

Richard W. Lemp

Comic Metamorphosis of the (Anti) Hero in Roch Carrier's WWII Novels

ublished almost thirty years after his first novel set during World War II, Canadian author Roch Carrier's second work using World War II as an element of the story moves from war as alienation and destruction to war as, ironically, a vehicle for eventual self-discovery and wholeness. Carrier's 1968 work, *La Guerre, Yes Sir!*,¹ treats war's intrusion into a Québécois village when one of its native sons returns from the European theater in a pine box. The fallen soldier's homecoming, complete with an honor guard of six English soldiers and their sergeant—none of whom speak French and who are therefore unable to communicate with anyone in the dead Corriveau's village—is heavy in paradox and irony. The event-filled wake in the family home, the growing hostility between Anglophone and Francophone cultures, and the ironic twist of a second casualty at the novel's conclusion all figure into a tale that alternates between a dark hilarity of surrealistic absurdities bumped against each other and a scathing commentary about war's destructive power. None of the individual personae in the story qualify as heroic, not even the honored Corriveau, who was the victim of a land mine while on his way to relieve himself. If there is a heroic character, it must be the village itself, for, in spite of the flawed human beings who compose it, in spite of the vestige of the British Empire that oppresses it, and in spite of the winter suspending it in frozen isolation, the village's collective soul has a resilience that is the novel's only hope.

At the other end of the spectrum, Carrier's 1996 novel, *Petit Homme Tornado*,² usually translated as *The Lament of Charlie Longsong*, incorporates the title character's combat injury during the Normandy invasion—his right arm is amputated—within the framework of a multi-layered quest. On the first level of the narrative, it is the search by a history professor for evidence of Canadian pioneers in the Southwestern United States. On a deeper level, however, it is a textual search within the memoirs of a Québécoise poetess for her story as a nurse

during the war, the affair with one of her patients, the suspenseful cover-up of her unexpected pregnancy, and the secret of her son's true father, a secret she carries to her grave. At its best, however, it is Charlie Longsong's quest for spiritual wholeness, a quest eventually fulfilled by the son whom he had fathered during his convalescence, the son who is himself ultimately the messenger of the truth.

If there is a quest in *La Guerre, Yes Sir!*, it is more a journey away from the heroic rather than an engagement in it. The opening scene of the novel witnesses the spiritual (and shortly thereafter, physical) agony of the villager Joseph as he decides which of his two hands to chop off in order to make himself unfit for military service, swearing that "they won't make jam out of me" as they did with Corriveau (10).³ Later confused with the frozen *crottin de cheval* (the horse dropping) that the village boys substitute for the lost puck in their hockey game, Joseph's severed hand changes from painful loss to maligned object as his wife attempts to retrieve it in between plays. She does eventually secure the lost hand, but it is a gruesomely pyrrhic victory.

Joseph's hand is the first event in what Margot Northey has called "the sportive grotesque" in Carrier's fiction.⁴ Joseph's self-mutilation typifies the cost of war on the physical level and prepares us for those in the work who become spiritually maimed as well. As Joseph literally cuts himself off from the war, the war has, in many respects, already vivisectioned the life of the villagers. Amélie hides two men in her attic: her deserter husband Henri and her draft-dodger lover Arthur. Their ménage à trois has an outward air of civility, but it has underlying casualties, not the least of which is conjugal integrity and the identity of the children that such an arrangement produces. When Henri discovers that the newest set of twins Amélie has borne are not his, she tries to clear up the mystery: "J'ai des jumeaux; deux couples de jumeaux. C'est simple: je les ai transbahutés (elle se frappait le ventre) et puis, ils sont sortis." ["I have twins; two pairs of twins. It's quite simple: I lugged them about with me (slapping her stomach) and they came out."] "Ce qui m'intéresse" ["What interests me"], Henri replies, "est de savoir comment ils sont entrés." ["is to find out how they got in"] (16).

