

# Canadian Content





# Canadian Content

The McGill Undergraduate Journal of Canadian Studies

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# Notes on Contributors

**Drew Childerhose** is a U3 Canadian Studies and Sociology student with a minor in Political Science. His favourite place in Canada is Polly's Cove, Nova Scotia.

**Matthew Chung** is a U2 Honours History student with a minor in Québec Studies. His submission was originally written for Professor Nicholas Dew's Historical Methods seminar this past fall. Hailing from the nation's capital, he likes to think of Montreal as his second hometown. This past year, he served as the Vice-President Communications of the Arts Undergraduate Society.

**Yolanda Clatworthy** is a U3 Honours Political Science student with a Major in Canadian Studies. An avid traveller, Yolanda has lived on five continents and travelled in six, yet the vastness and diverse beauty of Canada always draw her back again. She likes photography, social justice, anything outdoors, jam sessions, and brunches. On her list of "things to do in the near future" is to bike cross-country from Victoria to St. Johns. The Arrogant Worms band sums up her favourite place in Canada pretty well: anywhere with trees and rocks (and preferably a body of water).

**Gabrielle Lemoine** is a U3 English Literature student. Her favourite places in Canada are its coasts: the rocky shores of Nova Scotia and the Gulf Islands of British Columbia.

**Isabel Luce** is a U3 Honours Art History student with a major in Canadian Studies. At school, she is interested in Canadian art and Postcolonial theory, but in her spare time she enjoys painting, sketching, photography and travelling to new places. Next year Isabel will be continuing her studies in Canadian art by pursuing a Master's degree in Art History with a focus on Canada in the 19th century. Montreal has always been Isabel's favourite place in Canada, but she would jump at any opportunity to explore the eastern coast.

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**Taylor Rusnak** is a U3 Joint Honours Political Science and Anthropology student. Born and raised in Winnipeg, Manitoba, she is a proud prairie girl. Taylor prefers the term "lifestyle" as opposed to "hobby" when explaining her love of ultimate (frisbee). She also enjoys snowboarding in the Rockies, water-skiing in the Whiteshell area, and learning in general. Taylor doesn't have a concrete plan for the future... and prefers it that way.

# Foreward

**Will Straw**

## Foreward

In an age supposedly marked by the death of print, one of my great pleasures in the last few years has been to witness the ever-growing number of scholarly journals published by students. Last year's issue of *Canadian Content*, with its fine articles, lively layout and beautiful use of images put most of the "professional" scholarly journals that pile up on my desk to shame. As the new Director of the McGill Institute for the Study of Canada, it is a pleasure and honour for me to write the introduction to this year's issue of *Canadian Content*.

The quality and diversity of the articles in this issue suggest many things for me. In particular, they confirm my sense that those who study Canada are engaged with the most advanced ideas to be found across the social sciences and humanities. (In other words, *Canadian Studies* is not a musty backwater cut off from the main currents of intellectual life.) Isabel Luce's article, "Reclaiming Canadian History: An Examination of Black Women in Canadian WWII Portraiture" expertly reconstructs the complex interplay of institutional policies and aesthetic prejudices in shaping images of black Canadian women in wartime. In his article "What it means to make policy under democracy," Taylor Rusnak carefully works through different definitions of democracy so as to understand what we mean what we ask of policy-making that it be democratic. Gabrielle Lemoine's succinct analysis of Michael Ondaatje's poem "The gate in his head" captures the postmodern dimensions of this work without getting bogged down in the need – typical in an earlier generation of scholarship – to demonstrate the work's essential "Canadianness." All of these articles draw on approaches which are richly conceptual and innovative.

In an analysis from which I learned a great deal, Matthew Chung traces the debate among Quebec intellectuals as to whether Quebec is a "postcolonial" space. Chung shows that political analysts have often answered this question differently from literary scholars, whose definitions of the "postcolonial" are rooted more deeply in questions of language. Drew Childerhose's article, "Birthing in the Arctic" traces a history which merits wider dissemination,



that of the “medicalization” of childbirth in the Canadian North and the widespread practice of uprooting mothers from their communities so that they might give birth elsewhere. (Childerhose concludes with some optimism by describing the rise of locally-based midwifery since the 1980s.) Another shift in public policy, in a very different area, is analyzed in Sarah Mathieu-Comtois’ careful study of Canada’s response to the collapse of the Bretton Woods economic order in the 1970s. This collapse, Mathieu-Comtois’ shows, made monetary policy a key area for the expression of Canadian economic nationalism.

I travelled in canoes in my earliest childhood, but reading Yolanda Clatworthy’s cultural history of the canoe brought home to me how little I know of its complex cultural history. Clatworthy reminds us of the canoe’s central place in the early history of Canadian exploration, but she also takes us through its role within recent beer commercials and notes its occasional status as a sexual symbol (read the article!). Another richly resonant Canadian artifact is the focus of Kristen Pye’s “Treasure Eleven,” whose enigmatic title refers to one of the 90 treasures displayed by the McCord Museum on the occasion of its 90th birthday. “Treasure Eleven” is the hockey sweater worn by Maurice Richard and celebrated in Roch Carrier’s famous short story “Le chandail du hockey.”

Niki Marion’s study of novelist Dennis Lee’s long poem *Civil Elegies* left me with one of the most striking images in this whole issue, that of lifeless citizens wandering zombie-like through Toronto’s Nathan Philips Square. Like the best work in Canadian Studies, Marion captures both the modern character of this image and its links (however perverse) to a Canadian tradition of pastoral landscape imagery reaching back to the days of the Group of Seven.

I congratulate these authors on their smart, engaging contributions to Canadian citizens, and salute the journal’s editors for their expert handling of the whole process.

**Dr. Will Straw** is a professor in the Department of Art History and Communication Studies. He is currently Director at the McGill Institute for the Study of Canada.



# Mapping an Identity

The Re-Appropriation and Evolving  
Role of the Canoe in Canada

**Yolanda Clatworthy**

## Mapping an Identity: The Re-Appropriation and Evolving Role of the Canoe in Canada

When Pierre Burton uttered the now famous words “To be Canadian is to make love in a canoe,”<sup>1</sup> he was by no means the first to associate the canoe with Canadian culture and a burgeoning national identity. Nor was he the last. Canoes and Canadians have been inextricably linked for hundreds of years, from French *coureurs-de-bois* to English paintings by the Group of Seven; ancient Native rituals to modern recreation. The canoe has provided artistic inspiration, a mode of transportation, and even a source of spiritual illumination for thousands of Canadians. This paper will trace the trajectory of the canoe throughout Canadian history in order to determine whether or not the canoe continues to be (as) relevant to Canadian society today as it used to be; whether canoes continue to shape and imbue the Canadian consciousness or have been relegated to the backwaters of national nostalgia. I posit that, while the canoe no longer facilitates the exploration, economic expansion, and physical mapping of Canada, it has been re-appropriated in such a way that it continues to metaphorically map the national psyche through art, music, literature, and other cultural mediums.

The canoe was first used here before Canada was even defined as a country, and indeed even contributed to the formation of Canada. As such, the importance of the canoe cannot be understated. In the words of respected historian William Wood, “What the camel is to desert tribes, what the horse is to the Arab, what the ship is to the colonizing Briton, what all modern means of locomotion are to the civilized world today, that, and more than that, the canoe was to the Indian who lived beside the innumerable waterways of Canada.”<sup>2</sup> In later years, the canoe would come to mean just as much to the settlers as it did to the indigenous populations.

Furthermore, canoes speak volumes of the cultural context and geographic situation of the people who used them. Typically,

1 “Canoe Quotes,” [http://www.canoe.ca/AllAboutCanoes/canoe\\_quotes.html](http://www.canoe.ca/AllAboutCanoes/canoe_quotes.html).

2 Ibid.

Inuit to the North of the Arctic Circle used closed canoes (kayaks), whereas those in the southern reaches of the country used open canoes.<sup>3</sup> Further regional variations could be observed in the shape, size, and construction of the canoe: Northern canoes were usually small, manoeuvrable, and made of seal-skin stretched over driftwood. Canoes constructed in the Canadian Shield were built of birch-bark stitched together, and were usually larger and heavier than those to the North. Biggest of all were the wooden canoes from the west coast, which traded manoeuvrability for stability in the ocean.<sup>4</sup>

European settlers were not long in recognizing the benefits of this ‘perfect machine’ either. Upon arriving in the New World, Samuel de Champlain wrote “in the canoe the savages [sic] can go without restraint, and quickly, everywhere, in the small as well as the large rivers. So that by using canoes as the savages [sic] do, it would be possible to see all there is.”<sup>5</sup> And go they did. In their adopted canoes, the settlers pushed west up the St Lawrence and the Ottawa River, through the great, forbidding Canadian Shield, across the prairies, and, eventually, out into the Pacific Ocean off the coast of British Columbia. Some were explorers driven by a desire to discover virgin lands, such as Alexander McKenzie, Simon Fraser, and David Thompson.<sup>6</sup> Others, such as Governor George Simpson, transformed the canoe into “a weapon of bureaucratic tyranny.”<sup>7</sup> He and other entrepreneurs were motivated by economic reasons, for the canoe was the easiest and most efficient way to transport pelts for the Hudson Bay Company. Still, others, in particular the Jesuits, used the canoe to carry their messages of faith and religious conversion to the “savages” of the interior.<sup>8</sup> Finally, there were those who used to canoe as a means to escape civilization, the Church, and the rule of law, as evident in the following lyrics of a popular *coureurs-*

3 “Canada Central in Canoe and Kayak History,” last modified August 7, 2009, <http://www.cbc.ca/news/story/2008/05/13/f-olympics-canoekayak-history.html>.

4 Ibid.

5 Daniel Francis, *National Dreams: Myth, Mystery, and Canadian History* (Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press, 1997), 130.

6 Ibid., 131.

7 Ibid.

8 Ibid.

*de-bois* song: “We have slipped from the grip of the church/ We have travelled beyond the reach of the king/ We are the children of the wind/ We are masterless men.”<sup>9</sup> It seemed as if everyone benefited from the properties and the possibilities of the canoe.

As a result of this widespread usage and mass appeal, the canoe came to play a large and indispensable role in the exploration and the expansion of Canada. In the words of the writer John Murray Gibbon, the canoe “did most to pave the way for the development of the Dominion of Canada.”<sup>10</sup> The Canadian economy was built upon the fur trade, which provided the impetus for much of the exploration of the interior. Indeed, by the late eighteenth century, Mississippi had been connected to the Northern reaches of Canada by *coureurs-de-bois* trading furs.<sup>11</sup> Furthermore, as Professor Harold Innis writes, “there is a logic to the physical contours of Canada, a logic imposed by the early canoe routes.”<sup>12</sup> For example, the Canada-United States border is not merely an arbitrary line; it is instead a reflection of the way in which canoes followed the East-West flow of the watershed.<sup>13</sup>

Thus, the canoe was indisputably influential in the exploration, creation, and formation of Canada. It allowed for the penetration into unmapped territory, facilitated trade routes and economic expansion, and created the possibility for intercultural dialogue and exchange. As a result of the canoe, the unknown was opened up to all those who wanted to explore, exploit, or otherwise expand their reaches across the vast expanse that is Canada.

And that is not all that was expanded; the canoe continues to expand and influence our collective Canadian consciousness even today. Although it is no longer the primary mode of transportation, nor the quickest way to cross the country, nor even a viable way of transporting goods, it is still influential in that it expands the experiential horizons and cultural imaginations of Canadians: “Canoes were born of the physical landscape and are ingrained in the Cana-

9 James Raffan, *Canexus: The Canoe in Canadian Culture* (Nunavut: Betelgeuse Books, 1988), 12.

10 Francis, 130.

11 “The Canoe, Ontario: Seven Wonders of Canada,” [http://www.cbc.ca/sevenwonders/wonder\\_canoe.html](http://www.cbc.ca/sevenwonders/wonder_canoe.html).

