DESCRIPTION

How did a small French missionary colony become a major pivot of the North American economy and the leading industrial and financial metropolis of Canada in the nineteenth century, dominated by a Victorian bourgeoisie, only to see its role retrenched, by the later twentieth century, to one of a contested metropolis of the French-speaking province of Québec? How does the city today reconcile the many facets of its identity: as French window on North America, but also as a bilingual, and increasingly multicultural, metropolis? How has a city seemingly allergic to urban planning managed to sustain, even revitalize, an animated and liveable urban core? How can its economy exhibit an excellent performance in terms of conversion to high technology and knowledge-based industries, yet suffer from persistent high unemployment? How can a city with such an extreme climate and long cold winter, and that remains significantly divided between two cultural and linguistic majorities, be so frequently ranked one of the world's most liveable cities?

The list of paradoxes characterizing Montréal is a long one. The portrait that Annick Germain and Damaris Rose strive to paint of the intriguing city, caught in the maïstrom of political debate that permeates most of its urban issues, is both wide-ranging and fine-grained. At the heart of this debate lies the "National Question", addressing Québec's place vis-à-vis the Canadian federation. Building on a vast array of recent research, the authors, themselves forming a team that reflects the bilingual, bicultural character of Montréal, explore the twists and turns of Montréal's perennial quest for an identity and a mission worthy of a metropolis.
ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Annick Germain and Damaris Rose, both of University of Québec, Canada.

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