he blessed le bûcher de la Saint-Jean in Québec City on June 23rd of that year.³⁰ This would appear to be the first record of la Saint-Jean celebrated as an official feast, since it was done so at the request of Governor de Montmagny. Le Journal des Jésuites of June 23rd, 1650 also makes reference to the lighting of le feu de la Saint-Jean:

"...le feu de la St. Iean, duquel ie m'escués prevoyant qu'on m'y fairoit mettre le feu à

l'ordinaire, & ne iugeant pas a propos de laisser courir cette coustume, qui n'avoit point este pratiquée du temps de M. de Montmagny; ce fut M. le Gouverneur qui y mit le feu, le P. la Place y assista en surplis & estolle, avec St. Martin, pour chanter le Te Deum."³¹

Philippe Aubert de Gaspé, in his historical novel published in 1863, Les anciens Canadiens, describes the traditional custom of le feu de joie of June 23rd, the eve of la Saint-Jean-Baptiste, among the inhabitants of the Saint Lawrence Valley during the period of New France:

"Les Canadiens de la campagne avaient conservé une cérémonie bien touchante de leurs ancêtres normands: c'était le feu de joie, à la tombée du jour, la veille de la Saint-Jean-Baptiste. Une pyramide octogone, d'une dizaine de pieds de haut, s'érigéait en face de la porte principale de l'église; cette pyramide, recouverte de branches de sapin introduites dans les interstices d'éclats de cèdre superposés, était d'un aspect très agréable à la vue. Le curé, accompagné de son clergé, sortait par cette porte, récitait les prières usitées, bénissait la pyramide et mettait ensuite le feu, avec un cierge, à des petits monceaux de paille disposés aux huit coins du cône de verdure. La flamme s'élevait aussitôt pétillante, au milieu des cris de joie, des coups de fusil des assistants, qui ne se dispersaient que lorsque le tout était entièrement consumé."³²

Lionel Groulx also relates the religious ritual surrounding the lighting of le feu de la Saint-Jean:

"Le feu de la Saint-Jean avait lieu le 23 juin au soir, la veille de la Saint-Jean-Baptiste. La fête remontait aux premiers temps de la colonie, puisque d'après "les Relations" il y eut un feu de la Saint-Jean-Baptiste en 1636.

"Quand la fête se passait sur la place de l'église, elle ne manquait pas de solennité. On y érigeait une pyramide de bois de cèdre recouverte de branches de sapin. La cérémonie débutait par un salut du Très-Saint-Sacrement à l'intérieur de l'église; puis le curé, accompagné du clergé,

sortait, récitait les prières du rituel et, avec un cierge, portait le feu aux brins de paille disposés a chaque coin de la pyramide résineuse. En moins d'un instant, une flamme claire et grésillante montait dans la nuit et c'étaient des cris de joie, des acclamations, des coups de fusil, aussi longtemps que volait dans les airs la moindre flammèche du feu de la Saint-Jean."³³

From these various sources, it is possible to assert that le feu de la Saint-Jean was a widespread custom in Québec from the early days of the French régime. It would appear that it was also generally associated with the Church, whether by virtue of the fact that a priest would bless and ignite the bonfire or that it took place within the context of some religious ceremony. These feux de joie, also known as feux de la Saint-Jean, provide the most obvious and direct link to those ancient European traditions celebrating the summer solstice. The connection between the sun and the symbolism expressed by fire is an evident one, and the lighting of a ceremonial bonfire is almost certainly the manifestation of some desire to replicate and master the regenerative power of the sun: "Le feu de joie est une réponse de l'homme au soleil et à son Créateur. Par son activité et sa volonté propres, il pose le geste de faire vivre la lumière."³⁴ Both fire and the sun also provide light, and light is that to which John the Baptist came to bear witness.

Anne-Marie Desdouits, in her comparative study of seasonal activities among the inhabitants of Normandy's pays de Caux and French Canada, makes the point that le feu de la

Saint-Jean, while not as prevalent a custom in Normandy as in other parts of France, was still particularly important in those parishes dedicated to saint Jean, as seems to have also been the case in Québec.³⁵ Jean Provencher remarks on the specific grandeur of the June 24th festivities in such Québec parishes:

"On célèbre avec encore plus d'intensité la Saint-Jean dans les paroisses désignées par le vocable de ce saint, car une vieille tradition française veut que toute communauté commémore annuellement dans la joie la fête de son patron. A Saint-Jean-Port-Joli, Deschaillons, L'Isle-Verte, Nicolet, Les Ecureuils et Saint-Jean de l'île d'Orléans, on fête donc doublement. Les habitants de la paroisse reçoivent chez eux les parents et les amis des villages voisins. Cela occasionne de grands rassemblements de population, car beaucoup tiennent un calendrier des principales fêtes de paroisse à la ronde et se font un grand plaisir d'assister à chacune."³⁶

In this century, the lighting of le feu de la Saint-Jean was always a community occasion. Municipal representatives and members of the clergy and religious congregations were in attendance, as were many local inhabitants, notably schoolchildren.³⁷ There was singing, particularly traditional songs from French folk-music, and there may have been some dancing around the fire, in the manner of the French rondes. More patriotic songs such as O Canada or Vive la Canadienne may also have been sung. If the local member of parliament was present, this was the occasion for some political speech-making tinged with electoral flavour. Philippe Aubert de Gaspé describes another custom associated with the eve of la Saint-Jean: that of the lighting of

bonfires in the villages and towns bordering on the St. Lawrence River.³⁸ These bonfires were a means of communication between villages and between families. Le feu de la Saint-Jean has always been a core element of the festivities surrounding the feast of St. John the Baptist. It is, in fact, the oldest and the most enduring one. With the institutionalization of Saint-Jean-Baptiste in 1834, other traditions and customs would be developed, such as banquets, parades and firework displays. Yet none could lay claim to the ancient lineage of the feu de joie.

There are a number of popular beliefs and practices associated with la Saint-Jean-Baptiste which did enjoy, at different times and in different locales, a certain amount of acceptance. Some of these, such as la coutume du Loup vert, la louée, la criée du saumon pour les âmes and le couronnement de la rosière, were specific to certain parts of France or Québec.³⁹ Others, such as la cueillette des herbes de la Saint-Jean,⁴⁰ les bains de la Saint-Jean and le pain bénit, were more indigenous to French Canada. These last two customs, because they reveal something of the mytho-religious symbolism of la Fête de la Saint-Jean, require some brief elaboration.

With reference to the meaning behind many of the customs surrounding la Saint-Jean, Thérèse Beaudoin states: "Un phénomène important à relever ici est que la majorité des coutumes associées au 24 juin sont exécutées, non pour

se garantir des calamités naturelles, (...) mais pour apporter des bienfaits aux habitants eux-mêmes."⁴¹ In the case of les bains de la Saint-Jean, this significance is obvious. It was considered unhealthy to bathe in any of the lakes and rivers, notably the St. Lawrence, until June 24th. But with the dawn of la Saint-Jean, which date also marked the beginning of summer, these waters were believed to possess certain curative powers, and public swimming was widely encouraged. Quite apart from the association of swimming with summer and the vacation period, water on this day assumed medicinal and talismanic properties.

"Il est impensable de passer le jour de la Saint-Jean sans se baigner dans l'eau courante. Ainsi que l'eau de Pâques et la première pluie du mois de mai, l'eau de ce jour guérit de tous les maux et assure une bonne santé pour l'année à venir. Partout donc, quel que soit le lieu, on se jette à l'eau. Un grand nombre de chroniqueurs en font état. On porte les enfants qui ne savent marcher, on enfourche les boeufs et les chevaux jusqu'à ce qu'ils aient de l'eau à mi-poitrail, on se précipite avec d'autant plus de joie que le 24 juin est l'ouverture de la saison des bains. Il eut été dangereux de se baigner les jours précédents, et les mères exagéraient à merveille les maux que pouvaient causer ces eaux que n'avait pas encore purifiées la Saint-Jean. "Mais une fois venu le jour tant de fois appelé de nos vœux, raconte un témoin, les eaux du fleuve étaient transformées, elles étaient bonnes, salutaires au baigneur; le fleuve Saint-Laurent devenait comme une grande fontaine de Jouvence où tous, grands et petits, parents et enfants, allaient se plonger..."⁴²

At a more religious symbolic level, however, water has always been a purificatory and a rejuvenescent agent. In the Christian tradition, particularly in the case of John the Baptist's ministry, it holds a much deeper meaning by virtue

of its association with conversion and salvation. Were les bains de la Saint-Jean the symbolic transposition of the Christian idea of the washing away of sins into the more magical one of protection from bodily harm? Or was the connection between theology and magic so intimate, in fact, as to be inseparable? Anne-Marie Desdouits poses the question: "Faut-il y voir un symbole de purification, restant des cultes païens envers les fontaines et les sources? Ou s'agit-il plutôt d'un rappel biblique, celui de saint Jean-Baptiste baptisant dans les eaux du Jourdain où la purification est alors chrétienne?"⁴³

The tradition of le pain bénit is an example of an ancient and specifically religious custom associated with la Saint-Jean. In certain parts of France as well as in Québec until the late 1800s, it was customary, on every Sunday of the year, for each parish household to offer, in turn, bread (called "le pain bénit dominical"⁴⁴) which would be blessed during mass, and which would then be distributed amongst those in attendance at church. This tradition may have originated in the early Church, when "...les fidèles qui voulaient communier apportaient eux-mêmes le pain et le vin."⁴⁵ With time, however, this became an occasion for competition amongst the parishioners as to who could offer the biggest and most expensively decorated bread. Consequently, ecclesiastical authorities decided to discourage the custom, as Cardinal Taschereau of Québec City did around

the 1870s.⁴⁶ Though it is difficult to ascertain precisely why, le pain bénit became associated with la messe de la Saint-Jean, and it has enjoyed a revival in Québec since the late 1970s.⁴⁷ At one time, this bread was believed to have medicinal properties, much as running water did on June 24th: "On attribue à ce pain des qualités médicinales particulières comme celle de protéger contre l'épilepsie, aussi appelée "mal de Saint-Jean"."⁴⁸ In the Christian tradition, the symbolism attached to bread is particularly abundant and important. Not only is it the source of physical life ("Give us this day our daily bread"), but, by virtue of its transformation into the body of Christ, it is also the source of spiritual life. By being shared, it is a sign of unity and fraternity. From the viewpoint of Christian theology and custom, it makes sense that bread should be blessed and distributed on the feast-day of he who came to "bear witness" to the one who called himself "the bread of life."

During the period of New France, la Fête de la Saint-Jean was essentially a popular religious feast, with no overtones of patriotism or nationalism. It was, as Gérard Turcotte aptly remarks, "...une coutume poétique sans but de patriotisme militant."⁴⁹ But the feast followed the course of French Canadian history, and the radical transformations occasioned by the events surrounding the Rebellion of 1837-38 (its failure being understood as the true consolidation

of the Conquest of 1760) would significantly alter the meaning and tone of la Saint-Jean-Baptiste.

"La Saint-Jean-Baptiste a toujours été fêtée en Canada depuis l'origine de la colonie française. Mais l'esprit qui préside à cette fête sous l'ancien Régime français est tellement différent de celui qui domine la Saint-Jean-Baptiste du Régime anglais qu'on dirait deux fêtes vouées à deux saints différents. La césure qui coupe en deux les institutions politiques, les mentalités, ne laisse pas intacte la conception de saint Jean-Baptiste. (...) la grande coupure qui sanctionne finalement la Défaite, ce n'est pas 1760, mais 1837-38. L'évolution de la fête de la Saint-Jean-Baptiste, qui suit essentiellement cette coupure, confirme, encore une fois, ce partage fondamental des eaux canadiennes. La fête nationale de saint Jean-Baptiste qui fait du Baptiseur le Patron national ne naît pas avant 1843. On peut penser que son instauration doit être liée d'une manière ou d'une autre à l'insurrection matée de 1837-38."⁵⁰

From the semi-structured, quasi-mythical feast that it was in its early period, la Fête de la Saint-Jean became, from 1834 onward, a formal celebration of national appartenance, with all the ideological overtones which this implied. Saint Jean-Baptiste was transformed into a national symbol of the highest stature, and to him were attached the supposed virtues, qualities and destiny of French Canadianism. Conditioned initially by the aspirations of the Patriotes, the ideological framework surrounding la Fête would come to bear the imprint of Québec Catholic providentialism and conservatism.

C. Political Beginnings

The true institutionalization of la Saint-Jean-Baptiste as "fête nationale des Canadiens français" dates back to a banquet held on June 24th, 1834 in Montréal, and is the initiative of Ludger Duvernay, editor of La Minerve and supporter of the Patriote cause, who was perhaps more of an effective communicator than he was a staunch patriote. Denis Monière summarizes the account of this historic event which was published in the June 26th edition of La Minerve:

"Cette fête fut organisée par Ludger Duvernay dans les jardins de l'avocat John McDonnell, à l'endroit où fut plus tard érigée la Gare Windsor. Une soixantaine de convives avaient répondu à l'appel de Duvernay, dont les plus connus étaient Charles-Ovide Perrault, Louis-Hippolyte LaFontaine, Edouard Rodier, Georges Etienne Cartier et le Dr Edmund O'Callaghan. Ces agapes étaient présidées par le maire de Montréal, Jacques Viger. Après le repas dont le restaurateur Jehlen avait préparé le menu, on "enleva la nappe", comme le voulait une expression de l'époque, pour passer à la partie patriotique de la soirée. A la fin de son discours, Duvernay lança le célèbre toast en l'honneur du "peuple source primitive de toute autorité légitime". Ce faisant, il venait de doter le peuple canadien d'une fête nationale qui allait se perpétuer comme symbole de notre continuité historique puisque la fête de la Saint-Jean était célébrée à Québec aux premiers temps de la colonie. A cette occasion, Duvernay aurait aussi proposé d'adopter la feuille d'érable comme emblème national du Canada."⁵¹

It was on this occasion that Duvernay would proclaim John the Baptist, "qui, il y a dix-huit siècles, est venu préparer la voie de la réforme morale,"⁵² as patron saint of

French Canadians and June 24th as "fête nationale." From the very outset, therefore, the choice of saint Jean-Baptiste was justified in explicitly political and nationalistic terms. This sentiment was reflected in an article published in another pro-Papineau newspaper, Le Canadien in Québec City: "C'est d'un bon augure pour les Patriotes canadiens que d'avoir pour patron le précurseur de l'Homme-Dieu, qui est venu prêcher l'égalité des hommes aux yeux du Créateur, et délivrer le monde de l'esclavage des puissances ennemies d'un autre monde."⁵³

It is important to understand that the banquet of 1834 was first and foremost a political event. It was held only three years before the outbreak of armed hostilities, and the people in attendance were most certainly avid supporters of the Parti patriote-canadien. Duvernay himself had consistently defended the claims of the Parti in the pages of his newspaper. Apart from the speeches and songs which were part of any such event,⁵⁴ the political tone of the banquet is best reflected in the twenty-five toasts which were offered. Besides the classic "Le peuple, source primitive de toute autorité légitime" offered by Duvernay, toasts were also proposed in honour of "La Chambre d'Assemblée du Bas-Canada, l'organe fidèle du Peuple canadien," Louis-Joseph Papineau, the 92 résolutions, the Irish patriots, the reform party of Upper Canada and the government of the United States, among others.⁵⁵ There were two toasts dealing specifically with

the clergy: "Le Clergé canadien et ses Evêques. Puissent-ils toujours être unis, et donner le bon exemple à leurs ouailles. Ils seront soutenus et respectés en faisant cause commune avec la Chambre d'Assemblée et le peuple," and "Les prêtres libéraux de ce district. Ils sont, heureusement pour le pays, en grande majorité."⁵⁶

It was in the context of the euphoria surrounding the Patriotes cause that la Saint-Jean of 1834 assumed its true significance. The ideological orientation of the first banquet, expressed in the types of toasts which were offered, was decidedly liberal and republican, reflecting, as it did, the presence and leadership of some of the more prominent associates of the Parti patriote-canadien, as well as the larger movement of political and parliamentary contestation already under way in Lower Canada. Republican heroes and models were hailed: Papineau, the Upper Canadian reformers, the Irish patriots and the American government. Even the spirit of the French Revolution was recalled. Jacques Viger, Mayor of Montréal and the one presiding over the banquet, would sing several verses of a song linking the efforts of the Patriotes to the triumphs of the French in overcoming tyranny:

"Ils ont frappé la tyrannie,
Nous saurons l'abattre comme eux.
Si le sort désignait une race ennemie,
Veille sur nous, Saint-Jean (sic), fais-nous
victorieux."⁵⁷

In the two toasts to the French Canadian clergy can be seen

the beginnings of the struggle between the advocates of the Patriotes and the Catholic hierarchy. A warning is issued: the clerical establishment will retain the respect of the people only if its sides with the defenders of the 92 résolutions, i.e., the supporters of Papineau and his movement. Rumilly calls the banquet of 1834 "...un banquet de notables, presque fatalement doublé d'une manifestation politique."⁵⁸ A banquet for the elite it certainly was, though political by design and not by accident.

The banquet of 1834 would see the introduction of two symbols which came to be identified closely with les Canadiens, and which would be omnipresent in subsequent public celebrations of la Saint-Jean-Baptiste: the maple leaf and the beaver.⁵⁹ Both insignia, however, had long been associated with the history of French Canada.

"Les deux symboles véhiculent des valeurs bien précises ayant une grande signification pour le peuple canadien français: le castor rappelle l'époque des fourrures et de la traite avec les Amérindiens, alors que la feuille d'érable fait référence à cet arbre qui a fortement impressionné les premiers arrivants par sa taille et sa beauté. De nombreuses mentions en rapport avec l'érable ont été relevées dans les récits de voyageurs des XVIIe, XVIIIe et XIXe siècles."⁶⁰

The general acceptance of these symbols is made apparent by the fact that "...en 1836, Etienne Parent remplace la vignette de son journal Le Canadien, en substituant au laboureur près de sa charrue et de ses boeufs, une feuille d'érable et un castor."⁶¹ It would be relatively easy to enumerate the particular attributes of

the French Canadian character which the maple leaf and the beaver were meant to evoke: industriousness, perseverance, the close historical ties to nature and to the French régime, among others. 1834 marks the first time that these symbols, including that of Saint John the Baptist, are associated publicly with the collective identity of French Canadians as a people. All three would be replaced, at a much later time, with a more unifying political and decidedly French symbol, that of the fleurdelisé.⁶²

Celebrations of la fête nationale des Canadiens français were again held in 1835, 1836 and 1837, and were quite similar in style to the banquet of 1834.⁶³ Increasingly, however, the political mood of the times began to dominate and to determine the content of the festivities. At the banquet of 1835, for example, "Entouré de feuilles d'érables, le drapeau des patriotes aux barres horizontales verte, blanche et rouge surplombe le centre de la table d'honneur,"⁶⁴ and La Marseillaise, the anthem of the French Revolution, is sung. And during the banquet of 1837, in response to the Patriotes' call for the boycott of imported British goods and their policy of "achat chez-nous," "Les convives ne burent que de l'eau, du cidre et du "wiski" du pays."⁶⁵ Tensions were also becoming strained between the radical supporters of the Patriotes and those who were more moderate in their constitutional demands. In 1836, there was "...l'organisation de deux fêtes concurrentes: celle des

bureaucrates appelée la Saint-Jean-Baptiste de l'opposition, qui eut lieu dans les jardins de McDonnell (où elle avait eu lieu en 1834) et celle des Patriotes organisée par Duvernay à l'Hôtel Rasco."⁶⁶ Monière goes on to remark: "Cette double célébration signifiait que la tension politique montait et que les antagonismes se cristallisaient."⁶⁷

The influence of religion was beginning to be felt on the festivities, primarily because the Church remained an important social institution and June 24th was, besides all else, a religious feast-day. In 1836, the banquet of the Patriotes was held "Après la célébration d'une grand-messe en l'honneur du saint patron...",⁶⁸ and that of 1837 was held on June 26th "...parce que le 24 juin de cette année-là était un samedi, jour de jeûne et d'abstinence...."⁶⁹ The idea of celebrating la Saint-Jean-Baptiste along the lines of the one held in Montréal was spreading to other parts of Québec, due mainly to the influence of sympathizers and leaders of the Patriotes in certain towns and villages. It is clear that these various celebrations were tied to the mood of political crisis which prevailed, and the Patriotes would use them to stir up popular support for their cause, particularly around the 92 résolutions. In 1835, "Les Patriotes célébrèrent la Saint-Jean-Baptiste, au village Debartzch, à Saint-Denis, à Saint-Eustache, à Terrebonne et à Berthier. Autrement dit, dans les localités les plus effervescentes. Dans tous ces villages, la fête revêtit un

caractère de manifestation politique."⁷⁰ In 1837, celebrations were also held in Verchères, Trois-Rivières, Varennes and Saint-Thomas.⁷¹

From 1837 to 1842, Duvernay was in exile in the United States, partly self-imposed and partly due to government dictate. He tried to organize celebrations of la Saint-Jean in 1838 in Rouse's Point, New York, and again in 1839 in Burlington, Vermont, but without much success, since the other exiles were either too poor or too disillusioned to participate.⁷² In 1842, the Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste de Québec is founded by Pierre-Martial Bardy, and the modern Fête de la Saint-Jean is celebrated for the first time in that city.⁷³ In 1843, after a five-year hiatus, la Saint-Jean is again celebrated in Montréal. The date is significant. Not only does it mark the official foundation of the Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste de Montréal, but it also inaugurates the clerico-religious domination of the June 24th celebrations. Here again, the ideology of the Patriotes, now discredited, had to give way to a new socio-political reality and a very different type of nationalism.

D. The Period of Glory

In the course of the next 125 years, from 1843 to 1968,

the Saint-Jean-Baptiste celebrations became truly public manifestations of French Canadian nationalism, with a basic and fairly standard core of activities. Québec City and particularly Montréal remained the centres where the most grandiose festivities took place, even though most other towns and villages would host their own events on a smaller scale. The following were generally part of the overall format: high mass in honour of the Patron Saint, a procession or parade through the streets, fireworks, a bonfire, perhaps a banquet and a ball regrouping prominent lay and religious personalities, picnics and a variety of other such family-oriented outings. Streets and houses were decorated with flags and other tokens of national and religious pride, much as was done at la Fête-Dieu. This was also an occasion for sermons and political speeches on the issues of the day. As a rule, the celebrations would be organized and led by the local Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste, where there was one in existence. The following description is fairly typical of the way most areas celebrated la Fête de la Saint-Jean during this period:

"On se bornait à assister à la messe solennelle du matin, après quoi le défilé patriotique des diverses industries se formait, avec drapeaux et fanfares pour circulation dans les principales rues. Ces industries étaient installées en pleine activité sur des voitures de charge décorées de balises et on jetait aux spectateurs de menus produits de l'industrie représentée; ces voitures étaient suivies des membres de leurs corps de métiers respectifs. Puis venaient les simples civils, les professionnels suivis d'une voiture

d'apparat portant un enfant vêtu d'une peau de mouton et accompagné d'un agneau afin de représenter saint Jean-Baptiste qui était pasteur. Suivaient ensuite les membres et officiers de la société avec le conseil de ville, maire en tête, coiffés de hauts de forme, canne à la main et portant l'insigne officiel qui consistait en un ruban blanc de trois pouces de largeur et six de hauteur avec rosette blanche au haut pour l'attacher sur la poitrine et frange dorée au bas, portant les mots: "Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste de la ville de X..." surmontés d'un castor doré et entouré de feuilles d'érable. Ce défilé était invariablement clos par trois cavaliers costumés, représentant Jacques Cartier et Champlain ou Maisonneuve, suivant que c'était dans la région de Québec ou de Montréal, et un chef sauvage, bariolé de couleur et coiffé de plumes, chevauchant entre les deux premiers. Cette cavalcade avait en outre l'avantage d'empêcher la foule de bousculer le cortège des invités d'honneur.

(...)

"Dans la soirée, le Président de la Société locale, Son Honneur le Maire de la ville, MM. les Députés du comté et les invités d'honneur prononçaient des discours patriotiques du haut du balcon de la salle municipale, à l'étage supérieur du marché public, aux lueurs des feux de bengale de diverses couleurs, puis tous allaient dormir en paix, conscients d'avoir accompli un devoir national!"⁷⁴

A number of important dates punctuate this 125-year span. They are indicative of changes in the structure of the celebrations or, more generally, are notable because of their association with official recognition of one sort or another.⁷⁵ Among the more significant are the following: 1843, the first time that a solemn high mass inaugurates the festivities, and John the Baptist is named patron saint of the Société de tempérance by Bishop Bourget; 1866, the first representation, in the Montréal procession, of John the

Baptist as a young child;⁷⁶ 1880, the Convention nationale, regrouping the other Canadian and American sociétés nationales canadiennes-françaises, is held in Québec City;⁷⁷ 1908, Pope Pius X proclaims John the Baptist as patron saint of French Canadians; 1924, the first great parade, with floats, is held in the streets of Montréal; 1925, the Québec legislature declares June 24th to be a legal holiday; 1948, the Québec flag, the fleurdelisé, is adopted; and 1968, a riot erupts during the Montréal parade, in the presence of P.E. Trudeau, on the eve of a Canadian federal election.⁷⁸

With the 1843 celebrations in Montréal, la Saint-Jean, rather than retaining its overwhelmingly political focus and content, was transformed primarily into a religio-nationalistic manifestation. The Patriotes of 1837-38 had lost their political gamble, and several of their key leaders were still in exile. The Catholic Church, under the leadership of Montréal's Bishop Bourget, seized this unique opportunity to become the primary protector and defender of the French Canadian "nation." The Church was the official patron of la Saint-Jean of 1843. These changes were reflected in that year's festivities: "On ne faisait plus référence au peuple, source de toute autorité, ni à Papineau, ni à la république ... Le haut patronage de l'Eglise révélait aussi un changement majeur du leadership social et de l'orientation idéologique du nationalisme."⁷⁹ La Saint-Jean now became, in a way, apolitical or, at the very least, severely limited in

the type of political message it expressed. Religion, language, history and ethnic pride and solidarity were the predominant themes of the public celebrations of the Feast well into the 20th century.

"Le 24 juin devient alors une fête à la fois religieuse et nationale, axée sur des événements passés, telles les guerres et les batailles livrées par nos ancêtres. On allie de plus en plus la notion de nationalisme à celle de la religion, l'une étant nécessaire à la sauvegarde de l'autre, comme le proclame le clergé à cette époque. Les autres thèmes à l'honneur au cours du siècle dernier sont ceux de la conservation de la langue et de la culture françaises. Ainsi ce nationalisme, de politique qu'il était, sera à partir de 1840 restreint à sa seule dimension culturelle et religieuse. Le dernier quart du XIXe siècle voit réapparaître l'idée de nationalisme et de rapatriement. On veut regrouper tous les Canadiens-français qui ont dû s'exiler en dehors du Québec pour gagner leur vie. C'est donc l'époque des défilés à grands déploiements voulant refléter l'union existant entre les Canadiens-français, leur force et leur vitalité."⁸⁰

This concern with the past, and with the traditional aspects of the French Canadian identity, is evident in the themes chosen for the Saint-Jean-Baptiste parades in Montréal from 1924 to 1964. The basic components of French Canadian society, such as language, religion, the land and the family, are all celebrated. There is a marked interest in patriotism and in the glorification of national heroes and accomplishments, as well as the wider French Canadian diaspora. Almost ninety years after the fact, the Patriotes would appear to be rehabilitated, though undoubtedly more for their value as cultural symbols than for their political significance. From 1940 onward, more secular themes begin to

make their appearance: energy, science, the city, the economy. Québec society was beginning to change, and the parades of June 24th were partly a reflection of this reality. From 1965 to 1969, one sees the emergence of a national pride in Québec as the embodiment of certain collective aspirations. The following is the listing of the parade themes:

- "1924: Ce que l'Amérique doit à la race française;
- 1925: Visions du passé;
- 1926: Hommages aux patriotes "1837-1838";
- 1927: Quatre siècles d'histoire;
- 1928: Nos chansons populaires;
- 1929: Les contes et les légendes du Canada français;
- 1930: Je me souviens;
- 1931: Vive la Canadienne;
- 1932: Glorification du sol;
- 1934: Les anniversaires Histoire, Progrès;
- 1935: Le Saint-Laurent et les Grands-Lacs;
- 1936: Les voix du passé -- Evocation de nos poètes disparus;
- 1937: O Canada, mon pays, mes amours;
- 1938: Les pionniers de la prose au Canada français avant 1900;
- 1939: Le Canada français est resté fidèle;
- 1940: Leçons d'énergie;
- 1941: Hommage à la famille paysanne canadienne-française;
- 1942: Naissance d'une ville catholique et française au XVIIe siècle: Ville-Marie;
- 1943: Hommage à la mère canadienne;
- 1944: Hommage à l'éducateur;
- 1945: Les groupes français d'Amérique;
- 1946: Les Canadiens français et les sciences;
- 1947: La Patrie, c'est ça;
- 1948: La Cité;
- 1949: L'expansion française en Amérique;
- 1950: Le folklore;
- 1951: Le Canada français dans le monde;
- 1952: Notre héritage culturel;
- 1953: Nos richesses économiques;
- 1954: Fidélité mariale;
- 1955: L'Acadie rayonnante;
- 1956: Le Visage du Canada français;
- 1957: Sa Majesté, la Langue française;
- 1958: Champlain, Père de la Nouvelle-France et Québec,

Capitale du Canada français;
 1959: Le Saint-Laurent..."la route qui marche";
 1960: La présence canadienne-française;
 1961: Hommage à la femme canadienne-française;
 1962: L'épanouissement du Canada français;
 1963: La joie de vivre au Canada français;
 1964: Le Canada français, réalité vivante;
 1965: Montréal, ville dynamique;
 1966: La présence canadienne française dans le monde;
 1967: La vocation internationale du Québec;
 1968: Québec '68;
 1969: Québec, mon amour."⁸¹

The last large-scale, traditional parade in Montréal was held in 1969, when "...le petit saint-Jean-Baptiste (sic) est remplacé par une statue colossale. Celle-ci est décapitée par les manifestants et le char renversé."⁸² 1969 was a year of passionate linguistic conflict in Québec, with the Opération McGill français in March and the September demonstrations in Saint-Léonard favouring French schools. The défilés de la Saint-Jean, particularly that of 1969, were relatively accurate barometers of the intensity of Québec nationalism. As the themes of the Montréal parades demonstrate, they were representative of the more traditional forms of French Canadian nationalism. But rapid and pressing social change would force their disappearance, for "Les modèles de fierté nationale proposés par le défilé étaient affligés de contradictions intrinsèques évidentes."⁸³ Heinz Weinmann remarks: "La parade reste le dernier vestige du Canada français qui ne sera rejeté (...) [q']une fois que la transmutation du Canada français en Québec se sera accomplie. Cette métamorphose (...) se joue entre septembre 1959 (mort de Duplessis) et le 24 juin 1969

(dernière grande parade de la Saint-Jean-Baptiste)."⁸⁴

Initially, the parades were more like religious processions, where everyone was a participant. In fact, they were modelled on the processions of la Fête-Dieu. With time, and under the influence of the sociétés Saint-Jean-Baptiste which were responsible for their organization, these processions were transformed into grandiose parades, and the participants into spectators. History was depicted in the form of spectacular floats, and expressions of patriotism became limited to flag-waving and bursts of applause, particularly when the last float, that bearing the puerile John the Baptist, made its appearance.

"Dans la première moitié du XIXe siècle, les défilés de la Saint-Jean ont un caractère très différent de ceux de la fin du siècle. En effet, il n'y a pas de spectateurs qui regardent passer le défilé, car chaque personne prend place à l'intérieur du cortège. Ce n'est qu'avec l'avènement des premiers grands défilés organisés par les sociétés Saint-Jean-Baptiste que la population commence peu à peu à agir comme spectateur et non plus comme participant. C'est aussi le début des chars allégoriques et de la personification du petit saint Jean-Baptiste accompagné de son mouton. De très simples qu'ils sont dans les débuts, les chars prennent avec les années de plus en plus d'envergure, car ils servent à montrer à tous que les Canadiens-français sont des plus unis et des plus forts."⁸⁵

The figure of saint Jean-Baptiste, accompanied by his lamb, was always the high point of the procession or parade. From 1866 onward,⁸⁶ he was generally represented by a young, curly-haired (and normally blond) boy. This was more a matter of artistic fashion than of tradition, and seems to

have been inspired by painters of the Venetian School who had first started portraying the Baptist as a child.⁸⁷ Heinz Weinmann mentions that John the Baptist is generally depicted as either a child or a mature adult in most European painting, and often as a beheaded individual in the presence of his nemesis, Salome. In a few notable cases (Raphael, Da Vinci and Caravaggio) is he represented in a transitional stage, that of adolescence.⁸⁸ In Québec, representations of the Saint as a young boy became very popular and widespread, "...quoique, à quelques reprises, ainsi que dans les armoiries de la Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste de Montréal, il figure en adulte."⁸⁹ But the image of an immature child as symbol of French Canada did not appeal to everyone: "Cette représentation a servi de prétexte à la création de nombreuses controverses voulant qu'on ait identifié la province de Québec à un enfant qui ne pouvait pas se diriger lui-même."⁹⁰ Interestingly enough, the last saint Jean-Baptiste depicted in a parade, and the one destroyed and literally beheaded in 1969, was an adult statue.

One of those most outspoken about the inappropriateness of a child, and particularly a lamb, as symbols of French Canada was Olivar Asselin, President of the Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste de Montréal in 1913.⁹¹ Though generally accepted as an emblem of Christ, the one the Baptist came to announce ("Ecce Agnus Dei"), Asselin criticized the lamb as "[le] mouton national qui n'a que le mérite de se laisser

tondre au profit d'autrui,"⁹² and "...l'emblème de la soumission passive et stupide a toutes les tyrannies."⁹³ He derided both the young saint Jean-Baptiste and the lamb in the following words:

"Mais quand pour satisfaire la volonté philistine d'un président ou d'un secrétaire de section, on promène toute une matinée sous un soleil brûlant, au risque de le rendre idiot pour la vie, un joli petit enfant qui n'a fait de mal à personne et à qui, neuf fois sur dix, la tête tournera de toute manière; quand, à cet enfant, l'on adjoint un agneau qui, se fichant de son rôle comme le poisson, en pareille occurrence, se ficherait du sien, lève la queue, se soulage et fait bê; et que derrière cet enfant et cet agneau, on permet à un papa bouffi d'orgueil d'étaler sa gloire d'engendreur en ayant l'air de dire à chaque coup de chapeau: "L'agneau le voilà; mais le béliet, c'est moi". -- Si je veux bien ne pas mettre en doute la sincérité de ceux qui m'invitent à saluer, au nom du patriotisme, ce triste bouffon spectacle, je veux aussi, sans manquer de respect ni à la Religion ni à la Patrie, pouvoir m'écrier: Ce gosse qui fourre nerveusement ses doigts dans son nez et qui, pour des raisons faciles à deviner, ne demande qu'à retourner au plus tôt à la maison, ce n'est pas Saint (sic) Jean-Baptiste, c'est l'enfant d'un épiciet de Sainte-Cunégonde."⁹⁴

Monseigneur Paul Bruchési, Archbishop of Montréal, would respond:

"Quoi de plus édifiant que de voir, au milieu de nos fêtes, un enfant gracieux et pur symbolisant le Précurseur, et à ses côtés le doux agneau, image du Rédempteur? Certains hommes parmi nous se moquent de tout cela. Ils parlent de notre attachement au "mouton". Il faut qu'ils cessent un langage aussi insultant pour des croyances vénérables et pour de chères traditions. Notre symbole vaut infiniment mieux que d'autres que je ne veux pas nommer. Nous le garderons donc. Ceux qui le dédaignent et le méprisent font voir qu'ils n'ont pas de sens chrétien."⁹⁵

It is obvious that in his critique of what he called

"le saint-jean-baptisme," Asselin was not only speaking against the religio-conservative ideology of his own Société, but he was also questioning the relevance and effectiveness of these particular religious symbols for French Canada. In doing so, he was attacking the guardians and manipulators of these symbols, the Catholic hierarchy, and therefore the clerical foundations of French Canadian nationalism. The Archbishop's reprimand certainly makes that clear. As a nationalist, Asselin was opposed to the equation of language with religion, and hence to its ideological justification in clerical terms: "Asselin (...) a tenté de séparer dans la pensée nationaliste la langue de la foi, accordant la priorité à la première...."⁹⁶ In the minds of most people, however, the young child representing saint Jean-Baptiste was a fitting symbol of the French Canadian identity; his traits should mirror those of the whole nation. La Presse of June 24th, 1905 reflects an attitude quite prevalent throughout the early decades of the 20th century:

"Le bel enfant qui va passer debout sur un char de triomphe avec l'agneau blanc à ses pieds (...) est de plus la personnification de notre peuple: c'est pourquoi on devrait le choisir non seulement beau (...) mais noble (...). Il faut que son attitude et les traits de sa physionomie révèlent l'intelligence, la bonté, la droiture, (...)."⁹⁷

In a noteworthy study, Michèle Guay analyzes la Fête de la Saint-Jean-Baptiste in Montréal from 1834 to 1909 from the perspective of its tradition and signification, or its

historique and idéologie.⁹⁸ She identifies five historical segments during this period and ten ideological currents.⁹⁹ At the level of ideology, the Saint-Jean-Baptiste celebrations were effective in structuring a sense of national purpose and direction, as Guay argues:

"La fête nationale apparaît (...) comme un catalyseur de réflexions sur l'entité, l'existence actuelle et passée, et la survie possible de la collectivité. Elle est aussi la tribune où se formule une définition nationale à base de mythes suscités par la condition présente, articulés à des situations ou des personnages du passé et projetés sur le devenir collectif à titre de guides.

"A ce palier, on ne remarque pas comme dans le premier, une progression continue avec cumul des éléments. Il y a évolution, variation, disparition de certains thèmes ou modification importante, et chevauchement. La continuité est assurée par le retour annuel de la fête. Certains grands thèmes demeurent présents durant presque toute la période malgré des modifications: celui d'une mission du peuple français en Amérique par exemple ou celui du châtement divin par la disparition qui évolue en culpabilisation civile."¹⁰⁰

Guay remarks that most public rituals or feasts can be analyzed either in terms of "l'idéologie verbale" or "[les] symboles visuels." At the level of what is said, and by whom, it is relatively easy to show a clear progression in the development of particular ideological frameworks. With reference to visual symbols, however, their evolution is not as easily categorized; they tend to be less volatile over time. One can even speak of two levels of symbolism: the popular and the more elitist. In a typical process of manipulation of symbols, the elite, as those most concerned with

the definition of the collective identity reflected in the feast, will attempt to recuperate symbolic representations considered unorthodox or even aesthetically inappropriate.

"Ceux-ci [les symboles visuels], part intégrante et importante de la fête [de la Saint-Jean-Baptiste], connaissent une évolution plus lente que l'on peut difficilement scinder en courtes périodes. Les images populaires reflètent d'abord l'histoire des origines - Cartier, l'Indien, la France - et l'appartenance française; elles témoignent ensuite de la réalité quotidienne - premier char de typographe, les chars de métiers; puis, avec un certain décalage, elles commencent à intégrer les modèles historiques utilisés par les définisseurs: ceux de Nouvelle-France d'abord, ensuite ceux se rapportant à l'agriculture et enfin les hommes politiques du 19^e siècle. Dès les années 1880, et surtout après le tournant du siècle, la spontanéité de ces images produites dans les sections de la ville, c'est-à-dire par la base, heurte le sens esthétique des directeurs qui cherchent à intégrer cette symbolique au courant verbal pour la rendre plus orthodoxe. Ce sera une entreprise de longue haleine qui n'est pas achevée en 1909. Quant à l'iconographie publiée par le journal La Presse, elle est conforme aux verbalisations des définisseurs et provient sensiblement du même groupe de personnes. Elle a pu servir de modèle aux images populaires des défilés après le tournant du siècle."¹⁰¹

In general terms, we have identified, thus far, two periods in the historical development of la Fête de la Saint-Jean-Baptiste in Québec. The first, covering the years 1834 to 1837, is marked by the very special political mood of the times. The festivities, centred on the annual banquet, are organized and attended by members of the French Canadian bourgeoisie and political elite, under the leadership of Ludger Duvernay. The ideological tone of these events, including the manner in which they are subsequently

described in newspapers, is clearly pro-Patriotes. After a five-year break due to the exile of Duvernay and other sympathizers and leaders of the Patriotes, la Saint-Jean is again officially celebrated in Montréal in 1843.

Over the course of the next 125 years, the festivities will come to assume many of the features we traditionally associate with them, notably the parade and the representation of John the Baptist as a young child. The Catholic Church becomes a key player in the elaboration of the ideological content of the celebrations, as is the case in its rapport with all of Québec society. La Saint-Jean, particularly in the final decades of the 19th century and the early decades of the 20th, is the occasion for grandiose and elaborate manifestations of ethnic and national pride and solidarity.¹⁰² The Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste de Montréal is itself responsible for organizing the Montréal festivities, thereby playing an important role in the transmission of national values and aspirations. With the arrival of the 1960s and the Quiet Revolution, the type of nationalism associated with la Saint-Jean-Baptiste, particularly that based on religious values, appears increasingly less credible, culminating in the riot of 1968 and the destruction of the statue of John the Baptist during the last great parade of 1969. A third and vastly different period in la Fête's history begins.

E. The Recent Past

From 1970 to the present, la Saint-Jean-Baptiste in Montréal (and most certainly in all of Québec) has been characterized by two analogous trends: its popularization and its depoliticization. After the tumultuous decade of the 1960s, especially the critical years of 1968 and 1969, and even more so after the outcome of the 1980 Referendum on sovereignty-association, the mood of the June 24th celebrations became increasingly apolitical. Cries for Québec independence were heard less and less often, and were replaced by more traditional nationalistic themes such as demands for the preservation of the French language. What was emphasized was the festive or jubilant aspect of la Fête, rather than its political or nationalistic content, as the following makes clear:

"On veut pas que la fête soit uniquement la fête des gens du Parti Québécois comme on peut le prétendre. Quand on dit que c'est la fête de tous les Québécois et de toutes les Québécoises, ça implique tout le monde qui vit au Québec. Il y a six millions de population, c'est la fête des six millions. Ce qu'on a voulu, c'est rendre la fête à tout le monde. C'est pas un débat que l'on fait; peu important les résultats du référendum, peu importe de quelle nationalité on est, peu importe de quel parti on est, c'est la fête de tout le monde."¹⁰³

It could be argued that this change in focus was also the reflection of a certain confidence occasioned by the elec-

tion of the Parti québécois government in 1976. With a sovereignist party in power, the need to use la Saint-Jean as the opportunity for a show of political dissatisfaction may have appeared less pressing or relevant.

In 1970 and 1971, "...l'idée est lancée de faire la fête, d'être la parade au lieu de la regarder passer."¹⁰⁴ The festivities are held in the old section of Montréal, near the banks of the St. Lawrence River. In 1971, however, the Montréal police, perhaps fearing a repeat of 1968 and 1969, decide to break up the celebrations. In 1974, la Fête is transferred to Mount Royal, and this represents the beginning of the period of les super-spectacles. Its high point is the joint show of "les Cinq Grands" of Québec music in 1976: Robert Charlebois, Yvon Deschamps, Jean-Pierre Ferland, Claude Léveillée and Gilles Vigneault.¹⁰⁵ In terms of the visual symbolism associated with la Saint-Jean, the Québec flag, the fleurdelisé, becomes the universal emblem. Essentially, it is transformed into the master symbol, surpassing all others in its capacity to evoke feelings of national pride.

It is in the years 1974, 1975 and 1976 that les fêtes de quartier, organized by various community groups throughout Montréal, begin to make their appearance at la Saint-Jean. Increasingly, this format will become the preferred way of celebrating, even though the large-scale show, with one or more well-known Québec singers, remains very popular.

