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THE EXPRESSION OF COLONIALISM

IN THE NOVELS OF ROCH CARRIER

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by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis deals with three novels written by Roch Carrier: La Guerre, yes sir, Il est par là, le Soleil, and Le deux-millième Etage. The major focus of this study will be the expression of colonialism and the colonial relationship in each novel. The three different aspects of this literary expression will include the relationships between the exploited and the exploiter, and the imagery and language which emphasize these relationships. We shall see how the three different aspects contribute to reinforce the antagonism inherent in the colonial relationship. I will attempt to determine whether an evolution occurs in Carrier's presentation of the colonial relationship, and whether this reflects an evolution in Carrier's attitude towards Quebec's future. A sociological approach, based on Portrait du Colonisé by Albert Memmi, will be adopted for this study. References will be made to sociological and literary theory and criticisms.

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T A B L E O F C O N T E N T S

DESCRIPTIVE NOTE		ii
ABSTRACT		iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT		iv
INTRODUCTION		1
CHAPTER I	- THE COLONIAL RELATIONSHIP AS A HUMAN REALITY	11
	a) Participants	
	b) Exploitation	16
	c) Privilege	23
	d) Mythical Portrait of the Colonized	30
	e) The Role of the Roi-nègre	37
	f) Refuge Values	42
	g) The Two Responses of the Colonized	45
CHAPTER II	- THE COLONIAL RELATIONSHIP AS EXPRESSED THROUGH IMAGERY	57
	a) Images of Oppression	58
	b) Images of Refuge Values	65
	c) Images of death	78
	d) Images of life	89
CHAPTER III	- THE COLONIAL RELATIONSHIP AS EXPRESSED THROUGH LANGUAGE	99
	a) International French	104
	b) English	106
	c) Rudimentary Level of French	111

CONCLUSION	124
BIBLIOGRAPHY	133

INTRODUCTION

Quebec (then New France) was conquered in 1759 by the English and could therefore be described as a colony. Since resistance has always existed and culminated in 1837 (revolt of the Patriots) and in 1960 (Quiet Revolution), one can say that French Canadians perceive themselves as being colonized. We can safely deduct from Roch Carrier's writings, La Guerre, yes Sir, Il est par là le Soleil and Le deux-millième Etage, that he shares this perception. Marcel Rioux, a French Canadian sociologist has described Quebecers's colonial status:

"Si l'on dit souvent des Québécois qu'ils sont les colonisés les plus riches du monde, peut-être n'a-t-on pas suffisamment fait remarquer qu'ils sont aussi sûrement parmi les plus vieux colonisés du monde, sinon les plus vieux. Ces deux distinctions douteuses semblent indiquer qu'on ne s'habitue pas à la servitude..."¹

The purpose of this study is to examine the manner in which colonialism is portrayed in three of Roch Carrier's novels. In order to do this, the colonial relationship which develops from colonialism will be described. The basis for this description is Portrait du Colonisé by Albert Memmi. Although Memmi's analysis was based on the colonial situation in Algeria, certain aspects of it are universally applicable. As Memmi explains:

¹M. Rioux, La Question du Québec, (Montréal: Editions Parti Pris, 1976) p. 9.

"...Ce sont les voyages, les conversations, les confrontations et les lectures qui me confirmèrent au fur et à mesure que j'avancais que ce que j'avais décrit était le lot d'une multitude d'hommes à travers le monde.

Je découvrais du même coup, que tous les Opprimés se ressemblaient en quelque mesure...". 2

In addition to the universal applicability of the ideas expressed in Portrait du Colonisé, the book has been a source of inspiration and hope to the oppressed. Memmi notes the "function" of his book:

"...Tout le monde était d'accord pour le caractériser comme une arme, un outil de combat contre la colonisation; ce qu'il est devenu, il est vrai...". 3

Memmi has recognized the relationship of oppression which exists in Quebec. He devoted a chapter in L'Homme dominé to the French Canadians: "Les Canadiens Français sont-ils des colonisés?" In this chapter he examines the uniqueness of Quebec's colonialism. Memmi defines the Quebec situation as an example of economic, political, and cultural domination despite the relative prosperity in the province:

"Il est évident que l'on n'est pas dominé dans l'absolu, mais toujours par rapport à quelqu'un dans un contexte donné. De sorte que même si l'on est favorisé comparativement à d'autres

²A. Memmi, L'Homme dominé, (Paris: Editions Gallimard, 1968), p. 53.

³A. Memmi, Op. Cit., p. 60.

gens et à un autre contexte, on peut parfaitement vivre une domination avec toutes les caractéristiques habituelles de la domination, même les plus graves. C'est bien ce qui paraît arriver aux Canadiens français..." 4

In the above reference Memmi notes the transition from colonizer and colonized to dominator and dominated. This will allow us to expand the meaning of colonizer and colonized, since Memmi himself has done so in reference to the French Canadians.

Portrait du Colonisé has proven to be a relevant and influential document as well as an appropriate "tool" for the people of Québec. The Quiet Revolution⁵ of the 1960's resulted from the culmination of what the French Canadians felt was an oppression which they had suffered since the Conquest of the 18th century. Memmi's influence was important before and during the Quiet Revolution. An editor notes that:

"Albert Memmi demeure, depuis plus de vingt ans l'un des écrivains étrangers qui a le plus influencé le développement du renouveau nationaliste au Québec...
...Son livre le Portrait du Colonisé, devenu un texte classique sur la psycho-sociologie des rapports coloniaux, a trouvé au Québec une réception des plus chaleureuses..." 6

Memmi has influenced many of Quebec's revolutionary intellectuals. He received correspondence from Hubert Aquin, requesting him to discuss colonialism on French-Canadian television. In Paris, André D'Allemagne sought a meeting with individuals who could comprehend and would be able to explain the need for Quebec Independance to the French public. Jacques

⁴ Ibid., p. 87.

⁵ NOTE: In his article: Alienation culturelle et révolution nationale, Parti Pris (No. 2 Nov. 1963) 14., Paul Chamberland defines the Quiet Revolution as follows:

"Vouloir dénouer une crise sociale ou politique par un jeu de réformes plus ou moins radicales en vue de faciliter ou même d'accélérer l'évolution du groupe."

⁶ A. Memmi, Un Entretien avec Robert Davies, (Québec: Editions L'Etincelle, 1975), p. 5.

Berque and Albert Memmi were amongst those who assisted him.

A number of French Canadian writers and intellectuals have recognized and described the colonial relationship which exists between Quebec and the rest of Canada. André D'Allemagne described the nature of colonialism in Quebec in his book, Le Colonialisme au Québec. He refers to the political, cultural, and socio-economic colonialism which continues to exist in present day Quebec. D'Allemagne emphasizes the extent to which colonial domination has shaped the life of Quebecers:

"Depuis ses origines, le peuple canadien-français n'a jamais connu d'autre régime que le régime colonial. Ce fait a profondément marqué sa psychologie..." 7

In Le petit manuel d'histoire du Québec, Léandre Bergeron views the history of Quebec in three stages. Each stage represents the colonial domination of Quebec by different groups of people. These "régimes" include:

- 1) "Le Régime Français", from the 16th century to 1760;
- 2) "Le Régime Anglais", which began with the English Conquest of 1760 and ended at the beginning of the 20th century; and
- 3) "Le Régime Américain", which began with the influx of American capitalists in the early 20th century

⁷ A. D'Allemagne, Le Colonialisme au Québec, (Montréal: Les Editions R-B, 1968) p. 17.

and continues today.⁸

Bergeron notes the absence of a "Régime Québécois", and makes the following comment:

"On voit qu'il n'y a pas encore eu de régime québécois, c'est-à-dire le régime où les Québécois seraient maîtres de leur destinée. Ça a toujours été le régime des autres....Cependant depuis quelques années on sent qu'il se dessine au Québec un mouvement qui veut que nous entrions dans un régime québécois..."⁹

The early origins of the "Régime Québécois" can be found in the Quiet Revolution of the 1960's. In La Question du Québec, Marcel Rioux examines the issues which were raised during that period of time. Colonialism in Quebec was a major concern. Since the revolutionary movement of the Patriots in 1837, the independence of Quebec remained a dream for a segment of the population.

Quebeckers adopted an attitude of isolation and complacency which in itself perpetuated colonialism and a traditional culture. In the 1960's there occurred a "reconstruction culturelle". Rioux links the developments in Quebec's culture during the Quiet Revolution to the Separatist movement:

"...Il ne serait pas exagéré de dire que les créateurs de chansons, de poésie, de théâtre, de cinéma, de musique, d'arts plastiques et l'audio-visuel ont révélé aux Québécois les

⁸ L. Bergeron, Le petit Manuel d'histoire du Québec, (Montréal, Editions Hurtubise, 1972), p. 7.

⁹ L. Bergeron, Op. Cit. p. 8.

Québécois eux-mêmes et leur pays; dans plusieurs cas, ils ont servi à entrer (sic) les générations et révéler la trame continue d'un pays qui veut vivre et se bâtir Malgré les agressions de toute nature - politiques, économiques et culturelles - dont elle est l'objet, la culture québécoise a manifesté assez de vigueur pour leur opposer sa propre réalité et surtout pour dévoiler d'autres possibles, d'autres façons de vivre en société; qui mesurera l'impact culturel de telles oeuvres?" 10

Thus, during the Quiet Revolution, Quebec's cultural elite confronted the realities of Colonialism in order to develop an authentic identity.

Roch Carrier is one of the French Canadian writers who participated in the Quiet Revolution. His novels, short stories and plays deal with the people and issues of modern day Quebec. Georges Fournier describes the revolutionary nature of Carrier's literature:

"...the work of Roch Carrier constitutes an important achievement, and one that is highly symptomatic: the very substance of his writing illustrates the slow and difficult conquest of reality. It also constitutes a milestone: for perhaps the first time an author is dealing with the past and present reality of Québec without falling into either of the twin pitfalls: idealization of his subjects, or their depiction as poor wretches." 11

The focus of this study will be three of Carrier's novels:

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- 10 M. Rioux, Op. Cit. p. 243. (Note: that "entrer" is the publisher's error.)
- 11 G. Fournier, "Roch Carrier, A Quest for the Authentic," Ellipse, (Eté 1970), 36.

La Guerre, yes sir, Il est par là, le Soleil, and Le deux-millième Etage. In each novel, the action takes place in Quebec and the characters are French Canadians. Carrier describes situations and relationships which reflect colonialism in Quebec.

In La Guerre, yes sir, the action takes place in a small, nameless village in Quebec. Corriveau, a young soldier from the village, has died in the War. His body is returned by seven English soldiers. The novel focuses on Corriveau's return, the villagers' wake, the war, the presence of the English soldiers as an intrusion into the lives of the villagers and the battle at the end of the novel.

The second novel, Il est par là, le Soleil, describes the life of one of the characters from La Guerre, yes sir. He is a young French-Canadian man named Philibert. Carrier describes Philibert's departure from his home in a small Quebec village and his arrival in Montreal. Philibert's search for a job and happiness is the central theme of the novel. The reader follows Philibert as he accepts menial work of various types and then continuously quits his jobs in order to search for something better. In his relationships with various employers, Philibert is portrayed as the victim of socio-economic exploitation which is a major theme in this novel.

In Le deux-millième Etage, the setting of the novel is a predominantly French-speaking neighbourhood just outside of Montreal. The action revolves around Dorval and the tenants

of his apartment building. The neighbourhood in which Dorval's house is situated, is to be demolished in order to make room for the construction of a skyscraper. Dorval's resistance to the demolition and to capitalism is the predominant theme of the novel.

Each novel will be studied in the context of colonialism and the colonial relationship as it is described by Albert Memmi in Portrait du colonisé. This study consists of three chapters, each of which examines a different aspect of Carrier's expression of colonialism. The chapters included are:

- 1) The Colonial Relationship as a Reality;
- 2) the Colonial Relationship as expressed through Imagery, and
- 3) the Colonial Relationship as expressed through Language.

It was felt that these three literary aspects of Carrier's novels were important since they illustrate the manner in which cultural colonialism is linked to socio-economic colonialism.

The first chapter examines the colonial relationship as it is reflected in the relationship between characters in each of the novels. It identifies the participants in the colonial relationship and describes the exploitive nature of colonialism. The concept of privilege is discussed in the context of "les gros et les petits". Memmi's definition of "pyramide des tyranneaux" is applied to the relationships between characters in each

novel. The devaluation and the depersonalization of the colonized is illustrated. Religion and the clergy are examined in terms of their role as "le roi-nègre" or collaborator in colonialism.¹² The "valeurs refuges" are illustrated by the role of the family unit in each novel. The first chapter also examines the two reactions of the colonized towards colonialism. He either accepts the colonial relationship as being legitimate and consequently seeks to assimilate himself to the colonizer or he rejects the colonial relationship by revolting against it. The second chapter examines the imagery as it reflects different aspects of the colonial relationship. The images are studied in groups. They include those which emphasize oppression, the "valeurs refuges", life and death. The final chapter examines colonial bilingualism as it is reflected in Carrier's use of language. We find three levels of language in his novels: International French, English and a rudimentary form of French. Each level of language will be described and its presence in each novel will be examined in the context of colonialism.

By examining the relationships, imagery and language

¹² NOTE: Bergeron traces the origins of the "roi-nègre" to the conquest of Africa by European colonialist powers. The white conquerors sought the collaboration of the tribal chiefs in order to secure their domination. In the conquest of New France, the French Canadian clergy accepted the role of "roi-nègre" or collaborator in exchange for special favours from the English. References to the term "roi-nègre" in this text are not intended as a form of general judgement but are used in the context of Bergeron's definition and its application to the French Canadian clergy. Perhaps a more appropriate term for the role of collaborator would be "puppet king".

in Carrier's three novels, I intend to illustrate his expression of colonialism. We will determine whether there is an evolution in each chapter. This evolution will be studied in order to determine whether it reflects a change in the colonial relationship from the first novel to the third. It will also be determined whether there is an evolution in Roch Carrier's attitude towards Quebec's future.

CHAPTER I

THE COLONIAL RELATIONSHIP

AS A HUMAN REALITY

One of the first concepts which Memmi expresses is the co-existence of two participants in the colonial relationship: the colonizer and the colonized. Memmi examines their inter-dependence from the colonizer's viewpoint:

" On ne peut même décider de les éviter.
Il doit vivre en relation constante avec
eux, car c'est cette relation même qui
lui permet cette vie, qu'il a décidé de
rechercher en colonie; c'est cette rela-
tion qui est fructueuse, qui crée le pri-
vilège. 1

In La Guerre, Yes Sir, the English are the colonizers and the French Canadians are the colonized. Carrier marks the distinction between the two groups by his use of possessives: the third person for the colonizer and the first person for the colonized. The French Canadians continuously make reference

¹ A. Memmi, Portrait du colonisé (Hollande: Jean-Jacques Pauvert Editeur, 1966), p. 46.

to "leur maudite guerre",² thereby marking a distinction between themselves and the English. When they refer to Corriveau, they say: "Corriveau est à nous" (G.27) and, "Corriveau est plutôt notre premier enfant..." (G.29). Their use of "nous" can be regarded as an expression of solidarity.

Carrier also achieves this effect by the use of the collective. He makes numerous references to the "French-Canadians" (G. 47, 90, 91, 103), and to "les Anglais" (G. 24, 28, 84). By attributing different characteristics to each group, Carrier makes the two groups distinct and different from one another. The English are described as being serious, rigid and silent:

"...Les soldats s'étaient rangés en ligne
contre le mur, immobiles, droits, le regard
tourné vers Corriveau, silencieux...." (G.54)

Conversely, the French-Canadians are active, verbal and easy-going:

"l'on parlait, l'on riait, l'on discutait
dans la cuisine, l'on mangeait, l'on buvait,
l'on était heureux....." (G.56).

All of these devices serve to stress the differences between the two social groups.

² R. Carrier, La Guerre, yes Sir, (Montréal: Editions du Jour, 1970) p. 10. Hereafter textual quotations are identified in my text by (G.) and the appropriate page number.

In Il est par là, le Soleil, the two participants of the colonial relationship are again evident. Philibert is the colonized. The colonizer is no longer exclusively the English. The group has expanded to include individuals from many different national or ethnic backgrounds: English ³, Italian (S. 96), Greek (S.83), Jewish (S.118) and American (S.108). For this reason, the use of the personal pronouns is no longer totally appropriate to distinguish colonizer from colonized. Carrier portrays Philibert as the individual who is continuously working and struggling. He is subject to the orders, requirements and whims of other people. By introducing characters from various national and ethnic backgrounds, Carrier reveals that the colonizer is not restricted to a single language or nationality and that, in fact, he has an ever-changing face. There is also a move from ethnic to social colonization. The distinction between exploiter and exploited is very pronounced because Philibert is always in opposition to the characters who exploit and who are the colonizers.

The two participants are also present in Le Deux-millième Etage, but their identities are not as distinct as in the

³ R. Carrier, Il est par là, le Soleil, (Montréal: Editions du Jour, 1970), p. 93. Hereafter textual quotations are identified in my text by (S.) and the appropriate page number.

previous novels. Carrier marks the distinction between the two participants in the context of capitalism. Bergeron defines the term "capitalistes" as follows:

"...individus qui ont des capitaux qu'ils placent dans différentes entreprises pour en retirer le maximum de profits et sans se préoccuper de l'intérêt des travailleurs." 4

The concept of accumulation of profits is central in Memmi's analysis of colonialism. In the preface to Portrait du colonisé he explains that:

"...l'aspect économique de la colonisation est pour moi fondamental. Le livre ne s'ouvre-t-il pas par une dénonciation d'une prétendue mission morale ou culturelle de la colonisation et par montrer que la notion de profit y est essentielle..." 5

In the first chapter, Memmi explains why a colony is a source of profit: "...on y gagne plus, on y dépense moins..." 6 Therefore colonialism and capitalism are similar because their goal is the accumulation of profit through the exploitation of individuals. For this reason, those who participate in capitalistic ventures, or aspire to do so, are considered as colonizers. Those who suffer from capitalism are the exploited or colonized.

⁴ L. Bergeron, Petit Manuel d'Histoire du Québec (Montréal: Editions Québécoises, 1970), p. 7.

⁵ A. Memmi, op. cit., p. 21.

⁶ Ibid., p. 42.

Carrier emphasizes the distinction between the two participants. He uses the collective term of "capitaliste"⁷ to describe anyone who plays the role of colonizer or exploiter. The victims of capitalism, the colonized or the exploited, are also referred to collectively: "petites gens" (D.M.E. 18); "nous, on est chez nous" (D.M.E. 46); "On est encore debout" (D.M.E. 81); "exploités" (D.M.E. 134); "Sa place est parmi les ouvriers" (D.M.E. 134); "Nous les pauvres, les gagne-petit, les nés pour un petit pain..." (D.M.E. 141).

Both factions are anonymous. Carrier does this intentionally to demonstrate that anyone is a potential colonizer if he exploits another person. Conversely, anyone who is exploited can be considered colonized. This faceless and anonymous quality of the two participants is evident in Dorval's accusations:

"...Vous démolissez ma maison quand vous voulez parce que vous êtes l'Administration. Vous me construisez une autre maison comme vous voulez, parce que vous êtes l'Entrepreneur? Vous me la vendez aux prix que vous fixez, parce que vous êtes le Commerce. Moi, j'emprunte de vous aux prix que vous fixez parce que vous êtes la Banque." (D.M.E. 26).

Carrier's reference to "L'Administration", "L'Entrepreneur",

⁷ R. Carrier, Le deux-millième Etage, (Montréal: Editions du Jour, 1973), p. 11, 18, 40, 130. Hereafter textual quotations identified in my text by (D.M.E.) and appropriate page number.

"Le Commerce", and "La Banque" emphasizes the anonymity and collective nature of the colonizer. The use of capital letters reinforces the concept of Capitalism and the power of the exploiter. In the above quotation, the use of "me" and "vous" emphasize opposition. "Me" evokes helplessness while "vous" represents strength and power.

