



HAL
open science

Inventing Canada for French tourists (1870s-1880s)

Françoise Le Jeune

► **To cite this version:**

Françoise Le Jeune. Inventing Canada for French tourists (1870s-1880s). Landscape, Nature, and Memory: Tourism History in Canada, Department of History Simon Fraser University, Oct 2014, Vancouver, Canada. <hal-03313485>

HAL Id: hal-03313485

<https://hal.science/hal-03313485v1>

Submitted on 4 Aug 2021

HAL is a multi-disciplinary open access archive for the deposit and dissemination of scientific research documents, whether they are published or not. The documents may come from teaching and research institutions in France or abroad, or from public or private research centers.

L'archive ouverte pluridisciplinaire **HAL**, est destinée au dépôt et à la diffusion de documents scientifiques de niveau recherche, publiés ou non, émanant des établissements d'enseignement et de recherche français ou étrangers, des laboratoires publics ou privés.



HAL Authorization

Inventing Canada for French tourists (1870s-1880s)

Françoise LE JEUNE

Université de Nantes

Centre for Research in International and Atlantic History

The purpose of this article is to examine how “touristic” routes and itineraries were gradually blazed in Canada by a first generation of French travellers, in the 1870s. A handful of travel accounts were published in France both in book forms and in articles in *La Revue des Deux Mondes* or *Le Tour du Monde*, which were well-read magazines with a section devoted to travels. The first generation of travellers went to Canada in the 1850s or 1860s, but their narratives were published at the beginning of the 1870s. The authors, Ampère, Marmier or Baron de Lamothe, saw themselves as gatekeepers¹, embarking on a “Grand Tour” of Canada, in fact French Canada, while blazing trails in its unexplored nature. They rediscovered Canada, which one of them calls “our first colony”, for the French public after a century of neglect and ignorance.

This first generation of published travellers greatly influenced the second generation of travel writers and tourists who visited Canada in the last two decades of the 19th century when tourism in North America became a hobby for well-to-do French people. Indeed in the accounts published by the second generation, which we will not have time to analyse in this article, we can observe how the visitors are now influenced by the representations of Canada developed by the “trailblazers”. The second group tends to follow itineraries and scenic routes prescribed by the first one. In the 1880s and 1890s, these travellers wished to be educated tourists and pleasure seekers, while usually constrained by a timeframe that of their vacation. It was therefore comfortable to rely on travel books to make the most of a Canadian tour.

For lack of proper guidebooks on Canada in French², the second generation therefore relied on the first published travel accounts to gather educated comments and information on the Dominion’s history, society and politics. There French tourists found some recommended itineraries, a selection of sites they should visit for their particular historical or emotional significance, representations or sketches of the natural vistas and landscape to be gazed at depending on their accessibility or picturesqueness, while other sites were deemed uninteresting. As we will see, the first generation of French travellers invented the idea of “heritage tourism” in Quebec, “exotic tourism” among the “Red Skins”, “romantic sightseeing” in Canada’s natural sites and that of “adventure vacationing” in the West.

Meanwhile, in their discourse on the Canadian landscape and Canadian scenery in French and English Canada, the first group of visitors all conveyed a specific political agenda about the future of the Dominion, or about the state of French Canada and its connection with modern France. They naturally took part in the contemporary debate on the urgent need to gain a new French Empire and on Canada’s potential role in it. This controversial

¹ The concept of gatekeepers was used to refer to some upper-class British tourists who « discovered » places

² Murray published no handbook on Canada, the first Baedeker guide was released in 1910 and the first Michelin guide book (green guide) on Canada was only published in 1971 and the Hachette guide (blue book) in 1967. The publishing house, Hachette, was created in 1863 for the purpose of printing travel books. They published Lamothe’s narrative on Canada, *Cinq Mois chez les Français d’Amérique, Voyage au Canada et à la Rivière Rouge du Nord*, in 1879.

debate flourished in Paris in the 1870s³. In other words, by guiding future tourists to certain sites or must-see places, providing them with comments on the “sentimental value” or the imperial significance of such and such site, they brought to their readers a biased representation of Canada on which they projected their own political agenda, either conservative and catholic, or republican and liberal. This aspect of their travel narratives needs to be taken into account as it led to the invention of a mythical French Canada in France, which fed many books, pamphlets and emigration handbooks in the 1880s. In fact an on-going public debate over the status of Canada for French people, started in those years. A pro-Canada lobby described as “*Les Amis du Canada*” stood against the colonial party which promoted the development of France’s “new” colonies (Algeria, Tonkin...). Instead, “*Les Amis*”, a group of financiers, geographers and members of the clergy, pushed for a massive emigration of French Catholic peasants to Quebec or Canada’s North West. This insidious propaganda infuriated French authorities.

Through the analysis of three influential travel narratives, we are going to see how Canada gradually became the epitome for “*dépaysement*” for future French tourists. The word “*dépaysement*” has no exact translation in English but it is one of the essential criteria sought after by modern French tourists at the turn of the 19th century. They all wanted to be transported to unchartered grounds, to experience surprise, pleasure and thrill, while being impressed by stupendous landscapes which could not be gazed at in Europe. This is what tourists would find in Canada, according to our three travellers. While enjoying the comfort and safety of modern means of transportation like Canadian trains and luxury steamers, where else better than in Canada could French tourists be transported, metaphorically and physically, to impressive sublime romantic landscapes eliciting new emotional and aesthetic responses? Where else than in Canada could they observe a country which was both traditional in parts - as former New France seems to be stuck in the 17th century - and which was rapidly being modernized under American influence? Where else in the world better than in French Canada, could the Gallican tourist experience nostalgia before some relics and places evoking memories of France’s past imperial glories, while being overwhelmed by the feeling that the French race still contributed to creating a modern Canada?

1) Canada, a new popular topic for French readers in the 1870s

Between 1850 and 1914, no less than 600 written sources dealing partly or completely with Canada, ranging from adventure novels to newspaper articles, from travel narratives to emigration handbooks circulated in France, with a peak of publications in the late 1880s and 1890s⁴. This time period corresponds to the beginning of the Great Transatlantic migration from Europe to North America. Transatlantic transportation was then more readily available to French emigrants and travellers. Canada became an accessible new destination for French “first-class” travellers. All-inclusive tickets could be purchased, in France, by the visitors and tourists who wanted to explore the New World, in ease and comfort. If Canada was on their travel route, French visitors were also interested in discovering the United States. In numerous travel narratives, the word “*Amérique*” is used in the title, which stands for North America in French representations. Many travellers,

³ Simard, Sylvain, *Mythe et Reflet de la France, l’image du Canada en France, 1850-1914*, Ottawa, Ottawa University Press, 1984.

⁴ *ibid.*

British or French, in the 1870s split their travel time between Eastern Canada and Eastern American cities.

Among the travel accounts circulating in France on or about Canada in the 1870s and 1880s, some were mere translations of British travel narratives, others focused largely on the United States and included a few chapters on Canada, while only a handful of travel writers focused almost essentially on Canada. Since our key entry is “tourism”, I selected a small number of sources whose titles bore the words “promenade”, “visite”, “voyage” or “impressions” and which dealt essentially with Canada. The books were inspired by some pleasure travelling, in which authors enjoyed a travel adventure, seeking “*dépaysement*”. Three texts stood out of this collection as they were abundantly quoted by a second generation of travellers in the 1880s. I left out of this analysis numerous books, which were essentially written for the purpose of emigration propaganda.

