

The Production and Evaluation of a  
Video-Tape to be Used as an Aid in  
the Teaching of Canadian Literature  
at the High School Level.

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A Thesis Equivalent  
in  
The Department  
of  
Educational Technology

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
for the degree of Master of Arts at  
Concordia University  
Montreal, Québec, Canada

Sept. 1982

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## ABSTRACT

The production and evaluation of a video-tape to be used as an aid in the teaching of Canadian literature at the high school level.

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High school students with little exposure and appreciation for Canadian literature were introduced to the novel Maria Chapdelaine by the video production "Louis Hémon". This video tape was designed to incite an interest in the experiences and observations of the author Louis Hémon and to prepare students for reading his novel Maria Chapdelaine and other works of Canadian literature by focussing on the themes which are the most prevalent in Canadian literature. The experiment used as a sample 2 intact classes of students at the grade 10 level. One class (N=17) viewed the video tape before reading the novel, the other class (N=23) did not. The students' written responses to the novel were coded according to Purves' categories of responses to literature. Chi-square tests ( $\alpha=.05$ ) were administered to compare the frequency of certain categories of features of their written responses. Students indicated that on the whole they liked and appreciated the production, and a small but statistically significant difference was found to support the hypothesis that viewing the video tape before reading the novel would promote a deeper appreciation of the novel. The conclusion of effectiveness must remain tentative because it was not possible to randomly assign the subjects to the experimental and control groups.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank Dr. Gary Boyd for all his help; and express my appreciation to my fellow students who cooperated so generously on the video production, especially, Pierre Croteau.

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## INTRODUCTION

### Context of the problem

Literature is not a popular subject in many Montreal schools. Canadian works of literature are often not even included in the few works of literature that the student is exposed to during high school. There is very little in the way of visual or audio-visual aids to assist the literature teacher.

Students do not seem to be motivated to read. They often experience difficulty in comprehending works of literature assigned to them as part of the curriculum. This difficulty in understanding limits their ability to interpret and evaluate the work - while it is precisely these mental activities which make reading an enriching and meaningful experience.

It has been shown by various studies that clear visual representation increase the interest in a subject, and repetition of important messages facilitate learning. Video cassettes have the advantages of being relatively cheap to produce, and are a convenient vehicle for visual and audio-visual stimulus to be used in the classroom situation. Therefore it was decided to design and produce a video tape to be used as an aid in the teaching of Canadian literature at the high school level.

It was a concern to use the medium of video and its inherent characteristics to arouse the interest and curiosity of the student of literature in the life and perceptions of one particular writer, Louis Hémon, and in the historical and

social realities of the time about which he wrote; and to introduce to them the relationship between the past and present social and cultural realities which have been dealt with in Canadian literature throughout its relatively short existence. Although the video program relates directly to one particular novel, Maria Chapdelaine, and its author, Louis Hémon, it becomes a medium for the presentation and elaboration of the themes which reoccur most often in Canadian literature.

After an extensive study of Canadian works of literature and works of criticism on Canadian literature, the following themes were identified as those which reoccur most often in Canadian writing:

- survival
- the lure of the north
- the influence of religion
- the position of women
- the moulding of a Canadian character from the European heritage.

The novel Maria Chapdelaine is one of the first novels which describes the French Canadians and their way of life. It deals with the basic themes which are mentioned above.



The novel was written in 1912, and the video dramatization is set at that time. However, through flashes to the present day urban situation, these concerns and themes are related to the world that the students are more familiar with.

As F.R. Leavis asserts, the concerns of a literature course should be the relations between works, between the creative achievements of different authors, between different pasts, and between the past and the present.<sup>1</sup>

#### Statement of the problem

The purpose of the study was to judge the effectiveness of the production variables chosen in the design of the video tape "Louis Hémon" and to determine whether the understanding and appreciation of the novel Maria Chapdelaine by students was positively affected by viewing the video tape "Louis Hémon" before reading the novel, that is, whether the content of the responses of those students who had viewed the video production "Louis Hémon" before reading this author's novel Maria Chapdelaine would indicate a higher degree of involvement in the novel, a better grasp of the narration, and more of a tendency to interpret and evaluate the novel, than would the content of the responses of students at the same level who had not viewed the video before reading the novel.

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1) Leavis, F.R. Nor Shall My Sword. Chatto & Windus, London, 1972, p.111.

Review of the literature

In reviewing the recent empirical studies on the teaching of literature, certain findings, few and general in nature, emerge. Studies show that the teacher and his interventions are more important for producing measured achievement in reading fiction than particular texts or the sequencing of texts;<sup>2</sup> that the approach to literature adopted by the teacher affects the content of the responses from pupils.<sup>3</sup>

Studies show that understanding, i.e. the possession of information and ability to grasp verbal and human complexities, and liking are associated. Readers are often influenced by what they read.<sup>4</sup> It has been shown that appreciation is related to first of all comprehension of meaning, and second to the ability to create word pictures and associate emotions.<sup>5</sup> Smith reported that mental attitudes and clarity of objectives for the learner was more important than the qualities of the work to be read.<sup>6</sup>

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- 2) Cooper, Charles R. Empirical studies of responses to literature: Review and suggestions. Journal of Aesthetic Education, July 1976, 10, 77-93.
  - 3) Applebee, Arthur N. ERIC/RCS Report: The elements of response to a literary work: What we have learned. Research in the Teaching of English, 1977, 11, 255-271.
  - 4) Cooper, Empirical studies of responses to literature p.79.
  - 5) Purves, Alan C., Beach. R. Literature and the Reader: Research in responses to literature, reading interests, and the teaching of literature. National Council of Teachers of English. Urbana, Illinois, 1972, p.30.
  - 6) Ibid

Alan Purves and Vict6ria Rippere propose a new system for content analysis of response to literature. Basing their research on works of scholars and critics, and on essays of students, they isolated 139 "elements" which they proposed for analysing response to a literary work. They combined these 139 elements into 24 subcategories and 5 categories (engagement-involvement, perception, interpretation, evaluation and miscellaneous).<sup>7</sup> Further experience with this scheme of content analysis by Purves and other researchers has suggested further refinements which can be outlined as follows:

Personal statement (engagement-involvement)

1. about the reader, an autobiographical digression
2. about the work, expressing personal engagement with it

Descriptive statement (perception)

3. narrational, retelling part of the work
4. descriptive of particular aspects of the work

Interpretive statement

5. of parts of the work
6. of the whole work

Evaluative statement

7. about the evocativeness of the work
8. about the construction of the work
9. about the meaningfulness of the work.<sup>8</sup>

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7) Applebee, ERIC/RCS Report.

8) Cooper. Empirical studies of responses to literature. p.80.

This scheme has served as a basis for many subsequent studies on the teaching of literature and on responses to literature.