Memmi explains that the colonial relationship is based on the concepts of exploitation and privilege:

"...Les motifs économiques de l'entreprise coloniale sont aujourd'hui mis en lumière par tous les historiens de la colonisation..." 8

Exploitation, whether political or socio-economic, is the basis of the relationships described in each of Carrier's novels. His literary works reflect the conditions which existed in Quebec. Marcel Rioux discusses the exploitation suffered by French Canadians:

"Pourquoi donc, dans un pays aussi vaste et aussi riche, déjà si avancé à bien des points de vue, tant de malaises et de frustrations?.. ..Essentiellement, parce que la majorité des habitants du Québec ne profitent que marginalement de ce développement industriel et commercial et que leur culture est constamment menacée par les groupes qui dominent économiquement et politiquement leur pays. ... La question du Québec, en 1969, c'est la prise de conscience de cette domination et de cette menace." 9

⁸ A. Memmi, Op. Cit. p. 41.

⁹ M. Rioux, La Question du Québec, (Montréal: Parti Pris, 1976) p. 14.

In La Guerre, yes sir, the relationship of exploitation is political in nature. The novel focuses on the political power and domination of the English Canadians over the French Canadians as symbolized by the war. The participation of the French Canadians in the war is a result of a decision made and enforced by the English. Conscription¹⁰ is, in essence, a violation of personal freedom. The English are able to direct and control the French Canadians because of their political power. The French Canadians are considered a resource, cannon fodder, to be exploited by the colonizer. Arthur's refusal to participate in the war is based on the recognition of this fact:

"...Est-ce qu'il nous ont demandé si nous la voulions, cette maudite guerre? Non. Mais quand ils ont besoin de bras pour la faire, cette maudite guerre, alors là, ils nous aiment bien..." (G.13).

Carrier illustrates political colonialism in his portrayal of the relationship between the English and the French Canadians. It is the English Canadians, represented by seven soldiers, who make the decisions, give the orders (G.108) and control the villagers (G. 100). The French Canadians are subject to the soldier's jurisdiction even in their village and in their homes. The mere presence of the English inside the

¹⁰ NOTE: Two conscriptions have been declared in Quebec (1917 and 1943), against the French Canadians' wishes. Their disapproval was expressed by riots: in Quebec City and Montréal. Conscription has therefore acquired the symbolic meaning of political exploitation for French Canadians.

house, is a menace to Henri's freedom:

"La présence, dans le village, de ces sept soldats qui accompagnaient Corriveau, lui donnait des palpitations: les soldats pourraient bien ne pas s'en retourner les mains vides, ils étaient nombreux les déserteurs au village." (G.94).

The loss of physical and civil freedom is the ultimate expression of political colonialism. Bérubé summarizes the exploitive nature of the relationship between the English and the French Canadians:

"...Ce sont les Anglais qui viennent chercher les Canadiens français dans leurs villages et qui les mènent de force à la guerre, parce que ce sont eux qui empêchent les villageois d'agir à leur guise, qui tentent de leur enlever leur mort et qui les chassent de la maison des Corriveau, ce sont eux qui, dans La Guerre, yes sir, sont les gros, les exploiters...." 11

The character of Bérubé is the best example of exploitation. He is a willing participant in the war, although his duties are restricted to menial tasks. He obeys the commands of the English sergeant even when they bring him into conflict with the French Canadian villagers. In addition to characterization, Carrier emphasizes exploitation by his grammatical structures. The English Canadians are the subjects of the verbs

11 R. Bérubé, "La Guerre, yes sir" de Roch Carrier: Humour noir et langage vert, "Voix et Images, Vol. 3, 1970, 151.

while the French Canadians are the objects. As in the case of Corriveau, the only thing which the French Canadians receive in exchange for their participation in the war is death.

In Il est par là, le Soleil, Philibert's arrival in Montreal introduces him to socio-economic exploitation. Initially his needs are modest: "Philibert ne veut pas être riche. Il veut manger" (S. 37). However, he finds it impossible to fulfill this very basic need without falling victim to exploitation. Due to his poor education and his rural origins, Philibert is condemned to performing menial jobs:

"Philibert est-il condamné, pour le reste de sa vie, à transporter des caisses d'épicerie dans un escalier?" (S.58).

The use of the word "condemned" evokes the idea of a penalty or sentence which Philibert must serve.¹² He experiences the same feeling of economic dependency and restriction of freedom in his other jobs: digging trenches (S.60); cleaning windows (S.61); making boots (S.63); peeling potatoes (S.83); washing floors (S.95); working in a grease pit (S.124) and on a construction site (S.123). Being abused, Philibert repeatedly

¹² NOTE: This scene evokes the fate of Sisyphus in Greek mythology. Just as Sisyphus was condemned to pushing a stone up a hill for eternity, Philibert is also condemned to carrying cases up and down the stairs.

quits his employment. Inevitably he must seek work and finds himself working at another menial job. Due to his economic needs and his unfavourable social position, Philibert must satisfy the requirements of his employers. This places him in a helpless position where others can use or exploit him. In this novel, the circle of individuals engaged in economic exploitation has expanded. Philibert is victimized by the Greek and his wife (S.83, 90), the Italian (S.96); the Jewish merchant (S.118); and, of course, by the English.

Philibert refers to the link between political and economic exploitation:

"Les Anglais ont fait la guerre parce qu'ils avaient des usines....les Canadiens français ils n'avaient pas d'usines, pas d'armes à vendre, pas de bottines, pas de canons. Ils voulaient pas la guerre parce qu'ils avaient peur de perdre leurs deux bras...." (S.93).

War is the stimulus for economic expansion. Whereas the English Canadians are preoccupied with the manufacturing of arms the French Canadians are loosing theirs on the battlefields. Philibert also has aspirations to succeed economically. He would like a share in the prosperity which surrounds him. His dream is modest, he would like to own an "épicerie". Unfortunately his dream does not materialize. Philibert cannot however, be considered a capitalist. Whereas a capitalist's ambition is the accumulation of profit, Philibert's dreams are modest, he wants to fulfill basic needs.

Socio-economic exploitation is again a central feature of the relationships in Le deux-millième Etage. Although there are still two participants in this relationship, the exploiter and the exploited now belong to the same socio-economic class. The characters live in a capitalistic society which is based on self-interest and the accumulation of wealth which brings power. Carrier refers to the two levels of exploitation which exist in capitalism. One is the large, faceless corporation which has great wealth and uses it in order to increase profits. This money is used to secure the loyalty and efforts of individuals. The second level can be found in the solitary individual who is obsessed with capital accumulation.

The ever-increasing number of capitalists who dominate Dorval's life are described as anonymous forces. He refers to them in collective terms, replacing people by institutions:

"-Bande de maudits pirates capitalistes! Est-ce que c'est par charité que vous voulez nous donner des maisons neuves? Si vous aviez déjà fait la charité dans vos vies, vous seriez moins riches. Vous démolissez ma maison quand vous voulez, parce que vous êtes l'Administration. Vous me construisez une autre maison comme vous voulez, parce que vous êtes l'Entrepreneur? Vous me la vendez au prix que vous fixez, parce que vous êtes le Commerce. Moi, j'emprunte de vous au prix que vous fixez parce que vous êtes la Banque....". (D.M.E. 26)

Carrier presents individuals who are both capitalists and victims of capitalism. "Le fonctionnaire" (D.M.E. 17) and "Le chauve" (D.M.E. 56-57) are nameless individuals who

represent the system which crushes other individuals. In this novel, the revolt is not directed at an identifiable ethnic group but at the system which individuals represent.

Dorval and his tenants are both the victims and collaborators of capitalism. Barnabé is motivated by his capitalist dreams:

"Il rêvait. Au bout de son imagination, il voyait une maison, une voiture qui brillait, des enfants au visage bien lavé....Soudain, il cria, le poing levé vers Dorval:
-Oui, Dorval, j'vas devenir capitaliste...."
(D.M.E. 12)

The promoters of the mechanic's course charge Barnabé exorbitant fees, promising him success and wealth. At the end of the novel, Barnabé does receive his diploma and joins the ranks of collaborators as he helps demolish Dorval's house: "-C'est moé qui va te démolir." (D.M.E.164).

Dorval himself is both a victim and a collaborator of capitalism. His house and neighbourhood are to be demolished as part of a development program. This decision is made by wealthy investors who are intent on increasing their profits. The focus of the development is a skyscraper. The fact that this building will have 2,000 floors demonstrates the concept of accumulation beyond human needs. This building will be a great source of revenue for its owners. Unfortunately, its construction necessitates the relocation of the residents in the area. In this case the accumulation of wealth is more important than the needs and homes of individuals. Little is

done to compensate for their discomfort. Although Dorval's life is disrupted by the demolition, he succeeds in profiting from the situation. He converts his house into a bordello in order to earn money. While the workers are on strike, Dorval offers them distraction in the form of sex. Dorval and Mignonne profit from this venture, at the expense of the prostitutes and the construction workers. The other tenants are unable to profit from this lucrative enterprise because they do not own the house. Dorval's participation in the capitalist system is verbalized by one of his clients: "Parce qu'un capitaliste qui fait la traite des blanches, ç'a pas d'âme." (D.M.E. 146). Carrier thus illustrates the dual role which individuals can assume in a capitalist society.

Memmi explains that the notion of "privilege" is used by the colonizer to justify his exploitive venture. This self-bestowed privilege is derived from the mystification of the value of his origins and his background:

" C'est qu'il possède, de naissance, une qualité indépendante de ces mérites personnels, de sa classe objective: il est membre du groupe des colonisateurs, dont les valeurs règnent et dont il participe.... Le Colonisateur participe d'un monde supérieur, dont il ne peut que recueillir automatiquement les privilèges." 13

The notion of privilege is also applicable to the English con-

¹³ A. Memmi, Op. Cit., P. 50.

quest of New France. In his report to the English government, Lord Durham in 1841 made statements which justified the English domination. He praised the English, saying that:

"Les Français ne pouvaient que sentir la supériorité de l'entreprise anglaise; ils ne pouvaient fermer les yeux devant le succès de toutes les entreprises avec lesquelles ils venaient en contact et devant la constante supériorité qu'elles acquéraient...." 14

Durham also indicated that the French people were not business-oriented and had little ambition where material accumulation was concerned. For this reason the English had to assume responsibility for the economic welfare of the colony. This justified all of the English ventures, however exploitive they might be. 15

Carrier introduces the concept of "privilege" by reference to "les gros et les petits" in two of his three novels. In La Guerre, yes sir, it is the "gros" or the privileged, who have declared war at the expense of "les petits", or the unprivileged. (G.13,29). Although the focus of opposition in this novel is the English and the French Canadians, Carrier does extend the notion of "les gros et les petits" to include other ethnic groups:

¹⁴ L. Bergeron, Petit Manuel d'Histoire du Québec, (Montréal: Editions Québécoises, 1970) p. 105.

¹⁵ L. Bergeron, Op. Cit., p. 106.

"...Les gros...Ils sont tous semblables:
 les Allemands, les Anglais, les Français,
 les Russes, les Chinois, les Japonais; ils
 se ressemblent tellement qu'ils doivent
 porter des costumes différents pour se dis-
 tinguer avant de lancer des grenades. Ils
 sont des gros qui veulent rester gros...
 C'est pourquoi je pense que cette guerre, c'est
 la guerre des gros contre les petits...." (G.29).

Carrier emphasizes the notion of "gros et petits" by his continuous repetition of that phrase and by the physical image which it evokes of size and power. Religion is introduced in conjunction with the notion of privilege:

"-La vie, déclara-t-il, n'est pas autre chose que cela: il y a les gros et les petits. Il y a le Bon Dieu et il y a moi...Il y a les Anglais et il y a nous." (G.28)

The role of religion as the "roi-nègre" of Colonialism, will be discussed separately.

Privilege, as expressed by the relationship of "les gros et les petits" is also evident in Il est par là, le Soleil. Several references are made to "les petits Canadiens" (S. 54, 85), indicating that they are the unprivileged. There are no references to "les gros et les petits" in Le deux-millième Etage. Although exploitation exists it is no longer associated to ethnic colonialism, but instead to economic colonialism or capitalism.

Complementary to privilege and exploitation is the concept of "pyramide des tyranneaux".¹⁶

¹⁶ A. Memmi, Op. cit. p. 23.

Memmi indicates that even the oppressed are capable of dominating those who are weaker than them:

"...Chacun, socialement opprimé par un plus puissant que lui, trouve toujours un moins puissant pour se reposer sur lui, et se faire tyran à son tour....". 17

This pyramid of tyrants exists in present day Quebec.¹⁸ Just as the French Canadians are dominated by the English, the latter are dominated by the Americans.

In La Guerre, yes sir, Carrier illustrates the "pyramide des tyranneaux" through the behaviour of Bérubé. This character is a French Canadian who, as a result of political colonialism, is a soldier. His military duties are at the very bottom of the work hierarchy:

"Bérubé était responsable de l'entretien des toilettes dans l'aile G du bâtiment B à la base d'aviation de Gander, Terre-Neuve..." (G.36).

The nature of his duties is indicative of the degree of domination which he is suffering. Although Bérubé himself is a victim, he insults and physically abuses Arsène, the gravedigger. He places Molly, the English prostitute on Arsène's shoulders and makes him dance. Even an English prostitute is

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 54.

¹⁸ L. Bergeron, Op. Cit., p. 7.

"above" a French Canadian.

Carrier illustrates "la pyramide des tyranneaux" in Il est par là, le Soleil, by his portrayal of the immigrant entrepreneurs: the Italian, the Greek and the Jew. All were exploited at some time or other. However, they came to be resented. When the Portuguese worker explodes himself, one of the French Canadians co-workers makes the following comment:

"...Le Canada accepte trop de ces crêves-faim de l'Europe. Ils viennent ici, ils prennent nos places...." (S.122).

Some members of immigrant groups become commercially successful and form part of a non-French commercial class in a predominantly Francophone province. Philibert, as a francophone must work for immigrants in order to survive.¹⁹

In Le deux-millième Etage, Carrier indicates that anyone can be either the exploiter or the exploited depending on the role he plays in the capitalist system. The pyramid is not always the same. At the beginning of the novel, Barnabé Marchessault is a victim of poverty. As Dorval points out to Hildegard: "-C'est pas Barnabé qui te condamne à la pauvreté. I'est lui aussi un condamné." (D.M.E. 119). Carrier indicates that Barnabé is both the subject and object of punishment by the manner in which his name is linked to the verb

¹⁹ NOTE: In La Question du Québec, p. 128-130, Marcel Rioux notes that French Canadians appeared at the bottom of the social ladder in the province of Quebec

"condamner." Dorval, too, is depicted as a victim of socio-economic exploitation. "Le Chauve" describes the extent of Dorval's oppression

"-Pas un mot de plus. Tu sais que j'suis pas seul. Y a un bulldozer derrière moi Et derrière le bulldozer, y a le gouvernement." (D.M.E. 63).

Yet Dorval oppresses others. Although he is evicted along with his tenants, he later exploits the construction workers by converting his house into a bordello:

"-Si ma maison était aussi haute que le gratte-ciel à côté, elle serait remplie de clients. Faut donner au peuple ce qu'i veut avoir." (D.M.E. 141).

However, at the end of the novel, Dorval is once again a victim of oppression. The strike ends, construction resumes and his house is destined for demolition. Ironically, his exploiter is Barnabé who has elevated his position in the "pyramid" from being unemployed to being a collaborator in the system. Carrier graphically illustrates "la pyramide de tyranneaux" by the relationship between "le Chauve", "le bulldozer" and "le gouvernement". Each represents a different level in the hierarchy: the government orders "le Chauve" who in turn orders or controls the bulldozer.

The process of devaluation and depersonalization is an integral aspect of colonialism and the colonial relationship. Memmi describes the colonizer's dilemma. Although

he is the oppressor and exploiter, the colonizer is painfully aware of his dependence on the colonized. It is the very existence of the colonized which perpetuates the special position of the colonizer. The colonizer seeks to devalue the colonized. He does this to ensure his domination as well as to justify it:

"...De toutes ses forces, il lui faut nier le colonisé et, en même temps, l'existence de sa victime lui est indispensable pour continuer à être...." 20

Memmi explains that the devaluation and depersonalization of the colonized, which is necessitated by the colonizer's need to protect his position of privilege, is the basis for racism. Memmi notes the prevalence of racism in the colonial relationship:

"...le racisme colonial est si spontanément incorporé aux gestes, aux paroles, mêmes les plus banales, qu'il semble constituer une des structures les plus solides de la personnalité colonialiste." 21

Having established the presence of racism in the colonial relationship, Memmi describes the basic elements of the racist attitude. They include: the identification of differences between the colonizer and the colonized; the evaluation of

²⁰ A. Memmi, Op. Cit., p. 92.

²¹ Ibid. p. 107.

these differences: in a positive sense where the colonizer is concerned and in a negative light when they apply to the colonized; and finally, these differences are given an "absolute" value which describes all individuals without exception. ²²

The creation of the "Portrait Mythique du Colonisé" is the product of the devaluation and depersonalization process. ^{22b} This portrait is negative out of necessity. It must be in sharp contrast with the positive portrait of the colonizer:

"Ainsi, s'effritent, l'une après l'autre, toutes les qualités qui font du colonisé un homme. Et l'humanité du colonisé, refusée par le colonisateur, lui devient en effet opaque..." ²³

In addition to the negativity of this Portrait, one must also consider its universal application:

"...il ne s'agit nullement d'une notation objective... mais d'une institution: par son accusation, le colonisateur institue le colonisé en être paresseux. Il décide que la paresse est constitutive de l'essence du colonisé." ²⁴

²² Ibid., p. 108.

^{22b} J. Berque also refers to the process of the devaluation of the colonized in Dépossession du monde, p. 101.

²³ Ibid., p. 122.

²⁴ Ibid., p. 119.

This Portrait is universally applicable because the colonized has been deprived of his individuality. During the process of dehumanization he falls victim to "la marque du pluriel": ²⁵ ("eux", "ils", "les") which stresses the distance between both groups.

Aimé Césaire describes the process of devaluation and dehumanization in Discours sur le colonialisme. He indicates that colonialism negates the influences of civilization and that in effect it "decivilizes" its participants. As they lose their human qualities they become animal-like:

"...le colonisateur, qui pour se donner bonne conscience, s'habitue à voir dans l'autre la bête, s'entraîne à le traiter en bête, tend objectivement à se transformer lui-même en bête." 26

The final stage of the dehumanization process consists of the colonized's loss of freedom. He is not free to change the conditions of his life or his role of "oppressed". He soon resembles an object which exists to satisfy the needs of the colonizer. ²⁷ Césaire summarizes this effect of the colonial relationship in the following equation:

²⁵ Ibid., p. 123.

²⁶ A. Césaire, Discours sur le colonialisme, (Paris: Présence Africaine, 1955) p. 18.

²⁷ A. Memmi, Op. Cit. p. 124.

"colonisation = chosification." ²⁸

In La Guerre, yes sir, the English characters present a particular image of the French Canadians. They are referred to as ignorant (G.47) when la mère Corriveau doesn't appreciate the significance of the British flag. Their feast is regarded as a sign of savagery: "cette fête sauvage" (G.90) and they are described as: "Quels sauvages ces French Canadians!" (G.67). The French Canadians are perceived as animals:

" Quelle sorte d'animaux étaient donc ces French Canadians? Ils avaient des manières de porceaux dans la porcherie. D'ailleurs, à bien les observer, à les regarder objectivement, les French Canadians ressemblaient à des porceaux.... Les soldats savaient depuis longtemps que les French Canadians étaient des porcs... Ce soir, les soldats avaient sous les yeux la preuve que les French Canadians étaient des porcs." (G90)

Dehumanization is apparent in the use of zoomorphism and in reducing the colonized to the level of savagery or abnormality. The colonizer defines the other in reference to his own cultural code which he perceives to be the norm. Carrier uses zoomorphism when he has the English refer to the French Canadians as "porcs". The pig is the dirtiest and most taboo of all animals. Through this association, the French Canadians are deprived of their humanity. In addition to their dehumani-

²⁸ A. Césaire, Op. Cit., p. 19.

zation, the French Canadians also suffer devaluation. The English Sergeant describes them as "indociles", "indisciplinés" and "fous".

