

Free the heretic poems essay example

[Countries](#), [Canada](#)



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The life history of Louis riel is clearly brought forward by Gregory Scofield. In his book, “ Louis: the heretic poems”, he uses various literary devices to present his ideas about Riel and others. The poems bring out the struggles in an unequal society. Inequality and discrimination is shown to bring unwarranted suffering to the victims yet it can be avoided by reaching amicable solutions. The life and struggles in Riel’s life has many similarities with the life today in Canada. There are still inter racial strives that threaten the unity of the nation. Furthermore, various activist groups are championing human rights and preservation of the environment. These groups face a lot of opposition but many are still determined to ensure that their goals are achieved. These works by Scofield (2011) is able to capture the important historical details about Riel's life. From these details, we are able to relate his life and the history of Canada to the modern world. It provides an avenue to better the Canadian society by following on the footsteps of one of their most celebrated citizens (3).

How the poems create a link between the past and the present.

In his poems, Riel is portrayed as messianic. However, the representations of Scofield enable us to view Riel from another angle. The poems are divided into four interrelated parts. In the first part, *Le Garçon*, Riel's early life is covered and it helps to show the roots that made him take the life choices he made. The second part known as *Le président* covers his life during a rebellion and his subsequent exile to preserve his life. The third part, *Le Porte-Parole*, is more engrossed with the rebellion that had developed in the northeastern part of Canada. It tries to bring out the relationship between the events and his overall actions. The final part talks about his last moments. In all these chapters, various linguistic styles are employed and aid in bringing out figuratively the historical context of the events to the present.

Le garçon

This part has a peculiar resemblance to the messianic texts in the Bible. It begins with Riel's grandmother reciting the ancestral in the family tree. This as mentioned above, is similar to the counting of Christ's ancestors in the book of Mathew. The grandmother recitation shows that Riel had strong roots and the ancestors had already established his future. It also shows he had a mentor, which has become quite rare in the present world. It therefore pushes the society to uptake traditions that were uplifting but have been pushed over to the side (Pašović 2).

Furthermore, there is a repetition of the words, "open your eyes," in an allusion to the discovering of one's inner self (Scofield 15). This also shows

that Riel may have been so fond of the grandmother and may have gained most of his ideas from her. Currently, the various human rights groups and activists can use this portion of his life to promote humanity ideas. There are many countries in the world especially in the third world that violate these rights and freedoms. This therefore means that the activists should be braver and firmer in championing for these freedoms. This is supported in the subsequent writings; his early life in the United States schools is captured. At one point, Riel is asking for forgiveness and his person is compared to the Wisdom of Solomon. The poems follow a traditional form of narration and storytelling and are therefore able to capture the mind of the reader to the maximum (16).

In the poems, the historical background of the writer is also revealed. He possesses both French-Canadian and American Indian ancestries. In reference to the current world, there are many divisions concerning race, religion, and ethnicity. Looking at Riel's ancestral history and the overall achievements, the modern society should be encouraged to be more accommodating within the different ethnic and racial groups (Scofield, 15). It will gel the populace while at the same time guaranteeing achievement of greater goals by the citizens of this country. His mixed background also helps to show the importance of practicing full democracy and protection of human rights. The advantage is that the nation and the economy can be more robust due to the input of various groups just as Riel's ancestral history is.

He also takes a month's trip to Montréal in the poem. He uses various modes of transport that range from the oxcart, railroad, and the steamboat. This

depicts the various options that the present society can use to achieve equal development for all people in the nation. It also shows the importance of small steps that can be used to gain a bigger goal. Such steps may include legislation, activism and incentives to promote humanity. The section also provides an opportunity to experience his inner self-seeking efforts and their fruits. In this section, Scofield writes:

Me, Louis Schmidt and Daniel McDougall, by steamboat we are three crates of prairie dust, sailing down the Mississippi to Wisconsin, Then by train we go to Chicago. Me, in a velvet seat. Louis Schmidt at the window (p. 18).

Le president

The heading of this section is in French and it means the president. This title given to the poems shows the immense hope and power delegated to Riel in his fight for the Amerindian rights. Here, Riel is depicted as being a very influential leader. We are able to see his struggles with the majority Caucasian government that makes him to reveal a note sent by Sir J. McDonald (Scofield 34). This represents governments that are always crushing the freedoms and rights of their citizens. The note is quite insulting to Riel because it refers to him as a half-breed who must be curtailed in his activities. He however is not cowed but goes on with his activism. The western governments should therefore borrow a leaf from Riel's life and participate in more democracy promoting activities. It should not be aimed only at the receptive societies but also hostile ones like in North Korea and some Middle Eastern countries. He goes on to be a revolutionary as depicted in the poem, the revolutionary (p. 34).

However, he takes this as a challenge and is even more involved in the

revolutionary ideas. He is able to face and challenge MacDonald for the abuses that the local Indian population faces at the hands of the settlers. This ends up making him the champion in agitating for the rights, culture, and survival of the Native Americans against a backdrop of European influx (p. 35). The current situation in Fergusson, Missouri can also be easily solved if all sides sit down to discuss. However should the government give it a deaf ear, it may spiral out in a bigger threat to governance since the locals will be encouraged to agitate even more.

Le Porte-parole

There is more that is brought out in regard to the activism and fight for the natives' rights in this section. This title means spokesperson when translated to English. Here, he is able to agitate more strongly for the rights of the natives at the red river. Scofield uses various linguistic styles to show how Riel loathed the actions of the Caucasian settlers in his homeland. He refers to them as a crate of rotten oranges that will ultimately cause other fruits to rot. All citizens should therefore be ready to defend their constitutionally granted freedoms and guard against violation in regard to fellow citizens. This finally happens when later in the collection of the poems Riel dies at the hands of the protestant settlers. Although it may be tragic, it teaches us in the present to always stand firm with the ideas that we know are right no matter the consequences. The title of this section also shows the amount of power that Riel believed he had and the trust put on him by other community members (Scofield, 42).

In addition, one of the poems shows how Riel changes the wording of the Lord's Prayer to his own wording. Scofield (48) writes,

Give us this day our daily oranges; and forgive them their trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into war but deliver us from theft.

These words, filled with bitterness, help us understand the zeal that Riel had in fighting for the rights of the natives against the settlers. Riel is portrayed as believing in gaining power through peaceful means as opposed to his close ally Dumont. Dumont believes violence is the only way. Scofield also writes about how Riel, McDonald, and the devil are gambling for the Native American land (p. 18). This is a good lesson to modern day democracy movements to always seek it using peaceful means. A good example is the peaceful Quebec secession referendum that failed due to the harmony among the citizens (Pašović, 5).

L'Homme d'État

This is the final section in the collection of the poems. It is a tragic end to his agitation and fight for recognition of the natives. It contains the last events in Riel's life before he is hanged (Scofield, 15). In the poem, titled "the request" Riel fears are brought out even more clearly. He says, "this is my fear; to be put in a box. A poorly chosen box" (64).

Although he may be sure he is going to be killed, he is quite disturbed by the thought of the event. He fears that he will be put in a box that alludes to his ideas being locked away so that many will not experience them. This challenges the present day governments to always consider human life as sacred. The current system of governance in some American states still practice hanging of convicts. This is in complete disregard of the sanctity of human life. It therefore demands that all death penalties are done away with

and even the local citizen should be educated to know the sanctity of the life of his neighbor (Pašović, 6).

Works Cited

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