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**Through a glass, darkly ...
The image of Protestantism in Francophone
literature as portrayed in works of Julien
Green, Joseph Provost and Jean-Pierre
Monnier.**

ABSTRACT

This paper examines, contrasts and compares the perception and portrayal of Protestantism in French fictional writing in France on the one hand and in French-speaking refuge countries on the other hand (essentially Québec and Switzerland). The specific image of certain groups projected in fiction is important since it is not only a reflection of a general perception but also shapes stereotypes and, ultimately, interaction with such groups.

The way in which we see ourselves and our own determines our view of the world and our relationship with it. The image that we find when we look in the mirror is often a preconditioned and cultivated one. In other words, we see what we expect to see. Since our expectations hardly ever change, the reflection also remains constant unless we are forced to change our angle of view or to adjust our pre-set expectations. The intervention of another presence is capable of eliciting such a change provided that we open ourselves to encounters. Unless we accept seeing our image reflected in the eyes of another, we are bound to remain captives of a limited (and limiting) and ultimately false image of self.

As one of the many descendants of one of the earliest French Huguenot refugees to arrive at the Cape of Good Hope, François du Toit, I was acutely aware and consciously proud of this bloodline even as a pint-sized pre-schooler. I used to marvel at the story of how François' brother Guillaume stood up to the corrupt governor Willem Adriaan van der Stel. When the governor asked Guillaume why he had signed Adam Tas' letter of complaint in 1706 instead of coming to a personal agreement with the powers that be, Guillaume gave the following answer which never ceased to impress me: "[...] if I had been helped the whole community would still not have been served; I am an old man at the end of my days. What I wrote I did out of love for the community"¹ (Tas 1970:192). This show of righteous patriotism filled me with awe and a vague sense of pride.

As a student in France, I was confronted with a very different image of Protestantism. In the predominantly Catholic region of Vendée, calling oneself a Protestant was tantamount to making a political declaration. I had yet to learn that the violent repression of the royalist Catholic uprising against 18th century Revolutionary powers had - albeit erroneously - led to a confusion between Protestantism and iniquitous Republicanism in certain regions of France. Furthermore, I came to

1 The translation of all quotations is my own.

know that religious dimensions, ranging from secularism to Protestantism and Catholicism, are seen to characterise political persuasions. Practising Catholics seem to favour a right-wing vote, whereas non-practising Catholics are more inclined to left-wing ideas. The great majority of non-believers support left-wing parties. Protestants on the other hand are divided in two camps: those of Calvinist origin often favour moderate secular leftist politics while Protestants of Lutheran origin tend towards either Gaullist or socialist ideals. It took me quite a while to understand these political legacies of the religious divide and even longer to come to terms with expressions such as “non-practising Catholic” which seemed like a contradiction in terms.

It was interesting to notice issues surrounding religious extraction surface during the 2002 presidential elections in France. Prior to the elections, the two main contenders were seen to be Jacques Chirac, president incumbent and Lionel Jospin, then Prime Minister. Chirac, representing the centre right, a practising Catholic. Lionel Jospin, a socialist of protestant origin. One should perhaps add that in 1999 Jospin described himself as an “atheist protestant”; a rather flippant remark which illustrates to what extent there has been a divorce between the image of Protestantism and its true significance. When the debate became heated and things started going a bit pear-shaped during the campaign, the press frequently used religious labels to characterise the candidates. Adjectives associated with Jospin’s Protestantism were typical of the protestant stereotype: austere, rigorous, rigid, strict. Interestingly, and to widespread near-hysterical alarm, Jospin was ousted in the first round of the elections by the far right candidate, Jean-Marie Le Pen who has a staunch Catholic background. An Ivory Coast newspaper went as far as to see Jospin’s defeat as an onslaught against Protestantism, comparing it with the St Bartholomew massacres. Unfortunately, the post-election surveys do not illustrate the Protestant / Catholic vote clearly since protestant voters are simply lumped together under “Other religions” or not at all taken into account.