The English soldiers recall their education:

"Les French Canadians étaient solitaires, craintifs, peu intelligents; ils n'étaient doués ni pour le gouvernement, ni pour le commerce, ni pour l'agriculture; mais ils faisaient beaucoup d'enfants." (G.91)

The reference to the high birth rate is associated with the sexual function, which emphasizes the animality of the French Canadians. The English devaluation of the French Canadians is shown to extend back to the time of the Conquest. (G.91-92).

In contrast to the French Canadians, the English perceive themselves to be civilized (G.92); superior:

"....le Sergent avait pitié...." (G.47); responsible: "-Sorry we're on duty" (G.83) Even the French Canadians admire them.

The young girls appreciate the appearance of the English:

"....Qu'ils étaient beaux, ces Anglais qui n'avaient pas de joues au poil dur et dru, mais de belles joues blondes...." (G.59)

There is an association between hair and animality. The English are hairless and do not resemble animals as do the French Canadians. At the end of the novel, we find that the villagers do not have the freedom to remove their oppressors. They continue to play their role of "colonized" in the colonial relationship. They remain objects for the colonizer's use.

Carrier indicates that the Portrait of the French Canadians is distorted. He offers his own perception of the English and French Canadians, through descriptive passages.

A descriptive passage of the English soldiers reveals them to be rigid, lifeless and inhuman:

"...Les soldats s'étaient rangés en ligne contre le mur, immobiles, droits, le regard tourné vers Corriveau, silencieux..." (G.54)

as does the following:

"...Il n'était pas humain qu'ils restent ainsi toute la nuit figés, raides, immobiles. Ce n'est pas une position quand on est vivant...." (G.60)

In contrast, Carrier refers to the French Canadians in positive terms. They are happy, alive, generous and human:

"...Les villageois vivaient, ils priaient pour se le rappeler, pour se souvenir qu'ils n'étaient pas avec Corriveau, que leur vie n'était pas terminée et, tout en croyant prier pour le salut de Corriveau, c'est leur joie de vivre qu'ils proclamaient en de tristes prières..." (G.55).

In Il est par là, le Soleil, the colonized is no longer devalued by the Colonizer. This is so because the colonizer's point of view is not expressed. The colonized's Portrait is now the result of Philibert's perceptions. Society is viewed through the eyes of the deprived hero. This is

indicative of an evolution in which the narrator **gets** closer to the hero. In this novel, devaluation and depersonalization are linked to the relationship of "les gros et les petits". Due to Philibert's socio-economic exploitation, he no longer feels like a human being. He expresses his depersonalization in the following statement: "...même si j'ai l'air d'un homme, je suis une bottine....". (S.66). Further reference to the boot as a symbol of depersonalization will be made in the second chapter on Imagery.

The use of the collective, and the process of devaluation are evident in the sociological study of underprivileged youth which Philibert reads. The article (S.86) claims that this particular group of individuals are incapable of achieving success:

"...le principal obstacle qui se dresse sur la route du jeune homme issu des couches inférieures de la société est la FASCINATION de l'échec. Le jeune homme issu des couches inférieures aime mieux l'échec que le succès" (S.86).

The foreman at the construction site devalues the workers saying that the value of their work is less than the value of a piece of paper:

"Bande de maudits paresseux, travaillez, essayez de gagner au moins la valeur du papier de votre chèque...." (S.120).

In Le deux-millième Etage, an exploited person can be a potential exploiter. Therefore devaluation is relative to the individual's role in the system. In this novel the dehumanizing use of anonymity includes: le Chauve (D.M.E. 83); le Fonctionnaire (D.M.E. 17); l'Administration (D.M.E. 18), le Maire (D.M.E. 25) and le Délégué (D.M.E. 25). Carrier uses the collective terms to denote the identities of exploiting entities: "l'Administration", "l'Entrepreneur", "le Commerce", and "la Banque" (D.M.E. 26). It is here that the capitalistic forces are seen as being dehumanizing. In this novel racial differences or traits are not relevant to the colonial/exploitive relationship. The distinguishing feature between the exploiters and the exploited is their collaboration with or abstention from the capitalist system.

The Portrait of the colonized becomes reality when the latter accepts it and complies to its requirements. By doing so, the colonized sanctions his own negative Portrait. Memmi describes the process of mystification by which this acceptance is effected:

" Ce mécanisme n'est pas inconnu: c'est une mystification. L'idéologie d'une classe dirigeante, on le sait, se fait adopter dans une large mesure par les classes dirigées... En consentant à cette idéologie, les classes dominées confirment d'une certaine manière le rôle qu'on leur a assigné...." 29

²⁹ A. Memmi, Op. Cit., p. 125.

The prevalent ideology is established and promoted by the "roi-nègre" of the colonized people. The "roi-nègre" is a particular class or group of colonized people which serves as an intermediary between the colonizer and the colonized. Bergeron describes "le roi-nègre"'s role of collaborator:

"Certains chefs de tribu acceptent de "gouverner" au nom de la puissance colonialiste. De cette façon, la domination colonialiste peut se camoufler derrière l'indigène collaborateur, le roi-nègre. Ici, au Québec le clergé a accepté de jouer ce rôle de collaborateur." 30

The "roi-nègre" has an effective degree of control over the colonized. In exchange for subduing the colonized people and encouraging the acceptance of an ideology favourable to the colonizer, the collaborator receives power and special privileges. 30b Bergeron describes the ideology which the French Canadian clergy promoted after the defeat of the Patriotes:

" Le clergé va exploiter la défaite des Canayens et l'abattement qui l'a suivie pour leur faire croire que leur mission n'est pas dans le commerce matériel qu'il faut d'ailleurs "laisser" aux peuples moins civilisés comme les Anglais, mais dans le commerce spirituel, dans la propagation de la foi chrétienne et catholique, dans la conversion du monde païen au Christ". 31

30 L. Bergeron, Op. Cit., p. 54.

30b In his article, "Aliénation culturelle et révolution nationale," Parti Pris No. 2, Nov.63, p. 21, Chamberland summarizes the myths and ideologies used to justify the oppression of the French Canadians. He describes "le traditionalisme", "le pan-canadianisme" and "l'humanisme abstrait" and their various components.

31 Ibid., p. 113.

Thus the French-Canadians were bestowed with a spiritual rather than worldly mission.

As a consequence of "le roi-nègre" 's intervention, the colonized society becomes static. The Churchman transforms a historical moment into a fate or destiny, determined by God's will. Due to this conditioned passivity, the colonized does not attempt to revise social or political structures but accepts them as they are. He has no role in shaping his society or history:

"La carence la plus grave subie par le colonisé est d'être placé hors de l'histoire et hors de la cité. La colonisation supprime toute part libre dans la guerre comme dans la paix, toute décision qui contribue au destin du monde et du sien, toute responsabilité historique et sociale ...Le colonisé, lui, ne se sent ni responsable ni coupable, ni sceptique, il est hors du jeu..." 32

This explains the colonized's absence from politics and his diminished sense of nationalism. Bergeron describes the French Canadians withdrawal from political life after the Patriotes' Rebellion:

"Ces trois vocations du peuple canayen: la vocation missionnaire du clergé, la vocation "civilisatrice" de l'élite laïque, la vocation agricole de l'habitant, notre élite cléricobourgeoise va si bien les propager par les moyens de propagande que sont l'église et l'école, que le peuple canayen sera contraint à vivre cent ans d'obscurantisme, cents ans de moyen âge, cent ans en marge de l'histoire avant de pouvoir réorienter

32 A. Memmi, Op. Cit. P. 129.

son destin." 33

Carrier presents the effects of this absence from political life in La Guerre, yes Sir, and Le deux-millième Etage. Both the war and the demolition are the results of political decisions from which the colonized is excluded.

In La Guerre, yes sir, the presence and influence of religion dominates the villagers' lives. Carrier presents various aspects of this influence. Religion is portrayed as a ritual which is a central part of the villagers existence. Numerous references are made to prayers and praying (G.48, 54, 65, 109). This ritual is a source of comfort and encouragement. Prayer is seen as a substitute for the impossible action and assumes the qualities of magical words:

"Son mari lui avait rappelé la plus évidente vérité: «nous ne pouvons rien faire» , avait dit Anthyme. Toute une vie leur avait appris qu'ils ne pouvaient rien faire... Le mère Corri-veau n'était plus en colère et elle avait dit d'une voix douce:
-Nous allons prier....". (G.48).

Prayer becomes a "valeur refuge" when the villagers' history is transformed into a destiny.

Religion as a means of control is also important in this novel. Carrier illustrates the power of religious teachings

³³ L. Bergeron, Op. Cit. p. 115.

in controlling the behaviour of the villagers. Images of hell, suffering and punishment restrict life. There is a fear of eternal "damnation". The word "condemned" is used as both a verb and an object to describe religion as an exploitive relationship. This exploitation is similar to socio-economic exploitation to which individuals are also condemned. Both the colonizer and the clergy insist on the notion of sin. The sense of guilt instilled by it, is an agent of control. Guilt becomes self-destructive as it controls the natural or normal behaviour of the colonized.

Carrier illustrates the clergy's role as a "roi-nègre". At the funeral mass the priest praises Corriveau's participation in the war (G. 115). He endorses the English Canadians political exploitation of the French Canadians, by assuring the villagers of the spiritual rewards associated with participation in the war:

"Si vous étiez ce matin à la place de Corriveau qui, lui, est mort en saint à la guerre en défendant la religion contre le diable déguisé en Allemands, seriez-vous sauvés?" (G.116)

Carrier illustrates that the colonized is sanctified if he complies with orders. In this manner, religion is a collaborator who assists the colonizer in exploiting the colonized.

In Il est par là, le Soleil, the role of religion is less influential or dominant in the characters' lives. Philibert expresses resentment towards his religious education:

"-Sans Dieu, continue-t-il, je me suis trouvé seul. Dans mon enfance, on avait planté des peurs hautes et serrées comme le blé d'Inde... Privé de Dieu, j'étais un amputé, mais hostie, j'étais un homme. Je pouvais dire: Dieu, existe pas, mais moi, j'existe. T'es pas né quand t'as pas dit ces mots...." (S. 116).

Despite Philibert's rejection of religion, the early fears of his childhood are deeply imbedded. As he is dying he recalls the images of the fire and serpents of hell. (S.138-142).

Religion's role as a collaborator is evident in this novel. God is associated with "le patron". He is one of the privileged who exploits the unprivileged:

"-Le bon Dieu, il est comme le patron, on le voit pas souvent. Il fréquente pas notre genre de monde, le bon Dieu..." (S. 66)

God, the father figure, is the invisible oppressor whose name is evoked to justify oppression. In this novel, religion shares the role of "roi-nègre" with politics. The provincial political party serves as an intermediary for English Canadian business interests:

"Notre parti veut que les Canadiens français du Québec aient du travail, sans rien enlever aux Anglais qui sont aussi chez eux au Québec...."

Religion plays a minor role in Le deux-millième Etage. Dorval, the central character, is a self-proclaimed atheist

who rejects all aspects of religious life. He relies on himself for action and change. Carrier includes two episodes which are related to religion and the clergy. In both cases, religion is devalued as a positive social force. The first appearance of the clergy occurs in conjunction with le Chauve. The construction worker has requested that the priest perform an exorcism on Dorval. The clergyman is introduced in his most magical function of sorcerer, which is usually attributed to the colonized. Dorval rejects the priest's intervention and begins shooting at both men. Carrier uses humour and ridicule in his description of the exorcism:

"....le jeune abbé sortit de sa poche un goupillon qu'il tenait dérobé, prêt à servir et il commença à asperger Dorval, Que pouvait la carabine contre le goupillon?
-Noyez-moi pas, Monsieur le Curé... L'eau bénite pleuvait sur lui, Dorval se secouait dans une danse de plus en plus frénétique...." (D.M.E. 69).

By describing the priest in a humorous context, Carrier reduces the fear-inspiring effect associated with religion. In another reference to the clergy, the author questions their morality. He does this by describing the sexual encounter between "la vieille" and the "Séminariste" (D.M.E. 94). During the chase of the English, the woman is attacked and seduced by a man who turns out to be the "Séminariste". The impropriety of his actions devalues his role of spiritual leader.

Memmi discusses the colonized's reliance on refuge values. Since he has been prevented from developing a unique

identity, the colonized seeks to preserve that which he has. His only valid reflection and expression of self is found in the traditional family structure and in the past. Memmi explains the importance of the family in the colonized's existence:

"...Ce n'est pas une psychologie originale qui explique l'importance de la famille, ni l'intensité de la vie familiale, l'état des structures sociales. C'est au contraire, l'impossibilité d'une vie sociale complète, d'un libre jeu de la dynamique sociale, qui entretient la vigueur de la famille, replie l'individu sur cette cellule plus restreinte qui le sauve et l'étouffe" 34

Rioux explains that the French Canadians adopted refuge values after the Patriotes' defeat:

"...les Québécois vont se fixer comme objectif non plus de devenir une société indépendante mais de conserver leur culture...." 35

This culture, which included religion, language and customs, was transmitted through the family unit to later generations.

The refuge value of the family, as a source of self-affirmation and solace, is evident in La Guerre, yes sir. In fact, the concept of the family as a refuge is extended to include the village and the ethnic group. The entire village

³⁴ A. Memmi, Op. Cit., p. 137.

³⁵ M. Rioux, Op. Cit., p. 78.

mourns the death of Corriveau. Mère Corriveau explains the importance of the collective unit:

"...quand il arrive un malheur dans le village, nous aimons nous trouver ensemble, nous nous partageons le malheur, alors il est moins gros". (G.103)

In the midst of his neighbours, Anthyme reaffirms their identity: "-Nous sommes tous des Canadiens français, ici, son-geait le père Corriveau.....". (G.103)

There are fewer references to the family, in Il est par là, le Soleil. As the novel begins, the family unit is disintegrating. Philibert leaves the village and moves to the city. The village and his family exist only as memories:

"....Le neige a tout effacé. Il ne se souvient plus de son père, il a déjà oublié sa mère; la neige a recouvert son village...." (S.31)

Philibert is isolated in the city. He does not have a support system upon which he can depend: "Philibert est seul. Il est triste d'être si seul et fier d'être si triste...." (S.96)

Although Philibert longs to return to the village: "...il regrette d'être si loin de son enfance...." (S.73), he finds happiness in the freedom which the city offers him: "Il est libre tandis qu'au village, le ciel écrase les gens....". (S.73).

The freedom of the city marks the abandonment of the restraints imposed by tradition and religion. The refuge values are no longer acceptable to Philibert.

In the third novel there is no mention of the family structure. The characters, especially Dorval, do not rely on refuge values for their sense of identity. The house which normally shelters a family, shelters the class of oppressed workers in this novel. The class structure therefore replaces the family unit.

In his final chapter, Les Deux Réponses du Colonisé, Memmi describes the two different reactions of the colonized towards the colonial relationship. The colonized can either accept or reject his Portrait and the colonial relationship which it serves to perpetuate. The colonized person who accepts the colonial relationship, attempts to imitate the colonizer by adopting his values and lifestyle:

"....L'ambition première du colonisé sera d'égaliser ce modèle prestigieux, de lui ressembler jusqu'à disparaître en lui... Le refus de soi et l'amour de l'autre sont communs à tout candidat à l'assimilation. Et les deux composantes de cette tentative de libération sont étroitement liées: l'amour du colonisateur est sous-entendu d'un complexe de sentiments qui vont de la honte à la haine de soi." 36

The colonized's need for assimilation results in the negation of his own identity. This is the basis of his alienation. 37

36 A. Memmi, Op. Cit.

37 F. Fanon discusses the alienation of the colonized who attempts to imitate the colonizer, in Peau Noire, Masques Blancs, p. 15.

In attempting to imitate that which he can never hope to be, the colonized denies his own true self. The colonized's alienation extends beyond himself to his people: "...il s'habitue à regarder les siens avec les yeux de leur procureur." 38

The colonized's assimilation is determined by two factors, the departure from his own people and his acceptance by the colonizer:

"...Pour s'assimiler, il ne suffit pas de donner conger à son groupe, il faut en pénétrer un autre: or il rencontre le refus du colonisateur." 39

The colonized fails in his attempted assimilation because the colonizer rejects him. Memmi indicates that assimilation is impossible on an individual level. Change must be collective if it is to be successful:

"...Pour que l'assimilation colonisée ait une portée et un sens, il faudrait qu'elle atteigne un peuple tout entier, c'est-à-dire que soit modifiée toute la condition coloniale..." 40

Rioux discusses the difficulties which the French Canadian has encountered in trying to integrate himself into the predominantly English business community in Quebec:

"...il se trouvera doublement handicapé: le

39 Ibid., p. 159.

40 Ibid., p. 162.

nombre d'obstacles qu'il va rencontrer du fait qu'il est de culture française, va entraîner des conséquences néfastes au point de vue psychologique, et entravera l'efficacité de son travail, ce qui évidemment compromettra ses « chances d'avancement »." 41

In La Guerre, yes sir, Bérubé is the colonized who suffers alienation. He accepts the colonizer and attempts to imitate him. Bérubé speaks English, the colonizer's language (G.39, 90). He participates in the colonizer's war by becoming a soldier. Bérubé imitates the mannerisms of the English soldiers and obeys their commands:

"...Bérubé se mit au garde-à-vous...Bérubé n'était plus qu'une pelote de muscles obéissants" (G.53).

While he is on military duty at an air base in Newfoundland, he meets and marries an English woman named Molly. In attempting to resemble the English, Bérubé promotes their values to the point of negating those of the villagers. Bérubé's alienation is the most apparent in the scene in which he joins the English soldiers in their fight against the villagers:

"-Atten....tion! cria une voix anglaise. Ces mots paralysèrent Bérubé. Le Sergent avait donné un commandement: Bérubé, simple soldat était hypnotisé
-Let's kill'em!

Ces mots redonnèrent vie à Bérubé...Il frappa sur les villageois comme si sa vie avait été en danger." (G,108)

⁴¹ M. Rioux, Op. Cit., p. 128.

In Bérubé's prayer for help we note another sign of his alienation. Instead of using the words "Au fond de l'abîme", he says "Au fond tu m'abîmes Seigneur". (G.110) The use of "abîmes" in this context indicates that Bérubé has been damaged. By this slip of the tongue Carrier reveals the extent of Bérubé's destruction ~~and his own position~~.

Bérubé's attempt at assimilation fails. The villagers reject him because he is a traitor: "...la haine pour le traître..." (G.110); while the English refuse to accept him: "...ils ne toléreraient pas qu'un French Canadian priât pour un Anglais". (G.110). Although the English reject Bérubé, they continue to exploit him. At the end of the novel Bérubé continues to seek the acceptance of the English by imitating them. In his role as a soldier, he assumes the responsibility of pallbearer for an English soldier. His behaviour is geared to the expectations of the English.

In Il est par là, le Soleil, Philibert suffers from alienation. Having left his village he searches for a new identity in the city. In his pursuit of financial gain he must alter his personality and behaviour to meet the requirements of those who exploit him. He attempts to resist this distortion of self by quitting various jobs.

Philibert is obsessed with material possessions: "...il ne sera pas heureux avant de posséder une Pontiac jaune..." (S.72). The colour of the car is symbolic of success: "jaune" is indicative of gold and the sun, both of which are

unattainable for Philibert. His happiness is based on the accumulation of goods and money:

"...Il a des billets dans la poche intérieure de son veston, une bague à chaque doigt et des souliers en peau de crocodile..." (S.113)

Philibert attempts to reflect and imitate the image of the socio-economically successful man. When he dreams of owning a grocery store, he acknowledges the need to learn the English language and to increase his knowledge of business practices (S.132). Although Philibert's dreams do not materialize, they are the basis of his alienation. His awareness of exploitation leads him to imitation, not to struggle.

The alienation of the colonized is also evident in Le Deux-millième Etage. In spite of their awareness, most of the characters in this novel fall victim to the alienating influences of capitalism. Mignonne Fleury and even Dupont-la-France (DM.E. 169) shape their lives to meet the capitalistic requirements of their society. All of their activities are eventually directed to the "accumulation" of money. Although they are not capitalists, they are collaborators with the system.