Sexuality and warfare are inseparable in Carrier's novel. Although Amélie's already large family has now increased even more thanks to Arthur's contribution, her childbearing seems remote from the era of the *défricheurs* (the pioneers who carved out farmland from dense forests), when large families were a hedge against the settlers' natural enemies: the land itself, the harsh climate, accidents, and disease. Amélie is in control of her sexuality, not the men whom she hides and whom she effectively summons to her bed. Henri and Arthur, we discover, are not only cowards, they are poor lovers as well (there is at least one direct reference to an episode of Arthur's impotence). Amélie is sexual drive personified, but, more

than that, she is a force of life. As David Bond has suggested, the forces of life and death in Carrier's fiction are closely related to the setting and season of this particular novel—the action takes place during the winter and most of it takes place at night.⁵ Amélie and her two men characterize one response to the war; Bérubé and his new bride, Molly, an English prostitute whom he had met and married while on duty in Newfoundland, represent another.

Bérubé, a Québécois soldier who comes to the village on the same train carrying Corriveau's body, is the quintessential anti-hero of the work. Where Corriveau at least dies in a combat zone overseas, Bérubé never leaves Canada, works as a latrine orderly, and marries the first prostitute whose bed he shares for fear that he will go to Hell if he doesn't. In a peculiar bit of poetic justice, he brutally trains the village butcher and gravedigger, Arsène, in a mock manual of arms during the visit, the same Arsène who regularly beats his son Philibert. After Bérubé and Molly finally accept Mother Corriveau's repeated invitations to stay in her son's old room, they make love just as the wake begins. Juxtaposed against Corriveau's coffin below, their coitus is an attack on death itself: "C'est la mort qu'ils poignardèrent violemment" [It is death that they violently stabbed with dagger thrusts] (70).

Corriveau's wake is the novel's centerpiece and the stage on which the most unexpectedly violent events of the work take place. But in spite of his being the center of attention, Corriveau the person has little presence except the memory of his adolescent habits. When the train bearing his coffin arrives at the village station, the stationmaster is confused by the bill of lading listing a "Corriveau" as one of the items. "Qu'est-ce qu'un Corriveau?" ["What's a Corriveau?"], he asks impatiently, stunned to find out that "Corriveau is a coffin." (27). The stationmaster, mired in his own frustration, mutters that "you always have problems with the dead. I would rather transport ten living beings than one dead one" (27). When the English honor guard brings Corriveau's body into the family home, they encounter no small difficulty in negotiating the narrow doorway, awkwardly angling the burden to clear its passage, and searching for a place to set it down. They ultimately follow Mother Corriveau's request to "put him at his usual place at the table, so he will feel less disoriented" (45). Disgruntled at what she perceives to be a superfluous coverlet on the coffin, Mother Corriveau demands that the English soldiers remove it so that her son "won't get too warm" (46). Deeply offended that she should treat the Union Jack with contempt, the soldiers buckle at the insult, but their sergeant pretends not to hear the comment and simply orders the soldiers to fold the flag. Unaware that it is "her flag," we learn that she would not have uttered such a remark had she known and would have "kissed the flag, just as, every night she used to kiss the relics of the tunic of

Jesus Christ when she was twenty-three" (46). But the villagers and the soldiers never come to an understanding. The traditional wake, heavy in hard cider and greasy pork pies, disintegrates into a riot between the English and the Québécois, and, ultimately, results in the death of one of the English soldiers. The deserter Henri, slipping away from his hiding place just long enough to stumble into the fracas, accidentally fires the fatal shot.

Before his untimely encounter with the English, Henri has a terrible nightmare in which he imagines Corriveau's coffin as a monstrous gulf swallowing up the whole community. But it is because of his second nightmare that Henri flees from his sanctuary, imagining that Corriveau's coffin has transformed itself again, this time into a ravenous dog chasing him through the night. More pitiful, however, is Bérubé. Having been awakened by the riot, he comes down the stairs to join in. But at the sergeant's "Atten-tion!," he freezes. When the cry "Let's kill 'em" breaks the temporary silence, Bérubé attacks not the English, but his fellow Québécois: "Le soldat sans grade obéit comme il savait le faire. Il frappait les villageois comme si sa vie avait été en danger. Il devait frapper plus fort que les gens du village et plus fort que les Anglais s'il voulait que quelqu'un le respectât." ["The buck private obeyed as he knew how. He struck the villagers as if his life had been in danger. He had to hit harder than the people of the village and harder than the English if he wanted anyone to respect him"] (108). When the English soldiers pray for their dead comrade while the Québécois pray for Corriveau, Bérubé is pathetically caught between the two: he doesn't know whether to pray in French with the villagers or to pray in English with his fellow soldiers. Unable to do either, he leaves in silence.