12 Francis, 130.

13 *Ibid.*, 130.

dian cultural landscape.”<sup>14</sup>In other words, it has shifted from literally mapping Canada, to culturally mapping the Canadian identity.

Furthermore, the canoe acts as a symbol around which all Canadians can rally, regardless of their level of patriotism or nationalistic intentions. In a country which, when asked to define its’ identity, famously came up with ‘as Canadian as possible under the circumstances,’ any symbol which transcends ideological and regional boundaries is exceptional. According to folk singer Mike Ford, the canoe is just such a symbol. His lyric “I am Canadian says the beer company/ But is it only as a consumer of geography”<sup>15</sup> shows how Canadians are unified in the vastness and the diversity of their geography—which can be explored in its’ entirety using the canoe. Once again, it is James Raffan who makes this connection explicit, when he writes that: “Canoeing more or less defines who I am. Patched boats in the backyard affirm soul truths. My home, Canada, is not an abstraction; it is kindred canoe spirits and a constellation of sun-alive, star-washed campsites, linked by rivers, lakes, and ornery portages.”<sup>16</sup>

More specifically, the canoe influences Canadians and Canadian culture through its’ proliferation in every type of cultural production in Canada. Examples include, but are not limited to, museum exhibits, literature, paintings, advertising, film, currency, sculpture, architecture, and beyond. Even a national canoe day (June 26) has been declared!<sup>17</sup> Some examples are well-known, such as the Great Hall of the Canadian Museum of Civilization in Ottawa (which is shaped like a canoe), the works of the Group of Seven, or the classic NFB short film *Paddle to the Sea*. Others dwell in relative obscurity. Yet all have slipped into the national stream of consciousness and influenced, in one way or another, the self-perception of Canadians.

A truly great example of the influence that the canoe exudes is seen in the example of Pierre Trudeau, who was an avid and im-

14 Raffan, 1.

15 Mike Ford, “I’m Gonna Roam,” <http://www.mikeford.ca/documents/Canada%20Needs%20You%20Lyrics.pdf>.

16 “Canoe Quotes,” [http://www.canoe.ca/AllAboutCanoes/canoe\\_quotes.html](http://www.canoe.ca/AllAboutCanoes/canoe_quotes.html).

17 “Class Recognizes National Canoe Day of Canada,” [http://www.wawataynews.ca/archive/all/2009/7/9/Class-recognizes-National-Canoe-Day-of-Canada\\_17604](http://www.wawataynews.ca/archive/all/2009/7/9/Class-recognizes-National-Canoe-Day-of-Canada_17604)

passioned canoeist. His love for the canoe was evident in all that he did, from presenting Prince Charles and Princess Diana with one as a wedding gift,<sup>18</sup> to making a failed attempt to canoe to Cuba,<sup>19</sup> to forcing the RCMP to devise new and non-intrusive ways of keeping him (as Prime Minister) safe while he paddled off into the back-country, (including tracking him in a helicopter just out of his site).<sup>20</sup> At the tender age of twenty-four, he wrote one of the most eloquent tributes to canoes to date, detailing the transformative effect which canoeing had on him: “What sets a canoeing expedition apart is that it purifies you more rapidly and inescapably than any other travel. Travel a thousand miles by train and you are a brute; pedal five hundred on a bicycle and you remain basically a bourgeois; paddle a hundred in a canoe and you are already a child of nature.”<sup>21</sup> Indeed, his passion for the canoe was so recognized within Canada that, for many, he came to represent the link between Canada and canoes; Raffan writes that “the image of a paddler in a red canoe [Trudeau] evokes essential Canadian values: ruggedness, independence, technical prowess, balance, freedom, possibility, echoes of English, French, aboriginal heritage, and more than a little nostalgic schmaltz.”<sup>22</sup> Thus, not only did Trudeau help to place the canoe in the national spotlight, but he also made it so that the canoe came to embody “Canadianness” (in whatever form that may take). So strong is the influence of the canoe, that when Leader of the now nonexistent Reform/Alliance party showed up to his first press conference on a jet ski, rather than in a canoe, he widely criticized for not being “Canadian” enough.<sup>23</sup>

But Trudeau is not alone in establishing the link between canoes and identity, for it is a theme that is also deeply embedded in Canadian literature. Historian W.L. Morton wrote, “the alternating penetration of wilderness and return to civilization is basic rhythm

18 Andrew Granatstein, *Trudeau's Shadow: The Life and Legacy of Pierre Elliot Trudeau* (Toronto: Random House, 1988), 66.

19 John English, *Citizen of the World: The Life of Pierre Elliot Trudeau* (Toronto: Vintage Canada, 2007), 253

20 Granatstein, 72.

21 Pierre Trudeau, “Exhaustion and Fulfillment: The Ascetic in a Canoe,” <http://www.canoe.ca/che-mun/102trudeau.html>.

22 Granatstein, 65.

23 Bill Phipps, *Cause for Hope: Humanity at the Crossroads* (Nevada: Copperhouse, 2007), 188-189.



of Canadian life.”<sup>24</sup> Thus, it is possible to view many Canadian narratives based on the cyclical quest narrative of the canoe: leaving civilization for the unknown, facing mental, physical, and elemental challenges, and then overcoming them and returning and readapting to civilization.<sup>25</sup> As a metaphorical voyage, the “canoe carries us out of our European past deep into the wilderness where we are reborn as citizens of the new world.”<sup>26</sup> Opposite examples are also true, such as in the case of Joseph Boyden’s *Three Day Road*, in which two Native boys leave the wilds to venture out into “civilization,” only to return wholly transformed by the horrors of World War I.<sup>27</sup>

Further proof of the way in which the canoe helps map the Canadian psyche, is through the way in which “the canoe has slipped quietly into the stream of the nation’s common parlance.”<sup>28</sup> Many aphorisms have emerged from the canoe, such as “all in the same boat” and “heavy water.” In fact, Raffan even invented a word to describe the connection which canoes facilitate: “canexus.” According to him, “canexus” is a neologism “coined to muster images of the canoe as a connection linking people together.”<sup>29</sup>

And the possibilities for connection are practically unlimited: the canoe can either be “womb-like”<sup>30</sup> or “phallic;”<sup>31</sup> can entrench gender expectations<sup>32</sup> or provide “anti-structure to overturn normal patriarchal structures.”<sup>33</sup> Grey Owl made the connection between spirituality and the canoe, writing that it is “not prayer that stoops Canadians, but long hours kneeling at the paddle.”<sup>34</sup> According to Darcy McGee, the connection can even be made between canoeing and Canada’s position on the international stage: Canadians are caught in the rapids and buffeted by conditions beyond our control

24 Francis, 128-129.

25 William Closson James, *Locations of the Sacred: Essays on Religion, Literature, and Canadian Culture* (Waterloo, Wilfred Laurier UP, 1998), 81.

26 Francis, 129.

27 Joseph Boyden, *Three Day Road* (London: Penguin Canada, 2008).

28 “The Canoe, Ontario: Seven Wonders of Canada,” [http://www.cbc.ca/sevenwonders/wonder\\_canoe.html](http://www.cbc.ca/sevenwonders/wonder_canoe.html).

29 Raffan, 1.

30 Francis, 128.

31 Raffan, 38.

32 Closson James, 92.

33 Raffan, 37.

34 Francis, 143.

(such as international trade rules or American foreign policy) but must go on regardless.<sup>35</sup>

Another link that is made is between the North and a sense of identification with Canada. The canoe is omnipresent in folklore and in tales of “the North,” which can also be construed as a synonym for “wilderness.”<sup>36</sup> Francis writes that, “Canadian artists and writers consistently locate the essence of our identity in the North. Our cities belong to the global, post-industrial world of traffic, computers, and high-rise towers; they are indistinguishable from cities anywhere. Our wilderness, on the other hand, is our own.”<sup>37</sup> And indeed, the examples of Northern folklore are uniquely Canadian. For example, *Coueurs de Bois* of yesteryear used to visit their loved ones through the spectral apparition of the “*Chasse-Gallerie*,” a flying canoe which could traverse the vast distances between them in the North, and their loved ones in the South.<sup>38</sup> And renowned folklore artist Ian Tamblyn is known for the following verse:

Firewood, smoke and oranges, path of old canoe;  
I would course the inland ocean to be back to you;  
No matter where I go to, it’s always home again;  
To the rugged northern shore, and the days of sun  
and wind;  
And the land of the silver birch, cry of the loon;  
There’s something ’bout this country, that’s a part of  
me and you.<sup>39</sup>

His lyrics show the deep connection between the canoe, the North, and a sense of identification with vast expanse of land known as Canada; a connection which lends further credibility to Francis’ claim that the “canoe is the mother image of national dreamlife, the symbol of our oneness with a rugged northern landscape, and the vessel in which we are created as Canadians.”<sup>40</sup>

Clatworthy 35 Francis, 151.  
36 Raffan, 7.  
37 Francis, 150.  
38 Ibid., 130.  
39 “Canoe Quotes,” [http://www.canoe.ca/AllAboutCanoes/canoe\\_quotes.html](http://www.canoe.ca/AllAboutCanoes/canoe_quotes.html).  
40 Francis, 129.

For the purposes of this paper, a final way in which the canoe influences the Canadian identity is through art, the most obvious example of which is, of course, through Tom Thomson and the Group of Seven. Their paintings of remote and inaccessible parts of the Canadian Shield were rendered possible by the canoe; in a uniquely Canadian way, they “tracked down their art like a hunter does prey.”<sup>41</sup> In the NFB documentary, *Canadian Landscape*, painter A.Y. Jackson was said to look “more like a bushman than an artist... for the [Canadian] painter must be able to wield a paddle as well as a brush.”<sup>42</sup> Yet it was more than the way that they accessed their sources of artistic inspiration that made these painters Canadian; it was the way in which they painted as well. They “painted nature in the raw, wild and virile: the country as seen from a canoe.”<sup>43</sup> Their art was raw, bold, and unrestrained, much the same way as the Canadian landscape was. In the words of Francis, “what [their art] stood for was the myth of wilderness: the conviction that the essence of Canadianness was present in the land, in the canoeable Canadian landscape.”<sup>44</sup> Their art reflected the spirit of their era; their paintings of the Canadian wilderness helped the nation come into itself in the post-WWI years.

Thus, the canoe has played a pivotal, albeit changing, role in the mapping of Canada. Whereas it used to facilitate the physical mapping of the country, it now maps our collective consciousness and culture instead; while it has largely been rendered a relic of the past, it is simultaneously “lay[ing] a foundation for the future;”<sup>45</sup> and while it may no longer be a part of our everyday lives, it has been re-appropriated as symbolic of a nationalistic presence in Canada. Pierre Trudeau’s *Ascetic in a Canoe* perfectly sums up the importance of the canoe on the Canadian psyche: “I know a man whose school could never teach him patriotism, but who acquired that virtue when he felt in his bones the vastness of his land, and the greatness of those who founded it.”<sup>46</sup>

41 Francis, 133.

42 Radford Crawley, *Film: Canadian Landscape* (NFB: 1941), 5:19.

43 Francis, 136.

44 *Ibid.*, 142.

45 Pierre Trudeau, “Exhaustion and Fulfillment: The Ascetic in a Canoe,” <http://www.canoe.ca/che-mun/102trudeau.html>.

46 *Ibid.*, 3.