From findings of studies using this scheme of content analysis to measure the responses to literature, it would seem "that the dominant response deals with the content of the work, not its form, and with the work's relation to the reader and his world, rather than with the objective or aesthetic qualities of the work."<sup>9</sup>

Various studies (Auerbach, 1974; Faggiani, 1971; Angelotti, 1972; Pollock, 1972; Somers, 1972) conclude that differences in response are by-products of difficulty in comprehending a work. When the student has difficulty in understanding, there tends to be a decrease in interpretation and an increase in attention to content or perception categories. Sometimes difficulty leads to a brief evaluative statement without further discussion, - a quick way of opting out of an unpleasant situation.<sup>10</sup>

Grimme (1970) conducted a study in which he compared different teaching approaches. Compared were: the structural analysis technique (related to the "new" criticism school), experimental reflective technique, and a limited teaching situation connected with the existential movement. He found that the structural analysis approach led to increases in the proportion of perception and interpretation respon-

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9) Purves, Beach. Literature and the reader. p.16.

10) Applebee. ERIC/RCS Report.

es; the experiential-reflective approach led to interpretation supported with personal references, perceptual identification and literary judgement; and the limited teaching approach led to a concern with content, engagement-involvement, and miscellaneous categories. Combining results from these analyses with attitude questionnaires and intensive study of selected individual transcripts allowed Grimme to conclude both that the direct teaching approaches were superior to the limited teaching approach and that the effects of the experiential-reflective approach seemed most compatible with a lasting interest in literature.<sup>11</sup>

Charles Cooper, in "Empirical studies of responses to literature: Review and suggestions" concludes that an important instructional implication of the findings of the studies in this area is that "classroom instruction in literature must permit students of all levels to explore personal associations, to exchange perceived high points or points of significance in the work, and to build up an agreed picture of what actually occurred before moving on to an interpretation of the work or to a consideration of it's form."<sup>12</sup>

Squire, in conducting a study of responses of adolescents while reading four short stories found that readers who become personally involved in the story are more

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11) Ibid.

12) Cooper. "Empirical studies to the responses to literature p.89.

likely to discuss the literary qualities of the work.<sup>13</sup> Self-involvement or identification with characters appeared to be related to the influence of literature.<sup>14</sup> Dollerup found that "reading is continued or discontinued as a result of an interplay between the instantaneous perception of a given passage, the reader's evaluation of it, and presumably, a similar cumulated evaluation of what he has read hitherto, the interest he feels, and the interest he expects."<sup>15</sup>

Some research on methods of teaching literature using film, tape recordings, etc. or combinations of audio and visual media has been done. The findings are not conclusive enough to draw any general conclusions, however it was found that students who studied short films related to poems wrote significantly more statements about the poems than students who did not study the films.<sup>16</sup> And one study found that viewing a film of excerpts of a novel generated more interest in the novel than was generated viewing the film version of the entire novel.<sup>17</sup>

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13) Squire, J. The responses of adolescents to literature involving selected experiences of personal development. (Doc. Diss. U. of Calif., Berkeley, 1956.)

14) Culp, Mary Beth, Case studies of the influence of literature on the attitudes, values and behavior of adolescents. Research in the Teaching of English, 1977, 11, 245-254.

15) Dollerup, C. On reading short stories. Journal of Reading, 1971, 14, 445-454.

16) Squire, The responses of adolescents to literature.

17) Purves, Beach. Literature and the reader, p.98.

H. Marchant, in his review of the effectiveness of educational films finds that there is evidence to show that an audience learns more effectively when a) verbalization at an optimal level is integrated with clear visual representation, b) important messages are repeated and c) the rate of development is adjusted to the rate of learning of the audience.<sup>18</sup>

In Canada there has been a lot of concern over the lack of Canadian literature taught in schools, or read by Canadians in general, and much discussion of the importance of encouraging the reading of Canadian literature. Ross Campbell, interested by this problem conducted a study in which high school students were presented with both New Zealand poems and Canadian poems. Students were grouped. Some knew that the Canadian poems they were given to read were in fact Canadian, others were not told the origin of the poems. Campbell found that students who knew they were reading Canadian poems appear to have valued more highly, comprehended better, and been more involved in the Canadian poems. From his findings he suggests that "Canadian poems, presented

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18) Marchant, H. Increasing the effectiveness of educational films: a selected review of research. British Journal of Educational Technology. No. 2, 8, 1977, 89-96.

as Canadian poems would serve well as a base for cultural education in Canada and would offer, for some students, an attractive point for wider literary exploration and growth."<sup>19</sup>

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19) Campbell, Ross. A comparative study of the responses made by grade 11 Vancouver students to Canadian and New Zealand poems. Research in the Teaching of English, 1978 12, 297-306.



## MEDIA PRESENTATION

### Design considerations

High school literature teachers from the Commission des écoles catholiques de Montréal were consulted regarding which Canadian writers they considered appropriate for study at the level they were teaching. Works of criticism on Canadian literature, and essays and studies on the approaches to, and the reasons for the study of literature were referred to.

These readings influenced the decision to use the format of presenting as a real person, through a dramatized impersonation, an author whose work deals with many of the themes that are most prevalent in Canadian writing. Louis Hémon, whose youth, his mysterious past, his apparent unsettledness and dissatisfaction, his perceptiveness and appreciation of the land and the people on arriving in Canada, make him a character for whom high school age viewers could feel a certain sympathetic curiosity and interest.

The script is based on the writings of Louis Hémon; his novel Maria Chapdelaine, his short stories, his letters to his family in France and to his editor (parts of which are quoted in the production as his diary). Before writing the script, a thorough study was made of works of criticism on his writing, and of research into his life; also a documentary film on this author, produced by the National Film Board, was viewed.

The medium of video was chosen for this audio-visual presentation for the following reasons:

- Video production costs are relatively low.
- The presentation of a video production in a classroom is convenient. High schools are equipped with VTR units and monitors which can be rolled into classrooms. Most classrooms can easily be made dark enough to view a video tape, whereas to view film requires a darker environment than most classrooms can provide and therefore imposes the added inconvenience of moving the class to another locale.

- Video has an advantage as a pedagogical tool in that one has more control over the actual presentation of the production to the class. The tape can be stopped on a certain image, rewound to review certain sections more easily than film.

Studies show that neither medium, film or video tape, possesses a superior technical advantage in terms of perceived professionalism, nor in terms of effectiveness on retention.<sup>20</sup> Each medium however possesses different characteristics and variables, possibilities and limitations. These should be taken into account and exploited when planning and executing a production. In using a certain medium, one must use the characteristics and variables of the medium

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20) Donahue, Thomas R., & Donahue William A. Viewer response sets to filmed and video taped television content. 1977.

to most effectively clarify, intensify, and interpret sense perceptions through that medium.<sup>21</sup>

The small two-dimensional television screen and the limitations of taping in a studio make "genuine inner action, not artificial outer action, the primary material for the T.V. experience." (McLuhan)<sup>22</sup> "It is by the significant details that the event must be shown."<sup>23</sup>

The script was developed with these attributes of video production in mind, and with the concern of how to use the variables of the medium to most successfully relay the content.