These neighbourhood feasts are a way of decentralizing and popularizing la Saint-Jean. Yet very quickly, and particularly after la Fête de la Saint-Jean becomes la Fête nationale, "...ces fêtes seront plus encadrées, plus structurées, la place qu'on devrait leur accorder sera l'objet de débats importants, même passionnés."¹⁰⁶

In 1977, the recently-elected Parti québécois government decreed that la Fête de la Saint-Jean-Baptiste be known officially as la Fête nationale du Québec. The significance of this change, largely overlooked, was far more than cosmetic. On one level, this was a perfectly natural thing to do. In a society where religion was no longer the foremost promoter of national values and aspirations, and where it no longer was able to elicit feelings of loyalty and obedience, celebrating a saint's feast-day as the national day made little immediate sense to the people of Québec. It was to be expected that a political party committed to independence, born at a time of rapid secularization in Québec, should decide to institutionalize such a transformation. Yet this shift from a national holiday closely associated with religion to one officially devoid of any religious significance was also reflective of the much larger process of Québec's political and social maturity. A decisive break had been effected, beginning with the Quiet Revolution of the 1960s. No longer could the national identity be circumscribed in terms of the religious persona

of one of the most important of Christian saints; rather, this identity was legitimated solely by reference to the nation itself and to its future. Thus could René Lévesque allude, in 1980, to "...la fête de notre nation québécoise, synonyme de foi en l'avenir et de quête passionnée de l'excellence."¹⁰⁷

The change in name was followed by an attempt, on the government's part, to ensure a more coherent and systematic organization of la Fête nationale by the establishment, in 1978, of the "...Comité organisateur de la Fête nationale du Québec dont le principal mandat consiste à favoriser la participation de toutes les régions du Québec."¹⁰⁸ This would give rise to tensions between the Comité and the Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste de Montréal, which had traditionally been responsible for organizing the June 24th festivities as it saw fit, and can be seen as representing a power struggle between the old-style nationalism of the Société and the technocratic assurance of the Parti québécois government. At stake was the right to claim the leadership role in defining Québec nationalism. The new structure would further accentuate the dilemma about whether la Fête should be geared to les super-spectacles or les fêtes de quartiers.

"La programmation des fêtes de 1977, à Montréal, comprenait de gros spectacles au stade olympique et au parc Jeanne-Mance, des lieux animés et cinq fêtes de quartiers. Le bilan de la SSJB montrait à l'évidence le succès des fêtes de quartiers et la désaffection pour les super-spectacles. Le nouveau gouvernement péquiste décide donc de miser sur cette formule; il veut la développer à travers

tout le Québec et l'encadrer par un comité organisateur dont les objectifs sont: décentraliser, démocratiser et dépolitiser la fête.

"La structure de la corporation de la fête nationale n'est pas simple. A l'origine, un arrêté en conseil divise le Québec en quinze régions; dans chacune d'elles un conseil d'administration de onze personnes est formé; quinze régions s'élisent cinq représentants au niveau national. A cela s'ajoute un collège électoral de quinze personnes parmi lesquelles seront choisis les membres dits nationaux, dont la liste est soumise au ministre du Loisir et des Sports.

"La création de cette structure ne va pas sans heurts. La SSJB, qui avait toujours eu en main l'organisation des fêtes à Montréal, voit la décentralisation comme la violation d'une chasse gardée. La bataille sera dure.

"En 1978, 781 projets de fête sont réalisés dans 600 municipalités. On ne réussira cependant pas à mettre sur pied la corporation des fêtes de Montréal. Toutes les activités de cette région seront directement prises en charge par le Comité national. L'année suivante, il y aura 2 258 lieux de fête dans 1 026 municipalités.

(...)

"Avec un peu de recul, on peut se rendre compte que ce qui était clair à ce moment-là, c'est que le gouvernement voulait enlever aux nationalistes de la SSJB ce petit pouvoir d'organiser ces fêtes-là pour en faire ce qu'ils appellent, eux autres, une structure autonome." (Jacques Roy).¹⁰⁹

The Comité organisateur, as well as being a source of problems for the government, did not prove to be very effective, and responsibility for organizing la Fête nationale in 1982 and 1983 was transferred to the Société des Festivals populaires du Québec, an autonomous corporation specializing in the arrangements for public festivals. Since 1984, the Mouvement National des Québécois has been mandated to

perform this role. Paradoxical though it may seem, the Mouvement regroups some fourteen Sociétés nationales or Sociétés Saint-Jean-Baptiste throughout Québec, and its leadership is essentially the same as that of the Montréal Société.¹¹⁰

Today, la Fête nationale remains a mixture of the neighbourhood party and the big expensive show. The bonfire is still lit, and the Archbishop of Montréal still celebrates la Messe de la Saint-Jean on the morning of June 24th. Recently, an attempt has been made to bring back the parade, though on a much smaller scale.¹¹¹ But nowhere does one see the figure of saint Jean-Baptiste, the precursor of the gospels and the patron of French Canada, presiding over the festivities originally meant to honour his birth. Everywhere floats the fleurdelisé. It could be argued that one national symbol, more appropriate to the past, has simply been abandoned for another, far better suited to a modern society. As Québec itself has changed, so has the visual symbolism so essential to the elaboration and consolidation of its identity.

Yet symbols require interpretation, at least on the part of the individual trying to understand their relevance and applicability in a given cultural context. Clifford Geertz argues for a "substantive" approach, much as Max Weber would insist upon viewing social action as "meaningful."

"The culture of a people is an ensemble of texts, themselves ensembles, which the anthropologist strains to read over the shoulders of those to whom they properly belong. There are enormous difficulties in such an enterprise, methodological pitfalls (...) and some moral perplexities as well. (...) But to regard such forms as "saying something of something," and saying it to somebody, is at least to open up the possibility of an analysis which attends to their substance rather than to reductive formulas professing to account for them."¹¹²

What is important is to attempt to "read" the symbolic texts from the inside, from the perspective of those for whom the texts hold a particular significance.

How can one therefore provide a brief preliminary reading of the transformation from la Fête de la Saint-Jean-Baptiste to la Fête nationale du Québec and the consequent shift from saint Jean-Baptiste to the fleurdelisé as unifying national symbol?¹¹³ One could state that the Saint and his feast-day were associated with nationalism in the 19th and first half of the 20th centuries primarily because religion itself was the standard-bearer of the nation. Because Québec was a society heavily influenced by religion, there could be no other acceptable national symbol than a religious one. As much as the Catholic clergy may have manipulated this symbol to consolidate the influence of the institutional church, the figure of John the Baptist expressed something very positive about themselves to French Canadians. He was the one who "set them off" from the others on a predominantly non-Catholic North American continent. His historical mission was now their historical mission,

just as his place in Christian history foreshadowed their own special role as carriers of the sacred Word. Was not the myth of their foundation in the New World ample testimony to this fact? It is fair to assume that the majority of French Canadians at this time viewed themselves in such terms.

But then the society underwent profound changes, and a religious symbolic framework was no longer as credible as it once was. Consistent with the emergence of the State as the source of the collective identity and purpose, the national feast had to be secularized. The State's flag, as is the case with other modern States, became the national symbol par excellence. What the fleurdelisé represents, of course, is the fusion of the Catholic faith (the white cross) with the French culture (the white lily). As national symbol, therefore, it retains the religious allusion, while also incorporating the foremost themes of contemporary Québec nationalism: culture and language. In this sense, the fleurdelisé is a much more comprehensive and evocative national symbol than the figure of the Baptist. What the people of Québec celebrate today on June 24th is their own sense of who they are in the present (French, secular, culturally mature and distinct) and their own ambiguities about the future (language, demographics, political options). Though the outward symbolism may be different from that of the past, the "saying something of something" remains remarkably persistent.

ENDNOTES

¹See Chapter IV, section D, "Elements for a Sociological Definition of the Feast."

²Marie Chicoine et al., Lâchés lousses: Les fêtes populaires au Québec, en Acadie et en Louisiane (Montréal: VLB Editeur, 1982), p. 12.

³Jean Provencher, C'était l'été: La vie rurale traditionnelle dans la vallée du Saint-Laurent (Montréal: Les Editions du Boréal Express, 1982), p. 194.

⁴See Roger Lapointe, Socio-anthropologie du religieux: La religion populaire au péril de la modernité (Genève: Librairie Droz S.A., 1988), pp. 23-24. See also François-André Isambert, Le sens du sacré: Fête et religion populaire (Paris: Les Editions de minuit, 1982), pp. 43-46.

⁵Benjamin Sulte, Mélanges historiques (Montréal: Editions Edouard Garand, 1929), vol. 15, pp. 16-17.

⁶See Thérèse Beaudoin, L'été dans la culture québécoise: XVIIe-XIXe siècles (Québec: Institut québécois de recherche sur la culture, 1987), Chapter 3, Section I. The author writes: "Les coutumes associées à la Saint-Jean-Baptiste, parce qu'elles sont très rapprochées du solstice du 21 juin, auraient pu tirer leur origine des fêtes en relation avec le soleil. C'est la théorie que plusieurs auteurs ayant écrit sur le sujet ont véhiculé depuis de nombreuses années. Cependant, des études effectuées récemment en France ont mis en doute ces théories dites solaires, car il a été démontré que les coutumes de ces deux fêtes n'avaient aucun lien en commun, si ce n'est leur proximité. Quelques recherches entreprises sur ces coutumes au Québec abondent dans le même sens, trop d'éléments venant s'opposer à cette théorie.", ibid., p. 148. The French studies she refers to are those by Arnold van Gennep, Manuel du folklore français contemporain.

⁷Arnold van Gennep, The Rites of Passage (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1960), p. 179. Sympathetic rites are defined as "...those based on belief in the reciprocal action of like on like, of opposite on opposite, of the container and the contained, of the part and the whole, of image and real object or real being, or word and deed...", ibid., p. 4.

⁸Thérèse Beaudoin, op. cit., p. 148. For a discussion of the significance of religious feast-days as "dates d'échéance," see Robert-Lionel Séguin, La civilisation traditionnelle de l'"habitant" aux 17e et 18e siècles (Montréal: Editions Fides, 1973), pp. 238-252.

⁹See Jean Provencher, op. cit., "Les récoltes", pp. 99-153. See also Anne-Marie Desdouits, La vie traditionnelle au pays de Caux et au Canada français: Le cycle des saisons (Québec: Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 1987), pp. 340-349.

¹⁰Thérèse Beaudoin, op. cit., pp. 148-150.

¹¹See ibid., pp. 133-147 and 167-175, and Jean Provencher, op. cit., pp. 202-211.

¹²"Le symbolisme accordé à la Fête-Dieu n'échappe pas au domaine de la croyance populaire. En effet, cette fête, à la fois religieuse et profane, revêt un caractère très particulier pour les villageois qui attendent cette journée avec beaucoup d'impatience. La veille, chacun d'entre eux examine le ciel pour s'assurer qu'il fera beau pour la sortie du saint sacrement. Tous sont anxieux d'arriver au lendemain car, selon une croyance populaire ayant cours dans plusieurs localités, si le saint sacrement ne peut sortir lors de la procession à cause du mauvais temps, c'est signe que les récoltes seront peu productives cette année.", Thérèse Beaudoin, op. cit., p. 145. It should also be noted that the parades held on la Saint-Jean owe much, in their inspiration and format, to the processions of la Fête-Dieu.

¹³Benoît Lacroix, La religion de mon père (Montréal: Les Editions Bellarmin, 1986), p. 106.

¹⁴See ibid., pp. 114-118.

¹⁵Comité organisateur de la fête nationale du Québec, Recueil de chroniques portant sur les origines et la tradition de la St-Jean au Québec (Montréal: Comité organisateur, 1979), #3, p. 1.

¹⁶Hélène de Carufel, A la redécouverte de notre Fête nationale (Québec: Corporation des fêtes du 24 juin, 1980), p. 5. For a brief review of the different meanings associated with la Saint-Joseph in Normandy and French Canada, see Anne-Marie Desdouts, op. cit., pp. 281-282.

¹⁷As quoted in Thérèse Beaudoin, op. cit., p. 171.

¹⁸See Hector Grenon, Us et coutumes du Québec (Montréal: Les Editions La Presse, 1974), p. 145. Curiously enough, May 24th (or thereabouts) is celebrated as la Fête de Dollard des Ormeaux in Québec and as Victoria Day in the rest of Canada, while Bonaparte's birthday on August 15th coincides with la Fête de l'Assomption de la Vierge Marie.

¹⁹The other common name was Joseph. Until recently, French Canadian male children were automatically given the middle or second name of Joseph (as female children were given that of Mary). Though this indicated a widespread devotion to the Holy Family, one should remember that Saint Joseph was the original patron saint of French Canada. On the question of why John the Baptist should have been chosen as patron saint, see Gérard Turcotte, "Pourquoi saint Jean-Baptiste?", in L'information nationale (Montréal: Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste de Montréal, June 1987), p. 12.

²⁰Jean Provencher, op. cit., p. 201.

²¹"The Gospel According to Saint John", in The Jerusalem Bible (New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1966). Chapter I, verses 6-8, p. 146. Since 1717, John the Baptist has also been known as the universal patron saint of Freemasonry. The idea of light or enlightenment is an important theme in Masonic folklore, hence a reason why the one come "to speak for the light" may have been chosen as patron saint. John the Baptist, moreover, is sometimes associated with the Essenes, a Jewish communal sect quite secretive in its rituals, and which may have had some links to the early

Christian Church. In this case, the parallels with Masonic secrecy are quite obvious. (On the Essenes, see Henry Chadwick, The Early Church (Harmondsworth, England: Penguin Books, 1967, The Pelican History of the Church, Volume I), pp. 13-15). It is a well-known fact that some of the Patriotes leaders were also Freemasons.

²²Heinz Weinmann, Du Canada au Québec: Généalogie d'une histoire (Montréal: Editions de l'Hexagone, 1987), p. 432. This interesting work, which is a psychoanalytic reading of Québec history, contains a lengthy section on la Saint-Jean-Baptiste. Weinmann argues that John the Baptist is an apt representation of French Canada, primarily because he is a figure who was beheaded.

²³See Michel Brunet, "Trois dominantes de la pensée canadienne-française: L'agriculturisme, l'anti-étatisme et le messianisme," in Michel Brunet, La présence anglaise et les Canadiens (Montréal: Editions Beauchemin, 1958).

²⁴Denis Monière, Le développement des idéologies au Québec des origines à nos jours (Montréal: Editions Québec/Amérique, 1977), p. 186.

²⁵See the interesting article by Eric Wolfe, "The Virgin of Guadalupe: A Mexican National Symbol", in Reader in Comparative Religion: An Anthropological Approach, William A. Lessa and Evon Z. Vogt, eds., (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1972), pp. 149-153.

²⁶Even today, the Black Madonna of Czenstochowa remains a potent national symbol for the Poles, as attested to by the fact that her image is intimately associated with the Polish labour union, Solidarity.

²⁷Everett C. Hughes, French Canada in Transition (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1943), p. 148.

²⁸See, for example, the article by Pierre Savard, "La dévotion à sainte Philomène," in Pierre Savard, Aspects du catholicisme canadien-français au XIXe siècle (Montréal: Editions Fides, 1980), pp. 173-196. Though saint Jean-Baptiste may not have been the object of a popular cult, Savard indicates that, from the period 1714 to 1925,

seventeen Québec parishes were given the Saint's name. See ibid., "Les noms de paroisses au Québec pendant trois siècles," p. 164.

²⁹As quoted in Jean Provencher, op. cit., pp. 195-196. Provencher mentions that the Sieur Jean de Poutrincourt had recruited this group of settlers going to Acadia.

³⁰See ibid., p. 196. See also Comité organisateur de la fête nationale du Québec, op. cit., #8, p. 2.

³¹As quoted in Robert-Lionel Séguin, op. cit., p. 239.

³²Philippe Aubert de Gaspé, Les anciens Canadiens (Montréal: Editions internationales Alain Stanké ltée, 1987), p. 104. Philippe Aubert de Gaspé is considered the father of French Canadian literature.

³³As quoted in Anne-Marie Desdouits, op. cit., pp. 298-299. Notice the glaring similarities between this text and that of Philippe Aubert de Gaspé.

³⁴Hélène de Carufel, op. cit., p. 3. See also Comité organisateur de la fête nationale du Québec, op. cit., #1. Popular belief also equated le feu de la Saint-Jean with fertility and protection against natural calamities. See, in this regard, Thérèse Beaudoin, op. cit., pp. 152-153.

³⁵See Anne-Marie Desdouits, op. cit., pp. 289-293 and pp. 298-299.

³⁶Jean Provencher, op. cit., p. 200.

³⁷For a summary description of le feu de la Saint-Jean in a Québec town of the 1930s, see Everett C. Hughes, op. cit., pp. 149-150.

³⁸See Philippe Aubert de Gaspé, op. cit., pp. 105-107.

³⁹On la coutume du Loup vert and le couronnement de la rosière, see Anne-Marie Desdouits, op. cit., pp. 296-298 and pp. 295-296. On la louée, see ibid., pp. 301-303 and Robert-Lionel Séguin, op. cit., p. 238. On la criée du saumon, see Philippe Aubert de Gaspé, op. cit., pp. 104-105 and Thérèse Beaudoin, op. cit., pp. 157-158.

⁴⁰See Thérèse Beaudoin, op. cit., pp. 150-151, Anne-Marie Desdouits, op. cit., p. 304 and Jean Provencher, op. cit., p. 198.

⁴¹Thérèse Beaudoin, op. cit., p. 150.

⁴²Jean Provencher, op. cit., p. 198.

⁴³Anne-Marie Desdouits, op. cit., p. 305.

⁴⁴See ibid., pp. 282-286.

⁴⁵Hélène de Carufel, op. cit., p. 6. It would appear that the custom of le pain bénit was introduced by Monseigneur de Laval in 1645 in New France, on the occasion of the Christmas midnight mass in Québec City.

⁴⁶See Thérèse Beaudoin, op. cit., p. 157.

⁴⁷Le pain bénit has been part of the official liturgy of la messe de la Saint-Jean since 1978. I witnessed the custom in a Montréal church in 1987, on the occasion of la Fête de la Saint-Jean. During mass, the Archbishop of Montréal blessed baskets of what appeared to be plain dinner rolls. After mass, on the front steps of the church, these were then distributed indiscriminately to all who desired one. When the baskets were empty, large bags of similar dinner rolls, presumably unblessed, were brought out. People rushed to receive one or several, many eating them on the spot. What was striking was the lack of order in the distribution of the rolls, as well as the apparent absence of any sense of the rolls as "holy objects." In 1988, the rolls were distributed individually during mass, presumably to ensure more order in the proceedings.

⁴⁸Thérèse Beaudoin, op. cit., p. 157.

⁴⁹Gérard Turcotte, op. cit., p. 12.

⁵⁰Heinz Weinmann, op. cit., p. 407. Weinmann mentions 1843 as the "birth" of la Saint-Jean as "fête nationale." This date is actually the year in which the Association Saint-Jean-Baptiste, forerunner of the Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste de Montréal, was formally founded, even though the latter maintains that its foundation goes back to 1834, on the occasion of the first banquet organized by Ludger Duvernay. The Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste de Québec, the other large association, was founded in 1842.

⁵¹Denis Monière, Ludger Duvernay et la révolution intellectuelle au Bas-Canada (Montréal: Editions Québec/Amérique, 1987), p. 99. Emphases mine. See also Robert Rumilly, Histoire de la Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste de Montréal (Montréal: Les Editions de l'Aurore, 1975), pp. 18-20. This book by Rumilly is the definitive historical study of the Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste de Montréal for the period from 1834 to 1948. Unfortunately, this fine piece of historical research is marred by its anti-liberal bias, notably its anti-Semitism, and this raises serious questions about Rumilly's prejudices as well as his own historical objectivity. For example, he makes such statements as "...la puissante industrie judéo-américaine du cinéma..." (p. 328), "L'infiltration juive commence, il est vrai, à ronger cette belle paroisse." (p. 434), and "Il existe donc une organisation solide, aux ramifications internationales. Le nom de "juif", au Canada, ne doit plus évoquer seulement les regrattiers sordides de la rue Craig." (p. 469), emphases mine.

⁵²As quoted in Hélène de Carufel, op. cit., p. 6.

⁵³As quoted in Robert Rumilly, op. cit., p. 20. Emphases mine.

⁵⁴It is reputed that Georges-Etienne Cartier, later known as one of the fathers of the Canadian Confederation, sang some verses of a song of his own composition, probably O Canada! mon pays, mes amours. See ibid., p. 20. Monière claims that this did not occur until the banquet of 1835. See Denis Monière, Ludger Duvernay..., p. 100.

⁵⁵See Robert Rumilly, op. cit., p. 19.

⁵⁶As quoted in ibid., p. 20.

⁵⁷As quoted in ibid., p. 20.

⁵⁸Ibid., p. 17.

⁵⁹See Thérèse Beaudoin, op. cit., pp. 158-159.

⁶⁰Ibid., p. 158. Interestingly enough, the maple leaf and the beaver, particularly the former, have become the national symbols par excellence of Canada as a whole.

⁶¹Ibid., p. 159.

⁶²The Québec flag, called the fleurdelisé, was formally adopted in 1948, and has, as its recurring motif, the white lily ("fleur de lys"), symbol of the French monarchy. The lily, symbol of purity, is also associated with St. Joseph who, it will be remembered, was the first patron saint of French Canadians.

⁶³See Robert Rumilly, op. cit., pp. 23-32 and Denis Monière, Ludger Duvernay..., pp. 99-104 and pp. 114-115.

⁶⁴Denis Monière, Ludger Duvernay..., p. 100.

⁶⁵Ibid., p. 115.

⁶⁶Ibid., p. 102.

⁶⁷Ibid., p. 102.

⁶⁸Ibid., p. 103.

⁶⁹Ibid., p. 114.

⁷⁰Robert Rumilly, op. cit., p. 26. Emphases mine.

⁷¹See Denis Monière, Ludger Duvernay..., p. 115.

⁷²See ibid., pp. 143 and 147.

⁷³For an account of the 1842 festivities in Québec City, see Claude Paulette assisté de France Amyot, Je me souviens depuis 1834 (Ottawa: Editions Leméac/Rencontres francophones de Québec, 1980), pp. 13-16. The banquet organized on this occasion was influenced by the growing temperance movement: no alcohol was served. Charles Chiniquy, great pro-temperance orator, and a priest who would later be unfrocked by Bishop Bourget of Montréal, delivered the sermon during the mass. The SSJB de Québec was a nationalist organization, much as other such associations. Its motto was "Nos institutions, notre langue et nos lois!"

⁷⁴Victor Morin, Cent vingt-cinq ans d'oeuvres sociales et économiques (Montréal: Les Editions des Dix, 1959), pp. 15-16. Victor Morin was President of the Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste de Montréal from 1915 to 1924.

⁷⁵In connection with this, see Thérèse Beaudoin, op. cit., p. 163.

⁷⁶It is possible that this may have occurred as early as 1851. See ibid., p. 164.

⁷⁷See Claude Paulette assisté de France Amyot, op. cit., pp. 46-68.

⁷⁸See Marie Chicoine et al., op. cit., p. 250. Trudeau was, in fact, elected Prime Minister at this election. His show of defiance in the face of those throwing objects at him on the reviewing platform may or may not have been a factor in the outcome of the election, though it must be remembered that this episode occurred at the height of what was called "Trudeaumania."

⁷⁹Denis Monière, Ludger Duvernay..., p. 187. The Church seemed quite well aware of the "beneficial" influence of religious celebrations, including la Saint-Jean, on the population. In 1848, Bishop Bourget of Montréal wrote to Governor General Elgin: "...le peuple depuis huit ans est entretenu dans des dispositions pacifiques par des fêtes et exercices religieux." As quoted in Michel Brunet, "L'Eglise catholique du Bas-Canada et le partage du pouvoir à l'heure d'une nouvelle donne (1837-1854)," in Jean-Paul Bernard, ed., Les idéologies québécoises au 19e siècle (Montréal: Boréal Express, 1973), p. 93.

⁸⁰Thérèse Beaudoin, op. cit., p. 154.

⁸¹Hélène de Carufel, op. cit., pp. 28-29. The themes for the parades from 1960 to 1969 were obtained from an exhibit on la Fête de la Saint-Jean organized in 1988 by the Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste de Montréal. There was no parade held in 1933 because of preparations for the 400th anniversary of Jacques Cartier's landing in Canada.

⁸²Marie Chicoine et al., op. cit., p. 250. A few parades were held in the Montréal area after 1969, but none of the magnitude and significance of the earlier ones. In 1988, a modest attempt was made to bring back the idea of a parade as part of the festivities. There were three floats representing the past, the present and the future, which converged on a common point from different directions, and behind which bystanders were invited to march. The attempt was more or less successful.

⁸³Ibid., p. 250.

⁸⁴Heinz Weinmann, op. cit., p. 455.

⁸⁵Thérèse Beaudoin, op. cit., p. 156.

⁸⁶See endnote no. 76.

⁸⁷See Thérèse Beaudoin, op. cit., pp. 164-166, "Représentation de saint Jean-Baptiste." Hélène de Carufel mentions also: "Il était coutume en France de représenter Saint (sic) Jean-Baptiste par un enfant accompagné d'un agneau. Jean-Baptiste était le patron des bergers dans

plusieurs localités. Les bergers, étant des enfants, il est normal que le saint ait été évoqué sous les traits d'un enfant couvert d'une peau de mouton, tel que le berger se vêtait.", op. cit., p. 20.

⁸⁸See Heinz Weinmann, op. cit., pp. 410-413.

⁸⁹Hélène de Carufel, op. cit., p. 20.

⁹⁰Thérèse Beaudoin, op. cit., p. 164.

⁹¹On the matter of "l'incident Asselin," see Victor Morin, op. cit., pp. 9-10 and pp. 25-28, Robert Rumilly, op. cit., pp. 234-246, and Heinz Weinmann, op. cit., pp. 450-455. Weinmann argues that Asselin's critique and his subsequent polemic with Monseigneur Bruchési of Montréal prefigured the changes of the Quiet Revolution of the 1960s.

⁹²As quoted in Victor Morin, op. cit., p. 9.

⁹³As quoted in Heinz Weinmann, op. cit., p. 452.

⁹⁴As quoted in ibid., pp. 452-453.

⁹⁵As quoted in Robert Rumilly, op. cit., p. 237.

⁹⁶Denis Monière, Le développement..., p. 246.

⁹⁷La Presse, June 24, 1905, p. 4. As quoted in Michèle Guay, La fête de la Saint-Jean-Baptiste à Montréal: 1834-1909 (Ottawa: University of Ottawa, Unpublished M.A. Thesis, 1973).

⁹⁸See Michèle Guay, op. cit.

⁹⁹See ibid., particularly pp. 131-134 and pp. 309-319.

¹⁰⁰Ibid., pp. 309-310.

¹⁰¹Ibid., p. 313.

¹⁰²Examples of such manifestations are the convention of 1874 in Montréal and that of 1880 in Québec City. The purpose of both conventions was to regroup French Canadians who had emigrated to other parts of North America, especially the United States. In the early part of this century, two Congrès de la langue française were held in 1912 and 1937. On these various events, see Claude Paulette assisté de France Amyot, op. cit.

¹⁰³As quoted in Marie Chicoine et al., op. cit., p. 261.

¹⁰⁴Ibid., p. 250.

¹⁰⁵They were named "les Cinq Grands" because they were the most popular and most influential Québec chansonniers of that time. They remain very important in the history of Québec cultural life.

¹⁰⁶Marie Chicoine et al., op. cit., p. 256.

¹⁰⁷Hélène de Carufel, op. cit., inside front cover. Emphases mine.

¹⁰⁸Mouvement national des Québécois, "La Fête nationale du Québec," undated pamphlet.

¹⁰⁹Marie Chicoine et al., op. cit., p. 258. Emphases mine.

¹¹⁰See Mouvement national des Québécois, op. cit.

¹¹¹See endnote no. 82.

¹¹²Clifford Geertz, The Interpretation of Cultures (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1973), pp. 452-453. For an interesting discussion of symbolism with reference to the pan-Canadian context, see William A. Stahl, Symbols of Canada: Civil Religion, Nationality, and the Search for Meaning (Berkeley, California: Graduate Theological Union, Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, 1981).

¹¹³See subsequent parts of this thesis, especially Chapter V, for further elaboration of this question.

CHAPTER III

THE SOCIÉTÉ SAINT-JEAN-BAPTISTE DE MONTRÉAL

In March 1834, Ludger Duvernay, journalist and editor of La Minerve, founded an association in Montréal called Aide-toi, le ciel t'aidera. Denis Monière explains that this association was semi-secret, its members agreeing not to disclose the contents of their discussions, and that "L'objectif principal de Duvernay est d'habituer les jeunes Canadiens à écrire et à étudier."¹ "Cette association," Monière points out, "préfigure celle des Fils de la liberté et servira plus tard de creuset à la création de la Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste, qui ne sera constituée de façon formelle qu'en 1843."² It would appear that Aide-toi, le ciel t'aidera was short-lived; Robert Rumilly mentions that, as early as the banquet of 1835, it is never spoken of again.³ Yet Rumilly argues that there is a definite continuity between this association, the Fête of June 24th and the Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste de Montréal (SSJB de M).

"Nous pouvons considérer la fondation d'"Aide-toi, le Ciel t'aidera" comme un essai précurseur. Puis, entre la fête du 24 juin et la Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste, la filiation est incontestable. Le témoignage formel ou tacite des contemporains, à défaut de traces écrites, fournit une autre raison. La Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste existait au moins virtuellement, spontanément, dès 1834. Elle a pris une forme plus ordonnée, elle s'est "réorganisée sur des bases permanentes et solides" en 1843."⁴

A. The Beginnings

It is in 1843 that Duvernay and some of his long-standing friends such as George-Etienne Cartier propose the creation of the Association Saint-Jean-Baptiste. The motion calling for its establishment states: "Qu'une société de bienfaisance dans la cité et la paroisse de Montréal soit formée sous le nom d'Association Saint-Jean-Baptiste, se mettant, pour la prospérité et l'efficacité de ses travaux, sous la protection du grand saint qu'elle choisit pour patron."⁵ At the founding meeting, Denis-Benjamin Viger is elected President of the Association, while Duvernay becomes commissaire ordonnateur.⁶ The change in orientation from 1834, the year of the first banquet de la Saint-Jean, to 1843 is remarkable. Though some of the key organizers, notably Duvernay, are the same, the nationalism of the former days of the Patriotes is noticeably absent.

"Les mêmes personnes ont donc inauguré la fête nationale en 1834 et constitué la société nationale en 1843. Entre les deux entreprises, la filiation est incontestable. L'expression "réorganiser", employée par La Minerve, suffirait à l'établir. L'Association Saint-Jean-Baptiste s'assigne, entre autres buts, la reprise de la fête nationale, interrompue par les "troubles", mais en lui donnant un caractère religieux qui manquait aux banquets de 1834 à 1837. (...) Comparez (...) la manifestation politique de 1834 et la grand-messe de 1843! Rien n'illustre mieux

les changements survenus dans la situation et dans les esprits. Seul, Papineau, "l'homme-principe", n'a pas changé. Les longues lettres qu'il envoie, de son exil parisien, ressemblent aux rugissements du lion enchaîné."⁷

In 1849, the Association is formally incorporated. A certain ethnic nationalism is evident in the raison d'être of the group, as its declaration of purpose makes clear:

"L'Association se déclare fondée "dans le but d'aider et secourir les personnes en cette province, d'origine française, soit du côté de leur père ou de leur mère, ou celles de toute autre origine, qui se sont mariées à des personnes françaises et se trouvent dans le nécessité de recourir à l'assistance de leurs concitoyens, par suite d'accidents ou d'autres malheurs qu'elles auraient éprouvés, ainsi que pour répandre l'éducation parmi elles, et contribuer à leur progrès moral et social, et pour d'autres objets de bienfaisance...."⁸

The seal of the Association bears the motto proposed by Duvernay: "Rendre le peuple meilleur." It is not until 1914 that the term Société replaces that of Association in the group's name.⁹

Duvernay was undoubtedly conscious that the sense of bitterness and frustration stemming from the defeat of the Patriotes needed to be counteracted by the creation of a more permanent and stable structure to channel nationalistic feelings. Since the political solution was no longer credible or practical, any such structure must of necessity be oriented more to a cultural or social type of nationalism. The decision to found a charitable organization was perhaps deliberate in that this was seen as a more "neutral" type of regrouping. Above all, any new structure must be

able to bring together French Canadian leaders of all political persuasions. If there was one lesson which needed to be learned from the failure of 1837-1838, it was that of unity.

"Afin de refaire l'unité de la nation et de reconstruire le sentiment d'appartenance nationale, il était urgent de combattre l'apathie et le découragement qui s'était emparé de la population après ces rudes épreuves. Au-delà des partis et des journaux qui leur étaient inféodés et qui, par vocation, exprimaient des intérêts divergents, il fallait créer un lieu de rassemblement et de solidarité, une institution où toute la nation pourrait se reconnaître. L'ambition de Duvernay était de réunir tous les leaders du monde de la politique, des professions libérales et du commerce autour d'un objectif commun: la promotion de la nationalité.

"(...) Les souvenirs amers des années d'exil ont guidé les premiers pas de l'Association et inspiré son fondateur qui avait été profondément marqué par les rivalités dans les rangs patriotes. Il n'avait qu'une idée en tête: refaire l'unité des Canadiens français, non plus sur une base politique mais autour d'objectifs sociaux et culturels.

"Le nouveau nationalisme qui s'élabore dans le cadre de l'Union et qui définit la vocation de l'Association Saint-Jean-Baptiste suppose que la survivance de la nation n'est plus fonction de la forme de gouvernement ou de la structure du pouvoir politique, mais qu'elle dépend plutôt d'une politique pragmatique qui cherche à utiliser le pouvoir pour en tirer le maximum d'avantages matériels."¹⁰

The motto of the new Association, "Rendre le peuple meilleur," was the best expression of the doubts and uncertainty which now prevailed amongst the former supporters of the Patriotes' cause. Denis Monière sees in the choice of this particular devise the classic liberal notion

of human perfectibility, as well as a manifestation of the internalization of the failure of the Rebellion:

"La devise de la nouvelle association: "Rendre le peuple meilleur", traduit bien la pénétration de l'idéologie libérale dans la pensée nationaliste et témoigne de l'optimisme fondamental qui animait Duvernay. Le credo du Siècle des lumières ne postulait-il pas que, par nature, l'homme était perfectible, qu'il pouvait développer ses connaissances et améliorer ses conditions de vie dans la mesure où il avait accès au savoir, à l'éducation? Mais le choix de cette devise n'est-il pas en même temps une reconnaissance implicite que les intellectuels patriotes s'étaient trompés dans leur évaluation des progrès des lumières au Bas-Canada puisqu'elle suppose que le peuple canadien n'était pas assez avancé intellectuellement pour réaliser une révolution politique. Rendre le peuple meilleur signifie qu'il a des progrès à faire, que le peuple n'a pas atteint son potentiel de développement et manque notamment de culture et d'éducation de sorte qu'il n'est pas prêt à assurer lui-même son destin. N'avons-nous pas là, par un curieux retournement, une justification de l'échec par l'autoculpabilisation, le vaincu intériorisant sa défaite au point de s'en reconnaître responsable et de s'imposer des conditions de relèvement utopiques?"¹¹

In opposition to Rumilly, Heinz Weinmann emphasizes the discontinuity between the dates 1834 and 1843, and the fact that the SSJB de M was, in fact, founded twice.¹² In line with his psychoanalytic reading of Québec history, he argues that this is in accord with the duality which is reflected in the image of the Baptist and which runs through Canadian/Québec history as a central theme: "Comme pour se conformer au double visage de saint Jean-Baptiste, à la dualité dont le Canada a été pétri dès son origine, la Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste, vouée officiellement au Patron national du Canada français, sera fondée deux fois."¹³ The

Rebellion of 1837-38 represents a radical break in mentality, perhaps nowhere more obvious than in the person of Duvernay himself. Prior to 1843, the gatherings of June 24th are highly politicized events; religion does not play a dominant role. In 1843, the Association is founded on totally apolitical, humanitarian grounds. In fact, a fire nearly destroys the village of Boucherville just prior to the celebrations of la Saint-Jean of that year, and the banquet is cancelled in order to give the proceeds from the sale of tickets to the residents.¹⁴ On the 24th, it is the mass, and no longer the banquet, which becomes the meaningful event. In Weinmann's view, the supposed continuity between 1834 and 1843 is not entirely true to history. What is significant is the very fact of the dual foundation, reflecting, as it does, the 1837-38 fracture in Québec history and the very different mentalities which precede and follow it.

Others have provided a remarkably detailed history of the SSJB de M since its inception.¹⁵ For the purposes of this thesis, it is perhaps more valuable to consider the ideological profile of the Société over the years and its role in the development of nationalism in Québec. It must be acknowledged that this role was an important and prestigious one, certainly until the mid-1960s. Yet it is based on an interesting contradiction: one which also characterizes saint Jean-Baptiste as national myth and symbol. Weinmann

expresses it well:

"On est donc en droit de dire qu'après la crise sacrificielle de 1837-38, contre toute attente, de nouvelles solidarités se tissent sous le patronage de saint Jean-Baptiste, des solidarités politiques et économiques qui vont arracher finalement le Canada français au traditionalisme rétrograde dans lequel l'ont tenu prisonnier ses élites spirituelles et séculaires depuis la Conquête jusqu'en 1837. Après le choc psychologique de 1837, le Canada français s'ouvre à l'Autre, à la Confédération et, plus lentement, à la modernité. Certes, les forces réactionnaires, le poids des traditions se font sentir toujours lourdement chez le haut clergé qui voit son seul salut venir de Rome. Mgr Bourget et évidemment le centre de cette force d'inertie. Mais ce qui est paradoxal encore, c'est que le mythe national de la Saint-Jean-Baptiste, comme un boomerang, se retourne contre ses auteurs cléricaux. Non pas directement par une révolte, mais indirectement, lentement, par un long travail de sape, par une "révolution tranquille" qui prend conscience des contradictions inhérentes au mythe national."¹⁶

As much as the SSJB de M is at times (and perhaps justifiably) associated with a static, conservative nationalism, it is also true that it contributed significantly to the self-emancipation of French Canadians, notably in the political, economic and educational sectors. This could only have far-reaching implications for all of Québec society and for the continuous value of the Baptist as symbolic representation of the national character.

B. Nationalism and Ideology

In analyzing the overall evolution of the SSJB de M

over the years, Jean-Pierre Blais points out that "...celle-ci a toujours recherché à maintenir une sorte d'équilibre entre l'action politique et la bienfaisance."¹⁷ "C'est d'une conscience aigüe du danger que constitue la menace de l'environnement anglo-saxon," he further maintains, "que s'inspire sa pensée profonde."¹⁸ These observations underscore the two dominant themes which have characterized the nationalism of the SSJB de M since 1843: conservatism and ethnocentrism. From its very beginnings, the Société has also viewed itself as the nationalistic organization defending the interests of all French Canadians. In making these claims to universality, the organization has sought to expand and consolidate its sphere of influence. As recently as 1960, the President of the Société could declare in all sincerity:

"Il y a différentes catégories d'associations suivant les divers intérêts qui poussent les gens à s'unir. La Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste transcende, en quelque sorte, toutes ces formes de société. Elle recherche l'union de tous les Canadiens français et la protection de leurs intérêts supérieurs collectifs comme groupe ethnique distinct et ce, dans toutes les sphères de l'activité temporelle."¹⁹

Back in 1923, a similar hope was expressed that the SSJB de M should become the rallying point of all French Canadians. In quasi-mediaeval imagery, Jesuit Alexandre Dugré called for a strong national association regrouping and channelling the scattered forces of French Canada.

"Le puissant organisme social qu'est maintenant la Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste de Montréal doit

rayonner, doit accomplir, sinon l'unité, du moins l'union des sociétés locales autour d'une société centrale. L'association est la monarchie du XXe siècle: les victoires sont le fruit de la cohérence des efforts par l'unité de commandement. Nous possédons une foule de bons soldats, des corps d'armées solides, quelques chefs, mais pas d'armée, faute d'un état-major général qui combine les mouvements d'ensemble. A défaut d'un pouvoir central, qu'était jadis le roi, à défaut d'un impossible parlement unique pour nous seuls et pour nous tous de partout, nous devrions avoir une assemblée nationale à côté, au-dessus de la politique, les états-généraux de la Saint-Jean-Baptiste. (...) Il devrait se trouver une section de la Saint-Jean-Baptiste dans toutes nos paroisses, surtout dans les centres mixtes: adviene un péril, une souffrance, un coulage de forces sur un point donné, le frémissement se communique partout, grâce à ce système nerveux qui court dans toute la race."²⁰

Dugré places great stress upon the need to regroup the local sociétés under the banner of the one Société. The organization of these sociétés along parochial lines was very popular in this century. Most parishes in Montréal took great pride in having a local chapter of the SSJB de M within their territorial limits, and this was reflected in their active participation in the annual parade.

When the SSJB de M was first established, it was the French Canadian intellectual and political leadership of that day which was its guiding force. This leadership, as was pointed out earlier, was generally synonymous with that of the Patriotes, whose concerns and priorities were above all constitutional. The impetus behind the banquet of 1834 and the more formal organization of 1843 was basically the same: to provide an occasion and a forum for the affirmation

of a common national identity and purpose. This implied that class or professional distinctions were quite secondary, as were, to a certain extent, and especially after 1838, partisan political differences. "The Saint-Jean-Baptiste Society was hoped, in the minds of its founders, to be the first great associational device binding strongly together the masses and the élite among French Canadians who had gradually drifted more and more apart. It was rationalized as the sanction of a 'sacred alliance' between these two groups...."²¹ In claiming to regroup and represent all French Canadians, the SSJB de M, in more recent times, has tended to obscure the existence of social classes in Québec, even while claiming to gather them all under the banner of national unity.

"Si la Société ne reconnaît aucune lutte de classes au Québec, elle croit pourtant à l'existence des classes sociales, puisqu'elle affirme souvent réussir à toutes les représenter sous la même bannière de l'unité nationale."²²

This predilection has often made the Société appear apolitical, or at least somewhat distant and unrealistic, in its analysis of Québec society, particularly prior to the Quiet Revolution. In wanting to gloss over very real differences in class interests, all for the purpose of ethno-national solidarity and pride, the Société's relevance came to be consistently and seriously called into question. This has not prevented it, however, from evolving an influential and effective panoply of nationalistic symbols

and themes. Perhaps the very fact that it could claim to bring together diverse groups, especially during the festivities of June 24th, made this possible.

"...the Saint-Jean-Baptiste Society, for one, with its festive annual meetings officially gathering representatives from all the significant walks of French-Canadian life - clergy, politicians of all colours, journalists, writers, professionals, merchants, and students - was potent in developing an impressive nationalist symbolism for mass consumption. It has already been suggested that the slightly nationalist view of French-Canadian history originally implied the notion of a special divine mission granted to the French Canadians in North America. Such a view is a natural outcome of the theological-mindedness of the French-Canadian clerical leaders, particularly of those who shared the conception of history of Bossuet and De Maistre, according to whom Providence intervenes directly in human affairs... (...) This idea had (...) become an oratorical commonplace."²³

The SSJB de M, for a large part of its history, remained identified with a conservative type of nationalism. Even until quite recently, Louis Balthazar could remark that "...si l'on considère par exemple l'idéologie qui prévalait au sein des sociétés Saint-Jean-Baptiste (...), on demeure persuadé que le nationalisme ouvrait largement ses portes à la droite."²⁴ This conservatism was most strikingly evident in the Société's equation of nationalism with religion, a very common sentiment in the late 19th and first half of the 20th centuries. Bonenfant and Falardeau claim that the Société "...did much, from the very beginning, to make explicit and to overemphasize the unconscious relationship which always exists between national feeling and religion."²⁵ They further state that the SSJB de M

"...through its annual lyrical speeches and demonstrations, (...) glorified and popularized, along with a true reverence for tradition and the institutions of the past, an emotional and myth-like interpretation of the historical development of the French Canadians...."²⁶ In 1924, the President of the Société, Victor Morin, wrote: "La fête nationale des Canadiens-Français (sic) doit nécessairement revêtir un caractère religieux puisque la foi catholique est à la base même de leur survivance."²⁷ And as recently as the late 1950s, Lionel Groulx, an influential force within the SSJB de M, in speaking of "le rôle d'une société nationale en l'an 1958," could encourage his listeners in the following terms:

"Animez-vous de cette pensée que nous n'avons pas à défendre et à sauver -- et c'est là notre magnifique tâche -- uniquement un peuple français, mais un petite (sic) peuple catholique, le seul, en Amérique du Nord, ai-je encore dit tant de fois, capable de créer une civilisation selon les normes les plus orthodoxes et qui pourrait rendre à l'Eglise un superbe témoignage."²⁸

From 1843 until well into the 20th century, the SSJB de M was strongly influenced by the clerico-religious nationalism inspired by ultramontanism. Its leadership often consisted of the same individuals as were involved in a variety of ultramontane conflicts with more liberal thinkers and organizations, notably in Monseigneur Bourget's time.²⁹ Even though the inspiration for its foundation had been primarily political and liberal, the Société now readily accepted the new nationalism promoted by the Church.

