

René Lévesque. Un homme et son siècle. Une anthologie de sa pensée politique sur les enjeux internationaux et la place du Québec dans le monde, edited by Guy Lachapelle, Quebec City, Presses de l'Université Laval, 2022, 264 pp., CAN \$49.95 (paper), ISBN: 978-2-7637-5787-2

A flourish of events and publications in 2022 marked the 100-year anniversary of the birth of René Lévesque (1922-1987). The influence of this charismatic leader cannot be summarized in his work as Premier of Quebec between 1976 and 1985 alone; he remains the most famous and the most influential Québécois in the 20th century. There were even three TV miniseries made about him; those directed by Roger Cardinal (1994), Claude Godbout (2003), and another one (simultaneously shot in English and French) by Gilles Walker (2006), all dedicated to Lévesque's life. The co-founder of the Parti Québécois (in 1968), he was a dedicated and respected journalist (on radio and TV, and in newspapers) before going into provincial politics, in 1960. A thinker, a writer, a visionary reformer, Lévesque believed the population of Quebec, which formed a French-speaking majority inside the province of Quebec, should not be obligated to speak English with the often wealthy, economically dominating English-speaking minority living in Montreal, who often refused to learn the language of the majority, French. In other words, Anglophones were a dominant minority in Quebec, even before the 1867 Confederation. For Lévesque, this unfair situation was very much like Rhodesia (which he often referred to) or any other (post)colonial system and should be amended. As a reflex, many Anglophones in Canada wrongly perceived Lévesque as a troublemaker, or as a second-class citizen who refused to submit to the English-dominant minority. This is what René Lévesque expressed in some of his articles as a journalist, and these early writings and interviews (from 1951 to 1985) are gathered here by Guy Lachapelle (Concordia University) in this big book about "the man and his century ... an anthology about his political thought regarding international issues and the place of Québec in the world." This selection of (mostly) unknown writings by René Lévesque is presented in a chronological order, beginning with some of his postwar reportage.

This is not the first scholarly book dedicated to René Lévesque: 30 years ago, there were two edited books by scholar Michel Lévesque (1991 and 1992). Another substantial anthology compiled by Éric Bédard and Xavier Gélinas was published under the title *René Lévesque: Chroniques politiques* (2014).

Raised as a Catholic, Lévesque was a humanist with an insatiable interest for International Relations. Fully bilingual, and an Americanophile in some ways, the young Lévesque volunteered to serve in the U.S. Army as a war correspondent in 1944, simply because he knew about so many French Canadians who were treated as second-class soldiers in the Canadian Army, especially during World War II. And his first articles (not presented here) were written in that context.

René Lévesque. Un homme et son siècle comes in four sections. Section One includes a variety of reports and interviews, including a long conversation with Fidel Castro from late 1959, in which Lévesque candidly asked the leader *maximo* "when there would be elections in Cuba?" — "Very soon," the new Cuban president replied (30). The second part gathers articles about specific countries in Africa and Asia written in the late 1960s, when Lévesque momentarily retired from active politics; among these we have his analysis of the riots following the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. published in 1968 (73). It is only in the third section that we find articles solely dedicated to the place of Quebec within the federal, Canadian scene, most of them published in the early 1970s.

The final section consists mainly of official declarations and transcriptions. Premier of Quebec starting in 1976, Lévesque made countless speeches and often penned them; he was an impassioned orator. His detractors often believe he mostly spoke about political independence, but the variety of topics presented here proves he aimed to comment on many ongoing world issues.

Because Lévesque once lived in the USA and often spent his summer holidays in Maine, his genuine interest in American affairs and Canada-US comparisons are at the center of many of his articles and interviews. His preoccupation with social justice, minority rights, and civil rights, and his recognition of African Americans' place and contributions are expressed in many of his articles (34, 47, 61, 106). For Lévesque, the causes of African Americans and Indigenous peoples were symbolically similar to the plight of French-speaking Canadians all across Canada, who often experienced discrimination from the dominant English-speaking rulers, in a typical colonial scheme. But at the same time, Lévesque always respected Anglophones and never refused to speak English with those who did not want to have a conversation in French or disagreed with him. Many of his writings were intuitive and visionary whenever he made comparisons between, say, the New Deal and the progressive vision of his own political party, or how the idea of cooperatives (co-ops) emerged in both countries, back in 1973 (132).

This unique anthology of writings by Lévesque will be essential for any collection of books on Quebec Studies, Canadian Studies, US-Canadian relations, and of course Canadian history. By showing the other viewpoint, it aptly demonstrates how the quest for social justice in Quebec was wrongly perceived by many English Canadians as "ungrounded" or "exaggerated." More importantly, it illustrates how the situation of the oppressed Québécois nation, being a French-speaking majority dominated by an English-speaking minority, might be seen as a pattern of colonialism featuring the same figures who dominated Native and other minority (and marginalized) groups in Canada and elsewhere. Finally, this book reconfirms the need to reevaluate and reconsider the contribution of René Lévesque as a great thinker, an immensely effective communicator, and a pioneering Human Rights advocate.

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The American Western in Canadian Literature, by Joel Deshayé, Calgary, University of Calgary Press, 2022, 415 pp., CAN \$34.99 (paper), 978-1-77385-267-6

Following upon the spurs of Sara Humphreys's *Manifest Destiny 2.0* (2021) and Christopher Conway and Antoinette Sol's *The Comic Book Western* (2022), both published in the University of Nebraska Press's "Postwestern Horizons" series and both examining global manifestations of the Western in a specific nonliterary medium (video games and comic books, respectively), Joel Deshayé's *The American Western in Canadian Literature*, the latest addition to the University of Calgary Press's "The West" series, moves the critical debate on the Western

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