The first important travel narratives on Canada were written by two literary authors Jean-Jacques Ampère and Xavier Marmier, as well as one journalist, Baron de Lamothé. They were three famous household names in France in the 1870s, which clearly became associated with Canada in the years following the publication of their books. Their literary success came from the fact that the three authors rediscovered the Dominion, its French history and its natural landscape, after decades during which Canada was completely ignored by French people. The first time the word “tourist” appeared in the title of a narrative on Canada was in 1911 only.⁵ But our three travel writers all describe themselves as “tourists” in the course of their text. They use the expression without any disparaging comment, quite the contrary, as it conveyed the self-image of a prosperous man, the “grand tourist” who had time and money to enjoy the “exotic” vistas of the New World, to share the life of Canada’s élite, and to tour the country as a first-class traveller⁶. As in all travel narratives published in the “grand tour” style, these texts all convey some comments on the state of society and politics in Canada, which we are going to analyse as well.

Indeed, not everyone could afford to travel for several months in the New World, particularly in the 1870s and 1880s. It requested some funds, which could be private if the traveller was a well-to-do member of the upper middle-class or the aristocracy. The traveller/author could also be sponsored by a newspaper or an emigration society by which he was sent to Canada, in order to write an attractive narrative on the prospects of the country while exploring new lands for future migrants, in the North West. The “social” background of travellers must be taken into account as only the “real” well-off traveller or the “real” well-to-do tourist could afford to visit the New World for several months on end, without being dictated his political agenda. Therefore I left out of this selection a number of books, in the form of travel narratives, written by men I identified as commissioned by an emigration society or even sponsored by the Canadian government.

Still these “real” or “authentic” travellers all toured Canada for a purpose, which they usually expressed in the preface, dedicated to a friend or their family. Our three visitors all betray some pre-conceived fascination for Canada. They indicate that they knew of

⁵ Moeller Charles, *A travers le Nouveau Monde, Etats-Unis et Canada, Notes d'un touriste*, Bruxelles, Paris, 1911.

⁶ All travel narratives published in the time-period under study, open up on the transatlantic journey, describing the liner on which two weeks are spent. All make clear that they are visitors and that they should not be mixed up with poor emigrants.

Canada beforehand, through conversations they had with French Canadians they met in Paris, or through literary impressions they forged by reading previous rare narratives on the New World like Chateaubriand's romantic *Voyage en Amérique* (1827) or Tocqueville's political essays published in 1840. However Tocqueville and Chateaubriand had only briefly visited Canada in those years.

In comparison, in Britain, travel narratives on Canada began to be published regularly in the 1830s, reaching a peak in the 1840s and 1850s⁷. But in the case of French travellers, the first re-encounter with Canada, dates back to the late 1850s with Jean-Jacques Ampère's *Promenade en Amérique* (which went through three reprints)⁸, and to the 1860s with Xavier Marmier's *Les Etats-Unis et le Canada* (3 reprints too)⁹. Ampère and Marmier were novelists both having achieved literary fame with their works on foreign literatures, based on grand tours taken in Germany and Italy where they visited literary circles and gazed at ancient sites. To complete this limited collection of original French travel books which "invented" and represented Canada for the first time, one must add the first travel narrative written on an exploration of the West, beyond the Great Lakes, near the Red River, before the CPR was completed. The book was written by a journalist, an aristocrat, Baron de Lamothe who published *Cinq mois chez les Français d'Amérique, Voyage au Canada et à la Rivière Rouge du Nord*¹⁰, in 1879 with Hachette a new publishing house specialising in "exotic" travel books, which quickly became one of the first French publishing companies to issue travel guides. Before publishing a book version of their Canadian trip, each author had sent out some of his "best" pages to literary journals or magazines so that their "representations" were largely circulated in the 1870s.

2) English Canada or the spectacle of rising modernity, of "embryogénie", and the impact of modern railway travels on French visitors' "touristic" habits

In *Doing the Town, the Rise of Urban Tourism in the United States*, Catherine Cocks suggests that American cities had no appeal for tourists before the beginning of the 20th century. This was untrue of French tourists who were very interested and even fascinated by the modernity of American cities which all reached their full development at various degrees in the 1870s and 1880s.

Depending on their entry or departing point in North America, French travellers (and British visitors) could not help but compare Canada to the United States. The Republic and its progress were fascinating for some, and repulsive to others. Like many British visitors before them, Ampère, Marmier and Lamothe reached Canada after several days spent in the United States where they landed at New York. Therefore the French visitors could not help but express their impressions when they witnessed such a great contrast between both countries, which was "visible the moment they entered Canada¹¹". They were struck by the difference between the extreme modernity of American cities and the bustling activities of its "capital cities" (New York, Boston), with the more rural unsettled lands and growing

⁷ See chapters 1 and 4 on British travel narratives in Françoise Le Jeune, *The Feminine Experience in the Margins of the British Empire*, London, Mellen Press, 2012,.

⁸ Jean-Jacques Ampère, *Promenade en Amérique: Etats-Unis, Cuba, Mexique*, Paris Michel Lévy frères, 1855 (rééditions en 1856, 1860 et 1874)

⁹ Xavier Marmier, *Les Etats-Unis et le Canada*, Tours, Alfred Marne, 1874 (réédition en 1877 et en 1902)

¹⁰ Baron Lamothe, Henri de, *Cinq Mois chez les Français d'Amérique, Voyage au Canada et à la Rivière Rouge du Nord*, Paris, Hachette, 1879.

¹¹ An expression used by both Ampère and Marmier.

villages of Ontario and the lack of business activity in “provincial Montréal” (Marmier, 141). Indeed if the United States represented the future of the New World with modern amenities, with displays of mechanical progress everywhere and ceaseless business activities, the visitors’ first impressions of Canada expressed the complete opposite. Indeed they depict Ontario and Quebec as a series of undeveloped surroundings and untamed landscapes in the 1850s and 1860s. Besides, since the travellers took the train from Boston or New York to Montréal, they were under the impression of receding or regressing in time the moment they left the United States. Ampère had praised New York deeming the city the “future capital of the modern world”, while Canada is now described as the “beginning of societies” (Ampère, 123)¹². As for Marmier, he declares being moved by the drastic contrast between the “primitive but grand works of nature” in Ontario next to “the works of man’s industry” in America. Captured from the train, this spectacle of pre-industrial times versus post-industrial times, “nowhere to be seen in Europe”, brings Marmier “some deep emotions”¹³.