Monseigneur Bourget's "informal" diocesan newspaper, les Mélanges religieux,³⁰ provided a succinct and quite explicit description of this nationalism:

"C'est ainsi que nous entendons la nationalité canadienne: la religion, le catholicisme d'abord, puis la patrie. Car celle-ci ne prend de force et de physionomie véritable que dans l'appui et la protection de celle-là: le Canada sans catholicisme c'est un drapeau sans couleur... Car ce ne sont pas des frontières, ni même des lois et des administrations politiques et civiles qui font une nationalité, c'est une religion, une langue, un caractère national...."³¹

Perhaps one of the texts which best exemplifies the Société's attachment to ultramontane principles is the motion which it passed on the occasion of the death of Pope Pius IX in 1878. It should be remembered that Pius IX was the pope par excellence of ultramontanism. The motion reads:

"La Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste, qui se fait gloire de représenter l'élément catholique canadien-français de Montréal, déclare que le vénéré Pontife qui vient de mourir sera à jamais nommé son Docteur, son Directeur et son Père, et que, dans la personne de son successeur, elle se fera gloire d'écouter toujours la parole de Pie IX."³²

In his article on the ideology expressed in the annals of the Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste de Québec from 1880 to 1902, Jacques-Pierre Mathieu argues that "...les idées contenues dans les Annales expriment l'idéologie de l'élite canadienne-française des années 1880-1902,"³³ and that "...les idéologues de la S.S.J.B. de Québec s'identifiaient avec l'élite."³⁴ Though the Québec City Société was undoubtedly different from that of Montréal, it is not an exaggeration

tion to claim that both were quite similar in their ideological profiles. Their leaders were drawn from the same social class, hence their interests were fundamentally alike. It was their understanding of French Canadian society which was seen as normative. Mathieu points out that "...les idéologues de la S.S.J.B. de Québec étaient des ultramontains et, par surcroît, le mouvement l'était."³⁵ Certainly, the same could be said of the Montréal Société. What this ideological choice meant, fundamentally, was a sustained emphasis on religion as guardian and focus of the national purpose: "...la religion, telle que conçue par les idéologues de la S.S.J.B., constituait une sorte de superstructure de l'identité nationale et une fortification contre les égarements de la psychologie individuelle et donnait un sens à la vie individuelle et collective."³⁶ It also served as justification for a lack of effective political power.

Because it was religiously inspired, the ideology of the Société was defensive in outlook and conservative in its rhetoric. It emphasized tradition and the utter dependence of French Canadians upon divine providence in their personal and collective developments. Mathieu asks the question whether this abdication of responsibility was not, in fact, a manifestation of utopian thinking.

"Globalement, l'idéologie de la S.S.J.B. était défensive. On parlait de "survivre", de "s'unir pour se protéger", d'"empêcher l'émigration", de "sauvegarder les traditions", etc. (...) ...il

faut considérer l'idéologie de la société nationale comme conservatrice. (...) l'idéologie conservatrice est le lieu des classes dominantes (nous avons parlé d'élite) et se caractérise par la justification du présent dans un schème éternel.

"Fataliste, le Québécois, tel qu'exprimé par l'idéologue de la S.S.J.B., était persuadé qu'il ne saurait avoir d'influence sur son destin et sur son milieu. Fataliste, il croyait que Dieu seul (la Providence) peut améliorer le sort de l'homme et, à plus forte raison, de l'homme canadien-français, parce qu'il appartient à un peuple divin.

"Ce recours à l'absolutisme divin a la couleur de l'utopie. Celle-ci "peut-être considérée comme une sorte de soupape pour des hommes dont la pensée est remplie de contradiction."

"D'autre part, l'idéologue de la S.S.J.B. érigeait en valeur l'attachement à la tradition; il en faisait même une question de conscience.

"Y aurait-il lieu de se demander si le nationalisme canadien-français au XIXe siècle fut le contenant d'une utopie?"³⁷

It was this same sort of clerical and doctrinaire nationalism, "...which made a cult of differences and the past and took account of a treacherous present only in terms of its relationship to an idealized past and never to the future,"³⁸ which Pierre Elliott Trudeau would later denounce in 1956, citing the SSJB de M as the perfect example of a French Canadian institution "...où la complaisance pour "la doctrine" aboutissait à l'incompréhension de la réalité...."³⁹

Reference was made earlier that the founding charter of the SSJB de M emphasized one of its purposes as the physical and moral support of persons of French origin. Its by-laws

of 1919 go one step further, speaking of the unity and defence of French Canadians: "L'union et la protection, au point de vue national, des Canadiens catholiques de langue française, et des étrangers catholiques de langue française naturalisés Canadiens ou considérés comme Canadiens."⁴⁰ Two elements appear particularly significant from the point of view of the Société: religion and language; they define the very essence of the French Canadian nationality. This nationality was perceived in primarily cultural and emotional terms. It could not be equated with or draw its meaning from a political entity such as a separate French Canadian country, since this did not exist. Hence the leaders and thinkers of the Société espoused a dual view of la patrie:

"...ils faisaient une distinction entre la patrie réelle à laquelle ils devaient loyauté et la patrie sentimentale, nid de la nationalité, double option antithétique qui avait pour objet, d'une part, de préserver notre physionomie distinctive et, d'autre part, de veiller à l'intérêt collectif de la patrie canadienne."⁴¹

What better elements than the French language and the Catholic faith to set the French Canadian "nation" apart from the rest of English Protestant Canada? The sense of nationality was almost mystical: "Les nationalités proviennent d'une volonté divine, ne perdons pas de vue ce fait de toute importance. Une fête nationale nous est nécessaire."⁴² It was also a total world-view, encompassing all aspects of the French Canadian's life and all the important social institutions: "Il n'en est pas un d'entre eux qui ne caresse

le rêve d'abriter un jour sa demeure embellie par une jolie femme et de nombreux enfants, à l'ombre d'une église franco-canadienne desservie par un prêtre canadien-français et protégée par l'organisation puissante d'une société Saint-Jean-Baptiste."⁴³ All the central elements of the traditional type of French Canadian nationalism -- the large family, the parish, the priest and the French language -- find themselves expressed in this passage.⁴⁴ To them, however, is added a new institution, a société Saint-Jean-Baptiste, as the crowning touch.

C. The Société's Influence

One of the ways in which the institutional model provided by the SSJB de M had a lasting influence outside Québec was with Franco-American communities in New England.⁴⁵ The rather important exodus of French Canadians to the industrial towns of the American eastern seaboard in the 1870s and again in the 1880s was a constant preoccupation of the Société. In 1874 in Montréal and in 1880 in Québec City, conventions were held regrouping French Canadians from all parts of North America.⁴⁶ The purpose of the 1874 gathering was expressed in the following words in the call issued by the SSJB de M to French Canadian associa-

tions south of the border:

"...La patrie pleure depuis longtemps, en ses jours de fête, l'absence d'un si grand nombre de ses enfants; nous voulons lui donner la satisfaction de les voir réunis, une fois, autour d'elle, pour lui offrir l'hommage de leur respect et lui prouver que dans l'exil comme sur le sol canadien, ils sont restés fidèles à ses glorieuses traditions."⁴⁷

French Canadian emigrants to New England settled in industrial towns such as Lowell, Massachusetts and Manchester, New Hampshire, bringing with them their language and traditions, including their religious and ethnic associations. They lived in self-contained neighbourhoods, known as "little Canadas," where the entire life cycle, from birth to death, remained tightly circumscribed by the Catholic Church and the French language.

"Dans un Petit Canada, on pouvait naître, se faire instruire, assister aux offices religieux, travailler, faire le marché, fraterniser, vieillir et mourir sans avoir à prononcer un seul mot d'anglais. Le Petit Canada était une transplantation de la vie, de la langue, de la religion et des coutumes du Québec, en somme un petit village francophone à l'intérieur d'une ville industrielle américaine. Même urbanisé et adapté à certaines coutumes américaines, on ne perdait presque jamais l'âme québécoise. Vu leur esprit vivement nationaliste et la proximité de la mère patrie, les émigrés québécois voyaient leur survivance ethnique privilégiée."⁴⁸

In the late 1800s, there were some 150 French Canadian associations in the United States, many modelled after the SSJB de M in their focus on charitable works, and the vast majority of them bearing the name of Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste.⁴⁹ The first such Société was founded in New York

City in 1850.⁵⁰ It was not uncommon in several areas where French Canadians were found in large numbers that the local Société would mark June 24th with a parade and other events replicating the sorts of festivities normally held in Québec.

Though the reasons for the exodus were primarily economic, due, in large measure, to the failure of colonization movements and the sheer poverty of many farmers, French Canadian ideologues, especially clerical, were of two minds on the meaning of the emigration, viewing it "...as either diabolical or providential."⁵¹ Ultimately, it was the providential view -- the long-standing belief in the messianic mission of the French in North America -- which prevailed. Interestingly enough, the SSJB de M never apparently accepted this sort of justification. Their concern was always with the unity between the diaspora and the Canadian homeland. Emigration was not, in their estimation, a missionary endeavour ordained by God; it was rather a shameful thing: an exodus which could have severe consequences for the long-term survival of French Canada.⁵² Throughout its existence, the SSJB de M consistently supported, in financial and moral terms, the struggles of French-language minorities across North America to preserve their rights and identity. With reference to the Franco-American experience, the attitudes of the majority of clerics, however, was summarized differently:

"Watching the flood of emigrants and only slowly coming to terms with the permanence of their mobility were a number of clerical and secular spokesmen. At the onset, they prophesied doom. French Canadians were surely going to the devil by following the infinitesimal glitter of gold among the spinning machines of New England. Many of them probably had the devil in them in the first place, to be tramping around the American states without any sense of place or purpose. (...) Gradually, however, they decided that their presence among the emigrants would be more useful than their condemnation from afar. Unlike the many colonization movements which priests led, here they followed the French Canadians into "exile". They joined them in the "little Canadas" of the manufacturing centres of New England and added ecclesiastical and social structures to what they grudgingly admitted was a permanent presence beyond the borders of Quebec. By the end of the century they even began to find significance in that presence. Surely a population totalling three-quarters of a million in 1886 and doubling every twenty-eight years from the birth rate alone, without adding the continuing influx of immigrants from Quebec, must be destined to play an extraordinary role in America. Perhaps the hand of providence was at work after all, dotting the heathen landscape with compact groups of Catholics who treasured their familial customs and traditions."⁵³

The SSJB de M contributed in some significant ways to the social and economic development of Québec society. Considering the clerical domination of this society, especially in the educational sector, the Société appeared quite progressive when it launched a series of technical and professional courses for young French Canadians.

"La Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste de Montréal est un des premiers milieux, peut-être le premier milieu où l'on s'est aperçu que l'enseignement trop exclusivement classique ne préparait pas les Canadiens français aux carrières commerciales et industrielles, de plus en plus importantes. C'est en partie pour cette raison que les Canadiens français prenaient une part insuffisante (sic) au

progrès de leur ville et de leur pays. La Société a fondé des cours techniques gratuits: d'électricité, de physique, de chimie, de géologie, de marine, d'architecture, etc., qui ont été un premier noyau de notre enseignement technique. C'est de là qu'est parti le mouvement aboutissant à la fondation des écoles techniques et de l'Ecole des Hautes Etudes Commerciales."⁵⁴

Another educational initiative of the Société was le Prêt d'honneur, a system of student loans designed to assist needy students in pursuing professional careers, particularly in scientific fields.⁵⁵ The Prêt d'honneur was quite successful, and it was widely supported by a series of public appeals.

Among other projects conceived by the SSJB de M were le Monument national, a type of community centre where public events and meetings sponsored by the Société were held regularly, as well as a variety of medals, prizes and publications all designed to encourage and reward patriotism amongst French Canadians.⁵⁶ On the occasion of la Saint-Jean of 1924, the Société unveiled a large illuminated cross on Mount Royal, erected in honour of the founders of Montréal. Rumilly remarks: "La Croix du mont Royal ne rappellera pas seulement l'esprit des fondateurs de Montréal. Elle symbolisera la liaison intime existant, depuis près d'un siècle, entre l'histoire de Montréal et l'histoire de la Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste, entre la vie de Montréal et la vie de la Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste."⁵⁷

One of the institutions spawned by the SSJB de M which was to have a considerable impact on the history of women in

French Canada was the Fédération nationale Saint-Jean-Baptiste, formally created in 1907 as successor to the women's committee of the Société, l'Association des Dames patronesses.⁵⁸ The two women who were the inspiration behind the Fédération were Marie Lacoste Gérin-Lajoie and Carolina Dessaulles Béique. Though quite traditional in its ideology, the Fédération nevertheless was successful in regrouping women's associations from a variety of milieux and in giving them a united voice for the first time.⁵⁹

It is in the economic sector that the SSJB de M achieved its most remarkable success, with the constitution of the Caisse nationale d'économie (1899) and the Société nationale de fiducie (1918).⁶⁰ Inspired in part by the economic self-reliance preached by Alphonse Desjardins and other advocates of the caisses populaires movement, these financial institutions were specifically created to give French Canadians the capital needed to invest in their own future by funding a variety of projects and making it possible for people to turn to non-anglophone financial interests for their investments.

"Les Canadiens français ne manquaient pas seulement de technique, mais de capitaux. Les grosses successions canadiennes-françaises se faisaient administrer par des sociétés de fiducie de langue anglaise, les seules existantes, qui employaient naturellement ces capitaux au développement de leurs entreprises. La Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste a fondé des succursales économiques, en commençant par la Caisse Nationale d'Economie et la Société Nationale de Fiducie, qui ont donné un exemple, déterminé un courant. Ce sont d'incontestables services pratiques."⁶¹

Weinmann is right in remarking that one of the great services rendered by the SSJB de M was the manner in which, despite differences in ideology amongst its members, it managed to bring together opposing camps in French Canada, particularly at such a critical time as that of the Union of the two Canadas: "L'association accomplit cette tâche inestimable, pas encore assez remarquée, pour le Canada français: maintenir l'opposition des idées tout en permettant le dialogue des hommes."⁶² This spirit of moderation not only prevailed in political matters; it also influenced the other successful initiatives of the Société.

"Il est impossible, ici, d'évoquer tous les moments de crise au XIXe siècle où la S.S.J.B. a joué un rôle de conciliation et de modération. Dans le domaine politique, aussi bien que dans le domaine économique. C'est un aspect de la S.S.J.B. qu'on a tendance à oublier aujourd'hui, à cause des préjugés, certes justifiés, voulant que le Canadien français, au XIXe siècle, ait vécu en retrait de la vie économique.

"La Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste du XIXe siècle -- outre qu'elle constitue le pépinière des hommes politiques, des maires de Montréal, des ministres de la Confédération et du Québec, entre autres P.-J.-O. Chauveau, Premier ministre provincial, qu'elle rassemble tous les francophones, non seulement du Canada, mais de tout le continent nord-américain -- cherche aussi des assises communes dans le domaine économique. Ainsi, François-Albert-Charles Larocque préside à la fondation de la Banque d'Epargne; Charles-Séraphin Rodier, menuisier au départ, crée une industrie de batteuses mécaniques; Jean-Baptiste Rolland, apprenti à la Minerve, a fondé sa propre librairie en plein essor. A l'intérieur de la S.S.J.B., germe même l'idée d'écoles techniques et commerciales axées sur un enseignement beaucoup plus "pratique" que celui des collèges classiques traditionnels.

"D'ailleurs, le mouvement mutuel qui se développe à la fin du XIXe siècle participe du même esprit d'entraide qui anime la Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste. Coopération agricole, coopératives d'épargnes fondées par Alphonse Desjardins. On connaît le succès des Caisses Desjardins aujourd'hui."⁶³

Moderation and conciliation, however, tend to produce a conservative vision of socio-political reality, and the SSJB de M would prove no exception.

Many of these institutions listed in the above citation were effectively set up by the Société in the closing years of the 19th century and in the first quarter of the 20th. During this period, what was the general ideological profile of French Canadian society? Some response to this question may assist us in understanding the historical significance of the diverse institutional and nationalistic initiatives of the Société. Fernand Dumont describes the Québec of that period in these words:

"En somme, au cours de ce quart de siècle, notre société a eu sa manière propre de vivre l'histoire. En apparence, elle s'est arrêtée, elle a répété ses coutumes. (...) replacés dans leur contexte, arrêt et répétition relevaient d'une façon de vivre et d'interpréter des conflits. Etrangère aux grandes forces historiques où elle se trouvait impliquée, cette collectivité les a affrontées quotidiennement grâce aux mécanismes de défense de ses coutumes. Cela ne lui a pas donné une identité, des procédés de décision, une politique qui eussent pu lui permettre de surmonter les défis et les crises. Son histoire n'en a pas moins eu sa forme d'ensemble: ses idéologues ont transposé ses mécanismes de défense dans la tradition et la doctrine. S'il y avait là une évasion, comme on l'a dit, il y faut d'abord reconnaître un mode particulier de conscience historique."⁶⁴

Dumont suggests that prescriptive behaviour -- what would subsequently be explained in terms of tradition -- is what characterized the French Canadian outlook of this era. In many of its essential traits, this was a static society, accustomed to reacting to the world in the manner in which it had always done. The SSJB de M reflected, to a certain extent, this attitude, most notably in its emphasis on religion and the customs of French Canada. There was an important aspect of continuity in many of the projects which it sponsored, such as its awards to students for the best essays with a patriotic theme. At the same time, however, it went beyond the customary and proposed such daring and unusual things as a loan for pursuing an education in the sciences or stock in a company set up with French Canadian capital. In its own modest way, the Société helped precipitate the changes of the Quiet Revolution. But it did so with the utmost respect for the past and with a consistent belief in the value of tradition and custom. Rumilly's judgement, though perhaps a bit grandiloquent, is certainly not without an element of truth: "La Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste, dès ses débuts, a rassemblé les Canadiens français, entretenu leur patriotisme, développé leur esprit de solidarité. Elle a pris des initiatives hardies et fécondes."⁶⁵

In spite of its many other worthwhile activities, however, the event which people always associated most directly with the SSJB de M was the annual parade on June

24th. This was perhaps the one time when the presence of the Société as an active force in Québec society was most evident. The parade was important to the Société for one basic reason: it was "un moment privilégié" when the Société's view of what constituted the most appropriate nationalistic feeling could be displayed and celebrated. The parade was an educational tool. From a sociological point of view, it allowed the CSJB de M to determine and direct the ideological content of Québec nationalism. As an example, the following words written by the President of the Société to mark the parade of 1924, the theme of which was "Ce que l'Amérique doit à la race française," are revealing:

"Une des traditions les plus populaires et les plus constantes de la célébration de la fête nationale consiste assurément dans la "procession" que le peuple accueille avec empressement comme une manifestation éclatante de notre vitalité et de la vigueur de nos traditions. (...) ...mais il faut que cette manifestation tende à un but plus élevé qu'à la simple satisfaction des yeux; il faut qu'elle comporte un enseignement qui puisse être profitable.

(...)

"C'est là ce qu'il faut rappeler à notre peuple un jour de fête nationale, pour lui inspirer la fierté de ses origines, l'amour de sa nationalité et la détermination de lutter "jusqu'au bout" pour en conserver les traditions. C'est ce qu'il faut apprendre à l'enfant d'aujourd'hui pour qu'il continue d'une main vigoureuse le sillon profondément tracé par la génération qui passe.

(...)

"La parade historique de 1924 offrira donc un précieux enseignement. Elle rendra hommage à la mémoire de ceux qui ont consacré le meilleur de leur vie et de leurs efforts à la fondation de

notre pays; elle apprendra à nos compatriotes quelle dette de reconnaissance nous devons à ceux dont les noms devraient être gravés dans tous les coeurs canadiens,; elle inspirera même à nos concitoyens d'origine étrangère un respect profond pour ceux qui ont renouvelé au Canada les "gesta Dei per Francos".⁶⁶

For a people which so often saw itself in inadequate terms, these parades, particularly if their theme was historical, provided an opportunity to learn about the past and to express justifiable pride in its accomplishments.

D. Social Profile and Modern Québec

Not only did the SSJB de M reflect the prevailing political and religious mood of its day, but it also at times incorporated some of the social movements. In the early years of its restoration in the 1840s, the Société was apparently greatly influenced by, and had close links with, the burgeoning temperance movement in the Montréal arch-diocese.⁶⁷ This movement, of which Monseigneur Bourget was an avid supporter, was part of the much larger process of religious revivalism sweeping across Québec in the mid-19th century. John the Baptist was adopted as patron saint by the temperance society, and in the parade of 1843 (the first after the episode of the Patriotes), members of both the Association Saint-Jean-Baptiste and the temperance society

marched side by side. The suggestion had been made earlier that June 24th should be the feast of both groups.

"On sait que Saint-Jean-Baptiste (sic) est le patron adopté par la société de tempérance canadienne de Montréal; le jour de la solennité les associés peuvent gagner une indulgence plénière. Ce saint est aussi le patron national du Canada. Ne serait-il pas possible de s'entendre à ce moment, pour faire dans toutes les paroisses de la fête de la tempérance et de la fête nationale, une seule et même fête, sans distinction d'engagements, sous une seule et même bannière."⁶⁸

Whether or not "...la suggestion de célébrer ensemble la nation et la tempérance donne lieu à une réorganisation de la société Saint-Jean-Baptiste"⁶⁹ remains an open question. Since Monseigneur Bourget was so interested and active in both associations, one can at least assume the existence of a certain degree of mutual influence.

Nationalistic organizations such as the SSJB de M can be expected to mirror the types of changes undergone by the larger society of which they are part. The Société's history provides an example of this fact. From the explicitly political grouping that it was prior to 1837-38, the Société became, after those years, a more humanitarian forum which often regrouped individuals of differing political orientations. In its very early years, the more liberal elements predominated, while the more conservative would prevail from 1843 on. The difference between the rouges and the bleus in French Canadian political life is no mere ideological convenience. It is the direct product of the mutations caused by 1837-38, of which the Société was the most

conspicuous and important image. In fact, this difference had its source in the SSJB de M itself.

"La S.S.J.B. est à la source même de la naissance des rouges et des bleus, des libéraux et des conservateurs. Car elle a son versant rouge et son versant bleu. Son versant rouge (libéral) trouve son origine dans le célèbre banquet de 1834, réunissant les Patriotes qui ont préparé la Révolte de 1837-38. Son versant bleu (conservateur), qui prédominera par la suite, intégrera sans trop de heurts et sans qu'ils passent pas l'ordalie de la "trahison", les anciens combattants patriotes prêts à "collaborer" avec l'ancien ennemi."⁷⁰

The Société of the 19th century and, one could argue, the early part of the 20th was most sensitive to the political and economic realities of its era. Its concern with the economic deficiencies of the French Canadians, with their lack of proper scientific and technical learning and their survival as a distinct cultural and linguistic entity within the larger American melting-pot, indicated that the SSJB de M stood as a viable and influential representative of French Canadian interests and aspirations.

"...la S.S.J.B. du XIXe siècle, contrairement à celle d'aujourd'hui, se distingue par un très grand sens des réalités politiques et économiques. Justement, plus la crise de conscience de la valeur intrinsèque du Canadien français se fait aiguë, plus l'esprit sacrificiel de la Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste qui a présidé à sa fondation va être senti comme un obstacle à l'essor de cette conscience nationale."⁷¹

The Québec of those years was still a very traditional and rigid society, and one which remained dominated by an ideology of clerico-religious origin. As progressive as the SSJB de M may have been in certain areas, it was strongly

influenced by this ideology and all which it implied by way of immobility. In 1938, the Société presented a brief, entitled Les faits sociaux dans la province de Québec, to a royal commission on federal-provincial relations. Pierre Elliott Trudeau quotes from this brief in order to show how truly conservative the Société was in its appreciation for the pressing labour problems caused by increased industrialization:

"La législation ouvrière demeure un palliatif dangereux en accentuant la tendance trop prononcée de tout attendre de l'Etat, et d'autre part, à (sic) créer une situation privilégiée aux travailleurs des villes. Dans le premier cas, c'est l'acheminement vers le socialisme d'Etat. Dans le second cas, le contraste ville-campagne, industrie-agriculture accentuera le mouvement de centralisation urbaine. Une législation qui vise à améliorer le sort de l'ouvrier -- bonne en soi -- ne peut qu'attirer vers la ville le rural. Or, notre population est, par tradition, rurale et la législation qui peut paraître bonne, en d'autres milieux, risque dans notre province de causer des perturbations sociales très graves."⁷²

Some fifteen years later, however, in the early 1950s, the SSJB de M, in another brief to a similar royal commission (the Tremblay Commission), would argue that "special status" was the only viable solution to Québec's constitutional dilemma, and requesting that a strong Québec State obtain several of the powers which it would quite simply gather unto itself in the years to follow.⁷³ The Société, as with the society, was changing.

The SSJB de M, in the recent past, has often been described as an ultra- or old-guard nationalist organiza-

tion. The persons likely to provide such a description usually claim to represent a different, more open sort of modern nationalism. Certainly, the Parti québécois appears to have perceived the Société in just those terms during its years in power. The Société's reputation is perhaps not totally unfounded. It does remain tainted, despite its efforts at modernizing its rhetoric, with a certain "French Canadianism," even though it has become increasingly involved in such popular causes as the protection of Québec's language law, Bill 101. At times, the Société may have appeared ethnocentric, perhaps even xenophobic, in its demands for a French society in Québec, though here again it has moderated its discourse by recognizing and opening up to the reality of cultural communities in Montréal. It has also become more explicitly political in its support of sovereignty for Québec. There is, of course, something slightly archaic in a nationalistic organization still carrying the name of a Christian saint. The following description of the nationalism of "les Sociétés Saint-Jean-Baptiste," written in the early 1970s, and meant to differentiate these from the Rassemblement pour l'indépendance nationale (RIN), still reflects a contemporary reality:

"Toujours dans la voie du nationalisme traditionnel, on trouve les Sociétés Saint-Jean-Baptiste, regroupées en un fédération dont les liens sont plutôt lâches. L'action des SSJB porte surtout sur la refrancisation linguistique et l'aide aux minorités franco-canadiennes et franco-améri-

caines, en plus de l'organisation du célèbre défilé de la Saint-Jean. Les SSJB n'ont pas de position officielle quant au système socio-politique. Bien implantées chez les petites élites locales, elles servent à la propagation des idées en fournissant aux porte-parole des milieux politiques et des divers mouvements (dont le RIN) des tribunes à travers la province à l'occasion des nombreux congrès, débats et conférences qu'elles organisent. Les SSJB sont loin d'être homogènes: fédéralistes et séparatistes s'y côtoient et chaque organisation locale a ses propres tendances de même que ses conflits internes."⁷⁴

In his 1968 autobiography, White Niggers of America, Pierre Vallières, former terrorist and member of the Front de libération du Québec (FLQ), wrote some angry words:

"Let us kill Saint John the Baptist! Let us burn the papier-mâché traditions with which they have tried to build a myth around our slavery. Let us learn the pride of being men. Let us vigorously declare our independence. And with our hardy freedom, let us crush the sympathetic or contemptuous paternalism of the politicians, the daddy-bosses and the preachers of defeat and submission.

"It is no longer time for sterile recriminations but for action. There will be no miracles, but there will be war."⁷⁵

These words did not turn out to be as prophetic as their author may have wished. They were written at a time when it seemed that profound changes were needed in Québec. In this passage, the figure of the Baptist stands as a symbol of all those traditional attributes of the French Canadian character which the modern nationalist wishes to overcome. Who are the "they" of the builders of myth? Surely, in Vallières' eyes, the Catholic Church and other carriers and defenders of the old nationalisms, including

politicians. In this group could be placed the Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste de Montréal. This institution played a significant part in the propagation of some of the more enduring myths about French Canada. Any critical review of its many contributions must perforce acknowledge that, apart from its early years when the liberalism of the Patriotes inspired its social and political thought, the SSJB de M has remained predominantly conservative in its ideology. This may help explain why, even today, it is not quite in the mainstream of Québec society, nor is it in the forefront of Québec nationalism.⁷⁶ In 1984, on the occasion of the Société's 150th anniversary, the publisher of Le Devoir wrote:

"Quatre traits ont marqué l'histoire de la SSJB jusqu'à tout récemment: indépendance face aux partis politiques et aux gouvernements, attachement aux droits des minorités francophones hors Québec, aptitude à distinguer l'essentiel de l'accessoire, et capacité de rassembler les francophones des différentes familles politiques. Grâce à l'équilibre généralement maintenu entre une option franchement partisane et une conception plus large des exigences à long terme imposées par la situation complexe de la francophonie canadienne et québécoise, la SSJB a réussi à rassembler et à mobiliser."⁷⁷

This is a fair summary of the most important contributions of the SSJB de M to Québec nationalism. It is less sure, however, whether these will remain so in the future.

ENDNOTES

¹Denis Monière, Ludger Duvernay et la révolution intellectuelle au Bas-Canada (Montréal: Editions Québec/Amérique, 1987), p. 98. Undoubtedly, secrecy was due to the fact that Duvernay thought it best, considering the political situation of those years, not to provoke unduly the authorities.

²Ibid., pp. 98-99. The "Fils de la liberté" was a very militant group of young Patriotes who were not afraid to advocate the use of violence in achieving their goal of an "independent" Canada. On a number of occasions, they were to clash in the streets of Montréal with members of the Doric Club, an equally militant English Protestant group.

³See Robert Rumilly, Histoire de la Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste de Montréal (Montréal: Les Editions de l'Aurore, 1975), p. 21.

⁴Ibid., p. 22. Rumilly's book provides the basis for much of the historical material in the following pages. On my reservations with reference to this otherwise very helpful work, see Chapter II, endnote no. 51.

⁵As quoted in ibid., p. 51. Emphases mine.

⁶It is not until 1851, one year before his death, that Ludger Duvernay is elected President. He died on November 28, 1852.

⁷Ibid., p. 53.

⁸As quoted in ibid., p. 59. Emphases mine.

⁹See Heinz Weinmann, Du Canada au Québec: Généalogie d'une histoire (Montréal: Editions de l'Hexagone, 1987), p. 437, footnote no. 11.

¹⁰Denis Monière, op. cit., pp. 214-215.

¹¹Ibid., pp. 215-216.

¹²See Heinz Weinmann, op. cit., pp. 434-438.

¹³Ibid., p. 434.

¹⁴Weinmann writes: "Spontanément, les sociétaires pratiquant l'idéal d'entraide et de bienfaisance qui préside à leur Association, renoncent à leur banquet et versent du secours aux sinistrés. Que font-ils sinon sacrifier leur ancienne fête animée par les discours politiques, les toats (sic) et les rires au nouveau Patron du pays: saint Jean-Baptiste prêchant le renoncement au monde, le sacrifice de soi pour l'Idée, pour la Mission au service d'un Autre?", ibid., pp. 437-438.

¹⁵See, of course, the work by Robert Rumilly, op. cit. Though this book only goes until 1948, it covers the more significant decades in the history of the Société.

¹⁶Heinz Weinmann, op. cit., p. 442.

¹⁷Jean-Pierre Blais, L'idéologie nationaliste de la Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste de Montréal (1952-62) (Montréal: Université de Montréal, Unpublished M.A. Thesis, 1964), p. 4.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 26.

¹⁹As quoted in ibid., p. 59. The President in question was Jean Séguin.

²⁰Alexandre Dugré, S.J., Saint Jean-Baptiste: Le saint, la fête, la Société (Montréal: L'oeuvre des tracts, 1923), pp. 15-16.

²¹Jean-C. Bonenfant and Jean-C. Falardeau, "Cultural and Political Implications of French Canadian Nationalism," in Ramsay Cook, ed., French-Canadian Nationalism: An Anthology (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1969), p. 21. One of the ways in which class distinctions were somewhat played down was the formation of different chapters within the Société for different professions. It could be argued, however, that different chapters for doctors and lawyers, for example, only served to heighten class distinctions.

²²Jean-Pierre Blais, op. cit., p. 144.

²³Jean-C. Bonenfant and Jean-C. Falardeau, op. cit., p. 26.

²⁴Louis Balthazar, Bilan du nationalisme au Québec (Montréal: Editions de l'Hexagone, 1986), p. 147.

²⁵Jean-C. Bonenfant and Jean-C. Falardeau, op. cit., p. 22.

²⁶Ibid., p. 22.

²⁷Victor Morin, "Les enseignements de la fête nationale," in La revue nationale (Montréal: Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste de Montréal, June 1924), p. 181.

²⁸Lionel Groulx, Rôle d'une Société Nationale en l'an 1958 (St-Hyacinthe: Les Editions Alerte, 1958), p. 12.

²⁹See Robert Rumilly, op. cit., pp. 108-120.

³⁰For summaries of the ideology advocated by les Mélanges religieux, see Denise Lemieux, "Les Mélanges religieux, 1841-1852," and Nadia F. Eid, "Les Mélanges religieux et la révolution romaine de 1848," in Fernand Dumont et al., eds., Idéologies au Canada français, 1850-1900 (Québec: Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 1971), pp. 63-92 and pp. 93-116.

³¹As quoted in Denis Monière, op. cit., p. 188.

³²As quoted in Robert Rumilly, op. cit., p. 115.

³³Jacques-Pierre Mathieu, "L'idéologie des Annales de la Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste de Québec, 1880-1902," in Fernand Dumont et al., eds., op. cit., p. 294.

³⁴Ibid., p. 294.

³⁵Ibid., p. 303. Emphases mine.

³⁶Ibid., p. 298.

³⁷Ibid., pp. 303-304.

³⁸Michael D. Behiels, Prelude to Quebec's Quiet Revolution: Liberalism versus Neo-Nationalism, 1945-1960 (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1985), p. 88.

³⁹Pierre Elliott Trudeau, "La Province de Québec au moment de la grève," in La grève de l'amiante (Montréal: Editions du Jour, 1970), p. 39. See Michael D. Behiels, op. cit., pp. 85-89, for a brief analysis of French Canadian traditional nationalistic thought and the citélibriste critique of it.

⁴⁰"Règlements de la Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste de Montréal" (Montréal: Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste de Montréal, June 1919).

⁴¹Jacques-Pierre Mathieu, op. cit., p. 300. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the term "canadien" referred to persons of French origin in North America, whether inhabiting Canada or the U.S.A.

⁴²Benjamin Sulte, Mélanges historiques (Montréal: Editions Edouard Garand, 1929), vol. 15, p. 81.

⁴³As quoted in Jacques-Pierre Mathieu, op. cit., p. 302.

⁴⁴The defence of the French language in Québec remains very much of an active concern with the SSJB de M today, as made clear by its leadership role in opposing all moves to undermine the provisions of Bill 101, the law making French Québec's only official language. See, as background, the pamphlet "Qu'est la Loi 101 devenue?", available at the offices of the SSJB de M, no publisher, undated.

⁴⁵See Gerard J. Brault, The French-Canadian Heritage in New England (Montréal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1986). See also Le Magazine OVO (Montréal: Vol. 12, no. 46, 1982), which is an issue devoted specifically to Franco-Americans, especially those who settled in Manchester, New Hampshire.

⁴⁶See Claude Paulette assisté de France Amyot, Je me souviens depuis 1834 (Ottawa: Editions Leméac/Rencontres francophones de Québec, 1980), pp. 37-68.

⁴⁷As quoted in Robert Rumilly, op. cit., p. 101.

⁴⁸Robert B. Perreault, "Les Franco-Américains," in Le Magazine OVO, op. cit., p. 15.

⁴⁹See Claude Paulette assisté de France Amyot, op. cit., pp. 93-97. A new Québec film, directed by Claude Fournier, entitled "Les tisserands du pouvoir," takes place in Woonsocket, Rhode Island, and has some interesting scenes which depict the celebration of la Saint-Jean.

⁵⁰Ibid., pp. 23-24.

⁵¹Susan Mann Trofimenkoff, The Dream of Nation: A Social and Intellectual History of Quebec (Toronto: Gage Publishing Limited, 1983), p. 138.

⁵²See Robert Rumilly, op. cit., pp. 98-101 and pp. 249-251.

⁵³Susan Mann Trofimenkoff, op. cit., p. 138.

⁵⁴Robert Rumilly, "Un témoignage," in L'information nationale (Montréal: Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste de Montréal, Vol. XXXI, no. 5, June 1983), p. 45.

⁵⁵On the Prêt d'honneur, see Robert Rumilly, Histoire..., Chapter 25.

⁵⁶See Victor Morin, Cent vingt-cinq ans d'oeuvres sociales et économiques (Montréal: Les Editions des Dix, 1959), pp. 32-38 and pp. 48-51.

⁵⁷Robert Rumilly, Histoire..., p. 316. The cross served as a Québec nationalistic symbol when, in 1988, a large banner advocating the preservation of Bill 101 was draped over it in the middle of the night. This was in the context of a whole series of similar occurrences where English signs in Montréal were painted over with the numbers 101. Interestingly enough, the individual accused of placing the banner on the cross has claimed that he is a political prisoner as defined by Amnesty International. He is supported in his defence by a former president of the SSJB de M.

⁵⁸See ibid., pp. 183-184 and pp. 199-200.

⁵⁹See Susan Mann Trofimenkoff, op. cit., pp. 187-191, for a good introductory history of the Fédération.

⁶⁰See Victor Morin, Cent vingt-cinq..., pp. 39-48 and Robert Rumilly, Histoire..., pp. 178-179 and pp. 280-283.

⁶¹Robert Rumilly, "Un témoignage," p. 45.

⁶²Heinz Weinmann, op. cit., p. 440.

⁶³Ibid., pp. 440-441.

⁶⁴Fernand Dumont, "Du début du siècle à la crise de 1929: Un espace idéologique," in Idéologies au Canada français, 1900-1929 (Québec: Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 1974), p. 12.

⁶⁵Robert Rumilly, "Un témoignage," p. 45.

⁶⁶Victor Morin, "Les enseignements...", pp. 182-183.

⁶⁷See Denise Lemieux, op. cit., pp. 68-71.

⁶⁸As quoted in ibid., p. 70.

⁶⁹Ibid., p. 70.

⁷⁰Heinz Weinmann, op. cit., pp. 439-440.

⁷¹Ibid., pp. 448-449. Emphases mine.

⁷²As quoted in Pierre Elliott Trudeau, op. cit., p. 40.

⁷³See Michael D. Behiels, op. cit., pp. 213-214.

⁷⁴André d'Allemagne, Le R.I.N. et les débuts du mouvement indépendantiste québécois (Montréal: Editions l'Etincelle, 1974), p. 18.

⁷⁵Pierre Vallières, White Niggers of America (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1971), p. 20.

⁷⁶See endnote no. 44. With the recent decision of the Canadian Supreme Court striking down the provisions of Bill 101 dealing with the language of commercial signs, and the anger felt by many Québec nationalists, it is possible that the SSJB de M may find itself in the forefront of the struggle for language rights, and hence be in a position to regain a certain amount of credibility as a relevant nationalistic organization.

⁷⁷Jean-Louis Roy, "La SSJB, 1834-1984," in Le Devoir, 23 June 1984, p. 10.

CHAPTER IV

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

The first chapter discussed the history of Roman Catholicism in Québec and the influence which it enjoyed, as an institution, in the shaping and development of Québec society. This influence, it was remarked, has been pervasive and quite extraordinary in its impact. Also reviewed, in the subsequent two chapters, were the Saint-Jean-Baptiste celebrations, the immediate subject matter of this thesis, and the Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste. These three chapters were an historical presentation, an attempt at sketching the general backdrop and highlighting its more prominent themes.

This fourth chapter addresses more substantive issues and questions. It is concerned with exploring those theoretical perspectives which appear, at first glance, particularly relevant to the topic of the thesis: nationalism, ideology and secularization, popular religion and the social role of the feast. It also delineates, by way of a summary, and as an introduction to the last chapter, the polarities which la Fête de la Saint-Jean captured and expressed.

A difficulty with theoretical extrapolation is that it is necessarily selective. Anyone of the themes discussed in this chapter could have been developed at greater length, or

itself served as the central focus of the thesis. I have sought to maintain intellectual rigour in my approach, without losing myself or the reader in secondary, though certainly interesting, avenues of exploration.

A. Nationalism, History and Religion

It has been noted that the history of the Catholic Church in Québec is, in many respects, the history of an institution which adapted itself particularly well to the profound changes which Québec society underwent over time. Such an observation, though generally true, does not imply that this has been an easy or a thoroughly voluntary process of adaptation. Québec Catholicism has had to contend, in the course of its existence, with a series of efforts and movements aimed at defining Québec as a collective entity. These are what can properly be called "nationalisms." At times, the Church has been an active partner in these efforts; at other moments, a hesitant ally or a vociferous foe.

The question of the relationship between nationalism and religion is central to any study, not only of Québec Catholicism, but of Québec society as a whole. Nationalism, the quest for an expression of national identity and purpose, is one of the more enduring motifs of Québec

history. As with religion, it is an ideological concept with very potent historical implications.

A major difficulty is that of definition. Nationalism assumes many guises, depending on the society and historical period in question. Is such a definition possible, and, if so, how all-inclusive can it be? Specifically, what do nationalism and religion have in common, and how do they act in a symbiotic relationship? What has been the Québec experience in this regard?

It is generally acknowledged that nationalism, as we have come to understand it, had its origins in France, "là où se sont élaborées les définitions les plus libérales de la nation."¹ The great ideals of the French Revolution served as models for other national unification or independence movements in the 19th and early 20th centuries. In this century, nationalism has often been a response to the contradictions and breakdown of the colonial structure. It has also acted as the catalyst for the growth and spread of such movements as European Fascism. Nationalism is therefore not linked to a particular type of political ideology: its manifestations and purposes are varied. Its one consistent trait is its reference to "the nation."²

How to define nationalism? Louis Balthazar, in a recent book which presents a critical survey of nationalism in Québec, suggests the following: "Un mouvement qui consiste à accorder une priorité à l'appartenance nationale et à lutter

pour une meilleure reconnaissance de la nation à laquelle on appartient."³ He then goes on to define the central term, that of nation:

"Un groupe de personnes qui, au-delà d'unités élémentaires comme la famille, le clan, la tribu, acceptent de vivre ensemble sur un territoire donné, partagent un certain nombre de valeurs, d'habitudes, de souvenirs et d'aspirations, parlent la même langue (le plus souvent) et sont régis par une organisation politique."⁴

These definitions are quite broad, and with good reason. Since nationalism can accommodate a variety of political orientations, it is important that it be understood in as comprehensive a manner as possible.⁵

Certainly one of the more enduring and effective aspects of nationalism is its impact as something grounded in individual and collective psyches. A nation is a reality which can be comprehended by any number of objective criteria, just as nationalism is a social force which can be defined according to certain standards. But beyond such efforts, there remains the vastly uncharted manner in which nationalism functions as a psychological leverage in history. Individuals build loyalties to nations and to what these represent, and they act in history on the basis of such psychological constructs. If not always beneficial, nationalistic motifs still provide justification and meaning in many human lives.

Balthazar's definition of a nation contains four elements of particular significance:⁶ territory, values/

aspirations, language and political organization. Most important is that of territory. It would be difficult to understand nationalism without the concept of a territory -- a homeland, a sense of place regrouping the individuals who wish to live together. This territory can correspond to an actual geographical entity, or it can, in fact, refer to an ideal which once existed or remains to be realized. As such, the territory assumes very powerful overtones as a collective symbol of the people. Israel is perhaps the most obvious modern example of this, though other groups, such as the Armenians and even the Palestinians, partake of similar beliefs.

Values and aspirations refer to a sense of shared identity and meaning, often ethnic or cultural in origin. History has shown that, more often than not, individuals who constitute a nation have certain traditions or a cultural heritage in common. They share some of the same aspirations and perceptions about themselves and others, and perhaps also similar understandings of what the nation represents for them. A common history is certainly an essential ingredient in this process of collective definition.

As for language, Balthazar himself recognizes its relative nature. Language is indeed a key element in the elaboration and transmission of culture, but not all groups which share a similar linguistic heritage also partake of a common national one. Yet language is increasingly used as a

means of defining the nation, as Balthazar remarks: "Quoi qu'il en soit, dans un univers de communications incessantes, il est difficile de penser que la langue ne constitue pas un élément d'appartenance nationale."⁷ One shall note with interest, at this point, that language has consistently been one of the central themes in the development of Québec nationalism.

Political organization stands as the crux of the definition of a nation. Nationalism, certainly in the modern period, has focussed on attaining political maturity or, at the very least, on expanding or securing it. As Balthazar points out, political organization need not be understood in terms of a State, but certainly a sense of the polis must animate nationalism for it to be truly effective and legitimate. Otherwise, the concept of a nation is not fully comprehensible. The example of Québec is instructive in this regard. The quest for political affirmation has been recurrent in Québec nationalism. At times, it has taken the form, particularly recently, of a call for nationhood, but more generally it has sought the type of political leverage needed to assert or protect the contours of an emerging national identity, without necessarily opting for full or outright political sovereignty. This is the meaning of the Quiet Revolution of the 1960s.

