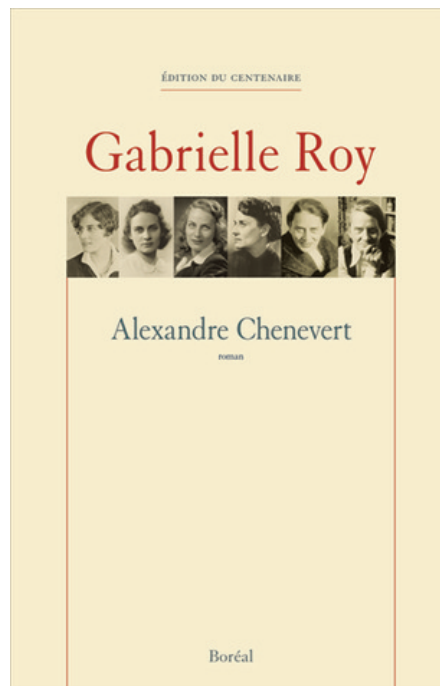




Alexandre Chenevert

Gabrielle Roy

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Dans le Montréal de l'immédiat après-guerre, un petit homme au nom pompeux, qui exerce le métier de caissier dans une banque, porte sur ses épaules le sort de l'humanité entière.

Alexandre Chenevert Details

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Geneviève says

"[...] le bonheur semblait encore la façon la moins coûteuse de guérir."

"Si je n'ai rien à gagner, je n'ai rien à perdre..."

Eric Adriaans says

I loved this book when I read it for the first time in a first-year Canadian literature class at Carleton University. I loved the detailed exploration of the intellectual and emotional background of a quiet and unassuming man. It made me want to delve into all of the other Gabrielle Roy novels...and I eventually made a significant dent in Roy's total portfolio.

Kalen says

I used this book for a comparative essay in Grade 12 and I hated it. It went nowhere at all and the middle part of the book seemed pointless. There was also very little about the man's job as a cashier and the whole book was one big complaint. Don't read it if you don't have to.

Tom Gray says

The title of the English translation of this novel is "The Cashier" while the title of the French original is "Alexandre Chenevert". Each of these titles has implications that can be justified within the novel but I prefer the original French title. Alexandre Chenevert is the protagonist of this novel. His job is that of a bank teller and hence the cashier of the title. As Chenevert's physician, Dr. Hudon, observes Chenevert is legion. He is the ordinary man of Montreal who goes to work in the morning by the thousands and worries about his job, his marriage, his finances... Chenevert is someone who cannot find joy in life. He is beset by his worries. His instinct is to protect and support those around him. He finds that he cannot influence them as he tries to direct them for the good. He worries about the suffering in the world. He obsesses over global poverty, famines in China etc.. His inability to effect good in the world produces a deep hatred for himself that denies himself any relief. Dr. Hudon urges Chenevert to relax and enjoy life but Chenevert cannot do this.

Chenevert's affliction is not that of his own but affects almost everybody in society. Dr. Hudon despairs because he sees so many like Chenevert and does not have the capacity to cure them all. Father Marchand supports Chenevert in his final illness, but he despairs because he cannot truly understand the suffering of those he is supposed to comfort. The book is "The Cashier" because Chenevert is legion. However, it is "Alexandre Chenevert" because with his final illness, Chenevert finds that the people in his life recognized his concern and love for them. They came to support him in the time before his death. In the last days of this life, Chenevert was able to give up his hopeless task of ending suffering in the world and accept what was around him. He was able to overcome his self-hatred and accept himself. He was able to see himself as

others saw him – as worthy.

The theme of the novel that I see is just that. That is to accept that there is suffering in the world and attempt to alleviate it. However, do not lapse into despair. Accept that that you are worthy and deserve happiness. This alone will end much of the suffering that people see around them.

Czarny Pies says

Alexandre Chenevert raconte la vie d'un petit employé de banque qui est mal aimé et malheureux. Il finit par mourir bien avant son temps d'un cancer.