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Postcoloniality,  
Orientalism, and the  
Question of Québec

**Matthew Chung**

# Postcoloniality, Orientalism, and the Question of Québec

## Introduction

In his work “En quoi la littérature québécoise est-elle postcoloniale?” Vincent Desroches initiated a theoretical discussion of the ways in which postcolonial theory could apply to the context of Québec.<sup>1</sup> As Mary Green observes, Québec had hitherto been marginalized within the field of the postcolonial.<sup>2</sup> She also discerns a fundamental paradox associated with this marginalization. In the preceding decades Québécois intellectuals had only defined their own condition as that of a colonised people.<sup>3</sup> As the title of Desroches’ work would suggest, the postcoloniality of Québec has ultimately been debated within literary circles. This essay attempts to account for the reasons why literary theorists have marginalized Québec within the field of the postcolonial. In addition, it seeks a conclusion to this same debate on the postcoloniality of Québec through an application of postcolonial theory to historical sources. To this end, Orientalism, as developed by the literary theorist Edward Said, will inform a fundamental rereading of the *Durham Report*.

## The Postcolonial Moment?

Marilyn Randall writes, “most critics would situate the postcolonial moment in French Canada during the period of the Quiet Revolution, when young intellectuals in Québec discovered and circulated the writings of Albert Memmi.”<sup>4</sup> At this time, André d’Allemagne and Pierre Vallières among others assumed the rhetoric of anticolonial liberation in order to reinterpret their condition as that of a colonised people. This discourse raises two fundamental issues for contemporary theorists of postcolonialism: Can Québec be considered postcolonial in a historical sense? If not, how should the historian account for this oppositional rhetoric to colonialism?

1 Mary Green, “Locating Quebec on the Postcolonial Map,” in *Postcolonial Thought in the French-speaking World* (Liverpool, 2009), 248.

2 Ibid, 250.

3 Ibid, 251.

4 Marilyn Randall, “Resistance, Submission and Oppositionality: National Identity in French Canada,” in *Francophone Postcolonial Studies: A Critical Introduction* (New York, 1993), 77.



Historian Sean Mills writes that anticolonial theory served as a framework within which Québécois intellectuals could conceive their experience in the face of unequal relations of power, both past and present.<sup>5</sup> He writes that their claims to represent a colonised people were based upon two understandings of colonialism that only informed one another. Québécois intellectuals understood that they had become colonised subjects subsequent to British victory on the Plains of Abraham in 1759. The second form of colonialism was understood to have later emerged in the form of American economic imperialism. A certain teleology between these two forms of domination thus informs the claims by André d'Allemagne and Pierre Vallières of their colonised condition. Vallières writes, “C’est devenu un ensemble de lieux communs de dire que le Québec est une colonie, une sous-colonie ou une sous-sous colonie, une triple colonie, etc. La dépendance du Québec à l’égard de l’étranger est une constante de son histoire”.<sup>6</sup> For his part, d’Allemagne posits, “Depuis ses origines, le peuple canadien-français n’a jamais connu autre régime que le régime colonial”.<sup>7</sup>

Historians Guy Frégault and Michel Brunet conceived the practice of history in a functionalist sense whereby “history is a hypothesis permitting the present situations by those that preceded them”.<sup>8</sup> Like other intellectuals, the two historians also sought a historical account for their experience in the face of unequal relations of power. Frégault thus posited, “any historical explanation of the present situation of French Canada must begin with a consideration of the fundamental fact in the history of his country: the British Conquest”.<sup>9</sup> His account of the Conquest seemed to explain the colonised condition of present-day Québec for André d’Allemagne:

“The fact is that an English society had closed around the Canadians without absorbing them; it had been created against them and it developed without them. Generations of Canadians succeeded one another in a British empire, a British continent, a British state [...]

5 Sean Mills, *The Empire Within: Postcolonial Thought and Political Activism in Sixties Montreal*, (Montréal, 2010), 7.

6 Pierre Vallières, *Nègres blancs d’Amérique*, (Montréal, 1968), 334.

7 André d’Allemagne, *Le Colonialisme au Québec*, (Montréal, 1966), 17.

8 Guy Frégault, *Canada: The War of the Conquest* (Toronto, 1969), 343.

9 Rudin, 105.

And since their own society had been shaken to the roots and its growth arrested, they were now no more than the residue of a society, lacking the direction and the means without which they could neither conceive nor put into practice the political and economic policies that were a necessity for them.”<sup>10</sup>

Québécois intellectuals who defined their condition as that of a colonised people attempted to position themselves in relation to other colonised peoples. In *Les Nègres blancs d’Amérique*, Pierre Vallières engages with the notion of *négritude* given the association of blackness with marginalisation: “les nègres d’Amérique sont solidaires des nègres du monde entier. Solidaires dans la servitude. Solidaires dans la lutte de libération”.<sup>11</sup> Michèle Lalonde employs a similar rhetoric in “Speak White”: “Nous savons que la liberté est un mot noir/comme la misère est nègre”.<sup>12</sup>

Yet Sean Mills writes, “it became evident that the province differed from most decolonizing nations in one crucial respect”.<sup>13</sup> That French Canadians represented the descendants of white settler colonists served as the basis to marginalise their claims as a colonised people by anticolonial theorists. Albert Memmi, in response to the question, “Are the French Canadians colonized?” would ambiguously state, “each domination is relative, and each is specific”.<sup>14</sup> Thus, can Québec be considered postcolonial in a historical sense? André d’Allemagne concedes that colonialism in Québec may have ultimately constituted a psychological rather than historical condition: “le colonialisme au Québec, plus qu’ailleurs, est essentiellement un phénomène psychologique”.<sup>15</sup>

### **Postcoloniality and the Question of Québec**

As Marvin Richards and Robert Schwartzwald observe, the debate on the postcoloniality of Québec has remained within

10 Frégault, 342.

11 Vallières, 69.

12 Michèle Lalonde, *Speak White*, (Montréal, 1974)

13 Mills, 76.

14 Albert Memmi, “Are the French Canadians Colonized?” in *Dominated Man: Notes Towards a Portrait* (New York, 1968), 74.

15 d’Allemagne, 127.

the purview of literary theorists rather than that of historians.<sup>16</sup> The question thus emerges of why literary theorists have only marginalised Québec from the field of the postcolonial.

One explanation locates the marginality of Québec within the field of the postcolonial in the context of linguistic barriers. Obed Nkuzimana observes, “le postcolonialisme, en tant que modèle théorique et méthodologique, ne fait pas parti du répertoire des concepts critiques au sien du discours québécois et de la francophone en général”.<sup>17</sup> It has been suggested that the translation of works by such theorists as Edward Said will serve to provide openings for postcolonial theory within the francophone intellectual milieu.<sup>18</sup>

Nonetheless this explanation would only appear to be insufficient in itself. For example, Laura Moss observes that it has become common practice to exclude Canada from theoretical discussions of postcolonialism despite its status as an English-speaking country.<sup>19</sup> A parallel between the marginality of both English Canada and Québec within the field of the postcolonial may thus be established in that “the refusal to recognize Québec’s postcolonialism comes also from the suspicion that falls on every so-called settler colony”.<sup>20</sup> In this sense, literary theorists only evoke history itself as means to marginalise the postcoloniality of Québec. Linda Hutcheson maintains, “history cannot be continentally ignored”.<sup>21</sup>

Marvin Richards states that postcoloniality has been conceptualised not as a transhistorical concept but rather as one with a definite chronology.<sup>22</sup> It is in drawing upon a chronology of the forms of colonialism historically assumed that Leela Gandhi rejects the notion “that settler societies stand in the same relationship to colonialism as those societies which have experienced the full force

16 Marvin Richards, “Corralling the Wild Ponies: Correspondences between Québec and the Postcolonial,” *Québec Studies* 35 (2003): 135; Robert Schwartzwald, “Rush to Judgment? Postcolonial Criticism and Québec,” *Québec Studies* 35 (2003): 117

17 Obed Nkuzimana, “Le débat postcolonial et le Québec,” *Québec Studies* 35 (2003): 64.

18 Schwartzwald, 115.

19 Laura Moss, “Is Canada Postcolonial? Introducing the Question,” in *Is Canada Postcolonial? Unsettling Canadian Literature* (Waterloo, 2003), 2.

20 Ibid., 134.

21 Ibid., 139.

22 Ibid.

and violence of colonial domination”.<sup>23</sup>

In addition, while Québécois intellectuals of the Quiet Revolution conceived their condition as that of a colonised people, it would seem that “as colonizers themselves of the ‘new’ world, Québécois claims to colonial victimization are weak, even inauthentic”.<sup>24</sup> Marvin Richards writes that given their lack of a pre-colonial culture, the Québécois have only been characterised as colonisers themselves of indigenous peoples, which serves to marginalise their claims to represent a colonised people in the view of some postcolonial theorists.<sup>25</sup>

Nonetheless some literary theorists have only attempted to restore Québec from the margins of the postcolonial. Amaryll Chanady alters the premises of the debate on the postcoloniality of Québec in conceptualising it not “as a historical category but rather as a discourse that depicts and usually condemns colonialism (however it may be defined)”.<sup>26</sup> Marilyn Randall also understands postcoloniality as “a subjectivity of oppositionality to imperializing/colonizing [...] discourses and practices”.<sup>27</sup> As will be illustrated, the critiques of Québécois intellectuals of the Quiet Revolution only manifest this subjectivity of oppositionality in relation to historical imperialising and colonising discourses.

### **Orientalism and a Rereading of The Durham Report**

Given this inconsistency in conceptions of postcoloniality, Obed Nkuzimana states, “il devient très peu pertinent de nous reposer la question si le Québec fut une colonie ou pas”.<sup>28</sup> Therefore in her view, the fundamental question that emerges is whether postcolonial theory is ultimately applicable to the case of Québec. In turn, this essay seeks to examine the ways in which a postcolonial reading might shed light on the interpretation of sources pertinent to the history of Québec, in particular the *Durham Report*.

Some have questioned the extent to which “the introduction

23 Leela Gandhi, *Postcolonial Theory: A Critical Introduction* (New York, 1998), 168.

24 Richards, 134.

25 Ibid.

26 Amaryll Chanady, “Rereading Québécois Literature in a Postcolonial Context,” *Québec Studies* 35 (2003): 31.

27 Randall, 78.

28 Nkuzimana, 66.

of postcolonial theory and criticism to the field of Québec Studies would be enabling”.<sup>29</sup> Vincent Desroches views postcolonial theory as a means to deconstruct “l’essentialisme, la prétention à l’universel, le discours monologique à l’œuvre dans la construction des idéologies impérialistes, colonialistes, et nationalistes”, which largely reflects the intent of Edward Said in his work *Orientalism*.<sup>30</sup>

Marvin Richards posits along these lines, “that ‘Quebec’ [...] has become a construct like ‘the Orient’ in Edward Said’s analysis”.<sup>31</sup> Marilyn Randall insists that this state of Otherness “had to be constructed by the process of colonization, and, according to Lord Durham’s Report following the 1837-8 uprising, were firmly in place by the time of the Rebellion”.<sup>32</sup> Based on these premises and the notion that “identity of self or of ‘other’ is a much worked-over historical, social, intellectual, and political process that takes place as a contest involving individuals and institutions in all societies,” it would seem that Orientalism represents an apt theoretical framework within which to reread the *Durham Report*.<sup>33</sup>

Edward Said proposed Orientalism as a discourse in Foucaultian terms.<sup>34</sup> Foucault himself posited that discourses have the tendency to occasion their own discourses of resistance. In *Le Colonialisme au Québec*, André d’Allemagne objects to the depiction of “les Canadiens comme un peuple sans histoire,” a direct response to the *Durham Report*.<sup>35</sup> This response establishes the fundamental link between the discourses of Québécois intellectuals and the imperialising rhetoric present within the *Durham Report*, and thus their own ‘subjectivity of oppositionality’.

A rereading of the *Durham Report* seeks to demonstrate the extent to which this *Orientalism*-era postcolonial theory indeed applies to the case of Québec so that historians of Québec may further engage with this theoretical framework in future studies. In addition, this case study is also significant in that “postcolonial theory must think through the paradoxes engendered by settler

29 Schwartzwald, 113.

30 Desroches, 7.

31 Richards, 149.

32 Randall, 78.

33 Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: 1994), 332.