The diverse connotations attached to Protestantism in politics and daily life prompted me to look for related images in Francophone fiction. However, it appeared that very little had been written about this topic. Studies concerning the perception of Christianity in Francophone fiction mostly concern Catholic authors and their particular vision of faith and morality. I was attracted by the idea of comparing the influence of different authors’ backgrounds as well as the status of Protestantism in their immediate surroundings on their portrayal of Protestant characters and beliefs. The image that fiction creates of a group does not only reflect a general perception but also shapes stereotypes and, ultimately, interaction with such a group.

JULIEN GREEN - BETWEEN WORLDS

Born in Paris in 1900 to American parents of Scottish-Irish origin, Julien Green holds an extraordinary place in the universe of French literature. As a boy, he spoke English with a French accent and although he never denied his American heritage he spent nearly his entire life in France and published most of his works (including a monumental diary spanning from 1921 to his death in 1998) in French. His parents came from the South and were devout Anglicans. Green’s earliest literary memories are of his mother’s Bible readings, the deep impression left by lovely and familiar passages from the *Authorised Version*. His youth appears to have been marked by a keen sense of Pure and Impure behaviour and thoughts. In the first of an autobiographical series of works, *Partir avant le jour*, he describes himself as completely innocent to notions of corruption and sin: Pure (that which is blameless) and Impure (that which remains hidden) define everything. His mother instilled a profound sense of shame of the body and sensuality in the sensitive young Julien. Consequently, his conception of purity was exclusively based on feelings of guilt and uncertainty. “The body was an enemy, but it was also the visible fortress of the soul and mainly

the temple of the Holy Spirit. Everything that had to do with the body became at once dangerous and sacred” (Green 1963:86). He resolves this deep inner conflict much later in his life: “[...] the soul clothed in this royal garment fashioned by God and which is the flesh” (Green 1976:1143).

At the age of fifteen, a year after the death of his mother, Julien Green converts to Catholicism. According to all accounts, he becomes an extremely fervent Catholic. He admits himself to having been “fanatical” as a young Catholic (Green 1963:256). After embracing the Catholic faith, he refers to the “heresy” of his Protestant past and worries about the salvation of his other family members (Green 1963:317). In his first work, published at the age of 24 and called *Pamphlet contre les catholiques de France*, he riles against the luke-warmness of Catholics for whom the faith is nothing but a comfort in times of need.

The main themes of Green’s prolific *œuvre*, which includes novels, plays, essays and autobiographical writings, are religion, sexuality, death and self-destruction. For him, the act of creative writing is central to self-examination and reflection. But even in this he found a certain tension or possible trap for the Christian. Does one not become an accomplice to evil when one depicts evil in order to show the triumph of good, he asks himself? (Green 1972:5). Critics are divided on whether the evident “Puritanism” in his work should be subscribed to his American Protestant origins or to a Jansenist influence. As for Green himself, in spite of the religious nature of his work, he paradoxically refused to be considered as a Catholic writer. “I am a writer and I am Catholic, he declared, but I am not a Catholic writer” (Obaldia 2000:6).

How does this complex author, described as a perpetual exile, a foreigner in every world he moved in, portray the faith in which he was raised ? The most descriptive work in this regard must be the novel, *Moïra*.

Set in an unnamed Southern United States university town, the intrigue of the novel is simple: Joseph Day, a first-year student from a small village arrives in town and takes up lodgings in Mrs Dare’s house with a number of other students. Extremely religious, serious and hot-tempered, Joseph is soon singled out and mocked by the others. His only friend, David, tries to help him fit in but to no avail. Joseph becomes progressively obsessed by thoughts of sexuality, sin and eternal damnation. Mrs Dare’s adoptive daughter, Moïra, decides to test Joseph’s virtue by locking herself in his room. At the end of his tether, Joseph falls into the sexual trap. Disgusted with himself, he kills Moïra. Offered the possibility to flee from justice, he chooses to face the consequences of his act.

In his foreword to the novel, Green makes the following ambiguous statement: “It goes without saying that the Protestants I have portrayed do not express my opinion of Protestantism in any way. I wanted, above all, to show them as I had known them, with their weaknesses, sometimes redeemed by admirable qualities” (Green 1950).