The most striking example of alienation is the character of Barnabé Marchessault. Barnabé's life and personality are moulded by his ambitions and his capitalistic interests. When he speaks, he does not express his own thoughts. Instead, he repeats or mimics the ideas found in his self-instruction manual:

"-Aujourd'hui, avec le progrès scientifique, l'avancement technique, on est à l'âge de l'ordinateur. (Il avait oublié que c'était la première phrase de son cours par correspondance..."). (D.M.E. 12)

We can note the irony of the narrator by his use of parentheses in the above quotation. Barnabé's alienation is so deeply embedded that his humanity depends on his assimilation to an idealized model. He is not concerned about the demolition of his home. In fact, he would prefer that it be completed as quickly as possible (D.M.E. 46). He would then have the "peace" he needs to complete his studies. At the end of the novel, Barnabé's successful completion of the course permits him to demolish his former home. Carrier thereby illustrates the self-destructive nature of alienation. In contrast to Barnabé, Dorval resists alienation. Although he succumbs temporarily to the demands of capitalism (D.M.E. 140), he ultimately resists its alienating forces. This is the basis for the second response of the colonized.

As mentioned earlier, Memmi indicates that the colonized can never hope to attain complete assimilation within the colonial relationship. Since assimilation is not a viable means of changing his condition, the colonized will inevitably find another. Only when colonialism is destroyed, will the colonial relationship cease to exist. The colonized will reject colonialism through revolt;

" Mais la révolte est la seule issue à la situation coloniale, qui ne soit pas un

trompe-l'oeil, et le colonisé le découvre tôt ou tard. Sa condition est absolue et réclame une solution absolue, une rupture et non un compromis...." 42

The colonial relationship resulted in the colonized's negation or refusal of self. In order that the colonized re-affirms himself, the colonizer must be rejected. The refusal or rejection of the colonizer must be extended to include all oppressors:

"...le colonisé réagit en refusant en bloc tous les colonisateurs. Et même, quelquefois, tous ceux qui leur ressemblent, tout ce qui n'est pas, comme lui, opprimé...Et qu'ils le veuille ou non, ils le sont par quelque côté: par leur situation économique de privilégiés, par leur appartenance au système politique de l'oppression, par leur participation à un complexe affectif négateur du colonisé." 43

Once the colonizer has been rejected, the next stage of the revolt is the colonized's affirmation of self. He identifies and re-inforces traits or differences which are unique to himself and to his people, in order to construct his identity and confirm his solidarity with other oppressed people:

"...L'important est maintenant de reconstruire son peuple, quelle qu'en soit la nature authentique, de refaire son unité, de communiquer avec lui et de se sentir lui appartenant." 44

⁴² A. Memmi, Op. Cit., p. 163.

⁴³ Ibid., p. 166.

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 171.

Thus, the oppressed must create a new society which meets their needs and encourages their development. ⁴⁵

Since the Quiet Revolution some Quebeckers have indicated their preference for the second answer of the colonized. Rioux discusses the affirmation of self which has been the most evident in French Canadian culture:

"...Malgré les agressions de toute nature - politiques, économiques et culturelles - dont elle est l'objet, la culture québécoise a manifesté assez de vigueur pour leur opposer sa propre réalité et surtout pour dévoiler d'autres possibles, d'autres façons de vivre en société....." ⁴⁶

According to Chamberland this affirmation of self will be complete when Quebec is no longer a province of Canada but an independant country. ⁴⁷

The reaction of resistance and revolt against oppression is prevalent in Carrier's three novels. In each one he presents violence and antagonism as an expression of the colonized's revolt. René Dionne notes the prevalence of war in La Guerre, yes sir:

"...Ces gens qui détestent la guerre se rendent compte qu'ils ont la guerre en eux. Ils se la font d'ailleurs sur tous les plans, guerre entre villageois, entre hommes et femmes, ou dans ces cas de conscience, à l'intérieur d'un même

⁴⁵ A. Césaire, Op. Cit. p. 29.

⁴⁶ M. Rioux, Op. Cit. p. 244.

⁴⁷ P. Chamberland, "De la Damnation à la liberté," Parti Pris, Vol. 1, Eté 64, no 9-11, p. 14.

individu, guerre entre Anglais et Français,
avec ceux qui perdent, avec les assimilés,
avec les forts et les faibles." 48

According to Dionne, the result of this state of war is "une prise de conscience" ⁴⁹ of oppression. The villagers become aware of their oppression and their frustrations. There are numerous references to war and violence in this novel. The very presence of the English soldiers brings the war into the villagers' lives (G.24). References to "les Allemands" (G.23) evoke thoughts of antagonism and war. Bérubé's fight with Molly (G.41), and the violence which he directs at Arsène (G.79) and the villagers (G.108) are symptoms of frustration and an inner struggle. The villagers fight amongst themselves (G.68) and with the English soldiers:

"...Les villageois redoublèrent de violence et de colère. Les Anglais se défendirent à coups de poings, à coups de bottes....", (G.107).

Although there is a degree of physical resistance, we see the English and French Canadians kneeling together to mourn their dead, at the end of the novel. Despite their consciousness of oppression, the villagers are unable to effect a change in their condition.

⁴⁸ R. Dionne, "La Guerre, yes sir", Relations, Oct. 68, p. 281.

⁴⁹ R. Dionne, Op. Cit., p. 281.

In Il est par là, le Soleil, the antagonism and violence of war are absent. Reference is made to soldiers (S.48) and a distant war (S.93). However, there is no actual confrontation or revolt against the oppressor. Carrier does reveal the anger and frustration which the oppressed experience and which they express through violence. He describes the hostility between the English and the French Canadian hockey players (S.54) and the emotions of the crowd. (S.52). The hostility between these two groups is isolated and restricted to the hockey arena. Frustration and violence find outlets for expression. This explains the ferocity of the crowd's attack on La Neuvième Merveille:

"...Un peu de sang coule. Alors les poings se déchaînent, ils attaquent de tous côtés le visage d'acier, ils frappent comme s'il fallait détruire pour vivre, comme si le visage du géant était un mur de violence...." (S.110)

In the second novel, the colonized neither re-affirms himself nor rejects the colonizer. Awareness and anger are present but they are not channelled towards collective action and revolt. Even Philibert who is extremely aware of his oppression is limited in his revolt which he expresses by quitting various jobs.

Soldiers and war, as expressions of political oppression, are also absent in Le deux-millième Etage. A dominant aspect of this novel is the focus on Dorval's resistance. Bérubé refers to Dorval as "un homme qui lutte contre l'injus-

tice sociale." ⁴⁹ He also describes the origin and nature of Dorval's resistance:

"Bien sûr, il y a quelque chose d'idéaliste et de naïf dans le communisme bien-appris de Dorval; sa lutte contre le capitalisme, tributaire de l'amour admiratif qu'il continue à entretenir pour Jeanne, demeure une lutte globaliste, sans nuance et qui parfois parodie elle-même. Mais elle reste toujours sincère, ardente, honnête; contrairement à ses locataires, Dorval croit en ce qu'il entreprend - les autres résistent en attendant des jours meilleurs...." 50

Dorval's revolt consists of three elements. First, he identifies the oppressor. Dorval denounces the capitalists who are the oppressors in this novel. He calls them: "maudits capitalistes" (D.M.E. 11); "sans coeurs" (D.M.E. 39); "mangeurs de petites gens" (D.M.E. 18) and "bande de maudits pirates capitalistes" (D.M.E. 26). Secondly, Dorval is aware of his oppression. While rejecting them, Dorval re-affirms his own identity: "...Ma maison va rester debout et moi, je vais rester sur mes jambes. Comme un homme; debout!" (D.M.E. 18) Thirdly, Dorval resists the oppression as he declares:

"-I'm'démoliront pas."
 "-C'est la mort."
 "C'est la guerre."

⁴⁹ R. Bérubé, "Le deux-millième Etage," Livres et auteurs Québécois, 1973, 18.

⁵⁰ R. Bérubé, Op. Cit., p. 18.

He then organizes the revolt, but ends up alone, having been abandoned by his tenants. Carrier makes numerous references to the isolation which Dorval experiences: "...Dorval était le seul gardien de sa maison. Seul, il veillait....". (D.M.E. 73). Dorval realizes that his solitude and his isolation are the causes of his failure: "-Seul, seul comme Jésus-Christ sur la croix, est-ce qu'un homme peut résister." (D.M.E. 160). Carrier indicates that it is not the sacrifice of one individual, but rather collective action which brings change.

We find that in Carrier's three novels there is an evolution in the portrayal of various aspects of the colonial relationship. The participants in the relationship increase from two ethnic groups to a level of global participation. There is an evolution in the "type" of exploitation experienced: from political to socio-economic. Devaluation and depersonalization, the basic elements of racism, decrease in significance. The influential role of religion, as the "roi-nègre", disappears. There is an evolution in the refuge values as the family unit disappears and is replaced by the class. The nature of alienation evolves from being political and social to being economic. Conflict, as expressed by war and violence loses its impact through the use of humour. The "pyramide des tyranneaux" remains and even increases, revealing a political pessimism on the part of the author. The end of the third novel shows the author's refusal of individual sacrifice as a solution to problem of oppression.

CHAPTER 2

THE COLONIAL RELATIONSHIP AS EXPRESSED THROUGH IMAGERY

The literary form of a novel is influenced by the society in which it is written. As Jacques Leenhardt explains:

" Si en effet la cohérence d'une vision du monde peut être dégagée à partir d'une insertion de l'oeuvre dans un ensemble plus vaste, de caractère sociologique, n'en va-t-il pas de même pour l'élaboration de la signification au niveau sémantique...." 1

Carrier's literary achievements have been recognized by critics such as Georges Fournier. Reviewing Carrier's novels, Fournier says that they have:

"...a marvellous blend of art and realism, in which social judgements do not override aesthetic qualities but rather give them vigour and life...." 2

The first chapter dealt with Carrier's portrayal of the realities of the colonial relationship. The second chapter will examine colonialism as it is revealed through art, and more specifically, through imagery. The images or symbols which Carrier has selected emphasize various aspects of

¹ J. Leenhardt, "Sémantique et sociologie de la littérature in Sociologie de la Littérature, (Bruxelles: Editions de l'Institut de Sociologie, (1970.)). p. 99.

² G. Fournier, "A Quest for the Authentic", Ellipse, (Eté 1970), p. 36.

of the colonial relationship. Albert Durand explains the importance of symbols as a means of reinforcing ideas:

"...On peut dire que le symbole n'est pas du domaine de la sémiologie, mais du ressort d'une sémantique spéciale, c'est-à-dire qu'il possède plus qu'un sens artificiellement donné, mais détient un essentiel et spontané pouvoir de retentissement." 3

Carrier uses objects less for their descriptive value than for their symbolism. The imagery in the three novels can be grouped together to reflect relevant features of the colonial relationship. Oppression is emphasized by the symbols of the "boot", "gun", "hole", "bulldozer" and the "skyscraper". The elements of refuge and escape are represented by the "house", the "feast" and the "giant". Life and death imagery is prevalent in each novel. Symbols which are associated with life include: "sun", "hole", "apple", "blood", and "light". The death imagery is found in the use of the "coffin", "snow", "hole", "blood", "night" (or darkness), and the "mutilated body". It should be noted that the images of the "hole" and "blood" have an ambivalent significance, emphasizing both life and death.

The relationship of domination and oppression is illustrated by Carrier's image of the "boot" and the "hole".^{3b}

³ G. Durand, Les Structures anthropologiques de l'imaginaire (Paris: Bordas, 1969) p. 26.

^{3b} NOTE: The image of the hole can be linked to both oppression and death. It will be examined more closely as part of the death imagery.

In La Guerre, yes sir, the "boot" is symbolic of oppressive power. It is associated with violence and war. This effect is achieved through the metonymic procedure by which a part of an object is substituted for the whole. In a reference to Arthur, the first feature which Carrier mentions is "une botte" (G.10). The "botte" is introduced in conjunction with "la carabine" which Arthur holds. Both the "boot" and the "gun" are instruments of oppression and physical harm. The "boot" is associated with the Germans:

"-Les Allemands s'en viennent avec des bottes
qui tombent par terre comme des coups de ha-
che..." (G.16) 4

and with soldiers: "Tu es un soldat, tu as l'uniforme, les bottes...." (G.17). The act of kicking reflects the image of the "boot". Bérubé kicks Arsène in order to humiliate him (G.90), and Philibert is kicked by his father, Arsène. (G.20, 21, 118). The behaviour of both Bérubé and Arsène can be regarded as a form of domination and oppression leading to injustice.

In Il est par là, le Soleil, Philibert continues to be the victim of the "boot". He escapes from the village in order to evade his father's domination and violence: "ce gros pied de cuir" (S.9). Carrier focuses on the importance of

⁴ NOTE: Often in movies, the sound of boots signifies the approach of soldiers. In cartoons, oppression is also shown in the image of the boot. The boot is often disproportionately large in size and is depicted as crushing something fragile such as a flower.

the "boot" by the use of a cinematic close up. Philibert's arrival in the city exposes him to another form of domination. The "boot" has become the symbol of socio-economic oppression:

"Sautent devant ses yeux deux bottes bien cirées; il ne lève pas les yeux. Un homme lui parle....alors il accélère ses coups de pioche jusqu'au départ des bottes cirées." (S.60)

The adjective "cirées" refers to the polished appearance of oppression. One notes that the boots are at Philibert's level of vision. This indicates the higher, physical position of the oppressor, which is consistent with his socially elevated role. The boots are described as if they were detached from the body so that they represent the oppression.

In order to survive, the colonized manufactures the instruments of his social death. The nature of socio-economic exploitation is revealed by Philibert's employment at the boot factory (S.63), where generations of workers have spent their lives in the production of boots. The workers cease to have personalities or to exist as individuals. The focal point of their lives is the manufacture of boots. Consequently, their human qualities are not important. Philibert reveals his depersonalization in describing a dream:

"....J'étais une bottine mais je pensais comme un homme...Vous savez pas ce que moi, la bottine je faisais? Non? Baptême, je faisais des bottines!" (S.64).

This repetition of "bottine" emphasizes the depersonalisation which Philibert has suffered. "Bottine" is harmless as compared to the "boot", however, "bottine" does emphasize the notion of depersonalization which is a consequence of oppression. There is only one reference to the "boot" as a symbol of political domination (S.51), which is indicative of its diminishing influence.

The "boot" is not evident in Le deux-millième Etage. However, reference is made to the act of kicking:

"Un coup de pied souleva le fonctionnaire,
projeta très haut son chapeau et vida son
porte-documents de tous ses papiers...." (D.M.E. 18)

A similar reference can be found when Dorval kicks the "grues mécaniques". (D.M.E. 38). In both cases it is Dorval who is doing the kicking. The colonized is transformed from the object to the subject of the kicking.

The metonymic process is also applied to the "gun" which is generally given the function of oppression and violence. References to the gun are found in La Guerre, yes sir, (G. 10, 47, 99). In Il est par là, le Soleil, the "gun" is also the instrument of the colonized's death. For socio-economic survival, the colonized must produce weapons which will ultimately kill him in the war:

"Les Anglais ont fait la guerre parce qu'ils
avaient des usines. Ils fabriquaient des
chars d'assaut, des mitrailleuses et des fusils...
Les Canadiens français....Ils voulaient pas la
guerre parce qu'ils avaient peur de perdre leur
deux bras...." (S.93)

Numerous references are made to the "gun" in Le deux-millième Etage. In addition to symbolizing violence, the "gun" now represents resistance against oppression. It is Dorval who uses this instrument of violence to attack his oppressors. He shoots at le Chauve (D.M.E. 66,71), at the bulldozer (D.M.E. 67), and the clergy:

"Il baissa le canon de son fusil. Quelle jolie guerre! De toute sa vie de soldat il n'avait jamais été aussi fier...." (D.M.E. 71)

The gun also serves to protect Dorval's interests. In references such as the following: "la carabine sur les genoux..." (D.M.E. 160) and "...la carabine à la main, il surveilla son territoire". (D.M.E. 162), the "gun" becomes the instrument of defence. The "gun" is transformed into a weapon at the colonized's disposal rather than being the instrument of his destruction.

There are two symbols of oppression which are exclusive to Le deux-millième Etage. They are the "bulldozer" and the "skyscraper". The "bulldozer" evokes the image of military tanks. Both have the same function of destruction. Carrier describes the invasion of the machines: "...Les grues avaient envahi le quartier...." (D.M.E. 39), and their destruction of the neighbourhood:

"Les murs éclataient comme des noix sous le marteau. La brique était de la coquille d'oeuf, friable comme la vie des hommes qui ressemblent toujours à leurs maisons...."

...Des bulldozers amoncelaient en tas fumant
ces débris imprégnés de toutes les odeurs
humaines." (D.M.E. 52)

Carrier compares the demolition of the houses to the destruction of humanity. Both are portrayed as being helpless. The fragility of their existence is evident in the comparison to the egg shell which can be easily crushed.⁵ Similar to the "gun" and the "boot", the "bulldozer" has a dual role. It is needed by the alienated oppressed such as le Chauve (D.M.E. 63) and Barnabé: "Barnabé Marchessault était impatient de terminer son cours. Au fond du trou, les machines l'appelaient..." (D.M.E. 111), because it gives them a job. Yet the "bulldozer" is also an instrument of destruction which has ravaged the neighbourhood and the lives of its inhabitants. The "bulldozer" reinforces the notion of domination and oppression. The machine is not controlled by the workers, but by "les Boss" (D.M.E. 47). The latter determine which areas will be levelled. These decisions are made to further the Bosses' interests. Dorval explains that the workers' participation in the demolition is determined by powerful and anonymous forces:

"...Pourquoi est-ce qu'i viennent nous mettre
à la porte de chez nous? I'obéissent à quel-
qu'un. Qui est leur Boss? Avez-vous vu la face

⁵ NOTE: Similar references to the demolition equipment include: (D.M.E. 44) and (D.M.E. 125)

de leur Boss? J'parle pas des petits Boss. Ceux-là, les petits Boss, on peut les reconnaître. Y ont des faces en trou de cul. Mais les gros Boss, les big Boss, on dirait qu'i ont pas de face....". (D.M.E. 47).

The "skyscraper" is also symbolic of the exploitive relationship perpetuated by capitalism. Dorval indicates the association between capitalism and the skyscraper:

"-Devant vous, dit Dorval, vous voyez les gratte-ciel. Le capitalisme habite là. Ecoutez... Ecoutez... - Vous entendez pas la voix? Pourtant vous lui obéissez toujours comme des maudits esclaves!....C'est la voix du capitalisme." (D.M.E. 86). 6

The "skyscraper" is an instrument of psychological rather than physical destruction: its crushing size is always present and dominating. The workers are slaves to the capitalistic system which the "skyscraper" represents. They devote their lives to the construction of buildings representing capitalistic interests. In this novel, they are constructing a skyscraper which will have two thousand floors. The gigantic proportions of the building reflect the greed of its owners. This is a reflection of the motivation behind capitalistic ventures, of which the objective is the accumulation of profit rather than the satisfaction of needs. On a much smaller scale, the workers pursue their own economic interests which are geared not

⁶ NOTE: Other references to the skyscraper used in the context of capitalism include: (D.M.E. 72, 73, 160, 161, 162.)

only to survival but also to the accumulation of small possessions.

In opposition to the symbols which reflect oppression Carrier introduces images which portray refuge and escape. The image of the "feast" is evident in each of the three novels. Bakhtine indicates that this form of activity is an integral part of human civilization. The "feast" is associated with special occasions and includes activities such as eating, drinking, dancing and laughter. Bakhtine describes the unique quality of the "feast":

"...La fête est dégagée de tout sens utilitaire (c'est un repos, une détente etc). C'est la fête qui, affranchissant de tout utilitarisme, de tout but pratique, donne le moyen d'entrer temporairement dans un univers utopique...." 7

The "feast" is a departure from the rigid and static daily routine, an oblivion of oppression. It is an occasion to express liberation from them: "...les images de la fête populaire... sont profondément actives et triomphantes...."⁸ Closely associated to the image of the "feast" is that of drinking and inebriation. Albert Durand describes this form of escapism:

"...La vertu de ces beuveries est à la fois de créer un lien mystique entre les participants et de transformer la condition morose de l'homme. Le breuvage enivrant a pour mission d'abolir

7 M. Bakhtine, L'oeuvre de François Rabelais et la culture populaire au Moyen Age et sous la Renaissance (Paris: Editions Gallimard, 1970), p. 276.

