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The Several Lives of Joan the Spinner:
Honoré Beaugrand's *Jeanne la fileuse: épisode de l'émigration franco-canadienne aux États-Unis* and the Making and Remaking of a French Canadian/Franco-American Novel

Honoré Beaugrand was not a typical late nineteenth-century French Canadian/Franco-American¹ writer. A radical Liberal, republican and Free Mason, Beaugrand was unafraid to challenge dominant French Canadian ultramontane or moderately liberal social and political views in his writings and speeches during his eclectic career as a journalist, author and politician in New England and Québec between 1873 and 1906.² Sometime between 1877 and 1878 (the exact dates are unknown), Beaugrand printed his novel *Jeanne la fileuse: épisode de l'émigration franco-canadienne aux États-Unis* [Joan the Spinner: An Episode of French Canadian Emigration to the United States] in a series of chapters in his newspaper *La République* of Fall River, Massachusetts.³ In his fictional novel, Beaugrand tells the tale of a poor young farm girl, Jeanne Girard, who is forced by desperation and isolation to depart her ancestral Québec homeland to join the flood of rural French Canadians flocking to the mill towns of New

¹ In this paper I will define **Franco-American** as a person who is either a French Canadian emigrant in New England, a child of such emigrants or a descendant of French Canadian emigrants who self-identifies with their French Canadian heritage and/or speaks and writes French. I consider Honoré Beaugrand a Franco-American writer because *Jeanne la fileuse* was written and first printed when he lived in Fall River, Massachusetts and addresses French Canadian emigrants (and their families) in the United States in the introduction of the story's first edition. However, as Beaugrand later moved back to Canada, served as mayor of Montréal and republished this story in Montréal, he is also very much a French Canadian writer as well.

² François Ricard, "Honoré Beaugrand," in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography Online*, (University of Toronto & Université Laval, 2000), <http://www.biographi.ca/009004-119.01-e.php?Biold=40670> (accessed 2 October 2010).

³ Maurice Poteet, "'Notre premier roman bourgeois'?" *Voix et Images* 6, 2 (1981), 328. Unfortunately, the exact dates of the original printing of Beaugrand's novel in his paper *La République* are currently unknown as copies (original or microfilm) of his paper in the 1877-1878 period were not available to this researcher. However, Beaugrand specifies in the first edition's introduction that he printed this story first *en feuilleton* before publishing in its entirety in March 1878. Poteet has examined the copies of the *La République* that he could track down and can say conclusively that *Jeanne la fileuse* was *not* printed before 1877 (328).

England.⁴ Self-published *en volume* by Beaugrand in Massachusetts in 1878, the story was reprinted several times in serial form in French Canadian newspapers during the 1870s and 1880s and was published a second time in Montréal in 1888.⁵ Although this novel would remain outside the standard corpus of recognised nineteenth-century French Canadian literature for most of the twentieth century, *Jeanne la fileuse* was later republished twice in 1980 by two separate publishing houses – the small National Materials Development Center for French in Bedford, New Hampshire and the major francophone publishing house of Fides in Montréal.⁶

That this (often unheard of) story was written by the influential, nonconformist Victorian journalist-turned-politician Honoré Beaugrand renders *Jeanne la fileuse* a fascinating source of historical analysis. Why did Beaugrand write this story? Did the author's intentions extend beyond his desire to publish a work of fiction? Why was this story published in volume and in serialised form so many times in Beaugrand's lifetime? And why, after a century of little recognition, was the story of *Jeanne la fileuse* republished in the *same year* by two very different publishing houses? The answers to these questions will lead us to understand Beaugrand's intentions as an author and help us to better understand patterns of publication and reading in nineteenth-century French Canada and francophone New England. More importantly however, such queries will also force us to recognise that the intended motivations and purposes of a publishing and republishing a work of fiction evolve in conjunction with the time and place in which that story is read and (re-)produced.

⁴ Richard Santerre, "Le Roman Franco-Américain en Nouvelle-Angleterre," (Phd. dissertation, Boston College, 1974), 48.

⁵ Maurice Lemire, "Jeanne la fileuse" in *Dictionnaire des œuvres littéraires du Québec : Tome premier* (Montreal: Fides, 1978), 409.

