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Fernand Dumont, *The Vigil of Quebec*. Tr. Sheila Fischman and Richard Howard. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1977, pp. XVII, 131, \$3.50 paper, \$10.00 cloth.

Originally published in 1971, to which a prefatory "Letter to my English-speaking Friends" was added for this edition, Dumont's collection of articles, some of which date from a decade earlier, has in no way been overtaken by history. The events of November 1976, as those events six years earlier, are significant punctuation; they help give form to a sentence but do not constitute its meaning. The author's concern is less with political forces than with "the attitudes I ought to adopt" to the changes of Quebec during his generation. His book is both personal and public, it combines autobiographic reflection and sociological analysis. In a word, it is philosophic, a meditation, or, as Dumont indicated by his title, a kind of vigil. To be vigilant is to stay awake during a time generally given over to sleep. One keeps a vigil because one expects something to happen, because one sees it happening where others do not. Today even politicians beyond the borders of Quebec are awake and in their excitement are forever dinning in our ears the message that something is going on. This little book may help English Canada to understand what has happened during their unwakefulness.

It was originally written for Quebec readers and consequently there is a problem of translation. I refer not to the job rendering French into English prose nor even to reflecting the subtleties of Dumont's rhetoric, so redolent of a Ricoeur or a Merleau-Ponty. Here Fischman and Howard, and their editor at the University of Toronto Press, have done their task well. The problem lies in the tacit dimension of any communication, in the web of assumptions and signs that express indirectly, contextually, and, as it were, invisibly, its poetic and subliminal sense. It is a problem because, let us admit frankly, most of us, French and English, are "relatively indifferent" to one another. We have neither hatred nor fascination. Unlike those two sorts of hyphenated Americans, Southern- and Afro-, we have not really shaped each other but tolerated each other, and whatever the virtue of toleration, it is not enough, Dumont reminds us, to make a country. Memories of France and Britain, and

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fear of the United States, no longer suffice. How could they be when our present immigrants have no memories of France or Britain and think they are coming to America? Bilingualism, we should add, is only a convenience that "connects us at the surface of our respective languages." Politically, the problem of translation is this: is there anything of depth we can offer each other?

The seriousness of this question is indicated in Dumont's rejection of the conventional liberal answers. On the one hand, we cannot begin with a hearty "let's forget about the past and build for the future" because we must evoke the past to come together at all. That is why we are *here*, after all. "Strategy cannot take the place of dialogue." Nor can we disregard culture in favour of economic functionalism and liberal homogeneity, for the generation of forces leading to that functional equality so cherished by liberals (regional equalization grants, Anglophone bilingualism, and so forth), presupposes a commitment to Canada as its chief motive, whereas the Canada that would be created by those commitments and presumably would benefit, would be no more than a province of a universal and homogeneous liberal society. That we have difficulty understanding Quebec (though watching the enthusiasm of supporters of the Parti Québécois, this descendant of Ontario Orangemen caught a glimpse of his great-great-grandfather's distrust of Catholic Frenchmen) is a measure of our liberalism and a limit to our imagination. Let us at least try to see how Dumont formulated the attitudes he has adopted.

From before the Conquest, the French in North America owed their coherence to something other than imperial ties and so were able to switch allegiance with minimal disruption. Only with British immigration did one society face another, in the same land, but with different social structures and pursuing different social purposes. Mutual contempt maintained the distinctiveness of the two societies — our famous two solitudes — and, when we came together, we simply reversed the sign, as in algebra. French traditionalism, so lately despised, became the quaintness of Old Quebec that made us not-Americans; English commercialism in turn became the model for "adapting" to modernity. This old dialectic, painfully familiar, broke down sometime during the 1960's. Dumont's attitudes were formed from his experience that the strategy of adapting was no longer possible, even as an idea.

Consider, to begin with, the dimensions of the change: "from at least seeming religious solidarity to rapid dechristianization, from ignorance to mass education, from Duplessis to independentism, from the challenges of *Cité libre* to the tutelage of Trudeau." There was a clear spiritual narrowing from the euphoria of the Lesage regime to Bourassa's technocrats. The Olympics were not a bigger and better version of Expo because the October crisis came between them. In 1976, everyone knew about Montreal's sewage, and roads, and public housing, and construction scandals, and somehow that detracted from the fun we were supposed to be having. Seriously to pursue the strategy of

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adapting means the certainty of more war measures and hollow fêtes. But these are general remarks. They indicate a dimension and suggest a tone but are essentially tropes to be expanded by analysis and description. Here one can only suggest the richness of Dumont's thought.

His "short account of our affections" begins with reflection on the formative encounters with the literature of his youth in the 1930's. The dessicated concepts "urbanization" and "industrialization" that described Cantonville badly covered the raw experiences expressed in poetry, song, and fiction. Dumont has the rare gift of combining a meditative immediacy with conceptual control. This latter skill he learned from his teachers in the social science faculty at Laval, an institution that forged the new intellectual tools needed to understand this "society . . . being converted to its future." And Dumont insisted that social science was as necessary as poetry. Something discursive was needed to replace traditional Catholic analyses grown debased and trivial and turned into ideological pretexts by Duplessis. The *Tremblay Report* (1954), for example, is a fine-sounding piece of political theory, but what did words such as "religion and culture thus meet in humanism" mean to the Chief? The central question, which preoccupies both the poet and the sociologist, concerns "the significance of economic progress. How do we rise above the wretched dreams of abundance?"