Lighting was used to establish the time of day and the atmosphere. To show that it is early morning the set was lit to give the impression that the main source of light was coming through the window, thus simulating the light of the sun in the early hours of the morning. A dark background (cameo lighting) and warm colors were used to set the mood for revealing the character's inner actions and thoughts.<sup>24</sup> In contrast however, the actor retraces Louis Hémon's trip to Northern Québec on a brightly colored map to give a sense of excitement, discovery and adventure.

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21) Zettl, Herbert. Sight, Sound, Motion; Applied Media Aesthetics. Wadsworth Pub. Co., Belmont, Calif., 1973. p.

22) Idem, The study of television aesthetics. Educational Broadcasting Review, 2, p.36 - 40.

23) Ibid.

24) Zettl, H. Sight, Sound, Motion. P.25

Voice-over technique was used for the monologue to reveal the inner thoughts of the character. This technique of an interior voice or inner dialogue to reveal what one really feels is more realistic on the T.V. screen than having the actor speak his lines. It makes possible and more believable free psychological associations, and it makes it easier to present transitions in time - both important elements of the script. It also establishes a certain mood of introspection and retrospection.<sup>25</sup>

Sound should be used to "provide literal information and to establish the mood."<sup>26</sup> The timbre of the actor's voice (deep, rich, melodious) was an important factor to be considered in the casting. As the actor's voice is the main source of sound in the production, it had to be pleasant to listen to and in keeping with the desired atmosphere.

The music used is by the Québécois composer and pianist André Gagnon. His music is lyrical. It is familiar and identified by most as being Québécois. Sounds such as the typing at the opening of the show "characterize the situation and provide additional aesthetic energy."<sup>27</sup>

Through most of the production the cuts and the dissolves happen at quite a slow rhythm in order not to

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25) Zettl, H. Sight, Sound, Motion. p.23

26) Idem. The study of television aesthetics.

27) Ibid.

break the pensive and tranquil mood. The rhythm is accelerated slightly when Louis Hémon remembers and reviews his voyage and his first impressions of the new land.

### Budget

Having access to the studios at Concordia University and the voluntary cooperation of fellow students who acted as technicians, cameramen, etc., the actual cost of producing this video program was minimal. Following is an outline of the actual costs of this production. This excludes an assessment of the monetary value or cost of the conception, research and scripting of the video, or of the time devoted to other necessary tasks; typing, making of graphics, designing and arranging the set. The involvement of the "crew" - actor, technicians, cameramen, is described in number of hours. No monetary sums have been ascribed to their participation in the breakdown of costs. The use of studio facilities is also described in the number of hours the studios were required for the production. Rental fees and salaries could be calculated according to the available resources and the policies of the resource centers.

Research and script: 90 hours over a period of 5 months  
during 1976-77

Typing: 5 hours

Photocopies: \$ 7.00

Graphics: 6 hours (materials) \$14.00

Set: Most props were found, some were on loan from an antique dealer.

(purchase of props) \$10.00

Rental of sound studio: 1 day

technician 10 hours

narrator 6 hours

Rental of T.V. studio: 1 day

2 cameramen 2x 8 hours

1 soundman 8 hours

floor manager 8 hours

1 technician 8 hours

actor 8 hours

Rental of editing suite: 1/2 day

technician 4 hours

Purchase of slides from Notman Archives \$ 7.00

Lab costs for production of slides \$ 8.00

Master video tape 1"

Copy - 3/4" colour cassette 45.00

1/4" sound tape 15.00

## HYPOTHESIS

### Statement of the hypothesis

It is expected that high school students of Canadian literature, who, before reading the novel Maria Chapdelaine, have viewed the video production "Louis Hémon" and have been led in a discussion of it by a teacher who favors the experiential-reflective approach, will give responses to a questionnaire based on the novel which will show a higher degree of engagement-involvement, interpretative thought, perception and evaluation, than those students who have not viewed the video tape before reading the same novel.

### Rationale for the hypothesis

As has been found in the research literature above, students show more of an appreciation for a certain work of literature when the content and the meaning of the work is clear to them, and it is only when they understand the content and the meaning of the work, and are able to "explore personal associations, exchange perceived high points or points of significance in the work"<sup>28</sup> that they are able and motivated to interpret and evaluate the work.

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28) Cooper, C.R., Empirical studies of responses to literature.

It seems that the experiential-reflective approach in teaching literature is most compatible with a lasting interest in literature.<sup>29</sup> In other experiments it has been shown that the presentation of a film related to a poem or novel has a positive effect on the comprehension, appreciation, and ability to evaluate the poem or novel.

As the video production "Louis Hémon" was designed with a concern for the points that H. Marchant suggests are the elements which make an educational film effective i.e. a) clear visual representation of the content, b) repetition of important messages, and c) the rate of development being adjusted to the rate of learning of the audience, it is expected that viewing and discussing this production before reading the novel Maria Chapdelaine will have a positive influence on the understanding and the appreciation of the novel.

Operational definitions of the variables

experiential-reflective approach: when a teacher encourages personal association with characters, ideas, themes and situations dealt with in a work of literature being studied.

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29) Grimme, Duane A. Responses of college freshmen to lyric poetry. (Ed. D. diss. U. of Colorado, 1970)  
Dissertation Abstracts International, 1971, 31, 4004-05A



questionnaire:- a number of open ended questions and statements formulated to evoke responses to the novel Maria Chapdelaine, and based on the elements of response described by Purves' system of content analysis of responses to literature. (see appendix I)

responses to a questionnaire:- written statements formulated by the students in response to a list of statements and questions presented to them after having read the novel Maria Chapdelaine.

a higher degree of engagement-involvement, interpretation, perception, and evaluation:- a higher incidence of statements which can be put into the categories of responses as described in the Purves system of content analysis of responses to literature. (See the Purves instrument - appendix II)

## FORMATIVE EVALUATION, RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS

### Subjects

The video cassette "Louis Hémon" was shown to students at the grade 10 level at the Polyvalente Emile Néligan in Montréal in order to obtain an evaluation of the production by the public for whom it was conceived. The Polyvalente Emile Néligan is an "inner city" school. The student population is mostly French Canadian, but has many immigrants among its numbers; most immigrants being, at this level, very fluent in French. The students are from working class backgrounds. On the whole they are not great readers, in fact, most had not read any Canadian literature at all. According to their French literature teacher, the novel Maria Chapdelaine is a difficult work for the students to tackle because of the many descriptive passages.

### Procedure

A short verbal introduction to situate the video program "Louis Hémon" was given to these students by their regular French literature teacher. Their classroom was darkened by lowering the existing blinds, and the 15 minute production was played on two T.V. monitors placed in different areas of the classroom for the most comfortable viewing. After viewing the video tape, the students were asked to fill in a questionnaire to evaluate the design and the assessed impact of the production. The questionnaire (see

appendix III) was made up of 20 items, which directed the students to evaluate on a scale, the different production variables, and the amount of information and interest communicated or aroused in them, in the character, the theme, and the historical setting dealt with in the video program.