⁶ Roger Le Moine, "Introduction," in Honoré Beaugrand, *Jeanne la fileuse* (1878), ed. Roger Le Moine (Fides: Montreal, 1980), 43, Honoré Beaugrand, *Jeanne la fileuse* (1878) (Bedford, NH: National Materials Development Center for French, 1980).

The prominent presence of Beaugrand's personal social commentary and his highly political views in *Jeanne la fileuse* highlight that the author had more than one objective in writing and distributing this story. Nonetheless, it is important not to overlook perhaps his most basic intent of all – to create a recognised work of literary fiction for a mass French Canadian and Franco-American audience. Although the author's pro-emigrant plot and highly liberal political commentary differ greatly from the writings of most French Canadian authors of his day, Beaugrand's plot structure and substance reflect the patterns and themes of popular French Canadian *roman d'aventures* [adventure novels] of the nineteenth century.

Firstly, and in its most basic sense, Beaugrand's *Jeanne la fileuse* is a dramatic love story. Beaugrand situates his *roman d'aventure* in 1872 and recounts the experiences of a poor sixteen year-old farm girl, Jeanne Girard, who falls in love with Pierre, the son of the wealthy local farmer and government bureaucrat Jean-Louis Montépel.⁷ Because the elder Montépel is a Conservative and a personal enemy of Jeanne's Liberal, former rebellious *Patriote* father, M. Montépel does not consent to the marriage of Jeanne and Pierre.⁸ While Pierre sets off to spend the winter working in the woods of Gatineau to save enough money to marry Jeanne, M. Girard dies leaving Jeanne alone and impecunious.⁹ Aided by the kindly emigrant Dupuis family, Jeanne makes the fateful decision to depart for the Massachusetts city of Fall River to work in the bustling textile mills. Although she is later injured in a factory fire, Jeanne is ultimately reunited with Pierre and returns to Canada.¹⁰ Beaugrand's employment of this dramatic love story plot was not unusual for a nineteenth-century French Canadian writer. In fact, many of

⁷ Beaugrand, *Jeanne la fileuse* (1878) (Bedford, NH: National Materials Development Center for French, 1980), 29, 38, 46. When citing page numbers from *Jeanne la fileuse* I will cite the pages from this 1980 NMDC edition **unless** I specifically refer to a different edition.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 12, 62-69, 82.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 90-91, 98-99

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 116-118, 171, 181-183.

French Canada's most popular novels of the nineteenth century such as *La Fille du brigand* by Eugène L'Écuyer and Joseph Doutre's *Les Fiancés de 1812* similarly tell tales of indefeasible love in which heroic couples must overcome countless trials and tribulations before their ultimate and final union.¹¹ Beyond this popular love story motif, Beaugrand's constant interruptions of his plot to tell tales of French Canada's history and folklore (with an entire chapter dedicated to the famous folkloric tale "le Fantôme de l'avare") place his story directly in line with contemporary French Canadian novels. For instance, Philippe Aubert de Gaspé's widely popular story *Les Anciens Canadiens* similarly pauses for whole chapters at a time to recount tales of French Canadian folklore.¹² While not all of Beaugrand's contemporary peers appreciated his style and plot (critic Joseph Desrosiers wrote in 1878 that the "book, as a novel, is as boring as the rain"), Beaugrand's writing demonstrates that he sought to follow an established (and popular) pattern of writing novels in his attempt to create a recognised work of French Canadian fiction.¹³ However, in Beaugrand's own words "the book that I present...is less of a novel than a pamphlet."¹⁴ Why then did Beaugrand choose to write a work of fiction?

In fact, Beaugrand's primary purpose in writing this novel was to promote his own personal views regarding French Canadian emigration to New England to defend emigrant workers from attacks levelled against them by members of the French Canadian elite. During the 1860s and 1870s, thousands of poor, overpopulated *habitants* left their unproductive farms in Québec in search of industrial employment in New England's mill towns. Mass emigration from

¹¹ See Eugène L'Écuyer, *La Fille du brigand ; œuvres choisies* (1844), ed. Jean-Guy Hudon (Sainte-Foy, QC: Éditions de la Huit, 2001) and Joseph Doutre, *Les Fiancés de 1812* (Montréal: Louis Perrault, Imprimeur, 1844).