34 *Ibid.*, 94.

35 D’Allemagne, 129.

colonies like Québec”.<sup>36</sup>

Said posits, “the Orient was not [...] a free subject of thought or action”.<sup>37</sup> French-Canadians are constructed in a similar way in that their voices are only silenced by Lord Durham in his report. Said elaborates on the way in which positional authority “puts the Westerner in a whole series of possible relationships with the Orient without ever losing him the relative upper hand”.<sup>38</sup> In this sense, a parallel may be established between the experience of the nineteenth-century Orientalists and that of Durham in the face of the Other. Durham claims all authority to speak on behalf of the colony of Lower Canada without ever losing his position of power:

“The suspension of the constitution gave me an essential advantage over my predecessors in the conduct of my inquiries; it not merely relieved me from the burthen of constant discussions with the legislative bodies, but it enabled me to turn my attention from the alleged, to the real grievances of the Province [...] to endeavour to make myself master of the real condition of the people, and the real causes of dissatisfaction or suffering. [...] The condition of the people, the system by which they were governed, were thus rendered familiar to me”<sup>39</sup>

Durham moreover defends his monopoly on the representation of the Other in the face of criticism:

“I describe in strong terms the feelings which appear to animate each portion of the population; and the picture which I draw represents a state of things so familiar to the personal experience of the people of this country, that many will probably regard it as the work of mere imagination; but I feel confident that the accuracy and moderation of my description will be acknowledged by all”<sup>40</sup>

36 Richards, 134.

37 Said, 3.

38 Ibid, 7.

39 Lord Durham. *Lord Durham's Report: An Abridgment of Report on the Affairs of British North America*. ed. Gerald Craig (Montréal, 2007), 10-11.

40 Ibid, 34.

What were thus ‘the feelings which appear to animate each portion of the population’ and how did Durham account for the Lower Canada Rebellion? Said writes that Orientalist thought only posited an ontological and epistemological distinction between the Orient and the Occident.<sup>41</sup> In declaring, “I expected to find a contest between a government and a people: I found two nations warring in the bosom of a single state: I found a struggle, not of principles, but of peoples,” Durham thus essentialises the differences between colonists of English and French descent.<sup>42</sup> He writes along these lines, “it is scarcely possible to conceive descendants of any of the great European nations more unlike each other in character and temperament, more totally separated from each other by language, laws, and modes of life”.<sup>43</sup> If “the Orient has helped define Europe (or the West) as its contrasting image” as Said suggests<sup>44</sup>, then the distinction between colonists of English and French descent is constructed to confirm “the superior political and practical intelligence of the English”<sup>45</sup>

Finally, Said viewed the relationship between the Occident and Orient as “a relationship of power, of domination, of varying degrees of a complex hegemony”.<sup>46</sup> Orientalism therefore represented “a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient”.<sup>47</sup> In this sense, certain cultural attitudes only served to underpin the political structures of colonialism and imperialism. In his conclusion, Durham resorts to the comparative inferiority of the French-Canadian ‘race’ in order to justify his literal restructuring of the colony of Lower Canada:

“A plan by which it is proposed to ensure the tranquil government of Lower Canada, must include in itself the means of putting an end to the agitation of national disputes in the legislature, by settling, at once and for ever, the national character of the Province. I entertain

41 Said, 2.

42 Lord Durham, 13.

43 Ibid, 19.

44 Said, 2.

45 Lord Durham, 29.

46 Said, 5.

47 Ibid., 3.

no doubts as to the national character which must be given to Lower Canada; it must be that of the British Empire; that of the majority of the population of British America; that of the great race which must, in the lapse of no long period of time, be predominant over the whole North American Continent.”<sup>48</sup>

### Conclusion

It might be said that the debate on the postcoloniality of Québec should be left to the literary theorists. To quote Obed Nkunjimana once more, “il devient très peu pertinent de nous reposer la question si le Québec fut une colonie ou pas”. As this essay has demonstrated, through a rereading of the *Durham Report* in light of Orientalism, postcolonial theory can shed light on historical sources pertinent to the history of Québec. In this case, Orientalism serves to reveal the fundamental link between representations and power.

To return to an earlier theme, the claims by Québécois intellectuals of the Quiet Revolution to represent a colonised people should not be disregarded given that postcoloniality can constitute a subjectivity of oppositionality. In light of Foucaultian theory, these discourses in themselves evoke the idea that colonising discourses have had a profound impact throughout the history of Québec. In this sense, colonial discourse analysis would represent one field in which historians of Québec can engage with postcolonial theory. Edward Said concerned himself with “the internal consistency of Orientalism and its ideas about the Orient”.<sup>49</sup> Thus these same historians should also seek the correspondence of colonising discourses in the history of Québec.

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48 Lord Durham, 144.

49 Said, 5.



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# May Photos Speak: A Photo Essay on the Northern Gateway



## Yolanda Clatworthy

Photos, they say, can speak louder than words. I hope that this proverb rings true, because I have no words to convey to you just how sublimely special the Great Bear Rainforest is. In the summer of 2010, I was lucky enough to have spent several months in Gitga'at territory in the heart of this region, currently under threat by the proposed Northern Gateway Pipeline. It is my hope that these photos will help Canadians realize just how much is at stake on BC's Northern Coast.



From above, the momentous technical difficulties of squeezing super tankers through these narrow, plunging channels become clear. The area is also known for unpredictable and sometimes hostile weather; Environment Canada labeled it the fourth most dangerous body of water in the world. Just five years ago, the BC ferry Queen of North ran aground and sank here.



Below water is also home to a rich abundance of life. Tidal walls are covered in mussels and starfish, millions of salmon return here to spawn, and halibut and seaweed continue to sustain the First Nations communities as they have for thousands of years.



Closer up, it becomes possible to see the verdancy and lushness of the forest floor. The Great Bear Rainforest is the largest intact temperate rainforest left in the world, capable of supporting more biomass than anywhere else on Earth. The old-growth forest includes trees more than a millennium old and up to 90m high.





Visitors to the region are privy to sights hard to find anywhere else. Humpback whales breach and bubble feed, pods of orcas pass through, wolves cruise the shoreline, and those looking to fish must share the streams with grizzlies. Some species that are endangered elsewhere are abundant here, such as the bald eagle. Others, such as the Spirit (Kermode) bear cannot be found anywhere else. The richness and uniqueness of this area is unparalleled.

The Influences of the Pastoral  
Tradition and the Modern Condition  
in Dennis Lee's *Civil Elegies*

**Niki Marion**

## The Influences of the Pastoral Tradition and the Modern Condition in Dennis Lee's *Civil Elegies*

In his poem *Civil Elegies*, Dennis Lee laments the death of the collective Canadian identity. His elegy reflects the confusion and distress that he believes characterizes modern society, and his treatment of the elegiac form reflects this uncertainty and upheaval. Lee uses traditional conventions of the pastoral elegy to interrogate the causes that produced the modern condition in Canada and the corresponding death of affect. Lee, however, does not use pastoral conventions merely to mourn the loss of uncomplicated times and an idealized connection to nature. He employs traditional pastoral in combination with Sandra M. Gilbert's modern elegiac conventions to question and obscure the supposed simplicity of the past and its connection with the current loss of emotion and motivation. Lee specifically questions Canada's ability to create a national identity within the modern condition and uses the elegiac form and its conventions to critique what he sees as a problem of Canadian society. Lee's manipulation of both pastoral and contemporary conventions in elegiac form rejects the thematic principles of Canada's past and present as viable solutions to the modern condition. Lee, though, does not condemn Canada to this fate. He thus combines the two types of conventions within his elegy to create a hybrid form that allows him to address the one period of time that provides hope for the reform of the modern Canadian identity: the future.

Before Lee comes to this conclusion, he first laments the inadequacy of the past and its traditions, represented through the conventions of the pastoral elegy, to repair the modern condition. Lee does not portray the speaker and the Canadian condition as shepherds in a strict adherence to the definition of pastoral elegy, but he does employ the broader meaning of the pastoral in *Civil Elegies*. According to M.H. Abrams' *Glossary of Literary Terms*, a pastoral poem expresses "an urban poet's nostalgic image of the supposed peace and simplicity of the life of shepherds and other rural folk in an idealized natural setting" (240). Abrams also mentions that this technique "serves as an oblique way to criticize the



values of the class structure of the society of its time” (241). Lee uses the symbol of Canadian land and its potential to engender a return to a more natural relationship with it as a foil to the commodified, contemporary city which produces a “waning of affect” (Jameson 10). Lee sees the possibility for redemption in the land, a salvation that his technologized, consumer-driven society does not realize it needs: “a people which lays its whiskey and violent machines / on a land that is primal, and native, which takes that land in greedy / innocence but will not live it, which is not claimed by its own / and sells that land off even before it has owned it” (Lee 36). Lee criticizes the modern society whose values dictate the death of the land for the proliferation of profit and consumerism.

Lee uses the specific conventions Abrams ascribes to the pastoral elegy throughout the poem to present and critique the ills of modern society. In a traditional pastoral elegy, the speaker first invokes the muses and then refers to other classical mythological figures throughout the poem (Abrams 93). Immediately in his first elegy, Lee introduces the furies, who, in classical mythology, punish the guilty in the underworld (Lewis). Their duty also includes the protection of the natural order of things, which includes the preservation of legal, ethical, and moral regulation (Lewis). Lee uses this pastoral convention to display the death of a natural sense of moral order and responsibility in modern society and to encourage an acknowledgement of that lost order. The poet charges the populous milling purposelessly in Nathan Philips Square with negligence of, and complicity in, this loss, characteristics that he implies lead to the diseased, inattentive modern state:

Therefore the specters arrive, congregating  
in bitter droves, think in the April sunlight,  
accusing us and we are no different, though you would not expect  
the furies assembled in hogtown and ring me round, invisible, demanding  
what time of our lives we wait for till we shall start to be. (Lee 27)

The furies therefore function as two pastoral conventions: as classical allusions and as an indirect way of blaming society for the fate of shepherd, whose death metaphorically represents the death of ethics, morality, and affect that Lee sees as the modern condition

(Abrams 93). This concept introduces one of Gilbert's modern elegiac conventions: the people of Nathan Philips Square embody "a resignation to loss that sometimes involves...a stoic acquiescence in the inevitable" (*Death's Door* 412). Society's "waning of affect," then, is simply a resignation to the materialistic values of the corrupt modern age. The furies are unable to provoke the people to action, a failing which implies the inefficacy of the past to motivate the present and the inability of the present to take heed from the past.

In a pastoral elegy, the poet also usually raises questions about the justice of fate but ultimately consoles his audience by concluding his elegy with visions of Christian afterlife (Abrams 93). Essentially, *Civil Elegies* embodies this existential plea but without the tidy religious consolation. Gilbert sees the disappearance of God in modern elegies as confirmation of the rejection of loss and mourning, an effect of the privatization of death in contemporary society (*Inventions* 27). Lee maintains that spirituality is an ineffective resolution for Canada's condition and uses his second elegy to display the modern absence of religion. Lee opens the elegy by questioning the very existence of divinity: "Master and Lord, where / are you?" (Lee 31). He goes on to emphasize that even the media asserts the absence of providence, that "the headlines / declare it" (Lee 31). Lee unearths no solid confirmation or support of religion; his faith wanes, and he can say nothing about God that "does not / vanish like tapwater" (Lee 31). Religion offers no panacea to the social epidemic that plagues Canada because society has lost its faith. Pursuing the modern Canadian condition beyond religion, he proposes that Canadians have become so ignorant about the world around them that routine controls their lives. Citizens are nothing but "dozing" zombies who comply with the political, societal, and socioeconomic norms (Lee 33). Canadian society chooses ignorantly to accept its flawed existence, exemplified by the numerous people who filter through Nathan Philips Square on a daily corporate basis like a continuous assembly line: "the people come and they feel no consternation, dozing at/ lunchtime; even the towers comply" (Lee 33). Lee implicates the consumerism of the urban in this condition but denies that a simple return to the natural past would provide a solution to this present-day dilemma. Furthermore, a return

to the past actually denies the possibility of reform, as Lee shows with his allusion to the quintessentially pastoral Tom Thomson.