Both authors also had in mind some clichés on under-developed Canada versus civilized America beforehand, which they had collected in British travel books. Ampère mentions having read Fanny Kemble’s *American Journal* published in 1835, as for Marmier he read Harriet Martineau’s *Society in America* published in 1838. Both women were critical of the “colonial aspects” of Canada in the 1830s, which they compared to the most visible progress of American cities. In other words, the French visitors both expected to find an underdeveloped Canada (“cette civilisation encore sauvage” as Lamothe writes) when they entered the British colonies. When crossing the border by train, Ampère first exclaims: “There it is!” referring to the Ontarian landscape in which he observes the slow progress of “settlement” (the English word is used in the text) (Ampère, 123)¹⁴. He clearly expected to witness such a contrast in the progress of civilisation in the two nations. In Canada West, he describes a rough landscape that was sparsely populated, composed of small cabins built from axed trees, on plots full of burnt stubs. While surveying this landscape, he muses about his visits to the ruins of past civilisations in Italy, which he contrasts in his imagination to “these poor unfinished hovels” which will form the “stepping stones of a new society” one day¹⁵. Canada West is deemed by Ampère, Marmier and Lamothe as stuck in a “pre-civilisation” stage for now, while Eastern America is in a “post-industrial” age.

On the other hand, in “the English part of Canada” as Ontario is called in French narratives, Ampère, who is “forced” to spend a day and a half at Ogdensburg since his train broke down, develops a new kind of “rêverie” which is inspired by the Canadian landscape in this “pre-civilisation” stage. He is fascinated by the “extraordinary spectacle” represented by a phenomenon he calls “urban *embryogénie*” (Ampère, 133). He explains the concept of embryogeny to his readers by describing it as “the spectacle of a city which grows overnight” from “an embryo into a butterfly”. According to him, the French traveller should indeed be fascinated by the unusual “sight of savagery slowly departing the site, giving way before industry and progress.” This can only be observed in Canada,

¹² Ampère, 123, « C’est ainsi que commencent les sociétés. »

¹³ Marmier, 127.

¹⁴ Ampère, 123, « Voilà bien des divers degrés de *settlement*. »

¹⁵ Ampère, 124, « Ces pierres d’attente de l’avenir parlent à mon imagination... Quand je contempais les ruines en Italie, en Egypte, je rêvais à ce qui a été ; en contemplant ces rudiments d’habitations humaines, je rêve à ce qui sera. »

as Eastern America is already fully urbanized. In English Canada, the traveller can still catch a glimpse of futurity in the making, by observing these growing pioneering areas. However Ampère explains that this sight is fugitive, that these pockets of settlement are epiphenomena. The traveller who might follow in Ampère's footsteps the following year might only see a finished city with neat roads and lots covered in stores and cottages leading him to push further west to catch this fascinating "historical" moment in the lives of civilisations. In 1874, Lamothe needs indeed to push further west near Thunder Bay to catch a glimpse of the spectacle of "*embryogénie*". Ampère, Marmier and Lamothe all convey the idea that it might be fascinating to observe a slowly emerging urban landscape and that English Canadian budding cities provide the ideal observation point for it as the visitor can see these "archeological" layers, from a pre-civilisation time to a post-industrial age according to Ampère.¹⁶ In their classification however, we will see that English Canada is closer to modernity than French Canada that belongs to the past.

The impression that travelling through Canada is a spectacle in itself is also reinforced by railway journeys. Both Ampère and Marmier, along with all the French travellers who published after them, were fascinated by the modernity of the railway carriages. This was also a recurrent comment in British travel narratives even though British visitors were usually acquainted with comfortable first-class cars in their homeland. French visitors on the other hand, experienced for the first time long railway rides, in comfortable cars with restaurants and first-class service all the way. These first French travellers who take the train to cross Eastern Canada spend a lot of time praising this means of transportation, which revolutionized their own perspective on the landscape and their traditional tourist's habits¹⁷.

Ampère and Lamothe devote several pages to the description of their train experience, their "maiden" journey, when riding from Boston to Montreal or from Thunder Bay to Winnipeg. For the first time, both visitors see Canada through their car window and they feel "*emporté*", i.e. both seized and dragged at the same time, through the landscape that unfolds before them providing some fugitive and distant impressions. This is a new form of spectacle as the train removes the tourist from the actual scenery, while at the same time taking him through rapidly changing vistas. They need to convey this new feeling to their readers as it adds a new dimension to their perception of Canada. This feeling of "powerlessness" as they are not interacting with the outside, leads Marmier to describe himself as a "tourist". Ampère and Marmier who first depicted themselves as traditional 18th-century strollers ("promeneur" or "flâneur") enjoying walks through cities, ruins and nature, are here confronted to a new way of experimenting the landscape. They travel through Canadian nature in a train, a means of transportation that they find pleasant and convenient as there is "so much nature to see" (Marmier, 110). For the "traditional" romantic tourist who used "to walk through unexplored forests to reach the confines of civilisation" (Ampère, 178), Canada offers a completely different experience thanks to the train, as the "spectacle" is brought to the visitor, effortlessly "on the very side of the road".¹⁸ According to Lamothe writing in 1874, Canada and its trains are "perfect for

¹⁶ Ampère, 185, « cette impression plus extraordinaire qu'agréable, produite par le spectacle du développement américain à Ogdensburg. »

¹⁷ Marmier (p.44), states : « En France nous n'avons pas idée d'un tel déploiement de machines, d'une telle abondance de moyens de communication. Mais nous ne sommes pas voyageurs, nous aimons la promenade à pied. »

¹⁸ Ampère, 122, « Le spectacle qu'on allait chercher il y a quelques années avec des fatigues infinies, au fond des forêts vierges, aux limites de la civilisation, on le rencontre maintenant sur les bords du chemin de fer. »

modern tourists” who only have a limited time to visit the country. Our first French travellers insisted on the fact that somehow their way of seeing and excursions was completely changed by travelling on Canadian trains. Railways and steamers in the 1860s created new travelling habits. Ampère and Marmier seem disturbed by the fact that they *also* enjoy this modern way of travelling as speed brings a variety of scenery, a lot of “dépaysement”, while they enjoy comfort and luxury. In short they described the new habits of the modern tourist.

These touristic habits were reinforced in travel narratives written by the next generation of French tourists or travellers who all devoted a chapter to the modernity of the CPR sweeping them through a yet under-developed West, giving the impressions that Canada’s landscape was a reachable spectacle for first-class travellers. Most of them were enthusiastic because they could see Canada, without necessarily experiencing its natural sites first-hand, as it was either deemed a boring series of homesteads in the Prairie or admired for its succession of majestic Alpine-like panoramas in and beyond the Rockies. The French visitors travelling in Canadian trains, particularly the CPR, conveyed the impression that discovering and contemplating required less effort in Canada as it did in the old World or in the American Far-West where there were too many railway companies and poor service. What they all seemed to enjoy the most was the speed of the CPR that gave the Canadian landscape a cinematic effect.¹⁹ In Britain or France, Canada quickly gained the reputation of being accessible to anyone, including women, who sought to admire new vistas, to see the confines of civilisation or to gaze at pristine snow-capped mountains and unexplored forests in the Rockies, while comfortably travelling in his or her “armchair”²⁰.

3) Rediscovering French Canada, touring its historical relics and “ancient” sites, and evoking the memory of past imperial glories

The train, or the steamer finally take our visitors from Ontario to Montréal then to Québec city, which is described as the highlight of the travellers’ time in Canada. With Ampère and Marmier, readers discover and explore French Canada, “this ancient jewel of France” as Marmier exclaims, which the French public had neglected since the Conquest. Both travellers write about some “strange feelings” of excitement and anticipation as they approach the St Lawrence and Montréal. They are under the impression of having taken a time machine as in less than a week since their landing in the New World, they experienced urbanized modern America, crossed embryos of picturesque cities in English Canada on the cusp of modernity, before being “transported” back in time and space to a province which at times resembles France in the Ancien Régime. After having expressed either their fascination for extremely modern American cities, or some anthropological interest for budding sites of modern “civilisation” in Ontario, the more “backward” aspect of French Canada definitely unsettles our visitors at first. Montreal though an apparently modern city is very quiet and provincial, displaying no sign of business activity or industrial progress, while Quebec is a 17th-century French citadel town, on a remarkable promontory set in very rural surroundings.