The novel closes with the twin interments, one for Corriveau and one for the English soldier. Speaking in a chastising voice rather than a comforting one, the village priest offers his cold, antithetical admonition to his parishioners: "nous vivons pour mourir et nous mourrons pour vivre." ["we live to die and we shall die to live"] (115). But the ending does not bring closure: it is a fade-out rather than a conclusion, as each of the characters blends into the snow during the cortège. Molly, still wearing her wedding gown, is the first to disappear. *La Guerre, Yes Sir!* begins in the snow, ends in the snow, and has a morbid Rabelaisian feast in between. *Petit Homme Tornade*, on the other hand, begins with a lost historian and ends with a hero's vision.

Open wounds are the rule in *La Guerre, Yes Sir!*, from Joseph's self-inflicted maiming in the beginning to the unresolved shooting at the end. In *Petit Homme Tornade*, healing and restoration are the order instead. When historian Robert Martin begins his search for French Canadian pioneers who may have migrated deep into the American Southwest, it is in part for his own therapy, as he is in the

middle of a bitter divorce from his “trop jolie coiffeuse”—his hairdresser wife—who has never understood history, nor scholarship, nor Martin himself. Martin’s chance meeting with Charlie Longsong at a remote Arizona gas station sets off a series of flashbacks embracing Charlie’s defense of his land against the whites, his wartime service, his having been maimed during the Normandy invasion, his recovery from the initial trauma, and, most of all, his brief, but passionate affair with Blanche Larivière, the Québécoise nurse who had taken care of him. The open wound in Charlie’s life is not only his longstanding guilt over having accidentally shot his father during the whites’ raid, but that he does not have a son himself, lamenting that “un vieil homme sans fils est un enfant sans père” [“an old man without a son is a child without a father”] (*PHT* 93).

One of the greatest differences between the two works is Carrier’s shift of emphasis from weakness to strength. In *La Guerre, Yes Sir!*, few characters show any courage or conviction. Joseph is desperate, Henri and Arthur are cowards, Arsène is abusive, Bérubé is a bully made powerless by his superstition and insecurity, and the whole village is under the thumb of both the State and the Church. Only Amélie and the stern village curate wield any real authority and their use of it is far from edifying. In *Petit Homme Tornade*, metaphors of strength abound, beginning with the very title, and from one novel to the next, we move from isolation to expansion and from ethnocentricity to racial and cultural diversity.

Robert Martin is the least likely candidate to be the catalyst for Charlie Longsong’s transformation from underappreciated Native American veteran to rediscovered warrior. Following his first meeting with Charlie, Martin is described in these less than flattering terms:

Robert Martin n’était pas aventurier. Il était mesquin, peureux, égoïste. Il est tout ce que lui reproche sa femme. En plus, il est aussi raciste que n’importe qui. Voilà pourquoi il a refusé de laisser monter Charlie Longsong dans sa voiture. Il n’était pas intéressé par l’histoire de cet Indien. La rue Gît-le-cœur n’a pas besoin d’un Indien de l’Arizona. La rue Gît-le-cœur à Paris est le territoire de Robert Martin. Quand il était libre et jeune, Robert Martin a été heureux sur cette rue. Il était irrité de voir cet Indien envahir son territoire.

[Robert Martin was not an adventurer. He was narrow-minded, paranoid, and egotistical. He was everything for which his wife reproached him. Even more, he was as much of a racist as anybody. That’s why he refused to let Charlie Longsong get

into his car. He wasn't interested in this Indian's story. Rue Gît-le-coeur doesn't need an Indian from Arizona. Rue Gît-le coeur is the territory of Robert Martin. When he was young and free, Robert Martin was happy on this street. He was irritated to see this Indian invade his territory.] (PHT 55)

If the chance meeting at the gas station provides the inciting element for Charlie Longsong's memories, it is Charlie's mention of "33 Grande Allée, Québec, Canada—Blanche's home—and "Rue Gît-le-coeur"—the location of Blanche's wartime apartment in Paris—that serves as the vortex for all the stories that come together in the work. Having seen the Quebec plates on Martin's car, Charlie repeats the names of the streets as if he were in a trance, taken back over time and geography to his rendez-vous with Blanche. As Gilles Dorion mentions in his 1999 article addressing the confluence of myths and cultures in *Petit Homme Tornade*, the physical union of Blanche and Charlie is an act of love and passion that symbolically follows the war.⁶ In *La Guerre, Yes Sir!*, the old world is the source of death and sorrow; in *Petit Homme Tornade*, it is an esthetically distant crossroads that engenders a new relationship between White and Native American. That Charlie should not only be nursed back to health by a Bohana—a White—but also be in love with her, as she is with him, is a powerful irony. That Martin's initial racism and narrow-mindedness should give way to sympathetically taking up Charlie's cause is even more surprising.