Of special import to the topic at hand is Balthazar's comment on whether religion should be one of the components

used in defining a nation. He remarks:

"Il a semblé à certains que la religion était un élément de cohésion nationale telle qu'on devait l'inclure dans une définition de la nation. Il est vrai qu'une pratique religieuse commune peut constituer un puissant facteur de cohésion. Il se trouve même des nations qui semblent ne devoir leur existence qu'à la religion comme, par exemple, le Pakistan. Mais, outre que ces cas sont de plus en plus rares, il faut noter qu'un processus de laïcisation des institutions a souvent accompagné une intensification de la conscience nationale."⁸

This statement points to a problematic area in the interplay between religion and nationalism. While it is true that religion can perform a significant role in the process of national assertion, it is equally true that certain forms of nationalism have been blatantly anti-religious, and especially anti-clerical, in tone. Generally, in the West, the more intense the nationalistic pitch, the less it is rooted in religious language, and the more it is reflective of and accompanied by a process of institutional secularization.⁹ If one considers the two high points of Québec nationalism, the Rebellion of 1837-38 and the Referendum of 1980, the absence of religious justification was notable in each case. The same could be said of the Quiet Revolution, which was indeed a case of the national overtaking the religious.

To the first question, therefore, of whether a definition of nationalism is possible, the answer is positive, as demonstrated by Balthazar's observations. The definition is not, however, all-inclusive. It does bring out a series of

objective criteria which are more than probably common to all forms of nationalism, and this makes some genuine comparisons possible. But nationalism is subject to the vicissitudes of historical forces, and "...la nation est le produit de vouloir beaucoup plus qu'une donnée sociale."¹⁰ Nationalism is, in some important ways, the embodiment of countless individual aspirations expressed collectively.

All nationalisms contain an array of symbols which crystallize, in some tangible, significant manner, that which the nation represents. These symbols can be visual, such as the Québec fleurdelisé, the Mexican Virgin of Guadalupe, the American Stars and Stripes or even the German swastika. Or they can be less tangible, but still very powerful: the concepts of race or ethnicity, the land itself (usually defined as something occupied by an alien power, and therefore needing to be liberated) or language. In some cases, religion (or more appropriately, a church) can provide the source of national identity and cohesion. In this regard, "the history of the people" is an important nationalistic motif in itself. When a common past, especially if it is perceived as having been shaped and safeguarded by religion or some similar force, can be called upon to justify nationalistic aspirations, then the mixture becomes especially potent. Poland is a striking example of this fact.

Much of this nationalistic symbolism properly belongs

to or assumes the qualities of what can be called mythical. But not mythical in the sense of something which is false and unreal; rather, mythical in that "...it supplies models for human behavior and, by that fact, gives meaning and value to life."¹¹ Such models are often expressed in ritual form. Rituals, whether these take the form of ceremonies, grand feasts, memorials or even parades, express many themes and symbols specific to the nationalism in question. They serve to impart certain visions of the nation and its members, those things which set it apart and make it unique, as well as a sense of the national history as something which is "...significant, precious, and exemplary."¹²

This description of nationalism, and of some of its structural components and characteristics, is strikingly close to the manner in which one sometimes speaks of religion. This is because both are types of ideologies, a subject which is discussed in the next section of this chapter. At this point, we need to mention briefly one of the elements of nationalism often taken for granted, and which is central to the argument behind the thesis: the concept of social class. At the outset, a word of caution is in order:

"On ne saurait même pas lier toujours les idéologies nationales aux idéologies d'une classe particulière, à celles de la bourgeoisie par exemple. Selon les lieux et les circonstances, le milieu paysan, la classe ouvrière se sont considérés comme solidaires de la bourgeoisie ou opposés à elle quant aux représentations de la nation."¹³

Dumont's caveat is an important one, even if it requires some clarification. It could be said that, though not all nationalisms are the monopoly or exclusive domain of the upper classes, most nationalisms, if not all, have their origins in the interests of these classes. Or at least, it is a certain elite which normally defines the intellectual content of nationalistic ideologies and ensures their propagation.

When reviewing the Québec content, this becomes quite obvious. Throughout the history of Québec, it has been the elite, whether clerical or secular, which has consistently interpreted and structured the contours of nationalism. The ecclesiastical leaders of the Catholic Church did it after the Conquest of 1760 and the Rebellion of 1837-38, just as the middle classes and political elites did it during the Rebellion, the Quiet Revolution and the years of the Parti québécois government. In Québec, it could be said that nationalism is initially an elitist phenomenon.

A reason why, in several instances, it is the bourgeoisie which actively supports and promotes nationalism has to do with the specific characteristics of this class. The middle class is generally a self-made class, i.e., its members view themselves as having attained a certain economic or social stature by virtue of their own efforts. Theirs is a rationalistic understanding of the world, where the socio-economic environment is something to be created and

manipulated. As such, the bourgeoisie sees itself as a type of "historical synthesis," the purpose of which is to move history forward, but the real intent often being the promotion of its own interests. Hence its willingness to initiate or endorse movements calling for national affirmation.

Nationalism, therefore, implies a notion of class. As it is a process of thought grounded in social relations, it is invariably tied to the particular situation and interests of a specific class. Since the upper classes are in a more privileged position to express and defend their needs, most nationalisms are inspired and sustained by members of these classes. This does not mean, as Dumont so rightly points out, that nationalism is only the expression of a bourgeois ideology, for example. Rather, its symbols, rituals and language can well be a representation of and a response to legitimate needs and aspirations beyond those of an exclusive class, as influential as this class may be.

When speaking of nationalism and religion, the first thing which can be said is that both are often functionally very similar. Contingent upon a given social or cultural context, they can assume some of the same roles in a society. Among others, they inspire loyalties, structure definitions of the self and of the community, provide ultimate points-of-reference for everyday struggles and instill a sense of the future as a reality transcending

immediate necessities. Both are cultural systems.

"Religion et nationalisme sont, en effet, deux réalités culturelles dont les fonctions peuvent être rapprochées et parfois identifiées: la religion tout comme le nationalisme ont comme fonction d'identifier et de distinguer un groupe donné, de lui donner sens et mission, d'inspirer et souvent de définir ses comportements collectifs et individuels.

"(...) ces deux dimensions sont la plupart du temps entremêlées et se réfèrent toutes deux à des fonctions culturelles fondamentales, plus précisément aux besoins qu'un groupe éprouve de se définir, donc de se distinguer, de se donner un avenir et des orientations."¹⁴

A number of very pertinent questions immediately come to mind. First, if religion and nationalism perform some analogous functions in a given social group, can the same be said of an institutionalized form of religion, viz. a church? Second, what makes religion receptive or not to certain forms of nationalism, or at least agreeable to coexisting with them? Third, can nationalism, in fact, overtake religion as the source of cohesion and identity in society? The Québec experience provides useful clues in answering these questions.

While both nationalism and religion impart certain values, mores and aspirations to those who are "the believers," and thus are closely matched in their social psychological impact, they stand in stark contrast to one another by virtue of the sources of legitimacy which they claim. A religion will always refer to a sense of sacredness, a reality apparently not bound up with or subject to the

actions of mortal individuals.¹⁵ Religion, as Durkheim points out, "...is a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, that is to say, things set apart and forbidden...."¹⁶ This seeming separateness, this sacred quality, which, according to Durkheim, is none other than society itself, is what makes religion such a potent and enduring social force. It is its legitimacy and the guarantee of its survival. Nationalism, on the other hand, while it can expound certain universal and emotionally-charged themes very powerful in themselves, such as patriotism or racial pride, cannot readily lay claim to a sacred "otherness" as religion can. Its legitimacy is primarily a function of its credibility with its followers.¹⁷

If such can be said of religion, how even more apt when speaking of a church, an institution saddling two worlds: the secular and the sacred. A church finds itself in a precarious position. On the one hand, it claims to speak with the authority of divine inspiration; on the other, it must address and respond to the requirements of life in the everyday world of men and women. Thus a church, and the Roman Catholic Church is perhaps the most illustrious example of this, will invariably place itself on a transcendent or metaphysical plane, as it must if it wishes to maintain its credibility: "...l'église, organe chargé par Jésus de prolonger son oeuvre de salut, se situe d'emblée et par nature dans la sphère universelle et eschatologique du

Royaume des Cieux. Elle ne possède de soi aucune compétence profane. Par rapport a la question nationale comme telle, l'église apparaît comme para ou supranationale."¹⁸

The nature of metaphysical religion, and of a church in particular, is supranational in scope. If it identifies itself too closely with a particular brand of nationalism, especially if such nationalism seeks to alter radically an existing order of things, it runs the risk of jeopardizing its source of legitimacy as something beyond history, and therefore not subject to its tensions. As Merleau-Ponty remarks: "Dans la mesure...où elle fait vivre ses fidèles sur deux plans l'Eglise est conservatrice."¹⁹ By virtue of this fact, a church, at least in its ecclesiastical structure, will generally ally itself with social or political movements which espouse stability and the status quo. Its essence often prevents it from doing otherwise. It will claim to be apolitical, but its politics are those of stability and the condemnation of meaningful change. In a word, a church tends to be more receptive to established national ideologies, in the sense that these constitute a justification for existing social relations, or it will itself sometimes be the carrier of such ideologies, even though it can certainly learn to support and coexist with nationalistic movements of the more liberal type. Ernst Troeltsch states: "The Church is that type of organization which is overwhelmingly conservative, which to a certain

extent accepts the secular order, and dominates the masses; in principle, therefore, it is universal, i.e. it desires to cover the whole life of humanity."²⁰

A major assumption in these pages is that the more a religion claims to be metaphysical or transcendent ("universal"), the less it will tend to accommodate itself to nationalism as a socio-political movement. Very often, when religion and a particular type of nationalism are supportive one of the other, this is more a matter of conjuncture than of principle. There is, therefore, always a fundamental philosophical disjunction between religion and nationalism, though it is never absolute at all times and in all places. This does not, however, negate certain functional similarities between the two. The concept of nation, as that of society, can also have powerful overtones of the sacred. The spirit of nationalism, much like the notion of "the social good," can be tainted with a powerful sense of the providential. The nation and society thereby assume some of the manifest qualities of the religious.

Nationalisms invariably supplant religions as sources of meaning and identity in a society, particularly when a process of increased secularization is at work. In a world where the monopoly and absolute authority of religion begins to crumble, there is a need to fill the resulting ideological vacuum with a new set of allegiances. The nation is seen as the harbinger of cultural identity and social cohesion,

and the political apparatus as the privileged means by which national aspirations can be satisfied. These national aspirations, formerly couched in the language and imagery of religion, become, as it were, emancipated.

In discussing religion and nationalism in Québec, the question is often asked whether the Catholic Church was the inspiration for and the source of Québec nationalism. The question is undoubtedly too causal. The Church certainly influenced, by the sheer weight of its prestige and power, the course of Québec nationalism. But rarely did it effectively support or contribute to the development of nationalism in its most assertive and dynamic form, that of a call for political change. The Catholic Church remained faithful to its role and self-perception as a conservative and supranational social institution. Its brand of nationalism was more traditional and less strident in tone: it was an appeal for cultural and religious hegemony. It was a nationalism marked by its reactionary quality.

"En effet, que le nationalisme québécois ait été souvent soutenu par des gens d'Eglise qui constituaient, pour une large part, l'élite nationale n'implique pas nécessairement que la religion ait inspiré leur nationalisme. De toute façon, il faut se demander de quel nationalisme il s'agissait. On peut affirmer, sans crainte d'erreur historique, que le nationalisme promu, soutenu ou inspiré peut-être par l'Eglise catholique depuis 1760 est un nationalisme qu'on pourrait appeler "culturel", dont le slogan a été surtout la survivance du fait français en Amérique, c'est-à-dire, la survie et le développement de la langue et de la culture françaises dans le contexte politique et constitutionnel existant. Depuis 1760 jusqu'à tout récemment, le discours

officiel de l'Eglise catholique a toujours prêché la soumission des catholiques aux systèmes politiques en place. Des discours de Mgr Plessis, à la fin du XVIIIe siècle, à la lettre des évêques en 1967 à l'occasion du centenaire de la confédération, en passant par ceux de messeigneurs Lartigue, Bourget et Laflèche au XIXe dans les années 1837-1840, le thème de la loyauté de l'Eglise catholique par rapport au régime établi, confédératif ou autre, est constant. Il faut attendre le referendum (sic) québécois pour entendre ou lire certaines questions ou critiques prudentes à l'endroit du système confédératif. On peut penser que la mentalité catholique, forgée au cours de quelques siècles par des moyens d'éducation populaire remarquablement efficaces (pensons à la prédication), ait beaucoup de mal à déboucher sur la politisation de la question nationale impliquée par exemple dans le projet de souveraineté du Québec."²¹

Despite the fact that Québec Catholicism was not supportive of the political aims of Québec nationalism, it still was able to articulate a sense, rather enduring, of what "le peuple" should be, of what its mission and identity were among the cohort of nationalities. Insofar as it defined the elements of a "national character," it could be argued that the Catholic Church did indeed elaborate a certain type of nationalism for Québec. The Church's virtual monopoly of social and cultural life, notably education, made it easy for such a definition to become the norm. Typical of the Church's view of Québec's national character are the following excerpts from a sermon preached by Monsignor L.-A. Pâquet on 23 June 1902, the eve of la Saint-Jean-Baptiste:

"All peoples are called to a true religion, but not all have received a religious mission. History both ancient and modern proves this: there are

peoples dedicated to the soil, there are industrial peoples, merchant races, conquerors, there are peoples versed in the arts and the sciences, and there are also races of apostles. And who are these races of apostles? Ah! recognize them by their radiating genius and by their generous souls: they are the ones who under the guidance of the Church have done the work and spread the blessings of the Christian civilization; who have put their hand to all the beauty, greatness, and divinity that we see in the world; who with the pen or the point of a sword have engraved the name of God into history; who have treasured and kept alive and undying the love of truth and goodness. (...)

"Now, my brothers, - why should I hesitate to say it? - we have the privilege of being entrusted with this social priesthood granted only to select peoples. I cannot doubt that this religious and civilizing mission is the true vocation and the special vocation of the French race in America. Yes, let us not forget, we are not only a civilized race, we are pioneers of a civilization; we are not only a religious people, we are messengers of the spirit of religion; we are not only dutiful sons of the Church, we are, or we should be, numbered among its zealots, its defenders, and its apostles. Our mission is less to handle capital than to stimulate ideas; less to light the furnaces of factories than to maintain and spread the glowing fires of religion and thought, and to help them cast their light into the distance.

(...)

"When one descends from such a race, when one counts among his ancestors such people as Clovis, Charlemagne, Louis IX, Joan of Arc, Vincent de Paul, and Bossuet, is one not justified in laying claim to a special role and to a superior mission? Through a happy and providential combination we have French blood and Christian blood circulating in our veins. French blood alone leads quickly to corruption, perhaps more quickly than any other; but mixed with Christian blood it produces heroes, disseminators of fruitful spiritual doctrines, glorious craftsmen of the most beautiful and divine works."²²

These passages are quite remarkable for the way in

which religious imagery and appeals to racial pride are used to fashion a picture of French Canadians as a people ordained to perform a particular civilizing mission in North America. The tone is triumphant and the sentiments expressed are somewhat retrograde. Though this is the manifestation of an ultramontane world-view, such an outlook and definition of nationalism were normative in Québec for a long time. What these words also reveal is the manner in which the interests of the Catholic Church are transformed into a noble and uplifting destiny for the French Canadian nation. The Church was not keen on elaborating a brand of nationalism which would make it possible for modernism and industrialization to flourish, thereby eroding the bases of its own power and influence over Québec society. As mentioned earlier, the politics of the Catholic Church were invariably the reflection of its position in society.

Québec nationalism can be divided schematically into three general stages corresponding to the three significant attempts at self-definition of the people of Québec: canadien, canadien-français and québécois. This generally accepted schema is the one used by Balthazar.

"Cette histoire [du Québec], je la découpe en trois grandes catégories, trois types de nationalisme assez différents l'un de l'autre pour reposer sur le rejet de celui qui précède. C'est d'abord le nationalisme canadien qui correspond à la période de la province du Bas-Canada (1791-1838) et au mouvement patriote qui a dominé la vie politique québécoise ou bas-canadienne de cette époque. C'est ensuite le nationalisme canadien-français qui correspond à un repliement sur lui-

même et sur ses traditions d'un peuple devenu minoritaire. C'est enfin le nationalisme québécois qui se manifeste à compter de 1960 avec la Révolution tranquille et une nouvelle tentative d'affirmation politique de la nation."²³

In elaborating these three types of Québec nationalism, Balthazar further proposes four models of nationalism which provide the general theoretical framework to his study: moderne, traditionnel, étatiste and autonomiste.²⁴

In summary, the first model, moderne, is the classic form of nationalism. It corresponds to the rise of a bourgeois vanguard and the identification of its interests with those of the State. It advocates a break with an old, established feudal order. This type of nationalism is typical of the 1837-38 Rebellion and the Quiet Revolution; to it correspond the canadien and québécois forms of Québec nationalism. The second model, traditionnel, is a reactionary type of nationalism, and stands in opposition to the first. It emphasizes solidarity in terms of the national or ethnic interest, rather than the primacy of the State, and is basically apolitical in character. Québec ultramontanism from the mid-1800s to the mid-1900s, and the concomitant canadien-français type of nationalism, was the expression of this traditional perspective, though there were certain efforts made at reviving a more canadien or liberal notion of what the nation represented. The third variety, étatiste, is, as its name indicates, centered on the State as the focus of national identity and the provider of the general

good. It is an outgrowth of the first model, and will generally surface at times of intense urban development. This type of nationalism is characteristic of Québec society of the 1960s and 1970s; to it corresponds the québécois form of Québec nationalism. The fourth model, autonomiste, is a reaction to disillusionments caused by the preceding type. It maintains a certain distance from the State as the embodiment of national aspirations, and reemphasizes cultural or ethnic values. Balthazar argues that this describes Québec in the post-Referendum period. Though québécois remains the prevailing nationalism, the canadien and canadien-français types still maintain a certain credibility.²⁵

Québec Catholicism responded in different ways to the three stages of Québec nationalism. To the first, canadien, the Church stood in an adversarial position, intent on reaffirming its prestige and consolidating its temporal authority. In the case of the second, canadien-français, the Church became the prime leader and defender of what it had itself defined as the national identity and raison d'être of Québec. To the third, québécois, the Church reacted in a remarkably neutral and almost distant manner, as if it were unable to grasp fully the far-reaching political implications of the changes taking place. Though ostensibly supra-national in nature, it will be noted that Québec Catholicism never really shied away from involvement with the ebb and

flow of nationalistic fervour in Québec. Its one handicap remained its proverbial incapacity to understand or support nationalistic movements calling for significant political change to an otherwise static social order.²⁶

In her lucid and penetrating book, The Origins of Totalitarianism, Hannah Arendt, remarking on the development of the nation-state in Western Europe, writes:

"Nations entered the scene of history and were emancipated when peoples had acquired a consciousness of themselves as cultural and historical entities, and of their territory as a permanent home, where history had left its visible traces, whose cultivation was the product of the common labor of their ancestors and whose future would depend upon the course of a common civilization."²⁷

Of the peculiar form of nationalism which surfaced among the German and Russian peoples at the turn of the century, what she calls the "tribal nationalism" which was to find its ultimate expression in the Nazi and Stalinist regimes, Arendt then remarks:

"Nationalism has been frequently described as an emotional surrogate of religion, but only the tribalism of the pan-movements offered a new religious theory and a new concept of holiness.

(...)

"The pan-movements preached the divine origin of their own people as against the Jewish-Christian faith in the divine origin of Man. According to them, man, belonging inevitably to some people, received his divine origin only indirectly through membership in a people. The individual, therefore, has his divine value only as long as he belongs to the people singled out for divine origin. (...) The political advantage of this concept was twofold. It made nationality a permanent quality which no longer could be touched by history (...)

Of even more immediate impact, however, was that in the absolute contrast between the divine origin of one's own people and all other nondivine peoples all differences between the individual members of the people disappeared,...."²⁸

Arendt is speaking, in the second passage, of a type of nationalism which is unique, and which perhaps combines elements of the models which Balthazar describes as "traditionnel" and "étatiste." Yet her words serve as an apt summation to this discussion of nationalism and religion. She touches upon a fundamental issue in the equivocal relationship between these two very tenacious forms of ideology. What Arendt raises is the problem of the ease with which the language and symbolism of each can be used, or misused, by the other. This has recurred throughout history. Perhaps they are so similar because each casts such a dazzling spell and promises such great things.

As underscored earlier, nationalism and religion are sometimes very much alike when examined from a functional viewpoint. Both provide a needed definition of the individual's place in the world, as well as of the community of which the individual is a part. Both fabricate and maintain a universe of meaning, where time, history and human sacrifice make sense. "Both put forward the claims of "higher" loyalties and offer to the self the support of an encompassing authority. National rhetoric and religious rhetoric are very similar. Both play upon memory and hope."²⁹ Nationalism and religion each carry certain concep-

tions of history: the former, from the vantage point of the traditions and aspirations of the collectivity; the latter, more often than not, from the perspective of a "divine" plan or purpose. More importantly, the "higher loyalties" which each espouses and defends are couched in the idiom of an ideal or a force having an existence quite apart, and therefore not guided by human whim and frailty.

Precisely because of certain similarities, religion and nationalism are sometimes interchangeable in terms of their roles as agents for social change, just as each can be used to bolster or defend the other. The power and enduring quality of their symbolic and mythical makeup ("memory and hope") lend themselves to a process of co-option. History abounds with examples of this symbiosis, whether it be the Reformation, the English Puritan Revolution of the 17th century or the resurgence of modern day Islamic militancy. When ideologies are at once fixed in the past and geared toward the future, particularly if their driving force is something as yet unrealized, their influence and strength can be remarkably durable.

There are certain constraints and limitations to this process of mutual support. One of these is the universal or supranational nature of religion, and particularly of a church, which makes total fealty to nationalism problematic. Another is the difference in the source of legitimacy which each claims for itself. Because of these, it could be argued

that religious rhetoric is perhaps more easily absorbed by nationalism than is the language of nationalism by religion, though Québec ultramontanist may provide an exception to the rule. An additional factor which can hamper and even prohibit a rapport between nationalism and religion is secularization, or what Peter Berger defines as "the process by which sectors of society and culture are removed from the domination of religious institutions and symbols."³⁰

Such a process of secularization occurs generally at times of profound change, industrial or technological, and is usually accompanied by a crisis of confidence in a given social or political order. It is itself the expression of an ideological alteration, marked by a shift in legitimacy from a religious world-view to a more pluralistic and temporal one.

B. Ideology and the Process of Secularization

The concept of ideology has always been problematic in the social sciences, in large part because it is often and perhaps too easily associated with a Marxist interpretation of history. The concept suffers from a certain prejudice on the part of many scholars who would discredit any viewpoint which, implicitly or explicitly, acknowledges the important

intellectual legacy of Marx to an understanding of society.

Another problem is that ideology, in the classic Marxian sense of the term, is invariably interpreted as something which is "false" or "negative" insofar as it is the rationalized expression of certain power interests, whether these be economic or political. Marx's own indictment of religion as "...only the illusory sun that revolves around man so long as he does not revolve around himself"³¹ is a prime example of this thinking. Despite the validity of this understanding of ideology, many persist in equating "false" with inefficient or useless, thereby dismissing the very real functional nature of ideology in society: functional in that it is, at once, a system reflective of basic social relations and effective in its influence in shaping these same relations.

"L'idéologie est une réalité qui influe sur les hommes et leurs institutions. Serait-elle fausse qu'il faudrait compter avec elle comme on le fait avec une force historique. Et puis, peut-être est-elle vraie d'une certaine manière: elle tient lieu d'une vue d'ensemble de l'histoire qu'aucune rationalité scrupuleuse ne saurait remplacer; elle anticipe aussi sur l'avenir de l'action et, sans dispenser de la raison, elle soutient la volonté. Elle est donc fonctionnelle en un sens."³²

In other words, the truth or falseness of a particular ideological perspective, while certainly important, is perhaps not as meaningful, from a sociological viewpoint, as its impact as a norm for action.

"Concernant le discours idéologique, la question de savoir s'il est vrai ou faux n'a qu'une portée relative, car un tel discours a quelque chose de

performatif. Ce qui signifie qu'il se caractérise par ce qu'il fait et non parce qu'il dit, même s'il dit quelque chose, même si, en outre, il fait dans la mesure où il dit, par le truchement du dire."³³

It is quite limiting to think that one can attempt to understand modern societies, and notably the history of Québec, without an appreciation for the importance of ideologies. In the recent past, a significant portion of the historical and sociological studies of Québec have been written from the vantage point of the development of ideologies.³⁴ The value of ideologies as a means of comprehending social reality is critical in the context of this thesis. As was noted in the preceding section, both nationalism and religion are ideological phenomena, i.e., both put forth all-inclusive explanations of reality, which explanations claim to structure and order normative behaviour and are usually linked, in some manner, to the interests of a particular group or class. This does not mean that either is true or false in any metaphysically absolute way. Rather, each is functional and effective -- in a word, socially meaningful. Ideologies are ideas, deceptive ideas perhaps, but still suggestive and paradigmatic in terms of human action. This is precisely how Denis Monière defines an ideology in Le développement des idéologies au Québec:

"Une idéologie est un système global plus ou moins rigoureux de concepts, d'images, de mythes, de représentations qui dans une société donnée affirme une hiérarchie de valeurs et vise à modeler les comportements individuels et collectifs. Ce système d'idées est lié sociolo-

giquement à un groupe économique, politique, ethnique ou autre, exprimant et justifiant les intérêts plus ou moins conscients de ce groupe. L'idéologie est enfin une incitation à agir dans telle ou telle direction en fonction d'un jugement de valeur. Elle a principalement quatres (sic) fonctions: elle rationalise une vision du monde et la présente comme universelle, elle cherche à "éternaliser" des valeurs particulières, en ce sens elle est anhistorique. Elle est apologétique en légitimant des structures de classes et la domination d'une classe. Elle est mystificatrice car elle déguise plus ou moins consciemment la nature réelle d'une situation, masque de cette façon les intérêts de classe et cherche à réaliser l'intégration sociale. Elle a une efficience, c'est-à-dire qu'elle mobilise les énergies individuelles et collectives et les oriente vers l'action. Elle intervient dans la réalité et sert de guide à la pratique."³⁵

Ideologies are not generated spontaneously in history; they are the expression of human material and social conditions, and are the result of human activity in the world. The Marxian view of history, as distinguished from German Idealism, argues that "...l'histoire ne résulte ni de la volonté de Dieu ni du mouvement des idées, elle résulte de l'activité pratique des hommes."³⁶ Marx himself writes: "Men are the producers of their conceptions, ideas, etc.-- real, active men, as they are conditioned by a definite development of their productive forces and of the intercourse corresponding to these, up to its furthest form."³⁷ Too often, however, this is taken to mean that economic considerations always determine the production of ideas. Friedrich Engels disputes such an assumption and clarifies the intent of the Marxian view: "The economic situation is the basis, but the various elements of the

superstructure (...) also exercise their influence upon the course of the historical struggles and in many cases preponderate in determining their form."³⁸ As part of the superstructure, Engels includes "...religious views and their further development into systems of dogmas...."³⁹ The production of ideologies is, in sum, a dialectic process. While taking root in human material and social circumstances -- our deliberate activity in history -- ideologies themselves impact on how a society chooses to define itself. They can effect change; they are dynamic. Max Weber addresses this question when he writes, at the conclusion of The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism:

"The modern man is in general, even with the best will, unable to give religious ideas a significance for culture and national character which they deserve. But it is, of course, not my aim to substitute for a one-sided materialistic an equally one-sided spiritualistic causal interpretation of culture and of history. Each is equally possible, but each, if it does not serve as the preparation, but as the conclusion of an investigation, accomplishes equally little in the interest of historical truth."⁴⁰

Of the four functions of ideology which Monière outlines, its ability to mystify is of particular relevance to the Québec situation. The process of mystification is especially prevalent in a milieu which could be described as colonial.⁴¹ Throughout much of its history, it should be noted that Québec has been subjected to colonial arrangements, whether it be as an economic outpost of France or as part of growing British interests in North America following

the Conquest. Some maintain that this remained the case in the context of the Canadian political system.⁴²

To be colonized means to fall prey to ideological categories which are not one's own, but which are still internalized as if they were. A colonial situation is a highly structured and closed one, where both the colonizer and the colonized live in a world with a consistent logic and a dynamic all its own. Ideologies conceal the true nature of social situations; they place a wedge between the reality of such situations and the manner in which they are perceived, understood and recounted. It is in this sense that they mystify. In a colonial context, part of this process of mystification entails the acceptance of the definitions of what it means to be the colonizer and the colonized, and the consequent internalization of the stereotypical characteristics of each, by each. In his influential book, Portrait du colonisé, Albert Memmi writes:

"L'idéologie d'une classe dirigeante, on le sait, se fait adopter dans une large mesure par les classes dirigées. Or toute idéologie de combat comprend, partie intégrante d'elle-même, une conception de l'adversaire. En consentant à cette idéologie, les classes dominées confirment, d'une certaine manière, le rôle qu'on leur a assigné. Ce qui explique, entre autres, la relative stabilité des sociétés; l'oppression y est, bon gré mal gré, tolérée par les opprimés eux-mêmes. Dans la relation coloniale, la domination s'exerce de peuple à peuple, mais le schéma reste le même. La caractérisation et le rôle du colonisé occupent une place de choix dans l'idéologie colonisatrice; caractérisation infidèle au réel, incohérente en elle-même, mais nécessaire et cohérente à l'intérieur de cette idéologie. Et à laquelle le colonisé donne son assentiment, troublé, partiel,

mais indéniable."⁴³

Memmi clarifies the uniqueness of the colonial situation: it is a system of domination based, not primarily on class, but on race or ethnicity ("de peuple a peuple"). While certainly motivated by economic gain and expansion, colonialism retains its hold by the institutionalization of a vast array of structural controls, including violence, conditioned by a view of the cultural heritage of the colonized as something inferior or, more generally, non-existent. Its corollary is the implicit superiority of the colonizer's culture. This culture of the colonizer is imported; its reference point is the mother country, the metropolis. The culture of the colonized, on the other hand, is defined as static and primitive, including its manifestations in such collective rituals as feast-days.

"Bien sûr, en vertu de son formalisme, le colonisé conserve toutes ses fêtes religieuses, identiques à elles-mêmes depuis des siècles. Précisément, ce sont les seules fêtes religieuses qui, en un sens, sont hors du temps. Plus exactement, elles se trouvent à l'origine du temps de l'histoire, et non dans l'histoire. Depuis le moment où elles ont été instituées, il ne s'est plus rien passé dans la vie de ce peuple. Rien de particulier à son existence propre, qui mérite d'être retenu par la conscience collective, et fêté. Rien qu'un grand vide."⁴⁴

There is, as yet, no sense of national feast-days, as there exists no expression of a national or historical identity which would make this possible. The transformation of religious feast-days into national ones is itself the manifestation of the cultural emancipation of the colonized.

Because colonialism is so total and absolute, and yet so fragile, as a system of domination and control, there will inevitably arise, among the colonized, a sort of counter-ideology to that put forth by the colonizer. Such a counter-ideology, often fueled by the breakdown of the colonial structure and the timid emergence of a sense of national awareness on the part of the colonized, is, in many respects, an inevitable development, as Memmi remarks: "Un jour vient nécessairement où le colonisé relève la tête et fait basculer l'équilibre toujours instable de la colonisation."⁴⁵ The counter-ideology of the colonized can be expressed, in its most advanced forms, as a call for national liberation or political autonomy; its primary and more immediate manifestation, however, is a positive affirmation of the identity of the colonized as precisely that to which he was once denigrated.

"Le colonisé s'accepte et s'affirme, se revendique avec passion. Mais qui est-il? Sûrement pas l'homme en général, porteur des valeurs universelles, communes à tous les hommes. Précisément, il a été exclu de cette universalité, sur le plan du verbe comme en fait. Au contraire, on a recherché, durci jusqu'à la substantification ce qui le différencie des autres hommes. On lui a démontré avec orgueil qu'il ne pourrait jamais s'assimiler les autres; on l'a repoussé avec mépris vers ce qui, en lui, serait inassimilable par les autres. Eh bien! soit. Il est, il sera cet homme-là. La même passion qui lui faisait admirer et absorber l'Europe, lui fera affirmer ses différences; puisque ces différences, enfin, le constituent, constituent proprement son essence."⁴⁶

There is, moreover, a rediscovery of and a new appreciation for those rituals, traditions and myths which were once

perceived and accepted as proof of the inferior status of the colonized individual.

"Lui, qui considérait les rites comme d'inévitables corvées familiales, les réintroduit dans sa vie sociale, leur donne une place dans sa conception du monde. Pour mieux les utiliser, il réexplique les messages oubliés, les adapte aux exigences actuelles. Il découvre d'ailleurs que le fait religieux n'est pas seulement une tentative de communication avec l'invisible, mais un extraordinaire lieu de communication pour le groupe entier. Le colonisé, ses chefs et ses intellectuels, ses traditionalistes et ses libéraux, toutes les classes sociales, peuvent s'y retrouver, s'y ressouder, vérifier et recréer leur unité."⁴⁷

La Fête de la Saint-Jean-Baptiste, particularly its procession and parade, were, in some significant ways, the reflection of a colonized Québec. The themes, images and ideologies which these public displays projected, and their general acceptance by all social classes, were indicative of the static nature of the society. Religion was the topos, but a religion which seemed to be fixed, immobile, eternal. There was a real sense that nothing of import could happen outside the dogmatic bounds of Roman Catholicism. In the late 1960s, history -- not the mythical one of ancestors and saints, but the pressing one of social change -- overtook the celebrations, and their colonization came to an abrupt end.

Ideologies are an essential part of all types of human activity in the world, regardless of the precise economic, political or social systems within which they are found. Nationalism and colonialism are forms of ideology, as is

religion. Conflicting ideologies can be found at the same time in a given context. Thus certain polarities may arise: religious ideologies vs. national ideologies vs. class ideologies vs. colonial ideologies. Such polarities may exist indefinitely side by side; they may also find a certain resolution or reach a level of co-existence within the society.

Québec is a good example of a society containing, throughout its history, ideological polarities. One of the historical moments when ideological contradictions became most obvious in Québec was the mid-20th century. This period was marked by a process of secularization of Québec society -- a process culminating in the Quiet Revolution of the 1960s and its aftermath. It was a "calling into question" of a religious ideological perspective and the beginning, in a remarkably bold fashion, of a process of affirmation and emancipation from social arrangements marked by their colonial and traditional texture.

Secularization is an oft-used concept in sociological literature. Because it points to a very important social process, and is itself a way of understanding the modern world, it has been defined in a variety of ways by different thinkers. Attempts have been made to cleanse the concept of its blatant ideological connotations because of the unfortunate tendency of some to speak of it in anti-religious terms. Yet secularization, of which an objective

comprehension is certainly possible, is central to grasping the meaning of social change.⁴⁸

Peter Berger's definition of secularization, quoted earlier, serves as a beginning. Secularization can be understood by reference to one of the component parts of the word: secular. What is secular is differentiated from that which is religious. Hence secularization is a process by which the human world is no longer grasped by reference to religious notions and categories, but rather in terms of temporal, earthly considerations. Secularization purges the social world of its religious content; it suggests a different order of plausibility and a supposedly more "rational" explanation for social and natural phenomena. Max Weber reminds us quite forcefully of the almost inevitable march of increased rationalization in the modern world, and the manner in which it radically alters our perceptions of the religious.⁴⁹ Berger speaks also of the social-structural and cultural aspects of secularization:

"When we speak of society and institutions in modern Western history, of course, secularization manifests itself in the evacuation by the Christian churches of areas previously under their control or influence--as in the separation of church and state, or in the expropriation of church lands, or in the emancipation of education from ecclesiastical authority. When we speak of culture and symbols, however, we imply that secularization is more than a social-structural process. It affects the totality of cultural life and of ideation, and may be observed in the decline of religious contents in the arts, in philosophy, in literature and, most important of all, in the rise of science as an autonomous, thoroughly secular perspective on the world.

Moreover, it is implied here that the process of secularization has a subjective side as well. As there is a secularization of society and culture, so is there a secularization of consciousness. Put simply, this means that the modern West has produced an increasing number of individuals who look upon the world and their own lives without the benefit of religious interpretations."⁵⁰

Danièle Hervieu-Léger, in Vers un nouveau christianisme?, discusses secularization in the wider context of modernism, which, she argues, is where it assumes its fullest sense. Her interest is to provide an explanation for the emergence and persistence of new religious movements in a society which remains intensely secular in its most fundamental orientations. She accepts Berger's thesis (which owes much to Max Weber) that Christianity itself, with the Reformation, contained the seeds of secularization, but she goes one step further in asserting that this does not imply the disappearance of religion, but rather its continual restructuring. She writes:

"...la sécularisation, ce n'est pas la disparition de la religion confrontée à la rationalité: c'est le processus de réorganisation permanente du travail de la religion dans une société structurellement impuissante à combler les attentes qu'il lui faut susciter pour exister comme telle."⁵¹

In displacing religion as a world-view, secularization inevitably brings about an ideological struggle between two different loci of power in society: the clerical and the lay. On the one hand, this is due to the fact that competing explanations of reality are confronting one another. On the other hand, and more serious still, is the attempt to

control the leverages of power in society, whether these be political, economic or cultural, and the desire to monopolize and determine their course. One should not underestimate the intensity of this struggle. The lay leadership, more often than not the bourgeoisie, foresees the possibility offered to it for influence and gain. Their motives, however, may not always be entirely self-seeking. On occasion, they are inspired by a real need for social change, a need which becomes especially urgent if the clerical structure is perceived as blocking or hampering the development of the society. The clerical or ecclesiastical leadership will be reticent to abandon its realm of influence, and will decry the passing of religious values and the emergence of a secular, godless society. It was this type of conflict which marked Québec in the early decades of the 20th century, a conflict which would force the Catholic Church to ask itself some fundamental questions:

"Elle [l'Eglise] a su préserver la culture traditionnelle du peuple et embrigader les masses par des ligues, des croisades, des congrès. L'édifice est solide; mais est-il adapté aux exigences de milieux de vie soumis aux forces de la modernité? Dépositaire d'une théologie fixiste et dressée à recevoir d'ailleurs ses mots d'ordre, cette Eglise est-elle armée pour faire face aux interrogations nées de la sape irréversible de "l'ordre naturel des choses"? Toute préoccupée à consolider ses assises et incapable de remettre en question ses vérités, saura-t-elle trouver autre chose à offrir à ses fidèles qu'un message noyé par le dogmatisme, impuissant à rejoindre l'homme moderne en gestation, qu'une religion ritualiste, sans portée pour la formidable lutte qui s'annonce?"⁵²

Secularization is not an isolated social phenomenon. More generally, it is one, and perhaps itself the end product, of a series of changes which have marked the modern age, and which can be called the process of modernization. Such developments as industrialization, urbanization, and scientific and technological advances have also contributed significantly to the overtaking of the religious by the secular. The difficulty with the evacuation of the religious from society is that it creates a situation where severe problems of legitimacy can arise, a situation not unlike that surrounding the rise of nationalism. For once the all-inclusive and secure comprehensions of reality offered by religion are no longer present in a society, what can and should take their place? "...[S]ecularization has resulted," Berger remarks, "in a wide-spread collapse of the plausibility of traditional religious definitions of reality."⁵³ One possible answer is that secular society itself, in its political, economic or cultural life, provides the aura of authenticity and authority. This is not always the most advantageous option, since pluralism tends to diffuse the contours of legitimacy.

Another solution is to translate traditional religious categories and explanations into more palatable secular ones, without necessarily voiding them of their transcendent quality. Society will always do this, as Durkheim reminds us. It will fashion and maintain "eternal" standards which

elicit allegiance; in the extreme, it sets itself up as the ultimate authority and symbol. But the difference is one of quality of symbols. It is here that such recurring motifs as the nation, ethnicity, the race, socialism, capitalism and democracy, including the State, in all their timeless and almost mystical overtones, assume importance. What is "secularized" becomes "sacralized," or "...the process by means of which on the level of symbol-systems certain patterns acquire the same taken-for-granted, stable, eternal, quality..."⁵⁴ The religious is re-infused into society, but it speaks a different language.

In a secularized society, religion naturally still exists. The one difference is that it can no longer lay claim to the same type of authority recognized and accepted by all. Yet it remains an influential force, for secularization does not negate religious belief. It transforms it into one among several other foci of meaning and ethical conduct. It is to this belief, and to its permanence and resiliency, that we now turn in our discussion.

C. Popular Religion and Social Identity

Religious belief is not an homogeneous phenomenon. Its manifestations are many and varied, conditioned by histori-

cal circumstances, socio-political exigencies and cultural developments. It takes many forms: from the magical world-view of the so-called primitive, to the missionary zeal of the ardent believer, to the philosophical sophistication of the professional theologian and cleric. These are all types of religiosity, or ways of apprehending and living out a sense of the sacred. For the student of religion, the task at hand consists of trying to understand this behaviour from the vantage point of the believer, as Weber points out:

"The external courses of religious behavior are so diverse that an understanding of this behavior can only be achieved from the viewpoint of the subjective experiences, ideas, and purposes of the individuals concerned--in short, from the viewpoint of the religious behavior's "meaning" (Sinn)."⁵⁵

The Saint-Jean-Baptiste celebrations in Québec were (and remain so in some significant ways) the expression of types of religious and social behaviour. Perhaps one should be somewhat more precise about the meaning of "social behaviour": the festivities were social in that they were collective manifestations which embodied and communicated overt nationalistic feelings about and definitions of Québec society. They were public displays, partly religious and partly civic, which served as the occasion for people to commemorate and circumscribe their social and cultural identities. Yet the feast itself was decidedly religious in origin. It is this religious connection which best ensured its survival over the years, not to mention the centuries:

"Si la Saint-Jean a su résister au temps, c'est en partie à cause des cérémonies religieuses qui l'entouraient."⁵⁶

What was religious was also close to the people. The celebrations have always been characterized by their mass appeal or, to put it differently, their popular nature. It is indeed true that their institutionalization in the early decades of the 19th century was inspired by the bourgeois elements of French Canadian society, who introduced into the feast a political tone which was, until that time, relatively dormant. But the extensive participation by the people in the various festivities surrounding la Saint-Jean, and the special religious and traditional features of many of these, leads us to emphasize their popular quality, even though a certain dichotomy persisted between the elite and the masses in the sorts of events each would attend. Thus can one speak of popular religion in connection with the Saint-Jean-Baptiste celebrations.

The term "popular religion" has its origins in a well-established and time-honoured ethnographic and sociological tradition, though its current intellectual respectability is a more recent development.⁵⁷ We shall attempt a preliminary definition by reference to three enduring traits of popular religion, i.e., 1. its relation to organized religion, 2. its traditional character and 3. its links to the "lower" social classes:

"(...) La religion populaire est alors la partie de la religiosité populaire qui reçoit la sanction

de la religion organisée, le reste recevant de cette même religion organisée les noms infamants de magie et de superstition.

"Jugée à l'aune de la modernité scientifique, la religion populaire s'avère traditionnelle et, si on dit les choses moins poliment, folklorique et déphasée. (...) Reste donc que la religion populaire serait beaucoup plus anté que anti-moderne.

"Du point de vue de la hiérarchisation sociale, la religion populaire a des affinités électives avec les couches sociales inférieures, au moins en ce sens que la majorité des membres de la société se situe au bas et non au haut de l'échelle...."⁵⁸

These characteristics allude to the influence, the durability and the appeal of popular religion.

In speaking of popular religion, one is qualifying a particular type of religiosity which is itself differentiated from another type. Popular religion is defined as such precisely because it is not something else. This "something else," by inference, represents the norm: that which gives popular religion the sobriquet of "popular." Two different forms of religion stand in opposition: one which is institutionalized, organized and codified, and which implies a more scholarly notion of the sacred; another which is spontaneous, less formal and more diffuse, and which is more oriented to experiential perceptions of the sacred. As is the case with culture, it is the elitist or normative view of religion which circumscribes the understanding of what constitutes popular religion.