Tom Thomson, whose many landscapes symbolize an intimate connection to nature, exemplifies the ultimate pastoral figure. Thomson came from a family of true outdoorsmen; both his grandfather and his father worked on the family farm in Ontario (Larsen 29). Thomson himself chose to fish and hunt instead of attending church on the Sabbath (Larsen 39). Lee seems to mimic Thomson's substitution of nature for religion by juxtaposing Thomson with his condemnation of spirituality in his second elegy. Thomson, though, still found himself lured into city life: he originally started his artistic career in Seattle as a commercial artist (Larsen 50). Like Lee, Thomson found the city unsympathetic and accordingly reaffirmed his original connection with nature through painting. His first piece, *A Northern Lake*, was honored for expressing "the very spirit of Canada," a statement that implies a connection to the geographical landscape of Canada could form the foundation of its collective identity (Larsen 69). In his elegy, Lee highlights that Thomson's physical and emotional relationship with the land fosters his creativity and his sense of self: "he paddled direct though / the palpable dark, hearing only the push and / drip of the blade for hours and then very suddenly the radiance of the / renewed land broke over his canvas" (Lee 35). At the end of the allusion, however, Lee shows how the return to the ostensible peace of the past does not save Thomson from his untimely death. Likewise, when extended to the whole of Canada, this return would be ineffective if it could not prevent the death of a soul that eminently "was part of the bush" (Lee 34). The reaffirmation of the past and of nature that Lee suggests through his mention of Tom Thomson, then, does not offer a viable solution to the modern condition.

Lee complicates his elegy by continuing to incorporate other modern conventions that Gilbert outlines. In contemporary elegies, Gilbert notices that there is a new focus on the private and public history of the elegized, an attention Lee exemplifies in *Civil Elegies* (*Death's Door* 412). Lee weaves Canadian history from both the public and private spheres within his poem, focusing especially on Canada's involvement in the Vietnam War. Lee condemns Can-

ada for its production of napalm for American use. In his fifth elegy, he most provokingly decries his “nation’s / failure of nerve; I mean complicity, which is signified by the / gaseous stain above us” (Lee 41). Lee uses the term “criminal” ten times over the span of eleven lines and culminates his denunciation of the “consenting citizens...cogs in a useful tool” with an allusion to Paul Martin, whom Lee facetiously deems “honourable” (Lee 41). Lee extends this sarcasm to all Canadians, condemning them all to be honourable, an effect that only strengthens the “drift to barbarian / normalcy” that Lee observes in this historical account (Lee 43).

This death of compassion for fellow humankind is also present in the private sphere of Canadian society, most evident in Lee’s depiction of the disintegrating relationships between lovers in his seventh elegy. “The nerve ends come apart” in homes where relationships are failing and where comfort and shelter from the conditions of the outside world are absent (Lee 44). As Robert Lecker summarizes in his novel *The Cadence of Civil Elegies*, the narrator “looks in front of him at the present and finds a world that is ‘sold out utterly to the modern’ where the people are neither ‘alive nor dead’” (26). In addition, the speaker also “looks back over his shoulder for the comfort of history and...instead he confronts the ‘shambles of dead precursors’ and his sense that our ‘ancestors’ were cowards, ‘stewards of unclaimed earth’” (Lecker 26). Accordingly, neither present nor past offers Lee any solution to the modern Canadian condition.

In his concluding elegy, Lee combines elements of modern and pastoral elegiac conventions to create an innovative closing consolation. Though the pastoral consolation is usually brought about by the speaker’s recognition that death only brings new life in heaven, Lee modernizes this by accounting for Gilbert’s idea that “the only consolation the mourner can find in a confrontation of loss is not a vision of celestial resurrection but a dream of social redemption” (*Death’s Door* 438). Lee has no trust in the past or in the present, but he is confident about the future, in which “many will come to themselves” (Lee 50). Through his use of the future tense throughout the final elegy, Lee imagines a potential contemplation of identity in relation to Canadian space and place. Canadians must look to the future if they have any hope of constructing a new identity. Lee’s conclu-

sion to his elegy unites the modern and the pastoral to achieve this:

Earth, you nearest, allow me.  
Green of earth and civil grey:  
within me, without me and moment by  
moment allow me for to  
be here is enough and earth you  
strangest, you nearest, be home. (Lee 51)

The “green of earth and civil grey” imply that humans must learn to embrace and coexist with the natural world to produce a harmonious future. Though Lee gives no Christian pastoral consolation, Robert Lecker posits that Lee’s “final words of the poem are a prayer, to a new muse, a new god, Earth” that will consider the modern condition and aid the people in the creation of a redeemed social order (18).

Proving that the past and the present are inadequate, Lee advocates the future as a potential source of hope for the rehabilitation of the modern condition. Canadian identity, a complex and always shifting construct, cannot be confined to one temporal location. Identity is constantly forming on a continuum, and condemning it to its past and present leaves no flexibility for modification. Lee allows the past and the present to affect the future, but he does not imply that they are the only influences. If so, Lee’s consolation would be a resignation to loss. Though the past and the present do not offer solutions to the modern condition, Lee does not dismiss their authority. In *Civil Elegies*, he uses both pastoral and modern conventions to show that the future needs to differentiate itself from its precursors to enforce a new Canadian identity.

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Economic Nationalism and  
Canadian Monetary Policy:  
The Post Bretton Woods Decade

**Sarah Mathieu-Comtois**

# Economic Nationalism and Canadian Monetary Policy: The Post Bretton Woods Decade

## Introduction

“No foreign policy – no matter how ingenious – has any chance of success if it is born in the minds of a few and carried in the hearts of none.”<sup>1</sup> Henry Kissinger expressed in this statement during one of the most enduring debates in the realm of international political economy: what motivates foreign economic policy? Is it the ideas of individual policymakers or pressures from lobbying groups? Is it a mere, cold calculation of one’s systemic power share or bureaucratic disputes? Many scholars have made strong cases out of one or more of those determinants when analyzing trade or investment policies. However, when it comes to exchange rate regime choices, or more broadly monetary policy decisions, the political implications get blurrier and less evident. The Canadian case is no exception. However, it seems difficult to accept the argument that no political force motivates the formulation of a particular monetary policy, knowing the extent of the implications it has in terms of both internal wealth redistribution and international systemic position. With regards to this, the present paper will argue that the economic nationalist sentiment has influenced monetary policymaking in Canada in the 1970s, following the collapse of the Bretton Woods monetary regime. Some authors have argued it to be present throughout the years since Canada’s independence. However, one will find the 1970s to be the most compelling decade in terms of direct causation links between economic nationalism and monetary policy. In order to prove this point, a clear definition of economic nationalism will first be elaborated, followed by an analysis of its implications in the Canadian context. Secondly, a dissection of the distributional effects of different monetary policy choices, both at the domestic and at the international levels, will be presented. Thirdly, Canadian monetary policy choices, in the years following the collapse of the Bretton Woods regime, will be examined in depth and with regards to the ideas of economic national-

1 Kim R. Holmes, “American Internationalism: Promoting Freedom, Democracy and Development,” <http://usinfo.org/enus/economy/trade/pj81holmes.html>.



ism. Finally, concluding remarks, as well as possible generalizations about the influence of economic nationalism on Canadian monetary policy, will be made.

### **Economic Nationalism and the Canadian Context**

Richard Kim Nossal defines economic nationalism as an ideology focusing on, “the importance of economic factors to the existence, strength, and durability of the nation.”<sup>2</sup> This statement is insightful in the sense that it emphasizes that economic nationalism is not distinct or detachable from nationalism; it is simply another, more precise, expression of it. It can also be understood as, “the zero-sum pursuit of supposed economic interests of the people of one country with regards for those of another country.”<sup>3</sup> Indeed, societal groups advocating economic nationalism often do so through demands for discriminatory policies towards other countries, stressing the causal link between another nation’s gains and their nation’s losses. However, one should not automatically associate economic nationalism with protectionism. The latter can be in some instances an expression of the former, but the former does not always motivate the latter. Indeed, as Nossal highlights, the level of influence of economic nationalism should not be calculated in terms of outputs, or policies. Rather, it is to be found in the intentions, or inputs, behind policymaking.<sup>4</sup> For example, a protectionist trade doctrine can be adopted out of mere retaliation towards an important partner’s imposition of tariffs. The wave of protectionism that followed the passage of the Smoot-Hawley Tariff in 1930 in the United States is an example of this.<sup>5</sup> On the other hand, a protectionist trade doctrine could also be part of a grand nation-building strategy, as was the case in a lot of the developing countries after decolonization.<sup>6</sup> This is one of the reasons why one must carry a very careful and deep

2 Richard Kim Nossal, “Economic Nationalism and Continental Integration,” in *The Politics of Canada’s Economic Relationship with the United States*, ed. Denis Stairs and Gilbert R. Winham (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985), 59-62.

3 Christopher Baugh and Atilla Yaprak, “Economic Nationalism: Conceptual and Empirical Development,” *Political Psychology* 17.4 (1966): 763.

4 Nossal, 66.

5 Barry Eichengreen, “The Political Economy of the Smoot-Hawley Tariff,” NBER Working Paper (1986).

6 John Rapley, *Understanding Development – Theory and Practice in the Third World* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2007), 35-43

analysis before stating that a particular behavior is attributable to economic nationalism.

Nevertheless, once the motives have been properly established, different sorts of policies can serve the interests of economic nationalism. Prior to the General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs (GATT), the imposition of tariff barriers was the most common and straightforward way to address demands motivated by economic nationalism. However, as the rules of free trade imposed themselves with more credibility and enforcement mechanisms became increasingly effective, policymakers have been forced to find new responsive measures. As it shall be illustrated later, some of them can be found in the realm of monetary policy, even more so since the collapse of the Bretton Woods regime. Indeed, since the early 1970s, countries have been free to decide whether to float or to fix their currencies, and if so, they are able to determine the rate. Macroeconomics have then shown how monetary policy can sometimes substitute trade policy: a low and fixed exchange rate will have the same effect for exporters and import competitors as tariff protection.

In the Canadian context, the expression of this sentiment has been, since the era of John A. MacDonald, mostly directed towards the United States.<sup>7</sup> There is no need to restate the complexity of the relationship between the two countries. While some sectors of Canada's economy view their Southern neighbour as essential on many levels, such as capital provision or market bases, others perceive it as their fiercest rival. For this reason, the role of economic nationalism from the very inception of Canadian foreign economic policy is a highly controversial topic. Indeed, scholars such as Robert Craig Brown argue that it was, as an element of MacDonald's First National Policy, instrumental to an assertion of Canadian political autonomy from the United States.<sup>8</sup> On the other hand, economists such as Harry Johnson have found that the important protection level effectively lowered the standards of living in Canada, thereby weakening the political base on which independence must stand.<sup>9</sup> Nonetheless, what remains uncontested is the existence and strength of the ideology in the Canadian context – the question whether this has

7 Melville H. Watkins, "Economic Nationalism," *The Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science* 32.3 (1966).

8 *Ibid.*, 390

9 *Ibid.*

been positive or not seems to generate quite subjective responses.