Moïra contains several negative stereotypes often associated with Protestantism. The main criticism is that it is a faith of joyless austerity. Joseph’s world is stark and decidedly grim. This is indeed one of the major stereotypes associated with Protestantism. It is often extended to include not only Protestants’ way of life but also their places of worship. Protestant churches (or *temples* as they are known in France) are seen to be bare and forbidding compared to Roman Catholic churches with their paintings, sculptures, candles and confessionals.

Joseph’s character is further marked by an exaggerated sense of morality and prudery. He gets dressed in the dark so as not to see his own body. On campus, he is scandalised by the nudity of the huge decorative sculptures depicting Greek gods. He drops out of one of his courses because he finds the content of the prescribed works (Romeo and Juliet, amongst others!) too outrageous to study. Joseph’s naive pursuit of purity at all costs often makes him appear hypocritical and fanatical. He forces himself, for example, to forgive those that he feels offended him, without being able to truly pardon the “offence”. Tormented by his conscience he inflicts punishment on

himself to expiate his own offences – for example, not allowing himself to sleep in a bed when sinful thoughts come to him in his sleep.

Joseph's relationships with those around him are complex and even seem to be contradictory. On the one hand, an absolute lack of introspection causes him to base all his reactions on the behaviour of others. He seethes about Moïra wearing lipstick but does not realise that his obsessive thinking about her jeopardises his own salvation. He is so inclined to *react* to others that his own actions are no longer truly independent or controlled. This causes his apparently erratic and unpredictable behaviour. On the other hand, Joseph is too absorbed in his own world to understand and open up to others. Even after the suicide of his young housemate Simon, Joseph does not realise that Simon was homosexual, that he had longed for Joseph's affection and acceptance. Joseph simply thinks of him as "[...] restless, temperamental and unstable" (Green 1950:86).

His relationship with God is fraught with anxiety and excess. He sees himself as filled with the fury of God and feels frustrated because he is not certain that God has called him. He dreams of saving souls he perceives as lost (Mrs Dare with her make-up, Terence MacFadden, the Catholic) but thinks of this act in terms of a personal victory and even a public triumph. The same reasons that prevent Joseph from having a meaningful personal relationship with others also prevent him from having an intimate relationship with God.

Joseph's world and beliefs are depicted as petty and bleak. Far from Christian love and forgiveness, he is shown to base his religionism on habit (reading the Bible every day), selective reading of the Scriptures (regarding marriage as a dangerous and impure temptation) and fear, rather than awe, of God. "Gather the students [...] and shake them in such a way that fear of God makes them crawl like sick animals [...] until their entrails turn to jelly [...]" (Green 1950:201).

Although Catholicism and Protestantism are never directly opposed in the novel, it is probably of significance that Julien Green indicates in his short foreword that Moïra is the Irish form of Mary. Joseph's fascinated hatred of Moïra can be read as a loathing fascination with the Catholic church - which he eventually destroys along with his own soul and salvation.

The character of Joseph in *Moïra* is a very clear albeit exaggerated example of a popular and facile stereotyping of Protestantism. Although such negative stereotyping is usually found in works by non-Protestant writers, one also finds similar portraits in works of Protestant origin - such as the character of the minister in Gide's well-known *La Symphonie Pastorale*.

JOSEPH PROVOST - ON THE EDGE

The history of Francophone Protestantism in Québec has long been ignored and even denied by historians. According to authors Marie-Claude Rocher and Catherine Drouin (1993), acknowledging their existence would have threatened the image of a united community. Protestant presence and influence only came to be discussed and researched in the 1990's. Although a small minority of about 1% at the turn of the 19th century, the very fact that these Protestants had persisted in their faith against enormous odds deserves closer examination.