"Un divorce s'établit donc ici entre deux modes religieux opposés. Le premier est évidemment corrélé à un faible degré d'initiation aux outils

culturels, cependant que le second est lié à une certaine maîtrise, par éducation ou par métier, du maniement des symboles, y compris de la manipulation de la fonction symbolique elle-même par modification des rapports sémantiques. D'où la justification, à titre de connotation, du terme "populaire" attaché au premier type de religiosité, cependant que le second recevra le qualificatif de "savant" ou d'"éclairé".⁵⁹

But one must be cautious of undue bias in the definition of popular religion. François-André Isambert goes on to ask, "Y a-t-il une forme religieuse qu'il faudrait, pour être franc, appeler "inculte", réservée au illiterati et bonne pour les illiterati, tandis que l'autre serait accessible moyennant un certain bagage intellectuel?"⁶⁰ The immediate response is negative. Different types of religiosity are only distinct ways of being religious; they are not superior or inferior in and of themselves, nor are they correlated simplistically with social stature.

Popular religion is distinguished from scholarly religion, or what Max Weber would call "intellectualism"⁶¹ in the history of religions. Indeed, "...parler de religion populaire, c'est toujours l'opposer à autre chose, à une autre forme de religion."⁶² And Roger Lapointe remarks: "Je songe au fait crucial que la religion populaire existe par le vertu d'un regard autre, d'une instance extérieure, d'une intervention en elle-même non populaire."⁶³ The antipode of popular religion is not organized religion, but rather metaphysical religion, i.e., that form of religiosity which is based on the abstraction of the sacred and which is, by

its nature, elitist and non-popular.

"...le contraire de la religion populaire, ce avec quoi par conséquent elle entretient les plus étroites connivences (même genre) mais aussi à quoi elle s'oppose le plus radicalement (espèce différente), ce n'est pas proprement l'autorité ecclésiastique, autrement dit la religion officielle, mais la religion savante, c'est-à-dire théologique et ultimement métaphysique."⁶⁴

A good deal of what is called popular religion or religiosity is indeed found in organized religion. One need only consider, in the Christian tradition, such manifestations as devotion to the saints and to holy individuals, pilgrimages and the veneration of sacred objects and images. Other sorts of popular religiosity, whether magical, divinator or based on a belief in spirits and demons, are excluded, primarily because they can never be fully "recuperated" by mainstream religion; such beliefs and practices are labelled superstitious. Hence organized religion will often co-opt certain forms of popular religiosity and establish them as credible. They retain their definition as "popular" when analyzed from the viewpoint of the religious virtuosi, to borrow a Weberian concept.⁶⁵

Can one attempt a definition of popular religion, of what constitutes its essence? Such a comprehensive definition is not easily culled from the recent literature. Benoît Lacroix offers one particular definition, more general than critical: "Nous entendons par RELIGION POPULAIRE un ensemble de croyances, de rites et d'agirs qui

sont ceux de la majorité. C'est-à-dire? le peuple sans plus de distinction et surtout sans arrière-pensée sociologique."⁶⁶ Isambert is more cautious, limiting himself to outlining some of the distinguishing marks of popular religion, such as its manifestation in mass movements or its festive nature.⁶⁷ Lapointe, returning to the distinction between popular and metaphysical religion, suggests a more comprehensive approach:

"Au niveau où nous sommes, qui est celui des croyances et des rites tels que vécus et prônés par les usagers eux-mêmes, la religion populaire est donc l'ensemble des pratiques et croyances ayant les caractéristiques susindiquées (magie, etc.), tandis que la religion savante désigne les croyances et pratiques ayant les propriétés opposées (métaphysique, etc.)."⁶⁸

One should perhaps heed Weber's summons, and seek to circumscribe popular religion in terms of what it means to the religious believer. A Québec writer, describing the religious experience of her youth, offers a revealing portrait of popular religiosity:

"Entre les champs d'avoine et la jungle verte des rangs de maïs, j'ai suivi les bannières et les cierges des Rogations pour attirer la bénédiction divine sur les récoltes de la paroisse. J'ai savouré les crêpes fines de la Chandeleur, en souvenir des relevailles de la Vierge, et tendu le cou à la Sainte table pour que le beau cierge courbe et torsadé de la Saint Blaise me protège tout l'hiver contre les maux de gorge. J'ai eu le front tour à tour marqué par les Cendres et purifié par l'eau bénite. J'ai épié l'Angelus qui me délivrait chaque midi des servitudes de l'analyse logique et grammaticale. Dans les dégels éblouissants de la Semaine Sainte, j'ai visité à pied les sept reposoirs requis pour obtenir l'indulgence plénière applicable à l'assurance d'une bonne mort. Et j'ai bu l'eau de Pâques

glacée dans les paumes tièdes de mon père."⁶⁹

Popular religion or religiosity, one can submit, is an immense array of symbols, beliefs and rituals rooted in the need to experience the sacred as something immediate, tangible and personal in one's life. Though differentiated from the metaphysical or scholarly type of religiosity, it shares a common inspiration in that both are means by which the sacred is discerned and somehow made more relevant to the believer. Popular religiosity includes the sanctioned as well as the non-sanctioned; it moves from a belief in the intercessory power of souls to an obsession with the magical. It is, in a word, what the vast majority of people believe, and that by which they delimit their lives. It is an original form of belief, understood in the dual sense of primary and creative.

In describing popular religion as something "original," the question can be asked whether one is speaking of a form of religiosity which is innate, almost pristine in nature. This is not the case, for it is difficult to claim that human individuals are religious in any existential sort of way. Sociologically speaking, one can only start from the premise that popular religion, as with other types of religious behaviour, is a social phenomenon. No doubt such behaviour has important psychological impact and benefit, but it remains grounded in the social structure. The representation of popular religion as both "primary" and

"creative" refers more to its special qualities as the expression of a religiosity which is omnipresent in human history.

One of the more remarkable features of popular religion is its constancy, its traditional nature. From where we stand as moderns, this is sometimes taken to mean that popular religion is irrational, quaint and perhaps even unscientific. One must again be wary of such biased criticism. It is true that forms of popular piety and belief, if understood as expressions of what a majority of individuals believe in a given culture, have always existed. In this sense, popular religion has a distinctively timeless quality. In Québec, for example, prior to the onslaught of the secularization of the mid-20th century, the religiosity of large segments of the population was marked by rituals which were recurrent and cyclical, almost eternal in the mystique which surrounded them. People recited the rosary in the evenings with their families around the kitchen table; they made novenas to a variety of saints and lit votive candles in their honour; they celebrated le mois de Marie, le mois du Sacré-Coeur and la Fête-Dieu; they made special pilgrimages to Sainte-Anne-de-Beaupré and l'Oratoire Saint-Joseph. As Hélène Pelletier-Baillargeon reminds us by the recollection from her youth quoted above, such rituals assumed potency by the very fact of their perpetual repetition, either on a daily or on a seasonal basis.

Specifically, however, what does it mean to say that popular religion is traditional by its essence? Only this: that popular religion is pre-modern, and, more importantly, is such by virtue of its disjunction from the modern as understood in its most rational and scientific sense.

Lapointe explains:

"Ainsi, la religion populaire n'est pas moderne. Elle ne l'est pas justement en tant que traditionnelle, ce qui est traditionnel et qui vient donc du passé s'opposant à ce qui est moderne et issu du présent. (...) On peut pourtant se risquer à déterminer le moderne comme étant un progrès de la culture, et non pas n'importe quelle sorte de progrès, mais un progrès de la rationalité, sensiblement comme M. Weber a opposé la domination traditionnelle à la domination bureaucratique (...) Le fait de ne pas être moderne de la part de la religion populaire paraît alors moins bénin. Celle-ci se trouve au contraire affectée d'un manque et d'une carence primordiaux au jugement de l'instance qui ici énonce la vérité, c'est-à-dire la modernité rationnelle et scientifique. La religion populaire, à l'instar de la culture populaire dans son ensemble, est non moderne en tant que traditionnelle, déphasée et pré-scientifique en tant que non moderne."⁷⁰

Traditional does not imply static or no longer effective. Though traditions can sometimes be said to be dead or dying, popular forms of religiosity enjoy remarkable strength, though their intensity and influence as culturally meaningful systems are historically relative. Their persistence is due, in no small measure, to their place of attachment in the social hierarchy.

The identification of popular religion with what is called the "lower" social classes warrants some clarification. The very term "popular" is indicative of the reasons

why the connection is made: "popular" being borrowed from the French expression "le peuple," and consequently opposed to other segments of society such as "la noblesse" or "la bourgeoisie." Synonymous with this distinction is a typically 19th century romantic notion of "le peuple" as the repository of the national ideal and good.⁷¹ Popular religion is perceived as that type of religiosity which is characteristic of the people or, in a more condescending vein, the less enlightened. This view is problematic for two reasons. First, it fails to consider the fact that many expressions of popular religiosity have found themselves accepted and endorsed by more organized forms of religion. Second, it is a throw-back to and an endorsement of a view of religion where the elite and the learned again define the parameters of religious behaviour and belief, their approach being more desirable and therefore normative. The fact remains, however, that popular religion is, more often than not, a product of the great mass of people at the lower end of the social scale -- the "lower" classes, for lack of a more suitable term. But this should only be understood in the sense of their constituting the majority.

Jean-Charles Falardeau, in writing of the linkage between popular religion and social class in Québec, states: "Le degré de "popularité" de la religion et d'appartenance à une couche sociale est déterminé à la fois par la proximité de l'univers urbain et, du même coup, par l'absence ou par

la non-possession ou la possession d'un savoir écrit et "savant".⁷² The author was describing Québec society at a time when the distinction between urban and rural was far more pronounced than it is today, but his remark points to the need to situate popular religion in relation to socio-structural and cultural factors. Is it indeed appropriate to limit popular religiosity to a rural, illiterate or semi-illiterate context, as Falardeau seems to suggest? Or should we not look to a more fundamental process of social change, one which explains the social bases for the production of different forms of religiosity?

Max Weber offered a general model for analysis in his distinction between community and bureaucracy. Jean-Paul Montminy presents a summary:

"Pour Weber, la naissance ou l'apparition d'une distinction, d'une dichotomie, entre religion officielle et religion "populaire" serait à chercher dans le passage d'une civilisation de type communautaire (gemeinschaft) avec ses relations primaires, sa spontanéité et ses effervescences, à une civilisation bureaucratique (gesellschaft) marquée principalement par les relations de type secondaire, la poussée des intérêts élitistes et le conformisme des masses. La religion dite populaire serait ainsi le produit d'un processus d'évolution sociale qui, en favorisant l'émergence d'une société de plus en plus technicisée et bureaucratisée, aurait conduit le peuple à donner aux institutions en place une coloration et un contenu mieux appropriés à ses besoins: pour la politique: des mouvements "populaires"; pour le religieux: une religion "populaire", etc."⁷³

This particular perspective has one important advantage. It brings an element of comprehensiveness to the

discussion by providing a theoretical framework which takes account of historical and social development. Its immediate limitations are twofold. On the one hand, Weber suggests that popular religion is such because it plays a compensatory role vis-à-vis the disenfranchised classes. While this has the merit of presenting an interesting psycho-social explanation, it fails to take note of the fact that members of the higher social classes partake of certain forms of popular religiosity, especially when these are sanctioned by organized religion. By extension, and on the other hand, the question is asked whether popular religion is always found in the populace. It would appear that the reality of the situation is much more amorphous than would appear at first glance.⁷⁴

We find ourselves echoing our original observation: popular religion has natural affinities with the lower social classes because of their sheer number. And one can add: and because they have opted for this type of religiosity. This latter part of the statement raises an interesting dynamic which touches upon the question of power and authority, as it relates to the two parties concerned: the clergy or religious professionals and the laity.

"Le clergé détient le pouvoir de la loi, de la morale. Il prescrit, il ordonne, bref, il maintient l'ordre. Le peuple exerce le pouvoir quotidien de la coutume, donc, le pouvoir de la spontanéité, de l'effervescence, voire même de la contestation ou de l'attestation.

"Il n'est pas inutile à notre propos de rappeler

la relation étroite qu'il y a entre pouvoir et religion, surtout s'il s'agit de religion "populaire".

"Nous savons que toute religion, se voulant porteuse et définitrice de sens, propose à sa clientèle une explication du monde. Comme pour tous les autres champs du social, le savoir devient alors la source d'un pouvoir; la doctrine ou l'idéologie de la religion donnant naissance à des pratiques imposées (le culte) et à des prescriptions morales. Surgit alors toute la dynamique entre les auteurs sociaux en présence (le clergé -- le peuple)...."⁷⁵

By introducing the element of power, and its use by both clerics and the laity, we come back to the initial distinction between popular religion and scholarly or metaphysical religion. This distinction is ultimately based on the notion of power -- who possesses it, and to what purpose -- and, as such, is tied up with social class. The sacred becomes the stake, and different social groups contend for it. Different gnosés are proposed; distinct types of religiosity are legitimated. Popular religion can be understood as a manifestation of the inherent power of the people, the majority, to give their lives the symbolic and ritualistic content distinguishing them from the religious virtuosi, primarily because they do not have immediate and direct access to the religious world of this latter group.

Popular religion is often typified by public and collective manifestations. It is, in many ways, a mass phenomenon. One need only think of certain pilgrimages as a good example.⁷⁶ Individual forms of piety do have their

place, but these are often subordinate to more communal expressions of religiosity.

"Elles [les classes populaires] vivent le religieux suivant une dimension horizontale qui se traduit dans la Fête, dans les cérémonies à grand déploiement, dans la Communion des saints, etc., alors que la piété bourgeoise privilégie la verticalité d'un rapport à Dieu personnel et intérieur.

"Cette allure communautaire de la religion populaire devrait aussi être rattachée, me semble-t-il, à la psychologie des foules. Il y a des raisons de penser que la religion populaire en tant que communautaire existe à son maximum dans les phénomènes de foule, en tant que de telles ambiances transforment les individus qui s'y trouvent. E. Durkheim voyait même dans l'effervescence sociale le creuset par excellence de la religion naissante."⁷⁷

The feast is a "privileged" instance and form of popular religiosity, for the feast makes manifest the natural affinity between the people and the uniquely popular character of human celebrations: "...ce trait de la fête d'être un moment exceptionnel... en même temps que d'être populaire, ce qui réveille la vieille affinité que le sens commun établit entre la fête et le peuple."⁷⁸ Beyond this, however, is the concept of the feast itself as a cultural display, a moment in time when a society expresses its own identity and values: "La fête, bien entendu, est enjeu de civilisation."⁷⁹ The feast is at the confluence of the popular and the social, understood in its widest, most civilizing sense.

In discussing la Fête de la Saint-Jean in Québec, one can affirm that the celebrations were the expression and

manifestation of the contradictions of Québec society. As with a camera, they give a snapshot of what this society looked like in time, and how it evolved. We need to understand what a feast does in society, how it represents the social and the religious, and how it impacts on them. We need to sketch out the elements for a sociological definition of the feast.

D. Elements for a Sociological Definition of the Feast

Durkheim's The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life, despite its shortcomings, has set the standard for much of the sociological analysis of religion. In one particularly illuminating passage from his book, the great sociologist discusses a religious ceremony which takes place among some of the tribal divisions of aboriginal Australia. His intent is to show how the intensity of certain social rituals gives rise to a collective awareness of the existence of the sacred. These rituals, meant to solidify tribal solidarities through an "acting out" of certain religious themes, produce states of ecstasy. Durkheim writes:

"So it is in the midst of these effervescent social environments and out of this effervescence itself that the religious idea seems to be born.

(...)

"The religious life of the Australian passes through successive phases of complete lull and of superexcitation, and social life oscillates in the same rhythm. This puts clearly into evidence the bond uniting them to one another, but among the peoples called civilized, the relative continuity of the two blurs their relations. It might even be asked whether the violence of this contrast was not necessary to disengage the feeling of sacredness in its first form. By concentrating itself almost entirely in certain determined moments, the collective life has been able to attain its greatest intensity and efficacy, and consequently to give men a more active sentiment of the double existence they lead and of the double nature in which they participate."⁸⁰

The important theme which Durkheim raises in these passages is that of "effervescent social environments." This concept can provide a focus for the elaboration of a sociological perspective on the idea of the feast, and of its parameters and catalytic role in society.

Durkheim argues that effervescent and agitated social occasions are the source of the religious feeling, insofar as they allow individuals to perceive a sense of the sacred which is, of course, society itself. Isambert acknowledges our debt to Durkheim as the starting-point for an analysis of the feast:

"On peut suivre pas a pas la construction du type idéal de la fête, en commençant par Durkheim et les Formes élémentaires, qui fait, du rassemblement massif générateur d'exaltation, le fait privilégié par lequel la société perçoit de façon intense, mais confuse, sa puissance sur les individus."⁸¹

The "effervescent social environments" of which Durkheim speaks were ritualistic and celebratory in nature. They were, moreover, collective phenomena and representa-

tions, i.e., they took shape by virtue of the fact that many individuals were involved in their preparation and their execution, and they were symbolic of that which they were meant to evoke. When discussing popular religion earlier, we remarked that one of its distinguishing traits is also the fact that it is a collective or communal manifestation. The feast, that which is socially effervescent, is a form of popular religion or, at least, one of its vital components. It can even be seen as "composante principale."⁸²

In primitive religions, these times of social effervescence are geared to the production and maintenance of euphoric states of mind among the tribal individuals. The goal is the awakening of a feeling of an ultimate power -- for Durkheim, the society as sacred -- and its subsequent affirmation and vindication. The question can be asked whether a feast always calls up the sacred as its ultimate point of reference, to which Isambert seems to respond in the affirmative.⁸³ Reference to the sacred is certainly typical of feasts which are themselves religious in character: Christmas, Easter and so forth. When considering more secular or partly religious feasts such as national holidays, birthdays and even la Fête de la Saint-Jean in its more institutionalized form, however, the link with the sacred is not as easily made. One can speak more appropriately, in these cases, of "sacralized" times or events. In the Durkheimian perspective, society is the sacred, and all

celebrations, whether specifically religious or not, refer ultimately to the sacred. Celebrations and feasts are sacred or "sacralized" moments in that they recall a time or an event which "goes beyond" and yet remains quite actual and timely, basically because it is the social itself which is being commemorated.

Collective rituals contain an inherent tension between, on the one hand, spontaneous expression and, on the other, structured formalism.

"...la pluralité des modèles de la fête et la tension entre deux pôles. D'une part, la spontanéité, l'indifférenciation, l'inarticulation; de l'autre, l'ordonnance rituelle, la répartition des rôles, la codification des symboles. A l'une et à l'autre extrémité, on sort de la fête, d'un côté dans l'émotion collective informelle, de l'autre dans le pur cérémonial. Entre les deux, la fête religieuse contemporaine négocie son équilibre dans un double mouvement d'intériorisation de la festivité et d'extériorisation de la célébration; mouvements non contradictoires en principe, mais pris en main par des tempéraments et des idéologies adverses."⁸⁴

This strain between two opposing tendencies is similar to the tension between popular religiosity and the more metaphysical or scholarly type of religious expression. Rituals maintain a delicate balancing act between their informal, unstructured elements, which are their original inspiration, and their natural aptitude to structure and codify themselves. This reflects a conflict between the two groups which find themselves present in the ritual of religious derivation -- the religious virtuosi or clerical power structure and the great mass of the people -- and

their corresponding ideological frameworks. Public feasts and celebrations, often originally inspired by popular religiosity, are a fertile terrain for manifestations of this tension. The conflict is generally abated, but never fully resolved. Hence the public feast is an exceptional occasion for the representation of the social and cultural dynamics of the society of which it is a component part.

All feasts are defined with reference to the element of time: "Toute théorie de la fête commence logiquement par définir celle-ci par rapport au temps."⁸⁵ Isambert goes on to quote Henri Hubert by way of explanation: "Une fête a une date et elle est une date. Une date de fête est un élément du temps qui se distingue des autres par des qualités particulières."⁸⁶ And Benoît Lacroix provides further insight into the relationship between time and its impact on the collective imagination:

"Ainsi perçu comme mesure de vie et de mouvement, le temps, quel qu'il soit, se prête à la fête dont il est tour à tour le point de repère irréversible et la limite inévitable. (...)

"Bien sûr, le temps ne crée pas la fête. Mais il la conditionne. Autant que l'espace. Il la provoque, en un sens. L'humanité éprouvera toujours le besoin de s'arrêter ou de précipiter le temps devant l'ennui et l'uniformité qui lui font peur. Au même moment, le temps des origines et le temps de la fin possible du monde la hantent jusqu'à l'angoisse: elle s'y réfère instinctivement, inévitablement aussi. Rupture parfois artificielle avec le temps habituel et le vécu quotidien, la fête lui rappellera des événements qu'elle célébrera à sa manière par des récits, par des rites, comme pour ne pas oublier que, malgré tout ce qui arrive, la vie continue son chemin. Chaque fête devient une mémoire qui se

souvient."⁸⁷

Time sets the parameters of the feast. It is at once its impetus, and that which conditions and constrains it. In discussing the concept of the feast, one must necessarily lead off with a basic observation about human individuals and their response to living in the social and natural worlds: that humankind has a propensity to celebrate, to mark, in some festive manner, those events and myths which have fashioned it and which continue to provide it with a sphere of meaning. The feast, as will all social actions, is meaningful, and it is so precisely because it is tied up with time and space, the two axes of human existence. Of celebration and time, American theologian Harvey Cox remarks:

"Celebration links us both to past and to future, but the emphasis varies depending on what we are celebrating. A saint's day in a Mexican village revives for a time the piety and exploits of the holy one. A wedding feast or a bar mitzvah expresses our hopes for the future. Celebration thus helps us affirm dimensions of time we might ordinarily fear, ignore, or deny."⁸⁸

The continuum of time is, of course, limiting. While human celebrations are historically bound, by virtue of necessity and because of their recollection of specific incidents and personages, they also transcend time and physical space. "Rompant avec le déroulement de l'action utile (dans le sens du Zweckrational wébérien)," Isambert notes, "la fête est une tranche de temps hors du temps."⁸⁹ The feast stands outside and beyond time; it is not

purposive, everyday behaviour, but rather ritual behaviour which points to the transcendence of historical reality and which conjures up eternal certainties.

We have circumscribed, thus far, some important elements for a sociological understanding of the feast. Taking our clue from Durkheim, we have indicated that "effervescent social environments" are synonymous with human festivity and celebration. The feast is a ritual, almost always collective in expression, which is meant to re-create euphoric states of mind in the participants, and which evokes a sense of something transcendent (often called "the sacred"). The feast is a representation, i.e., it mediates, via symbolic categories, that which it recalls. The feast, as with all rituals, wavers between spontaneity and ossification. This is reflective of the permanent tension between popular or mass movements and more elitist social norms and power structures. Thus the feast reproduces ideological struggles present in the society. "Society's forms are culture's substance,"⁹⁰ Clifford Geertz reminds us. The feast is a substantive cultural manifestation of society's socio-structural contradictions. Finally, the feast recalls time and transcends it. It is an extra-ordinary moment in that it flows from the present, revives the past and projects the future, while at the same time attempting to bring all three into clearer focus. Of particular significance is the fact that many feasts are tied to the calendar

of seasons, thereby demonstrating, once again, how the feast imitates life and derives meaning from its demarcations.⁹¹

An essential character of the feast is the fact that it is a festive occasion. It is an exuberant and effusive time when gratuitous fun and pleasure often abound. At a deeper level, however, this chaos and transgression of everyday reserve are themselves the signs of an attempt at recapturing a *primaeval* epoch and disorder, just as they are meant to reaffirm the bases of the social structure.

"...il y a quelque chose de plus dans l'exubérance de la fête. Elle est transgression des règles que le sacré impose à la vie quotidienne, mais transgression rituelle, ce qui est, après le respect, une seconde manière de reconnaître le sacré en tant que tel. Dans cette transgression, le mythe est joint au rite. Car le chaos de la fête est reconstitution symbolique du chaos primitif. Ce recours au temps originel donne à la fête toute sa puissance de renouvellement. Ainsi, plus profondément, elle est recours au sacré, comme source de toute vie, ce qui en fait, à proprement parler un temps sacré."⁹²

The return to the time of origins is a function of myth. The feast reaffirms, in a stylized manner, certain truths about existence which were precepts once upon a time, and which remain the standards for all subsequent actions. What the feast also does is allow human beings to transgress routine behaviour, the better to infuse subsequent daily life with order and meaning. As with the religious ritual, the feast is a powerful force for cohesion in a society.⁹³ It reminds men and women that there exists an eternal order in the world.

A feast remembers and recalls -- it commemorates -- a legend, a myth, an era or a hero. "...[C]'est le propre de la fête de faire vivre cette allégorie, de faire de l'imaginaire le cadre même de la réalité, d'incarner dans le rite le temps du mythe."⁹⁴ If the feast is a bridge between the temporal and the eternal, the symbol best able to serve as intermediary is the hero, a half-human, half-divine being.

"A vrai dire, le personnage qui convient le mieux à cette commémoration n'est pas le dieu mais le héros, produit en quelque sorte "du rituel mimétique de la fête". (...) si la fête joue un rôle intermédiaire entre le rite proprement religieux et la simple réjouissance profane, le héros, comme type intermédiaire, convient parfaitement à l'emploi de personnage célébré par la fête.

"Qu'est-ce en effect qu'un héros? Un demi-dieu, dit-on. Et, de fait, il s'agit d'un médiateur entre dieux et hommes."⁹⁵

In the Christian tradition, religious feasts commemorating events in the life of Christ, such as Christmas and Easter, are examples of this glorification of the hero and his ability to mediate between the two worlds. In Buddhism, feasts surrounding the Buddha offer similar characteristics, as is the case in Islam with events in the life of Muhammad. With reference to the Saint-Jean-Baptiste celebrations, the parallel is obvious, but with a significant difference. The Saint is himself an image of half-human and half-divine attributes. He existed in history, while partaking of the divine or saintly order. But in the Christian tradition and its scriptures, and in popular belief, saint Jean-Baptiste is himself the precursor of another hero, this latter one

being the fullness of the human and the divine. Thus la Fête de la Saint-Jean is characterized by a double mediation: the Saint as hero points to the completion of the sacred-profane link in the person of the heroic Christ.

The feast is a memorial. It is also, to a certain extent, a projection -- the reflection of those who celebrate.

"En célébrant un objet, le groupe en arrive à se célébrer lui-même. Le cas le plus clair est ici celui des fêtes patronales: la fête du saint patron est dite en même temps fête de celui dont il est le patron, qu'il soit individu, ville ou corporation."⁹⁶

This identification with the object being celebrated is not absolute, but rather selective: "Si tout groupe se célèbre jusqu'à un certain point lui-même dans ses célébrations, il choisit parmi les thèmes dont il est porteur et qui peuvent désigner des éléments extérieurs à lui, avec lesquels il est en relation."⁹⁷

La Fête de la Saint-Jean in Québec illustrates well this process of symbolic symbiosis. Saint-Jean-Baptiste is the patron saint of French Canada, and is therefore representative of the ethnic and national identity of those who call themselves French Canadians. The religious feast of his birth, June 24th, is a celebration of this identity. What is being celebrated is not solely a Catholic liturgical feast-day, but also, and even more importantly, a host of historical events and themes which have forged and conditioned the French Canadian people. Whether they be religious, cultural

or political, the themes which la Fête de la Saint-Jean brings to the fore and which it expresses are an effort at collective self-affirmation.

If the feast is a manifestation of social forces at different historical periods, it is itself subject to change. What becomes of a feast at a time when a religious world-view is no longer credible, and when the impact of rapid secularization evacuates any notion of the sacred from the world? "Comment évaluer une réflexion," Lacroix asks, "dans un contexte social qui tend à humaniser l'avenir de la fête populaire?"⁹⁸

One can only touch upon a possible answer, considering that we are still undergoing such a process of change. The primary role of the feast in its evocative, mediatory and festive functions persists. Human beings have always celebrated the passages and moments which mark their lives; they still do, and they undoubtedly always will. There was a time when a direct reference to the sacred or the religious helped make sense of change. The reference has perhaps become more oblique, but it is not totally absent. We now celebrate -- "sacralize," to put it more appropriately -- equally significant elements of our lives: the family at Christmas, the possibility of re-birth and transformation at Easter, the nation or the people on the occasion of national holidays. Our lives remain marked by their seasonal quality, and our celebrations still reflect this. What secularization

does is alter the focus of the feast; it does not negate its intrinsic nature or value. "...[N]otre besoin de merveilleux,"⁹⁹ in Lacroix's words, endures because it is so necessary. Just as la Fête de la Saint-Jean was once the expression of the religious character of French Canada, so now it has become the occasion for exalting another sacred symbol, that of "le peuple québécois."

When looked at in terms of its essence, the feast is a mixture of opposing tendencies; yet it is itself their resolution. The feast is both profane and sacred. Firmly rooted in human need and uncertainty, it points to a transcendence and an eternal certainty inherent to the world. It is at once festive and ritualistic, and spontaneous and structured. As with myth and symbol, the feast becomes that which it represents. What is being recalled in the feast is not actually happening, but it is still present in the here-and-now. The feast is both paradigmatic, and occurring in time and space. The feast is a collective phenomenon, but remains intensely psychological in producing euphoric states of mind in the participants. Time circumscribes the feast, yet the feast goes beyond time in recalling its origins. The feast is disorderly and chaotic, but it reasserts the cohesion of the group. The feast commemorates and celebrates a half-human, half-divine being who mediates between the two worlds of temporality and eternity. Even in more secular periods, the feast still partakes of the

sacrea:

"Le caractère essentiellement mixte de la fête,
signalé par Durkheim, se fonde, nous l'avons vu,
sur l'ambiguïté même des conduites et objets
symboliques, à la fois présents dans leur matérialité et signifiant quelque chose d'absent, de
passé, d'immatériel."¹⁰⁰

From a sociological perspective, the nature of the feast as a junction in society is of the greatest importance. We are in the presence of one of the more significant times in the life of a culture and a society, and this provides a valuable opportunity for analysis and understanding. The public feast is pre-eminently and wholly social. It expresses all that a society and its individual members want to believe about themselves, and that which they want to become. More often than not, what are reflected in the public feast are the contradictions and polarities which make the society what it is.

A purely structural-functionalist overview of the feast, while valuable and necessary, fails to take full account of its durability and its influence on the members of a society. We have already noted humankind's propensity to celebrate. This does not imply, as Durkheim's notion of social effervescence seems to suggest, that these times of celebration and festivity are basically another example of the omnipresence of society. There is no doubt that the feast is socially conditioned, but it also is and does more than that. If there are indeed times which can be called "socially significant," then the public feast is an example

par excellence. A feast is always loaded with meaning, at times concealed, at other moments not. In keeping with a sense of the feast as a mixed social metaphor, we argue that this meaning can be found in the meeting of opposing social and cultural tendencies.

E. Summary: The Polarities

This thesis argues the la Fête de la Saint-Jean represents a popular dimension of Québec Catholic religiosity, and that it served to maintain a certain equilibrium, albeit fragile and often passing, between the social and the religious in Québec society. The celebrations, because they were the high point of the national life, offer a privileged opportunity for understanding Québec -- its social, cultural, political and religious fabric -- in all its historical complexity. La Fête was a crossroads where the diffuse elements of the society met and were expressed, and where they meshed into an organic whole. The festivities were a meeting-place for the polarities intrinsic to Québec society.

The preceding theoretical exposition helped in identifying a number of sets of polarities. Three of them will retain our attention: nationalistic ideologies vs.

religious ideologies; the elite vs. the masses, or the bourgeoisie vs. the people; and popular religiosity vs. scholarly or metaphysical religiosity, or clerical authority vs. lay or secular interests. This list is not exhaustive, but one could argue that it contains the more significant elements. These three sets of polarities, themselves at odds in Québec society, found a certain modus vivendi in the Saint-Jean-Baptiste celebrations, for it is of the nature of a feast to synthesize and transform that which is typically disparate. A feast allows a society to resolve and go beyond its in-built contradictions, and thereby ensure its own continuity and credibility.

Nationalism and religion, it was noted, share some similar structural characteristics, while at the same time often standing in opposition in terms of the particular world-view and interests which each defends. As ideological systems, they perform analogous roles, though their claims to legitimacy are inspired by different understandings of social reality. In Québec, nationalistic ideologies and religious ideologies have not always been supportive of each other. As a matter of fact, they have more often than not viewed each other in adversarial terms. In the Saint-Jean-Baptiste celebrations, these ideologies intersected. Amazingly enough, the celebrations also provided that rare moment when nationalism and religion were fused together. This results, in part, from the double nature of la Fête

itself as being religious in origin and nationalistic in impulse. At a deeper level, however, this revealed something important about the dual identity of Québec society.

The celebrations were also marked by a pull between their own popular character and their more elitist ideological inspiration. It was a certain element of the French Canadian bourgeoisie which institutionalized the festivities in 1834, just as it was another elite, that of the Catholic Church, which ensured their religious justification and subsequent survival. The great mass of the people had always celebrated la Saint-Jean in their own way since time immemorial, and infused it with their own meanings consistent with the texture of their lives. Much of this stemmed from popular religiosity. The Catholic Church had been supportive of such popular manifestations, while also channelling their inherent energies and warning against excess. When nationalism was grafted onto the celebrations, competing interests, which had been more latent than evident, were placed in opposition. The festivities were organized by the elite -- the bourgeoisie and the ecclesiastical leadership -- and therefore reflected the concerns of this elite, even while the people continued to participate massively in the various events. Antipodal themes and diverse classes once again met and were transformed.

In Québec, an historical break between the old and the new took place with the Quiet Revolution of the 1960s, a

time marked by the rapid secularization of the society. This watershed in Québec history had a profound and lasting impact on the Saint-Jean-Baptiste festivities. Their transformation paralleled that of the whole of Québec society. The concluding chapter of the thesis analyzes the celebrations in terms of the sets of polarities mentioned above, and with reference to the three historical periods which typify la Fête. The celebrations themselves are viewed as social representations. In other words, they are the reflection of how a society chooses to interpret itself, both to others and to its own members.

ENDNOTES

¹Louis Balthazar, Bilan du nationalisme au Québec (Montréal: Editions de l'Hexagone, 1986), p. 16.

²Fernand Dumont makes an interesting and perceptive remark about the origins of nationalism: "On s'accorde à reconnaître que la conscience nationale remonte, pour certaines collectivités, à l'orée des temps modernes. Au début du XIXe siècle, on voit mieux la nécessité de la fonder; la nationalité émerge de la nation. Buchez marque l'importance de cette transition quand, se reportant à l'une de ses publications de 1834, il écrit en 1866: "Quand je prononçai pour la première fois le mot de nationalité, je lui donnai une signification nouvelle... Par nationalité, je veux dire non seulement la nation mais encore quelque chose de plus, ce en vertu de quoi une nation subsiste même lorsqu'elle a perdu son autonomie". Fernand Dumont, Les idéologies (France: Presses universitaires de France, 1974), p. 93.

³Louis Balthazar, op. cit., p. 19.

⁴Ibid., p. 20.

⁵Nationalism is often perceived as a conservative or reactionary force in history, especially from the vantage point of the 20th century, a time when national borders and aspirations appear almost unnecessary. In the words of P.E. Trudeau: "Il se peut que le nationalisme ait encore un rôle à jouer dans des sociétés arriérées...Mais dans les sociétés avancées...le nationalisme devra disparaître comme un outil rustique et grossier," (Quoted in Roger Lapointe, "Chassez le national et il revient au galop," Sciences religieuses/Studies in Religion, II, 3, 1972, p. 225). Such an absolute condemnation fails to take into account the fact that nationalism, when associated with liberal and democratic forces, can act as a strong catalyst for positive change in history.

⁶See Louis Balthazar, op. cit., pp. 20-25, for a more detailed discussion of these concepts.

⁷Ibid., p. 22.

⁸Ibid., pp. 22-23. Emphases mine.

⁹Such a statement needs to be qualified. Nationalistic movements, and even revolutions, have been inspired by religious considerations. See Guenter Lewy, Religion and Revolution (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974). In other words, social change can be motivated and guided by religious factors. But nationalism, because it often displaces religion as a source of meaning and power in a society, is notably secular in character.

¹⁰Louis Balthazar, op. cit., p. 24.

¹¹Mircea Eliade, Myth and Reality (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1963), p. 2.

¹²Ibid., p. 19.

¹³Fernand Dumont, op. cit., p. 94.

¹⁴Louis Racine, "Religion et nationalisme," in Critère (Montréal: Société de publication Critère inc., autumn 1981, number 32), p. 167. For a discussion of the historical interaction between religion and nationalism, see Conor Cruise O'Brien, God Land: Reflections on Religion and Nationalism (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1988). See also Jacques Grand'Maison, Nationalisme et religion, Two Volumes (Montréal: Librairie Beauchemin, 1970) for some reflections in the Québec context.

¹⁵Most Western theologies, of course, do emphasize the importance of human activity in the sacred or divine plan. My statement is meant to refer to religion as a sociological phenomenon, and to the manner in which it ensures its own legitimacy and survival in the social world.

¹⁶Emile Durkheim, The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life (New York: The Free Press, 1915), p. 62.

¹⁷There is another school of thought which might argue that civil religion, of which nationalism can be a particular manifestation, is also cloaked in the language of the sacred. See Robert Bellah, Beyond Belief (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1970).

¹⁸Roger Lapointe, "Chassez le national...", p. 214.

¹⁹As quoted in ibid., p. 215.

²⁰Ernst Troeltsch, The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1976), Volume I, Midway reprint, p. 331.

²¹Louis Racine, op. cit., p. 168.

²²Ramsay Cook, ed., French-Canadian Nationalism: An Anthology (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1969), pp. 154-155.

²³Louis Balthazar, op. cit., pp. 34-35.

²⁴For a detailed discussion of these four models, see ibid., pp. 25-35.

²⁵The autonomiste model suffers from a certain lack of precision and clarity in Balthazar's study. In part, this may stem from the fact that nationalism in Québec, at the present time, remains somewhat fluid. Historical objectivity is not always possible under these conditions.

²⁶I refer the reader to the first chapter of this thesis, "Church and Society in Québec," for a further discussion of the Catholic Church's reactions to types of nationalism in Québec.

²⁷Hannah Arendt, The Origins of Totalitarianism (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1973), p. 229.

²⁸Ibid., pp. 233-234. Arendt offers the following definition of pan-movements: "Tribal nationalism, spreading through all oppressed nationalities in Eastern and Southern Europe, developed into a new form of organization, the pan-movements, among those peoples who combined some kind of national home country, Germany and Russia, with a large, dispersed irredenta, Germans and Slavs abroad. In contrast to overseas imperialism, which was content with relative superiority, a national mission, or a white man's burden, the pan-movements started with absolute claims to chosenness.", pp. 232-233.

²⁹Michel Despland, "Religion and the Quest for National Identity: Problems and Perspectives," in Religion and Culture in Canada/Religion et culture au Canada (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1977), Peter Slater, ed., p. 530.

³⁰Peter L. Berger, The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, 1967), p. 107.

³¹Karl Marx, On Religion (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1974), Saul K. Padover, ed., p. 36.

³²Fernand Dumont, op. cit., p. 20. It should be noted also that many Marxist thinkers downplay the functional nature of ideologies by emphasizing primarily their role as expressions of class interests: "Dans l'école marxiste, il y a quelques flottements de la pensée autour de l'efficacité qu'il convient d'accorder aux idéologies. La critique marxiste de l'idéologie, spécialement religieuse, semble parfois dépasser le but, quand elle subordonne si totalement cette superstructure à ses fondements économiques, qu'elle tend à la priver de toute causalité propre. Une critique aussi radicale de l'idéologie s'annule en quelque sorte elle-même, puisque finalement elle ne porte plus sur rien, l'idéologie étant dépouillée de toute force et de toute efficacité indépendantes." Roger Lapointe, "L'ultramontanisme au Québec -- ou quand la doctrine se trouve décalée au rang d'une idéologie," Sciences religieuses/Studies in Religion, 8/4, 1979, p. 426.

³³Roger Lapointe, ibid., p. 425.

³⁴The most influential works are the six-volume collection entitled Idéologies au Canada français, edited by Fernand Dumont, Jean Hamelin, Fernand Harvey (1974) and Jean-Paul Montminy (Québec: Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 1971, 1974, 1978 and 1981) and Le développement des idéologies au Québec des origines à nos jours by Denis Monière (Montréal: Editions Québec/Amérique, 1977).

³⁵Denis Monière, op. cit., p. 13.

³⁶Ibid., p. 15.

³⁷Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, The German Ideology (New York: International Publishers, 1970), C.J. Arthur, ed., p. 47.

³⁸Friedrich Engels, Marx and Engels on Religion (New York: Schocken Books, 1964), pp. 274-275.

³⁹Ibid., p. 275.

⁴⁰Max Weber, The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1958), p. 183.

⁴¹For a discussion of the colonial framework as applied to Québec, see Denis Monière, op. cit., pp. 20-33.

⁴²Québec's colonial or oppressed condition is a central theme in much of the indépendantiste and staunch nationalistic literature. See, among others, Pierre Vallières, White Niggers of America (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1971).

⁴³Albert Memmi, Portrait du colonisé (France: Gallimard, 1985), pp. 108-109.

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 123.

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 162.

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 148.

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 148.

⁴⁸For a thematic review of the different interpretations of secularization, see Peter L. Berger, op. cit., pp. 105-107, and Hans Mol, Identity and the Sacred (Agincourt: The Book Society of Canada Limited, 1976), pp. 22-24.

⁴⁹See Max Weber, The Protestant Ethic..., and "Bureaucracy" in H.H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills, eds., From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology (New York: Oxford University Press, 1946), pp. 196-244.

⁵⁰Peter L. Berger, op. cit., pp. 107-108.

⁵¹Danièle Hervieu-Léger, Vers un nouveau christianisme?: Introduction à la sociologie du christianisme occidental (Paris: Les Editions du Cerf, 1986), p. 227.

⁵²Jean Hamelin and Nicole Gagnon, Histoire du catholicisme québécois, Le XXe siècle, Tome 1, 1898-1940 (Montréal: Boréal Express, 1984), pp. 359-360.

⁵³Peter L. Berger, op. cit., p. 127.

⁵⁴Hans Mol, op. cit., p. 5.

⁵⁵Max Weber, The Sociology of Religion (Boston: Beacon Press, 1963), p. 1.

⁵⁶Comité organisateur de la fête nationale du Québec, Recueil de chroniques portant sur les origines et la tradition de la St-Jean au Québec (Montréal: Comité organisateur, 1979), Communiqué-Chronique #8, p. 3.

⁵⁷For an interesting review of the theoretical development and understanding of popular religion, see Roger Lapointe, Socio-anthropologie du religieux: La religion populaire au péril de la modernité (Genève: Librairie Droz S.A., 1988), Chapter I. It is important to note that the interest in popular religion as a field of study originated in France.

⁵⁸Ibid., p. 87.

⁵⁹François-André Isambert, Le sens du sacré: Fête et religion populaire (Paris: Les éditions de minuit, 1982), p. 113.

⁶⁰Ibid., p. 113.

⁶¹See Max Weber, The Sociology of Religion, Ch. VIII.

⁶²François-André Isambert, op. cit., p. 36.

⁶³Roger Lapointe, Socio-anthropologie..., p. 49.

⁶⁴Ibid., p. 61.

⁶⁵See Max Weber, The Sociology of Religion, Ch. X.

⁶⁶Benoît Lacroix, La religion de mon père (Montréal: Les éditions Bellarmin, 1986), p. 239.

⁶⁷See François-André Isambert, op. cit., pp. 120-122.

⁶⁸Roger Lapointe, Socio-anthropologie..., p. 66.

⁶⁹Hélène Pelletier-Baillargeon, "La religion populaire: opium du peuple ou facteur de civilisation?", in Critère, op. cit., p. 118.

⁷⁰Roger Lapointe, Socio-anthropologie..., p. 44. The author goes on to discuss popular religion as it relates to an oral vs. a written cultural tradition.

⁷¹See ibid., pp. 40-41.

⁷²Jean-Charles Falardeau, "Religion populaire et classes sociales," in Religion populaire, religion de clercs? (Québec: Institut québécois de recherche sur la culture, 1984), Benoît Lacroix and Jean Simard, eds., p. 286.

⁷³Jean-Paul Montminy, "Religion populaire, religion vécue," in ibid., p. 309. See also Roger Lapointe, Socio-anthropologie..., pp. 33-37.

⁷⁴See Roger Lapointe, ibid., pp. 35-36.

⁷⁵Jean-Paul Montminy, op. cit., pp. 307-308.

⁷⁶It is important to bear in mind that certain pilgrimage sites are sanctioned by the clergy while others are only tolerated, without receiving official recognition. See François-André Isambert, op. cit., pp. 58-62.

⁷⁷Roger Lapointe, Socio-anthropologie..., pp. 42-43.

⁷⁸François-André Isambert, op. cit., p. 84. Roger Lapointe argues that the feast and Messianism are aspects of popular religiosity. See ibid., pp. 145-152.

⁷⁹François-André Isambert, op. cit., p. 15.