¹² Philippe Aubert de Gaspé, *Les Anciens Canadiens* (Québec: Desbarats and Derbishire, 1863).

¹³ Joseph Desrosiers, "Jeanne la fileuse," *La Revue canadienne Volume Quinzième* (Montréal: Imprimerie canadienne, 1878), 403. Desrosiers wrote that "le livre, en tant que roman, est ennuyeux comme la pluie." Armand Chartier, "Franco-American Literature: The New England Experience," in *Ethnic Perspectives in American Literature* eds. Robert Di Pietro and Edward Ifkovic (New York: The Modern Language Association of America, 1983), 27.

¹⁴ Beaugrand, *Jean la fileuse*, 1. Beaugrand wrote that, "le livre que je présente...est moins un roman qu'un pamphlet."

Québec to New England greatly disturbed the French Canadian clerical and political elite which felt that emigration threatened the so-called French Canadian *race* and the Québec state.¹⁵ To discourage emigration, migrants were often labelled “apostates” by the French Canadian Catholic elite.¹⁶ Meanwhile, the Québec press was often equally hostile, and one 1867 article in Montréal’s *La Minerve* read, “how cowardly, lowly, and despicable are these Canadians of the United States, wrapped in their nothingness, and with ridiculous self-conceit equalled only by their insignificance.”¹⁷

Jeanne la fileuse is a direct challenge to this standard anti-emigrant rhetoric of the 1860s and 1870s. According to francophone literary scholar David Hayne, Beaugrand was “the only novelist [who] dared to defend the emigrants.”¹⁸ Beaugrand makes quite clear his intentions in writing *Jeanne la fileuse* when he states in the introduction to the first edition that he has “only one goal in publishing it: to re-establish the truth, while defending the honour and good name of my compatriot emigrants.”¹⁹ The plot of Beaugrand’s book reflects his sympathy for emigrants as he recounts the common economic and demographic pressures that daily threatened the livelihood of Québec’s *habitant* farmers. For instance, Beaugrand depicts his model emigrant

¹⁵ Yves Roby, *Les Franco-Américains de la Nouvelle-Angleterre : Rêves et réalités* (Sillery, QC: Septentrion, 2000), 40-47.

¹⁶ Barry Rodrigue, “Francophones, pas toujours, mais toujours Franco-Américains,” in *Franco-Amérique* eds. Dean Louder and Éric Waddell (Sillery, QC: Septentrion, 2008), 123.

¹⁷ *La Minerve*, 14 May 1867, cited in Ralph Vicero, “Immigration of French Canadians to New England, 1840-1900: A Geographical Analysis,” (PhD dissertation, University of Wisconsin, Madison, WI, 1968), 230.

¹⁸ David M. Hayne, “Émigration et colonisation : Thèmes jumeaux de la littérature canadienne-française du XIXe siècle,” in *Textes de l’Éxode : Recueil de textes sur l’émigration des Québécois aux États-Unis (XIXe et XXe siècles)* ed. Maurice Poteet (Montréal: Guérin Littérature, 1987), 355, 357. Meanwhile, standard French Canadian literature of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century argued strongly against emigration. Nearly all influential novels in this period from Antoine Gérin-Lajoie’s *Jean Rivard* (1862 and 1864) to Louis Hémon’s *Maria Chapedelaine* (1914) discouraged abandoning *la patrie* while promoting colonisation. According to Hayne, “Après la publication de *Jean Rivard* le modèle ne variait plus : l’émigration était financièrement hasardeuse, représentait une menace pour la religion et la moralité, était antipatriotique et antinationale.” For this reason, Beaugrand was “le seul romancier [qui] osa défendre les émigrants” (355).

