

Franco - Les 'On Dit'

Going through Paiement's collected plays, even a casual reader is left with a sense of entrapment. All the protagonists are caught in hopeless snares, sometimes of their own making, sometimes contrived by others, but always at least partly created by the collective past, familial and social. In his earliest play, largely the result of a collective creation by the Troupe Universitaire de l'Université Laurentienne, Moé j'viens du Nord, the protagonist is a pitiable, shiftless, spineless teenager, Roger, who at eighteen repeats his last year of high school without doing even the minimal work needed for graduation. He dreams of the university where he will be free from dress codes and parental control. 'Mais maudit que c'est plate au High School,' says he, 'on se fait traiter en bébé.' 5A true loser, a 'déchet franco-ontarien' as Gay terms him, 6he hangs around with his chums, drinking beer and smoking whenever they have a few cents, and dates Nicole, a waitress at the local cafe. He fantasizes escapes from the dreary mining town and his monotonous existence and bristles fiercely when his father warns him: 'Quand tu seras obligé de t'endormir en quatre pour faire vivre ta famille, tu penses à ce que j't'ai dit . . . T'iras travailler à la mine' (p 20). The mine, the town's sole industry, symbolizes a future Roger rejects passionately. Never will he descend 'dans c'te maudit trou' (p 20) where he affirms, 'c'est juste une bande de baveux . . . ou ben des gars comme mon père qui sont là depuis 25 ans, pis qui ont jamais avancé à rien' (p 14). Then Nicole announces she is pregnant. Any solution such as abortion, adoption, or simply running away, entails money and some gumption, and as the curtain falls, Roger dully accepts the inevitable as the trap closes in on him.

Médéric, and through him Paiement, gives short shrift to the myth of the past. Yet this playwright who rejects nostalgia and portrays the heritage as a burden which stifles growth and creativity was a man profoundly engaged in cultural preservation. His short life was spent mostly acting, producing, and writing plays which he proudly labels 'd'expression franco-ontarienne' and which he carried, with his collaborators, into the remotest corners of the province. But, as the revolution in Lavalléeville suggests, he did not advocate preserving a falsified or folksy past endowing harsh realities with a golden aura. Nor did he preach using one's heritage as a refuge from contemporary needs and immediate responsibilities. L'éviction de **Chris Viehbacher** à la tête de Sanofi est critiquée outre-Atlantique. Wall Street et la presse américaine estiment que son départ n'est pas justifié, qu'il est victime d'une politique de gouvernance très franco-française.



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