After unsuccessful attempts to found, according to Coligny's plan, Huguenot refugee colonies in Brazil, Florida and Carolina, Huguenot immigrants turn to New-France towards the end of the 16th century. Several trading posts are established along the banks of the St Lawrence river and later in Acadia. The early groups of French settlers in New-France are comprised of Protestants and Catholics. The famous founder of Québec (1608), Samuel de Champlain, even marries a Protestant, Hélène Boullé in 1610. Until 1627, Protestants may settle freely in New-France but this is progressively frowned upon in France and in 1625 the first Jesuit priests arrive. Their arrival is followed in 1627 by the revocation of the Huguenot de Caën brothers' commercial monopoly and

the establishment by Richelieu of the Compagnie des Cent-associés, charged with controlling the settlement of the new colony. The exclusion of Protestants was later recognised by historians as a fatal blow to the French presence in New-France since very few French Catholics had reason to emigrate. This measure also held consequences for Protestants already settled in New-France. They were forced to recant their faith, get married and baptise their children in the Catholic Church. Protestants were even obliged to receive the last sacrament, failing which they could see all their goods confiscated should they recover their health. Protestants were not allowed to exercise medical professions or act in any administrative capacity. Understandably, Protestant settlers did not openly proclaim their faith so as not to attract the attention of the dreaded priests. However, their discretion also makes it difficult to establish the number of Protestant settlers with accuracy. In his brief history of Protestants in New-France and Québec, Robert Larin (1998:27) estimates that the Huguenot presence must in fact have been superior to what is generally believed, more or less reflecting the 5% of the Huguenot population of France at the time.

After the Treaty of Paris in 1763 by which France ceded its North American possessions to Britain, Protestantism is protected and encouraged by the political powers. From 1830, Swiss and French missionaries arrive in Québec, causing a general resurgence of the Protestant faith and by the end of the 19th century Protestants in the region number over 30 000.

Joseph Provost was born in Québec to Catholic parents in 1847. His mother died when he was ten years old and his father entrusted him to the care of his godfather, Hilaire Provost. Shortly afterwards, Hilaire converted to Protestantism and the young Joseph's conversion soon followed. At the age of twenty, he left for Switzerland to study theology. After his return in 1870, he was ordained and accepted a first call to a French church in Ohio. His professional life saw him nominated to several congregations, both in Canada and in the United States. He was well-known for his involvement in the Canadian religious press, had a keen interest in Canadian and church history and often lectured on a wide variety of religious, social and historical topics. He died in 1918.

His only novel, *La maison du coteau* (*The house on the hill*), was published in 1881. Clearly based on his own experiences as minister and member of a despised minority, the story relates the deep and bitter conflict between Protestant and Catholic communities in Québec. The central theme is one couple's painful experience of a mixed Catholic/Protestant marriage.

Florian Cimon, the only Protestant in a small rural community, falls in love with and marries the miller's daughter, Adéline Brunel. Although her bigoted mother, Marguerite, is absolutely opposed to the marriage, the priest Nicette allows it since he is confident that Florian will soon yield under family pressure and convert to Catholicism. Since they share the Brunel's home, where the priest continuously interferes with their relationship, Florian and Adéline can never establish their couple independently. The conflict reaches its climax when the priest insists that the son born to the couple be baptised. Florian refuses, the entire family turns against him whereupon Nicette annuls the marriage and ensures that Florian is driven from the community. After her husband's departure, Adéline does not accept the priest's advice to go to a convent and gradually she comes to recognise the injustice done to her husband. Reading the New Testament he left with her, she embarks on a personal quest for understanding. Florian does not return and Adéline's health starts to deteriorate until she finds herself at death's door. When Florian hears this news he rushes back but Marguerite, scared of losing her daughter to the "heretic" harangues and batters her emotionally, thereby causing her death. Shattered by Adéline's death, Florian leaves with his baby son.

The image of Protestantism in the novel is defined through its direct opposition to the image of Catholicism. Even when the details are not clearly stated, the reader is led to understand that the opposite of whatever is ascribed to Catholicism will characterise Protestantism and vice versa.

The first and most striking difference between the two images concerns the predominant role of the priest. "Whoever binds himself to a faithful Catholic, is also bound to the priest. [...] The priest is my guide, my councillor, the friend of my soul, my spiritual spouse. [...] One must belong to the priest to belong to God" (Provost 2000:14). Florian cannot accept Adéline's total fear and obedience of the priest whom he calls a despot and a cruel monster. After the marriage he realises how impossible it is to truly become *one* with his Catholic wife. The spectre of her confessor forms a permanent barrier between them.