¹⁹ Beaugrand, *Jeanne la fileuse*, 1. Beaugrand writes that he has, “qu’un but en le publiant : celui de rétablir la vérité, tout en défendant l’honneur et le bon nom de mes compatriotes émigrés.”

family, the Dupuis, not as traitors to their homeland but as desperate economic migrants. Referring to the Dupuis father as a “brave man” who is reluctant to uproot his family, Beaugrand writes that M. Dupuis comes to realise that, “his large family, which could only cause him expenditure in Canada, would become a source of revenue in the United States.”²⁰ Although they depart for New England, the Dupuis family never ceases to cherish Québec, they send their son to participate in the patriotic 1874 Montréal Saint-Jean-Baptiste celebrations and after amassing sufficient savings, they return to farm in Québec.²¹

Beyond serving as a social commentary in the defence of emigrants, *Jeanne la fileuse* is also a political tract which Beaugrand employs to censure prevailing laissez-faire economic policy. As literary scholar Pierre Sabourin articulates, Beaugrand’s book reads as a criticism of a perceived “apathy among the French Canadian political elite, which, according to Beaugrand, voluntarily maintained the under-development of industry and agriculture” in Québec.²² An opponent of laissez-faire economics, Beaugrand is often blunt in his criticism of government non-interventionism and argues midway through his novel that “the primary causes of French Canadian emigration to the United States can be attributed in large part to the indifference shown by the Canadian government to all that concerns industrial enterprise and the improvement of channels of communication between agricultural districts and commercial centres.”²³

²⁰ Ibid., 117, 124. Beaugrand writes that M. Dupuis came to the conclusion that, “sa famille nombreuse, qui ne lui causait que des dépenses au Canada, deviendrait une source de revenus aux États-Unis.”

²¹ Ibid., 150-161, 184.

²² Pierre Sabourin, “Hypothèses institutionnelles et thèmes : La Minorisation de la littérature de l’exode québécoise vers la Nouvelle-Angleterre,” in *Textes de l’Éxode : Recueil de textes sur l’émigration des Québécois aux États-Unis (XIXe et XXe siècles)* ed. Maurice Poteet (Montréal: Guérin Littérature, 1987), 383. Sabourin writes that Beaugrand criticises a perceived, “apathie de l’élite politique qui, selon lui, maintenait volontairement le sous-développement de l’industrie et de l’agriculture.”

²³ Beaugrand, *Jeanne la fileuse*, 126. Here Beaugrand writes that, “les causes premières de l’émigration franco-canadienne aux États-Unis se trouvaient en grande partie dans l’indifférence du gouvernement canadien pour tout ce qui touche aux entreprises industrielles et à l’amélioration des voies de communication entre les districts agricoles et les centres commerciaux.”

A staunch Liberal, Beaugrand also writes this story in a highly partisan manner and blames Canadian Conservatives for failing to prevent emigration to the United States. It is no coincidence that the author situates his novel in 1872 and can therefore freely criticise the administrations of federal and provincial Conservative governments in Ottawa *and* Québec.²⁴ And Beaugrand does just that, arguing that in the year 1872, everyone “accused the administration” (he does not specify which one) “of culpable negligence and criminal carelessness for all that dealt with the agricultural, industrial and financial prosperity of the country.”²⁵ Beyond such political diatribes, Beaugrand’s plot further underscores his belief that Conservatives were responsible for the expulsion of patriotic French Canadians to New England. For instance, in Beaugrand’s tale, following the failure of Conservatives to rise in revolt against British rule alongside Liberal *Patriotes* in 1837, it is none other than the Conservative M. Montépel’s who betrays the hideout of Jeanne’s *Patriote* father to *les Anglais* and forces him to flee to New England for his life.²⁶ Additionally, as Franco-American literary student Janet Lee Schidler finds, Jeanne herself is also “chased” from Québec. Jeanne is forced out “by poverty of course, but because the government does nothing to keep emigrants in Québec, this same government is equally responsible for the departure of the young girl.”²⁷ Thus, Beaugrand’s story is highly political and serves as a contemporary political treatise for economic interventionism while also serving as a partisan tract for French Canadian Liberals.

²⁴ John Dickinson and Brian Young, *A Short History of Quebec*, 4th ed. (Montréal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2008), 192-193.

²⁵ Beaugrand, *Jeanne la fileuse*, 109. Here Beaugrand writes, “on accusait hautement l’administration de négligence coupable et d’insouciance criminelle pour ce qui touchait à la prospérité agricole, industrielle et financière du pays.”

²⁶ Constance Gosselin Schick, “*Jeanne la fileuse* et le rapatriement des émigrés,” *The French Review* 71, 6 (May, 1998), 1010-1013, Beaugrand, *Jeanne la fileuse*, 66-69.