This leads us to the establishment of a paradigm in which the following argumentation will be framed. First of all, the nature of international economic relations assumed to prevail is the one elaborated by Peter J. Katzenstein: “the consistency and the content of foreign economic policies result at least as much from the constraints of domestic structures as from the functional logic inherent in international effects.”<sup>10</sup> Secondly, Canadian economic nationalism is motivated by, “a desire to see the nation maintain its separateness and its capacity for self-determination.”<sup>11</sup> We will assume that it is exclusively directed towards the United States for the time span considered. In this context, Nossal has worded a subset of assumptions as follows: “economic linkages create integration” and “integration destroys nationhood.”<sup>12</sup> Finally, the third assumption is related to the societal forces pushing the ideology. One will observe that there is much less mobilization about monetary issues than there can be, for example, about trade. Some groups have very specific demands about trade protection or liberalization, whereas the pleas regarding monetary policy remain broad and often much more loosely organized. For this reason, David H. Bearce argues that political parties act as agents of individual exchange-rate regime preferences, as organizational structures.<sup>13</sup> However, this will not apply in the case of Canada, due to its peculiar economic composition, which shall be discussed later.<sup>14</sup> Indeed, economic nationalism was an ideology shared in a quasi-consensual manner from the 1950s until the mid-1980s.<sup>15</sup> The social cleavages will emerge as a result of different perceptions of what is the best monetary policy to adopt if Canada is to secure independence from the United States.

### **Distributional Consequences of Monetary Policy Choices**

10 Katzenstein, Peter J. “International Relations and Domestic Structures: Foreign Economic Policies of Advanced Industrial States” *International Organizations* 301.1 (1976): 1-45.

11 Nossal, 67.

12 *Ibid.*, 69.

13 David H. Bearce, “Societal Preferences, Partisan Agents, and Monetary Policy Outcomes”, *International Organizations* 57.2 (2003).

14 Michael D Bordo, Tamara Gomes, and Lawrence L. Schembri, “Canada and the IMF: Trailblazer of Prodigal Son?” *Open Economies Review* 21.2 (2008): 309-333.

15 Nossal, 67.

Many monetary policy options have been available for states to choose from since the collapse of the Bretton Woods regime and the enactment of the Second Amendment of the Articles of Agreement of the International Monetary Fund at Rambouillet, in 1975.<sup>16</sup> Indeed, this modification to the international monetary regime “legalized” floating, thereby transforming the way decision makers were to respond to the different demands of society, and pursue national interests. This regime change was a response to the first official acknowledgement that a “trilemma” existed in monetary policy formulation. Indeed, the Bretton Woods regime’s rules comprised a stipulation that states shall fix their currencies within a 1% adjustment band<sup>17</sup>. However, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) was to act as a buffer for countries with balance of payments deficits; it would allow them to adjust without having recourse to fiscal austerity and other domestically unpopular strategy. This is what political economy call “monetary autonomy.” The trilemma appears with the realization that a fixed exchange rate and free capital flows are not compatible with this concept of monetary autonomy, so central to the post-war welfare state.<sup>18</sup> The Second Amendment was, in other words, an assertion that full employment was more important than the defense of a fixed parity.

In Canada, Eden and Molot have labeled this shift in monetary policy objectives “compensory liberalism”: a desire to address social demands for more intervention without sacrificing growth, trade liberalization, and free capital flows.<sup>19</sup> Thus, the monetary policy objectives have fallen along the lines of the trilemma: price stability, high employment, and economic growth.<sup>20</sup> Usually, price stability is achieved through fixed exchange rates. Yet, the unique economic structure of Canada led it to realize early – it has been the

16 IMF. “Articles of Agreement,” <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/aa/aa04.htm>.

17 Raymond F. Mikesell, “The Bretton Woods Debates: A Memoir,” *Princeton Essays in International Finance* 192 (1994): 18.

18 John Gerard Ruggie, “International Regimes, Transactions and Change. Embedded Liberalism in the Postwar Economic Order,” *International Organization*, 36.2 (1982): 379-416.

19 Lorraine Eden and Maureen Appel Molot, “Canada’s National Policies: Reflections on 125 Years,” *Canadian Public Policy*, 19.3 (1993): 253-241.

20 G. L. Reuber, “The Objectives of Canadian Monetary Policy, 1949-61: Empirical Tradeoffs and the Reaction Function of Authorities,” *The Journal of Political Economy*, 72.2 (1964): 69-132.

first country to defect on its Bretton Woods commitment in 1950 to float the dollar, only to return to a fixed parity in 1962 – that a fixed exchange rate regime would be highly disruptive.<sup>21</sup> In order to understand this, a brief return in time is required. Before World War II, Canada's imports from the United States were financed by exports to the United Kingdom; thus, balance of payments was maintained in a quite stable way. With the special conjuncture following the war and the temporary trade discrimination imposed by Europe towards the "dollar zone", Canadian reserves began to dry out, causing deflationary pressures. It also motivated intense speculation, further hurting the currency's rate and creating a "vicious circle" of instability. As a response to this, the Canadian dollar was devalued. Then, during the third quarter of the year 1950, Canadian reserves built back by 43%.<sup>22</sup> This was a result to intense import stimulation as the Korean War began, combined with massive foreign direct investment flows in the natural resources sector. Concerns about inflation, due to the low rate at which the dollar was fixed, motivated the decision to float in 1950. Classic macroeconomic logic derives the following conclusion: the importance of the resources sector in Canada makes it too vulnerable to external shocks to fix the Canadian dollar. Temporary disequilibria are too frequent, making a fixed parity unsustainable. Canada's position as a developed state relying on a staples economy makes it an interesting case for political economists, as its monetary policy choice is more constrained than most comparably opened and developed nations.<sup>23</sup> In sum, Canada is one of the few nations for which the monetary trilemma was not such an important issue, as its most optimal decision was a floating currency.

Although this might be true, other determinants can account for this sort of monetary behavior. This is related to the fact that monetary policy can, as explained earlier, in some instances have the same effect as protectionist policies. Currency devaluation indeed gives a competitive hedge to national commodity exporters, as their prices appear lower on the global market. This ability to adjust can become an important tool for economic nationalism. This

21 Bordo, Gomes, and Schembri.

22 Ibid.

23 Richard Cooper, "Exchange Rate Choices," Paper presented to the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston Conference on *Rethinking the International Monetary System*," Chatham, Massachusetts (1999).

is particularly relevant in the 1970s as the rules of the GATT constrained a state's ability to impose tariffs to nurture infant industries and thereby build nationhood.

## **The 1970s: Economic Nationalism and Canadian Monetary Policy**

### **After Bretton Woods**

On May 31, 1970, the Liberal government of Pierre Elliott Trudeau announced that the Canadian dollar's exchange rate would start to float again.<sup>24</sup> Canada's desire to abide by international conventions – as well as by bilateral arrangements with the United States<sup>25</sup> – led Canada to fix its parity under the Bretton Woods agreement from 1962 until 1970. This turned out to be somewhat of an economic disaster, as recalled by Michael C. Webb.<sup>26</sup> In order to make a clear assessment of how economic nationalism influenced this decision, and those to follow over the course of the decade, a logical scheme will be used. First of all, a review of the literature presenting evidence of this intention so instrumental to economic nationalism will be elaborated. Simultaneously, political economic arguments will demonstrate how this policy shift was closely tied to the United States' intrusive behavior. Lastly, it will be shown that the policies directly served the purpose of economic nationalism. To be sure, the intention here is not to make the argument that economic nationalism completely supplants macroeconomics as an interpretation of the monetary policy shift. Rather, it is to provide an unusual but sound complementary political analysis.

After the crucial date of March 1, 1973<sup>27</sup>, some states have

24 Bank of Canada. "Return to a Floating Rate," [http://www.bank-banque-canada.ca/en/dollar\\_book/june1970.pdf](http://www.bank-banque-canada.ca/en/dollar_book/june1970.pdf)

25 Canada negotiated an exemption from the American Interest Equalization Tax (a measure to restore the balance of payments of the United States without have to deflate American economy). In return, it had to fix its currency and observe a reserve ceiling of 2.7 billion USD. (Michael C Webb, "Canada and the International Monetary Regime," in *Canadian Foreign Policy and International Regimes*, ed. A. Claire Cutler and Mark W. Zacher, (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1992), 163.

26 Webb.

27 On March 1, 1973, the Bundesbank (Germany's central bank) had "to purchase 2.6 billion USD overnight" in order to defend the parity that had even been abandoned by the United States itself in 1971. Past this day, no one kept on defending the Bretton Woods agreement, thereby putting a de facto end to the regime; it had become too costly. A new regime, with loose rules, was

chosen to float, while others have chosen to fix. Jeffrey A. Frieden has provided a very compelling analysis of how domestic preferences of certain groups, in an open economy, were determinants of this decision.<sup>28</sup> He found actors heavily involved in cross-border transactions, such as exporters, import competitors, and the financial sector, to be the fiercest advocates of a fixed exchange-rate regime. However, this phenomenon has not happened in Canada, despite its heavily outward-oriented economic structure. We did not observe an intense mobilization for pegging the dollar, let alone for North American monetary union.<sup>29</sup> This puzzle leaves one thinking that some broader forces, such as economic nationalism, might be at work in this particular context. Dolan, Tomlin and von Riekhoff<sup>30</sup> have found several pieces of evidence of this support for economic nationalism in “policy statements and actions” throughout the 1960s and 1970s.<sup>31</sup> The account deserves a full citation:

“Chief among these were the 1963 Gordon budget; repeated interventions by the Pearson and Trudeau governments aimed at preventing or reversing the takeover of Canadian financial or industrial enterprises by American firms (Mercantile Bank in 1966, Denison Mines in 1970, Home Oil in 1971), each of these interventions registering a downswing on Canada’s transaction behavior; preparation of legislation to monitor foreign direct investment; and finally the 1972 Third Option paper that provided both the rationale for and official government endorsement of the policy of Canadian economic nationalism. Canadian economic nationalism and concomitant regulatory activities by the Canadian government are reflected in the declining level of transac-

adopted de jure in 1975 through the Jamaica Conference and the Rambouillet Agreement. (Mark R Brawley, *Power, Money, and Trade* (Toronto: Broadview Press, 2005), 332.

28 Jeffrey A Frieden, “Monetary Populism in Nineteenth-Century America: An Open Economy Interpretation,” *The Journal of Economic History* 57.2 (1997): 367-395.

29 Helleiner, 25.

30 Michael B. Dolan, Brian W. Tomlin, and Harald von Riekhoff, “Integration and Autonomy in Canada-United States Relations,” *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 15.2 (1982): 331-363.

31 *Ibid.*, 359-360.



tion behavior and by the sharp drop in the satisfaction with the gains perceived to stem from the existing continental relationship.”<sup>32</sup>

Those reflect the intention of the political class in slowing down the increasingly powerful grasp of the United States over the Canadian economy. The monetary policy providing a basis for those actions is also extremely relevant. The fact that the Bank of Canada is a fairly independent actor might make policies in the monetary realm somehow more insulated from political influence. However, this clearly has limits: Robin Bade and Michael Parkin have found that it effectively became much less autonomous from 1967, when the Bank Act was passed, granting “the government ultimate authority in monetary policy matters.”<sup>33</sup> This indicates a firm intention to use the monetary policy as a political instrument. Hence, Canada was the first country of the Group of 10 to abandon the Bretton Woods regime all together in 1970. The macroeconomics rationale is the same as in 1950 – the low-inflation target has been a constant in Canadian monetary policy until 1991.<sup>34</sup> However, in 1970, there is a clear plan by the liberal government to reaffirm an “arm’s length” relationship with the United States and its monetary policy of “benign neglect”. One important action was to lower the Bank Rate<sup>35</sup> from 7.5% to 7%: this had the effect of making domestic borrowing more attractive.<sup>36</sup> The political by-product was an effective decrease in American portfolio investment in Canada, to the benefit of the domestic financial sector.

The re-adoption of a floating exchange-rate regime effectively permitted the government, through the Bank of Canada, to adopt policies serving economic nationalism. Those policies magnified what Nossal calls the political effects: sovereignty and independence.<sup>37</sup> Moreover, as explained earlier, it also benefitted Canada’s major trading sector – natural resources – in increasing price stabil-

32 Dolan, Tomlin, and von Riekhoff, 360.

33 Robin Bade, and Michael Parkin. “Central Bank Laws and Monetary Policy” University of Western Ontario Paper, 1988, <http://economics.uwo.ca/faculty/parkin/CentralBankLaws.pdf>.

