
Louis Hémon

Maria Chapdelaine



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Description

Ce classique de la littérature du xxe siècle a pendant longtemps été récupéré par les idéologies conservatrices qui ont voulu le présenter comme un « modèle de littérature canadienne » et même comme un « chef-d'oeuvre catholique ». À des degrés divers, les très nombreuses éditions publiées jusqu'à tout récemment reprenaient les « corrections » qui servaient à perpétuer le mythe d'un Canada français où « rien ne devait changer ». La présente édition est conforme à celle de 1980, établie d'après le manuscrit original de Louis Hémon. Elle comprend un avant-propos, un relevé des variantes ainsi qu'un index des personnages et des lieux.

Insightful reviews

Paula: I read a different French edition, but close enough. An allegory of sorts. Pastoral. Roughly idyllic or idealized version of French Canadian "frontier" life around the turn of the last century. I did enjoy the colloquialisms, such as the French-speaking Canadians referring to themselves as les Canadiens and les habitants (tr. as inhabitants, those who live in this place), whereas the English-Speaking Canadians are labeled les Anglais, les Russes, les Italiens, etc. One of the dominant themes is the Christian struggle between good and evil, dark and light, here embodied in the antagonism between primeval forest and farm. Slaying the forest as quickly and completely as possible, both by logging the Old Growth and by hacking fields out of the forests is portrayed as a religious duty, the bringing of the Word to the wilderness, civilization to barbaric nature (one that shows no particular use for man). This brings to mind what Americans often think of as the Puritan view of the wilderness. Apparently, a view also shared by the pious Canadian Catholics. Their world view is fatalistic. God has his mysterious purposes, not to be questioned by humans. One must bend to his will. And in return, nature must bend to the will of man. What we think of as the Puritan work ethic manifests itself here as the work ethic of the Catholic peasant. A man proposes to a woman by claiming to be a hard worker and never drinking a drop. Certainly, a drinking man would make a miserable life for a woman, true everywhere, but even more true in the hard circumstances of the northern homestead. Everyone here must be able to get up at the crack of dawn and labor hard till dark, just to survive. A drinking man would mean an impoverished family. A woman married to such a man would live a miserable existence in an environment where the best situation is already a tough one. This is also an unquestionably patriarchal world. A woman marries a man's decisions as well as the man himself. If he, like Samuel, Maria's father, is never a settler, must always move on once a farm has been cleared and is ready to become part of a settled community, then his wife has no choice but to move with him. She can be happy or not about it, but the decision is his to make, not hers. In other respects, putting aside the gender-based division of labor, such a life is a partnership. Also, as indicated by Maria's consideration of her 3 suitors, a woman marries not only a man, but a way of life and a place, the land. In the final instance, when faced with choosing between Lorenzo Surprenant (tr. Surprising) who would take her away to city life in the United States and Eutrope Gagnon (perhaps from the verb gagner, to earn or to win), her closest neighbor, which would mean a life exactly like the one her mother had with her father (her mother, prematurely dead of a mysterious malady), chooses to stay (after having been spoken to by the voice of the land & the voice of duty). She might have faced a somewhat different life if her first fiance, François Paradis (tr. obviously as paradise)

hadn't died of exposure in the winter en route to visit her for the New Year. He was an adventurer, a guide to buyers of pelts from the Indians and a lumberman, not a farmer. The lesson intended, perhaps, is that paradise is meant not for daily life but only for the afterlife.

Czarny Pies: C'est un hymne à la gloire de la misère. Un français de la France arrive au Canada. Il constate que les Canadiens-français ont la vie dure mais ils ne lâchent pas. À l'époque, il y avait des gens qui pensaient que c'était vrai. Cependant, même dans les pires des temps les choses se brassaient plus que fait croire Hémon dans ce petit roman lamentable.

Avec Maria Chapdelaine, Hémon nous a donné une héroïne de la grande tradition de George Sand. Maria est une fille de la campagne. Chez George Sand les héroïnes sont des filles des cultivateurs. Maria qui vit au Canada est la fille d'un bûcheron. Elle est sans façons et dénuée de toute mondanité.

Notre héroïne sort donc d'un roman de Georges Sand. Cependant, il nous faut un héros. Hémon se sert de l'héros du Pecheur d'Islande de Pierre Loti. Hélas, tout comme le pêcheur qui meurt dans les eaux froides d'Islande, l'amoureux de Maria meurt sur ses lignes de trappe dans la forêt boréale.

Il y a vraiment tous les clichés chez Maria. Je suis de l'avis que ce roman est surevalué. Je ne vois pas le lien entre Maria Chapdelaine et la forte littérature canadienne française de nos jours.

Elisabeth: Un des premiers romans du terroir. Déprimant! Le public devait être les lecteurs français. Il ne faut surtout pas associer ce roman à la quête de notre identité collective. Le Québec rural est mis en scène pour d'autres. L'auteur est observateur et n'engage pas le dialogue avec ses personnages. Il décrit les us et coutumes du Québec sans vraiment en tirer l'essence.

2/5

François-Denis Gonthier: the main uninteresting booklet that I ever read. I used to be pressured to learn this at school.

Lynne Handy: Written in 1923, the writer writes a grand description of our environment and the hardships continued by way of those that settled within the Canadian forests. Maria's tale is, of course, dated. There were not many selections for younger women whose households settled in cabins within the woods.

Jim Booth: Like different classics of what should be referred to as pioneer literature, Louis Hémon's vintage of Quebecois literature Maria Chapdelaine conveys the affection of a human for the land. See my complete dialogue of the publication at newsouthern Gentleman.wordpress.com - hyperlink on hand at my Goodreads web page - thank you for preventing by!

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