²⁷ Janet Lee Schidler, “Exode et Littérature Franco-Américaine (1860 – 1930),” (Master’s thesis, McGill University, Montréal, 1983), 43. Schidler writes that, Jeanne is chased out, “par la pauvreté bien sûr, mais comme le gouvernement ne fait rien pour garder les émigrés au Québec, ce même gouvernement est également responsable du départ de la jeune fille.”

Nonetheless, regardless of why Beaugrand would choose to write this story, it remains to be seen why *Jeanne la fileuse* was printed in no fewer than five different Franco-American and French Canadian newspapers between 1877 and 1888.²⁸ After all, during this same period Beaugrand had two editions of *Jeanne la fileuse* published in volume. Presumably Beaugrand wanted to sell copies of his book and reprinting his story in newspapers would seem counterproductive to those efforts. To examine this subject it is necessary to understand patterns of literary publication and distribution in late nineteenth-century French Canada.

While during the nineteenth century the novel was a popular form of literature among both bourgeois and working-class North American francophone readers, books as we know them today – in which stories are printed and sold in their entirety – were very rare. With a very limited audience and high printing costs, French Canadian authors hesitated to print their books *en volume* in the late nineteenth century.²⁹ Jacques Allard finds that among all of Quebec’s francophone publishers “from 1900 to 1910, one never saw more than three novels appear per year (for an average of 1.5).”³⁰ That Beaugrand had the funds to print *Jeanne la fileuse* in Fall River in 1878 (a self-published book) and had enough confidence in his own name recognition to sell his story makes this publication quite unusual.³¹ (His second, 1888 Montréal edition published by *les Éditions de la Patrie* was less unusual as it appeared after Beaugrand had achieved fame and fortune as the owner of the popular daily newspaper *La Patrie* and had served

²⁸ Lemire, “Jeanne la fileuse,” 409.

²⁹ Pascal Brissette, “Chapitre II : Écrire pour la nation 1763-1895,” (Lecture, McGill University, Montréal, 28 September 2010).

³⁰ Jacques Allard, *Le Roman du Québec : Histoire. Perspectives. Lectures.* (Montréal: Éditions Québec Amérique, 2000), 51. Allard finds that, “de 1900 à 1910, on ne voit jamais paraître plus de trois romans par année (pour une moyenne de 1,5).”

³¹ Pascal Brissette, “Chapitre II : Écrire pour la nation 1763-1895,” (28 September 2010).

as mayor of Montréal from 1885 to 1887).³² Yet, if books were rare in Victorian French Canada and Franco-America, novels were not. In most cases however, “it’s newspapers that published these texts.”³³ Novels appeared in instalments of one or two chapters at a time in newspapers as authors and editors sought to attract and to retain readers by enticing them to read their serialised stories.³⁴ In Beaugrand’s career as a newspaper editor and owner, he frequently employed this *roman-feuilleton* [serialised novel] form. As his career brought him from Fall River to Ottawa and then Montréal, each appearance of a new Beaugrand newspaper witnessed the reappearance of *Jeanne la fileuse*: in *La République* (Fall River – 1877-1878), *Le Fédéral* (Ottawa – 1878) and *La Patrie* (Montréal – 1880).³⁵ Thus, Beaugrand’s efforts to expand his story’s reach to new readers *and* his desire to attract daily subscribers for his newspapers explain the persistent reprinting of *Jeanne la fileuse* in francophone newspapers of the 1870s and 1880s.

Meanwhile however, Beaugrand’s two published editions of *Jeanne la fileuse* reflect not only the author’s efforts to sell copies of his book, but his attempts to address two distinct contemporary issues by appealing to two different audiences in each edition. At first glance it would appear that Beaugrand’s two editions were practically identical. In fact, Beaugrand did not change any of his writing in the second edition.³⁶ However, Beaugrand’s two dissimilar introductions demonstrate that he was addressing two different audiences and sought to

³² “Honoré Beaugrand,”

http://www2.ville.montreal.qc.ca/archives/democratie/democratie_fr/expo/maires/beaugrand/index.shtm (accessed 18 October 2010).

³³ François Roche, *Les Francos de la Nouvelle-Angleterre : Anthologie franco-américaine (XIXe et XXe siècle)* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1981), 15. Roche writes that, “c’est la presse qui publiait ces textes.”