### Data analysis

The mean value given by the students to each of the items on the questionnaire was calculated. See table 1 for rating of the production variables, and table 2 for rating of the affective impact of viewing the video production.

Table 1. Rating of the production variables.

	Mean	S.D.	N
actor	3.9	.76	22
set	3.6	.94	23
camera	3.6	1.48	21
lighting	3.9	.80	22
music	4.4	1.10	22
photo flashes	4.0	1.20	23
script	3.6	.65	20
rhythm - beginning	3.4	1.50	23
middle	3.7	.75	23
end	3.6	1.26	23
format - 1 character	3.2	2.12	23
viewing conditions	4.3	1.42	22

Note. Every student did not answer every item.

Table 2. Rating of affective impact.

	Mean	S.D.	N
a feeling for the character	3.7	.98	23
impressions of the period	3.3	.84	21
information about L.H.	3.7	1.10	23
information about period	3.6	.95	22
interest in writings of L.H.	3.3	.34	20
interest in similar books	3.0	.49	22
interest in the person L.H.	3.0	1.48	22
interest in reading <u>M. Ch.</u>	2.9	1.81	23

Note. Every student did not answer every item.

#### Results of formative evaluation

The results indicate that on the whole the production was enjoyed and appreciated.

The choice of music was very highly rated; the music being lively, recognizably based on traditional Québec music, but modern in its rendition, and familiar.

The use of the still photographic inserts was appreciated. They provide a concrete reference to the past and to contemporary times.

The rhythm of the dramatization was rated as being too slow at the beginning, but satisfactory further into the production. The overall pace is slow, this is intended. In fact, the middle part which could not be executed as the original script dictated, becomes a little monotonous.

The original script calls for breaks in the voice-over monologue, by having the actor speak certain sections of the script on camera. Because of lack of training, the actor (not a professional), was not able to do this satisfactorily, and the voice-over technique was resorted to for the entire production. The fact that viewers found the pace in the middle of the production more satisfactory than at the beginning, shows rather that they were getting used to the pace of the program. Nevertheless it is an indication that the beginning of the script should be altered to make it more captivating.

The decision to present only one character, basically a soliloquy, was not highly appreciated. It is not clear (perhaps because of the limitations of the questionnaire) whether this evaluation is based on the feeling that the show is visually monotonous, or if one feels a lack of interaction between Louis Hémon and the people he speaks of, who, for a year, were part of his life. Again, this format is very demanding on an actor, and the acting must be supported by a very effective application of the other production variables to offer enough visual diversity, through lighting, camera movement, and the use of other visuals. These production variables, a good script, and the competency of the actor, are what

will make the presentation believable and transmit a feeling of interaction between the principal character and the people he calls up from his memories. The poor response to using only one character should not be taken automatically as a recommendation to always include two or more characters in such productions. It should be looked into as to why; in this production, this format was not wholly appreciated, and if a soliloquy is thought to be a possible format for another production, to be aware of the particular needs that this format calls for, in order for it to be successful.

It was noted that the viewers were attentive during the entire screening (15 minutes). The viewing conditions were rated very highly:

Interest in the era (1913) in which the dramatization was set was rated as quite low, however the students felt that they gained information about the period, as well as information and some feeling for the writer Louis Hémon.

Although, on the whole, the students who saw the video tape did not attest to much interest in the person of Louis Hémon, they admitted to more interest in his writings than to novels by other authors of that same period.

It is difficult to assess the reasons for the negative attitude of these students to the novel Maria Chapdelaine. This novel had already been introduced and assigned to be read by their teacher. How much this influenced their expressed interest (or lack of it) in this novel cannot be measured. But the discrepancy in the expressed interest in Louis Hémon's writing in general and in the novel Maria Chapdelaine, his major work, lets one assume that some other factor intervened to generate a negative attitude towards reading this novel.

#### Conclusion

This is a description of the reactions of one group of students to this production - a group who, according to their teacher, is not enthusiastic about reading. It would be important to show this production to a class of students at the same grade level who have a more positive attitude towards reading, and comparing the responses to the questionnaire of both groups.

It would be valuable to discuss with the students why they do not feel more motivated to read this novel or other novels to which they have been exposed. It would be recommended to do this before deciding on a design and a script for another production with similar objectives.

## SUMMATIVE EVALUATION

### Subjects

Subjects for this study were students from two classes at the grade 10 level at the Polyvalente Emile Néligan in Montreal. The teacher who, the previous year, had agreed to show the video to her class for the formative evaluation, again cooperated as fully as she could within the schedule and structure of the school. The original and ideal test design was to use students from two classes at the same grade level, and considered equivalent, but having had a different literature teacher during the term. Students from each of these classes would have been randomly assigned to either the experimental group, or the control group. This was to control for the effect that the students' past conditioning by their literature teacher on responses to literature might have on their responses in this study. It was not possible to follow this experimental design given the structure and the scheduling of the school.

Therefore the experiment was carried out using two intact classes of 23 students, having the same literature teacher, and considered equivalent by her. Both classes were to begin the study of the novel Maria Chapdelaine. One group was designated to be the experimental group, the other, the control group. Due to a snowstorm, only 17 of

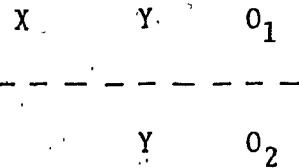


the experimental group were present to complete the questionnaire for the summative evaluation.

Experimental design

Given the nature of the study which deals with responses to literature, it was judged that any form of pretest that could provide relevant initial data on the equivalency of the intact groups would also provide both groups with an experience much too relevant to the posttest, and would be a further threat to the validity of the experiment.

Therefore an "intact-group comparison" considered by Tuckman to be a "pre-experimental design"<sup>30</sup> was administered. This design can be represented as follows:



whereas: X the treatment, i.e. the viewing of the video cassette "Louis Hémon", followed by a short discussion, during which, the regular literature teacher encourages personal associations.

Y the reading of the novel Maria Chapdelaine.

30) Tuckman, Bruce W., Conducting Educational Research.  
Harcourt Brace Jovanovitch, Inc., 1972.

- 0<sub>1</sub> analysis of content of written responses to the novel by the treatment group, two weeks after having viewed the video tape and having read the novel.
- 0<sub>2</sub> analysis of content of written responses to the novel by the control group, two weeks after the assignment to read the novel.

### Procedure

Students in the treatment group were given a short introduction to the video tape "Louis Hémon" by their regular teacher during their scheduled French class. The introduction touched on the background of Louis Hémon, his concerns as a writer, as well as on the setting of the dramatization in time and in place. The students then viewed the video cassette. The viewing was followed by a short discussion, led by the class teacher on the content and implications of this production. The students were encouraged to recall themes and ideas put forth by the production and to comment on any relevancy or comparison of these themes and ideas to aspects of their own experiences and reality.