8 Ibid., p. 300.

la condition quotidienne de l'existence
et de permettre la réintégration orgiasti-
que et mystique...." 9

The "feast" is a prevalent image in La Guerre, yes sir, it is a wake which becomes a celebration. Carrier has devoted 68 pages or 54 per cent of the novel to this description.¹⁰ Rather than being an episode, the "feast" permeates the entire novel.¹¹ François Gallays examines the function of this celebration in the novel. He indicates that it serves as both the reflection and the re-affirmation of the French Canadian collectivity:

"...c'est toute l'âme de la paysannerie, sinon de la société canadienne-française qui se découvre ici tant avec ses qualités et ses défauts qu'avec ses joies et ses misères." 12

René Dionne refers to the "feast" as a form of exorcism:

"...Leur soirée carnavalesque n'est au fond, qu'un effort pour l'exorciser...." 13 The death of Corriveau has brought the reality of war to the villagers. They attempt to escape this

⁹ A. Durand, Les Structures anthropologiques de l'imaginaire. (Paris: Bordas, 1969), p. 299.

¹⁰ R. Dionne, "La Guerre, yes sir," Relations, (Oct. 1968), p. 279.

¹¹ F. Gallays, "La Guerre, yes sir," Livres et auteurs canadiens, (1968), 39.

¹² Ibid., p. 39.

¹³ R. Dionne, Op. Cit., p. 281.

reality by participating in the "feast" and drinking.

Carrier provides many description passages of the "feast" In the following reference, he describes the food and the beverages , revealing their variety and abundance:

"...La mère Corriveau les accueillait avec une assiette dans laquelle elle avait placé un quart de tourtière sous une sauce faite de pommes, de fraises, de myrtilles, de groseilles mélangées. Anthyme, lui, tendait un verre qu'il remplissait de cidre mousseux..." (G.56)

Carrier also describes the feast as an exorcism of death:

"...Les villageois, vivaient, ils priaient pour se le rappeler, pour se souvenir qu'ils n'étaient pas avec Corriveau, que leur vie n'était pas terminée...." (G. 55).

Through their celebration, the villagers are able to obtain refuge from the reality of their oppression as represented by the war and the death of Corriveau.

The image of the "feast" and drinking is found rarely in Il est par là, le Soleil. After Philibert's arrival in the city he meets two soldiers and is introduced to beer:

" Il grimace au goût âcre de la première gorgée de bière, mais pourrait-il n'être pas emporté par les applaudissements, les cris, les bottes frénétiques sur le plancher qui acclament son premier exploit de vider un verre sans le poser pour reprendre souffle?" (S.51)

He drinks in order to obtain a temporary feeling of acceptance in the midst of an alienating environment. In the city, the "feast" is represented by the nightlife in the clubs:

" La vraie vie, celle qui enflamme les artères de Phil, crépite dans les clubs de nuit de la rue Saint-Laurent..." (S.113).

Although Philibert's presence in the clubs is an escape, the notion of a collectivity and the sense of belonging which is evident in the first novel, is not apparent here. The "feast" has now degenerated and is described as part of the socio-economic exploitation of individuals.

In Le deux-millième Etage, the "feast" is transformed into the sole act of drinking. Numerous references are made to beer. Dorval drinks mainly in the company of his tenants:

"Il distribua d'autres bouteilles de bière et bientôt, tous ivres, ils sortirent dans la neige de la grande nuit silencieuse frappant l'une contre l'autre les bouteilles, des casseroles, et hurlant des obscénités..." (D.M.E. 124) 14

Beer and drinking have several functions in the novel. They reflect celebrations (D.M.E. 16, 124) and an escape from the reality of the demolition. (D.M.E. 124). Symbolically, Dorval attempts to "inebriate" the "bulldozer" in order to resist the demolition:

"...il versa l'une après l'autre ses bouteilles de bière dans l'estomac du géant...-Aussi longtemps que le bulldozer va être soûl, i' songera pas à faire du mal." (D.M.E. 44).

At the end of the novel, Dorval continues to drink but he is

¹⁴ NOTE: Other references to beer and drinking include: (D.M.E. 127, 129, 133, 162.)

alone. The sense of a collective solidarity is no longer evident. In each of the novels, the "feast" or drinking, is a form of symbolic resistance. However, reality and oppression become apparent only too soon because the escape is temporary.

The image of the "giant" can be found in each of Carrier's three novels. In mythology, the "giant" is portrayed as a huge, powerful, invincible and even frightening creature. Chevalier describes the role of the giant:

"...L'évolution de la vie vers une spiritualisation croissante est le véritable combat des géants. Mais cette évidence implique l'effort propre de l'homme, qui ne doit pas compter sur les forces d'en-haut pour triompher des tendances involutives et régressives qui sont immanentes en lui. Le mythe des Géants est un appel à l'héroïsme humain. Le Géant représente tout ce que l'homme doit vaincre pour libérer et épanouir sa personnalité." 15

The "giant" can be viewed as the father image which one has to fight in order to become an individual. One can equate God with the father imagery. Both can be perceived as an obstacle which one must overcome in order to become a human being. In La Guerre, yes sir, Arsène, who is Philibert's father, can be portrayed as the giant. He controls his son because he is strong and powerful:

¹⁵ J. Chevalier, Dictionnaire des symboles, (France: Editions Robert Laffont & Editions Jupiter, 1969), p. 382.

"Il aurait voulu que son fils comprît, mais il savait que la douceur n'est jamais efficace. Alors il enfonça sa botte dans les fesses de Philibert...." (G.21)

The image of the giant is also evident in Il est par là, le Soleil. In this novel the giant is Boris Rataploffsky. He is described as a physically strong and invincible individual:

"Le poing de Philibert heurte un rocher de chair. De peur d'être mis en miettes, il dévale d'escalier. La montagne déboule derrière lui. Il sent dans son dos l'énorme souffle, la chaleur âcre..." (S.101).

The giant symbolizes Philibert's dreams of success. Carrier calls him "La Neuvième Merveille" which reinforces the sense of something detached from reality. The use of capital letters in his name emphasizes his largeness. His size and the fact that he is called a "wonder" places the giant in the same category as the pyramids of Egypt or the Taj Mahal. Boris is given the "parures du roi",¹⁶ he has "son trône" (S.102) and he carries himself with "la majesté de Dieu" (S.103). However, Boris is the king of an imaginary world as the name "Merveille" indicates. He has the "good" power which is actually imaginary. In opposition to this, there is the "bad" power of "les gros" which is real. The "giant" provides a temporary escape from

¹⁶ M. Bakhtine, Op. Cit., p. 199.

reality for Philibert. However the weakness of this refuge soon becomes apparent. The giant is reduced to human dimensions when the people who pay to hit him succeed in hurting him. We see that he is vulnerable:

"Baptême, s'affole Philibert, c'est pas vrai qu'il a la face en acier!" (S.106).

The giant cannot bear the violence which is directed at him and surrenders to it by drowning himself. His death reveals his humanity and his mortality: "Il n'est plus un géant, mais un homme." (S.112). The dream falls apart and only the "official" giant, the power of "les gros" remains.

Dorval is the giant in Le deux-millième Etage. He is the individual who resists the demolition of his house and the oppression of capitalism. Initially Dorval is described as being energetic and powerful; a protective father image:

"...il monta au premier étage en un seul pas. Géant capable de sauter par-dessus les toits..." (D.M.E. 16)

and:

" Le géant Dorval cria avec tant de force qu'il vit les murs s'ouvrir, le plafond tomber sur sa tête, les poutres se briser sur ses épaules...." (D.M.E. 16).

Dorval, the giant, is the character who stages the battle against the forces of capitalism. His stature and strength matches the hugeness of capitalism. Two symbols of oppression:

the "skyscraper" and the "bulldozer" are the targets of Dorval's resistance. Carrier presents the battle of the "giants" in this novel. Both the bulldozer and the skyscraper are referred to as giants. Dorval pours beer into the bulldozer: "...dans l'estomac du géant..." (D.M.E. 44), to halt its destructiveness. In reference to the skyscraper, Dorval says:

"-Les gratte-ciel des capitalistes ressemblent à des jambes de géant...
-Regardez. Les immeubles capitalistes, c'est des jambes, des pieds. La tête? On la voit pas. La tête du capitalisme, c'est invisible..."

This "giant" is so immense that it cannot be viewed as an entity. Dorval is obviously outmatched. Signs of physical weakness become apparent:

"...Ses jambes ne pouvaient plus le porter.
Son ventre avait le poids d'un baril de bière..." (D.M.E. 19)

His pursuit of Mignonne Fleury is indicative of his weakness (D.M.E. 153). Dorval, the giant, is reduced to human dimensions. He is unsuccessful in his battle against the other giants. In each novel, the "giant" suffers distortion. The popular, superhuman being capable of helping the oppressed, is revealed as being weak and is ultimately destroyed by the bigger giant.

The "house" is also a symbol of escape or refuge. Chevalier describes it as being:

"...un symbole féminin, avec le sens de refuge, de mère, de protection, le sein maternel." 17

In La Guerre, yes sir, the "house" is both a refuge and a prison for Henri. This deserter is safe from capture yet his life is restricted by the physical limits of the house:

"Déserteur, pour ne pas risquer d'être pris et ramené à l'armée par les soldats anglais, Henri était resté tapi dans son grenier, immobile au fond de son lit...." (G.94)

The presence of the English soldiers in the house of Corriveau represents an intrusion into their refuge and their lives (G.93). The "house" can also be a symbol of Quebec, where French Canadians have established their homes and their identities. The presence of English Canadians in Quebec can be regarded as an intrusion into the lives and the refuge of French Canadians.

In Il est par là, le Soleil, Philibert does not have a home. He is a transient without roots. Philibert does not have a refuge from his oppression. This is evident in his wanderings: "...Les maisons semblent marcher en tout sens à côté de lui." (S.35). Philibert is outside, not belonging to the houses. This evolution in the image of the "house" is consistent with the disappearance of the family as a "valeur refuge". Dorval's house serves as more than a refuge. It

¹⁷ J. Chevalier, Op. Cit., p. 486.

symbolizes his resistance to capitalism:

" Sa maison resterait debout. Se rendre?
-Jamais de ma sainte vie..." (D.M.E. 132).

The "house" is an analogy with people and sex, all representing life. For this reason the quantitative aspect is linked to human beings rather than the numerous storeys of the skyscraper which represents capitalism.

The image of the "house" as a refuge is emphasized by other indicators of intimacy. Durand explains that:

" La maison constitue donc, entre le micro-cosme du corps humain et le cosmos un micro-cosme secondaire...On peut demander: "Dis-moi la maison que tu imagines, je te dirai qui tu es." 18

The windows are "les yeux de la maison." ¹⁹ In La Guerre, yes sir, they symbolize Joseph's insight with regards to the war:

"Cette fenêtre embuée qui le séparait de la vie peu à peu fut transparente, très claireJoseph mesura, en un instant de vertigineuse lucidité, la peur qui l'avait torturé durant le dongs mois...." (G.9)

The kitchen, associated with fire and warmth, reveals the intimacy of the House:

¹⁸ A. Durand, Op. Cit., p. 277.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 277.

"La mère Corriveau tira d'autres tourtières du four. Toute la maison était un four qui sentait la tourtière au lard grasse et dorée..." (G.59)

The fire of the house is protective as opposed to the fires of hell and war which are destructive.

Although Philibert does not have a home, references to the "house" are evident in Il est par là, le Soleil. There is a description of his grand-parents' home. This house represents the past as a refuge from the present:

"C'est une vieille maison de bois que l'on repeint toujours en blanc pour effacer les années; Philibert l'aime parce que, pour la trouver il faut avancer dans un chemin presque secret de terre battue...." (S. 22)

The house does however, suffer the effects of time. It is no longer a pleasant refuge:

"Privée de leur ambre verte, l'herbe est blême, et au bout de l'allée dégarnie, la maison des grands-parents apparaît toute honteuse de son pauvre bois qui a la gale; les rats ont rongé la maison à sa base. Un jour la maison s'écroulera...." (S.23).

The "house" becomes the symbol of a happy past which is disappearing and which no longer provides refuge from oppression. Socio-economic influences have destroyed the "house". The grand-parents have sold it because: "nos enfants aiment bien l'argent...." (S.25).

References to the "stairs", as part of the house imagery, are evident in Il est par là, le Soleil. Durand explains

that stairs, ladders, and elevators are associated with movements of ascent and descent:

"...Les escaliers de la maison descendent toujours et monter au grenier ou aux chambres à l'étage, c'est encore descendre au coeur du mystère, d'un mystère, certes, d'une autre qualité que celui de la cave mais tout aussi teinté d'isolement, de régression, d'intimité...." 20

For Philibert, the "stairs" represent the isolation and regression of socio-economic exploitation:

"Agrippé au mur, un escalier sans fin se tord ...Philibert se retourne vers le bas, puis il regarde en haut, il a l'impression de n'avoir pas monté une seule marche, l'escalier s'allonge sans cesse...." (S.57).

The presence of the stairs increases in Le deux-millième Etage. References can be found as Dorval wanders about the neighbourhood: il erra encore dans les escaliers où la nuit montait et descendait..." (D.M.E. 38) and, "...l'escalier était interminable..." (D.M.E. 34) The stairs can be viewed as a parallel to the social ladder. The French Canadians are at the bottom of it. Dorval's climb to the top of the skyscraper (D.M.E. 153, 154) is symbolic of his search for a better life.

In the third novel, the "house" is the extension of the body:

"...Il posa ses mains sur son torse...En réalité

²⁰ A. Durand, Op. Cit., p. 280.

il touchait moins à son propre corps qu'à la brique des maisons de sa rue...tout cela faisait partie de son corps..." (D.M.E. 28)

At the end, the house is crushed just as the giant is a crushed human being. The "membres" can be associated to the "membres" of a family, the "membres" of the body and to the "membre" with a sexual connotation. Similar to life, all are standing at the beginning and all are crushed at the end.

Other symbols of intimacy closely associated to the "house" are evident in this novel. They include the "ship" and the "rocking chair". Durand explains that:

"...le goût de navire est toujours joie de s'enfermer parfaitement....aimer les navires c'est d'abord aimer une maison superlative, parce que close sans rémission... le navire est un fait d'habitat avant d'être moyen de transport...." 21

He also explains that the ship becomes more simply a rocking chair.²² Carrier makes several associations between ships and Dorval's house:

"Encore peuplée de tous ses locataires, qui ne l'avaient pas abandonnée, sa maison ressemblait à un navire avec son équipage..." (D.M.E. 30)

Other similar references include Dorval's sea voyage during the

21

Ibid., p. 286.

22

Ibid., p. 287.

war. Carrier has expanded the image of "la berceuse" to "la chaise berceuse" (D.M.E. 121, 124). The rocking chair provides Dorval with a sense of enclosure and comfort when he is isolated from the other characters.

The symbol of the "house" is more prevalent in Le deux-millième Etage than in the other novels. The house has become more than a mere refuge. It now represents the affirmation of self and resistance which are viable alternatives to an "escape" from oppression.

The antagonism and conflict of the colonial relationship, as well as its destructiveness are reflected in the life/death imagery of the novels. Life is evident in the images of "sun", "blood", "light", "apple", and "sex". Death is emphasized by the images of the "coffin", "hole", "dismembered body", "snow" and "darkness". It should be noted that the images of the "hole" and "blood" can be associated with both life and death.

In La Guerre, yes sir, the coffin is a dominant image. Its presence in the house is indicative of the notion of death in the midst of life. The villagers eat, drink, fight and make love in the presence of the coffin, thereby defying death. Numerous references to "le cercueil" (G.19, 97, 99, 104, 123,65) serve to emphasize death. Corriveau's coffin is symbolic of the collective death or destruction of the colonized French Canadians. Several references are made to this collective death.²³

²³ NOTE: The theme of death is prevalent in Carrier's novels as it is in French Canadian literature and art. The significance of this theme is due to religious influences which stressed that happiness could not be attained on earth but only in the afterlife.

They include Mère Corriveau's vision:

"...Elle avait vu dans sa tête les cercueils de tous ses garçons empilés les uns sur les autres." (G.105)

In another reference Henri's dream leads him to "une vision escatologique"²⁴ in which he sees the sun and the coffin on earth. The entire village is inside of the coffin:

" A la vérité, ce cercueil sous le soleil était plus gros que celui de Corriveau car les gens du village, un à un, l'un derrière l'autre, y entraient, comme à l'église, courbés, soumis...puis il n'arriva plus rien: la mer entière avait été bue par le cercueil de Corriveau et sur toute la terre, il ne restait que le seul cercueil de Corriveau." (G.97)

Godin describes the two poles of this vision:

1) the sun which is "très haut" and symbolizes an inaccessible life, and

2) the coffin which contains everything and everyone on earth.

He offers the following interpretation of the vision:

"...elle confirme (car nous le savions déjà) que la mort de Corriveau touche la collectivité entière. Mais elle précise, surtout, que cette mort est étrange, puisque le cercueil lui-même prend valeur de rachat: comme si, par la mort de Corriveau, passait la vie de la terre. Une fois encore, "mourir, c'est vivre." Il suffit d'ailleurs de se rappeler que la veillée funèbre fait éclater une intense fête

²⁴ J. Godin, "Roch Carrier: Une Terre entre deux (ou trois?) soleils", Livres et auteurs québécois, (1971), 309.

de vie, violente et instinctive,
pour saisir la vraisemblance de cette signi-
fication." 25

There is a sense of ambivalence attached to the life/death imagery. This is due to a confusion of values. It is questionable whether life or death is the most desirable state of being ²⁶ in a society where the afterlife is better than life. This confusion is evident in references such as the following. Esmalda asks:

"-Qui est mort? Qui est vivant? Le mort peut être vivant. Le vivant peut être mort...". (G.73).

A parallel reference can be found in Il est par là, le Soleil. The elderly couple believe that the dead infant is alive:

"...Mourir, c'est vivre. Vivre. Notre enfant vit!...Mourir, c'est vivre. " (S.82).

The image of the "hole" also reflects this reversal of values. Henri, the deserter, lives in an attic which resembles a cellar:

"...Il ne se pardonnait pas d'être un homme caché au fond d'un grenier glacial...et qui craignait que l'on vînt l'arracher à ce trou noir où il avait peur, où il se détestait..." (G.95)

²⁵ Ibid., p. 309.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 306.

Another reference to the "hole" can be found in Arsène's digging of the "fosses" (G.117) for burial purposes. The ambiguity of life and death is illustrated by the fact that Arsène's livelihood depends on death: "...Un mort dans le village était, pour lui, un bienfait de Dieu..." (G.117). This parallels the image of the French Canadian manufacturing the boots and weapons which will be used against them. We see that the French Canadians are digging their own graves.

The images of the "coffin" and the "hole" are present in Il est par là, le Soleil. Whereas references to the coffin (S.13, 16) decrease, the image of the hole becomes more dominant in this novel. These variations can be associated with the evolution which takes place in this novel. As religion disappears as a "valeur refuge", there is a transition from socio-metaphysical death to a purely social death. The work which Philibert performs is indicative of the exploitation which he suffers. Many of his jobs are connected to the "hole". He digs trenches on Rue St.Catherine: "...Le trou peu à peu devient fossé."; (S.59) Philibert works in Papatakos' cellar:

" Sous les solives, la nuit de ce sous-sol
semble de la grosse terre noire, puante et
lourde qui aurait été renversée sur Philibert..." (S.91)

At the garage he spends his days in "sa fosse de graissage" (S.124). Philibert is portrayed as a living person who spends much of his life working underground. He is below the surface of existence, in a social shell. The "hole" becomes a symbol of his oppression.