¹⁹ F. Le Jeune, “Representations of the Canadian West in late 19th-century British women’s travel narratives”, in Michèle Kaltemback ed., *Canada from Sea to Sea*, Toulouse, Presse Universitaire du Mirail, 2005.

²⁰ I’m alluding here to John Murray’s ideal British reader, the « armchair traveller ».

Tocqueville and Chateaubriand had provided some fugitive or romantic impressions on that part of the New World in the 1820s and 1840s but the French public only became properly reacquainted with the old “New France” thanks to these 1870s travel accounts. Therefore whatever impressions both literary travellers conveyed to the page, naturally led to the creation of “clichés” and “stereotypes” which were later reproduced in other travel narratives. However, though Québec and Montréal lacked the attractions provided by modern cities in the New World, the travellers declare the province of Quebec a central attraction for French tourists. They prescribe future visitors to spend several weeks to see everything and to interact with the people in “their language”. Our three travellers deem the province the highlight of their “grand tour” and they devote several chapters to express their personal views on what must be seen and felt upon discovering this part of Canada. They embark their readers on their “promenades” and excursions, detailing their “impressions” and “reverie” upon discovering what they claim is their “French heritage” in Canada.

The first glimpse of what they deem the symbol of French Canada is the St Lawrence River whose view they hail as if they just re-discovered “Kanata”! The St Lawrence automatically triggers a sort of musing, which takes them directly to the times of Jacques Cartier. Marmier has high expectations on his way to the province of Quebec. He could hardly wait until he saw the St Lawrence and “our former possession in the New World” where “our French blood still runs”. The moment he reaches Lake Champlain, Marmier loses himself in a reverie, which takes him back to the founding of the French colonial empire in Canada (Marmier, 60). At that point of their narrative, looking at a map of “ancient Canada”, they reminisce upon their lost empire, at a time when France used to “possess half the continent” (Ampère, 135). Our three visitors dedicate dozens of pages to this historical narration, revisiting New France from the moment of its discovery by Cartier and its colonisation by Champlain. In this section, they clearly rely on a single historical source, recently completed and published in Canada and France, François-Xavier Garneau’s *Histoire du Canada de sa découverte à nos jours*. Garneau was actually Ampère and Marmier’s host in Quebec City. When evoking the beginning of the French empire in Canada, they tend to glorify the role of the Catholic missionaries among the natives and the bravery of the “coureurs des bois” who were truly imperial trailblazers. The travellers seem to experience an upsurge of national pride at this point of their journey. This is particularly noticeable when they contemplate the landscape of contemporary French Canada from their steamer, as they cast an “imperial gaze²¹” upon it, conveying the content (or disappointment) of a former landlord.

Nostalgia and regrets over past imperial glories all come to the page at this point. These are “natural feelings” according to Lamothe. The landscape along the St Lawrence, the architecture in the cities, the “seigneurie” (or land-tenure) system all seem to take the tourists back to the *Ancien Régime*. The bucolic scenery is completed by the presence of sturdy French peasants who are exaggeratingly represented as 17th-century New France settlers²². The French travellers deem the countryside around Quebec “picturesque”. Excursions outside the old town are numerous as the city itself is small and does not provide enough entertainment to the visitors. Both Ampère and Marmier being literary people, they turn their encounter with the typical French Canadian peasant into some

²¹ See Mary Louise Pratt’s analysis in *Imperial eyes, Travel Writing and Transculturation*, London, Routledge, second edition, 2007.

²² Ampère describes groups of peasants in a very picturesque fashion « en habit de bure grise » (139).

stereotypical folkloric description, verging on primitivism. One excursion on Ile d'Orléans or a visit to Beaufort, lead the civilised tourist to meet and talk with a population of uneducated rough men and women, dressed in 17th-century fashion, looking like relics of France's past, who live happily on their small rented farm away from the modern world. This seems to be part of some domestic exoticism modern tourists seek, either British or French, as this type of description is common in English travel accounts on the Irish peasantry during the Famine or in French books narrating visits to Brittany at the turn of the 19th century (where Parisian tourists discovered the humble interior of peasants' hovels in which animals and men used to share the same living quarters).

Everything, from the accent, the vocabulary, the habits and folklore of these human "relics" to their conversation with a more elite society of French-Canadian journalists or political leaders, reminds our travellers of the cultural and social "*survivance*" of the French race in this vast British empire. It leads them to point to the fact that French people can be settlers and colonists after all, contrary to the anti-colonial lobby's declarations at home. The sound of some old-17th century French expressions, the traditional dishes served in inns, the picturesque of French peasants in their hovels along the St Lawrence and in the countryside outside Quebec City, bring back memories of "ancient" France, to the visitors. On the other hand, being transported to a France of yore, does not reflect greatly on the progress and modernity of the province. If Ampère, Lamothe and Marmier all regret the fact that France had left behind this great colony, they cannot help but contrast the lack of development of the French Canadian population, largely rural and set in conservative ways and manners, with the social, economic and political progress brought by the English race (which was visible in English Canada). The backwardness of what is left of the French race, though a great distraction for the tourist during his excursions, disappoints them.

As for the walking tours tourists can take in the old town of Quebec, our visitors mention they are directed by their French Canadian host (Garneau) to what he believes might be the main points of interest for them, on this nostalgic "grand tour". French travellers express their wish to retrace "their" history to the time of the Conquest (Marmier, 156), which marked the end of French domination in North America. During their visit, with the benefit of hindsight, our visitors are critical of the decision taken by France to abandon Canada by the Treaty of Paris, particularly at a time when, in the 1870s, political leaders complained that France had no real empire anymore and was losing its prestige in Europe.

Quebec City already counted several touristic sites as our travellers discovered upon their first visit in the 1860s. Before touring the city, Lamothe recommends that future visitors should first gaze at the old citadel from their steamer on the St Lawrence and impress upon their mind the view of this "majestic, regal" promontory "guarding the entrance gate to the continent" (Lamothe, 121). Next they should start a visit of the upper part of the city by contemplating the sweeping views over the surrounding countryside and the St Lawrence, from the "Durham terrace" (now Dufferin terrace)²³, "one of the most extraordinary spectacles beyond imagination" (Marmier, 154). As for a historical tour, our three tourists all wish to catch a glimpse of the place where Montcalm was defeated by Wolfe, after Garneau had told them about the circumstances behind the decisive 1759 battle. If this part of the Conquest history was usually well known by British tourists at the time, the French