⁸⁰Emile Durkheim, op. cit., pp. 250-251.

⁸¹François-André Isambert, op. cit., p. 128.

⁸²Ibid., p. 13.

⁸³See François-André Isambert, op. cit., Second section, Ch. 2, and Third section.

⁸⁴François-André Isambert, op. cit., pp. 146-147.

⁸⁵Ibid., p. 148.

⁸⁶As quoted in ibid., p. 149.

⁸⁷Benoît Lacroix, op. cit., p. 142.

⁸⁸Harvey Cox, The Feast of Fools (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1969), p. 24.

⁸⁹François-André Isambert, op. cit., p. 161.

⁹⁰Clifford Geertz, The Interpretation of Cultures (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1973), p. 28.

⁹¹For an elaboration of the seasonal feast, see Chapter II, "The Saint-Jean-Baptiste Celebrations," Section A.

⁹²François-André Isambert, op. cit., p. 127.

⁹³See Benoît Lacroix, op. cit., p. 108.

⁹⁴François-André Isambert, op. cit., p. 153.

⁹⁵Ibid., p. 154.

⁹⁶Ibid., p. 163. Emphases mine.

⁹⁷Ibid., p. 163.

⁹⁸Benoît Lacroix, op. cit., p. 104.

⁹⁹Ibid., p. 111.

¹⁰⁰François-André Isambert, op. cit., p. 160.
Emphases mine.

CHAPTER V

THE CELEBRATIONS AND THEIR POLARITIES

The celebrations of la Fête de la Saint-Jean-Baptiste can be divided into three general historical segments: the early period of the Patriotes, from 1834 to 1837; the very long span of clerical domination, from 1843 to 1959; and the era of secularization and transformation, from 1960 to the present.

At the end of the previous chapter, three major sets of polarities which find expression in the celebrations were identified. These are: the interplay between nationalistic ideologies and religious ideologies; the relationship of the elite to the masses; and the tension between popular religiosity and scholarly or clerical religiosity and authority. La Saint-Jean-Baptiste (as is typical of any feast, in fact) provides a unique sociological opportunity for the study and analysis of many of the more obvious, and sometimes not-so-obvious tensions found in Québec society. This is because a feast, as the Durkheimian tradition reminds us, is essentially a society reflecting itself back unto itself. In this reflection are found the bases of its legitimacy and power over individuals.

The present chapter, which is also the concluding one of the thesis and, in many respects, its crux, seeks to

elaborate further on the sets of polarities identified above, using the three historical periods, also mentioned earlier, as parameters. It is introduced by a terse discussion of ritual forms, the purpose of which is to underscore the vital necessity of a sociological reading of collective ritual manifestations. It may also provide further theoretical insight into the specific topic under discussion.

A. Ritual Forms: Sociological Perspectives

In an article entitled "The Nature and Function of Ritual Forms: A Sociological Discussion,"¹ Frederick Bird analyzes various types and functions of ritual forms, as well as their patterns of manifestation within contemporary North America. This article is especially useful because of its good synthetic overview of the basic sociological understanding of ritual, and of the typology which the author proposes. "Rituals," according to Bird, "are cultural phenomena. As symbolic codes, they regulate human interactions in a wide variety of contexts from religion and etiquette to types of therapies, ceremonies, and intimate exchanges."² From a phenomenological viewpoint, "...rituals may be defined as culturally transmitted symbolic codes

which are stylized, regularly repeated, dramatically structured, authoritatively designated, and intrinsically valued."³ Bird then argues that what differentiates religious rituals from other rituals is that "...they are considered to be a means by which persons establish and maintain their relation to what they consider to be sacred."⁴ The author acknowledges, however, that "...the distinction between religious and non-religious rituals is fluid. Many seemingly secular rites may exhibit religious aspects precisely because they serve as means of re-enacting the relation between persons and some public purposes or personal identities which are held to be sacred."⁵

In terms of their functional roles, Bird identifies four specific aspects of ritual codes.

"Functionally analyzed, ritual codes typically have been utilized to facilitate the following kinds of activities: they regulate human interactions particularly in marginal settings; they serve as means for making transformations in personal and social status and identity; they facilitate the communication of intense and power sentiments; and they activate and bring into play otherwise dormant human energies. (...) the phenomenological characteristics of ritual codes - - their stylized, symbolic, repetitive, and authoritative features -- render them particularly suited for these functions."⁶

Seasonal rites, as with most rites of passage, are associated with the second function, i.e., they mark changes in status or identity. The author remarks that ritual forms "...may foster and re-invigorate attachments to social groupings such as occurs through seasonal rites; and they

may serve as means for augmenting the sense of communal power and status such as happens in public ceremonies."⁷

The fourth aspect of ritual codes, i.e., the activation of dormant human energies, is what Durkheim touched upon in his discussion of "collective effervescence."

"Durkheim argued that collective effervescence often occurred when persons came together in a ritual setting and found in their group existence a contagious attraction and excitement absent when they were isolated from each other. Group rituals bring into life these otherwise dormant interpersonal forces, both because they allow persons to act in concert with each other and their group ideals and because they evoke and channel interpersonal affections."⁸

Echoing Claude Lévi-Strauss, Bird points out that "...the structured, repeated drama of the ritual provides a form by means of which persons can acknowledge emotions without suppressing contradictory feelings which might otherwise render individuals ambivalent and anxious and apathetic."⁹ As was discussed previously, the sociological concept of the feast has its basis in the Durkheimian understanding of this "collective effervescence."

It is important to re-emphasize the stylistic, symbolic and dramatic character of ritual codes. In his article, Bird acknowledges the work done by social anthropologist Edmund R. Leach on this question.¹⁰ Leach states: "In ritual, the verbal part and the behavioural part are not separable," and that "As compared with written or writable speech, the "language" of ritual is enormously condensed...."¹¹ In relation to festivals and the concept of time, he remarks,

in another context:

"...let me emphasize that, among the various functions which the holding of festivals may fulfil, one very important function is the ordering of time. The interval between two successive festivals of the same type is a "period," usually a named period, e.g. "week," "year." Without the festivals, such periods would not exist, and all order would go out of social life. We talk of measuring time, as if time were a concrete thing waiting to be measured; but in fact we create time by creating intervals in social life. Until we have done this there is no time to be measured."¹²

These elements may be considered when examining the Saint-Jean-Baptiste festivities in Québec.

The celebrations surrounding la Saint-Jean were very special times in the life of the French Canadian collectivity. Many important aspects of the daily lives of people were expressed symbolically in the feast and in the attendant merrymaking and rituals: the family and the importance of children, by the association with summer vacation and the representation of the Baptist as a young child; the land, through the changes in the farming cycle which the date of June 24th marked; the parish and religion, by the fact that the feast was so permeated with a multitude of religious overtones, including the core figure of saint Jean-Baptiste, and that the parish was initially the centre of most festivities; and ethnic pride, so obviously depicted in the processions and parades and in the nationalistic rhetoric and symbolism circumscribing the Feast.

Several cardinal themes and messages were therefore

condensed in la Fête de la Saint-Jean-Baptiste: messages about the various foci of identity for French Canadians. In the banquets and processions, the masses and the parades, the bonfires and the legends, these foci were reflected and explained in compact, dramatic terms. What was said, sung or visualized during the festivities was always done so in terms of the behavioural traits, either actual or desired, of French Canadians as a whole. In more recent times, the medium may have changed, but the message fundamentally has not. Today's Fête, as amorphous and highly individualistic as it might appear, still manages to pull together and to express some significant facts about the national heritage and identity, such as the dilemma of language and the challenge of demographic change. The fact that la Fête recurred on an annual basis, and was so closely tied to a change in seasons, gave a consistent order and meaning to the national community and to every individual claiming membership within it.

In his analysis, Bird remarks that public ceremonies can sometimes be ways of increasing "the sense of communal power and status."¹³ Such ceremonies, because they tend to be associated with glorious times in the life of the collectivity and are often occasions for marking or commemorating special historical events (which may, in fact, be mythical), are also ideal channels for the propagation of ideological messages and the reaffirmation of social and

ethnic bonds. Religious rituals can, of course, perform analogous functions, and Bird reminds us of the fluctuations between them and non-religious or secular rituals.¹⁴ He points out that certain elements of secular rituals may appear religious because they reinforce in individuals the sense of a sacred purpose or identity, and bind them to it. Sociologist of religion Hans Mol expresses a similar view:

"Rites articulate and reiterate a system of meaning, and prevent it being lost from sight. They act out and sacralize sameness. They restore, reinforce, or redirect identity. They maximize order by strengthening the place of the individual in the group, or society, and vice versa by strengthening the bonds of a society vis-à-vis the individual. They unify, integrate, and sacralize."¹⁵

Mol argues that both religious and non-religious rituals are essentially engaged in similar processes of social cohesion and solidarity.

It is certainly true to say the Saint-Jean-Baptiste celebrations, as public ceremonies, augmented "the sense of collective power" of French Canadians, as they undoubtedly still do today for the people of Québec, though perhaps in a more diffuse manner. This "collective power" was a function of the reassertion of the primacy of social or ethnic identity over personal or individual purpose. (Though Durkheim's concept of "collective effervescence" is most directly applicable in so-called primitive societies, the question can be asked whether it shares some of the qualities of this notion of "collective power"). It was also

in this sense that the festivities could be said to display the characteristics of religious rituals. The fact that there were so many religious dimensions, and particularly so much Catholic symbolism, attached to the celebrations only served to make their "sacredness" that much stronger and more all-encompassing.

B. The Patriotes: 1834 to 1837

The four-year period from 1834 to 1837 is perhaps best characterized by a certain amount of ambiguity in the interplay between the religious and the secular around the annual banquet and related events of la Saint-Jean. Duvernay and his cohorts were not really irreligious individuals; as full members of their society, they remained influenced by, and very much indebted to, the Catholic paradigm then dominant in Lower Canada. There was, of course, an alternate paradigm being proposed at that time: that of the ideology of liberalism, as expressed and propagated by the Patriotes and their sympathizers. But there remained a delicate tension between these two views of the world, which was reflected, though perhaps not always directly, in the annual festivities of June 24th.

Prior to 1834, la Saint-Jean-Baptiste was not connected

with any form of nationalistic fervour or sentiment. The feast, and what little there may have been in the way of festivities, remained essentially religious or traditional in nature: the association with the sun or with the changing seasons and the farming cycle; the various beliefs, legends and customs linked to such themes as the curative powers of herbs or water; and so forth. In fact, the feast was most readily identified as a form of popular religiosity. Though the clerical class had originally "recuperated" non-Christian celebrations of the summer solstice by institutionalizing the feast of Saint John the Baptist at about the same calendar date, elements of pre-Christian times persisted.

The essence of any feast -- its carnivalesque, orgiastic character and its role as symbolic reversal -- must not be confused with the process of embourgeoisement which it almost invariably undergoes. It is of the nature of a feast to seek to transcend structure, the better to reaffirm it subsequently, and certainly most collective celebratory rituals would have been marked, in their origins, by revelry and disorderly, indiscriminate behaviour. Over time, and basically through an appeal for the preservation of a supposed higher morality, religious authorities sought either to eliminate a particular feast, or transform it into a Christian one. Increasingly, the feast would have lost the sharp contours which made it

something unique and out of the ordinary, as well as the ability it had to be an occasion for calling into question fundamental social relations. The feast was now used to reflect the interests of a particular social class: that class which sought to make its values and standards the social norm. The feast became orderly, restrained, symbolically neutered and restricted in time. Active participation was no longer necessary; it was sufficient to remain a passive observer.

In controlling the feast, and thereby using it to their advantage, the bourgeoisie were further able to transform the perception of the feast so that this same perception was accepted as constituting the very essence of what was being celebrated. As an example, this happened repeatedly in the case of the celebrations of la Saint-Jean-Baptiste, whether it was the Patriotes, the Catholic hierarchy or the nationalists of the 1960s and 1970s who were imposing their beliefs and vision. Feasts connected with national events or communities, and which are almost always the national holiday, are easily subjected to this type of metamorphosis. Associations with the sun or with other such natural forces, or the meaning of a feast as a time for the expression of forbidden and repressed individual or social impulses, give way to the uniformity and pallor of the bourgeois feast. Whether or not it is possible, in the contemporary world, for the feast to regain its original purpose remains most

uncertain.

During the New France period and the years following the Conquest, it was the clergy who dominated the formal ceremonies marking la Saint-Jean. Together with the representatives of the civil authority (such as the Governor or the local seigneur), they would preside over the lighting of the bonfire, which was the single most important event of the festivities. Clerical authority consequently legitimated and defined the parameters of the feast. From historical evidence,¹⁶ however, it is most likely that the people themselves would celebrate June 24th in their own boisterous, unstructured manner, through dancing, drinking and other activities frowned upon by the Church. There are enough examples of the clergy condemning the habitants for their carefree ways, particularly during the large number of feast-days which dotted colonial life, to sustain such an assumption.

From its origins, therefore, la Fête de la Saint-Jean contained an inherent tension between its popular, religious origins and the attempts by the elite, clerical and lay alike, to control its meaning. Earliest celebrations of the summer solstice more closely resembled the fertility rites common to most European traditions. Christianity transformed these rites by linking them to the June 24th feast-day of Saint John the Baptist, thereby giving a Christian sense to the important fertility and purificatory symbols of fire and

water. As a popular tradition found in certain regions of France, la Saint-Jean was brought to New France by the early settlers. In the New World, it lost a great deal of its non-Christian or "primitive" flavour, basically owing to the difficult frontier character of life in North America and to the fact that the Church and the colonial authorities formed a cohesive ideological block on matters of faith. The polarities expressed in la Saint-Jean prior to 1834 were those between the elite and the masses, and between popular religiosity and clerical authority. The elite -- church and state together -- sanctioned the festivities as religious, while the people still persisted in associating the Feast with the solstice and their own needs as farmers. Clerical authority also prevented the original non-Christian (yet religious) aspects of the festivities from being expressed. Could the fact that there never arose a popular cult of saint Jean-Baptiste be the manifestation of a genuine rejection, by the masses, of this clerical authority? It seems quite likely, especially if one considers that another patron saint, Saint Joseph, enjoyed an ever-growing popularity.¹⁷

When Ludger Duvernay held the first banquet in 1834, the true institutionalization of la Saint-Jean-Baptiste was begun. Duvernay organized this gathering for one very specific purpose: to support the cause of the reformers in the Lower Canadian Assembly. His intent was not primarily

that this should be a social occasion, nor a religious one. This was to be a political event. The choice of the Baptist as patron saint, and of his feast-day as the national holiday, gave rise to various types of justification: June 24th had been celebrated since the very beginnings of the French colony; Jean-Baptiste was a very common name among the inhabitants of French Canada; the messianic calling of saint Jean-Baptiste was similar to that of French Canadians in North America; other ethnic groups had a saint as their national symbol. These were among the more popular reasons given. The first banquet of 1834 had more in common with the New France period than it did with the growing clericalism of French Canadian society. It was primarily a festive occasion.

"La manifestation du 24 juin 1834 (...) s'inscrit encore dans l'esprit qui a marqué les fêtes de la Saint-Jean-Baptiste du Régime français. Fête laïque plus que religieuse où fusent les rires, où le bon vin accompagne la bonne chère. Ce n'est donc pas un hasard si le 24 juin 1834 est commémoré par un banquet. Dans ces temps troubles où les esprits des Patriotes sont chauffés à blanc par les 92 Résolutions, la Saint-Jean-Baptiste est pour les réformistes l'occasion rêvée d'affirmer et de consolider leur solidarité lors d'une fête conviviale. Rien d'officiel, tout est laissé à la spontanéité, jusqu'à la convocation qui se fait de vive voix."¹⁸

The real motive for the choice, however, had more to do with the conjuncture of the times. It was necessary to bring nationalism and religion together. More precisely, a religious vindication of nationalism was required. The 1830s in Lower Canada, especially because of the recurring

conflicts in the Assembly, were a period rife with nationalistic sentiment. This nationalism was identified with a brand of liberalism particularly offensive to the Catholic hierarchy. The need to somehow make the new nationalism more palatable to what was then still a predominately believing and practising Catholic society was quite evident. The choice of a major Catholic saint as national patron and archetype would, it may have been hoped, lend credibility to the nationalistic movement. Duvernay may have realized that, fundamentally, only a religious symbol would be acceptable. The result was that the ambiguity between the religious and the secular was accentuated. Religious symbolism was used to justify and support a political struggle which the Catholic Church itself could not endorse.

Nationalistic ideologies and religious ideologies coexisted side-by-side during the four official banquets held in the course of these years, but always there remained an undercurrent of tension between the two. The Patriotes were not the most avid supporters of clerical power, and this was made quite clear when, during the original banquet of 1834, two toasts out of twenty-five were proposed in honour of the clergy, but only for those who supported the cause of the reformers. On the other hand, however, there seems to have been a concerted effort made to respect religious norms and practices, and integrate them into the

June 24th festivities. Already in 1836, the patriotic banquet is preceded by a high mass, while the banquet of 1837 was postponed because June 24th of that year fell on a Saturday, a day of fasting and abstinence.¹⁹ It remains somewhat surprising to note that Duvernay and his companions, as sympathetic as they were towards Fapineau's republicanism and his calls for a greater separation between church and state, should also consciously try to synthesize Catholic practice with the secular nationalistic rhetoric surrounding the banquets.

The context and manner in which the figure of saint Jean-Baptiste was referred to as a nationalistic symbol during the banquets are particularly interesting. In 1835, the following stanza from a song was sung:

"Paix! Liberté! voilà notre devise
Garde, Saint-Jean (sic), notre naissant chaînon;
Si la discorde jamais nous divise,
Pour s'allier on choisira ton nom.
Mais chers amis hâtons-nous de redire
Ce beau refrain (sic) qui doit être adopté:
Pour son pays, un Canadien désire
La Paix! la liberté! -- bis."²⁰

And in 1836, Duvernay himself sang a song of his own composition:

"Accourez au banquet civique
On dîne en famille aujourd'hui;
Calmons notre ardeur politique
Chassons les soucis et l'ennui
Que chacun en ce jour de fête
Célèbre Jean, l'ami d'un Dieu.
Avant de conquérir sa tête
Prions Hérode encore un peu.

"Citoyens! nous sommes tous frères,
En vain, on veut nous désunir

Inscrivons donc sur nos bannières,
 Le motto de notre avenir:
 La force naît de la concorde!
 Autour de l'érable sacré
 Creusons avant qu'il ne déborde
 Le fleuve de la liberté...

"Méprisons les vaines menaces
 Nous sommes tous fils de héros;
 Forts de nos droits, suivons leurs traces,
 Gardons la clé de leurs tombeaux
 Et si les ligues étrangères
 Jamais voulaient nous asservir,
 Unissons-nous comme des frères
 Et nous saurons vaincre ou mourir."²¹

In both these songs, John the Baptist is addressed as one who can preserve the unity of the people and the righteousness of their struggle: "Garde, Saint-Jean (sic), notre naissant chaînon;" "Que chacun en ce jour de fête célèbre Jean, l'ami d'un Dieu... Citoyens! nous sommes tous frères...." In the song of his composition, Duvernay portrays the banquet as a family gathering, where everyone is a brother. With the aid and guidance of the Baptist, the efforts of "les ligues étrangères"²² to impose their will upon the French Canadians will come to naught. Duvernay plays upon two key concepts or images in the pantheon of nationalism: the maple and the idea of the heroism of the ancestors. The maple is even made sacred, and associated with the flow of liberty: "Autour de l'érable sacré, Creusons avant qu'il ne déborde, Le fleuve de la liberté...." As for the ancestors -- the settlers of New France -- they are depicted as the inspiration for the current struggle: "Nous sommes tous fils de héros; Forts de

nos droits, suivons leurs traces, Gardons la clé de leurs tombeaux...."

Yet the political and patriotic tone of these songs certainly overshadows the almost passing references to saint Jean-Baptiste. It is as though the image of the Saint were used as a convenient way of introducing the necessity of the political struggle under the guise of a religious cause. The fact remains that the portrayal of the Baptist on the occasion of these early banquets suffers from a lack of clear and consistent development. The true unfolding of the Saint as a central symbol of French Canada would come after the Rebellion, when the Church would take over the control of the imagery surrounding the official celebration of his feast-day. The sole symbol associated with the armed struggle of the Patriotes, and which may incorporate a direct reference to saint Jean-Baptiste (because of the initials "JB" found upon it), is the Drapeau des patriotes de Saint-Eustache. But even this remains uncertain, considering that the symbolism found on the flag can be interpreted as being of Masonic inspiration.²³

The interplay between nationalistic ideologies and religious ideologies in these critically important early years was, it has been noted, ambiguous, underdeveloped and uncertain. The banquets really were the only significant manner in which the "national holiday" was celebrated. These feasts were, first and foremost, an opportunity for certain

public figures to express their sense of solidarity with the reformers in the Assembly. Religious considerations appeared peripheral, almost secondary. At the same time, however, an important saint was chosen to represent the emerging collective identity of French Canadians. This attempt to bridge the religious and the political did not truly function effectively. This would happen only when the Church reappropriated the image of the Baptist some years later and, with it, the destiny of "le peuple."

The banquets were occasions for the French Canadian elite of Lower Canada, particularly that of the liberal professions, to assemble at a time when there was a pressing need for such opportunities for political mobilization. They were events organized by an increasingly confident bourgeois class, and thus were inspired by similar sorts of interests as would motivate the key leaders of the Patriotes in a few short years. The relationship of this elite to the larger masses of people was as ambivalent as that found between nationalism and religion in the festivities. In fact, the banquets functioned as a means of enhancing class differences, while at the same time paying lip-serve to the requisite need for French Canadian unity in the struggle against what was viewed as British oligarchical arrogance. These banquets were semi-private affairs. Though tickets were sold for some of them, there is no question but that only certain types of people could afford and would want to

attend. In the toasts offered, the songs sung and the speeches delivered, on the other hand, the people were often the topos. They were presented as the source of all power, as the very first toast of the very first banquet of 1834 makes clear.²⁴ Subsequent banquets also reflected this insistence upon popular sovereignty.

Duvernay's banquets became influential arenas of political debate, basically by virtue of the fact that influential public personages were in attendance. The circle was small, yet it consisted of some of the key leaders of the Patriotes, as well as other prominent figures. In this sense, the banquets were instrumental in strengthening the bonds of political solidarity and the growing sense of French Canadian patriotism amongst the new nationalists.

"L'exemple de Duvernay fut aussitôt imité dans le district de Montréal et plusieurs sections de la nouvelle société furent fondées. Comme les membres étaient tous plus ou moins directement rattachés à la politique, la société devint vite une organisation semi-politique qui contribua beaucoup à resserrer les liens des Patriotes. Au printemps de 1837, la société était déjà une organisation puissante plus encore par la valeur de ses membres que par leur nombre.

"Bien que la Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste n'ait pas pris une part apparente aux événements qui devaient suivre, on ne peut l'ignorer dans l'histoire de ces jours mouvementés. La première, elle a groupé avec succès un grand nombre de chefs canadiens et leur a insufflé l'esprit d'association. Elle a aussi contribué grandement à développer leur patriotisme et c'est de ses rangs que devaient sortir les têtes dirigeantes du Comité central et permanent."²⁵

In actual fact, even though "the people" were a stock

theme of banquet rhetoric, they were not really part of any civic celebrations marking la Saint-Jean-Baptiste. It was not until after the Rebellion, when the Church assumed responsibility for organizing the festivities, that structured public manifestations made their real appearance. If la Saint-Jean was celebrated collectively at all, it was in the context of such traditionally-inspired activities as le feu de joie. Such events could not really be said to be tied into a national or political system of meaning which would have served to create a sense of identity for French Canada at this time. Duvernay and the other notables attending these early banquets (as well as, of course, the complimentary and far more momentous efforts by the Patriotes) were only beginning to bring this about. In sum, it is perhaps more accurate to specify that, in these years, the elite and the masses, so far as their rapports in terms of the Saint-Jean-Baptiste celebrations were concerned, did not really partake of similar values or common social paradigms.

Institutional religion was noticeably absent from these banquets. It could be said to be present only by virtue of the symbol of saint Jean-Baptiste. This symbol was truly a figure associated with the established Catholic faith, and did not partake of any characteristics of what could be called popular religiosity. The feast-day itself had, of course, been celebrated since the very beginnings of French

settlement in North America, yet it was not really a parallel or alternative ritual to the canonical one. Its most prominent non-Christian component -- the feu de joie -- had long since been reclaimed by the clerical authority structure. This authority blessed the fire and presided, together with representatives of the secular order, over the ceremonies associated with it.

The banquets remained very much a privileged enclave where Catholicism was something foreign to the types of political sentiments which were expressed during them. This merely reflected the larger reality of the hostility between the Catholic hierarchy (particularly Bishop Lartigue of Montréal) and the leaders of the reform movement, who were derided and condemned by the Church because of their liberal ideas. It is, however, true that at least on one occasion, the banquet was preceded by high mass in honour of Saint John the Baptist. There may well have been other such masses. This does not imply that the Church was receptive or open to some of the reform sentiments. Rather, it should be remembered that Duvernay's banquets were partly civic events (the first Mayor of Montréal, Jacques Viger, presided over the one of 1834²⁶), and therefore were socially and politically acceptable in some sense. Some of the persons in attendance were not members of the Parti canadien-patriote, but merely sympathizers. The Church could therefore still perform a religious function such as a mass without

fundamentally compromising its anti-liberal stance.

As compared to the very long period which followed, clerical power and influence were not elements of the four important banquets which are at the origin of the modern Fête de la Saint-Jean. These banquets were not arenas for the manifestation and resolution of tensions between popular religiosity and clerical authority. Rather, if tension there was, it was between two poles of a different order: those of politics and an institutional church. The banquets of 1834 to 1837 cannot be divorced from the momentous events of 1837 and 1838. Nor, it would seem, can they be described as primarily religious in inspiration or significance.

C. Clerical Domination: 1843 to 1959

The period from the early 1840s to the late 1950s is undoubtedly the richest and the most significant in terms of the overall meaning attached to la Fête de la Saint-Jean-Baptiste. It is certainly the longest of the three segments, and thus the most influential historically. This period, which parallels that protracted era during which the Catholic Church was the central power in French Canadian society, is marked by one overriding fact: that of the clerical domination of the June 24th festivities. It was no

longer politics which provided the context within which these celebrations achieved their fullest sense; rather, it was now religion. Heinz Weinmann describes this dramatic transformation in the following way:

"La grande nouveauté qui distingue clairement cette fête [celles de 1843 et après] de son premier avatar de 1834, c'est la messe qui dorénavant en devient le centre rayonnant. Dès 1844, la messe entre pour ainsi dire dans le rituel canonique de la fête de la Saint-Jean-Baptiste: "Que pour perpétuer la célébration de la fête nationale des Canadiens une messe solennelle soit chantée dans l'église de cette ville (Montréal), lundi des 24 du courant, en l'honneur du Patron de cette Société et qu'un pain béni (sic) convenable y soit offert". On se souvient que, lors des fêtes de la Saint-Jean-Baptiste sous le Régime français, le Seigneur a été chargé de la distribution de ce pain béni. Une fois le Seigneur dépouillé de son pouvoir, le seul personnage dont l'autorité n'est entamée -- bien au contraire -- ni par les Défaites, ni par la Révolte, le curé, devient maintenant la figure clef de la fête nationale. La distribution du pain béni n'est alors que le pâle reflet de cet autre pain eucharistique distribué à la communion. A n'en pas douter, la véritable "fête" de la Saint-Jean-Baptiste se joue dorénavant autour de l'autel, autour du sacrifice eucharistique."²⁷

In the conclusion to his recent book on the contributions of the communities of teaching brothers to the modernization of Québec society from 1920 to 1970, Paul-André Turcotte makes the important point that it is not entirely accurate to view the period from 1840 to 1960 as a monolithic ideological block of time, where the Catholic Church reigned supreme over Québec society. There were other forces at work, both inside the Church itself as well as within the larger society, which had a considerable impact

upon Québec Catholicism and its continued legitimacy. Turcotte, by way of hypothesis, breaks this era into three periods: 1840 to the turn of the century; 1900 to the 1930s; and the 1940s to the 1960s.²⁸

The first period represents the consolidation of Québec Catholicism's temporal power. Even during this time, however, the Church's ascendancy did not go unchallenged. L'Institut canadien and Arthur Buies' La Lanterne are significant examples of an opposition which, in the name of classic liberal ideals, questioned the Church's growing influence.²⁹ The second period is marked by two processes impacting upon Québec society: urbanization and industrialization. Among the noteworthy elements of change are such initiatives as those of les frères éducateurs in the field of education and the 1938 establishment of l'Ecole des sciences sociales, économiques et politiques at l'Université Laval.³⁰ Turcotte makes the point that the clerical establishment was beginning to lose its credibility as propagator of French Canadian nationalism, in part because of its support of conscription during the two World Wars. As for the third period, many of the groups and associations set up by the Church, in an attempt at retrieving its power and influence in the face of the eventful changes about to take place, were themselves questioning the worth and future of a clerically-dominated society.

Throughout this time, however, and despite the fact that there were alternate ideological perspectives being proposed for Québec, the certainty remains that Catholicism retained its stature as the normative paradigm. A similar statement could be made about the celebrations of la Saint-Jean. From 1843 to 1959, these may appear too uniform, too much one-like-the-other, considering that change was occurring in Québec. Though there were occasions when such change was acknowledged,³¹ the celebrations were fundamentally like the Catholic Church: present, yet forever fixed; unsettling yet reassuring in their changelessness.

The predominant ideological construct of this overall period was ultramontaniam. As was discussed earlier, ultramontaniam espoused the religious domination of all aspects of public life, most specifically that of politics. In its most extreme form, it would advocate a form of theocratic society -- though this was never really achieved in any perfect or thorough manner in Québec. As a type of nationalism, the ultramontane world-view was fundamentally a clerical one. It affirmed that Catholicism and the French language, together with such customary occupations as agriculture, were the very "essence" of the French Canadian identity. Only by remaining faithful to its traditional values (defined very much in terms of the interests of the Church) could French Canadians ever hope to preserve their special place or mission in North America. Ultramontaniam

was particularly open to all manner of conservative ideology, being itself quite reactionary in its attitude. The event which allowed ultramontanist really to take hold in Québec was the failure of the Rebellion of 1837-38.

Ultramontanist was at once a nationalistic and a religious ideology. This was the primary reason for its overpowering influence and its durability. Its nationalism was religious, and its religion nationalistic -- hence its taste for such grandiose clerico-political manifestations as Eucharistic Congresses and the processions of la Fête-Dieu and le Sacré-Coeur. These public events were very visible expressions of the close affinity between the Church and the secular order. Though primarily religious in character, the trappings of secular power were very much in evidence during these displays of public fervour. The message being communicated was unmistakable: that the Church and the nation were one, each sustaining the other. More often than not, the Church was portrayed and accepted as the more important of the two. If religious feasts were capable of reinforcing this bond, how much more powerful would be a public rite such as la Fête de la Saint-Jean-Baptiste, which already combined elements of the religious and the national.

The two most important components of the June 24th festivities of this period were the mass and the procession or parade. Each was the embodiment and symbolic depiction of one of the two poles of the celebrations: religion and

nationalism. The mass, as the central ritual of the Catholic faith, was the arena where the religious authority dominated, and where the clerical significance attached to la Saint-Jean was most clearly articulated, by way of the sermon. If the Bishop or Archbishop was the one delivering the sermon, the authority of the clerical interpretation was that much more credible. During the early part of this period, the procession would normally be held after mass and actually leave from the church where mass had been celebrated, thereby drawing an unmistakable and direct connection between the sacred and temporal. Which groups or individuals participated in the procession, and in what order, was always a significant political statement, and one which demonstrated the strength of a given nationalistic orientation or movement. The large parades were introduced later, and were more conspicuous shows of nationalistic zeal. The floats, which illustrated a general theme with patriotic overtones, were the perfect visual conduits for transmitting the political and religious message, which was, generally, one and the same.

In speaking of the interplay between nationalism and religion in the context of a feast, one inevitably broaches the question of propaganda. Such feasts as la Saint-Jean are purposive; they project images and values which are intended to provide people with socio-political constructs and definitions of reality: "En effet, il ne saurait y avoir de

pouvoir sans mise en scène du pouvoir. (...) C'est au moyen d'une représentation flatteuse et d'une rhétorique codée que les leaders trouvent les points d'ancrage de leur pouvoir sur les mentalités."³² The representational or theatrical aspects of public ceremonies are important by virtue of their ability to signify and somehow "make real" the different types of public power, whether political, religious or otherwise. Processions, parades and the like provide a kind of stage where power can be objectified, and where a particular interpretation of it is revealed as normative. The public feast can be a remarkable tool for propaganda.

The propagandistic components of the celebrations attached to la Saint-Jean-Baptiste were both verbal and visual. The sermons and patriotic speeches delivered in churches or in the context of civic gatherings delineated the major currents of nationalistic thought prevalent at any given time. These were generally influenced by the overarching themes of ultramontane thinking, whether temperance, the family, religious education, the land or papal omnipotence. The processions and, later, the parades provided the visual dimension. The banners and flags,³³ and more importantly the floats, were the more direct and impressive statements of religio-patriotic ardour. The manner in which the Baptist himself was represented was an indication of certain ideological forces at work.

Much has been made, over time, of the fact that the image of saint Jean-Baptiste which has been the most popular and widespread is that of the child. Why is it that so much pride was attached to this symbol? Olivar Asselin, it will be recalled,³⁴ decried the connotation of infantilism which this symbol projected. In his criticism, he almost certainly anticipated the political development of Québec society. In social psychological terms, the image of the child is that of a purely human, instinctual being. The child is polyvalent, i.e., any evolution or growth is possible. As a symbol, the child is not a controversial one, in part because children are not expected to be fully responsible creatures. In a positive sense, representations of the Baptist as a child could also be seen as expressing the promise which the future holds for the French Canadian collectivity. The adult, on the other hand, is a symbol of maturity, and consequently is required to make choices and to stand for something. An adult John the Baptist, who, because he is both a saint and an apparently mature being, embodies the opposition between ecclesiastical mastery and national self-assertion, is a more problematic and unsettling image. Representations of the young saint Jean-Baptiste really began to take hold during the heyday of clerical supremacy in Québec. What this was saying was that the only true nationalism was a religious one -- a nationalism which was uncritical and immature, and which was

fundamentally unable to exist outside the confines dictated by the Catholic world-view.

If one were to choose a classic statement which captures the essence of the manner in which religion and nationalism were brought together by the symbolism attached to la Fête de la Saint-Jean, one could do no better than the famous speech on "la vocation de la race française en Amérique," given by Monseigneur Louis-Adolphe Paquet on 23 June 1902, in Québec City. Part of it reads as follows:

"...ce que je tiens à dire, ce que je veux proclamer bien haut en présence de cette partiottique assemblée, c'est que le Canada français ne répondra aux desseins de Dieu et à sa sublime vocation que dans la mesure où il gardera sa vie propre, son caractère individuel, ses traditions vraiment nationales.

"Et qu'est-ce donc que la vie d'un peuple? Vivre, c'est exister, c'est respirer, c'est se mouvoir, c'est se posséder soi-même dans une juste liberté! La vie d'un peuple, c'est le tempérament qu'il tient de ses pères, l'héritage qu'il en a reçu, l'histoire dont il nourrit son esprit, l'autonomie dont il jouit et qui le protège contre toute force absorbante et tout mélange corrupteur.

(...)

"Pendant qu'autour de nous d'autres peuples imprimeront dans la matière le sceau de leur génie, notre esprit tracera plus haut, dans les lettres et les sciences chrétiennes, son sillon lumineux. Pendant que d'autres races, catholiques elles aussi, s'emploieront à développer la charpente extérieure de l'Eglise, la nôtre par un travail plus intime et par des soins plus délicats préparera ce qui en est la vie, ce qui en est le coeur, ce qui en est l'âme. Pendant que nos rivaux revendiqueront sans doute, dans des luttes courtoises, l'hégémonie de l'industrie et de la finance, nous, fidèles à notre vocation première, nous ambitionnerons avant tout l'honneur de la doctrine et les palmes de l'apostolat.

"Nous maintiendrons sur les hauteurs le drapeau des antiques croyances, de la vérité, de la justice, de cette philosophie qui ne vieillit pas parce qu'elle est éternelle; nous l'élèverons, fier et ferme, au-dessus de tous les vents et de tous les orages; nous l'offrirons aux regards de toute l'Amérique comme l'emblème glorieux, le symbole, l'idéal vivant de la perfection sociale et de la véritable grandeur des nations.

"Alors, mieux encore qu'aujourd'hui, se réalisera cette parole prophétique qu'un écho mystérieux apporte à mes oreilles et qui, malgré la distance des siècles où elle fut prononcée, résume admirablement la signification de cette fête: Eritis mihi in populum, et ego ero vobis in Deum. Vous serez mon peuple, et moi je serai votre Dieu."³⁵

Paquet's closing words are the important ones of his speech. His lines are taken from the Old Testament, where "...nationalism (...) is altogether indistinguishable from religion; the two are one and the same thing. God chose a particular people and promised them a particular land."³⁶ In emphasizing the theme of the affinity between God and a chosen people, Paquet merges nationalism and religion. He claims that this is the meaning of la Saint-Jean-Baptiste. Rhetoric aside, the concept is a telling one. Earlier, Paquet develops the idea that a people (a nation) can only remain true to itself by preserving its distinctive national traditions and heritage. These, in turn, are nurtured by the immutability of the Catholic faith ("le drapeau des antiques croyances"; "cette philosophie qui ne vieillit pas parce qu'elle est éternelle"). Typical of the conservatism and ultramontanism of this era, Paquet rejects all forms of

accomplishment which are not tied purely to religion, or which are not consistent with his vision of the Catholic civilizing mission of French Canadians in North America. The particular philosophy which Paquet considered eternal was Thomism, "...ce cheval de bataille de l'ultramontanisme."³⁷ It is interesting to note that the prelate speaks of "juste liberté" and "autonomie," yet how foreign these concepts were to ultramontane thinking.

Compared to the earlier period of the banquets, when the poles of religion and nationalism did not really intersect, the celebrations of this epoch are marked by the symbiotic relationship between religious ideology and nationalistic ideology. This can be explained, in large measure, by the monopoly which the Catholic Church enjoyed in virtually all sectors of social life, thereby giving it the unique opportunity to impose its own version of the common good -- ultramontanism -- upon Québec. The celebrations of la Fête de la Saint-Jean, particularly the mass and the procession or parade, were, from this perspective, just so many other opportunities to combine the public ceremonial with the religious ritual. The Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste itself was generally infused with the clerical outlook, and consequently its contributions to the festivities were in line with the prevailing temper of the times.

In the article quoted earlier, Frederick Bird observes

that some secular rites or public ceremonials may display religious dimensions, "...because they serve as means of re-enacting the relation between persons and some public purposes or personal identities which are held to be sacred."³⁸ The Saint-Jean-Baptiste celebrations were collective manifestations, one of their purposes being to increase or reaffirm the ethno-cultural bonds which united French Canadians. The purpose or destiny of this people was depicted and symbolized in terms of a sacred trust: to stand as a beacon of Catholic values and belief in the midst of an anglo-Protestant (and liberal) continent. Everything about the public and ritualistic aspects of the celebrations was infused with religious overtones, whether it was a priest delivering a sermon extolling the virtues of large Catholic families or a parade float illustrating the heroic acts of the founders of New France. The festivities of la Saint-Jean combined religion and nationalism in a way which left each almost indistinguishable from the other. Not only did this occur at the level of la Fête; it was an impulse which permeated social life in Québec at every turn.

Particularly in the 20th century, the celebrations were very large public gatherings. People participated in a wide variety of activities, whether civic or familial: mass, parade, bonfire, fireworks, picnic, dancing, stroll and games in the park, etc. At one level, the festivities could be said to have been open and democratic. In theory,

everyone and anyone could share in their performance. Though the parades are limited indicators of the level of participation, because people were merely there as bystanders, they nonetheless serve to show that la Saint-Jean was a very popular and well-attended day of celebration.³⁹ For many events, anyone, regardless of class or social stature, could be involved. This was especially the case for the indiscriminate and public events such as the parade and other open-air events. While this was true of the city, it is certainly fair to say that la Saint-Jean in the countryside was even more open and accessible to all. The more closely-knit social structure of these small communities would account for this.

"The people" may have been allowed to participate in most of the events or activities attached to la Fête, yet they could not be said to have been the prime originators or interpreters of its meaning, nor were they given access to all of the different occasions which marked the June 24th holiday. Class distinctions persisted. Such special affairs as the traditional banquet, le bal de la Saint-Jean or official governmental receptions remained closed to all but those considered important enough to be invited, whether by virtue of office or because of socio-economic status. In this sense, it could be said that there were two Fêtes de la Saint-Jean: the official one underscored by the formal civic or state ceremonial, and the popular one which took place in

public and to which all were supposedly invited. This dual character is typical of all public feasts such as la Saint-Jean-Baptiste. One can speak of "...deux sortes de fêtes: fête populaire, caractérisée par la mise entre parenthèses de la hiérarchie sociale et par la "vision carnavalesque" de la vie, et fête officielle, sanction de cette même hiérarchie."⁴⁰ More often than not, there is an opposition, strong or only slightly so, between these two types.

In the case of la Saint-Jean, this opposition was never really present. If it was, it was not so evident or significant as to constitute a barrier to the elaboration of a common purpose or sense to the festivities. La Fête de la Saint-Jean-Baptiste in Québec, as compared to its European antecedent, was not really typified by its carnival-like ambiance. Its spontaneous, exuberant aspects were more centred around the intimacy of the immediate or extended family, much as would happen on such occasions as Christmas. Families would attend mass or the parade together, and they would picnic together. A carnival implies a certain reversal in the social order, where everyday power relations are either ridiculed or abandoned for a while. If anything, la Saint-Jean presented these power relations as normal and necessary for Québec, thereby objectifying them to the point of virtual monopoly.

As was mentioned on a number of earlier occasions, the clerical and political elite of Québec were the ones who

truly elaborated the overall meaning and specific configuration of the Saint-Jean-Baptiste celebrations. As propagators of the dominant ideological frameworks, they could and did use the festivities as means of transmitting to the masses their sense of what constituted, for Québec, a national identity and purpose. This elite, while still homogeneous in many ways, was comprised of a number of distinct groups or foci of influence: the Catholic Church, the provincial government, nationalistic organizations such as the Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste de Montréal (SSJB de M), and what would become an increasingly influential intellectual class consisting of journalists, academics and writers. At different times, one or another of these groups would provide the dominant paradigm.

Generally, however, it was the Church and the SSJB de M which controlled the celebrations. In the period from 1843 to 1959, both shared a similar conservative ideology, committed as each was to a vision of a French Canada essentially self-contained and intensely Catholic in its smallest component. Only once did this implicit alliance between the Société and the Church break down: when a future president of the Société, Olivar Asselin, attacked the symbolism of the lamb, a highly evocative Christian icon. Asselin's critique was formulated in the context of the misuse of the lamb (and of the child) as a politico-religious symbol, indicative not only of political

inferiority, but also of religious "tyranny."

"Asselin s'attaque (...) au fond de la symbolique de l'agneau au Canada français: son enchevêtrement politico-religieux. Il en a contre l'agneau "devenu chez-nous, bien moins qu'un symbole religieux, l'emblème de la soumission passive et stupide à toutes les tyrannies". La première de ces "tyrannies", celle qui à deux reprises (1760 et 1839) a prêché la soumission au vainqueur, c'est bien l'Eglise canadienne."⁴¹

The intense popularity of the lamb and the young Saint as symbols of French Canada would be such that they would figure prominently in the parades for many years following the appearance of Asselin's polemic. In this case, it seems that they appealed to a certain penchant, both on the part of the governing elite as well as ordinary citizens, for national emblems which reinforced certain stereotypical traits drawn from the collective experience of French Canadians. Their history had taught them that they had been either a colonial outpost or a conquered people, and that Catholicism had been their saving grace. These perceptions and psycho-social motifs, the products of a clerical interpretation of history, were reflected quite naturally in the major symbols attached to the national holiday.

"Certes, même après 1913, l'agneau et l'enfant continueront de figurer dans les parades de la Saint-Jean-Baptiste. Les forces réactionnaires d'opposition, à l'intérieur même de la Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste, se liguent contre le "blasphémateur" de l'agneau. Mais, dorénavant, depuis que les Canadiens ont entr'aperçu "les choses sacrificielles cachées depuis la fondation" du Canada français, depuis que le doute s'est infiltré dans sa symbolique, l'agneau n'est qu'un animal bêlant et l'enfant, le fils d'un brave épicier du quartier Saint-Henri.