In Le deux-millième Etage, the image of the "coffin" is evident in la Vieille's frequent references to "les quatre planches de ma tombe" (D.M.E. 7, 48). Although she is alive, la Vieille is continuously speaking of her death.

The "hole" is the image of a social death. A dark and dangerous corner of the neighbourhood is referred to as "...un trou pour les Canadiens français" (D.M.E. 93). Dorval refers to his house as a "trou" (D.M.E. 53). He feels that it is a reflection of his life: "...C'était le trou qu'il avait fait dans l'univers, son trou." (D.M.E. 34). In this reference, "faire son trou" has a positive meaning which equals "faire sa place au soleil". It is associated with happiness and life. Dorval's house, however, is engulfed in a larger negative hole produced by capitalism:

" Le trou était maintenant assez vaste
pour y enterrer un village, ses maisons,
son église et ses habitants...." (D.M.E. 111)

As in the first novel, Carrier refers to the collective social death which the oppressed suffer. The hole itself becomes the place of death: "-Le trou, i'est déménagé en moi, dit Dorval" (D.M.E. 124). The ambiguity between life and death is evident in the character of la Vieille. Although she continuously refers to her death: "-Quand j'serai couchée dans les quatre planches de ma tombe" (D.M.E. 7), she dies while performing the act of life.

The image of a "mutilated body" evokes the thought of

the social mutilation of the individual. In La Guerre, yes sir, there is evidence of physical mutilation in conjunction with the war. At the beginning of the novel, the reader witnesses the self-mutilation of Joseph:

"Ses autres doigts, son autre main, saisirent la hache. Elle s'abbattit entre le poignet et la main qui bondit dans la neige..." (G.9)

Bérubé explains the significance of this act:

"L'automutilation est pour lui la seule forme de résistance possible s'il n'agit pas comme il le fait, Joseph devra aller faire la guerre" 27

This self-mutilation is a warning and a symbol of the mutilation which the other characters experience. Henri is hiding and incapable of action. The Corriveau's have lost their son to the war. Bérubé's alienation is a form of psychological mutilation and Mireille is a paralytic.²⁸ Carrier emphasizes this mutilation by his continuous references to parts of the body as objects. This mutilation is also a feature of capitalism. Human beings are seen as mere objects which can be manipulated for profit. In La Guerre, yes sir, Joseph's hand becomes a hockey puck for the village boys' game (G.32). In the description of Bérubé's attack on Arsène, there are references to parts of the body: "poing", "ventre", "peau", and "visage" (G.87). Mireille's foot appears to detach itself from her

²⁷ R. Bérubé, "La Guerre, yes sir de Roch Carrier: humour noir et langage vert", Voix et Images, (1970), 149.

²⁸ Ibid., p. 150.

body (G.101). It is not flesh, but made of wax, which is indicative of its objectivisation.

In the second novel one can find similar references to mutilated bodies. The ducks are a symbol of death. As the river freezes, it traps them in ice and, unable to move, they are destined to death. The hunter removes the heads of the thirty-nine ducks with a sickle (S.12). The mutilation of the birds is thus associated with a sickle which is a symbol of death. The helplessness of the ducks trapped in the frozen river, foreshadows Philibert's inability to escape his socio-economic death. The image of physical mutilation is again associated with death when Philibert pretends that his hand is dead and buries it (S.14). Carrier describes the physical disabilities of the village children (S.29) and the self-mutilation of the Portuguese worker as he blows himself up (S.122). The final illustration of physical mutilation is Philibert's death:

"...Phil voit ses membres étalés dans la nuit.
Un bras arraché forme une fleur rouge; une
jambe a l'air d'une branche cassée et sa tête
est entourée par l'eau d'une mare." (S.137).

These examples of mutilation as well as Philibert's death emphasize the presence of destructive forces. As in La Guerre, yes sir, Carrier refers to specific parts of bodies when describing people. He does not describe individuals but mutilated beings.

Few references are made to the "body" in Le deux-millième

Etage. This is indicative of the absence of death and physical mutilation as signs of oppression. A reference is made to the removal of the ears of Englishmen as a form of a reward as in bullfights. However this venture is unsuccessful.

The image of "snow" is generally associated with the north, which is a:

"...pays du froid, de la guerre, de la mort...." 29

Chevalier explains that "...c'est par excellence la terre de la chasse et des combats...." ³⁰ In La Guerre, yes sir, the image of snow is prevalent throughout the novel. It is portrayed as a barrier to human action:

"...Chaque pas exigeait un effort. Il fallait d'abord retirer la jambe de la neige qui retenait le pied par une forte succion...." (G.34).

The snow is effective in isolating the villagers: "La route qui reliait le village et la gare avait disparu dans la neige ..." (G.34). The snow discourages human habitation: "...Personne n'habitait ici. Nulle maison..." (G.34). In numerous references, Carrier associates snow with violence and bloodshed. When Joseph cuts off his hand he didn't see: "...ni la tache rouge, ni la main, ni la neige." (G.9) As the novel ends,

²⁹ A. Durand, Op. Cit., p. 286.

³⁰ J. Chevalier, Op. Cit., p. 615.

Carrier remarks that: "La guerre avait sali la neige" (G.124), "Snow" reinforces and belongs to the death imagery because of its glacial and cold characteristics: "nous sommes toujours ramenés, également, à l'image d'un pays enseveli sous la neige, et que le soleil ne parvient pas encore à réchauffer."³¹

This is evident in La Guerre, yes sir, as Carrier indicates that not even the sun can give life to "...la terre morte sous la neige et la glace..." (G.96).

In Il est par là, le Soleil, snow and cold are again associated with death. Even the death of the ducks can be linked to the cold: "...Les canards étaient pris dans la rivière, parce que la rivière était prise en glace..." (S.11). Since the ducks are trapped in the ice, the hunter is able to use his sickle, (a symbol of death) to kill them. The snow which Philibert finds in Montreal is "brune" or dirty: "...Le long de sa route, il a mangé de la neige. A Montréal, la neige est trop sale..." (S. 34). This description reinforces the association of snow with negative forces. Although we find several references to snow early in the novel, it decreases as an image. Philiberts notes its disappearance and comments:

"Ce n'est plus le temps de la neige. Le soleil est dans le ciel rouge comme le coeur dans la poitrine du Sacré-Coeur." (S.58).

This reduction of the "snow" imagery reflects a similar reduction in the death imagery.

³¹ J. Godin, Op. Cit., p. 309.

The image of snow is absent in Le deux-millième Etage except for a few references such as the following:

"Une nuit, le trou devint silencieux. Il y avait aussi la neige qui tombait et cette fois, elle serait tenace." (D.M.E. 123).

"Snow" is linked to the "hole", both of which reflect death. This continued reduction of snow is consistent with the disappearance of metaphysical death and the increase of awareness.

The symbol of "night" also reflects the presence of death. It also:

"vient ramasser dans sa substance maléfique toute les valorisations négatives...Les ténèbres sont toujours chaos et grincement de dents" 32

Bérubé explains the function of "night" in La Guerre, yes sir:

"...La nuit du roman, c'est sur le Québec tout entier qu'elle pesait alors - nuit de l'impuissance, des contradictions, des obsessions qui prennent lentement le chemin de la conscience. Et il aura fallu la nuit de la deuxième guerre mondiale sur le monde pour que ces tiraillements intérieurs nous apparaissent." 33

The reversal of values, which "night" represents, is evident in references to Henri's imprisonment in the attic. Although

³² J. Chevalier, Op. Cit. p. 99.

³³ R. Bérubé, Op. Cit., p. 163.

there may be daylight outside, it is always dark in the attic. The opposition of light and darkness is also evident when Mère Corriveau lights candles in the presence of Corriveau's coffin. The flames are a source of light and warmth as opposed to the darkness of death.

References to "night" and darkness increase in Il est par là, le Soleil. Philibert often works underground, in darkness. Although there may be sunlight outdoors, Philibert is restricted to a perpetual darkness which is symbolic of social death:

"Sous les solives, la nuit de ce sous-sol semble de la grosse terre noire, puante et lourde, qui aurait été renversée sur Philibert..." (S.125)

Night and darkness are also associated with Philibert's physical death. As the flames of the fire disappear, darkness remains:

"...la lumière est poussiéreuse et ne repousse plus la nuit qui redevient toute noire: la voûte intouchablement noire s'abat sur Phil." (S.142)

In the third novel the image of "night" is increasingly pervasive. There are numerous references such as the following: "le noir de la nuit..." (D.M.E. 16); "Où finissait la nuit, où commençait l'escalier?" (D.M.E. 36); "...la nuit trouée..." (D.M.E. 38); "...il était dans un trou sans lumière..." (D.M.E. 53); "...le soir épais..." (D.M.E. 76); "...sous le ciel noir..." (D.M.E. 192), and "Sous la nuit profonde ..." (D.M.E. 78). The continuous allusions to night and dark-

ness are significant in that they indicate a sense of pessimism or hopelessness. Darkness is associated with social death. The night is constantly bearing down on the characters, as is their oppression. The following reference is indicative of an increasing loss of light or hope: "...Très tard, les fenêtres éclairées s'éteignirent une à une...Dorval...il veillait, il résistait à la nuit. Seul..." (D.M.E. 15) Dorval has doubts about his future: "...qu'est-ce qui arrive à un homme qui tombe au fond de la nuit..." (D.M.E. 15), and they are associated to night and darkness. He wonders whether oppression can ever be defeated.

In opposition to death, Carrier introduces life imagery. The most prevalent symbol is that of the "sun". The sun is associated with light and warmth, both of which are life-giving qualities. Durand describes the positive aspects of the sun imagery:

"C'est donc ici la puissance bienfaisante du soleil levant, du soleil victorieux de la nuit qui est magnifiée...C'est l'ascension lumineuse qui valorise positivement le soleil..." 34

This "ascension" of the sun also has religious connotations. It is associated with "le ciel" and God:

"...le soleil signifie d'abord lumière et lumière suprême. Dans la tradition médiévale le Christ est constamment comparé au soleil..." 35

³⁴ A. Durand, Op. Cit. p. 168.

³⁵ Ibid., p. 167.

The sun is therefore associated with both physical and spiritual life.

In La Guerre, yes sir, the presence and lifegiving forces of the sun are ineffective in combatting the darkness and cold. Death is more prevalent than life:

"Le soleil était tombé très tôt derrière l'horizon comme tous les jours d'hiver où même, la lumière ne résiste pas au froid..." (G.95).

The sun as a symbol of life and hope is an illusion. Henri's thoughts of sunshine awaken him from his nightmare. However we see that:

"Le soleil d'Henri n'était qu'un mirage, une pauvre idée qui ne ravivait pas la terre morte sous la neige et la glace..." (S.96)

This mirage indicates the impossibility of life under a state of oppression.

In Il est par là, le Soleil, the title of the novel reveals the inaccessibility of the happiness and life to which Philibert aspires. The English title of the novel: Is it the Sun, Philibert?, is a question. It emphasizes the uncertainty which surrounds Philibert's dreams. As a young man, Philibert leaves his village in search of another life. As he makes this decision he sees: "Le soleil très haut encore, tient la terre entre ses bras de lumière." (S.30). Upon his arrival in the city, he learns that his "sun" or happiness is unattainable. He is restricted to a world of darkness. While working in Papatakos' cellar, he thinks of the sun:

"Dehors, il fait peut-être soleil, et des gens vont et viennent...La vie n'est pas pour lui. Il est enseveli pendant que les autres sont heureux." (S.91)

Except for the short period of time which Philibert shares with Rataploffsky, his life lacks both sun and happiness. At the end of the novel Philibert is on the verge of attaining success and happiness. Unfortunately death interrupts the fulfillment of his dreams. The novel ends with the statement: "-Il est par là, le soleil." (S.142). This indicates that even after death, happiness is beyond Philibert's reach, in an unknown place.

Few references are made to the "sun" in Le deux-millième Etage. We note more references to "le ciel" which is closely associated to the image of the sun. However, the sky is also unattainable and therefore does not offer hope. In referring to the sky, Dorval says: "...les capitalistes l'ont acheté, cadastré et revendu à d'autres capitalistes..." (D.M.E. 72). This pessimism can be interpreted as a warning against illusory images of hope and happiness. They are not to be found in heaven but on earth. There is an evolution in terms of light and darkness, in the three novels. In La Guerre, yes sir, the action of the novel occurs during one particular night. In the second novel, darkness pervades Philibert's life however references are made to the daylight outside. In Le deux-millième Etage, the action occurs over a much longer period of time in which the presence of daytime and light increase.

We move from the absence of the sun, which indicates that everything "up" or in the sky belongs to God and not to the French Canadians. Although they live in darkness, we can observe the increasing importance of life imagery related to the earth. References to the "apple", the "soil" and the "earth" represent the reality of life on earth. They emphasize the necessity of creating a paradise on earth rather than in heaven.

The apple is a life-related image. It is associated with nature, the earth, energy, nourishment and paradise. In La Guerre, yes sir, the "apple" is present in the form of cider. In the novel, the cider is unearthed to celebrate life in the face of death. Anthyme serves this beverage during the wake. The life-giving force of the cider is derived from the earth:

"Durant les années, le cidre d'Anthyme se chargeait des forces merveilleuses de la terre." (G.56).

This seems to emphasize the importance of the earth in terms of a source of strength and happiness. The image of the apple is absent in Il est par là, le Soleil. However, its presence increases in Le deux-millième Etage. The apple is described as a microcosm of the various elements of life by Dupont-la-France:

"-La pomme, oui, elle contient l'eau, le ciel, l'air, le soleil, mais propres, purs, clairs. Tout cela est buvable dans le jus de pomme. La pomme était le coeur de l'Eden. L'homme, sans la pomme, est triste. C'est un exilé, c'est un agonisant qui n'ose revivre ni mourir." (D.M.E. 14).

Other references to the apple indicate that it is a source of health:

"-De la bière, toujours de la bière. Un produit chimique, du poison. Pourquoi n'offre-t-on jamais de saines boissons?

-Du jus de pomme, répondirent-ils en chœur, même les enfants." (D.M.E. 31)

It also provides strength for resistance:

"-Prenez et buvez ce verre de jus de pommes. Il vous faudra être fort pour résister. Dans la pomme, il y a de la puissance, parce qu'elle tire ce qu'il y a de meilleur dans la terre." (D.M.E. 67). 36a

Once again the value of the land is stressed. When Dorval plants apple trees where houses have been levelled, he seeks to create a Paradise on earth. He attempts to find his happiness on earth rather than aspiring to unattainable goals in the sky.

The imagery of "blood" can reflect both life and death. Chevalier describes its relation to life: "Le sang est universellement considéré comme le véhicule de la vie. Le sang est la vie..." ³⁶ Blood has characteristics normally associated with the sun: warmth and life. The red colour of blood is symbolic of qualities such as nobility, generosity, strength and courage. ³⁷ Blood which escapes through wounds symbolizes

³⁶ J. Chevalier, Op. Cit. p. 673.

^{36a} NOTE: This reference can be considered a parody of the Gospel. "Prenez et buvez" evokes Christ's sacrifice as well as the wine which is offered during the Mass.

³⁷ Ibid., p. 673.

death and sacrifice.

In La Guerre, yes sir, the image of "blood" is present throughout the entire novel. Dionne explains the dual effect and meaning of bloodshed in this novel:

"...prendre conscience de l'existence des autres et des faibles et forts que nous étions: faibles d'un long passé de soumission acceptée, forts de tout ce qu'il y a encore d'instinctivement brutal et vital en nous." 38

Blood is associated with the war and acts of violence in this novel. When Joseph cuts off his hand in resistance to the war (G.9), his blood acquires a positive connotation, in an ironic form. Joseph loses a hand but saves the rest of his body from mutilation. There is a reference to Arsène's slaughter of the pig. The animal is described as a "blessure rouge" (G.75). In this case, the blood is associated with life. The animal is destined for human consumption at Corriveau's wake. In the final sentence of the novel, Carrier notes that: "La guerre avait sali la neige". (G. 124). The image of blood and bloodshed brings the realities of war and violence to the isolated village.

There is a decrease in the image of "blood" in Il est par là, le Soleil. "Blood" appears at the beginning and at the end of the novel. As a young boy in the village, Philibert describes the decapitation of the ducks by a big man with a

³⁸ R. Dionne, Op. Cit., p. 121.

sickle and the loss of blood: "...ces étoiles rouges saignent sur Philibert, elle glissent sur le plancher de sa chambre..."

(S.12) At the end of the novel, "blood" is described in connection with Philibert's death:

"...le sang dégouline dans ses cheveux, sur son front chaud, le sang coule dans ses sourcils, ses yeux et la voiture est remplie du sang du Christ.

...le sang roule comme un fleuve et le toit de sa voiture luit au-dessus de la marée rouge." (S.135).

In both references Carrier emphasizes the quantity of blood and the manner in which it spreads. The deaths of individuals and the reference to blood evokes Christ's sacrifice. The image of "blood" is absent in the third novel. War and violence are not directed at human beings. There is no loss of physical life. Death and mutilation disappear and are replaced by a futile struggle against oppression. Parallel to this evolution is the change from a serious to a humorous literary style.

The conflict between life and death is apparent in Carrier's use of the image of sex. Sex is portrayed as a source of new life as well as the affirmation of life. In La Guerre, yes sir, references to sex are made in conjunction with war. Molly's clients were soldiers. In the midst of war and death, Carrier introduces life. Amélie and Henri observe the arrival of Corriveau's coffin and this inspires their love:

"Leur étreinte fut de plus en plus violente et, un instant, sans qu'ils n'osent se l'avouer, ils s'aimèrent..." (G.44).

and: "C'est la mort qu'ils poignardèrent violemment". (G.70). Love kills death just as solidarity (human love) kills oppression. Philibert's sexual encounters, however, are distortions of love and life. They include the Greek's wife (S.89) and "Anita, la tigresse africaine" (S.113). Both are prostitutes. In Il est par là, le Soleil, there is no sun, no light, no love and no life above ground. There is an increase in the number of references to sex in Le deux-millième Etage. The juxtaposition of life and death is most evident in the character of "la vieille". She drinks "de la bière" in order to fight "la bière" (coffin). Life and death become one when "la vieille" dies. Dorval who fights for and defends the social life of the oppressed also has an enormous sexual appetite. Sex is portrayed as a life-giving force in the description of the bordello:

"La maison de Dorval redevint vivante...
Le fardeau du jour s'était allégé sur les
épaules des ouvriers." (D.M.E. 138)

There is an evolution in the imagery of Carrier's three novels. This evolution can be examined in terms of positive and negative imagery. One can define positive imagery as those symbols which emphasize the notions of life, hope, optimism as well as those which offer a refuge from oppression. There is an increase in the presence of the "apple", which is the for-

bidden fruit of earthly life. This can be interpreted as new source of life and hope on earth. The image of "sex" as a symbol of creation and life, also increases in the third novel. This indicates the perpetuation of human life. There is a decrease in the presence of the "sun". It represents unattainable happiness in the form of a distant ideal and God. Its decrease seems to indicate the need to discover happiness on earth. The function of the "feast" changes. In La Guerre, Yes sir, the feast is an escape from death and the English. In Le deux-millième Etage, it is an occasion for making collective decisions. We note that in each novel, the end of the feast is negative. It does not alleviate the villagers' oppression and Dorval remains alone and isolated. The "house" evolves from being a refuge to being the symbol and instrument of Dorval's resistance. Thus the same image can express different ideas. By protecting his house from demolition, Dorval resists the actions of the capitalists. The evolution in the positive imagery reveals a new awareness and a redefinition of goals.

The negative imagery includes symbols which reflect death, violence, oppression and pessimism. There is a decrease in the images of the "gun" and the "boot" but we note an increase in the images of the "skyscraper" and the "bulldozer". This evolution indicates that the symbols of oppression have changed, as the characters progress from political to economical warfare. There is a decrease in "snow" which reflects isolation and violence, and in the mutilation of the "body". These two images

are related to political war. As the nature of war evolves so do the images which illustrate it. The presence of night decreases in the third novel, thereby indicating hope for the future. Both the images of the "hole" and "blood" decrease in presence, thereby indicating the disappearance of death and mutilation.