34 Helleiner, 36.

35 Domestic interest rate.

36 Bank of Canada. “Return to a Floating Rate,” [http://www.bank-banque-canada.ca/en/dollar\\_book/june1970.pdf](http://www.bank-banque-canada.ca/en/dollar_book/june1970.pdf).

37 Nossal, 74-76.



ity. This is significant considering the circumstances of the early 1970s. The breakdown of Bretton Woods and the first oil shock of 1973 created a stagflation tide in most OECD countries. As a response, a lot of those adopted what was later called “neo-protectionist” policies in order to get their economies back on track.<sup>38</sup> Yet, for reasons we now know, Canada, as a small and open economy, could not afford to implement such a measure. It was also not in a position to resort to capital controls, as foreign investment was central in stimulating its economy.<sup>39</sup> One must then expect that some societal groups might have exerted pressure on the Canadian government to intervene in some way. In spite of that, the gains in independence and sovereignty brought by this policy shift are not to be diminished. Those were, in fact, instrumental. This is all the more true bearing in mind that it occurred in concert with an overall reevaluation of the nature of the Canada-United States relation by the Canadian society and government. This profound questioning was in part the result of expanding disparities in economic growth in the 1960s.<sup>40</sup> It also had to do with the fact that the Nixon administration refused to exempt Canada from the 10 per cent “import surcharge” it imposed on all G10 countries, as a coercive means to oblige currency revaluation, following the closing of the gold window in 1971.<sup>41</sup> Indeed, if this was a surprise to the Canadian officials in Washington, it was all the more unsettling for the Canadian population. It was perceived as a breach of trust in the “special relationship” that had implicitly been established between the two neighbors. On the other hand, Canada was absolved from participation in the Smithsonian Agreement<sup>42</sup>, an unsuccessful attempt at correcting the “misdénomination” of the USD to halt speculation. It stipulated that all G10 countries were to revalue their currencies against the USD by a little more than 10 per cent, while the United States would devalue by a little less than 10 per cent.<sup>43</sup> This happened exclusively because Canada was already floating its dollar. In this sense, it is clear that the policy shift of 1970 gave Canada more leverage, by increasing its independence

38 Eden and Molot, 240.

39 Helleiner, 36.

40 Robert Gilpin, “Integration and Disintegration of the North American Continent,” *International Organizations*, 28.4 (1974): 863-865.

41 Webb, 167.

42 Ibid.

43 Brawley, 331-332.

vis-à-vis the United States. It was able to retain a comparative advantage in trade by keeping the value of the dollar a little under that of the USD by more or less two cents.<sup>44</sup> This small but significant difference targets exactly that “zero-sum pursuit of supposed economic interests of the people of one country with regards for those of another country”<sup>45</sup> discussed earlier. Indeed, the whole point of the Smithsonian Agreement was for the United States to appear powerful and coercive. Canada, by staying out if it, gave the tone to a decade of distancing and of economic sovereignty reassertion. Indeed, this economic advantage allowed Canada to get out of this stagflation phase and eventually to impose, for the first time, laws regulating capital inflows.<sup>46</sup> Once again, this was directly aimed at reducing American stranglehold on Canadian resources and development.

Although each of those measures have been more beneficial for some societal groups than others – and this is clearly not to be neglected – they also fostered and fueled a widespread sentiment of nationalism cutting across classes and economic sectors. It is then not surprising that the political class was so supportive of this popular idea. After all, Prime Minister Trudeau, in his 1970 *Foreign Policy for Canadians*, placed “sovereignty and independence” as second in his list of “areas of national interests.”<sup>47</sup> Moreover, an indirect consequence of the adoption of this monetary regime was the ability by the government to pursue a “lax fiscal policy” and spend a lot on social programs, thereby legitimating itself in the eyes of its population and promoting domestic economic growth.<sup>48</sup>

### Conclusion

To conclude, one can plausibly argue that economic nationalism, as a widespread and deep-rooted ideology, was present in Canada when time came to determine which exchange-rate regime would be most suitable after Bretton Woods. In other words, monetary policy became in 1970, and for the rest of the decade, a politi-

44 Webb, 166.

45 Baugh and Yaprak, 763.

46 Bank of Canada, “Return to a Floating Rate,” [http://www.bank-banque-canada.ca/en/dollar\\_book/june1970.pdf](http://www.bank-banque-canada.ca/en/dollar_book/june1970.pdf).

47 Steven Kendall Holloway, *Canadian Foreign Policy: Defining the National Interest* (Peterborough: Broadview Press, 2006), 17.

48 Webb, 168-170.

cal means and an important instrument towards the achievement of greater independence and sovereignty in the context of highly integrated economies, such as those of the United States and Canada.

As far as generalization goes, in-depth examination of political intentionality behind policy outputs needs to be conducted in order to argue anything serious. However, it is legitimate to think that nationalism, be it economic or not, is not something that easily fades out. It might have gained momentum in reaction to some catalyzing events throughout history, but it is fair to say that it has always been present with regards to the United States. On a related issue, Nossal looks into the question of a second level of economic nationalism appearing in the late 1970s-early 1980s: the “Quebécois” economic nationalism, directed towards English Canada.<sup>49</sup> It would certainly be interesting to see how it intervened in the Canada-United States economic relation. Indeed, one might expect that a phenomenon of counter-balancing of the “Toronto center” with the “American center”, through the exploitation of constitutional loopholes regarding foreign economic affairs, is likely to have taken place. At least, it seems quite logical in the context of economic nationalism.

49 Nossal, 67-77.

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# Reclaiming Canadian History:

An Examination of Black Women  
in Canadian WWII Portraiture

**Isabel Luce**

## Reclaiming Canadian History: An Examination of Black Women in Canadian WWII Portraiture

In September 1939, Canada officially entered World War II.<sup>1</sup> Because a *total war* required as much manpower as could be recruited, black and aboriginal populations (previously rejected by enlistment offices during World War I) were now encouraged to fight for their country. At the same time, due to the ever-growing demand for personnel, the Canadian Women's Army Corps (CWAC) was created in 1941 in order to encourage women's participation in the war effort through non-combative support roles.<sup>2</sup> Although 21,624 women served during the war, the existence of black and aboriginal women within these ranks has been largely overlooked. Grace Poulin's 2007 book "Aboriginal Women: Invisible Servicewomen in Canada," examined the role of aboriginal women within the Canadian Armed forces, arguing that "if women [were] the invisible combatants of WWII... aboriginal women were more invisible"<sup>3</sup> because they could often pass by unnoticed as if they were someone of European descent, thereby hiding their origin. Like those of aboriginal women, black women's contributions to Canada's WWII effort have also gone unnoticed. In fact, their contributions to the war effort have been glossed over as if they were nonexistent.

Painting is one of the few sources, however, that has acknowledged black women's participation in the CWAC and other groups. By examining problematic modes of representation present in two portraits by white artists of black women, I hope to uncover any hidden power dynamics at play. The first painting, "Private Roy," by war artist Molly Lamb Bobak (fig. 1), depicts a young black woman staffing a canteen. The second portrait, "Young Black Girl," by Alma Duncan (fig. 2), depicts a young black woman wearing civilian clothing. Both paintings were created around the same time, but illustrate different approaches to representation of the black female body relating to the very different levels of social acceptance and inclusion that the black population in Canada experienced during this period. Ultimately, I use these two portraits to explore the experiences of black women in Canada throughout the Second World War

1 "World War II," *Ontario Black History Society*, Accessed November 15<sup>th</sup>, 2011, <http://www.blackhistorysociety.ca/news.php/news/30>.

2 Ibid.

3 Grace Poulin, "Paving the Way: WWII Servicewomen in Canada," CFB Esquimalt Naval & Military Museum, Accessed November 24, 2011, [http://www.navalandmilitarymuseum.org/resource\\_pages/pavingtheway/poulin.html](http://www.navalandmilitarymuseum.org/resource_pages/pavingtheway/poulin.html).



as well as their importance on the home front and to the war effort as a whole.

From the War of 1812 to both World Wars, black Canadians have a long history of fighting on behalf of Canada; however, they have had to consistently fight for their right to do so.<sup>4</sup> In World War I a number of black men attempted to enlist in the army but were turned away because their white contemporaries refused to fight alongside them.<sup>5</sup> Only when the need for manpower became critical did Canada resort to enlisting 1,049 black men in the segregated “No.2 Construction Battalion.”<sup>6</sup> These men were given non-combatant roles and assigned menial tasks like construction jobs throughout the war.<sup>7</sup> By the war’s end, many of these men had proven their loyalty and bravery on the field, but came home to find that they were still discriminated against in Canadian society. Many soldiers were forced to return to the jobs they held before the war because racism prevented them from obtaining other employment opportunities.<sup>8</sup> Historian Robin Winks has explained that many black Canadians began to see the United States as a more desirable place to live during this period, as even though racism appeared to be more overt there, it was at least clear where one was able or unable to work.<sup>9</sup> In Canada, it was virtually impossible to know whether one would be turned away from a hotel, restaurant or bar simply based on race due to the less overt style of racism practiced.<sup>10</sup> The years leading up to the Second World War were particularly difficult. Often referred to as the “Dirty Thirties,” the Depression resulted in approximately half of the black population in Canada losing their jobs.<sup>11</sup> When the Second World War was declared in 1939, many unemployed black men were partially motivated to enlist by the need to support their families. This time, they were allowed to enlist and fight alongside white men; however, racism within the ranks continued to exist and would often show itself in more

4 Poulin, 427.

5 Robin W. Winks, *The Blacks in Canada: A History* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1971), 421.

6 “World War II,” *Ontario Black History Society*. Accessed November 15<sup>th</sup>, 2011, <http://www.blackhistorysociety.ca/news.php/news/30>.

7 It also must be noted that according to the census from 1911, there were 16,900 black Canadians in Canada at this point, which meant 16% of the population chose to enter the war effort, which was a significant number, *Ibid*.

8 Despite the racism still present, it is also important to mention that this period saw the beginning of local organizations like the “Porters’ Mutual Benefit Association organized in 1917, as a way to unite workers, and together try to improve work conditions. This group evolved into the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, whose membership grew increasingly throughout the Second World War. Winks, 421.

9 *Ibid*, 427.

10 *Ibid*.

11 *Ibid*.

subtle ways.

In 1941, it became clear to the Canadian government that even more workers were needed to assist with the war effort. At the same time women were pushing for the right to join the Canadian forces in a more direct ways. Though initially met with apprehension by both the government and popular opinion, the Canadian Women's Army Corps (CWAC) was officially established on July 30, 1941 and a number of women immediately enlisted and began their training.<sup>12</sup> The idea of including women within the army did not fit with traditional gender roles – for many it was difficult to see a woman in the role of warrior.<sup>13</sup> Therefore, the women who did join soon found themselves in non-combat roles that would free up soldiers to fight overseas. They worked as “drivers, cooks, clerks, typists, stenographers, telephone operators, [and] messengers.”<sup>14</sup>

Vancouver-born artist Molly Lamb Bobak was one of these early women to enlist in the CWAC in 1942.<sup>15</sup> She began working as a waitress in an army canteen, and as a set designer for the Army Shows taking place in Toronto, and within two years, rose to the position of lieutenant. In 1944, she was awarded third prize in the Canadian Army Art Competition and soon after, she was awarded the title of “official war artist,” being the only woman of the 31 war artists hired.<sup>16</sup> A war artist was required to record what life was like on a daily basis during the war; however, Bobak's role was to capture the lives of women in CWAC and the Women's Royal Navy Service (WRENS). During this period Bobak would produce over four hundred works and several illustrated war diaries.<sup>17</sup>

Bobak painted “Private Roy” (fig.1) in 1946 at a fort in Halifax.<sup>18</sup> In the painting, Private Roy stands in uniform behind the army canteen's counter, arms crossed over her chest and eyes downcast. It must be

12 Barbara Dundas and Dr. Serge Durlfingler, “The Canadian Women's Army Corps, 1941-1946- Dispatches: Backgrounders in Canadian Military History,” (*Canadian War Museum*, accessed November 15<sup>th</sup>, 2011), <http://www.warmuseum.ca/education/online-educational-resources/dispatches/the-canadian-womens-army-corps-1941-1946/>.