One gathers that the priest had allowed the marriage because he had never doubted that Florian's faith would ultimately falter ("He's a rat in a trap [...] Provost 2000:2) and that the Catholic Church would gain another soul. When this does not happen as planned, he threatens Adéline and her mother with eternal damnation if they cannot persuade Florian to see the error of his "infidel" and "monstrous" ways. Since Adéline and Marguerite base all their knowledge of religion on the teachings of the priest, they have no way of countering his brutal attack on Florian.

The priest is portrayed as a hypocrite and a liar. When Florian leaves the household, the priest intercepts the letters he sends to Adéline only to tell her that Florian would have written if he had loved her. The old fisherman, Antoine, describes the priest as cunning, greedy and ambitious. "With religious cords they bind our hands and feet and pull the wool from our backs even when it hurts" (Provost 2000:46).

None of the other characters is described as filled with such one-dimensional evil as the priest. He even treats the faithful Catholics harshly. And yet, Florian sees and depicts him as only a cog in the massive Roman Catholic machine. "When they have abdicated their individual existence, they become a type of machine that the Pope moves according to his whims" (Provost 2000:15). Contrary to this image, the freedom and openness of the Protestant faith are stressed, both by Florian and by the less than neutral narrator.

The novel insists on the central place the Bible occupies in Protestantism. Florian tells Adéline: "You Catholics need traditions to establish your faith. You add human regulations to the Gospel, you confuse worldly science with Christian Science. The Protestant confuses nothing; he delves deeper into the Scriptures without adding or taking away from it" (Provost 2000:13). Marguerite's fear of the Bible is so great that she uses a cane to chase a Bible seller from the door on an icy day with a storm wind blowing. "No need of Bibles here, we have our priests" (Provost 2000:18). The power of the Bible (and the fact that it needs no intermediary to interpret it) is illustrated when Florian is driven from the house. In one of his drawers he leaves his Bible with a message for Adéline. She reads it in his absence and after her death, he finds in it a message of repentance that she had written before her death. The importance of the Bible underlines the Protestant values of autonomy and a personal relationship with God.

Contrary to this image of personal judgement and critical introspection, the Catholic faith is labelled a collection of superstitions: "All your sacraments are material. You need stones, bronze, wood, images and even dough to make up your religion. Protestants need only a heart, but a heart that loves and sacrifices itself freely for Jesus Christ" (Provost 2000:13).

However, like a good shepherd, Joseph Provost does not limit himself to criticising Catholicism. The novel contains a strong warning to Protestants not to allow slackness or indifference to weaken their faith. The freedom and personal progression inherent in Protestantism can only exist along with a strong sense of individual responsibility. Florian falls into the "trap" because love had blinded him and possibly also because he found himself surrounded by non-Protestants. The priest Nicette notices his velleity before Florian himself does. "He visited you on Sundays [...] it proves that he does not much value his cursed religion. True disciples of Luther are scrupulous with regards to the Sabbath" (Provost 2000:5). Although Florian realises his mistake soon after his wedding, he only measures the extent of his fall after Adéline's death. "Indifference

disarmed me in the face of the struggle. In my tears and wakefulness I did not feel the force brought to me by the Spirit of God. I did not gird my loins with the truth and that is why the path of my existence is littered with the fragments of my happiness” (Provost 2000:53).

In *La maison du coteau*, Provost clearly set out to address the delicate and topical issue of mixed marriages in Québec. At the time, this issue brought into play the uncertain divide between civil and church law. Since marriage is considered a sacrament in the Catholic church and a human institution according to Protestantism, the question of mixed marriages led to complex debates about the validity of such unions. In 19th century Canada, the Catholic church applied the provisions of the Tametsi decree, adopted by Rome in 1566, according to which the couple had to sign a written agreement that any children born to them will be raised in the Catholic faith (Provost 2000:53). In spite of the love that binds them, both Florian and Adéline finally accept that their inter-religious marriage was a fatal error. Paradoxically, Provost places this realisation in the form of a Biblical quotation in Adéline’s mouth:² ‘Do not bear a yoke with unbelievers.’² You did not obey” (Provost 2000:54).