In examining the imagery which emphasizes aspects of the colonial relationship such as: oppression, "valeurs refuges", life, and death, we notice a degree of evolution. This evolution consists of either the increase or decrease (in the use) of a particular image or the changing function of an image. The significance of the evolution is that it parallels a new sense of awareness of earthly aims and the means of attaining these goals.

CHAPTER 3

THE COLONIAL RELATIONSHIP AS EXPRESSED THROUGH LANGUAGE

In the two previous chapters, we have discussed Carrier's depiction of the realities of the colonial relationship and his use of imagery in emphasizing various aspects of it. We shall now examine to what extent Carrier's use of language also reflects the colonial situation. There are three levels of language in each of the three novels. They include International French and English, both of which are self-explanatory, and a rudimentary French which we will not call Joual. This third level shares the characteristics of Joual, yet cannot be defined as such. Carmen Garon indicates that:

" Cependant, chez Carrier, nous n'avons pas affaire au "joual". Cela ne veut pas dire que les conclusions que nous avons tirées du "joual" ne s'appliquent pas à ses oeuvres." 1

The characteristics of this rudimentary language include the use of cuss words, English, repetition and exaggeration. It is also characterized by a limited vocabulary, and a sentence structure which is repeated with little variation. ² All of the above features are considered Joual when they appear together.

¹ C. Garon, Le Sacre dans les oeuvres de Michel Tremblay et Roch Carrier, (Hamilton: McMaster University, 1973) p. 70.

² C. Garon, Op. Cit., 70.

The language level used in the three novels is not quite the same. Although Roch Carrier writes in International French, the language of the colonized and the texture of the language reveals a degree of alienation. This will be examined in terms of the use of English by French Canadians, the use of cuss words and mutilated language by the French Canadians, and the fact that the author writes in International French while his characters speak another level of language. We shall determine the extent to which the characters participate in the novels through their dialogue and thoughts, and we will consider this as a degree of autonomy vis-à-vis the author. We will also determine whether this could be a reflection of autonomy vis-à-vis the power or class structure in a Goldmanian perspective.

Memmi's analysis of the colonial relationship includes the problem of colonial bilingualism. This bilingualism refers to the simultaneous presence and use of two languages: the language of the colonizer which is introduced by colonialism, and the language of the colonized. This issue is particularly relevant in Quebec and in Quebec's literature. Jean Marcel indicates that:

"...Tout le monde sait bien, en effet que le point "névralgique", le point le plus vulnérable de la problématique québécoise se situe précisément sur la question de la langue..." 3

³ J. Marcel, Le Joual de Troie, (Montréal: Editions du Jour, 1973), p. 105.

The different values and lifestyle of the colonizer form a part of the world in which the colonized tries to participate through imitation. The language of the colonizer is part of that world. Since the colonizer's language is prevalent in business and official circles such as the government, the colonized must use this language if he wishes to succeed economically or socially. Memmi describes the presence and importance of the colonizer's language:

"...Toute la bureaucratie, toute la magistrature, toute la technicité n'entend et n'utilise que la langue du colonisateur...." 4

If the colonized does not learn the colonizer's language he will not be able to climb the social ladder. Marcel Rioux discussed the importance of English, the colonizer's language in Quebec, and the manner in which French was reduced to a secondary language:

"...Le British North American Act, qui est la loi fondamentale du Canada, a institué le bilinguisme au Québec, pour protéger la minorité anglaise; sur le plan fédéral, les Chambres doivent aussi utiliser les deux langues. Ces dispositions font, en pratique, du Canada, un Etat unilingue et des Québécois francophones des bilingues par nécessité. Les Québécois anglophones n'ont aucune raison d'apprendre le français. Le français, au Canada, a le même statut que ceux qui le parlent: un statut d'êtres pauvres, dominés et colonisés...." 5

⁴ A. Memmi, Portrait du colonisé, (Holland: Jean-Jacques Pauvert, Editeur, 1966) p. 143.

⁵ M. Rioux, La Question du Québec, (Montréal: Editions Parti Pris, 1976) p. 120.

For the most part, French Canadians employed in secondary industries in Quebec had to use English at their work place.⁶ This was due to the presence of English ownership and management, the majority of which did not speak French. If a francophone aspired to management level positions, he had to contractually become bilingual in order to participate in the English business milieu. However, "English-speaking" employees were not under the same obligation to learn French. This was particularly true in Montreal.⁷ The above circumstances existed at the time that Carrier wrote his books.

Memmi describes the devaluation of the colonized's language and the effects of this. As his language is reduced in value, both socially and economically, the colonized abandons it for the colonizer's language:

"la langue maternelle...est la moins valorisée...
...Dans le conflit linguistique qui habite le
colonisé, sa langue maternelle est l'humiliée,
l'écrasée. Et ce mépris, objectivement fondé,
il finit par le faire sien."⁸

Rioux referred to the diminishing value of French in Quebec:

"La proportion des Canadiens d'origine française
qui passent à l'anglais - c'est-à-dire qui déclarent
au recensement que l'anglais est leur
langue maternelle - augmente sans cesse:

⁶ NOTE: We use the past tense because Bill 101 was passed in 1977, thereby changing the status of the French language in Quebec.

⁷ M. Rioux, Op. Cit., p. 126.

⁸ A. Memmi, Op. Cit., p. 144.

3,5% en 1921; 7,9% en 1951 et 10% en 1961. Le professeur Jacques Henripin prévoit que dans l'hypothèse la plus favorable, l'élément français ne représentera que 20% de la population totale du Canada dans quarante ans; l'hypothèse pessimiste ne donne que 17%. C'est à peu près la moitié de ce qu'ils représentaient en 1867..." 9

Albert Memmi describes the devaluation of the colonized's language and the adoption of the colonizer's language as a reflection of the colonized's alienation. As the colonized attempts to learn the other's language, he suffers the inner conflict of participating in two different societies with different values:

"...les deux univers symbolisés, portés par les deux langues, sont en conflit: ce sont ceux du colonisateur et du colonisé..." 10

This situation results in the further alienation of the colonized as he is forced to imitate the colonizer. Rioux described the English influence which led to the alienation of francophones in Quebec. In order to succeed in business, the French Canadian had to have a perfect command of English. He also had to be willing to accept transfers outside of Quebec. It was also necessary for him to function as an Englishman within his particular company or business. That is to say, the francophone had to learn to think and behave as did his English co-workers in order to be accepted.¹¹ Due to the francophone's

⁹ M. Rioux, Op. Cit., p. 144.

¹⁰ A. Memmi, Op. Cit., p. 144.

¹¹ M. Rioux, Op. Cit. p. 127.

background and culture he would encounter obstacles which could affect him psychologically in terms of inferiorization and practically in terms of advancement.¹²

We will examine the language of the novels in order to determine to what degree it expresses colonialism. As the narrator, Carrier uses International French in describing his characters and the action in his novels. However his characters use a different language. In writing his novels, Carrier found that much of what he had learned was not applicable to the daily realities of Quebec life.

In referring to La Guerre, yes sir, Carrier explains that:

"...Pour écrire mon roman j'ai dû me dépouiller de tout ce qu'on m'avait appris pour revenir à la source des personnages d'instincts, de colères, de sentiments profonds...." 13

Carrier's language reflects the nature of his education. He was educated in a "collège classique" where emphasis was placed on the Rhetoric. The educated French Canadian speaks a language learned in a convent. It consists of International French and a few French-Canadian words. This language is devoid of feelings, which is in contrast to the emotions and instincts of

¹² Ibid., p. 128.

¹³ R. Bérubé, "La Guerre, yes sir de Roch Carrier: Humour noir et langage vert", Voix et Images, vol. 3 (1970), 146.

life which characterize Quebec's society. ¹⁴

In both La Guerre, yes sir, et Il est par là, le Soleil, International French appears only in the narrators' lines. In Le deux-millième Etage, Carrier again uses International French in his narration, however we note that one of his characters, Dorval, also uses this level of language. This is significant because Dorval is the individual who resists colonialism and affirms his identity. The language which he uses is a reflection of this. Dorval explains that he learned to speak International French in France during the war:

"J'ai dû me déguiser en Français anonyme.
J'ai mangé de la grammaire trois fois par
jour, j'm'suis fait maigrir la gueule,
j'm'suis effilé le bout de la langue,
j'm'suis mis de l'huile dans les pentures
des machoïres et deux semaines après,
j'parlais le Français aussi bien que le
frère du Général de Gaulle...Ouais...
j'ai un peu désappris, mais j't'assure
que si un Allemand arrivait devant moi,
j'me remettrais à parler le vrai Français
de France..." (D.M.E. 63).

Although Dorval makes fun of French he still speaks it. Dorval himself makes the distinction between International French and the language spoken by French Canadians in Quebec:

¹⁴ Reference is made to the characteristics of Joual in J.P. Desbiens, Les Insolences du Frère Untel, (Montréal: Editions de l'Homme, 1960).

"Moi qui parlais Français comme on le parle au Canada depuis que j'suis né, j'ai appris à parler Français comme les Français. Les hommes quand i'causent, i'ont l'air d'avoir un bonbon sur la langue. Mais entendre parler les Français c'est beau...." (D.M.E. 62)

However, International French and French Canadian French are two levels of the same language. International French is described as the more valued level. In this novel, the character who seeks power does not speak English but French, regardless of the level. Dorval's use of this level of language emphasizes his resistance and affirmation of self. Thus, the use of International French is indicative of a decrease in alienation.

English is the second level of language which can be found in the three novels. In the context of colonialism, we can view the use of English as a symptom of assimilation, which is the basis of the colonized's alienation. The presence of English can be examined from two perspectives: English when it is used by French Canadian characters and secondly when it is used by the other characters. English is the language of the colonizer in each of the novels. This language was introduced in French Canada after the Conquest of 1759. Since that time it has dominated the political and socio-economic life of Quebec. We will determine to what extent English reflects the oppression exercised by the colonizer, as well as the assimilation and alienation experienced by the colonized.

We will first examine the use of English as a language of oppression. In La Guerre, yes sir, English is spoken by the

soldiers who represent political colonialism. This is evident in the following references: "Dismiss" (G.54); and "Let's go boys! Let's kill'em!" (G.107). English is clearly the language of orders and commands. These references indicate who has the power to make decisions. A French Canadian employee at the train station indicates that he learned English while in the navy:

"-I understand boys. You may speak English.
I learned when I was in the Navy....Royal
Navy...." (G.27)

Once again English is associated with the war, a symbol of oppression. By being a soldier, the employee was learning English as well as obedience. The reference to "Royal" emphasizes the fact that the navy is an English source of control. Molly, the English prostitute, also speaks English:

"What did you say"; "Shut the door" (G.37). English is used to give orders to French Canadians. The presence of English in the title: La Guerre, yes sir, is both a reflection of oppression and assimilation. There are two components in the title. The first "La Guerre" is a fact; the French Canadians fight and die. The second component: "yes sir", is the response to that fact. The French Canadian is the soldier who obeys his English superior. The ethnic hierarchy is thus clearly indicated in the title of the novel.

In Il est par là, le Soleil, English is associated with socio-economic exploitation. Papatakos, one of Philibert's

exploiters, speaks English. In reference such as the following: "-Money! Work! That's the life!" (S. 83), Carrier caricaturizes the protestant work ethic. Also, the fact that English is used to refer to capital accumulation, emphasizes the connection between English and socio-economic exploitation. The reference to work and money can be viewed as a satire of the North American Capitalist ethic. We note that even Papatakos, with his broken English, is more successful than a French-speaking Canadian. The relationship between money and the English language is also emphasized in Le deux-millième Etage. Capital accumulation is again associated with English:

"Elle parle quelle langue, la voix du capitalisme? demanda Dorval. It speaks English."
(D.M.E. 86).

English now reveals an economic rather than an ethnic difference.

The use of English by the French Canadians characters in the novels, reveals their assimilation and their alienation. In the first novel, Bérubé is the character who suffers from alienation, as he continuously tries to imitate the English. He asks Molly: "Do you want to marry me?... What's your name." (G.38). In the presence of the English soldiers, he prays in English: "My Lord! Thou..." (G.110). It is interesting to note that in both of the above references, English is spoken in situations which reflect Bérubé's assimilation and alienation. The fact that he marries an English woman and later mourns the

death of the English soldier, can be viewed as efforts in becoming a member of the English-speaking society. However, Bérubé's attempts to imitate the English lead to frustration. This is evident in the simultaneous use of English and French:

"-Get on his shoulders, on his back, je ne sais pas comment te dire, baptême, cette langue-là n'a pas été inventée par des chrétiens." (G.84)

Bérubé's use of English corresponds with his role in the colonial relationship as described in the previous chapters. He is an alienated individual who does not belong to either the English or the French Canadian community, just as he is unable to speak either English or French correctly.

In Il est par là, le Soleil, Philibert is the victim of socio-economic exploitation. He also suffers from alienation as he attempts to imitate the values and lifestyle of the privileged. The importance he attributes to English reveals his need for assimilation and his alienation.

"...Il s'inscrira à un cours du soir pour apprendre l'anglais parce que l'anglais est la langue des affaires, des petites et des grosses affaires..." (S. 132).

Philibert's use of English in the novel includes the following references: "Yes Sir" (S. 44), which is a reply to an order; "Watch out. Let's stop." (S. 106), which is an order; "Mister Phil, Manager (S. 108), which reveals his power; and "Ladies and Gentlemen" (S. 104) which is an expression of speech.

It is evident that the elements reflected by Philibert's use of English: orders, power, and speech, all belong together in the context of socio-economic exploitation. Philibert says "Yes Sir" to the English woman in order to receive food. In this case we note the necessity of transforming an economical relationship of domination into a personal relationship. This is symbolic of French Canadians who must depend on the English for their socio-economic survival. Philibert's use of English typifies the French Canadian worker's need to learn English in order to survive. Philibert uses English while promoting *La Neuvième Merveille*. In this instance, Philibert attempts to share in the wealth by becoming a part of the socio-economic system; however, he fails. He can have access to it only through a miracle, not even his use of English helps him.

The use of English decreases in Le deux-millième Etage. When it appears, it does so in a satirical context. Dorval speaks English to Mignonne Fleury. He says "Good-night Madam" (D.M.E. 95) when he mistakes her for an English prostitute. Carrier appears to ridicule the use of English by having it spoken amongst French Canadians. English is also spoken during the ethnic chase of the English by the French Canadians at night: "Do you speak English" (D.M.E. 92, 100); and "What are you hunting for " (D.M.E. 102). In the second reference the English have become the objects and are thus devalued as an ethnic group. The humorous context in which English is used serves to devalue the language in terms of its oppressive, fear-

inspiring and superior value. This is in contrast to the use of English in La Guerre, yes sir, where it evoked fear. This devaluation of English reaffirms the importance of French when it is spoken.

Carrier's French Canadian characters use a rudimentary level of French. This level is characterized by cuss words and a limited vocabulary. The use of swear words in Quebec's literature is directly related to the role which the Church and religion have played in the history of French Canada. As we have seen in the first chapter, the clergy assumed the role of the "roi-nègre" in respect to the English. They collaborated with the English conquerors in exchange for special privileges. The clergy's cooperation consisted of exerting social control over the French Canadians while supporting English decisions. Carmen Garon describes religion in Québec as:

"...Une religion qui a prêché la méfiance de tout ce qui est progressiste et non-catholique, la peur de vivre, celle d'aimer, la résignation totale face au sort." 14

She examines the role which "swear words" have played in Québec's literature in the past and in the present day:

"...l'abondance et la variété des "sacres", ainsi que les raisons pour lesquelles on les emploie, distinguent la littérature québécoise de la littérature précédente. Auparavant, les "sacres" étaient peu nombreux et atténués. On

¹⁴ C. Garon, Op. Cit., p. 57.

s'en servait, soit pour donner à l'oeuvre une "saveur" québécoise, soit pour manifester la colère. De nos jours, la nouvelle vague des écrivains québécois, ceux des années '60 et '70, engagés, soucieux de l'identité québécoise et des problèmes du Québec, a commencé à se servir des "sacres" comme du "joual" pour intégrer le peuple à l'oeuvre, pour créer une oeuvre littéraire plus fidèle à la réalité québécoise et pour se dépouiller des rancœurs et des complexes québécois en les nommant...." 15

Swear words therefore serve to give expression to the frustrations and hostility experienced by the French Canadians. They can be considered a form of verbal combat directed at the oppression of the clergy, and since it is verbal, a sign of helplessness.

The second component of this level of language is poor vocabulary. Its origin can be traced to the days of La Nouvelle France. Except for a small group of people which included the clergy and officials, the general population of the colony was poorly educated. The educational system was reserved for a privileged few and therefore did not alleviate the situation. After the English Conquest the English language prevailed because of the shift in political and economic power. The introduction of anglicisms in industrialized Quebec and the increased contact with the English further impoverished the French language.

The use of cuss words and limited vocabulary is evi-

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 59.

dent in Roch Carrier's three novels. In La Guerre, yes sir, there is a wide variety of cuss words. They include the following: "mon dieu" (G.13); "Christ" (G.10, 25, 33, 48, 71, 72, 78, 85, 88, 107, 108, 112, 119,121); "doux Jésus" (G. 79; "Sainte Vierge" (G. 23); "calice" (G. 18, 77, 106, 108); "ciboire" (G. 25, 77, 78, 110); "hostie" (G. 17, 18, 19, 24, 27, 86, 87, 88, 119); "tabernacle" (G. 17, 18, 78, 119); "crucifix" 9G. 78, 110); "calvaire" 9G. 68, 119); "baptême" (G. 27, 71, 84, 89, 118); "maudit" (G. 10, 11, 12, 13, 25, 28, 33, 43, 48, 52, 78, 79, 90, 101, 106, 112); "sacré" (G. 67). ¹⁶

In this novel, the cuss words are found in the dialogue of the French Canadian characters. The use of cuss words reflects the anger and frustration which they experience because of the oppression of colonialism. Swear words are often found in quotations which refer to the war: "-Avec leur maudite guerre, ils ont fait de la confiture avec Corriveau..." (G. 10); and to the English: "-Ces crucifix d'Anglais dorment tout le temps". (G. 110).

An illustration of limited vocabulary and rudimentary language is the conversation of the employee at the train station:

"-Corriveau est plutôt notre premier enfant que les gros nous arrachent. Les gros, moi, je leur chie dessus. Ils sont tous semblables: les Allemands, les Anglais, les Français, les Russes, les Chinois,

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 6-15.

les Japans; ils se ressemblent tellement qu'ils doivent porter des costumes différents pour se distinguer avant de se lancer des grenades. Ils sont des gros qui veulent rester des gros. Je chie sur tous les gros mais pas sur le bon Dieu, parce qu'il est le plus gros que les gros. Mais il est un gros. C'est tous des gros. C'est pourquoi je pense que cette guerre, c'est la guerre des gros contre les petits. Corriveau est mort. Les petits meurent. Les gros sont éternels... Cela veut dire que les gros grossissent et que les petits crèvent." (G.29)

Carmen Garon analyses this quotation and finds that it contains many elements of a mutilated language. She comments that:

"Nous notons la pauvreté de langage, basée sur l'exagération, la répétition, l'emploi des mots élémentaires et le parallélisme structural de phrases courtes. On pourrait facilement résumer le paragraphe en deux ou trois phrases. Mathématiquement, un tiers des mots employés sont des répétitions, ce qui appauvrit le langage de trente-trois pour cent de variété, sans compter toutes les expressions simples ou banales qui forment les autres soixante-sept pour cent. Donc, le langage se trouve réduit à un niveau inférieur - à cinquante pour cent d'une variété normale de mots." 17

The employee's dialogue is in sharp contrast to the International French which Carrier uses as the narrator. The villagers' rudimentary level of language reflects their lower level of education, and excludes them from the political and economic spheres, dominated by the English.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 70.