²³ Marmier, 155, « J'ai couru sur cette terrasse dès mon arrivée. J'y suis restée des heures... c'est sans aucun doute l'un des spectacles le plus saisissants, les plus extraordinaires qu'il soit possible d'imaginer. »

travellers seemed to discover its historical details while walking through Quebec City. Thanks to Garneau's informed comments, they all provide some lengthy details on early colonial times in New France to the time of the Conquest. They conclude their chapters by a visit of the grounds where the battle took place. There they feel the need to provide their readers with further explanations on the circumstances of the British siege. Marmier and Ampère apparently just learnt about the story behind Wolfe's attack and the ruse he used to surprise French troops. They also introduce the expression "the plains of Abraham" to their readers, a name they had not heard of before or if they did, that they had not identified as the site of the fatal battle (Ampère, 134).²⁴

If to British visitors, the famous battleground represents the beginning of the British empire in Canada and seems to be an already well-known site in the 1840s, for French travellers, the unheard-of plains of Abraham are depicted by our visitors in the light of nostalgia and painful memories, as it marks the place where French glory ended. They pay tribute to Montcalm after having been told about his bravery and having been reminded about his fatal death on the field. Then they visit the "obelisque" dedicated to all the generals who fell during the fateful battle, which was a monument recently erected by the Governor's house. Here, Ampère's mind drifts and evokes glorious elegiac poems to honour Montcalm. As for Marmier, he glorifies the *Ancien Régime* that defended this Canadian empire for so long. Through this "guided" literary and historical tour of Quebec City, they somehow invent a form of "*tourisme de mémoire*" or "memorial tourism". This trend was just beginning in 19th-century France.²⁵ Indeed as Marmier concludes, where else but in French Canada could French tourists admire the remnants or relics of past French glories outside of France?

Following a sort of 18th-century "grand tour" tradition, (i.e. combining visits to admire the origins of European civilisation at Italy and Greece's ancient sites, while meeting the "grandees" of the continent), 1870s French travellers suggest Quebec City should be the site where French visitors could ponder over the cradle of the French race in North America and reminisce about these glorious imperial days.

As for Montreal, described as "more modern" by our visitors, compared to "sleepy Quebec", it should be the place where visitors become acquainted with a more refined French-Canadian society, among whom they will live and interact, thanks to some letters of introduction. When they arrive in Montreal, the narrators further develop their political agenda on the question of the French race and its progress (or lack of), in Canada. Lamothe explains this political digression in his travel log by the fact that Montreal counts less majestic vistas or picturesque features than Quebec, to the exception of Mont Royal where visitors can see Montreal and its surroundings. In Montréal however tourists should be prepared to spend more time in visiting domestic circles. Clearly when one reads the travellers' first representations of the city, one gathers that the visitors consider it as a French provincial town, which does not much impress them. Marmier exclaims "*Dieu soit loué! Je suis rentré en France*" the moment he arrives in Montreal. Travellers all describe the city as a smaller version of Paris with surviving French features in spite of the anglicisation of the town. For their first tour of the city, Lamothe recommends that future

²⁴ British visitors did the same thing hoping to see Wolfe's monument. British visitors came to Quebec city in the 1840s with Benjamin West's representation of a dying Wolfe in mind, and they sought to see the place where the hero gave up his life for the conquest of Canada.

²⁵ Today we talk of cultural or heritage tourism see Zeppel H., « Selling art and history, cultural heritage and tourism, » *Journal of Tourism Studies* 1991 Vol. 2 No. 1 pp. 29-45

visitors first gaze at the architecture of its religious institutions, its gothic Cathedral, or that they stroll along the main streets bearing French names (rue Saint-Jacques, rue Notre-Dame...), or ride in a “*calèche*” along Montreal’s green “*faubourgs*”, or take a “promenade” on its “Champ-de-Mars”, a large esplanade designed to review troops which was typical of Napoleonic urban planning... Marmier takes pride in these French elements that he describes as remnants of a time when French religious congregations ruled the colony. On the other hand the visitors complain about the fact that Montreal is under the growing influence of the English race which seems to impose its language on signposts, its English business values and eventually its modernity. Marmier is very critical, while Ampère believes this anglicisation might awaken the province and should become an opportunity for Montréal. Under English influence, Montréal could be transformed in “an Americanized France” (“une France américaine”). If he does not complain too much about it, since Ampère enjoys American dynamism and progress and welcomes its importation to English Canada, he fears that the “remnants” of French civilisation might soon disappear before what he describes as a “second Conquest”. This explains why Lamothe states in 1874 that French tourists should visit “what is left” of the French presence in Montreal.

Travellers take time to devote at least two or three chapters to personal reflections on the future of Montréal and that of the province in English Canada, or in examining French-Canadian society at work. Depending on their personal political agenda, travellers provide their readers with biased comments on what might happen to the French province in the Dominion. If they defend liberal views like Ampère and Lamothe, they state that French Canadians who enjoy so many political rights thanks to the English regime, are better off as a colony of England than France. Besides, the tenets of liberal economy in which French Canadians “happily lived” (unlike Conservative France) according to Ampère, implied progress and free enterprise, which would enable them to move forward, thanks to some healthy competition with their American neighbour. Other liberal comments include a discussion on the grip in which the Catholic hierarchy held its gullible flock in French Canada, which according to Ampère would slow down any social or cultural progress. Nonetheless, Ampère prescribes to French businessmen who are hankering for more liberalism in France, to move their firm to Montréal or to invest in French Canada, which in the years to come would eventually benefit from the growth of American dynamic commercial markets.

As for more Conservative travellers, like Marmier who feels some “sweet emotions” in this “old province of France”, he tends to complain about the fact that France was not paying more attention to its “lost colony” where the people still worshipped Gallican traditions and upheld Catholic values. French Canadians were “survivors” according to Marmier, particularly as they maintained a form of traditional Roman Catholicism, which was under threat in Protestant Canada, as well as in secular France. Marmier criticized the rise of Republicanism and secularism in France, Ampère and Lamothe complained about France’s conservative views and lack of connection with Canada. In short, our visitors used their analysis of Canadian affairs and the state of French-Canadian society to convey their own comments on France. Nonetheless, the travellers, conservative or liberal, wished to attract more French visitors and tourists to Québec to renew a filial connection. Marmier and Lamothe even encouraged French people to immigrate to French Canada either in Quebec or in the new French speaking Catholic colonies in the west to save the “French race” in Canada. In all these travel narratives, the question of the tension between the “two races” take up a good portion of the authors’ political discourse.

More generally speaking, the visitors seem to be “genuinely” touched by the fact that French Canadians love France and French people. They praise the warm welcome visitors and tourists receive upon their arrival, as if they had a special status, which could only flatter the Eurocentric and egotistic feelings of any European tourist going to the colonies, at the time. British travellers actually sought the same kind of attention in English-Canadian circles²⁶. French visitors are treated as special guests surrounded by an aura of cultural superiority, which they all enjoy. In a very sentimental tone, they evoke the idea, at this stage, that French genius had survived in Canada and that the old France and the New France should be better connected in the future so that French Canada might long continue to benefit from the “enlightenment of the former mother country”. In openly colonial overtones, our travellers suggest taking pity on the French Canadians who struggle to keep up their French values in an American world. Marmier and Lamothe hope that immigrants and visitors from France would join this cultural and social fight, not to mention the religious fight, and come to the rescue of this “threatened branch of the French race” (Marmier, 189).

4) Catching “glimpses of the natives”, an alternative itinerary for visitors seeking exoticism and the thrill of danger in the Canadian wilderness.