Driven by his lust for fame, Martin has followed the trail (literally and figuratively) of the mysterious Joseph Dubois from Quebec to Arizona only to hear the unexpected revelation from Charlie Longsong. Returning to Quebec, Martin carries the missing piece of the puzzle, although he is unaware of its significance until he sets to work in the library where, again by chance, he stumbles onto the personal papers of Blanche Larivière, where he discovers her confession of having made love to Charlie Longsong in her apartment on Rue Gît-le-coeur shortly after the liberation of Paris. Able to disguise her pregnancy by Charlie by hastily marrying her childhood friend, the affable but lackluster Jean Goupil, the ruse appears to work, although at their son Jean-René's birth, his grandfather judges his features to be Native American, not Québécois: "Ses yeux, son nez, sa peau, on dirait un petit Indien!" [His eyes, his nose, his skin, you would say a little Indian!"] (PHT 175).

Martin's eventual meeting with Jean-René is poignant. Having grown up in a well-to-do family, having continued the family tradition of practicing law, and now being a grandfather himself, Jean-René finds it difficult to believe that his true father is an eccentric old man living in a hogan. But the kinship has confirmation

on several levels. Openly rebelling against his upbringing, Jean-René had fled the family home for a motorcycle escape into the United States during whose course he was the victim of a serious accident that cost him his right arm. Like his real father, who, old and one-armed, is exceptionally strong, Jean-René commands an unexpected presence: “Quand Robert Martin entre enfin en contact avec lui après des mois d’enquête, il est étonné de rencontrer un géant, un grand gaillard de cinquante ans aux épaules larges qui ne ressemble guère à un notaire” [“When Robert Martin finally had contact with him after months of inquiry, he was surprised to encounter a giant, a tall, fifty-year-old lad with broad shoulders who scarcely looked like a lawyer”] (*PHT* 198). There are other signs: “La peau de cet homme n’a pas la couleur blême des papiers dans un bureau de notaire. Elle est cuivrée. Ses cheveux sont noirs, sans aucun fil argenté. Son nez, ses yeux sont comme ceux d’un Indien, évalue-t-il.” [“This man’s skin does not have the pale color of papers in a lawyer’s office. It is bronzed. He has black hair, without even a hint of gray. His nose, his eyes are those of an Indian, he judged”] (*PHT* 199).

The most revealing passage, however, is the flashback of Jean-René’s escape from Quebec as he travels to Arizona to meet Charlie:

Le jour où il a enfourché sa motocyclette pour se lancer à l’aventure, il croyait s’échapper de sa famille, se libérer de ce père qui n’était qu’un notaire trop court, trop timide, trop craintif, ennuyeux avec ses habitudes et ses rituels prévisibles. Sans le savoir, il cherchait son père authentique. Sans le savoir, il obéissait à cette force d’attraction qui le dépose aujourd’hui dans un petit aéroport de l’Arizona. De là, il partira à la recherche de l’Indien qui connaîtra le nom de sa mère. Jean-René Goupil est un peu jaloux de Robert Martin. Ce drôle de petit homme qui ressemble à un bouquin n’aurait pas dû lire avant lui les écrits de sa mère.

[The day he climbed on his motorcycle to launch himself into his adventure, he believed that he was escaping from his family, that he was freeing himself from this father who was nothing more than a lawyer who was too short, too timid, too weak, too fearful, boring in his routine and predictable rituals. Without knowing it, he was looking for his real father. Without knowing it, he was obeying this attractive force that today has set him down in a little Arizona airport. From there, he will leave in search of the Indian who will know the name

of his mother. Jean-René Goupil is a little jealous of Robert Martin. This funny little bookish man should not have read the writings of his mother before he did.] (*PHT* 245)

Robert Martin's revelation to Jean-René really doesn't surprise him, but it does throw his ordered world into temporary mayhem. Jean-René knows that he must go to Arizona, that he must find his father, as Charlie Longsong, without knowing it, yearns to find his son.