The students were then assigned to read the novel Marie Chapdelaine. They were given the Reader's Digest condensed version of this novel to read. (The teacher and the literature consultant for the C.E.C.M.

have concluded from their experience in teaching this novel to students at this particular school, that this version makes the novel more accessible to the students as it presents more concisely the long descriptive passages to which they react poorly.)

Students in the control group were given the same introduction, by the same teacher, to Louis Hémon the author, the time and place in which he wrote, and the concerns which touched him. They were then assigned to read the novel Maria Chapdelaine, also in the condensed version.

Two weeks later, the students from both groups were asked to write about the novel, given only broad guidelines and open-ended questions. They were told to write anything that came to mind about the work and their reactions to the work, to the characters in the novel and to the author, what they remembered, what they liked, what they didn't like, what it made them think of... They were encouraged to write two full pages. (see appendix I for form)

It was supposed that an introduction which made clear the circumstances and the background of the novel, established with visuals and sound the historical, geographical and social setting, and through dramatization, "brought to life" the author, would facilitate and encourage a deeper appreciation on the work. Furthermore, certain ideas on literature are put forth in the video production.

Literature is presented as being a reflection of the lifestyle, the culture, and the concerns of a people at a certain time, and in this way shows the relevancy of literary expression to personal and cultural experience. It was hoped that this would encourage the students to make associations to their personal lives, their experiences and their feelings while reading the novel.

Since it has been shown that "interpretation supported with personal references, perceptual identification and literary judgement" are the intellectual responses to literature which seem to be the most meaningful and "most compatible with a lasting interest in literature"<sup>31</sup> it was these types of responses we were trying to encourage through the content and the design of the video production. In other words, using the Purves scheme of content analyses of responses to literature, it was expected that those students who viewed the video tape "Louis Hémon" would write a greater number of responses which would attest to a) a greater degree of engagement-involvement, b) greater perception c) a higher degree of interpretive thought and d) a greater attempt to evaluate. (see appendix II for a description of the Purves instrument for content analysis of responses to literature)

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31) Applebee. ERIC/RCS Report.

Data analysis

The written responses of all students were coded according to Purves' categories of responses to literature. Chi-square tests (see table 3) were carried out to evaluate the probability of the frequency distribution of the features of the written responses to the novel Maria Chapdelaine by those students who were introduced to this novel by the video production, and those who were given but an oral introduction by their teacher.

Table 3. Frequencies and Chi-square values for the frequencies of response categories of the experimental (group 1) and control (group 2).

	group 1 N=17	group 2 N=23
Category A engagement-involvement	f = 29 $\chi^2 = 1.03$	f = 23 $\chi^2 = 0.08$
Category B perception	f = 114 $\chi^2 = 0.02$	f = 133 $\chi^2 = 0.01$
Category C interpretation	f = 3 $\chi^2 = 2.13$	f = 12 $\chi^2 = 1.79$
Category D evaluation	f = 51 $\chi^2 = 1.58$	f = 43 $\chi^2 = 1.32$

N of responses = 433

$\chi^2 = 8.74$

for 3 df the  $\chi^2$  for  $\alpha = .05$  is 7.82

Results,

The Chi-square value of this test is 8.74 which is significant at the .05 level. In other words the results show that viewing the video tape before reading the assigned related novel did alter the pattern of meaningful written responses to the novel. This difference is noted especially in the category of evaluation, category D. However, it is only when readers have a good understanding of the content of a work of literature, and become personally involved in a story that they tend to discuss the literary qualities of the work.<sup>32</sup> A significantly higher frequency of evaluative responses made by group 1 presupposes that this group of students understood and became involved in the novel. This must be deduced even though the frequencies of their responses in other categories do not in themselves attest to it.

As it was impossible in this experiment to randomly assign subjects to the experimental and control groups, one can only tentatively assume the true impact of viewing the video tape on the subsequent reading and appreciation of the novel.

As in other studies, "the dominant response deals with the content of the work."<sup>33</sup>

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32) Squire. The responses of adolescents to literature.

33) Purves, Beach. Literature and the reader.

It was expected that neo-Canadian students would find it more difficult to relate to, and identify with this novel, and Canadian literature in general, than would native Canadian students. However, it was noted in discussion with these students, and in compiling their written responses, that in fact, the immigrant students appreciated and related very much to the life of rural Quebec depicted in this novel. The very basic existence and struggle for life described by Louis Hémon is closer to their experience, coming from developing countries, than it is to students who grew up in Montreal. This observation could have implications for further studies, and for practical recommendations for curriculum planning for an area like Montreal, where many schools have a large neo-Canadian population.

## CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

Reading literature appreciatively and critically involves cognitive strategies which are developed with time, experience and exposure to works of literature. As previously stated the content of the responses of students to literature is affected by their teacher, his approach and interventions. (Cooper, C.R. and Applebee, A.)

It was hoped that experiencing this video program would increase the students' involvement in the novel Maria Chapdelaine and predispose them to make and express more "interpretations supported with personal references, perceptual identifications and literary judgements" which are, according to Applebee, those responses which "seem most compatible with a lasting interest in literature"<sup>34</sup> Only slight changes were actually measured.

In the teaching of literature, we are trying to stimulate the development of cognitive strategies

which have as their objects the learner's own thought processes... The internally organized nature of cognitive strategies means that the conditions of instruction can have only an indirect effect upon their acquisition and improvement. In the case of other types of in-

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34) Applebee. ERIC/RCS Report.



tellectual skills, one can plan a sequence of learning events external to the learner which will insure the learning of these skills. But cognitive strategies require a more indirect control: one has to increase the probability of certain internal events; and these in turn determine the learning of the cognitive strategy."<sup>35</sup>

The detection of only slight changes of the expected kind in this trial indicates that perhaps either a more elaborate program, more sensitive measurement techniques, or more control over the assignment of subjects to groups is needed.

For example, a video program such as the one used in this experiment could be supplemented with poster size reproductions of the still photographs used as inserts in the production. These photographs refer to the cultural, geographical and social realities which were observed and written about by Louis Hémon in 1913, and to the present day cultural, geographical and social realities of the students. These posters could be on display during the time devoted to the study of the novel in ques-

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35) Gagné, R.M. & Briggs, L.J. Principles of Instructional Design. Holt, Rinehart & Winston, Inc., N.Y., 1974, p.48.

tion. They would serve as constant reminders that literature is a reflection of a social and cultural reality, and would stimulate discussion on the concerns and the choices people had in dealing with that reality, and facilitate an understanding of the psychological make-up and the outlook on life of the individuals touched by that reality. The posters which refer to the present urban environment would serve as a point of comparison and would stimulate questions on how the students themselves, their values, their motives, their actions are affected by the milieu they live in. Such discussions and comparisons would aid in forming the thought processes which allow one to become personally involved in a work of literature, would encourage "interpretation supported with personal references" which is the first step in forming a lasting interest in literature. (Applebee 1977)

To determine conclusively the value of using such supplementary material in the teaching of literature, it would be necessary to produce a series of such video programs with related visuals in poster format, dealing with three or four novels in the curriculum, and to have a teacher who favors the experiential-reflective approach use these aids during a school term. Then an assessment of the students' responses to literature could be undertaken, and such pedagogical aids could be better evaluated.