In the 18th-century tradition of Rousseau and the Romantics, 19th-century French visitors in Canada all wish to catch a glimpse of the “happy savages” in their “natural habitat” (Lamothe, 62). While presenting their fascination for the First Nations as motivated by anthropological or ethnological concern, the attitudes adopted by the three visitors when they plan their excursion to native villages, point to the fact that they wish to add some exotic thrill to their Canadian adventure. On their excursions to French Canadian bucolic rural villages near Beaufort or to native villages in Lorette, our travellers become “modern tourists” with their demands for entertainment and “*dépaysement*”. They expect to be surprised, if not they deem the excursion not interesting enough.

While Marmier and Lamothe visit the Huron-Wendat village at Lorette, near Quebec City, Ampère stops at an Iroquois village south of Montréal, which is placed under the chiefdom (Ampère’s word) of a French Canadian priest. These villages are the “closest the traveller can get to the savages” as Ampère writes. Ampère reminds his readers about the fact that the Hurons or the Iroquois are the “fiercest” and most “dangerous” tribes in North America, even though they seem already too much “tamed” to his tourist’s taste. The traveller is seeking “raw savagery” or “original natives” to quote Lamothe. Ampère seems slightly disappointed when he meets with Iroquois men dressed like French peasants and playing a French game, while speaking French when interviewed²⁷. “Luckily” for the tourist, the women still wear native dresses and speak in their native tongue. The traveller is pleased by this exoticism that is somehow dampened by too much Catholic upbringing or in-breeding according to Ampère. The travellers truly turn into modern tourists when they all purchase a keepsake that is called a “*souvenir*” in French: Ampère leaves the village after having bought a pair of moccasins. Marmier purchases a wampum and Lamothe buys a tomahawk, all made by the squaws. Lamothe complains about this

²⁶ See chapter 4, « Anna Brownwell Jameson’s Winter Studies and Summer Rambles in Canada – With a woman’s “soul and senses” (1838) » in Françoise Le Jeune, *The Feminine Experience in the Margins of the British Empire*, London, Mellen Press, 2012.

²⁷ Ampère, 172, « J’ai eu le chagrin en entrant dans ce village, de surprendre les descendants du peuple le plus puissant et le plus redoutable de ces contrées, jouant au bouchon. En revanche, j’ai eu le plaisir d’acheter des mocassins à des Iroquoises qui ne pouvaient pas me parler sans l’interprète. »

business for tourists upon which the tribes now live, though he is glad to have purchased a native “trinket”²⁸. Ampère discusses with the priest who lives among them. He is curious about natives’ manners and their language and writes a whole chapter about the origins of native tribes in North America. As for Lamothe he leaves Lorette full of disappointment, stating that he cannot wait until he travels west to meet “real” natives, “the classic Indian of my dream”.

Marmier declares having been impressed by a “parade day” by Lake Huron (?) when native warriors got dressed in their traditional costumes and painted faces. He provides a colourful description of the scene that reminds readers of George Catlin’s paintings. When visiting Lorette, Marmier contrasts the “derelict state” in which he finds the Hurons in the vicinity of civilisation with those less exposed to progress in the West. Marmier devotes several pages to the past glory of the “red skin” man in North America, to better criticize the “relics” of the brave warrior, which are left to observe at Lorette. He adds that the “downfall of the red man” came with the British (and American) conquest, while he boasts about the French regime that had always considered the native tribes as equals and allies. For the author, the natives are the equivalent of older tribes in the Western world with their own “hieroglyphic” system (as he describes the wampum) and their own holistic rituals. According to Lamothe, they have been “bastardised” by Europeans with whose blood they mixed, so that the visitor (and future tourist) can only be disappointed when he observes some remains or remnants of these “fierce and intelligent” first nations.

6950 words

5) Niagara falls, a “commodified” piece of the Canadian wilderness – a literary competition to capture its sublime

By the 1860s, the Niagara Falls had already become quite “commodified” for the international public. Written descriptions and sketches of the falls circulated in all the European travel narratives about Canada or the United States. The falls were by then already a well-trodden touristic site, but at the same time many travellers felt they should convey their feelings to the page when faced with this impressive natural site²⁹.

Ampère was the first French visitor to write about the falls since Chateaubriand, the well-known author and romantic poet who published his *Voyage* in the 1820s. Like many British travel writers before him, Ampère declares being short for words when he tries to convey his first impressions of the site. “Sublime, surreal”, “I stood before something which was extraordinary, miraculous: it was not a spectacle, it was a vision” (Ampère, 188). Afterwards, following a British tradition of vying with each other to best convey to the readers the narrator’s personal feelings before such a sublime vision, the first French travellers also try to outstage one another. In the case of Ampère, how can he surpass Chateaubriand’s poetic style? Instead he provides a more realistic representation of the falls, by attempting to seize their exact colours and by providing specific geological details. The traveller invites the reader to enter the scene by resorting to the pronoun “you”. Over several paragraphs, Ampère takes his reader on a stroll, asking him to listen to

²⁸ Lamothe, 64, « Ils font aussi des paniers en bois de bouleau, des mocassins, des ouvrages en plume, des costumes indiens, des calumets en bois, des tomahawks et toutes sortes d’autres armes indigènes qu’ils disposent en trophée dans leur habitation ou qu’ils vendent aux étrangers ou aux marchands de curiosités. »

²⁹ Le Jeune, op.cit., ch.4.

the noise made by the water cataract while feeling its mist on his face³⁰. Ampère secludes himself from the busy world of vendors which already “disturb the beauty of the site”, and dreams of a time when the falls represented the wilderness at its best, before any European discovered and “desecrated this part of the world”.

Marmier almost did not go to the falls for fear their sight might disappoint him, as his romantic expectations were so high. Still his eyes filled up with tears and his emotion prevented him from exclaiming his surprise when he stood before the “sublime falls”. The reader is invited to go back to the origin of the world that “must have started on the site of these Canadian falls” according to Marmier, where viewers can feel the presence of the Creator. This surreal spectacle can only be observed once in a lifetime, he insists, and the falls are the only place in the world where travellers would experience God’s presence. However French strollers are not used yet to the vendors that mar the site. Marmier recommends that visitors approach the falls from the Canadian side as Americans have already turned the place into a tourist attraction. With the next generation of French travellers, as the Falls turn into a touristic site on both sides of the border, they would lose the original attraction they represented for the first travel writers. If the Niagara falls remained a necessary sightseeing stop for French tourists in the next generation, they would tend to only devote a few lines to the expression of their emotions before what was still a majestic landscape, while seeking further original “*dépaysement*” in a less touristic wilderness, by going westward where more sublime landscape awaited them in the Rockies.