But the most deeply hidden story is that of *Petit Homme Tornade*. Only when Charlie comes face to face with his own son—a son who shares his maiming—can he come to terms with his longing for Blanche and with his guilt over his own father's death. Jean-René bears more than his father's image. In many respects, it is as if Jean-René has carried the soul of the warrior until their reunion could at last restore to Charlie Longsong his name of Little Tornado Man. In the scene where Charlie's father appears to him in a vision, the past, present, and future coincide, and the three generations at last stand in the order of things as they should be.

That order reveals the key elements that both connect and distinguish the two novels: Carrier's treatment of ceremony and its role in his narrative technique. In *La Guerre, Yes Sir!*, ceremony takes several sardonic turns, from Joseph's solemn contemplation in the woods about which hand to axe and his ritualistic execution of his well being, to Philibert's blasphemous observation of the gutted pig strung up to drain as the image of "Christ sur le Calvaire" ["Christ on the Cross"], to the events of Corriveau's homecoming, wake and funeral, all of which serve to underscore the anti-heroic values throughout the work. Carrier's satirical indictment of war is especially pungent where he depicts ceremony's form absent of substance. The narrative structure remains essentially linear and, except for the one flashback in which we hear Corriveau's only utterance in the work and the text of his letter to his parents announcing that he has received a decoration, events do not leave the village. In *Petit Homme Tornade*, Carrier weaves his narrative into a composite fabric from the separate stories of each character. More complex in its structure, *Petit Homme Tornade* is also much more encoded. *La Guerre, Yes Sir!* discloses a ceremony that turns quickly into parody; in *Petit Homme Tornade*, it is a hidden ritual whose full meaning comes to us as the pattern in Carrier's interwoven text achieves its completion.

Corriveau's funeral events should be rituals of honor, but the overt clumsiness of the British soldiers (their negotiating Corriveau's coffin through the family door puts them more in the league of piano movers than that of an honor guard) and their rampant cultural insensitivity jeopardize the funeral's dignity from the

start. The wake turns into an outright brawl, a rebellion against contrived form and empty propriety. But the British are not the only characters who reflect this dissonance. If the Crown misses the mark, so does the Church.

When Corriveau's sister Esmalda (who has become a nun) arrives in the village, she remains outside the family home because the rule of her order forbids her to re-enter it. Standing outside in the snow, she utters: "Qu'il est doux de revenir chez les siens" ["how lovely it is to come back to one's own"] (73), a ludicrous comment given where she is when she says it, but a remark that also betrays the emptiness of the tribute that even the Quebecois pay to their own. Instead of lamenting her departed brother, Esmalda uses the occasion for a cold theological speculation couched in antithesis: "Le mort peut être vivant. Le vivant peut être mort" ["The dead may be living. The living may be dead"] (73), a remark that foreshadows the village priest's homily around Corriveau's coffin. More telling however, is the curate's stern admonition to his flock, even to the deceased: "Notre fils Corriveau, après une vie qu'il n'appartient à Dieu de juger, mais Dieu est un juge juste et impitoyable punissant les méchants et récompensant les bons, notre fils Corriveau est mort saintement en faisant la guerre aux Allemands" ["Our son Corriveau, after a life that belongs solely to God to judge, but a God who is a just and pitiless judge punishing the bad and rewarding the good, our son Corriveau died in holiness fighting the Germans"] (116). Seeming to forget about Corriveau, the priest launches into a solemn indictment of the villagers for all their sins—especially those of the flesh—that he, in the holy office of confession, is privileged to hear. He knows his flock well, but his approach to them is less with a shepherd's crook than with a whip of cords.