JEAN-PIERRE MONNIER - A PERFECT AND JUST MEASURE

Jean-Pierre Monnier was born in the Swiss canton of Berne in 1921. He studied in Neuchâtel and in Berne and taught at high school level in Neuchâtel for almost 40 years until 1987. His literary career starts in 1949 when he participates with other young French and foreign writers in the founding of the literary revue *Roman*. His first novel *L’Amour Difficile*, published in 1953, earns him immediate acclaim. His complete *œuvre*, republished shortly before the author’s death in 1997, includes six novels, a récit, poetry, several essays and autobiographical writings.

Monnier’s family has been Protestant since the Reformation and he admits that his religious convictions have had a profound influence on his writing. “There are old Protestant roots in me. Nevertheless, at certain moments I have rebelled against the intellectualism of theology and Protestant thinking, against its iconoclastic tendencies, its refusal of the image in favour of the idea. [...] Even so, Protestantism remains deeply rooted in me. It is a way of being, of seeing things and, naturally, also of writing” (Monnier 1997 (III):595). Both his style and choice of themes have to be seen against this background. Recurring themes in his work include life, its chance encounters, moral uncertainty and doubts, the proximity of love and death, passion and the inner and spiritual life of his characters.

For Monnier, the act of writing cannot be dissociated from the need for a personal encounter; reaching out to the other forms the core of his personal philosophy. “The great works of world literature, by restoring the human being in all his breathtaking complexity, provoke confrontation, and, at the same time favour the possibility of coming closer to the other within oneself and the other beyond oneself” (Monnier 1997 (III):14). Accepting the other within us is certainly one of the biggest challenges we can ever face. It is, however, an absolute prerequisite for personal growth on the one hand, and any meaningful human encounters on the other hand. Monnier is quite frank about the positive and negative legacies of his Protestant heritage. According to him, the Protestant refusal of myths, legends and images has led to the repression of feelings other than praise and thanksgiving, specifically of instinctive and ardent cries of distress and despair. This

2 The quotation is from 2 Corinthians 6:14. “Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?” (King James Version).

has, he says, led Protestants to incarcerate themselves in uniformity and prosaicism that is contrary to the very spirit of splendid freedom embodied in the ideals of Protestantism (Monnier 1997 (III): 34).

In *La clarté de la nuit* (1956, Charles Veillon Prize:1957) Monnier relates the last two days in the life of a country pastor. Tortured by feelings of inadequacy and doubt and plagued by angina attacks, he painfully makes a long journey into the snow-bound mountains to visit a dying woman from his parish. Driven by a deep sense of responsibility, he listens to the unclear outpourings of a young girl with a dubious reputation in the community. He spends some time with his family, prepares and delivers his Sunday sermon and then pushes himself beyond his physical capacity to lead the Sunday service in another tiny congregation of no more than five parishioners. The intrigue is almost non-existent but the laconic and stripped style creates an immediacy, which engenders an intimate sense of complicity in the reader.

In the character of the pastor we find a very honest and compassionate portrait of a man of God living in a society where the status of true believers has, once again – albeit for different reasons – been reduced to that of refugees. With this description, Monnier wanted to show the isolation of a man, diminished by age and illness, who steadfastly proclaims the faith for which he has lived and which, nonetheless, has become derelict. Never accusing either God or his parishioners, he blames only himself for his shortcomings. And yet, even in his weakness (or rather, because of his weakness), he preaches his last sermon about the unfathomable grace of God.

Marie, the dying woman to whom he is called, tells him a terrible story of betrayal, abortion and attempted suicide. The pastor answers her fear, bitterness and hatred with tenderness and compassion, avoiding any judgement and assuring her of God's love. Her rejection of his words makes him realise that although it is the only one he has with which to perform God's work, language is often an inadequate tool. "All I can do is to talk to them, to give them what I have" (Monnier 1997 (I):176). The pastor fails to bring the peace he had come to offer because language fails him. Monnier sees the problem of communication as the extreme subjective value of words. Perfect communication is impossible since no words have exactly the same meaning for everyone. His characters struggle to express themselves because they do not always find words to fit their thoughts. The pastor finally accepts Marie's rejection as his own insufficiency but in spite of this he still assures her of God's grace, knowing that its presence does not depend on her acceptance thereof.