6) The West: an “adventure vacation” for wealthy French tourists and more “memorial tourism” in the wilderness

Baron de Lamothe pushed further West in 1874, beyond Ontario, further than any French traveller before him. His depiction of unexplored Western Canadian nature, yet unrepresented in French books, was a novelty for French readers when the book was published in 1879. Lamothe travelled to Canada with a clear two-fold agenda, which he exposed in his preface. First he decided to visit French Canada of which he was very curious, having heard so much about it through conversations with Canadian visitors in Paris. Second, Lamothe also travelled to Canada to look for new destinations for French colonists and investors in the wilderness of the North West that he imagined as a sort of “cowboy” country. He presents himself as someone who belongs to a group of people in France who “truly admire Canada”. His travels to the West to which he devotes half his narrative and most of his travel time (at least 3 months), were first released in a series of articles on Canada’s landscape and geology in *Le Tour du Monde*, a well-read review devoted to travel accounts. Before entering and exploring the “undefined West”, Lamothe describes it to his readers as “the Prairie region” or “the Métis region”. (Lamothe, preface)

Lamothe’s journey beyond “the frontier of civilisation” as he describes this vast territory beyond the Great Lakes, first takes him on a trip on the lakes on board a luxury steamer. Such a luxury cruise should be included on the itinerary of future French tourists according to him. Lamothe wishes to go from Collingwood to Thunder Bay where he expects to encounter some thrill and to live a real adventure in the woods. He hopes to camp in “raw wilderness”, to sightsee a variety of untamed land in the “grand and original” Canadian West, which would “please” his eye. While cruising on the great lakes Lamothe recalls

³⁰ Ampère, 191, « vous vous promenez... vous marchez... vous sentez... vous vous asseyez.... »

that this vast expanse was first discovered and claimed by French “coureurs des bois” living among fierce native tribes. But Lamothe also indicates how exotic and out of the trodden path this excursion still is for the regular tourist. Indeed from the safety of the steamer, well-to-do visitors, mostly English Canadian families and some American ones, now have access to the beautiful landscapes of the shores while experiencing some thrill. Lamothe describes the surrounding nature as pristine and wild as it is not yet accessible by road. He deems the area “dangerous” for regular visitors! (Lamothe, 298)

Travelling west in 1874 means turning into a French “voyageur” or “coureur des bois” of yore for Lamothe and that brings thrill to his adventure trip. The West becomes a territory that the French tourist can explore and in which he can find sites reminding him of France’s former empire in Canada. In the same way as Montréal bore irremovable traces of the French race who built the town and named its streets, the West also bears marks of the French presence which he nostalgically reminisces when crossing places and passing sites bearing French names (“Rivière de la Pluie”, “lac Seul”, “Rivière rouge”....) In other words, French visitors should be proud as their ancestors contributed to make Canada into this soon-to-be modern nation.

Lamothe the urban “tourist” now becomes an explorer. When he enters Thunder Bay, half a village and half a mining camp then, Lamothe depicts a typical Western frontier city of the kind he believes readers have read of, in some adventure novels on the American Far West. In doing so, Lamothe exaggerates the roughness of the cowboy’s or miner’s life for his readers. Thunder Bay becomes the epitome of the Canadian Wild West for the author who accumulates some anecdotes describing life in this rough pioneering town that he calls “the extreme frontier” of civilisation. The population is transient, many men work for the CPR and others for the mining industry looking for a quick “buck”. In other words, this part of the West is represented as a “pandemonium” of the kind adventurers might have heard of or read about. For the sake of bringing further exoticism to the page, Lamothe uses several words in English such as “barrooms”, “whiskey”, “borders”, and “frontier” to make it sound authentic and realistic at the same time. This part of Canada is very masculine and violent, where “the best and most depraved of the Caucasian race” live in “promiscuity” with “aboriginal, natives’ barbarism” (Lamothe, 312)

At the same time Lamothe recommends that French tourists stay at bay from these rough cities and move further away once the railway line is completed, to St Boniface, a “small French island” (St Boniface) and a “mushroom city” (Winnipeg). From Thunder Bay to Fort Garry, all the way to Winnipeg and St-Boniface on the Red River. Lamothe depicts himself as a trailblazer for future visitors. Along the road, he meets with “squatters”, in fact Canadian settlers living in “primitive” conditions according to him. He describes how they extract maple sap and turn it into sugar, how lumberjacks work in the summer in rough camps. These men are described as “real Canadians”, as masculine figures taming the Canadian wilderness, clearing it for future settlers. Indeed he imagines for his French readers how these rough lots could turn into beautiful farms after a few years of hard labour. In a few years these farms might be purchased by would-be French emigrants so far incapable of clearing land like these Canadian men whom he sees as “white natives of the forest”. Lamothe is fascinated by the “spectacle of the forward movement of civilisation”, by the way nature is tamed gradually along his route, between the last picturesque village he saw at Collingwood to this half-cleared half-civilised land, beyond Thunder Bay. After making those Eurocentric observations on the landscape, the tourist

then continues with his personal agenda, by considering the potential of the West for French colonists.

Lamothe still hopes to encounter “the classic Indian” of his dream in the West. Instead he observes Métis people, the closest alternative to natives he comes across. They are particularly fascinating for Lamothe as they too represent a sort of human “relics” of the French imperial presence in Canada. Upon his first meeting with a Métis who runs a general store, Lamothe devotes a chapter to their history (largely inspired by Mgr. Taché’s own writings), insisting on the role played by the French “coureurs des bois”. Lamothe does not represent Métis people as civilised Europeans but as remnants of native tribes. In Canada, between the “folkloric” natives living at Lorette near Quebec city and the half-civilised Métis living in the West, French visitors interested in anthropology and evolution theories can observe the various stages of the native race’s decline. The Métis people seem to range from a group Lamothe describes as “bastardized natives” to more urban Métis described as “a race of handsome tall men who has kept their native instincts” depending on the “quantity of French blood in their veins”. What places some Métis above the original group of “bastardized natives” is the fact that they have accepted to be “saved” from their native habits by Catholicism and instruction in French, “thanks to the works of Bishop Taché.” As for the “ideal Indian”, Lamothe did not encounter one of them as they lived too far away from St Boniface. The next generation of travellers will have to write about them, he declares (Lamothe, 241).

As for future wealthy tourists, Lamothe deems Winnipeg and its surroundings worth a summer vacation. Winnipeg forms a “capital” of less than 2000 inhabitants where the visitor would spend an enjoyable month (Lamothe, 260). There, in company of the well-to-do families of the place, French or English-speaking, Lamothe enjoyed picnics, hunting and camping trips, canoeing and portage with Métis guides, in the city’s semi-tamed surroundings. In other words, Winnipeg could become a pleasant stop for wealthy French tourists. Lamothe’s hosts, like the governor of the HBC at whose house those entertainments take place most of the time, suggests the Baron should invite his friends, the sons of aristocratic French families to vacation in Winnipeg as they would enjoy hunting and riding with Métis guides described as great “buffalo killers”. Lamothe concludes this invitation by suggesting that the West has now become the place where European aristocratic men meet in the summer, away from European resorts: “Here they would, like English aristocrats, test their muscles, and enjoy a fortifying vacation.” (Lamothe, 274-75)

Conclusion : Touristic itineraries and routes laid out for the next generation of French visitors to Canada (1880s-1890s)

Somehow Lamothe’s travel narrative published in 1879 more than the two previous texts provided readers with great information on where to go, which route to follow or on daily excursions they could take if they spent a few days in Quebec or in Montréal, and possibly in the West. This can be explained by the fact that he had acquainted himself with Marmier and Ampère’s routes before his visit, which he clearly followed once in Canada. Lamothe thus tested and verified the sites and places that he now deemed interesting enough for future tourists. Therefore Baron de Lamothe contributes greatly and consciously to the definition of some prescribed itineraries for French tourists. At the beginning of each chapter before digressing towards more political or social comments, Lamothe points future visitors to pre-determined places and sites in order for them to make

the most of a few days in Québec, Montréal, English-Canada, Niagara Falls, the Great Lakes or the West.