³⁴ Maurice Basque and Amélie Groulx, “Minority Francophone Communities” in *History of the Book in Canada Volume II 1840-1918* eds. Yvan Lamonde, Patricia Lockhart Fleming and Fiona A. Black (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), 55.

³⁵ Lemire, “*Jeanne la fileuse*,” 409.

³⁶ The only change in the body of the text in the second edition was that Beaugrand removed selections of well-known French Canadian poems which he had included at the introduction of each chapter of the first edition.

propagate two distinct messages in each edition of *Jeanne la fileuse*.³⁷ In his first introduction Beaugrand makes it clear that his primary audience is the Franco-American/French Canadian emigrant working class in New England. After all, he presents his first edition as “a response” to attacks emanating from “certain political circles” against “the French Canadian populations of the United States.”³⁸ He goes on to write in his first introduction that, “I believed that I had to adopt the popular form of the novel, in order to interest the working-class, which forms, in the United States, virtually the totality of my readers.”³⁹ Quite differently however, to begin his 1888 edition, Beaugrand appeals directly to French Canadian readers by addressing contemporary Québec politics. Beaugrand writes in his opening line of the second edition that “the government of the province of Québec,” which had “promised to take new efforts to stop the march of emigration” has “unfortunately failed.”⁴⁰ Even though the Liberal Party (*Parti national*) of Honoré Mercier was in power in Québec City, Beaugrand believes that it is “his duty...to contribute to keep public opinion aware of the dawning of terrible consequences of laissez-faire politics and of the indifference on the part of those who are charged to promote the progress and advancement of the French race along the banks of the Saint Lawrence.”⁴¹ While the 1878 edition sought to primarily defend Franco-Americans from attacks against their character emanating *from* Québec, the second sought to influence political policy *within* Québec by criticising continued laissez-faire economic policy in 1888. Despite these differences

³⁷ Beaugrand, *Jeanne la fileuse*, 185.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 1. Beaugrand wrote that his book was a “réponse aux calomnies que l’on s’est plu à lancer dans certains cercles politiques, contre les populations franco-canadiennes des États-Unis.”

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 2. Here Beaugrand literally writes that, “J’ai cru devoir adopter la forme populaire du roman, afin d’intéresser la classe ouvrière qui forme, aux États-Unis, la presque totalité de mes lecteurs.”

⁴⁰ Honoré Beaugrand, *Jeanne la fileuse* (1878), ed. Roger Le Moine (Fides: Montreal, 1980), 73. He writes that, “le gouvernement de la province de Québec” which, “a promis de faire de nouveaux efforts pour enrayer la marche de l’émigration” has “malheureusement échoué.”

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 74. Beaugrand believed it to be, “son devoir...de contribuer à tenir l’opinion publique en éveil, sur les désastreuses conséquences d’une politique laisser faire et d’indifférence de la part de ceux qui sont chargés de veiller au progrès et à l’avancement de la race française, sur les bords du Saint-Laurent.”

however, both editions of *Jeanne la fileuse* reflect Beaugrand's efforts to use his novel to address and to influence *contemporary* social and political debate.

Flash forward nearly one hundred years. Despite the several serialised printings and two publications of *Jeanne la fileuse* in the 1870s and 1880s, this story would remain outside the standard corpus of recognised nineteenth-century French Canadian literature (and for that matter, American literature) for most of the twentieth century. And yet, in 1980 two new publications of *Jeanne la fileuse* appeared – one by the small National Materials Development Center for French in Bedford, New Hampshire, the other by the large Montréal publisher Fides. Though both were published in the original French without alteration to the original text, these two publishers printed *Jeanne la fileuse* for different audiences and distinct purposes.

The 1980 publication of *Jeanne la fileuse* by the NMDC of Bedford, New Hampshire emerged owing to the convergence of efforts to promote bilingual education by the American federal government and attempts by Franco-American scholars to recover and to publicise what they viewed as a little-known Franco-American literary past. In the wake of the American Civil Rights movement of the 1960s, the United States federal government began creating and funding programs for bilingual primary and secondary education in public schools. In 1970s New England, bilingual education often meant English and French instruction.⁴² Since bilingual schools required minority language textbooks and instructional material, throughout the seventies National Materials Development Centers emerged across the country where these materials could be printed. In 1975, the NMDC for French opened in Bedford, New Hampshire.⁴³ Meanwhile, in the 1970s, several Franco-American scholars were in the process of trying to republish New England's little-known francophone texts and to recover lost Franco-

⁴² Armand Chartier, *Histoire des Franco-Américains de la Nouvelle-Angleterre, 1775-1990* (Sillery, QC: Septentrion, 1991), 329-331.