This would of course pose greater problems in setting up a controlled experiment. As it is most often possible to use only intact classes when conducting experiments within the school system, and with the added element of the period of time over which the treatment would extend (one school term), situations which cannot be totally controlled are sure to arise, and so it would be necessary to use a much larger sample, several treatment and control groups.

Before undertaking another such experiment, the measurement technique used in this study, Purves' system of content analysis, and other instruments which are devised to measure the depth of appreciation of a work of literature should again be looked at closely. Using two systems of measurement and comparing the results would indicate the sensitivity of the instruments. It would be recommended to do this to assure oneself of the appropriateness of the chosen instrument of measurement.

There was enough informal positive response to the video program to encourage the development and further evaluation of such productions.

The teacher who accepted that this video tape be shown to her class for the formative evaluation, showed an appreciation for it, and welcomed the showing of this tape

the following year to two different sets of students. This indicates a certain acceptability of this video program as a relevant input into a course of study.

A student in a class to which the video tape was shown (this class was not included in this study as the novel Maria Chapdelaine was not part of their curriculum) said: "When you read a novel, the first 60 pages are not so interesting, they just get you into the novel - the video does what those first 60 pages are supposed to do." This comment expresses precisely the objective of the production.

The teacher who cooperated in the experiment expressed appreciation for the video production, and the students were very attentive while viewing it. The video tape was subsequently accepted by producers at Cablevision to be aired twice (Sept. 26 & 29, 1977). These are indications that the video tape "Louis Hémon" is very acceptable as a media production despite the limitations of resources at the production stage.

The results of this experiment, although they are not strongly conclusive, indicate a more critical involvement in reading the novel Maria Chapdelaine by the students who were introduced to this novel by the video production "Louis Hémon".

Further work on video and multimedia introductory programs for Canadian literature at the high school level should be undertaken because the students are at an age when the habits and attitudes towards reading that they form will likely be lasting. It is a sad fact that very few "readers" are coming out of the schools. An effort must be made to change this pattern. It is felt that video productions supplemented with other visuals to introduce novels or other works of literature and provide some direction on how to "read", interpret and evaluate a literary work, are very accessible tools, relatively inexpensive and easily inserted into a teaching program. They must, however, be well conceived and well produced if they are to realize their potential.

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APPENDIX I

Questionnaire for summative evaluation

Ecrivez ce qui vous vient à l'esprit concernant le roman Maria Chapdelaine.

Voici quelques points pour vous guider.

Ce n'est pas nécessaire de répondre à toutes les questions, ni de suivre l'ordre des questions, mais écrivez librement et essayez de remplir les deux pages.

- Décrivez un ou des personnages de ce roman.

- Racontez ou décrivez l'histoire, le dénouement; certains incidents ou aspects de l'histoire.

- Y a-t-il un aspect ou une partie du roman, ou un personnage, qui vous a fait réfléchir à vous même, à des gens que vous connaissez, à quelque chose proche de vous, de votre vie? Décrivez.

- Est-ce que la lecture de ce roman vous a mené à des conclusions concernant le mode de vie, les préoccupations des gens décrits dans le roman, ou sur le travail et les préoccupations de Louis Hémon, ou sur la littérature canadienne en générale?

- Comment appréciez-vous le roman, la qualité de l'écriture, l'importance, l'intérêt, la signification de ce travail littéraire?

- Pensez-vous que c'est un roman qui devrait être lu? Est-ce que vous le suggéreriez à des amis? Pourquoi? Qu'est-ce que vous diriez à vos amis de ce roman?

- Est-ce que vous avez lu d'autres romans canadiens? Lesquelles? Voyez-vous un rapport entre ce roman et d'autres romans canadiens que vous avez lu? d'autres romans non-canadiens? Décrivez ou comparez.

Combien de fois avez-vous lu le roman (le résumé du roman)?  
Quel est votre pays d'origine?  
Si vous n'êtes pas né au Québec, depuis combien d'années demeurez-vous au Québec?

APPENDIX II

Questionnaire for formative evaluation

Si vous étiez un réalisateur de programmes de video, comment estimeriez-vous :

1. le choix du comédien?

mauvais

bon

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

2. la scène?

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

3. la prise de vue?

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

4. l'éclairage?

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

5. Le choix de la musique?

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

6. l'usage des flashes photographiques?

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

7. le scénario?

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

8. le rythme de la production, au début

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

9. au milieu

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

10. à la fin?

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

Dans quelle mesure cette production réussit-elle à transmettre

11. un aperçu de cet individu, Louis Hémon?

peu réussie

très réussie

1

2

3

4

5

12. une impression de l'époque à laquelle et de laquelle il écrivait?

1

2

3

4

5

13. des informations sur Louis Hémon?

1

2

3

4

5

14. des informations sur l'époque?

1

2

3

4

5

15. un intérêt dans l'oeuvre de Louis Hémon?

1

2

3

4

5

16. un intérêt dans d'autres livres qui pourraient aussi traiter des perceptions et questions qui préoccupaient Louis Hémon?

1

2

3

4

5

17. un intérêt dans la personne de Louis Hémon?

1

2

3

4

5

18. Aurait-il eu avantage à présenter plus qu'un personnage dans cette production de vidéo?

définitivement

pas du tout

1

2

3

4

5

- 48 -

19. Mentionnez un ou deux aspects de la production qui vous ont plu?

20. Comment pourrait-on améliorer ce programme de video?

21. Maintenant que vous avez vu cette production, seriez-vous intéressé à lire le roman Maria Chapdelaine?

certainnement

pas du tout

1

2

3

4

5

22. Est-ce que vous étiez bien placé et à l'aise pour visionner le vidéo? (l'éclairage, la proximité à la télévision)

oui

non

1

2

3

4

5

Merci.

Quelle est votre pays d'origine?

Si vous n'êtes pas né au Québec, depuis combien d'années demeurez-vous au Québec?

APPENDIX III

Description of Purves' instrument of content analysis of responses to literature.

Written responses to a literary work and broken down into statements which are coded and classified into the following categories according to the content of the statement.

A) engagement-involvement

- 1) expressions directed at the work, i.e. expressions of feeling about the work and one's relation to it.
- 2) expressions directed away from the work, i.e. references to one's own experience and personal associations (autobiographical digressions).

B) perception

- 1) narrational retellings of the work,
- 2) descriptions of particular aspects of the work - language, characters, setting, etc.

C) interpretation

- 1) interpretations of parts of the work - characters, language, rhetoric, tone, certain scenes.
- 2) interpretation of the whole work.