The “tourist” and “excursionist” always seems to be at the back of his mind when he guides them to places or along routes where they will be “*dépaysés*”, as for instance when he recommends that future visitors choose to travel by boat from Quebec to Montréal as the trip “combines speed, comfort and some picturesque vistas” which should “please the tourist”. Lamothe also mentions the “best time of day” to catch sweeping views when going on a visit of a site or where to stand on a promontory to admire some majestic landscape. In Montréal, he suggests three excursions by foot or carriage, depending on the taste or health of the tourist. Lamothe declares how happy any French tourist would be in Canada where he can spend time exploring the land and meeting with his “cousins”. French Canada is both surprising and familiar and it will bring the visitor “endless pleasures”³¹. His book contains 47 views that he sketched himself, and he had illustrators “complete them to perfection” before printing. Out of these 47 views, 36 represent nature in its prime, from rapids, to falls, to woods and forests... The rest of them represent a series of emblematic buildings and vistas such as the Quebec citadel, Montreal from Mont Royal, Ottawa’s Parliament hill sketched from Hull, and a street view in Winnipeg...

The next generation of visitors in Canada in the 1880s and 1890s who published their travel accounts in Paris, went to “see” Canada, after having imagined it when reading these narratives. This time around they were all educated tourists in the sense that they were well informed about French Canada’s history and France’s former colonial connection to it.

Here is a typical touristic itinerary that could be gathered from the reading of Ampère, Marmier and Lamothe’s books. (An itinerary that is still prescribed to French tourists, to this day.) The next generation of French tourists would probably start their visit in the United States, as everyone should see New York (the urban centre by excellence, the “incarnation of modernity”), before travelling by train to Canada. They would first stop at Niagara Falls (the “spectacle of nature at its best”, a must-see, a “classic” excursion according to Lamothe), then Kingston or Toronto (described by Lamothe as a boring British American city), Lake Ontario (a “vast domestic sea”) whose “immensity” would impress the visitor, (as it is like “travelling on the Rhine”). Steamers might take them among the Thousand islands (both “picturesque and poetic”), up the Lachine rapids (Lamothe describes them as “a favourite with the tourist who enjoys both limited danger and great thrill”³²).

For those travelling by train from the States, they would observe the rapidly growing cities of English-Canada in Ontario (the “spectacle of embryogeny”) but the rest of Ontario is deemed “dull” (as there is no “mountains” complains Lamothe). They might wish to stop at Ottawa (catching a brief glimpse at Parliament hill from Hull, but the city counts “too many wood mills that mar the landscape”, as for the Parliament buildings they “are unpleasant to watch and disturbing to the eyes.”). Finally, French tourists could reach Montreal the “capital city of France in Canada” or “a piece of France in America”, experiencing some feeling of national pride when entering the city (which they will first observe from Mont Royal and its “promenade”, before catching a glimpse of Victoria

³¹ Lamothe, 101.

³² Lamothe, 95, « C’est un plaisir dangereux mais aussi une source préférée d’émotion pour le touriste qui aime « sauter » les rapides du St Laurent. »

Bridge). The apex of the French tourist's visit must be Quebec City (about which Lamothe declares "to sum it up for a tourist, and a French tourist most of all, Quebec City is among all North American cities the most inspiring one and whose visit makes memories"³³). Lamothe recommends visiting the outskirts of Quebec for "daily excursions" to catch glimpses of "old France" by spending time among some peasants or to buy mementoes of native culture at Lorette. Finally, for the more adventurous, sporty tourist, there is the West and even the "Far West" of Canada that tourists would soon be able to explore further thanks to the CPR, while still remembering France's glorious past in this part of Canada which should soon be transformed and influenced by a massive migration of French peasants.

Clearly, the first "real" travellers who intended to publish their narratives to rekindle some cultural interest in Canada in France, as we just discussed, hoped to attract future bourgeois and aristocratic visitors, business people, journalists and possibly settlers. The picture they constructed of Canada was supposed to trigger the imagination of French tourists whom they imagine as well-off, seeking distraction and novelty. Which better place than Canada could French tourists interested in the New World, choose to visit? Both familiar with an at-home feeling in French Canada, and disoriented and "dislocated" in Canadian nature, the French tourist in Canada could experience both glimpses of the past and scenes of modernity, pitting French versus English Canada. Canada also provided beaten tracks with spectacular and accessible sites, while a taste for adventure could be experienced by tourists who wished to go westward. Besides modern means of transportation (steamships on lakes, comfortable trains like the CPR), with first-class cabins and Pullman-cars, should attract modern tourists who might be frightened by the immensity of North America. Instead what the first generation of travellers underlined was the speed and ease with which one could cross the country, travelling from picturesque scenes to a sublime ones. At the turn of the 19th century, Canada was thus heralded and represented as a great destination for French well-to-do tourists who could follow some "familiar" itineraries and be "*dépaysés*".

(10.000 words)

Bibliography

Colbert, Benjamin, ed., *Travel Writing and Tourism in Britain and Ireland*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2012.

Marc Boyer, *Histoire générale du tourisme, du XVIe au XXIe siècles*, Paris, L'Harmattan, 2005.

Henry Cameron, "Tourism Histories," in *Tourism: Key Concepts*, edited by Peter Robinson (Abingdon: Routledge, 2012), 227-230.

Catherine Cocks, *Doing the Town, The Rise of Urban Tourism in the United States, 1859-1915*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 2001.

Peter Hulme and Tim Youngs eds, *The Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2002.

³³ Lamothe, *Cinq mois chez les Français d'Amérique*, Paris, Hachette, 1879, p. 38.

Françoise Le Jeune, *The Feminine Experience in the Margins of the British Empire*, London, Mellen Press, 2012.

Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial eyes, Travel Writing and Transculturation*, London, Routledge, second edition, 2007

Travel narratives

Ampère Jean-Jacques, *Promenade en Amérique: Etats-Unis, Cuba, Mexique*, Paris Michel Lévy frères, 1855 (rééditions en 1856, 1860 et 1874)

Bentzon Thérèse, *Notes de Voyage. Nouvelle-France et Nouvelle-Angleterre*, Paris, Calmann Lévy, 1899.

Bourbonnaud, Louise, *Les Amériques, Amérique du Nord, les Antilles, Amérique du Sud*, Paris, Henri Jouve, 1889.

Hulot, Baron Etienne, *De l'Atlantique au Pacifique à travers le Canada et le Nord des Etats-Unis*, Paris, Plon et Nourrit, 1888.

Lambert A., *Un voyage au Canada*, Mesnil, Imprimerie Firmin-Didiot, 1893.

Lamothe, Henri de, *Cinq Mois chez les Français d'Amérique, Voyage au Canada et à la Rivière Rouge du Nord*, Paris, Hachette, 1879.

Marmier, Xavier, *Les Etats-Unis et le Canada*, Tours, Alrfred Marne, 1874 (réédition en 1877 et en 1902)

Vianzone, Thérère, *Impressions d'une Française en Amérique (Etats-Unis et Canada)*, Paris, Plon, 1906.