⁴³ Rodrigue, "Francophones," 135.

American writings.⁴⁴ Owing to what they viewed as a general neglect of published Franco-American novels and to the fact that so many works of Franco-American literature were printed only once through the medium of (now-defunct) newspapers, scholars such as Normand Dubé lamented that Franco-American literature “remain[ed] ignored by the general public.”⁴⁵ Aiming to address this neglect, upon securing funds from the federal government, between 1975 and 1982 activist scholars such as Dubé and Richard Santerre utilised the NMDC of Bedford to republish many of New England’s past francophone texts. In 1980, the NMDC republished Beaugrand’s *Jeanne la fileuse*.⁴⁶

The efforts of the NMDC editors and publishers to republish works like Beaugrand’s text reflect their efforts to incorporate *Jeanne la fileuse* into a recognisable corpus of *Franco-American* literature. As this edition contains several typographic errors, lacks any editorial introduction and is held together by a fragile cover and binding, the NMDC’s publication of *Jeanne la fileuse* mirrors the limited institutional and economic resources available to the editors.⁴⁷ And while those involved in the reproduction of this NMDC edition offer neither an introduction to their edition nor publicise their names, they clearly sought to define *Jeanne la fileuse* as part of a small, yet definable corpus of Franco-American texts. After all, the back cover of the NMDC edition defines *Jeanne la fileuse* as “the first Franco-American novel.”⁴⁸

Meanwhile, Franco-American literary scholar Richard Santerre included extracts of this story as a central portion of his NMDC-published *Anthologie de la littérature franco-américaine de la*

⁴⁴ Normand Dubé, “The Franco-American Presence: A New England French Literature,” in *Franco-American Literatures of the New World* ed. James P. Gilroy, (Denver: University of Denver, 1982), 74, Chartier, *Histoire des Franco-Américains*, 332-344.

⁴⁵ Dubé, “The Franco-American Presence,” 74.

⁴⁶ Armand Chartier, “La Situation littéraire chez les Franco-Américains,” in *Le Québec et les Franco-Américains de la Nouvelle-Angleterre* ed. Dean Louder (Sainte-Foy, QC: Les Presses de l’Université Laval, 1991), 26, Chartier, *Histoire des Franco-Américains*, 332.

⁴⁷ Beaugrand, *Jeanne la fileuse* (1878) (Bedford, NH: National Materials Development Center for French, 1980).

⁴⁸ Ibid.

Nouvelle-Angleterre.⁴⁹ Thus, with the appearance of this edition of *Jeanne la fileuse*, Beaugrand's tale no longer served as a contemporary social or political commentary; it had become a central part of efforts to recognise and to promote a definable body of texts constituting a Franco-American literature.

Meanwhile, the Montréal edition of the same year published by Fides and prepared by Québécois literary scholar Roger Le Moine reflects this academic's efforts to include *Jeanne la fileuse* into the corpus of *Québec's* national literature and to recognise the story as Québec's first "bourgeois novel." In his forty-four page introduction, Le Moine cites a widespread failure to analyse *Jeanne la fileuse* among Québec's literary scholars from Camille Roy to Laurent Mailhot for creating "a silence more fatal than the worst of condemnations," which has led to the story's absence or occasional minor status in studies of Québec literature.⁵⁰ According to Le Moine however, *Jeanne la fileuse* should be considered part of Québec's literary tradition as the plot is largely situated in Québec depicts the lives of Québec migrants.⁵¹ He maintains that Beaugrand's tale was largely ignored in its own time and in the early twentieth century because it did not reflect the prevailing French Canadian elite opposition towards emigration. But since this (often ecclesiastically-driven) opposition towards emigration no longer remains a defining characteristic of Québec's literature, Le Moine argues that "*Jeanne la fileuse*...can be seen as *our* first bourgeois novel." According to this scholar, unlike popular French Canadian historical or moralistic novels of the nineteenth century that centred upon collective identity and community, Beaugrand's story proposes "an ideal of the accomplishment of the *individual*."⁵² In

⁴⁹ Armand Chartier, "Untitled Review," *The French Review* 55, 2 (December 1981), 309.