Only the ritual of family life survives, evident in Mother Corriveau's nostalgia for her son's customary place at the family table when the soldiers bring Corriveau's coffin into his home. But this absurdity bears a discomfiting truth about village family life in general: Amélie's children are confused, Philibert is abused, and most of the women in the village are worn out not only from tending to their husbands, but from having children at exhaustingly regular intervals. They are the target of one of the priest's most condemning utterances: "...et vous, femmes qui refusez les enfants que Dieu voudrait vous donner, femmes qui n'êtes pas heureuses des dix enfants que Dieu vous a confiés et qui refusez d'en avoir d'autres, femmes qui menacez par votre faiblesse l'avenir de notre race catholique sur ce continent, je sais que sans le Christ qui meurt tous les jours sur cet autel lorsque je célèbre la sainte messe, je sais que vous seriez damnées" ["...and you women who refuse the children God would give you, women who are not happy with the ten children that God has given you and who refuse to have any more, women who, by your weakness, threaten the future of our Catholic race on this continent, I know that

without the Christ who dies each day on this altar as I celebrate the Holy Mass, I know that you would be damned”] (117). It is not surprising that the curate’s holy water freezes as it leaves his aspergill.

Where ceremony in *La Guerre, Yes Sir!*, is perfunctory, judgmental, and even engenders hostility, in *Petit Homme Tornade* it proves a powerful medicine for healing. Carrier’s novel bears a message not unlike Leslie Marmon Silko’s *Ceremony*⁷: a Native American veteran returns from World War II in need of healing, in part because he has unanswered questions about his experience in the conflict, but also because he must still resolve issues that precede the war. Both texts are wonderfully constructed puzzles that yield resolution through myth, mystery, and, most importantly, storytelling. As Kenneth Lincoln comments in the “Grandmother Storyteller” chapter of his *Native American Renaissance*: “In *Ceremony*, Silko enters a half-breed’s fractured consciousness to bridge Western transitions between male and female, adult and child, history and myth, dark and light, Indian and White.”⁸ Carrier constructs his work with similarly opposing values: the male and female in Charlie and Blanche, the adult and child in Charlie’s quest for peace with his father’s spirit and the discovery of his own son; the issue of history and myth in Robert Martin’s quest for the farmer Dubois—who remains a myth—and Charlie Longsong’s real history; the dark and light in the trauma of war’s injuries and recovery from them, but even more in Charlie’s long unanswered questions about Blanche’s disappearance and his eventual knowledge of her life; finally, the Indian and White initially in the union of Charlie and Blanche (her name reveals an allegorical White Thought Woman) and later in Jean-René’s realization that he isn’t a Québécois who looks like a Native American—he is a Native American.

The persona of Thought-Woman may well be, as much as the protagonists, the central figure in the novels of both Silko and Carrier. As Lincoln further explains:

Thought-Woman, or grandmother spider, sits and thinks, names, weaves her web of stories, and the world takes shape. Thought-Woman, the matrix, deifies an old integrated regard for ideas, actions, beings, plots, and things. She is the first being, Ts’ its’ tsi’ nako, and her words spin healing webs of rain, as the shroud of darkness unravels from Tayo: “Then he could see the rain. It was spinning out of the thunderclouds like gray spider webs and tangling against the mountains.” (237)

In *Ceremony*, the returning veteran Tayo’s illness is due in large part to his not being able hear and see clearly—in the Philippines, he had believed that when

ordered to kill a Japanese soldier, he saw the face of his Uncle Josiah, hence his guilt in believing that he has caused Josiah's death, much as Charlie could not see in the darkness during the white's raid and fires without a clear target—believing that he has caused his father's death. More than that, however, Tayo is out of touch with his land and his ancestry because his mother is responsible for Tayo's alienation by her liaison with another race. "This bastard Laguna breed," Lincoln concludes, "goes painfully in need of 'a good ceremony' to unwind the twisted genetic, cultural, and historic confusions warring among estranged peoples" (237).

Charlie Longsong's alienation is second only to his reputation in the desert hamlet as an eccentric—if not outrightly crazy—old man. No one understands that the twisted story he tells of "Rue Gît le Coeur" is the thread that will eventually unite him with his son. The Arizonans do not understand him at all and, on their first meeting, Robert Martin cannot read the code either. For Tayo and for Charlie, there is a feminine voice that does tell each story clearly. In *Ceremony*, after the Laguna medicine man Ku'oosh is unsuccessful in the Scalp Ceremony, Tayo makes his way to Betonie, the Navajo medicine man, who, like Tayo, is of mixed blood. In a kind of free association of ideas, Betonie breaks down the longstanding barriers that have kept Tayo from himself. Betonie serves to guide Tayo to the mountain and to Ts'eh, the Thought-Woman and soul mate who restores him to wholeness. With far less nobility, Robert Martin breaks down his own barriers—notably his racism and his selfishness—to connect Charlie Longsong with his healing, too.