"Même si le ressort de la symbolique canadienne-française est cassé, à savoir que sa transcendance s'avère être de plus en plus aveugle, le peuple, avec la complicité des gouvernants, aime à perpétuer le spectacle de son auto-sacrifice. Après tout, qui se souvient encore en 1920 du geste attentatoire d'Asselin? Il a été trop marginal, trop "intempestif" pour infléchir immédiatement le cours des parades. Ces dernières survivent plus de cinquante ans encore, jusqu'en 1969."⁴²

What Asselin's critique demonstrates, apart from its historical value as the most widely-known denunciation of some of the more important traditions attached to la Fête,⁴³ is that the French Canadian elite was not all of one voice or vision in its acceptance of the ideological images and truths disseminated by the Church and certain segments of the SSJB de M. There was, in fact, a spirit of contestation beginning to be felt. Many years later, consequent upon the disappearance of these symbols, the following rationale would be provided by someone with the advantage of hindsight, but in words and themes very similar to those of Asselin: "Il fallut d'abord liquider la bête bonasse et placide que l'on avait imposée comme emblème à un peuple (sic) fougueux, chasser ensuite le Précurseur, Saint-Patron en instance de décapitation, terrible symbole de l'ultime sacrifice que l'on attendait de nous."⁴⁴

On the whole, however, the celebrations of la Saint-Jean were the expression of a relatively unanimous accord between the elite and the masses so far as the meaning attached to them was concerned. Important class tensions

were beginning to surface in Québec in the first part of the 20th century, and would attain their pinnacle in the post-World War II era.⁴⁵ The dominant ideology, "le nationalisme de survivance,"⁴⁶ still remained that propounded by the Catholic Church and its lay allies, who generally sought to solidify their advantage by espousing clerical supremacy in almost all aspects of collective life. This supremacy was reflected nearly perfectly in the June 24th festivities. Looking at these festivities from the perspective of an outsider, one could declare quite seriously that, apart from the obvious fact of the presence of ecclesiastical and political leaders, there were, on first glance, no real differences between the elite and masses in Québec society. La Fête de la Saint-Jean had a levelling effect; it was able to absorb and diffuse many of the class contradictions beginning to make their appearance in Québec. What this meant, in effect, was that la Fête functioned as a socially stabilizing agent.

During the period of Ludger Duvernay and the Patriotes, the banquets of la Saint-Jean, which were the primary means of celebration, were select functions meant to bring together those sharing similar political views. Though the celebrations from 1843 to 1959 may have been marked by a certain ideological coherence and consistency, they were not specifically thought of as politically exclusive manifestations. In principle, all were free to participate,

regardless of political allegiance or affinity. The speakers at various functions, whether clerical or lay, were not, however, necessarily apolitical in their orientations or in their discourse. La Fête de la Saint-Jean-Baptiste was, in fact, an intensely politicized event. Whether it was the person who had been invited to speak, the particular theme chosen for the parade, the flag or banner which predominated at a gathering or the manner in which John the Baptist was represented -- all these were political statements of one sort or another. They all referred back to a particular understanding of nationalism or to a specific ideological perspective being proposed. Interestingly enough, however, simply participating in the festivities as an ordinary citizen was not the same sort of political act it would become at a subsequent time.

Considered from the perspective of the sociology of religion, a feast represents a very special and quite unique moment when the identity of a social group meshes with the phenomenon called popular religion.

"La fête, avec ses multiples fonctions, est le moment privilégié où se constituent et s'affirment, inséparablement, la religion populaire et l'identité d'une collectivité enracinée dans un lieu et dans une histoire. Elle condense l'expérience collective spécifique qui est au principe de la religion populaire: la proximité physique, les épreuves historiques et quotidiennes, les solidarités de la vie de travail."⁴⁷

Furthermore, any discussion of the dynamic between the elite and the masses raises the question of power, and power

is, in many ways, an essential -- if not the essential -- factor of popular religion: "...cette question (...) de la religion populaire a à voir avec le problème du pouvoir religieux et avec celui de la division du travail religieux."⁴⁸ The festive dimension of popular religion is not an indication of the pristine innocence of non-bourgeois forms of expression; rather, it must be understood in terms of basic relations of dependency.

"...ce ritualisme festif se rapporte à la réalité des rapports de domination à la fois économique, sociale, culturelle et symbolique qui caractérisent les couches sociales dont l'appétit de rites est le plus fort. La demande de rites, présente dans le refus des changements liturgiques, dans les pèlerinages, les ostensions de reliques, les pardons, le culte des morts, etc., n'atteste pas l'existence d'une religion populaire dressée en face de la religion dominante. Elle concentre au contraire la relation de dépendance qui lie les fidèles aux clercs qui ont la maîtrise de la manipulation symbolique."⁴⁹

La Fête de la Saint-Jean, it was pointed out above, was a feast with a dual character: the official and the popular. The official Fête was the one at which the ecclesiastical and state hierarchy dominated, and which provided the framework for the elaboration of the formal interpretations of ethnicity, destiny and nationhood. This Fête was controlled primarily by the clerical authorities. It was a public ceremonial, consisting of well staged and easily regulated rituals such as a mass, a venue for the delivery of patriotic speeches and a procession or parade. The religious peculiarity of this official Fête was found in

most of its components, especially as most of its organizers were either clerics or members of like-minded lay associations.

The "other" Fête, the more popular one, was such only to the extent that it dovetailed with the official Feast. As with popular religion, it derived its significance from the fact that it was allowed to exist alongside the more authoritative Feast. This Fête went back, in its origins, to the European festivities marking the arrival of the summer solstice. In Québec, however, it never really retained the special flavour associating it with its carnival-like origins. From the beginning, the popular feast was co-opted by the authorities, and its various traits were integrated into the formal celebrations. What little there remained by way of popular features could be found in the parade, the bonfire and the various family activities which ran parallel to the public ceremonies.

"...le déroulement de la fête est destiné à toucher un grand nombre de personnes par un ensemble de manifestations où l'on peut distinguer une hiérarchie: une célébration populaire à participation ouverte - procession, messe, feu d'artifice, discours patriotiques, pique-nique, jeux, excursion, et plus tard, feu de la Saint-Jean; à côté de ces festivités populaires qui se diversifient avec le temps, des activités de groupes restreints - banquet, concert, pièce de théâtre, et, après 1874, congrès. Ces dernières activités servent de lieu de rencontre et d'expression à ceux qui se veulent les définiteurs nationaux.

"Il serait téméraire de tenter d'établir un rythme ou un cycle quelconque à ce palier: la fête nationale tend à se produire annuellement à moins

qu'elle ne soit inhibée par des circonstances extérieures, à se perpétuer semblable à elle-même (intégration des éléments nouveaux au bloc traditionnel) et à se complexifier à mesure qu'elle se popularise (fête populaire - fête de notables)."⁵⁰

Why this co-option, and how was la Fête de la Saint-Jean able to achieve this unity of the official and the popular? A fundamental and very important characteristic of a feast is its ability to suspend or negate temporarily the conflicts found in a society: "...la fête constitue un moment de négation des conflits sociaux: elle permet de faire fonctionner (...) l'unité minimale nécessaire à la vie sociale."⁵¹ The co-option of the popular feast again has to do with power. The reason why la Fête had been instituted, in the first place, was to make it serve as a sort of rallying-point for the emergence of a vibrant nationalism in the 1830s. Subsequently, the Catholic Church had used it for similar purposes, though in the context of its own particular view of a new kind of nationalism. To ensure the ideological coherence and structural harmony of la Saint-Jean Baptiste, thereby securing the power of those who controlled it, alternate festivities or ways of celebrating had to be integrated into the main framework of la Fête. Co-option was also operative at a symbolic level, by uniting, in a spirit of ethnic solidarity, the various classes found within French Canadian society in opposition to the other dominant cultural and linguistic group: the English. Though French-English tensions were never a major theme of the

celebrations of this period, they were there as an obscured component, for collective identities are generally formed by a process of differentiation from another collectivity.

There is a more fundamental historical reason why most feasts in the West were co-opted and regulated by the clerical power structure. As manifestations of popular religiosity, and therefore viewed as debased and somehow immoral, they fell prey to the spirit of rectitude inspired by the Reformation and the Counter-Reformation. Elisabeth Labrousse describes this movement, and its attendant ethos, in the following words:

"Réforme et Contre-Réforme (...) ont lancé une campagne de "moralisation" à corps perdu. Les élites du XVII^e siècle se sont sentis une mission "civilisatrice", un devoir majeur de faire adopter, ou à tout le moins, révéler, par le "peuple" des valeurs d'ordre, de règle, de bon sens, de décorum, de discipline -- des valeurs classiques et bourgeoises en un mot. Les excès et les déviations et tout genre -- danses, superstitions, indécences, schisme --, les comportements "gothiques" venus de la nuit des temps sont systématiquement et, à l'occasion, féroce^{ment} réprimés, en vertu d'un paternalisme déchaîné, arrogant (et finalement, naïf), qui s'efforce à plier le populaire aux "bienséances". Civilité et civilisation procèdent d'en haut, irradiant du sommet, et l'on n'accorde aux simples qu'une seule vertu, la docilité et la déférence."⁵²

In assimilating all of the possible ways of celebrating into one common feast, with its two components of the official and the popular, while at the same time maintaining a fine differentiation in the types of activities available to different social classes, it could be said that la Fête

achieved a certain measure of balance which was not always so manifest in the society at large. There were tensions slowly making their appearance in Québec, whether between the Church itself and a small but vocal group of liberal spokesmen, between a creeping urbanization and a more traditional way of life on the land, or between an expanding working class and an ensconced clerico-political elite. Yet during the annual festivities, "la nation" came together as one, and major conflicts seemed subsumed under a common purpose and vision. An example of a movement which was far larger than this common purpose, however, and which la Fête would later try to absorb and explain in its symbolism, was the exodus of large numbers of French Canadians to the United States.

At the level of the religious, those expert in the manipulation of sacred symbols, the clergy, maintained control over the dominant icon of the celebrations, saint Jean-Baptiste. They were also the ones who imparted to la Fête its sacrificial theme,⁵³ first by making the mass the main element of the festivities, and then by advocating social order and cohesion through such causes as temperance and agriculturalism. The message was unambiguous: like the Baptist, who sacrificed himself in order to fulfil better his role as precursor, so the French Canadian, possessor of a providential mission, must discipline himself so as to be worthy of this special trust. Unconditional obedience to the

dictates of the Church was, of course, the surest way of ensuring compliance with the divine will. For the Church, the divine will, Catholic doctrine and the national good were one and the same. To deny or dispute one or the other was the same as challenging the natural order of things. This teaching and attitude were communicated, over and over and under diverse guises, via the different venues made available by the June 24th festivities.

René Girard contends that the sacrificial theme is central to an understanding, not only of the very foundations of society and of the sacred, but also of the feast. He states: "Nous ne pouvons pas douter que la fête ne constitue une commémoration de la crise sacrificielle. (...) La fête proprement dite n'est qu'une préparation au sacrifice qui marque à la fois son paroxysme et sa conclusion."⁵⁴ His concepts of the victime émissaire and the victime sacrificiable are essential to his argument that all religions are founded on the sacrifice of a victim.

"La victime émissaire meurt, semble-t-il, pour que la communauté, menacée tout entière de mourir avec elle, renaisse à la fécondité d'un ordre culturel nouveau ou renouvelé. Après avoir semé partout les germes de mort, le dieu, l'ancêtre ou le héros mythique, en mourant eux-mêmes ou en faisant mourir la victime choisie par eux, apportent aux hommes une nouvelle vie.

(...)

"Ce qui caractérise essentiellement les catégories sacrificiables, on le sait, c'est qu'elles tombent régulièrement hors de la communauté. La victime émissaire, au contraire, faisait partie de la communauté."⁵⁵

In Girard's perspective, la Fête de la Saint-Jean-Baptiste could be considered as a commemoration of the sacrifice undergone by French Canadian society. In this paradigm, the Patriotes are the victime émissaire: their eventual defeat and destruction were necessary in order to purge this society of its violence, thereby ensuring a new cultural order. But as members of the society, and therefore too closely identified with its survival, the Patriotes could not be sacrificed as victims in the collective consciousness. There was a need for a symbolic transposition onto a victime sacrificable: John the Baptist. He was outside the community, and had the advantage of being a symbol which had already been sacrificed. In essence, the Saint became the Patriotes divinized. What has been celebrated from the very beginning, therefore, is not saint Jean-Baptiste, but the Patriotes incarnated in him. A Christian feast? Only an intensely profane one in religious disguise. Such an analysis logically leads one to question the manner in which Catholicism was used to maintain the victimization of French Canada, under the protection of a perfect symbolic victim.

Was la Fête de la Saint-Jean-Baptiste the manifestation of two separate forms of religiosity: the clerical and the popular? How well did it, in fact, harmonize them? The latter question is best answered first. The celebrations, even though they may have consisted of different activities, still formed an organic whole. There was not, as there might

be in the case of such feasts as the tripartite Halloween, All Souls and All Saints, for example, two almost distinct levels of meaning or intent: the purely profane and the religious. La Saint-Jean was meant to be a nationalistic feast, and it utilized Catholic imagery and language in this process. Though clearly religious in its origins, it was better identified with its political beginnings than with its theological ones. Harmony there certainly was, yet almost to the point of non-differentiation.

It could be said that, if tension there invariably is between popular religiosity and clerical authority, then la Saint-Jean-Baptiste did a remarkable job in attenuating it. Clerical religiosity was omnipresent in the celebrations, from the mass to the pain bénit to the Saint himself. It was an all-exclusive, normative form of religious expression. One would be hard-pressed, however, to find many specifically popular forms of religiosity in the festivities of this period, even though there were many popular (in the sense of "common" or "public") events. The closest approximation would be the recurring and live representation of saint Jean-Baptiste as a child, accompanied by a lamb. With the blessing of the Church, this tradition persisted for many years, even while others derided it. Some customs and beliefs, such as la cueillette des herbes de la Saint-jean and les bains de la Saint-Jean, as well as le feu de joie, were more directly associated with an alternate or

popular type of religiosity. Only le feu de joie was incorporated into the formal celebrations. Other customs, many of which were localized, did not persist or attain a universal level of acceptance. Though la Fête may have been a controlled feast with an official character, it still retained popularity by virtue of its mass appeal. The Church itself had "popularized" certain customs, such as the bonfire, by legitimizing their symbolic content.

In the decades which followed, under the pressure of the most far-reaching changes which Québec had ever known, la Fête de la Saint-Jean-Baptiste became radically and totally transformed, and was henceforth called la Fête nationale du Québec. Not only was the religious dimension suddenly (and perhaps irrevocably) abandoned, but, paradoxical though it seem, many other traditions were revived or strengthened. The important difference was that now the Church was no longer the prime communicator or motivator.

D. Secularization and Transformation: 1960 to the Present

Almost overnight, the Québec of the 1960s found itself breaking away from many of the key ideas which had defined it for over one hundred years. The Quiet Revolution was,

first and foremost, an ideological metamorphosis. What it meant was that Québec was finally prepared to enter the modern age, to ensure and take responsibility for its own social, economic and cultural development.

"Dans son sens le plus large, cette révolution idéologique signifiait une réconciliation avec le développement économique et social, qui avait tant été redoutée dans le passé. (...) l'image que la plupart des nationalistes se faisaient de la société canadienne-française était essentiellement rurale et agraire. On trouvait difficile d'abandonner le vieil idéal même après que le Canada français fut devenu une société majoritairement urbaine. (...) il ne semblait pas possible de demeurer fidèle à l'idéal national et en même temps accueillir pleinement le processus du développement. Ce traditionalisme fut définitivement abandonné au cours des années 1960. Désormais, on souhaitait ouvertement le développement économique et social; plutôt que de le voir comme un phénomène qui menaçait l'intégrité de la nation, on y voyait la possibilité de nouvelles réalisations. Une société technologique hautement efficace, dirigée par des Canadiens français et animée par l'esprit français, tel fut le nouvel idéal des nationalistes. On se proposa donc d'effectuer un rattrapage, afin d'atteindre le niveau du développement économique et social des sociétés avancées."⁵⁶

One of the more significant effects of this dramatic transformation was a new way of looking at what it meant to live in a place called Québec, and, because of the importance now given to the State, how best to understand and define its parameters as "la nation." This would imply a critical shift in the traditional views of nationalism.

"Cette nouvelle idéologie dominante impliquait également un rétrécissement des frontières de la "nation". Dans le passé, les nationalistes considéraient que la nation canadienne-française recouvrait la presque totalité du Canada et

s'étendait même dans certaines régions du nord-est des Etats-Unis. A partir de 1960, on se replia de plus en plus sur le Québec. Peu importe les solutions politiques préconisées, les Québécois étaient de plus en plus nombreux à refuser de confondre l'identité spécifique des francophones du Québec avec celle du Canada dans son ensemble. Les francophones du Québec étaient d'abord et avant tout Québécois, même si en certaines occasions, ils s'identifiaient comme Canadiens. Le terme "canadien-français", que l'ambiguïté rendait inacceptable, tomba en désuétude. Les mots nation et Québec devinrent à toutes fins pratiques synonymes."⁵⁷

The impact of these changes upon la Fête de la Saint-Jean was far from negligible. As a cultural manifestation, and one tied so closely to a very traditional brand of nationalism, it was only a matter of time before the mutations affecting all of Québec society began to influence the orientation and appearance of la Fête. The break occurred in 1969, when the last of the large-scale parades was held in the streets of Montréal. The social and political crisis then affecting Québec literally tore apart the celebrations. In subsequent years, la Fête underwent quite an alteration. There were efforts undertaken to make it more participatory and carnavalesque, and also to cultivate its patriotic aspects, particularly following the Parti québécois victory of 1976. The association with the past was definitively broken when the name Saint-Jean-Baptiste was officially replaced by that of Fête nationale. In many ways, this was an entirely natural outcome, reflecting, as it did, the inheritance of the revolution begun in 1960.

Though the nationalism of the period from 1960 to the present has not been uniform by any means, it has nonetheless been marked by its confident attitude and the manner in which it has literally redefined the political landscape of contemporary Québec. As opposed to earlier forms of nationalistic thinking, many of which were intimately tied up with the notion of catholicity, this new nationalism remained decidedly secular in tone. Its major themes have been political ascendancy, culture and language. It is language which has certainly been the unifying element and central motif of this nationalism, from its beginnings until today. What contributed the most to the sense of confident pride, however, is also that which was one of the great achievements of the Quiet Revolution: the reassessment of the role of the State as the motor of Québec's development. "Un autre aspect de l'idéologie de la Révolution tranquille fut la nouvelle attitude à l'égard de l'Etat. Puisque que le but premier de cette révolution était de créer une société francophone hautement développée, l'Etat fut promu au rôle d'agent ou de "moteur principal" du rattrapage."⁵⁸ In strengthening the role of the State, certain economic and social conditions were created which allowed for the emergence of a renewed assurance about the national identity.

It has become somewhat of a truism to assert that, with the Quiet Revolution, the Catholic Church lost most of its

dominant influence in Québec society. Yet nothing could be more significant or momentous. In forfeiting its place of pre-eminence, the Church became a minor force in Québec, and the State assumed responsibility for many of its former functions. One of the upshots of this shift, for the Church at least, was that clerical authority no longer held the kind of power which permitted it to speak out with moral certainty and dogmatic assurance on an entire range of social and political issues. There naturally was a larger process at work here: that of the increasing secularization of Western society and the consequent decline of all religious paradigms as incapable of providing the appropriate credibility necessary under these changed circumstances. In Québec, this transformation appeared more traumatic than was the case elsewhere, more than likely because the Church's power had been so all-encompassing and reassuring for such a long time.

With religion no longer occupying the respected position it had always enjoyed, the types of nationalism which surfaced in Québec really were incapable of considering Catholicism as an integral component of the Québécois identity. To have done so would have been both unrealistic and retrograde. But if religion had been the cement binding the various elements of the Québec social fabric together, what now could or should replace it? What would best serve as a substitute for the Catholic

ideological hegemony? It was none other than nationalism itself which superseded religionism. Nationalism -- of the Québécois variety -- became the bridge between the exigencies of living in a modern society and the desire still to retain a sense of one's roots.

"Le nationalisme québécois (...) s'est manifesté à tous les niveaux de la société et il devenait peut-être inévitable qu'il se manifeste au moment même où la société québécoise subissait les transformations profondes qui remettaient en question les traditions les plus tenaces. C'est d'ailleurs parce que d'anciennes solidarités s'écroulaient que le nationalisme moderne est apparu.

"Dans cette perspective, le nationalisme peut être envisagé, au Québec comme ailleurs, comme une réaction au stress provoqué par la modernisation des structures sociales. A l'intérieur de ces nouvelles structures anonymes, l'individu, habitué à un entourage familial et réconfortant, se sent déboussolé et éprouve le besoin de renouer contact, d'une nouvelle façon, avec la tradition. Le nationalisme lui permet de redéfinir son enracinement sans pour autant lui faire renoncer aux avantages de la modernisation."⁵⁹

The Saint-Jean-Baptiste celebrations of this three-decade period are noteworthy for, among other things, the decline and eventual disappearance of the sort of overt religious symbolism found on earlier occasions. Of the themes of the ten parades held in Montréal from 1960 to 1969,⁶⁰ none are directly religious (the last such theme, "Fidélité mariale," was for the parade of 1954), and most deal with the cultural dimensions of French Canada. Interestingly enough, the word "Québec" as part of the parade theme only makes its appearance in 1967, the year of

the centennial of the Canadian Confederation and the Montréal International Exhibition (Expo '67). It is during these years that saint Jean-Baptiste comes to be represented as an adult in the Montréal parade, thus indicating that the sort of religious sentimentality associated with the former image of the young child is beginning to wane. Since 1948, Québec's official flag, the fleurdelisé, has become widespread, and its popularity, as the symbol par excellence of Québec nationalism, increases dramatically. The yellow-and-white papal flag, so prominent during earlier festivities, disappears. What one is witnessing, in fact, is the secularization of a religious ideology and the sacralization of a nationalistic one.

The features of this new sacralized nationalism were quite different whether one considers the period 1960 to 1976 or 1977 to 1980 and beyond. The first of these was marked by intense social and political polarization, and its important themes were political autonomy and class conflict. It is during this time that the major groups advocating independence were established and that some of the more significant examples of social strife, such as the October Crisis of 1970 and the great labour unrest of the early 1970s, took place. The celebrations of la Saint-Jean, particularly those of 1968 and 1969, expressed the contradictions of this period, and were themselves victims of the social forces which stood in opposition. The second

segment, coming after the electoral victory of the Parti québécois and including the 1980 Referendum, appears more moderate in tone. The nationalism of this period centred on culture and language. Though language had certainly been in the forefront before this time, it now became (particularly following the demise of the political option which the Referendum was intended to legitimate) the premier symbol of national pride. Les Fêtes of June 24th were somewhat less political, more confident and more festive.

The similarities between the post-1960 celebrations and those which occurred at the time of the Patriotes are closer than one might think at first glance. In neither case did religion play a significant or leading role. In the 1830s, a different political philosophy, liberalism, was being proposed in the expectation that a new constitutional arrangement could be negotiated, and the Church saw itself very much as a threatened institution. The banquets of la Saint-Jean-Baptiste were occasions for the expression of this sense of political expectancy and opportunity. Though the Québec Church after 1960 was not in any way in peril, nor did it see itself in such dramatic terms, the mood of impending socio-political change within the larger society was just as acute as it almost certainly was in the 1830s. The festivities of the 1960s, particularly the parades of the latter years, reflected the uncertainties and mutations of those years. The nationalism of la Fête of each of these

two periods was passionately political, whereas that of the more than a century from 1843 to 1959 revolved basically around Catholic ecclesiastical ideals. From 1960 to the present, there was not, nor has there been, the kind of mutually advantageous interplay as could be found earlier between nationalistic ideologies and religious ideologies in the context of la Fête de la Saint-Jean (or la Fête nationale), primarily because the bond has been irreversibly torn asunder by the Quiet Revolution.

Despite this absence of the religious from the festivities, there still remains, on the part of the Church, a desire to interpret the history of Québec in the context of some larger destiny or purpose. One very recent example of this is the sermon which Monseigneur Paul Grégoire, Archbishop of Montréal, delivered on 24 June 1984, during la messe de la Saint-Jean. This sermon begins by recalling the 450th anniversary of the arrival of Jacques Cartier in Canada, then underscores the 150th anniversary of the foundation of the SSJB de M, and concludes with a reflection on the impending visit of Pope John Paul II to Canada. The association between the heroic destiny of Cartier and the arrival of Catholicism in the New World is put in the following words:

"1534. Naissance d'un pays sous le signe de la Croix et de l'Évangile. C'est cette vision d'histoire que nous soulignons aussi en cet anniversaire marquant.

"Au sein de nos réjouissances multiples, je

voudrais que nous gardions comme un héritage précieux l'audace et la foi de ceux qui ont ouvert ce pays. Et je me permets, en guise de réflexion, de nous poser à nous-mêmes quelques questions -- En 1984, dans le contexte d'abondance et de facilité qui est le nôtre, par comparaison à l'époque rude et aux moyens limités dont disposaient nos pères, de quel courage humain sommes-nous capables pour tracer des voies nouvelles au développement d'une civilisation qui appelle au dépassement de l'homme, à la façon de Jacques Cartier?"⁶¹

With reference to the relevance and meaning of saint Jean-Baptiste as contemporary symbol, the Archbishop states:

"En fidélité à une tradition non écrite mais vivace, nous choisissons, il y a cent cinquante ans, de faire de la fête de saint Jean le Baptiste notre fête. La Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste qui, par ses instances auprès des évêques du Québec, a permis d'obtenir du Pape saint Pie X, en 1908, la reconnaissance officielle de saint Jean-Baptiste comme patron spécial des Canadiens-français.

"En ce 24 juin 1984, nous nous réjouissons de cette initiative qui nous permet de nous rassembler comme peuple, non pas au souvenir d'un événement guerrier ou d'une lutte politique, mais à l'appel d'un saint, d'un héraut qui ouvre l'ère chrétienne, d'un annonciateur que le Christ a salué comme le plus grand des enfants des hommes.

"Nous sommes fiers de ce choix et souhaitons qu'il demeure toujours nôtre. Il dit par lui-même l'appartenance de notre peuple et son désir d'être, à la suite de Jean, sans faux messianisme, messenger de conversion et de salut."⁶²

It will be noted that, in this passage, the prelate makes a point of rejecting what he calls "faux messianisme," thereby calling into question the traditional theme of French Canadian messianic destiny which had been so often used in the past. He does, however, still associate the spiritual traits of the Baptist with those of "notre

peuple," and he remarks on the fact that this feat is not meant to commemorate a political event. Finally, the Archbishop brings together the figures of Cartier, the Baptist and John Paul II in an image of historical continuity:

"Année 1984. Année forte. Saint-Jean 1984. Saint-Jean aux couleurs multiples.

"Sous le signe de la fête, nous célébrons ensemble, comme peuple croyant, à la fois l'explorateur qui ouvrit notre pays à la civilisation chrétienne, le prophète ancien qui ouvre nos coeurs à l'écoute du Seigneur, le prophète nouveau qui nous demande d'ouvrir les voies au Christ Rédempteur.

"Les motifs de nous réjouir ne manquent pas en cette fête de la Saint-Jean 1984."⁶³

The tone of this 1984 sermon contrasts quite significantly with that of 1987, when the four themes are much more centred on questions of ethics and morality: the low birthrate, the rejection of familial responsibilities and commitment, the consequences of moral deprivation and the materialism rampant in society.⁶⁴ In 1988, the sermon speaks of the importance of "un peuple qui se rappelle," and of the Christian faith as "l'élément fondamental de son être." It mentions such issues as materialism, poverty, the low birthrate again, suicide, family violence, individualism, pollution and AIDS as examples of "une crise de conscience." A return to the Christian faith, "une révolution spirituelle," is called for, and saint Jean-Baptiste, "celui des radicales conversions," is cited as the

one able to help in the rejection of contemporary idols and a return to simple values.

As in earlier times, the Church still tries to attach to John the Baptist certain qualities and virtues which it would like individuals and the society as a whole to emulate, and it seizes upon la Fête as an occasion for placing the people's history and identity within an overall framework of religious meaning. Even though this does happen in the context of a specifically religious ritual, it confirms the durability of the religion-nationalism equilibrium.

In the 1970s, there was a concerted effort made to popularize la Fête by decentralizing it and also by planning activities which were participatory rather than merely spectator-oriented. The super-spectacles (which were certainly no more oriented to direct involvement by those in attendance than any other such large gathering or event) replaced the traditional parades. Music having become the ideal medium for the dissemination of nationalistic ideals, it was at the centre of many a June 24th festivity, and it remains so today. This change in orientation was not merely due to a transformation in style and cultural expression; it also had to do with the fact that violence had become associated with the celebrations. In a word, la Saint-Jean had become too politicized. Immediately after the incidents of 1969, the Baptist disappeared as the central symbol

attached to the festivities. He was dismissed as a figure and an emblem more appropriate to the past, particularly a past understood as having been dominated by the Church, and therefore more likely to stir passions and anger.

One of the purposes in popularizing la Fête was to involve as many people as possible in the event, either in the direct organization or as active participants. One would hear such expressions as "C'est la fête à tout le monde," which were means of getting across the message that, regardless of your stature in society or even, and more importantly, your politics, you were entitled to celebrate on this day. From an intensely polarized and emotionally-laden feast, la Saint-Jean-Baptiste became quite devoid of any particularly strong sense of political or social fermentation.

An example of the persistence of this movement away from the explicitly political was the slogan used by the SSJB de M as recently as for the Fête nationale of 1987: "et...bonne Saint-Jean, hein!". The interesting thing about this particular theme is not only that it uses a colloquial expression or mode of speech as a way of getting across its message, but that it reintroduces the former name of la Fête. Another interpretation which can be attached to this slogan is that the name of the Baptist can now be used with impunity, considering that it is empty of cumbersome historical significance.

Even though the effort was not a conscious one, it seems that the attempt at popularizing or democratizing la Fête was also a means of putting forth (by downplaying whatever latent class conflicts there were in existence) an homogeneous view of Québec as a classless society. One of the characteristics of post-Quiet Revolution nationalism was its rejection of the other, more traditional forms of nationalism as just so many ways of masking, on the part of the elite, the realities of class conflict. The contours of a new nationalistic ideology remained unclear, however, and independence became viewed as a manner of promoting social change in Québec. The very ideal of independence, which was a central theme of most of the pre-Referendum Fêtes de la Saint-Jean in the 1970s, did require a certain amount of social and political accord to be credible. National self-determination was seen as the guarantee of cultural emancipation for the working classes. As cultural manifestations in their own right, the celebrations of la Saint-Jean would naturally reflect this quest for the overcoming of class differences.

"Cette tendance à se préoccuper uniquement de la situation économique et politique québécoise apparaît clairement chez les intellectuels de gauche qui se sont généralement entendus pour dénoncer les anciennes idéologies canadiennes-françaises qui n'auraient reflété que les préoccupations de la bourgeoisie et qui se seraient servi de la question nationale pour masquer les conflits de classes. Mais l'entente est loin d'avoir été faite sur l'idéologie de rechange, en particulier sur la question nationale. Quelle est la place de la nation dans

une idéologie fermement axée sur les intérêts de la classe ouvrière? Malgré leurs divergences, la plupart des intellectuels de gauche ont opté pour des stratégies destinées à promouvoir le changement social et économique au Québec, et, ce faisant, ils ont été amenés à défendre l'idée de l'indépendance. Même parmi ceux qui considèrent le problème national comme secondaire, nombreux sont ceux qui, pour une raison ou pour une autre, estiment que l'émancipation des travailleurs passait par celle du Québec.

"Les premiers indépendantistes de gauche soutenaient que les travailleurs avaient des besoins culturels qui ne seraient satisfaits que par la libération nationale. Ils y voyaient le Québec comme une colonie: les travailleurs francophones souffraient donc des effets culturels de la colonisation. Ces penseurs rejoignaient ainsi l'analyse des nationalistes de droite qui ne voyaient pas de conflit de classes dans la collectivité francophone, mais voyaient eux aussi dans le Québec une colonie du Canada anglais et des Etats-Unis, et y décelaient une situation analogue aux pays du Tiers-Monde. Le principe de l'autodétermination, en vertu duquel les peuples déclaraient l'indépendance, devait également être appliqué au Québec."⁶⁵

It could be argued that this desire to blur the distinctions between social classes, on the one hand, and between class consciousness and nationalism, on the other, is indicative of the relative inability of contemporary symbols of national identity to elicit the same degree of unanimity and passion as was evident in earlier times in Québec. Though the festivities surrounding la Saint-Jean are now marked by a certain amount of openness and a higher degree of direct participation than was the case at other times, they still do not match the grandiose displays of national solidarity and purpose which earlier Fêtes so ably projected. Critics will say that this is only natural, and

that it reflects the collapse of any and all overarching systems of belief, not only in Québec but generally in today's world. Following the last of the big parades in 1968 and 1969, la Saint-Jean could not be said to represent very much by way of a strong and coherent vehicle for the production and dissemination of common assumptions and beliefs about the national character. Many of the celebrations of the 1970s and 1980s are best remembered because of the fact that they resembled big parties where music and drinking were the key elements binding people together. This suggests that there has been a revival of the recreative, carnival-like aspects of la Fête.

Two of the important characteristics of la Fête nationale in recent years have been its fragmentation and its diversification in terms of the projection of particular identities. The model of neighbourhood feasts, adopted in a spirit of decentralization, first made possible the scheduling of simultaneous events in many different parts of the city. A large public event, such as a concert or the lighting of the bonfire, may still have been held, but people were encouraged to participate, first and foremost, in neighbourhood activities. The focal point of the collective identity was not "la nation," but "le quartier." Another type of celebration has been that organized by and catering to a very specific group, such as ethnic communities, disabled persons or gays and lesbians, among

others. In these cases, the primary reason for coming together was to be found in an exclusive sense of collective identity, la Fête being more of a general framework within which to express one's distinctiveness. These sorts of very specific ways of celebrating are a reflection of the larger changes at work within Québec, particularly as regards the transition to an increasingly multicultural society. In the small parade of 1988, for example, one of the three floats consisted of children of different ethnic groups as representatives of the Québec of tomorrow.

The relationship of the elite to the masses which was mirrored in la Fête nationale, though certainly as significant as in other times, took the form of a denial or, at the very least, a concealment of class differences. This did not mean, however, that there still was not a segment of the population which determined and manipulated the symbolic universe attached to la Fête. Whether it was the SSJB de M, the Parti québécois or the supposedly autonomous corporations or groups which organized some of the festivities, all put forward, by the very fact of being entrusted with the responsibility for structuring la Fête and having access to the resources necessary to do so, certain perceptions and interpretations of the meaning of the celebrations. The important difference with the period prior to 1970 had to do with the fact that the parade could no longer be used as the ideal stage where a single, uniform

ideological message could be proposed. Now it was left to diverse and diffuse groups to elaborate their own views of nationalism, since there could really no longer be a unified one.

La Fête nationale represents the fulfilment of the process of secularization of Québec society, but it is also a reminder, in a certain manner, of the political ideals which inspired its birth in 1834. At that time, the nationalism advocated by the Patriotes was divorced from any sense of religious legitimacy or justification. What was being proposed was done so in political terms, and la Saint-Jean-Baptiste was a nationalistic feast more than it was a religious one. At least, that is how Duvernay determined it to be. When the Parti québécois won power in 1976, the cycle was complete, for "L'élection du Parti québécois le 15 novembre 1976 symbolise la revanche politique des Patriotes de 1837-1837."⁶⁶ The social class represented by the leadership of the Parti québécois was very similar to that of the Patriotes, allowance being made for historical differences. It was this government which formally decreed the transformation of the religious feast into the secular one, thereby formalizing the historical fact of the Church's demise and indicating that "an about-to-be country" such as Québec should have its own national holiday. In Québec, la conscience nationale is often a major determinant of history.

"Le fait demeure qu'après avoir été formée, la conscience nationale peut exercer une influence profonde et durable. L'histoire du Québec témoigne amplement de ce fait. C'est en grande partie en fonction de catégories et de suppositions reliées à la nation que les Québécois ont tenté de comprendre leur situation collective et de façonner leur avenir. On ne peut comprendre l'histoire du Québec sans reconnaître un rôle distinct et irréductible à la conscience nationale."⁶⁷

During this most recent period of Québec history, la Fête de la Saint-Jean appears quite empty of any significant religious meaning or rituals. Though there may be some scattered attempts to bring back saint Jean-Baptiste in some small local parades, the last important figure of the Saint was that of the Montréal parade of 1969. La messe de la Saint-Jean has been celebrated consistently, though it would seem to enjoy renewed popularity in recent years. On the whole, however, and particularly from 1970, la Fête became areligious in the formal sense. It followed the general pattern found throughout Québec society. The church no longer controlled its manifestations, nor did it provide the general schema of its nationalistic message. As in everything else, the State became responsible for its organization, either directly or indirectly. La Fête could no longer be said to have been an expression of clerical religiosity or authority. Whether or not it retained its dimension of popular religiosity, however, and in what manner, is something which requires further examination.

In the chapter dealing with popular religion in her

1986 book on the changes confronting French Christianity, Danièle Hervieu-Léger reviews a 1983 study on a local cult in Saint-Junien, Limousin, France.⁶⁸ This cult, in existence since the 16th century, consists of displaying the relics of two local saints considered the legendary founders and protectors of the city. The study traces the evolution which has taken place in the public celebrations of the cult, and how it has developed from a religious occasion to a merely secular one: "La fête semble se prendre elle-même pour fin en se profanisant de plus en plus."⁶⁹ In this context, the downplaying of the religious rituals of protection attached to the relics, as well as the increased concern with historical representations in the procession, among other such modifications, reflect a definite adaptability in the traditional cult. Taking this example of a very localized type of ritual as a starting-point, Hervieu-Léger goes on to draw some perceptive and important conclusions about popular religion in general, and which need to be remembered when discussing la Fête nationale du Québec. She states:

"L'un des points importants de cette étude est de mettre nettement en évidence que, contrairement à l'idée développée par certains spécialistes de la culture populaire (...) selon laquelle la religion populaire est une religion immobile, "invariante", figée dans la conservation du passé et inapte à de véritables innovations en raison de l'affinité élective qu'elle entretient avec les rythmes relativement constants de la vie paysanne, la tradition se perpétue à travers une innovation permanente. La constitution de l'identité locale est un processus dynamique d'élaboration culturelle. Or celui-ci ne se réalise pas "à part" des évolutions culturelles qui affectent la

société globale, mais en lien constant avec elles:
 la mise au second plan des rituels de protection,
 le récent souci d'histoire introduit dans le
 rituel ancien témoignent, entre autres, de cette
 interpénétration. En témoigne aussi, en même temps
 que la tendance au développement des à-côtés
 profanes de la manifestation, l'évolution du sens
 religieux donné à la fête par les chrétiens qui
 participent à sa préparation: bien plus que sur la
 signification religieuse des ostensions en elles-
 mêmes, ils insistent sur l'"expérience d'amour
 fraternel" que font ceux qui s'attachent ensemble
 à préparer le cortège. Tandis que la fête
proprement dite se laïcise, le religieux trouve, à
la faveur de cette laïcisation, de nouveaux modes
d'expression proches de la culture religieuse
dominante qui valorise l'expérience communautaire
comme lieu privilégié de la foi."⁷⁰

Hervieu-Léger brings out two salient themes which can be deduced from the study: 1. that popular religion, far from being static or forever anchored in tradition, is actually quite adaptable; and 2. that popular religion is not as removed or distant from mainstream forms of religiosity as is generally thought. She summarizes it in the following words: "Ces deux séries de remarques remettent déjà en question une partie des idées reçues, quant à l'immutabilité et à l'autonomie supposées de la religion populaire."⁷¹ When reviewing the transformations which have occurred in la Saint-Jean-Baptiste in Québec since its very beginnings in colonial days, one of the things which first comes out is the consistent manner in which it has accommodated itself to the larger process of social change. It has taken such forms as were required by socio-political and cultural circumstances. The second aspect has to do with the fact that the Catholic Church, for a long period of

time, controlled the celebrations, but that even in more secular periods (such as that of the Patriotes and the more recent past), religion has never been totally absent from the picture.

It may have been an implicit assumption in these pages that la Fête de la Saint-Jean is a manifestation of popular religiosity, and some may wish to argue that it is not truly so. It cannot be denied, however, that la Fête, in its origins, exhibited many of the characteristics of this type of religiosity. In New France, this remained the case, even though the Church officially sanctioned the events associated with la Saint-Jean. Even if an institutionalized official religion were to rehabilitate or co-opt a popular custom, as the Catholic Church did with this particular feast, this does not necessarily imply that the feast loses all the qualities usually associated with popular religiosity. Many mass demonstrations of religious zeal such as pilgrimages and, to an equally significant extent, la Saint-Jean-Baptiste exhibit aspects of both clerical religiosity and popular religiosity, just as they present similarities with displays of nationalistic feeling.

La Fête nationale is still la Saint-Jean-Baptiste, but under the guise of a thoroughly profane feast celebrating the fact and potentiality of contemporary Québec. Two events having religious connotations remain, one by virtue of its source and the other because it is a religious ritual: le

feu de la Saint-Jean and la messe de la Saint-Jean. Most other aspects of the celebrations have been secularized, whether by necessity or because of changes in style and custom. Hervieu-Léger speaks of identity, local in this case, as being a dynamic process, and something which cannot be realized apart from the wider course of cultural change. It has been pointed out, on a number of occasions, that la Fête has always done precisely this: to fashion, express and diffuse an identity for Québec. This has been its elementary purpose. It is natural, therefore, that it do so under different forms and features. The persistence of religion in the context of la Fête is likewise a function of this process of transformation. The public association of religion with the kind of nationalism found today on June 24th would be not only inappropriate, but also quite unimaginable. Yet forms of religiosity do persist. They may, in fact, be limited strictly to the mass celebrated on that day, but they nonetheless form part of the overall meaning attached to la Saint-Jean, if only for those who are able to understand the unity inherent in this Feast.

ENDNOTES

¹See Frederick Bird, "The Nature and Function of Ritual Forms: A Sociological Discussion," in Studies in Religion/Sciences religieuses, 9/4, fall 1980, pp. 387-402.

²Ibid., p. 387.

³Ibid., p. 388.

⁴Ibid., p. 390.

⁵Ibid., p. 391.

⁶Ibid., p. 391.

⁷Ibid., p. 395.

⁸Ibid., p. 393.

⁹Ibid., p. 393.

¹⁰See ibid., p. 389. See Edmund R. Leach, "Ritualization in Man in Relation to Conceptual and Social Development" and "Two Essays Concerning the Symbolic Representation of Time," in William A. Lessa and Evon Z. Vogt, eds., Reader in Comparative Religion: An Anthropological Approach (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1972), pp. 333-337 and pp. 108-116.

¹¹Edmund R. Leach, "Ritualization...", p. 337.

¹²Edmund R. Leach, "Two Essays...", p. 115.

¹³See endnote no. 7 above.

¹⁴See endnote no. 5 above.

¹⁵Hans Mol, Identity and the Sacred (Agincourt: The Book Society of Canada Limited, 1976), p. 233. Chapter XVI of Mol's book (pp. 233-245) provides an interesting summary of various theories of ritual.

¹⁶See Cornelius J. Jaenen, The Role of the Church in New France (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson Limited, 1976), Chapter VI, "Colonial Manners and Morals." See also Robert-Lionel Séguin, La vie libertine en Nouvelle-France (Ottawa, Editions Leméac Inc., 1972), 2 volumes.

¹⁷See Chapter II , section A.

¹⁸Heinz Weinmann, Du Canada au Québec: Généalogie d'une histoire (Montréal: Editions de l'Hexagone, 1987), p. 435.

¹⁹See Denis Monière, Ludger Duvernay et la révolution intellectuelle au Bas-Canada (Montréal: Editions Québec/Amérique, 1987), p. 114.

²⁰Ibid., p. 100.

²¹Ibid., p. 103. Emphases mine. See the Conclusion to the thesis for a discussion of the two lines highlighted.

²²This is an obvious reference to the British, particularly in the context of the clash of wills between the Assembly and the Governor General.

²³See "L'énigme d'une bannière," in Le Devoir (Montréal: 16 avril 1988, cahier spécial, "Rebellions 1837-1838"), p. 5.

²⁴"Le peuple, source primitive de toute autorité légitime."