Let us probe further. Why is abundance a wretched dream? Is not the poet out of touch with the sociologist? Or better, is this anything more than the fond intellectual, wallowing (not for the first time) in his sentimental, idealized vision of the proletariat? I mean, after all, surely, we all wish abundance. Dumont does not deny it, but he does alter the terms of our question. Consider the option: "When Mr. Marchand emphasizes that we are in the era of technology which, basically, recognizes no frontier, he gives me a useful reminder of the obvious. But he brakes the development of his reasoning too rapidly. In this universal perspective, I do not see what makes him stop at the Canadian border. Why should our children not simply be American?" This question has been raised in English Canada as well, but I have not seen it seriously maintained, with evidence, that "men, especially poor men, want more than a prosperous society. They desire a fraternal society where they can share not merely the fruits of economic growth but an ideal as well." Dumont can cite in defence of this proposition the behaviour of certain of Quebec's trade-union leaders whose ideals and purposes were learned from traditional Catholic teaching. And who can deny that the CNTU is unlike the IWA or the UAW? That is, there exists in Quebec an as yet confused, but nonetheless real, "transposition of traditional values into values of the future." And those traditional values, we know, are not the values of a universal and homogeneous liberal society.

We in English Canada have been warned, by George Grant, for example, of

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the enormous spiritual costs of that liberal society. We may understand the present situation in Quebec as a refusal to pay the cost. This brings me to a final point, the "teutelage" of Ottawa. A liberal society, Dumont wrote, is one "without concern for custom and beyond conflicts, where atoms raised to the status of personality would cement a variety of associations under an impulse that might be called freedom — this, it was believed, was an absolutely democratic ideal." And yet, as Professor Trudeau once wrote in a famous article, there were some obstacles to democracy, that is, to liberalism, in Quebec. By doing his part to remove those obstacles, by repudiating his own past, the Prime Minister has, in his own way, convinced thoughtful people in Quebec of the soundness of independence. "Five years ago many of us had not yet reached the solution of independence: we would have devoted the greatest interest to a consideration of a program of constitutional reform. If we have come to separation, it is because Mr. Trudeau and his friends have refused to consider that the questions being asked by most Québécois might possibly have some basis." For the Prime Minister and his friends, universalism may be obtained directly. Do we not have the testimony of Mr. Marchand? How can such things as a concern for custom, tradition, and community be allowed to interfere with the orderly unfolding of the liberal mind? That too we have known now for nearly seven years. For Dumont however, "obtaining access to the universal is first of all choosing for oneself the doorway that leads in."

What, then, for the future? With Dumont, one can say "we have at least one certain duty: to speak out." One can even admit, "I am not too sure why. Perhaps it is in order not to betray some mysterious ideal which comes from my illiterate ancestors, and which, even if it were never to take on a clear form, leads back to the most desperate definition of honour." A sense of honour is proof against the blackmail of liberal conformity, but more than defence is required: "For a small people like ours, the duty of welcome and assembly is a hard one. But it must be undertaken in terms of our lives' justification, as the highest proof that liberty is turned towards others. We must look patiently for interlocutors." It is possible they will be found in English Canada, for if anything is clear from the victory of the Parti Québécois it is that some kind of restructuring is in order. Dumont concluded his prefatory letter on a hopeful note: "It is in regaining its own essential equality that Quebec can best contribute to building something else in northern America than an outwork for the empire of the United States. You cannot escape such a challenge. And is it not in following the search for ourselves, each of us on his own, that our two peoples can make a new alliance?" It is hard to resist half a century of seductive liberalism but, if Dumont's meditations are sound, that appears to be what the continuing "crisis in Confederation" is about. Dumont is surely right in this: the challenge, however formulated, is inescapable. If we in English Canada do not respond creatively, it may well mean the end of both our societies. The

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meaning of that double end, however, will not be identical: Quebec alone will have perished nobly, with honour, and clear about its purpose. Dumont at least knows the attitude he ought to adopt.

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Essays on Politics and Society by John Stuart Mill. Edited by J.M. Robson, University of Toronto Press, 1977, pp. xcv, 780, 2 vol., \$60.00 cloth.

No one more than John Stuart Mill was struck by the difference in temperament between himself and Jeremy Bentham. Indeed, in his rather uncharitable essay, "Bentham" (1838), Mill describes his mentor as an emotionally impoverished, unsympathetic and unimaginative man. Mill had none of these defects, and as well his writing in contrast to Bentham's exhibits a non-dogmatic tentativeness. On substantive issues such as qualitative differences in pleasure or the heuristic value of social contract theory, Mill appears to advance utilitarianism both in terms of plausibility and humaneness. But as the present volumes demonstrate, Mill is a Benthamite philosophically if not at heart. Where he goes beyond Bentham, he goes beyond what can be rationally defended given his basic presuppositions. This is not to say that Mill's non-Benthamite claims should be dismissed, but rather that they require a firmer foundation than that provided by Mill.

These two volumes, *Essays on Politics and Society*, represent the latest results of Professor Robson's and the University of Toronto Press' ambitious project, the publication of J.S. Mill's collected works. And, like the earlier volumes in the series, they maintain a very high standard of scholarship and publishing. Robson's textual introduction, both meticulous and clear, renders this the definitive edition of Mill's writings on political themes. The contents, in addition to Mill's major monographs "On Liberty" and "Considerations on Representative Government", include otherwise inaccessible review articles on important theoretical and practical political works of the day. It is in these that one is struck by the persistence of dominant themes which give coherence and continuity to Mill's political thought. For, although much has been made of the divergence of Mill's later from his earlier writing, what is more striking is his long-term consistency regarding the fundamental nature of political theory and the good society. Thus his misgivings concerning popular democracy eloquently stated in "On Liberty" (1859) appear substantially in the same form in