D) evaluation

expressions of praise or blame for

- 1) the evocative power of the work,
- 2) it's construction,
- 3) the meaningfulness of the work.<sup>35</sup>

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35) Cooper. Empirical studies of responses to literature.



APPENDIX IV

SCRIPT OF VIDEO-TAPE "LOUIS HEMON"

shot no.		
1	cam 3	graphique 1 "Le 23 juin 1913"
2	cam 1 LS position A	LOUIS HEMON ASSIS A SON BUREAU, ECRIT AU DACTYLO (son du dactylo)
3	cam 3 cam 2 CU of letter	graphique 2 "Louis Hémon" L.H. REGARDE LA FEUILLE QU'IL TAPPE
4	cam 1 MS	L.H. TAPE - ENLEVE LE PAPIER DU DACTYLO Etrange comme ça s'est passé. Arrivant au Canada, j'étais pour aller directement vers l'ouest. L'ouest dont tout le monde parlait, ces vastes plaines fertiles. Mais au lieu de récolter ces vastes plaines comme je m'étais imaginé, je me suis trouvé à Péribonka, luttant contre ce froid terrible.
5	cam 2 LS  zoom in  MS  lip-sinc	IL SE LEVE. PARLE EN SE DIRIGEANT VERS LE FAUTEUIL. Je suppose je dois tout cela à ce missionnaire que j'ai rencontré pendant la traversée. IL S'ASSOIE SUR LE BRAS DU FAUTEUIL - FUME. Ses récits du nord me fascinaient: cette immensité de lacs, de rivières, de montagnes et de forêts dans cette région du Saguenay et du Lac St-Jean. Il le décrivait comme étant tellement <u>sauvage et impitoyable</u> . Et ces gens, ces familles qui défrichent la terre, qui établissent de nouveaux villages m'intriguaient. Peut-être parcequ'ils sont descendants de français, plusieurs de la Bretagne, ma région natale. IL SE LEVE. Mais qu'est-ce qui pousse ces gens à coloniser cette terre inhospitalière.
6	cam 1 pos.B LS  zoom to MS	SE DIRIGE VERS LA FENETRE Juste à y penser à cette terre rude, moi, je me suis décidé à m'établir et à passer le premier hiver à Montréal. REGARDE PAR LA FENETRE - DOS A CAM 1. On était déjà en octobre quand je suis débarqué à Québec. En écoutant parler ces gens, j'ai pensé qu'il serait mieux d'attendre le printemps avant d'aller vers le nord. SE TOURNE - PROFILE VERS CAM 1. Tout le monde parlait de la mauvaise saison qui approchait... quelle terme décourageante pour nommer l'hiver. (INSPIRATION POUR ECRIRE DANS SON JOURNAL) Il y a déjà un an et demi de ça.

- SE LEVE. VA VERS SON BUREAU. PREND SON JOURNAL.  
S'ASSOIE SUR LA CHAISE ET ECRIT.  
Déjà sur le bateau qui remonte lentement le fleuve  
St-Laurent / on est saisi par la grandeur et l'apre-  
té du paysage. Après avoir remarqué l'aspect rude  
et sauvage de la rive nord, / on s'étonne de voir  
des maisons. / Mais ces maisons sont séparées par  
de vastes solitudes. / On se rend compte des gens  
qui vivent là aux prises avec une nature hostile et  
en butte aux rigueurs d'un hiver qu'on dit sans  
clémence.
- 7 cam 1. zoom into L.H. sitting  
T.C. slide (1)  
change slide (2)  
change slide (3)  
change slide (4)
- 8 cam 1 MS L.H. writing  
9 T.C. slide (5)  
change slide (6)  
change slide (7)
- 10 cam 2 CU of hand  
zoom out to MS of L.H.
- 11 T.C. slide (8)
- 12 cam 1 MLS (pos A)  
zoom out
- 13 T.C. slide (9a)  
change slide (9b)
- Arrivant à Québec, j'ai débarqué dans ce qu'on  
appelle "la vieille ville", / une ville avec d'étroites  
rues de planches. Le caractère double de Québec,  
ville française greffée sur le sol américain, / vie  
américaine greffée sur la vieille souche française -  
la rend étrangement différente des autres villes. /  
On découvre en même temps que les noms français, des  
visages français où se reflètent des âmes restées  
françaises. / On écoute des mots anglais que les  
canadiens français ont empruntés pour s'en servir  
quand il leur plaît, pour leur propre avantage.  
J'ai fait le voyage de Québec à Montréal en train.  
J'ai remarqué les tuyaux de chauffage dans les wa-  
gons, et je me suis rendu compte qu'ils ne sont pas  
un luxe, mais une nécessité. Ainsi l'Européen - le  
Français qui regarde à travers la vitre, se sent  
vivement dépaysé; / il sent avec acuité le caractère  
étrange du paysage, cette graveté double de la con-  
trée encore presque déserte, presque sauvage, le  
mystère redoutable des terres que défendent les  
longues neiges.
- FADE OUT MUSIC
- POSE LE JOURNAL  
Ce premier hiver était long, dans cette chambre que  
j'avais sur la rue St-Hubert. SE LEVE ET SE DIRIGE  
VERS LA CARTE. Si j'étais d'une nature plus sociale  
certainement que le temps aurait passé plus vite.
- IL REGARDE LA CARTE.  
J'étais complètement obsédée avec cette idée de voir  
le nord. / je voulais voir ces gens qui travaillent  
dans les forêts, les bûcherons. / C'est pour cela

- 14 cam 1 MS que je me suis rendu d'abord à LaTugue. /  
Je voulais continuer jusqu'au Lac St-Jean par les rivières, mais on m'a dit qu'il y a tellement de maringuins, que personne ne voyage sur les rivières jusqu'à mi-juillet. Alors j'ai pris le train. Je me suis rendu à Roberval. Même après tout ce qu'on m'avait raconté au sujet du Lac St-Jean, j'étais complètement pris / par son immensité et sa beauté. J'ai fait la moitié du tour du lac à pied pour arriver à Péribonka, / parcequ'on m'avait dit que c'était un village typique de colons, nouvellement établi. /
- 15 T.C. slide (10a)  
change slide (10b)
- 16 cam 1 MS follows L.H. SE DIRIGE VERS LE FAUTEUIL ET S'ASSOIE (parle à cam 2)  
to armchair Quand j'y pense, M. Bédard était certainement d'accord pour m'engager comme journalier sur sa terre.
- 17 cam 2 LS A \$8. par mois, quand le taux était de \$20. il a dû penser qu'il faisait une bonne affaire. Moi, je me rendais compte qu'il n'était pas pour recevoir plus que ce qu'il payait. / En voyant les visages rudes de ces gens, / je savais que je ne pourrais jamais être leur égal dans le travail manuel. / En plus, je ne voulais pas travailler fort. Même Mme Bédard était plus utile dans les champs que moi. Elle déracinait des souches avec plus de facilité que moi.
- 18 T.C. slide (11a)  
change slide (11b)
- 19 cam 2 LS
- 20 T.C. slide (12)  
change slide (13)  
change slide (14)
- Chère Mme Bédard: avec quel regard froid elle m'a accueilli quand je suis arrivé avec son mari: Elle me considérait certainement juste comme un autre quêteux que son mari avait ramassé. Mais quelle femme! Je ressens de l'admiration et de la pitié pour elle. Elle était certainement mon informatrice principale de la vie, des traditions et des bavardages de la région. / Comme elle faisait l'éloge de la terre, des beaux grands champs, planches comme la main, prêts à semer. / Et comme elle vantait les vieilles paroisses où la vie était plus agréable, où la vie était plus agréable, où l'église était plus proche, et où on pouvait assister à la messe chaque dimanche de l'année. /
- 21 cam 2 MS Un vrai sens du devoir caractérise ces femmes, même les jeunes femmes. Jamais elles ne se plaignent du travail, ni mentionnent les désappointements quand une tournure du climat rude fait perdre la récolte, et tout le labour d'une saison.
- zoom into MCU TOURNE SA TETE  
Et la mort; avec quelle résignation elles acceptent la mort. Tout est dans les mains de Dieu.