²⁵Gérard Filteau, Histoire des Patriotes (Montréal: Les Editions Univers Inc., 1980), p. 207. Note that the author assumes that the Société was founded at the time of the first banquet in 1834 (even though it was legally founded only in 1843), thus his description of the Société as a patriotic association which influenced the Patriotes. Of the Comité central et permanent, Filteau writes: "Le Comité central et permanent (...) avait été établi à Montréal, au lendemain de l'adoption des 92. Son but était de constituer un organisme central d'information et de direction pour le soutien des revendications canadiennes. Le Comité devait éclairer l'opinion publique et aviser aux mesures à prendre suivant les circonstances. Les bases en furent jetées à une assemblée de délégués de comtés, réunis à Montréal, le quatre septembre 1834.", ibid., p. 207.

²⁶Those of 1835, 1836 and 1837 were presided over by Denis-Benjamin Viger, representative of the Patriotes in London and cousin of Jacques Viger.

²⁷Heinz Weinmann, op. cit., p. 437. Weinmann's footnote indicates that the quote is taken from the archives of the SSJB de M of 18 June 1944.

²⁸See Paul-André Turcotte, L'Enseignement secondaire public des frères éducateurs (1920-1970): Utopie et modernité (Montréal: Les Editions Bellarmin, 1988), particularly pp. 138-141.

²⁹On l'Institut canadien, see Jean-Roch Rioux, "Gonzalve Doutre et l'Institut canadien," in Pierre Hurtubise et al., Le Laïc dans l'église canadienne-française de 1830 à nos jours (Montréal: Editions Fides, 1972), pp. 129-144. On Arthur Buies, see Jean-Guy Genest, "La Lanterne, 1868-1869," in Fernand Dumont et al., eds., Idéologies au Canada français, 1850-1900 (Québec: Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 1971), pp. 245-263.

³⁰On les frères éducateurs, see Paul-André Turcotte, op. cit. On l'Ecole des sciences sociales, see Jean-Eudes Landry, "L'Ecole du maquis," in Contact (Québec: Université Laval, autumn 1988), pp. 8-16.

³¹In 1880, for example, on the occasion of the Convention nationale de Québec, the delegates pass resolutions calling for scientific and professional education in Québec schools.

³²Agathe Lafortune-Martel, Fête noble en bourgogne au XVe siècle (Montréal: Les Éditions Bellarmin, 1983, Cahiers d'études médiévales no. 8), p. 165.

³³Flags were important in making statements about the particular patriotic orientation and what the dominant ideologies might be at a given time. From 1834 to 1837, the tri-colour flag of the Patriotes (horizontal bands of green, white and red) was prevalent. In 1843, the Union Jack began to make its appearance. In the 1900s, the more popular ensigns were the yellow-and-white papal flag, l'étendard du Sacré-Coeur or le Carillon-Sacré-Coeur (a flag much like the current fleurdelisé, but where the four fleurs de lys were placed in the four corners and there was an inflamed Sacred Heart in the middle of the white cross) and sometimes the French tricolore. From the late 1940s until the present, the official fleurdelisé was most prevalent. The flag of the Patriotes is seen occasionally today. Of the specific banner used by the SSJB de M, Benjamin Sulte writes: "La Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste marche sous le drapeau britannique. Sa principale bannière est de couleur blanche et verte, ayant sur un côté l'image de saint Jean-Baptiste, entourée d'une guirlande de feuilles d'érable avec un castor et la devise "Rendre le peuple meilleur". Sur le revers sont les armes de la cité avec l'inscription "Association Saint-Jean-Baptiste de Montréal"." Benjamin Sulte, Mélanges historiques (Montréal: Editions Edouard Garand, 1929), vol. 15, p. 68.

³⁴See Chapter II, section D. See also Heinz Weinmann, op. cit., pp. 451-454, for a brief discussion of infantilism.

³⁵Yvan Lamonde, ed., Louis-Adolphe Paquet (Montréal: Editions Fides, 1972), Collection Classiques canadiens, no. 45, pp. 57-58 and 59-60. Emphases mine. See also Chapter IV, section A, for additional passages from this speech which explore a different theme.

³⁶Conor Cruise O'Brien, God Land: Reflections on Religion and Nationalism (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1988), pp. 2-3.

³⁷Roger Lapointe, "L'ultramontanisme au Québec -- ou quand la doctrine se trouve décalée au rang d'une idéologie," in Studies in Religion/Sciences religieuses, 8/4, Fall 1989, p. 419. Lapointe, in this article, makes reference to a book by P. Thibault on Thomism entitled Savoir et pouvoir: Philosophie thomiste et politique cléricale au XIXe siècle (Québec: Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 1972).

³⁸See endnote no. 5.

³⁹See the Appendix for some discussion of levels of participation, as well as related matters.

⁴⁰Agathe Lafortune-Martel, op. cit., p. 21. The author is explaining the theory of Mikhaël Bakhtine.

⁴¹Heinz Weinmann, op. cit., pp. 451-452.

⁴²Ibid., p. 454.

⁴³Asselin also decried the misuse of the annual parades, insofar as they depicted "...ce patriotisme "à panache et à ferblanterie" qui, au lieu de faire prendre conscience de l'histoire du Canada français, "contribue à l'abaissement de la conscience nationale, et à l'affaiblissement de la pensée française"." Heinz Weinmann, op. cit., p. 455.

⁴⁴Jean Paré, as quoted in Jean Pagnol, La Saint-Jean, Valréas, France 1504, Montréal, Québec 1834 (Valréas, France, 1986), p. 39.

⁴⁵See Denis Monière, Le développement des idéologies au Québec des origines à nos jours (Montréal: Editions Québec/Amérique, 1977), Chapters VI and VII.

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 290.

⁴⁷Danièle Hervieu-Léger, Vers un nouveau christianisme?: Introduction à la sociologie du

christianisme occidental (Paris: Les Editions du Cerf, 1986), p. 123.

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 132.

⁴⁹Ibid., p. 131.

⁵⁰Michèle Guay, La fête de la Saint-Jean-Baptiste à Montréal: 1834-1909 (Ottawa: University of Ottawa, Unpublished M.A. Thesis, 1973), p. 132.

⁵¹Danièle Hervieu-Léger, op. cit., p. 127.

⁵²Elisabeth Labrousse, La révocation de l'édit de Nantes (Genève: Labor et Fides, 1985), p. 226.

⁵³This theme is developed by Heinz Weinmann in his book. See Heinz Weinmann, op. cit., pp. 417-423.

⁵⁴René Girard, La violence et le sacré (Paris: Editions Bernard Grasset, 1972), p. 171.

⁵⁵Ibid., pp. 353-354 and p. 372. See Heinz Weinmann, op. cit., pp. 415-430 for an analysis of the symbol of John the Baptist from the perspective of Girard's theory.

⁵⁶Kenneth McRoberts and Dale Posgate, Développement et modernisation du Québec (Montréal: Les Editions du Boréal Express, 1983), p. 116.

⁵⁷Ibid., p. 117.

⁵⁸Ibid., p. 117.

⁵⁹Louis Balthazar, Bilan du nationalisme au Québec (Montréal: Editions de l'Hexagone, 1986), p. 145.

⁶⁰See the complete listing in Chapter II, section D.

⁶¹L'Eglise de Montréal (Montréal: Archidiocèse de Montréal, undated xeroxed copy), p. 469.

⁶²Ibid., p. 470. Emphases mine.

⁶³Ibid., p. 471.

⁶⁴Summaries of the 1987 and 1988 sermons are drawn from personal notes taken while in attendance at the June 24th masses.

⁶⁵Kenneth McRoberts and Dale Posgate, op. cit., pp. 165-166.

⁶⁶Denis Monière, Le développement..., p. 371.

⁶⁷Kenneth McRoberts and Dale Posgate, op. cit., p. 36.

⁶⁸See Danièle Hervieu-Léger, op. cit., pp. 101-137, particularly pp. 124-127.

⁶⁹Ibid., p. 126.

⁷⁰Ibid., p. 126. Emphases mine.

⁷¹Ibid., p. 126. Michel Vovelle, in La mentalité révolutionnaire: Société et mentalités sous la Révolution française (Paris: Editions sociales, 1985), Chapter 10, "Fête et Révolution," pp. 157-168, discusses the nature of the revolutionary feast as "...le lieu privilégié où s'est investi le rêve d'une société nouvelle et d'un monde idéal." He has some interesting remarks on the characteristics of a feast in a para-religious, socially-effervescent context.

CONCLUSION

"Conquérir sa tête"

It will be remembered that at the banquet of 1836, Ludger Duvernay is reputed to have sung a song, which he composed himself, containing the following words: "Avant de conquérir sa tête, prions Hérode encore un peu."¹ These two simple lines are not as anodyne as they might appear at first glance. They contain an important and prophetic element of protest which forms a link between Duvernay and subsequent generations of French Canadian thinkers. Before elaborating upon this point, however, it is necessary to recall the scriptural description of John the Baptist's death.

The story of the Baptist's martyrdom² centres upon the adulterous marriage between King Herod of Judea and Herodias, wife of his half-brother, Philip. John had publicly condemned Herod for this breach of Mosaic law, and been imprisoned, most probably at the request of Herodias. On the occasion of a banquet marking Herod's birthday, Herodias' daughter³ danced for the king and, in exchange, he promised her anything she would ask for. The girl asked her mother what she should request from Herod, and Herodias immediately answered: the head of John the Baptist. This is what the girl asks for, adding that it be brought "...on a

dish." Herod would have hesitated to keep his word, for he is described in the gospel as "deeply distressed."

"Reluctant to break his word," however, Herod orders John the Baptist beheaded. Heinz Weinmann analyzes the death of the Baptist in terms of René Girard's theory of the origins of the sacred:

"Jean-Baptiste, précurseur du Christ, par son sacrifice, découvre les fondations du religieux, de tout processus de sacralisation. Au fond du sacré se cache le meurtre collectif d'une bande d'assassins qui se font fort d'avoir amené "miraculeusement" la paix sociale grâce à ce meurtre assumé collectivement. Le sacré naît d'une crise qui se résout par le sacrifice d'un bouc émissaire. On adore, on divinise cette victime parce que sa mort a instauré la paix dans la société. Les assassins en divinisant leur victime, en faisant d'elle un bouc émissaire sacrificiel, effacent les origines meurtrières de leur acte. (...)

"Par un flash-back saisissant, avant même de décrire la mise à mort de Jean-Baptiste, saint Marc évoque les effets miraculeux provoqués un peu partout dans le pays. C'est donc parce que Hérode croit dans le bénéfice miraculeux de son assassinat qu'il fait tuer le Baptiseur."⁴

There are some interesting similarities, at the level of imagery, between the gospel narrative of the Baptist's decapitation and the stanza of Duvernay's song from which the two lines quoted above are taken. The full text of the specific passage from the song is as follows:

"Accourez au banquet civique
On dîne en famille aujourd'hui;
Calmons notre ardeur politique
Chassons les soucis et l'ennui
Que chacun en ce jour de fête
Célèbre Jean, l'ami d'un Dieu.
Avant de conquérir sa tête
Prions Hérode encore un peu."⁵

The 1836 banquet at which this song was heard was held at a critical time. This was only a year before the outbreak of the Rebellion, and the prevailing mood was one of impending political crisis. There were also divisions within the French Canadian "family." This was the year that two parallel banquets were held: the one traditionally hosted by Duvernay, and the other organized by the bureaucrates or opponents of the Parti canadien-patriote.

In his song, Duvernay speaks of a "banquet civique;" there is no sense of this being a religious event. He describes the occasion as "ce jour de fête," a time for celebration. In the selection from St. Mark's gospel, the scene is also a banquet, and a joyous one because it is held to mark a royal birthday. Duvernay makes specific reference to a family gathering ("on dîne en famille aujourd'hui"), but requests that political zeal be tempered ("Calmons notre ardeur politique"). These are undoubtedly references to the differences between the Patriotes and the bureaucrates. In the next-to-last line, Duvernay speaks of conquering or winning the head of John the Baptist which, in the gospel story, is what Salomé does, but only after asking Herod for it, presumably several times over. Duvernay also employs the image of pleading ("Prions Hérode encore un peu"). Duvernay insists that the head of the Baptist be asked for. In this context, Herod may be a symbol of British intransigence in the face of the Patriotes' requests for constitutional

reform.

There is something momentous about Ludger Duvernay, founder of the Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste and the one who chose saint Jean-Baptiste as patron and symbol of French Canadians, declaring that there is a need to win the head of the Baptist -- almost as a prize, as it were. This reveals, quite explicitly, that Duvernay was aware that the Baptist could not stand forever as a collective symbol of French Canadians, and that this symbol would have to be destroyed precisely so that this collectivity could attain maturity. In the Girardian perspective, such a sacrifice would usher in an era of social peace. Conquering the Saint's head would be a pre-condition of national liberation. In this sense, there is an evident and direct line linking Duvernay with two historic figures in Québec history: Olivar Asselin and Pierre Elliott Trudeau.

Some seventy-five years after Duvernay, Olivar Asselin "...par un acte très courageux, parce que solitaire, en pleine période d'angélisme, tue l'agneau, sacrifie le sacrifice."⁶ Asselin's critique of the clerico-nationalistic symbolism attached to the iconography of the childish Baptist and his docile lamb was a remarkable attack upon the power of the Church and a denigration of French Canadian powerlessness. Coming, as this did, from a future president of the Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste de Montréal, thereby paralleling Duvernay's own stature, the assault was

particularly significant. In 1968, a Canadian prime minister, by the sheer force of his presence at a Saint-Jean-Baptiste parade, sparked a riot which, a year later, at the last such parade, would lead to the public decapitation of the figure of the Saint. Pierre Elliott Trudeau, an old foe of Québec clericalism and of nationalism under any form, unwittingly set the stage for the climactic historical conquest of le Baptiste as national symbol. That same year, a Québec terrorist had written: "Let us kill Saint John the Baptist!"⁷

Duvernay, Asselin and Trudeau each, in his own way, had a decisive influence upon the orientation of Québec nationalism and upon the myth which was saint Jean-Baptiste. Duvernay was the original charisma, the founder who decided upon the choice of the symbol. Implicit in this choice, however, was an expectation that it would have to be destroyed. Asselin was the reformer, the voice of reason and judgement at a time when the power of Catholicism brooked no opposition. His timely critique, though not entirely effective in his day, heralded the dramatic changes which would soon take place in Québec. Trudeau was the catalyst, the end-point at which Duvernay's prophecy was realized. He represented the polarization of Québec society, more by virtue of the fact that he stood against its natural evolution, than because of his role as its voice in a Canadian context. Three men each of his time; three

ideologues who each marked a turning-point in the development of Québec. Yet each is connected, one with the other, in a process which has been unmistakable and inevitable in its impact upon the nationalistic aspirations and the destiny of their collectivity. These three figures summarize the general themes and historical partitions of the preceding pages.

This thesis has argued that a feast is primarily a social phenomenon, and that it reflects and integrates a number of forces at work within a society. Throughout its history, la Fête de la Saint-Jean-Baptiste in Québec has performed this same essential rôle. Our analysis led to the identification of three sets of polarities expressed in la Fête: 1. nationalism vs. religion, in terms of their respective ideological perspectives; 2. the elite vs. the masses, or the interactions between social classes; and 3. popular religiosity vs. clerical religiosity, or the relationship of belief to authority. Items two and three have tended to overlap in many cases. These three sets of polarities were examined in terms of the historical breakdown of la Fête itself: 1. 1834 to 1837, or the political period of the Patriotes; 2. 1843 to 1959, which represents the domination of the religious orientation; and 3. 1960 to the present, or the triumph of secularization. A basic assumption of this study has been that la Fête's development has taken place within the larger framework of

the types of association found between Québec Catholicism and Québec society.

The first polarity, that of nationalistic ideologies vs. religious ideologies, was manifested in different ways as the celebrations evolved over time. Prior to 1834, particularly during the period of New France, la Fête was characterized more by its traditional features, and therefore was closer to a form of popular religiosity. Nationalism, as it came to be understood later, was not an element of the festivities. During the short yet critically decisive period from 1834 to 1837, the years marking the institutionalization of la Fête de la Saint-Jean-Baptiste, nationalism and religion coexisted in an ambiguous and uncertain manner at the four banquets held during this time. These were primarily political events, and what references there may have been to Catholicism, including saint Jean-Baptiste himself, were basically conditioned by tactical considerations.

The prolonged era which followed (1843 to 1959), though it is not as uniform in its ideological profile as is sometimes assumed, represents the intimate merging of nationalism and religion, each conditioning and supporting the other. The Church's socio-political predominance would account for this, and the celebrations became the perfect stage for the enactment of this union. With the Quiet Revolution of the 1960s, religion was completely evacuated

from the festivities. An intensely secular nationalism replaced it, almost to the point where it became itself a sacralized focus of identity for Québec.

The second and third sets of polarities, which have to do with the dynamics of social class and with types of religiosity, are closely interrelated. In New France, and following the Conquest, la Saint-Jean was sanctioned by the clergy and the colonial authorities, though the masses of people persisted in associating it with natural occurrences, such as the solstice or seasonal and agricultural change. The clerical or elite authority was extending its approbation to a mass phenomenon, typified by its origins in popular belief. During the period of the Patriotes, the banquets were elitist occasions which further augmented class differences. Any acknowledgement of "le peuple" was limited to the nationalistic rhetoric of that time, and this was reflected perfectly in the banquets. Religious themes, whether popular or clerical, were not reproduced in the banquets; conflicts between politics and the Church were.

Over the course of the next one hundred years, la Fête acted as a powerful force for the integration, not only of nationalism and religion in Québec, but of the disparities between social classes, most particularly between the clerico-nationalistic elite of the society and the masses. They were seen as sharing a common ideological outlook, and this was expressed in the celebrations. Popular religiosity

was fused with clerical interpretations of the Feast, though "popular culture" remained a distinctive trait of the festivities. From the 1960s, and particularly during the 1970s, in an effort at creating consensus around the issue of Québec sovereignty, class distinctions were again minimized. The Feast has now become formally areligious (it bears the official name of Fête nationale du Québec), though remnants of its religious past, such as le feu de joie and the mass, still echo faintly but undeniably.

In Québec, there has been little scholarly work done on la Fête de la Saint-Jean-Baptiste. The vast majority of writings on la Fête are either rhetorical or merely descriptive. In the historical field, the thesis of Guay and the book by Rumilly do provide valuable and essential information. Weinmann's more recent work, while it does not deal exclusively with la Fête, and even though the particular viewpoint espoused may be problematic at times, remains the first systematic analysis of la Saint-Jean considered from the perspective of an overall theoretical model. My thesis adopts a sociological approach, and provides an analysis of la Fête in terms of some of the classic concepts in the sociology of religion, such as ideology and class, as well as a few of the more recent ones, notably popular religion. Of itself, the sociological scrutiny of the Feast represents a new approach.

In relation to the overall field, this thesis should

constitute a significant contribution to the growing literature on the feast as one of the more durable and important aspects of popular religiosity. This area of study remains underdeveloped in a North American context. Most studies in the sociology of the feast focus upon European examples. Even more fundamentally, the vastly expanded corpus on popular religion in Québec has yet to produce a significant study of la Fête de la Saint-Jean-Baptiste, even if there can be no doubt as to the importance of the Feast in Québec history. These pages should begin to address such a glaring and unfortunate shortcoming. Within the larger area of the history of Catholicism in Québec, my thesis examines one of the more consequential and revealing indicators of the relationship between church and society. As such, it provides an additional illustration of the dynamics of change and continuity in Québec, and of how this same society, at least in its cultural and political life, adapted itself.

The thesis also opens up a number of avenues for further exploration. First, it proposes a reading of la Fête as both a religious and a social phenomenon. More precisely, it argues, in part, that the celebrations of June 24th were characterized by their quality as expressions of popular religiosity. This would require further refined analysis. Specifically, the figure of saint Jean-Baptiste, from the perspective of a sociology of sainthood, would merit in-

depth study. Second, newspapers have played a critical role in the development and propagation of the values attached to la Fête, particularly as relates to nationalism. A careful study of editorials written to mark la Saint-Jean would constitute a very rich overview of Québec nationalism, thereby permitting an even better understanding of this important force in the development of Québec society. Third, la Fête outside Québec, particularly in New England or such important areas with significant French-speaking minorities as Ontario, was undoubtedly critical in sustaining ethno-cultural identity in the context of an ever-constant threat of assimilation. How la Saint-Jean acted as a barrier against such assimilation would provide insights into the dynamics of ethnic distinctiveness. On a general level, the preceding pages put forth an understanding of religion and culture in Québec which raises the question of their interdependence. From this perspective, any analysis which provides additional insight into this dynamic is a new contribution.

National feasts are the reflection of a collective purpose and specificity. What makes them different from other types of feasts, whether religious, familial or personal, is the fact that they mirror and expound loyalties to a national community, not so much in terms of a nation per se, but rather as an elemental, experiential reality. In his famous essay on civil religion in America, Robert Bellah

writes: "...the American civil religion is not the worship of the American nation but an understanding of the American experience in the light of ultimate and universal reality...."⁸ What a civil religion does, nationalism, because it is so similar, may also do. Nationalism structures the collective consciousness, thereby making sense, not only of the past and the present, but more importantly of the future of a community. Public ceremonials and rituals are the language of nationalism, giving it the vitality and imagery it requires to ensure its own legitimacy and continued renewal.

Reflected in la Fête de la Saint-Jean-Baptiste, from its inception, have been the meaning and development of the French Canadian and Québécois identities. It is obvious that la Fête has followed the course of Québec nationalism, for it is itself a manifestation of this force. From the intensely political times of the Patriotes through the long period of clerical mastery to the secular changes of a more recent past, the celebrations, and the significance attached to them, have progressed in accordance with the larger shifts taking place within the society. The most important question to ask may be the following: What does la Fête de la Saint-Jean-Baptiste tell us about the people of Québec? A thorough answer would necessitate a repetition of the main themes and arguments contained in the preceding pages. Suffice it to say the la Fête tells us something about pride

and vision and change, about faith, destiny and hope, and finally something about a sense of country, real or simply imagined. René Lévesque expressed it in the following manner:

"Du rite du "feu nouveau" engendrant symboliquement des forces nouvelles pour l'avenir, au début du siècle dernier, à la récente "communion du feu" allumant les joyeux signaux du 24 juin tout le long du Saint-Laurent, notre fête nationale, hier comme aujourd'hui, rend le plus légitime des hommages aux bâtisseurs de notre identité collective et nous fait communier dans un même sentiment d'appartenance et de saine solidarité.

(...)

"La fête est le miroir des réalisations d'un peuple, la preuve de sa fidélité, de son dynamisme et de sa confiance. Etre assuré de soi, c'est la meilleure façon d'être amical et fraternel envers les autres."

This work, it is hoped, was able to shed critical light upon the meaning behind such words.

ENDNOTES

¹See Chapter V, section B and endnote no. 21.

²See "The Gospel According to Saint Mark" (6: 14-29), in The Jerusalem Bible (New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1966), The New Testament, pp. 72-73. See also Heinz Weinmann, Du Canada au Québec: Généalogie d'une histoire (Montréal: Editions de l'Hexagone, 1987), pp. 418-421.

³Though she is known as Salomé, she is not named in St. Mark's gospel. Weinmann notes that it is the Jewish historian Flavius Josephus who gave her the name. See Heinz Weinmann, op. cit., p. 419.

Ibid., p.420.

⁵As quoted in Denis Monière, Ludger Duvernay et la révolution intellectuelle au Bas-Canada (Montréal: Editions Québec/Amérique, 1987), p. 103.

⁶Heinz Weinmann, op. cit., p. 454.

⁷This was Pierre Vallières. See Chapter III, section D.

⁸Robert N. Bellah, "Civil Religion in America", in Beyond Belief: Essays on Religion in a Post-Traditional World (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1970), p. 186.

⁹Hélène de Carufel, A la redécouverte de notre Fête nationale (Québec: Corporation des fêtes du 24 juin, 1980), inside front cover.

APPENDIX
QUANTITATIVE ASPECTS & RELATED QUESTIONS

In the course of their development, the Saint-Jean-Baptiste festivities in Montréal have progressed through four distinct stages in terms of their format: the private banquet, the procession, the parade and the public gathering. The corresponding dates are approximately as follows: 1834 to 1837, 1843 to 1923, 1924 to 1969, and 1970 to the present.

The first banquet of 1834 brought together some sixty persons; that of 1835, for which a limited number of tickets were sold, consisted of "...plus de cent convives."¹ In 1836 and 1837, the same number of people (and perhaps more) were undoubtedly in attendance, especially since the banquet of June 24th was now clearly associated with those supporting the cause of the Patriotes. This brief, four-year period was the most explicitly political phase of la Fête: "Durant cette période, la fête sert de tribune à une idéologie fabriquée ailleurs (par exemple, les 92 Résolutions). Elle témoigne de la nécessité de se retrouver en groupe, de renforcer ses convictions par la formulation et l'audition des idées réformistes."² The banquet, "...événement qui favorise la rencontre en groupe restreint et la diffusion d'un message verbal,"³ was best suited to the political

strategy and interests of the Patriotes. In 1842 in Québec City, some two hundred people attended the first banquet held since the last one of 1837 in Montréal.⁴

It becomes difficult, given the journalistic standards of those times as well as the very limited possibilities of obtaining comparative figures, to ascertain, with any degree of comprehensiveness, the extent of participation by the residents of Montréal in the festivities, and particularly the processions, from 1843 onward. Yet it would seem that la Fête gained in popularity year after year.

"Les chiffres se rapportant aux foules qui assistent à la fête paraissent assez élevés si l'on tient compte de la population de Montréal: cinquante mille habitants environ en 1847-1848, quatre-vingt dix mille habitants environ en 1860, puis trois cent mille et plus au début des années 1900. Il faudrait toutefois une source de renseignements beaucoup plus précise que les journaux d'époque pour tirer des statistiques concluantes. On peut noter à titre indicatif, que de 1843 à 1873, aux meilleures années, la foule emplît l'église Notre-Dame; or la capacité maximale de cette église se situe aux environs de dix mille personnes. Cela situerait l'assistance entre un cinquième et un dixième de la population de Montréal. Après 1874, les chiffres d'assistance sont plus considérables, mais cette augmentation semble liée au nombre important d'étrangers qui viennent à Montréal pour la fête. Ces chiffres d'assistance assez élevés, et le fait que plusieurs étrangers soient présents chaque année, permettent de croire qu'il y a une progression quasi constante dans la popularité de la fête de la Saint-Jean-Baptiste malgré la période creuse de 1885 à 1894."⁵

It was not until 1925 that June 24th was declared a legal holiday and that people were permitted not to work on that day.⁶ It is therefore very unlikely that many members

of the less privileged social classes were able to participate actively in the festivities prior to that time, especially if these were held on a workday. Of the 10,000 people in attendance at Notre-Dame, the vast majority would have been members of the middle or upper social classes: professionals, small businessmen, clergy and politicians. If June 24th fell on a Sunday, then many more people would have witnessed the procession as bystanders, though it is again doubtful that working people would attend mass at Notre-Dame or actually march with the others. In the evenings, of course, such events as firework displays, le feu de la Saint-Jean or outdoor dancing would be well attended by many residents of Montréal.

The itinerary of the procession seems to have varied from year to year, though it would generally cover the same area of Montréal: what would today be called Old Montréal, but which was then the heart of the City. In 1846, for example, "...la procession du 24 juin (...) défile par les rues Saint-Denis, Bonsecours, Saint-Paul, McGill et Notre-Dame, jusqu'à l'église [No're-Dame]." ⁷ Denis Monière describes the composition and route of the 1847 procession in the following manner:

"La procession est ouverte par le drapeau britannique, suivi par les élèves des frères des écoles chrétiennes, les pompiers canadiens avec drapeaux et fanfares, la Société de tempérance, les membres de l'Institut canadien, les membres de la Société des amis, les membres de l'Association Saint-Jean-Baptiste, les membres de la Législature, le comité de régie, les officiers de l'Association,

les vice-présidents et enfin le président. La procession se forme près de l'Eglise Saint-Jacques et défile par les rues Saint-Denis, Saint-Paul, Saint-François-Xavier et Notre-Dame jusqu'à l'église paroissiale. On demande aux marchands canadiens de fermer leurs commerces de 8 h 30 à midi."⁸

In 1874, on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste de Montréal (SSJB de M), the Ralliement de la race française (la Convention de Montréal) was held, regrouping delegates from scattered French Canadian communities throughout North America.

"Quarante sociétés nationales Saint-Jean-Baptiste du Canada et vingt-huit des Etats-Unis répondirent à l'appel, prirent part au défilé national avec leurs fanfares respectives, ainsi qu'au congrès des assises de la race canadienne-française par leurs officiers et délégués officiels. Les participants furent convoqués à se réunir à sept heures du matin sur la rue Craig, en face du Champ de Mars, et défilèrent par les rues Saint-Laurent, Sainte-Catherine, Visitation, Sainte-Marie, Notre-Dame, Saint-Joseph, des Seigneurs, Saint-Antoine, Craig, Place Victoria et Saint-Jacques avec bannières, drapeaux, insignes de leurs sociétés respectives et fanfares pour se rendre à l'église Notre-Dame où la messe solennelle fut célébrée par Sa Grandeur Mgr Edouard-Charles Fabre, évêque de Montréal, et le sermon de circonstance prononcé par M. A.-M. Deschamps, prêtre de Saint-Sulpice.

"Le banquet officiel eut lieu sous la présidence de l'hon. Charles-Joseph Coursol, maire de Montréal, qui avait occupé la présidence de la société (sic) Saint-Jean-Baptiste pendant les deux années précédentes."⁹

The following provides a statistical description of that year's procession: "Le nombre de sociétés s'élevait à 91; les chars allégoriques, à 12; les corps de musique, à 31; le défilé dura trois heures; dix mille hommes marchaient dans la procession."¹⁰ In addition, "Douze à treize cents

convives assistèrent au banquet, qui eut lieu à l'Hotel-de-Ville (sic)."¹¹ Though the festivities of 1874 may have been exceptional by virtue of the fact that many people from outside Montréal and the province participated, thereby swelling the number of those usually in attendance, they also demonstrated the popularity of la Fête de la Saint-Jean and its appeal as a rallying-point for French Canadians.

The central point of a procession's itinerary was Notre-Dame Church; all processions either emanated from the Church or arrived there as their destination site. Notre-Dame was the parochial church of Montréal, and therefore the oldest and most venerated of the churches on the Island. The procession itself consisted of representatives of any number of religious and civic associations, with the officers of the SSJB de M always occupying a place of honour. During the period from 1874 to 1884, floats began to make their appearance in the procession,¹² though on a considerably smaller scale than would be the case with the thematic parades starting in 1924. This was indicative of a widely perceived need, particularly on the part of the elite, to ensure a more systematic visual representation of certain ideological messages. It would appear that, apart from the cancellation of the 1843 banquet in order to support financially the victims of the Boucherville fire, la Fête de la Saint-Jean was celebrated annually from 1843 to 1923. The

quality and quantity of the celebrations, including the procession, were not, of course, always consistent.

When the thematic parades, still organized by the SSJB de M, were begun in 1924, la Fête entered an era of unprecedented growth. Year after year, the number of participants increased, and the floats became larger and more impressive. Apart from 1933 when no parade was held because of other preparations to mark the 400th anniversary of Jacques Cartier's arrival in Canada, there was a parade every year from 1924 to 1969, including during the War years. The totals of spectators were always very high, considering the population level at any one time.

"Le défilé, c'était un très grand événement. De toutes les parades en Amérique du Nord, c'était celle de Montréal qui attirait le plus de monde. Il y avait toujours entre 500 000 et 1 000 000 de spectateurs! Tôt le matin, les gens commençaient déjà à installer leurs chaises pour voir le défilé dans l'après-midi. C'étaient des familles entières qui s'y rendaient. On venait de tout le Québec et des Etats-Unis. Chaque année, on choisissait un thème approprié aux événements et à la situation sinon politique, du moins culturelle."¹³

Though the parade may have been the most popular of the festivities, other types of events were also well attended. The parades were discontinued in 1970, not only because of the disturbances of 1968-69, but also by reason of the criticisms levelled at them as regards their relevance in an increasingly politicized social context.

"Tout le temps qu'on a fait les parades, il n'y avait pas que ça. Nous avions une semaine complète de manifestations: un bal, une soirée d'amitié québécoise et le 23 au soir il y avait toujours de

300 000 à 400 000 personnes qui venaient au parc Jeanne-Mance pour les feux de la Saint-Jean, les spectacles, la danse et le feu d'artifice. Il y avait aussi le banquet national qui commémorait la fondation de la Société. A la table d'honneur, on invitait les vingt-cinq, trente organismes importants de Montréal, des néo-Québécois, les autorités civiles, les syndicats. Mais dans la salle n'importe qui pouvait assister, on vendait des billets.

"Si on a abandonné les défilés, c'est pas uniquement à cause des troubles de 1968-1969, mais aussi parce qu'il était plus difficile d'avoir des commanditaires; et puis les gens contestaient parce que certains des commanditaires étaient des anglophones ou des Multinationales. On se plaignait aussi que la population était passive, qu'elle ne participait pas; elle ne pouvait que regarder passer le spectacle. Voilà pourquoi, à partir de 1970, le défilé a disparu et qu'on a organisé des fêtes dans le Vieux Montréal et dans d'autres quartiers de la ville."¹⁴

The most important element of the parade was the float bearing saint Jean-Baptiste, which was invariably last.¹⁵ From approximately 1866, perhaps earlier, he was represented as a very young, curly-haired boy. Then in 1940, he began to be depicted as an older child or an adolescent. Rumilly writes: "Depuis la procession de 1940, saint Jean-Baptiste est représenté, non par un bambin, mais par un jeune homme vigoureux, au geste de prédicateur et de guide vers Jésus."¹⁶ In 1947, "Il se forme une conception vraiment nouvelle du défilé. Les chars, plus symboliques qu'anecdotiques, dérouleront une série de stylisations en carton, sans personnages vivants."¹⁷ This type of representation did not seem to appeal to those watching the parade: "Quand un grand saint Jean-Baptiste en carton apparaît, sur le dernier

char, au lieu de l'enfantelet avec son agneau, aucun applaudissement ne s'élève."¹⁸ In 1969, the last of the large-scale parades, it is a statue of an adult saint Jean-Baptiste which is decapitated by those protesting against the traditional clerico-nationalist symbolism of the Baptist.

Just as the earlier processions revolved around Notre-Dame Church in the older part of Montréal, the parades tended to have as their parcours the wider, semi-commercial avenues of the City, particularly Sherbrooke Street. For example, "La procession du 24 juin 1925 défile rue Sherbrooke, rue Maisonneuve, rue Dorchester et rue Saint-Hubert jusqu'au carré Viger. Elle comprend vingt-cinq fanfares et corps de clairons, des chorales, des délégations, et trente-cinq chars allégoriques...."¹⁹ This was undoubtedly a question of practical convenience: the streets were broader and straight, and could accommodate more viewers on the sidelines, especially now that June 24th was a legal holiday. At times, some of the parks bordering on the parade route, such as Lafontaine or Jeanne-Mance, were used as points of assembly, or for an open-air mass or fireworks displays. Atwater Street, adjoining Westmount, was as far west as the parades would go. In 1969, it was in front of the Ritz-Carlton Hotel on Sherbrooke Street that the float bearing saint Jean-Baptiste was overturned.

Since 1970, the parades have disappeared,²⁰ replaced by

types of massive public gatherings or neighbourhood festivities. In the early 1970s, Old Montréal was once again the focus of the celebrations. The centre then shifted to Mount Royal, where the famous 1976 super-show of "les Cinq Grands" attracted some 300,000 people.²¹ In subsequent years, Montréal parks, most notably Maisonneuve and Jeanne-Mance, have been the main sites of the public events, such as the musical shows and the bonfire. In recent years, the Mass on the morning of June 24th, celebrated at l'église Saint-Jean-Baptiste in the eastern part of Montréal, has attracted upwards of 3,000 people. Given the multiplicity of local neighbourhood events marking la Saint-Jean, as well as the fact that many surrounding towns and cities, including those on the Island of Montréal, organize their own festivities, it is quite unrealistic to put forward any type of overall figure for the rate of participation. Only the one big show held in Montréal can give a very partial indication of the level of involvement by the population. On the evening of June 23rd, 1988, for example, between 7,000 and 20,000 people attended le spectacle de la Saint-Jean and the bonfire in Jeanne-Mance Park.²² On the other hand, only a few hundred people marched in the small-scale parade.²³ The model of decentralized neighbourhood fêtes has proven to be quite successful. In 1987, some 570 events were held in thirty-two neighbourhoods or municipalities of the larger Montréal area.²⁴ In 1988, forty-six different associations

or groups organized events in twenty-five areas.²⁵

The SSJB de M was the point of departure and model for the foundation of many other associations and similar sociétés throughout Québec, other parts of Canada and the United States. Its closest and most prolific offshoot was the Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste de Québec, founded in 1842. In June of 1880, the year of the Convention nationale de Québec, and thirty-seven years after the formal creation of the Association Saint-Jean-Baptiste (forerunner of the SSJB de M), there were 42 sociétés Saint-Jean-Baptiste in the provinces of Québec, Ontario and Manitoba.²⁶ Of these, only 8 were in Ontario and Manitoba, the rest being in Québec. Aside from the bigger cities of Montréal, Québec, Trois-Rivières and Sherbrooke,²⁷ St. Sauveur had the largest membership (500 members), followed by Nicolet (400 members). The smallest appears to have been Stanstead in the Eastern Townships, with 40 members. The sole société in Manitoba was that of St. Boniface, the site of an important French Canadian community. Why there were no sociétés in the French-speaking centres of the Atlantic region remains an open question. It undoubtedly has to do with the fact that these centres were of Acadian origin, and therefore not settled by emigrants from Québec who might bring with them the tradition of such a société.

In 1880 in the United States, there were 150 French

Canadian associations or groupings, of which 91 carried the name of saint Jean-Baptiste (another six were associated with saint Joseph, and three were specifically identified with the temperance movement).²⁸ These associations appear to have been concentrated in twelve states, of which seven were on the eastern seaboard. Massachusetts was the most prominent, with 46 associations or groupings distributed throughout 31 cities and towns, followed by New York, with 24 organizations scattered in 17 different locales. Of those groups for which membership figures are given, the Chicago Société was the largest (17,000 members), followed by Lowell, Massachusetts: Institut Canadien and Union St. Joseph (10,000 members each) and Detroit, Michigan: Comté de Wayne (also 10,000 members). The smallest was the Association canadienne-française of Concord, New Hampshire (300 members).

What is striking at first glance is the fact that there were many more sociétés in the United States than in Québec. It is possible that the American figures are inflated, more an indication of the size of French Canadian communities than of organizational memberships. For Franco-Americans, however, minorities in predominately English-speaking towns and cities, a Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste, or some similar association, was an ideal way of coming together to preserve one's cultural, linguistic and even religious distinctiveness. Hence most areas where there were sizeable pockets of

emigrants from Québec had one or more French Canadian organizations. In Québec, such a société did not exactly serve a similar purpose of maintaining cultural or ethnic separateness. Its function was more directly political. Though there may have been fewer such sociétés, they covered vaster areas, such as Montréal or Québec City.²⁹ Franco-American associations were undoubtedly closer to the model of the special interest club or cultural organization; other groups fulfilled this type of function in Québec.

Membership figures for the SSJB de M are only really significant for the modern period. Prior to the late 1950s, active membership maintained itself at approximately 5,000 individuals.³⁰ This is where it stood in 1958. Ten years later, in 1968, membership had risen to 12,000 individuals.³¹ The dramatic increase can be explained by the fact that the Société undertook a fund-raising campaign in that year, thereby increasing its public profile and encouraging more people to join its ranks. In 1978, active membership had dropped to 3,500. The reason for this remarkable decline had to do with the creation, sometime around 1968, of the Service ("Société") d'entraide, a type of life insurance company. At that time, the category of membre adhérent was created, which included only those who had bought insurance with the Service d'entraide. People could decide whether they wished to remain as full regular members or become only

membre adhérent. Active membership today has stabilized itself at 3,200. This includes the categories of regular members, student members and life members. There are approximately 20,000 membres adhérents.

The SSJB de M today consists of twenty-four active sections, which are basically structured along the lines of Québec electoral ridings. There is one "inactive" section, which regroups members outside Québec (whether Canada, the United States or overseas). There were some one hundred chapters within the Société at one time. This number would have included the chapters found in almost all parishes, within and outside Montréal. The parochial division is no longer the basis of the Société's internal organization, though parish chapters still exist.

ENDNOTES

¹Robert Rumilly, Histoire de la Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste de Montréal (Montréal: Les Editions de l'Aurore, 1975), p. 24.

²Michèle Guay, La fête de la Saint-Jean-Baptiste à Montréal: 1834-1909 (Ottawa: University of Ottawa, Unpublished M.A. Thesis, 1973), p. 310.

³Ibid., p. 131.

⁴See Claude Paulette assisté de France Amyot, Je me souviens depuis 1834 (Ottawa: Editions Leméac/Rencontres francophones de Québec, 1980), p. 14.

⁵Michèle Guay, op. cit., pp. 133-134. Guay writes: "La huitième période, de 1885 à 1892, marque une éclipse de la fête. On prend l'habitude de célébrer hors de Montréal: la qualité des projections idéologiques est atteinte. On se borne à répéter ce que l'on avait affirmé par les années passées. Une inquiétude manifeste le contrecoup de tensions ethniques à l'échelle canadienne. La nécessité d'une éducation populaire et d'un témoignage de force nationale polarise les efforts sur la construction du Monument National. Les Patriotes de 1837 sont réhabilités par l'élite politique mais non par le clergé.", ibid., p. 312.

⁶See Thérèse Beaudoin, L'été dans la culture québécoise: XVIIe-XIXe siècles (Québec: Institut québécois de recherche sur la culture, 1987), p. 163.

⁷Robert Rumilly, op. cit., p. 57.

⁸Denis Monière, Ludger Duvernay et la révolution intellectuelle au Bas-Canada (Montréal: Editions Québec/Amérique, 1987), p. 219.

⁹Victor Morin, Cent vingt-cinq ans d'oeuvres sociales et économiques (Montréal: Les Editions des Dix, 1959), p. 17.

¹⁰As quoted in Claude Paulette assisté de France Amyot, op. cit., p. 39.

¹¹Ibid., p. 41.

¹²See Michèle Guay, op. cit., pp. 131-132.

¹³As quoted in Marie Chicoine et al., Lâchés lousses: Les fêtes populaires au Québec, en Acadie et en Louisiane (Montréal: VLB Editeur, 1982), p. 245.

¹⁴As quoted in ibid., p. 250.

¹⁵See Chapter II, section D, for a more detailed discussion of the representation of saint Jean-Baptiste in the parade, and of some of the controversy to which this gave rise.

¹⁶Robert Rumilly, op. cit., p. 527.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 556.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 557.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 322.

²⁰Parades were, however, held in 1981 and again in 1988. The one of 1981 was traditional in style, with floats consisting of gigantic paper-and-cardboard figurines, one of which was, of course, saint Jean-Baptiste. On the 1988 parade, see Chapter II, endnote no. 82.

²¹The same show had been presented on June 21st in Québec City, before some 150,000 people.

²²See La Presse, 25 June 1988, p. A3 and Le Devoir, 25 June 1988, p. A-3.

²³See ibid.

²⁴See L'information nationale (Montréal: Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste de Montréal, June 1987), pp. 18-28.

²⁵See La Fête nationale du Québec (Montréal: Comité des Fêtes nationales de la Saint-Jean, 1988), pamphlet.

²⁶See Claude Paulette assisté de France Amyot, op. cit., p. 99. Subsequent data is culled from this table. It should be noted that Ottawa is listed twice: under both Ontario and Québec.

²⁷Membership figures are not given in the table for these cities.

²⁸See Claude Paulette assisté de France Amyot, op. cit., pp. 93-97. Subsequent data is culled from this table.

²⁹Most local parishes in Montréal, however, had their own société, linked to the SSJB de M. There also were, at one time, distinct chapters within the SSJB de M regrouping people working in the same profession, modelled, in some loose way, on the guild system.

³⁰The membership data which follows was graciously provided by Mireille Beaulne, Registrar of the SSJB de M, on the basis of research done by Gérard Turcotte, long-time official of the Société.

³¹In his unpublished thesis, Jean-Pierre Blais quotes the following approximate membership figures for the SSJB de M: 1952/59: 5,000; 1960: 6,000; 1961: 10,000; 1962: 12,000; 1963: 15,000; 1964: 20,000. See Jean-Pierre Blais, L'idéologie nationaliste de la Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste de Montréal (1952-62) (Montréal: Université de Montréal, Unpublished M.A. Thesis, 1964), p. 160. These figures appear inflated, perhaps as a result of a certain confusion between membres adhérents and regular members.

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