



Contemporary French Civilization

“Minor” literature of an itinerant culture: Goulet, Campbell, and the Canadian Métis



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Abstract

The Canadian Métis population historically was marginalized and then oppressed, yet retains cultural vibrancy. The movement and adaptation necessary to survive became defining characteristics of their artistic expression, and the Métis who once spoke French and autochthonous languages now speak mostly English, albeit embroidered with traces of previous languages. Examining Métis literature reveals how language migrates, adapts, and transforms as a living phenomenon, in a Deleuzo-Guattarian process of continual movement, plateau-reaching, and regrouping while seeking new favorable environments (which means the ability to work, which increasingly means speaking English in this context). This historical literary unfolding is traced here in works by Louis Goulet, Maria Campbell, Marilyn Dumont, and Rita Bouvier, to demonstrate the development of a minor literature as defined by Deleuze and Guattari, and of a literature that emanates from a culture of inclusivity and itinérance as described by François Paré, who focuses on the French-Canadian diaspora beyond Quebec. Métis literature is resistant by nature, representative of a population that is not in the majority. The writings considered here share fundamental characteristics of numerous other minority literary expressions of survival and resistance. In addition to Deleuze and Guattari and Paré, helpful critical perspectives include those of Pamela Sing, Emma LaRocque, and Gloria Anzaldúa.

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The literature of the post-1700 period – to mark a distinction from the Restoration period of 1660–1700 – embodies many of the intellectual concerns of the Enlightenment. Reason, rationality, empiricism and scientism informed the thinking of many of the literary figures of the time. PROSE. Non-fiction. Features of 18th Century Non-fiction. Influenced by Montaigne and Francis Bacon. Dealt mostly with morals and manners. Often served the purpose of social commentary. He later worked as an official in the Canada Department of Immigration. In this job he was stationed in various cities across Canada and the United States. For many years Guillaume was President of L'Union Nationale Métisse St. Joseph du Manitoba. He gave many lectures, wrote numerous articles and collected the stories of the Metis people. He loved retelling stories and became known as the "Old Storyteller" of CKSB Radio. He was ardently proud of his Metis heritage and his home became the meeting place of such well-known Metis as Honoré Riel, Alexandre and Samuel Nault, Camille Teillet, Louis and Roger Goulet; there they discussed Metis history and culture. Among the Metis such friend were like relations. Canadian literature has been created in Canadian English, Canadian French, and Canadian Gaelic, and more recently by First Nations and immigrants of other ancestral backgrounds. Influences on Canadian writers are broad, both geographically and historically, representing Canada's diversity in culture and region. While mostly written in English, "Indigenous literature" has begun to flourish and is based upon many distinct oral traditions, languages, and cultural practices. However, Canadians have been