Landscape works as an extended metaphor — with greater complexity in *Ceremony* — but its elements are clearly present in *Petit Homme Tornade* as well. Neither wounded veteran will come to full healing until the issue of land and its rightful ownership is settled. But land alone is not the curative agent; it instead furnishes the bed on which the cure will take place. For Per Seyersted, topographical features are key elements in Tayo's recovery because they are so closely related to Ts'eh. The woman and the mountain, Seyersted asserts, both mark steps in Tayo's cure:

The meeting with Ts'eh is meaningful not only because she loves him, but especially because he is able to love her. He who had been kept at a distance by Auntie and who believed that it had to be that way, now experiences a warm, almost wordless closeness which opens him emotionally and makes him realize that he was indeed loved by his mother and his uncle, just as he loves them.⁹

In *Ceremony*, Ts'eh's voice calls Tayo into the physical and spiritual dialogue with her that enables not only his wholeness, but acceptance into his family as well. Able to hear the feminine voice of wisdom, Tayo resists the temptation to join his peers in the alcoholism, brutality, aimlessness, and eventual self-destruction that is the fate of his fellow Laguna vets whose orientation is overwhelmingly masculine. Tayo and Charlie both owe their restoration to women—to Thought-Women, Ts'eh for Tayo (although Night Swan, Uncle Josiah's former mistress prepares him for the completeness he achieves with Ts'eh) and Blanche Larivière for Charlie. Blanche is woman-bearing-child, but she is also goddess-bearing-thought. Charlie has always heard Blanche's voice, and his passion to tell his story stretches from the beginning of the novel to its last line, but he is able to join his family because others have enabled his son to hear her story, too.

"La guerre avait sali la neige" ["War had sullied the snow"] (124) is the somber conclusion of *La Guerre, Yes Sir!*, a metaphor of war's morbidity and corruption. Carrier ends *Petit Homme Tornade* on a much more optimistic note: brought back to Quebec City by his son, Charlie Longsong—after some warmly humorous adjustments to urban life—settles into his new home with Jean-René and his family. Having let go of his guilt and the land that was the source of it, Charlie regains the name his father had given him so long ago and takes his place as a patriarch in a city he had always believed unattainable, near the address he had chanted for over fifty years. Surrounded by his grandchildren and his great-grandchildren, the old man slowly, but confidently, responds to his son's request to "tell us a story": "Il y avait, dans le désert de l'Arizona, un garçon qui s'appelait Petit Homme Tornade" ["There once was, in the Arizona desert, a boy called Little Tornado Man"] (*PHT* 284). *La Guerre, Yes Sir!* leaves us with an image of war in its alienation and pain, against which only the stubborn will of humanity can prevail. In *Petit Homme Tornade*, love, memory, and the power of storytelling unite to bring peace, identity, and the resurrection of a hero.

Notes

1. Roch Carrier, *La Guerre, Yes Sir!*, (Montréal: Éditions du jour, 1968).
2. Roch Carrier, *Petit Homme Tornade*, (Montréal: Éditions Stanké, 1996).
3. All translations from French text are my own.
4. Margot Northey, "Sportive Grotesque." *Canadian Literature* 70 (1976): 14-22.
5. David J. Bond, "The Forces of Life and Death in Roch Carrier's Fiction," *Studies in Canadian Literature* 7 (1) Fall 1982: 59-76.
6. Gilles Dorion, "*Petit Homme Tornade* de Roch Carrier: le métissage des mythes et des cultures," *Voix et Images*, vol. XXV, No. 1 (73), automne 1999: 176-189.

7. Leslie Marmon Silko, *Ceremony*, (New York: Penguin Books, 1986). Originally published: New York: The Viking Press, 1977.
8. Kenneth Lincoln, *Native American Renaissance*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), 236-237.
9. Per Seyersted, "Leslie Marmon Silko," *Contemporary Literary Criticism* 74: 318-321.

RICHARD W. LEMP is Professor of English at the United States Air Force Academy and has a special interest in the literature of Quebec in general and of Roch Carrier's work in particular.