22 cam 1 pos C LS

PREND SA VALISE, LE MET SUR LE BUREAU, L'OUVRE.

Je me demande si cette acceptation de la fatalité qui semble caractériser leur conception de la vie sera toujours aussi manifeste parmi ces canadiens français. Certainement leurs bons curés continuent de le propager. C'est une mode de vie tellement ascétique, / avec la menace du jugement dernier toujours présent; l'idée que cette vie n'est autre qu'une étape vers cette autre vie après la mort. /

23 T.C. slide (15)

24 cam 1 LS

MET EN ORDRE SES PAPIERS

Je suppose que cette croyance les aide à accepter la sévérité de leur vie, et ses désappointements. Ça les empêche de chercher des alternatives à leur situation.

zoom in MS

Je discerne peut-être ce sens de la fatalité plus chez les femmes que chez les hommes. Ça me fait penser à ce que Mme Bédard m'a raconté de cette croyance qu'ont plusieurs jeunes filles de la région: si elles récitent mille Aves le jour de Noël, elles se marieront et seront heureuses.

zoom in to MCU

Parmi les hommes, je notais plutôt une contradiction dans ce qu'ils veulent. Ils veulent la liberté et l'indépendance. Ils veulent se mesurer contre la nature. Mais aussi ils veulent un foyer.

25 cam 2 pos. B .MLS

SE TOURNE, SE DIRIGE VERS LE FAUTEUIL. RAMASSE SES VETEMENTS.

La lutte de ces pionniers contre la nature ne fini jamais; si ce n'est avec la terre qui ne réagit pas à leur labour, c'est avec le froid terrible, et la solitude effrayante de la forêt. Toute leur existence semble être une lutte, non pas une lutte pour vaincre, mais une lutte pour survivre.

26 cam 1 pos A CU

IL MET SES VETEMENTS DANS SA VALISE

zoom out MS

Et c'est de cela que parle mon roman, la survivance de cette race de canadiens français sur ce petit coin de cette immense continent presque inhabité. C'est ça que symbolise la décision de Maria. Si elle marie Lorenzo, elle compromet le labour de ses ancêtres, mais en mariant Eutrope, et en restant sur la terre, elle continue dans leur pas.

27 cam 2 CU (over the shoulder, L.H. and his reflection)

PREND SON PETIT MIROIR

C'est certain qu'ils me trouvaient étrange. Dans un lieu tellement éloigné, tout étranger est vu avec curiosité, spécialement celui qui est toujours en train de prendre des notes, et qui visiblement préfère faire les commissions à la fromagerie plutôt que de défricher la terre.

28 cam 1 MS

IL MET LE MANUSCRIT DANS L'ENVELOPE ET L'ADRESSE  
Dans quelques semaines ce manuscrit sera dans les  
mains de l'éditeur à Paris. Il y aura probablement  
des mois avant que je ne reçoive un mot de lui.  
Il me semble que je mets l'expérience de toute une  
année dans cette enveloppe et que je l'envoie.

SIGNE LA LETTRE, LE PLIT

zoom in CU

Je me demande pour combien de temps encore vont  
exister ces gens que je décris ici. Ah, sûrement  
ils vont continuer à exister. Même avec le change-  
ment inévitable dans leur mode de vie qui suivra  
certainement quand plus de gens se décideront à  
quitter la terre, et à chercher la vie plus facile  
et les salaires plus réguliers à la ville.

fade in music  
29 T.C. slide(16)

Ces gens semblent être profondément touchés par  
l'éloignement et l'isolement, / et ils ne trouveront,  
même dans la proximité de la vie en ville, aucune  
solution à cet isolement. /

change slide (17)

Je crois que la terre, même si elle a été cruelle,  
et a exigé tellement de ces gens, existera toujours  
dans leurs mémoires comme symbole d'un passé idéal,  
de la liberté et de l'innocence. /

change slide (18)

Ils n'aimeront pas travailler pour leurs employeurs  
anglais. /

change slide (19a)

L'isolement qu'ils ressentent maintenant à cause  
de la distance qui les sépare de leurs voisins, /  
sera remplacé par une autre sorte d'isolement, plus  
complexe et plus aliénante.

change slide (19b)

fade out music

30 cam 1 MS

REGARDE CAM 1. Ca m'a étonné le jour que j'ai débar-  
qué à Québec, et c'a m'étonne toujours, que ce petit  
groupe de canadiens, existe depuis 300 ans sur ce  
continent. Ils sont dominés par leurs curés qui (FAIT SA VALISE)  
propagent une religion de soumission et de culpabi-  
lité, mais je pense qu'ils vont réagir contre cela.  
Ils découvriront et définiront leur identité, et  
cette quête sera transmise dans leurs écrits.

zoom out MLS

FERME SA VALISE

Enfin je verrai ces vastes plaines. Ce sera intéres-  
sant de voir si les pionniers de l'ouest ressemblent  
aux canadiens français. En Europe il y a tellement  
de différences entre les français et les anglais, et  
je m'imagine que ces différences se transmettraient  
ici. Leurs religions sont si différentes. Aussi il  
paraît qu'il y a beaucoup d'immigrants des pays de

- 50 -

fade in music  
31 T.C. slide (20)  
change slide (21)  
change slide (21)

l'Europe de l'est. Mais eux aussi, ils sont venus dans un nouveau pays, / un pays qui offre la même immensité, le même froid, ce climat tellement rude, / cette isolement, où ils devront lutter pour une nouvelle identité et pour leur survivance.

32 cam 2 LS  
zoom out

IL REGARDE SA MONTRE DE POCHE  
PREND SON SAC, VERIFIE SI IL N'A RIEN OUBLIE, ET SORT.

fade to black  
32 cam 3  
33 cam 1

graphique 3 "Le 8 Juillet, 1913"  
graphique 4 "Louis Hémon meurt..."

credits

fade out music