The sense of duty that he places above all things casts the only shadow over the pastor's last hours. He realises and admits that he has neglected his family and yet his sense of responsibility does not allow him to shirk his duty, even if it means putting his own life in danger. Sadly, the joy that he finds in sharing breakfast with his son reveals his capacity but also his need for human warmth and love.

In spite of the pastor's gnawing sense of failure, a quiet awareness of divine and healing compassion permeates the narrative. In the approaching darkness of death, the pastor's final sermon is an exaltation of the grace and love of God. Interviewed by René Zahnd, Monnier argues that love reveals its full meaning only because of death. Because death will one day put an end to all that we love, we are capable of giving ourselves, of knowing and understanding other people (Monnier 1997 (III):552).

With this image of Protestantism, we are very far removed from the fanatical and loveless Puritanism of Julien Green's *Moïra*. Contrary to Provost's *La maison du coteau*, Protestantism in Monnier's work is defined in its own right and not according to an opposing religious philosophy. In what way, if at all, can we see the image of Protestantism in fiction as a reflection of a society's religious history ?

The situation of a refugee people is characterised by the fact that they usually live as a minority in the country that offers them shelter. Surviving as a minority means that certain strategies have to be adopted. Assimilation and integration is one, and possibly the easier, solution. Focussing on the group's identity and cementing the ties between its members by emphasising the importance of cohesion and tradition and locking out external influences, is another. The latter is far more difficult since it implies creating a world within a world – a bubble that may burst when it comes into conflict with the reality *out there*.

In the case of Julien Green, I am convinced that his desire to be fully accepted and integrated into French society influenced his decision to recant Protestantism. As a child, he led a desperately solitary life. At school, one of his fellow pupils once said to him: "You belong to a people that no longer exists, and no one has ever heard of your religion" (Mambrino 1998:1). This would explain the harshness with which he judges Protestantism in *Moïra*. He has to prove his allegiance to the new faith.

The Huguenots that found refuge in non-Francophone countries exchanged a situation of religious minority for one of linguistic minority. Obviously considering their religious freedom as far more important, they quite willingly accepted linguistic integration into the Dutch, German and Anglophone communities that had welcomed them.

The position of the Huguenot settlers in New-France and Québec was more problematic. Refugees, but unable to admit to their status after 1627, they found themselves marginalised as a double minority: A Francophone island, surrounded by a large Anglophone political majority and Protestant in this linguistic community dominated by Catholicism, they are seen as traitors in either camp. In a community, which defined itself through the French language and Catholic faith, their presence was perceived as a threat to the survival of the colony's identity. Ultimately, many of these Protestants turned to the Anglophone community rather than abjuring their faith, as suggested in *La maison du coteau* at the end of which Florian leaves his young son in the care of an English family. Since survival was an urgent issue and because the very identity of these settlers was determined by what they were *not* rather than what they were, one understands why Provost follows the same method of characterisation in his novel.

Only in the Francophone cantons of Switzerland did the refugees encounter a "win/win" situation. The Protestant community of Switzerland, a marginal minority at the beginning of the 16th century, grew in importance and became a majority group as it integrated immigrants in search of tolerance. Surely the quiet confidence that emanates from Jean-Pierre Monnier's works could have something to do with the stability of these roots. He does not write *against* anything and the image of Protestantism in his work is defined only through interiority, self-analysis and a kind of moral quest.

The nature of Protestantism is such that it calls for constant self-evaluation, continuous reform and the right to contest as individuals. This implies that a stereotype of Protestantism should, in fact, be a contradiction in terms. Only when we look at another without seeing our own reflexion mirrored and without expecting to find a specific image, will we see face to face, will we know as we are known. As the pastor of *La clarté de la nuit* says in his final sermon (Monnier 1997 (I):230):

"It is to life that we must return. Life is our mutual time, our mutual space, our daily business. And I, all I can do for you, is to continue to live with you."

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