In Il est par là, le Soleil, the combination of cuss words and limited vocabulary is again evident in a rudimentary level of French. The number and variety of cuss words found in this novel are similar to those in the previous novel. These references include the following:

"Christ" ou "crisse" (S. 36, 48, 57, 58, 62, 64, 95, 121, 122, 123, 127); "Jésus" (S. 127); "Jésus-Christ" (S.116); "ciboire" (S. 48, 105); "hostie" (S. 53, 66, 93, 94, 95, 116, 120, 121, 123); "tabernacle" (S.49); "baptême" (S. 33, 34, 52, 53, 65, 106, 108, 116, 121, 123, 125, 126, 127, 128, 132); "maudit" (S. 32, 42, 53, 64, 94, 120). ¹⁸

Philibert is the character who uses cuss words in this novel. The significance of cuss words for him is expressed in the following quotation:

"...quand il sera un homme, il aura le droit de jurer à voix haute, de blasphémer aussi fort qu'il le voudra, comme son père et tous les hommes...." (S.21)

Swear words represent a defiance of oppression and an initiation to manhood. When Philibert grows up he will no longer be subjected to his father's punishment, or the oppression of religious fears. He equates this freedom with the liberty to use swear words. When Philibert moves to Montréal, he again encounters oppression, but of a different nature. His use of

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 6-15.

cuss words is now directed at the privileged who exploit the unprivileged. Although Philibert cannot fight or change oppression in a material sense, he does verbalize his anger and frustration through the use of cuss words. The swear word becomes a verbal substitute for action and it illustrates Philibert's challenge of authority and fear.

The use of rudimentary language is also present in this novel. This mutilated language reflects the psychological mutilation which Philibert has suffered because of his assimilation, and his alienation. A rudimentary level of language is evident in passages such as the following:

"...ça fait combien de temps que tu fais des bottines? Depuis la guerre? Tu veux dire la première guerre? T'as jamais arrêté de faire des bottines? Puis les autres sont arrivés, et ils font des bottines, puis, moi, je suis arrivé, et je fais des bottines. On aura fait des bottines toute notre vie. A la porte du ciel, quand on va y arriver, Saint Pierre va nous demander: qu'est-ce que t'as fait dans ta vie? On va répondre: j'ai fait des bottines...."
 (S.63).

Similar to the quotation chosen from the first novel, this example of mutilated language can easily be summarized in several sentences. There is a repetition of words such as "guerre" (two times), "bottines" (six times) and "vie" (two times). There is also a parallel sentence structure: the phrase "faire des bottines" is repeated six times. When Philibert arrives in Montreal he is exposed to the influence of the English language. Instead of attempting to improve

his usage of French, Philibert tries to learn English. Once again the importance of English in socio-economic circles is evident. In order to be successful Philibert must learn the language of business. This results in a further mutilation of his language.

The use of cuss words is also evident in the dialogue of the characters in Le deux-millième Etage. There is an evolution in the number of different words used. Whereas the first two novels have a great variety of swear words, there is a decrease in the third novel. The most prevalent ones are: "maudit" "Christ" and "diable". These are found throughout the novel. Dorval is the character who uses them most frequently. In references such as the following, the function of swear words is altered:

"Taisez-vous, maudits capitalistes!" (D.M.E. 10)

"Mais buvez pas trop bande de maudits capitalistes."
(D.M.E. 31).

"-Allez au diable, moi j'démolis!" (D.M.E. 126).

"-Christ! Insulte-moi pas." (D.M.E. 63).

Rather than being an expression of frustration or a form of verbal combat, in this novel, cuss words are often used in the context of giving orders or affirming oneself. They emphasize the action and resistance in the novel rather than being the actual instrument of resistance. By this evolution in the use of cuss words, Carrier reveals a decrease in alienation and an increase in resistance. Frustration and anger are expressed

through concrete and affirmative action rather than verbally. An evolution in the use of mutilated language is also evident in this novel. Much of the characters' dialogue is attributed to Dorval who speaks a richer level of French. This decrease in mutilated language reveals a similar reduction in the psychological mutilation which he has suffered from the colonial relationship.

There is an evolution in the levels of language used in the three novels. Two indicators were selected to determine the extent of this evolution. The first indicator was the proportion of lines dedicated to the narrator and to the characters in each novel, and the second was the proportion of lines dedicated to each of the different levels of language. In determining the proportions between the characters and the narrator, the characters lines included all of their dialogue, and their thoughts when they were introduced directly into the body of the novel. The remainder of the lines were considered to be the narrator's lines.

In La Guerre, yes sir, the narrator has 2009 lines while the characters have 1042 lines. This indicates that the narrator has 48 per cent more lines than the characters. In Il est par là, le Soleil, the narrator has 2200 lines and the characters have 815 lines. The narrator thus has 63 per cent of the lines. This indicates an increase in the narrator's role as compared to the first novel. In the third novel, Le deux-millième Etage, 2291 lines are attributed to the narrator whereas 1902 lines were "character" lines. The difference

represents 17 per cent more lines for the narrator. Therefore, in Le deux-millième Etage, there is a definite increase in the participation of the characters. It appears that Carrier's characters have an almost equal share in the action of this novel. Several conclusions can be drawn on the basis of this evolution. In the first two novels, the characters are portrayed as being confused and alienated. They were unable to express themselves well and therefore needed the author to speak on their behalf and to portray them. This is reflected in the great variance between the "narrator's" lines and the "characters" ' lines, and the gap between the two levels of French used. The increased character participation in Le deux-millième Etage is indicative of a growing independence and self-sufficiency on the part of the characters. In this novel, the characters, especially Dorval, take matters into their own hands. When they are faced with oppression, they not only recognize it but they also resist it. The characters' increased participation reveals an increase in communication amongst themselves. It is also indicative of a greater degree of involvement in the events which shape their lives. The characters are portrayed as being more autonomous vis-à-vis the narrator. The notion of a collectivity is thus developed.

The second indicator of an evolution in language is the proportion of lines attributed to the different levels of

language in each novel. Three levels were examined: International French, English and a rudimentary level of French, characterized by cuss words and a limited vocabulary. As was noted earlier, International French is used by the narrator. The proportion of lines attributed to this language level is the same as those reflecting the narrator's participation. In the third novel, the use of International French increases because many of Dorval's lines can also be considered as belonging to this level of language. The presence of English increases in the second novel and then decreases in the third novel. These lines include all of the English dialogue spoken by all of the characters. In La Guerre, yes sir, there are 35 lines of English or .03 per cent of the total lines dedicated to the characters' dialogue and direct thoughts. In the second novel, there are 40 lines of English or .05 per cent of the characters' total lines. In Le deux-millième Etage there are 19 lines of English or .01 per cent of the total lines dedicated to the characters. Therefore, the highest proportion of English can be found in Il est par là, le Soleil. This reflects the high degree of socio-economic oppression and alienation which is present in this novel. The use of English decreases greatly as the characters' participation increases in Le deux-millième Etage. It is also noteworthy that the English, as characters, do not appear in the novel but are only referred to. The decrease in the presence of the English language is consistent with the theme

of resistance. As the acceptance of the colonized status decreases so also does the use of English. Similarly, as the need to speak English decreases, the use of International French increases. This reflects a lesser degree of alienation and an increase in the affirmation of self by the French Canadians. The rudimentary level of French, characterized by cuss words and a limited vocabulary, was also examined. The lines attributed to this level included all those which contained cuss words. In La Guerre, yes sir, there is a total of 104 lines in which swear words appear. This represents 12 per cent of the characters' total lines. In Il est par là, le Soleil, swear words are present in 76 lines or 10 per cent of the characters' lines. In the third novel there are 99 lines which contain cuss words. This represent 5 per cent of the total lines attributed to the characters. Therefore, there is a progressive decrease in the use of swear words, (representative of the rudimentary level of language) in Le deux-millième Etage. This decrease is parallel to the decrease in the assimilation and alienation of the characters. Bérubé and Philibert suffer from oppression and alienation. The only outlet which allows them to express their anger and frustration is the use of cuss words. This emotional outlet is not as important to Dorval for two reasons. Dorval suffers from the need for assimilation and from alienation to a lesser degree than the other characters. Also, he expresses his anger and frustration through active resistance. This reduction

in swear words can also be associated with the diminishing influence of religion as the "roi-nègre". As religion loses its influence as a collaborator, individual action becomes more dominant. The need to verbally resist this source of oppression decreases.

From these two indicators: character/narrator participation and the language level proportions, one can draw the following conclusions in terms of colonialism. The increase in the dialogue reflects a greater awareness and participation on the part of the colonized. He is conscious of his oppression and is capable of participating in constructive action in order to alleviate his condition. The decrease in English and the increase in versatile French reveals that the language of the colonizer has depreciated in value while the colonized's language is becoming more dominant. This reflects the colonized's attempt to restore his identity.

It would be interesting to examine the motivation behind Carrier's particular usage of language. Although he writes in creative French, his characters express themselves in a rudimentary French. One can speculate as to whether Carrier intended to establish a hierarchy in which he would have a higher position than the French Canadians which his characters portray. The fact that Dorval learned to speak International French in the war makes one wonder if a person must learn French in France in order to gain awareness. The manner in which Carrier reduces his own participation in the

novels may be linked to his reputation as a "conteur".¹⁹
In a short story there is no intervention by the author.
This is an extreme form of self-effacement in which the narrator gives the floor to the characters and then disappears. This may be another explanation for the reduction in the narrator's lines in Le deux-millième Etage. It is noteworthy that Dorval assumes the role of a "conteur" in this novel and that this role coincides with an increase in the characters' lines and participation.

¹⁹ NOTE: Carrier's collections of short stories include Joli Deuils: petites tragédies pour adultes and Les enfants du bonhomme dans la lune.

CONCLUSION

As illustrated in the previous chapters, it is evident that an evolution occurs from La Guerre, yes sir, to Le deux-millième Etage. René Dionne refers to Il est par là, le Soleil as a novel of transition:

" La fin de Philibert, héros isolé, perdu dans la vie citadine comme l'avaient été ses devanciers dans la vie du village, marque pour Carrier la fin d'un cycle romanesque: celui de la campagne de son enfance ensevelie dans la vie montréalaise...." 1

Parallel to this evolution is the expression of colonialism as it is described in the three preceeding chapters. In examining the evolution in the relationships, imagery and language of colonialism, they appear to be three different facets of the same reality.

In studying the colonial relationship in these novels we note an evolution in the participants. In the first novel there are two ethnic groups: the English and the French Canadians, whereas in the third novel the participation is on a global level. This may be one of the reasons for a decrease in the use of English in the characters' dialogues. As the participants lose their ethnic identity, the use of English is not central to exploitation. Even French-speaking individuals

¹ R. Dionne, "Il est par là le Soleil," Livres et auteurs Québécois, (1970), 55.

are capable of exploiting others. The nature of exploitation changes from political to socio-economic. Capitalism has replaced colonialism as the modern-day form of exploitation. Both are characterized by oppression for the purpose of profit. As the nature of exploitation develops, so also do the images which emphasize it. Whereas the "gun" and the "boot" are associated with the violence of political war, the "skyscraper" and the "bulldozer" reflect the instruments of a socio-economic war. The presence of these images increases or decreases according to the type of war which is being waged, and emphasized. It is interesting to note that the symbols of oppression change in nature but do not disappear. This seems to emphasize that oppression, regardless of its ethnic structure, has not been eradicated.

Conflict is present in each novel. It is evident in the political war of La Guerre, yes sir, as well as in the socio-economic war of Le deux-millième Etage. There is an evolution in the presentation of violence. Initially, it is physically destructive. However, Carrier later portrays it in a humorous manner, the effect of which is that it loses its impact. The images of "blood", "snow", the "body" and the "coffin" decrease in relation to the transformation of the conflict. In Le deux-millième Etage there is no physical mutilation or death because the nature of the war has changed. In this novel the characters suffer from economic and social mutilation and death. Therefore there is a decrease

in death-related imagery.

The nature of the alienation from which the characters suffer varies according to the type of oppression which they experience. Whereas Bérubé attempted to imitate the soldiers' language and mannerisms, Barnabé is obsessed with material gain. Dorval's resistance to oppression is, however, indicative of a lesser degree of alienation on his part. Dorval's use of language also reflects his resistance and a decrease in alienation. He seldom speaks English or a rudimentary level of French. His swear-words are presented in conjunction with decisiveness and concrete action and therefore serve as emphasis rather than as his only form of resistance. Dorval's knowledge and use of French is consistent with his affirmation of self and his resistance against external forces. This awareness of language accompanies a political awareness. This explains the minimal use of English by the characters in this novel. The limited mutilation of Dorval's language emphasizes the fact that he does not suffer from alienation or psychological mutilation.

There is an evolution in the colonized's reaction to the colonial relationship. In La Guerre, yes sir the villagers become aware of their oppression but react only verbally, through their prayers and cusswords. They do not actively resist it. For this reason the refuge values of the family unit and religion are dominant. The images of the "house" (shelter) and the "feast" (sharing food and pleasure), empha-

size the "valeurs refuges", which the villagers seek for consolation. In this novel, the "feast" is an occasion to exorcise death, whereas in Le deux-millième Etage, it is an occasion to make decisions. Dorval resists capitalism and the exploitation which it represents. He is an individual characterized by decisiveness and action. In this novel, the "house" is no longer a refuge but a symbol of resistance. It can no longer be perceived as a "valeur refuge". The family unit evolves to become the class structure. The breakdown in the sense of community, which is related to the family unit, is evident in Le deux-millième Etage. For this reason the image of the "feast" changes to "drinking". Whereas the collective gathering was an occasion for decision-making and sharing of one's problems, Dorval's solitary drinking of beer reflects his isolation and a lack of solidarity amongst the oppressed. The evolution in the image of the "feast" reveals a degree of pessimism on the part of Carrier. Although he reveals the existence of resistance, he indicates that it is not supported on a collective basis and therefore fails.

The role of the clergy as the "roi-nègre" in the colonial relationship changes in Carrier's three novels. In Le deux-millième Etage, the clergy no longer provokes fear but is instead the object of ridicule. The diminishing importance of the role of collaborator is also reflected in the language used by the characters. In La Guerre, yes sir, the use of cuss words represents the verbal expression of the anger and

frustration suffered by the villagers. Due to the fear and sense of fatalism instilled by the clergy, the villagers are incapable of action which would relieve their oppression. Cuss words are an emotional outlet for them. The use and variety of swear words decreases in the third novel. The clergy is devalued in Le deux-millième Etage. It is no longer a source of fear which inhibits human action. Dorval is an atheist and therefore is not influenced by religion. He relies only on himself and his actions when trying to resist capitalism. Dorval does not use cuss words to give expression to his anger and frustration. His active resistance replaces the need for a verbal form of resistance. There is another aspect of language which emphasizes the action of the colonized. In the third novel, the characters share an almost equal proportion of lines with the narrator. This suggests the colonized's capacity to participate in constructive action.

As we have noted, there is a degree of ambivalence in the evolution of colonialism in Carrier's novels. This may be a reflection of Roch Carrier's role as a writer. Vachon describes the importance of the writer's role in Quebec during the Quiet Revolution.

"Vinrent les années 60 et, menée entre autres par Parti Pris, l'analyse prospective de notre première révolution. Annexe d'une Amérique anglophone et capitaliste, Québec est tout au plus un lieu-dit; colonie, Etat serf, ce pays n'est pas au monde; nous ne sommes pas chez nous; entre inexistence et souveraineté: économique, culturelle et politique, point de milieu...Des Québécois enfin osaient écrire cela!....." 2

Carrier belongs to this group of writers who describe the reality of Quebec's oppression in their works. George Fournier describes the nature of Carrier's writing:

"Whether he is dealing with Man in Québec or man in general, Roch Carrier's intention is to denounce whatever wounds or destroys the individual. Through the media of imaginary situations and characters in an atmosphere in which the fantastic and the miraculous come together, every symbol uncovers or illustrates a fault, an injustice or a tragedy." 3

It is evident that Carrier's novels serve a useful function by describing the reality which exists in Quebec. However, it is possible that by being a writer in a colonial situation he faces the dilemma described by Albert Memmi and Hubert Aquin. Both examine the difficulty which the writer experiences in participating in both writing and constructive action. Memmi recognizes the limitations of his work:

² A. Vachon, "Le Colonisé parle," Etudes Françaises, Vol. 10, no. 1, Feb. 74, 67.

³ G. Fournier, "A Quest for the Authentic," Ellipse, (Eté 1970), 39.

"Croire que l'on peut changer le monde!
 ...Je dis simplement que quelques-uns de
 mes livres ont aidé et continuent à aider
 à transformer quelque chose, indirectement,
 quand ils sont acceptés, lus et digérés
 par des masses de gens;" 4

By writing Memmi seeks to clarify problems and inspire action.

Hubert Aquin, a politically involved Quebec writer, is much more critical of the writer's role. He feels that writing is in itself a refuge value and that only political involvement can be considered a contribution to society. Aquin explains that in Quebec an individual becomes a writer because he is not allowed to participate in other realms of society:

"... ici on est écrivain faute d'être banquier
 ... De l'Anglais, par exemple, on dit qu'il
 est bon banquier et qu'en plus il a des écri-
 vains. A nous, on ne concède que le talent
 d'écrire, comme si cela nous était dévolu par
 nature - et il y a des écrivains qui tombent
 dans le piège -, quand en réalité, je le répète
 c'est faute d'être banquier qu'on est écrivain." 5

Aquin describes the impossibility of combining action and writing in Quebec. French Canadians, like all colonized people, attribute an important role to art. ⁶ It becomes a

⁴ A. Memmi, Un Entretien avec Robert Davies, (Québec: Editions l'Étincelle, 1975) p. 75.

⁵ H. Aquin, Point de Fuite, (Montréal: Le Cercle du livre France Ltée, 1971) p. 14.

⁶ H. Aquin, Op. Cit. p. 50.

"valeur refuge" for them. Rather than participating in constructive action which can change their condition, the colonized is restricted to artistic ventures. The colonizer promotes this aspect of the colonized's life in order to perpetuate his domination.⁷ Aquin explains that in order to free himself from oppression, he rejected his role as a writer:

"...Artiste je jouerais le rôle qu'on m'a attribué: celui du dominé qui a du talent. Or je refuse ce talent, confusément peut-être, parce que je refuse globalement ma domination...." 8

...En rejetant la domination, je refuse la littérature, pain par excellence des dominés, production symbolique dont on concède le monopole au dominé ce qui entraîne inévitablement une surproduction. N'a-t-on pas constaté que dans les pays colonisés se manifestait invariablement une surproduction littéraire? A défaut de réalités, on surproduit des symboles...." 9

Aquin indicates that by restricting himself to artistic ventures, the writer participates in his condition of colonized and external domination. Therefore, it is difficult for action and writing to co-exist. Carrier has defined his role as a writer:

"Quand on a fini d'écrire quelque chose, il arrive qu'on se demande à quoi ça sert. C'est dangereux car alors se présente la tentation de l'engagement politique... C'est dangereux pour la simple raison que cette sorte d'engagement

⁷ Ibid., p. 49.

⁸ Ibid., p. 50.

⁹ Ibid., p. 52.

entraîne souvent au réalisme pris dans son sens plus étroit. Fatalement dans de telles conditions un écrivain censure sa fantaisie quand il ne l'étouffe pas carrément. Pour ma part, je préfère un réalisme de l'intérieur...." 10

Carrier has chosen involvement through art rather than through political action or reform. In this manner he restricts himself to describing colonialism, rather than participating in activities which could result in tangible change. If we apply Aquin's interpretation of the writer's role to Carrier, we may conclude that Carrier has accepted his role of colonized. This may provide us with an explanation for the ambivalent manner in which the evolution of colonialism is portrayed in his novels. Although Carrier recognizes and disapproves of the colonial relationship, he never shows a victory. He indicates that change is desirable but difficult. This could be a reflection of Carrier's own sense of fatalism as a colonized person. It would be interesting to examine Carrier's subsequent works in order to determine whether there is any further evolution in his thoughts and attitude towards colonialism. Perhaps Carrier's own abstention from political action led him to depict Dorval's resistance as a failure. Like Carrier, Dorval succeeds in telling stories but abandons action.

¹⁰ Brigitte Morissette quotes Roch Carrier in the article by R. Dionne, "La Guerre, yes sir", Relations, (Octobre 1968) 280.

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