⁵⁰ Le Moine, "Introduction," 43, 48. Le Moine writes that the deathblow to *Jeanne la fileuse* came from "une silence plus néfaste que la pire des condamnations" among Québec's literary critics.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 28-37.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 42-43 (emphasis mine). Le Moine argues that "*Jeanne la fileuse*...peut être perçu comme *notre* premier roman bourgeois" because it proposes an "un idéal d'accomplissement de *l'individu*."

Le Moine's view, it is Beaugrand's emphasis on the individual that makes this story so unique and so important for "our" (i.e. Québécois) literature.⁵³

Le Moine can point to much evidence in *Jeanne la fileuse* to support his claims, as this story often reads as a celebration of individualist perseverance and heroism. For instance, Pierre *chooses* to set off to work in the Gatineau woods while Jeanne's brother Jules *chooses* to later settle in New England when Jeanne returns to Canada where he becomes a respectable small business owner of a family grocery store.⁵⁴ And after all, this story is called "Joan the Spinner" (emphasis on the individual worker) even though the title character spends less than one-third of the novel as a New England factory spinster.⁵⁵ Needless to say, this publication reflects a vision of *Jeanne la fileuse* that is distinct from the views held by the editors at the NMDC of Bedford, New Hampshire. While Franco-American scholars sought to establish and to promote *Jeanne la fileuse* as part of a small, yet distinct *Franco-American* literature, Le Moine's edition reflects an attempt to expand the corpus of standard *Québécois* literature to include this bourgeois novel which Le Moine maintains has been unfairly neglected from Québec's literary tradition due to the narrow confines of what used to define Québec's literature.

In the span of one hundred years Beaugrand's novel was transformed from a contemporary tract of social and political commentary to a defining piece of Franco-American literature while also becoming part of an effort to enlarge the boundaries of what constitutes Québécois literature. While Beaugrand's several printings of his story in francophone

⁵³ It is interesting to note that Le Moine does not use the term "*littérature québécoise*." However, neither does he use the term "*littérature canadienne-française*." In fact, Le Moine avoids specifically defining what he means by "notre" *littérature*. Nevertheless, as he refers to nineteenth-century French Canadians (anachronistically) as Québécois and refers to the Patriote Rebellion as the failed "*Révolution de 1837*" I believe it is safe to assume that when he refers to "notre" literature, Le Moine is referring to Québécois literature (7, 17).

⁵⁴ Beaugrand, *Jeanne la fileuse*, (1878) (Bedford, NH: National Materials Development Center for French, 1980) 184.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 126. Jeanne does not reach Fall River, let alone start working in the mill, until page 126 of Beaugrand's 184-page novel.

newspapers testify to the prevalence and the importance of the *roman-feuilleton* form in nineteenth-century French Canadian/Franco-American literature, Beaugrand's two published editions demonstrate that an author can republish a novel with different intentions and audiences in mind. While Beaugrand's first 1878 edition primarily addressed emigrant concerns and appealed to a Franco-American audience, the introduction to Beaugrand's second edition alluded to a politically-attuned French Canadian audience and offers his criticisms of contemporaneous French Canadian economic policies. And yet, one hundred years later, this story had become something entirely different. Beaugrand's story was no longer a contemporary commentary but a literary tract that had become the subject of debate over its classification – whether *Jeanne la fileuse* should be considered part of Franco-American or Québécois literature. (I would propose that perhaps this story should be considered part of French Canadian literature – incorporating works by francophone Canadian writers inside and outside of Québec and New England's Franco-American writers due to the institutional, social and often religious links that tied together the writers of these communities during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.)

As the subject of a source analysis *Jeanne la fileuse* is rich in detail for it demonstrates that Beaugrand's intentions were literary, social and political. The story also underscores that literary material in French Canada and Franco-America was constantly reprinted and republished in several forms. Most importantly however, *Jeanne la fileuse* demonstrates that a work of literature is never republished without consideration for its function. In fact, the intended purposes of a story's republication evolve in conjunction with the time and place in which that story is reproduced and consumed.

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