Pour moi, Alexandre Chenevert est le Québécois type de l'époque avant la révolution tranquille. Il est condamné à passer sa vie dans un emploi au-dessous de ses talents. Il lit les journaux avec acharnement et il est attristé par les malheurs qu'il voit partout au monde. Cependant il constate qu'il ne peut y rien faire.

Enfin, Alexandre Chenevert est le Québécois qui veut être chez lui non par égoïsme mais pour mieux contribuer à la vie. Hélas, ce sera pour une autre génération.

Sur son lit de mort, il découvre la bonté de l'humanité.

Alexandre Chenevert est souvent décrit comme étant un petit mélodrame sur un type sans intérêt. Je l'ai trouvé plutôt touchant possiblement parce que j'avais rencontré tant de personnes comme lui dans la vie. Alexandre Chenevert vaut la peine d'être lu. Il n'y a pas de roman qui représente mieux le *Zeitgeist* du Québec des années avant la révolution tranquille.

Cheryl says

This is a glimpse into mid-century working class Montreal, before universal public health care, during a time when workers had few rights, and the social services network was not yet fully developed. Against this perilous background, the prudent man will carefully and meticulously count his pennies, wasting none, begrudging those that must be parted with.

The Church, which in Quebec was almost always the Roman Catholic Church, exerted enormous influence and control, especially over the poor and working class. There was an ever-present need to conform to society's expectations of a proper marriage, to be an obedient and slavish worker, and to lead a righteous and proper life.

This is against human nature. So much of human nature must be stifled and repressed. But this happens with widely varying degrees of success. Monsieur Chenevert, a lowly bank teller, just wanted to do right, to be a righteous person, but he is a pinched, crabbed, irritable little man. Life didn't balance out on the books the way he thought it should. He is exasperating to everyone around him, and even to himself. And yet as Gabrielle Roy fleshes out his complexities, the reader becomes sympathetic to this man who has struggled so long with the only chance at life he gets.

One of the favourite characters of CanLit, the Great Canadian Outdoors, makes an appearance to justify its role as a restorative.

Roy's writing provides graceful and profound insights into the human condition, frequently leavened with flashes of humour.

Poor Monsieur Chenevert.

Kevin Frégeau-Strasbourg says

Troisième roman de Gabrielle Roy à avoir été publié, Alexandre Chenevert dépeint le récit d'un homme pour qui la vie n'a pas de sens et qui y cherche un sens. Aussi, il cherchera à trouver à ce qui le distingue de la masse. Voilà le principal enjeux que l'auteur cherchait à dépeindre dans le Québec du beau milieu des années 50.

Ayant été reçu plutôt froidement par le public et par la critique de l'époque, Roy cherche à questionner sur l'existence de l'humain et son but. Malgré le contingent de l'époque, l'auteure réussit à relever ce défi des plus difficiles.

Ibis3 says

[pleased to see the final deathbed scene arrive at last (hide spoiler)]

Ive says

Je suis déchirée sur la note à accorder à ce titre. D'un côté, je suis parfaitement consciente que c'est une oeuvre littéraire bien rédigée avec beaucoup de trouvailles et dont le message reste actuel et percutant.

D'un autre côté, je n'ai pas aimé le lire. C'était long, répétitif et souvent sans véritable moteur narratif (pas pour rien que ça m'a pris autant de temps à poursuivre ma lecture). Je suis parfaitement consciente que c'est là un effet de style qui renforce le propos sur l'aliénation du personnage principal. Cependant, je reste sur l'impression que la prose habituellement si riche de Roy se trouve ici diluée. L'idée du livre ayant tué la magie et la connivence que je trouve habituellement quand je lis un livre de cette auteure. Encore une fois, c'est une complément au propos, d'où mon déchirement.

J'accorde donc une note médiane et je continue d'y penser.