13 Some of these Post-war changes included, by 1922, women having the right to vote in every province in Canada with the exception of Quebec. Women were wearing “shorter skirts, cigarette smoking, [using] mechanical labour-saving devices and [developed] new attitudes towards the raising of children.” Tippett, 61.

14 Dundas and Durlfingler.

15 Alex Bobak, “Biographical Notes – Molly Lamb Bobak,” Accessed November 30, 2011, [http://www.bobakart.com/Artist\\_Biographies.html](http://www.bobakart.com/Artist_Biographies.html).

16 Ibid.

17 Ibid.

18 It was most likely done at the Halifax Citadel, which was in operation throughout both World Wars. Cindy Richmond and Brian Foss. *Molly Lamb Bobak: A Retrospective* (Regina, Sask.: MacKenzie Art Gallery, 1993), 109.

emphasized that portraits of black women by a white artist inherently include racial hierarchies that are obvious due to the power imbalance between sitter and painter, as art historian Charmaine Nelson has examined in her vast scholarship on the subject.<sup>19</sup> However, Bobak takes a sensitive approach to her subject, painting Private Roy as her equal, and as primarily a soldier.

Describing the painting, Charmaine Nelson writes, “the relationship between the artist and subject comes closer to equality... [as] both women were military officers and Private Roy was under no obligation (financial or otherwise) to sit for Bobak’s portrait.”<sup>20</sup> Bobak also wrote in her war diary that no matter what their place of origin, all the women “were made equal by the uniform.”<sup>21</sup> The title of the painting emphasizes this sense of equality as Bobak chooses to name Private Roy, rather than referring to her simply by her race and gender, as was common practice for artists producing similar paintings around this time. Describing the painting, Bobak explains that she “has caught her at a point in time [where] she’ll always be young and she’ll always be Private Roy to those who see her.”<sup>22</sup> Bobak’s use of her name implies that Private Roy becomes the subject rather than the object of the painting, as Roy’s likeness is emphasized rather than the artist’s expressive brushstroke.

This relationship of equality between artist and subject is perhaps made more evident after considering another painting, “Negress,” made just ten years earlier by Aleksandre Bercovitch (fig. 3). Bercovitch, a Russian immigrant who arrived in Montreal in 1926, spent the next ten years of his life in difficult living conditions, supporting his family on the little money he received as portrait commissions.<sup>23</sup> He painted “Negress” during these years. The portrait is of a woman whose name (and by extension, her identity) has been erased. She is simply an object to be regarded as a reflection of Bercovitch’s skill as a painter. Though she is dressed in modern and modest attire – a jacket over a pink striped shirt – her placement against a lush flowery background is contentious. The background may refer to the tropical locale that Bercovitch believes to be inherently associated with the black “savage” body. The woman is represented as a type rather than an individual; her grim face and far-off expression take away her personality. The power imbalance is evident in

19 Charmaine Nelson, *Through An-Other’s Eyes: White Canadian Artists–Black Female Subjects* (Oshawa, Ontario: Robert McLaughlin Gallery, 1998), 26.

20 Ibid.

21 Dundas, 68.

22 Dundas and Durflinger.

23 Roberts Adams, *The Life and Work of Alexander Bercovitch* (Montreal, Quebec: Editions Marlowe, 1988), 33.

this portrait as Bercovitch most likely hired his model to pose for him, and therefore, the subject would have likely had no input in the way she was represented.<sup>24</sup> The painting of Private Roy, on the other hand, displays a much clearer sense of individuality. Though both of the women in the paintings may appear melancholy, Private Roy appears attentive and aware as she looks off into the distance, engaged in thoughtful contemplation.

Despite the initial sense of equality one may read from the portrait of Private Roy, we must also be kept in mind that as a Lieutenant, Molly Lamb Bobak was Private Roy's superior. There are many possibilities as to why Bobak was able to rise so quickly to Lieutenant, while Roy remained only a Private (perhaps Private Roy joined the war effort later than Bobak); however, it must be acknowledged that race often came into consideration when privates were up for promotion. A black woman would have been more likely to be passed over for a promotion in order to avoid the racist uproar that could have happened in response to black woman having authority over her white contemporaries. In 1975, Bobak wrote, "I don't paint people with souls... I don't probe into things, I guess you could say I choose to avoid confrontations."<sup>25</sup> This is the reason Bobak also enjoyed painting large crowded scenes, as this deeper level was not required (as seen in figure 4).<sup>26</sup> This difference in rank and avoidance of portraying a person's deeper emotions and characteristics may account for the sense of alienation and disconnection that is also present within the portrait.

One reason that few women of colour enlisted with the Canadian forces was that the enlistment requirements were particularly, though covertly, exclusionary. An advertisement posted in the Edmonton Journal, in 1943, explained that prospective women applying for the Canadian Women's Army Corps "had to be in excellent health, at least five feet tall and 105 pounds (or within 10 pounds above or below the standard of weight laid down in medical tables for different heights), with no dependents, a minimum of Grade 8 education, aged 18 to 45, and a British subject, as Canadians were at that time."<sup>27</sup> Though these requirements did not contain a direct reference to race, it must be taken into account that

24 It also must be acknowledged that there were a number of women who resorted to modeling for portraits during this period, as the Great Depression forced women to take jobs they would otherwise not consider.

25 Richmond and Foss, 110.

26 I have included this work as another example of Molly Lamb Bobak's war paintings, but also because the woman on the proper left has a similar hairstyle and stature to Private Roy. It would be assuming too much to say that it was the same person – simply the similarities are intriguing.

27 "World War II," *Ontario Black History Society*. Accessed November 15<sup>th</sup>, 2011, <http://www.blackhistorysociety.ca/news.php/news/30>.

many recruiters interpreted the phrase “British subject” to mean “white.”<sup>28</sup> Though recruiters did not have an official policy of turning away black enlistees, they would often become particularly stringent in enforcing other rules in order to disqualify black or aboriginal candidates.

As Private Roy’s portrait was painted at a fort in Halifax, the racial history of the province may give an even greater understanding of black Canadians’ maltreatment and its effect on Roy as a young woman. According to historian Robert Winks, throughout the 1930s there was persistent evidence of racism throughout the province of Nova Scotia as “job opportunities for black men were few, and the segregated schools continued to reinforce the racist assumptions of many rural Nova Scotians.”<sup>29</sup> Other areas in Canada were not much better as Montreal in the 1940s had “only one hotel [that] could be depended upon not to turn [blacks] away.”<sup>30</sup> During these war years, the demographics were changing in the larger cities as a growing number of black immigrants were arriving from Jamaica, the Bahamas, British Guiana, Bermuda, and St. Vincent, and were settling throughout Nova Scotia, joining the segregated black communities who had been living there already for more than one hundred years.<sup>31</sup> Private Roy likely encountered segregationist policies and may have joined the army as a last-resort employment opportunity.

Alma Duncan, born in Paris, Ontario in 1917, entered the Canadian Women’s Army Corps as an unofficial war artist and spent most of her time painting factory workers in Montreal.<sup>32</sup> Alma painted “Young Black Girl” (fig. 2) in 1941, alongside artists Neumann and Roberts and likely would have consulted them for comments and feedback. The year after Duncan’s painting was completed, Neumann finished his own portrait of a black woman entitled “Seated Nude” (fig. 5).<sup>33</sup> Though no indicator of

28 Winks, 420.

29 There was one example in particular that showed the racist climate of Nova Scotia, as in October 1937, a black man bought a house in Trenton, Nova Scotia. That day a crowd of one hundred white protesters arrived to stone the owner and break into the house. The RCMP came to disperse the crowd, but it only came back that night, with three hundred more people. They destroyed the man’s house, as well as two other houses nearby also belonging to black families. The RCMP did not intervene this second time because the mayor refused to tell them to interfere. The only man who was arrested after it was all over and done was a black man who apparently assaulted a woman during the riot. Ibid.

30 Ibid.

31 Many of these original settlers being escaped slaves who fled the United States to settle in Nova Scotia in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. Ibid, 334.

32 Tippett, 62.

33 This painting by Ernst Neumann (1907-1956) was found through an auction site called artnet.com. I came across no other reference to this painting, other than this auction page, where they declare the originally owner to be a Francis Cohen from Montreal (born in 1922), who passed it on to his son, <http://>

race is mentioned in the title of Neumann's painting, the woman's dark skin, the texture of her black hair, and the way Neumann has portrayed her with a bare chest suggests that the portrait is of a black woman. It would be impossible to conclude that this is model was the same as the one who appears in Duncan's portrait; however, this relationship may be an indicator of how Duncan acquired her model. As Maria Tippett explains in her book *By a Lady*, women during the 1930s and early 1940s were often unable to hire their models due to societal constraints, and would instead persuade friends and family members to pose for them. Men, on the other hand, could attain their subjects in a businesslike manner, hiring models for a fee.<sup>34</sup> As opposed to Molly Lamb Bobak, who most likely knew her sitter and asked Private Roy to sit for her, it is likely that Duncan hired her black model with the assistance of Neumann and Roberts. This relationship of employer and employee precludes any agency on behalf of the sitter as to how she would be represented, and cements the sense of hierarchy of the white woman artist over her subject.

Due to the Depression, many women took up modeling; as a profession, it proved to be quite lucrative. One white model, Madeleine Rocheleau Boyer, wrote that she received around \$34.00 a week, which was much preferred to the \$7.50 a week she made through bookkeeping.<sup>35</sup> Black women models would have received a much lower remuneration; however, it would still have been a preferable profession to fall back on. At the same time, black women in Montreal were working together on behalf of their community through organizations such as 'The Women's Club,' a group founded in 1902 that sponsored bake sales, ran dramatic skits and art shows, and purchased graves for the poorer individuals in the black community.<sup>36</sup> This group was very active throughout the two World Wars, providing aid to members of their own community and donating to the war effort. Other organizations included the Little Mothers League, which ensured that young black girls would learn their household duties, and the Phyllis Wheatley Art Club that was formed in 1922 in order to give young women a sense of purpose through the arts.<sup>37</sup> The woman portrayed in Duncan's painting was likely working as a model in order to support herself and her family, and there is a possibility that she was involved with or connected to 'The Women's Club' and/or the 'Little Mothers League.'

[www.artnet.com/Artists/LotDetailPage.aspx?lot\\_id=48B1181CFB6564C10F391288B29A7DA8](http://www.artnet.com/Artists/LotDetailPage.aspx?lot_id=48B1181CFB6564C10F391288B29A7DA8).

<sup>34</sup> The exception to this rule seems to be Prudence Heward as she painted a number of black women in Montreal during the 1930s. Tippett, 87.

<sup>35</sup> Barbara Meadowcroft, *Painting Friends: The Beaver Hall Woman Painters* (Montréal: Véhicule Press, 1999), 121.

<sup>36</sup> Winks, 417.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

The title of the painting, “Young black Girl,” is another example of the artist taking away the identity of the sitter through not recording her name. Therefore, it is nearly impossible to understand in more detail who she may have been other than using broad conjecture. In comparison to “Private Roy,” this sitter is portrayed as a type rather than an individual, with her eyes entirely closed, and her face completely lacking in expression. The painting now belongs to the Art Gallery of Ontario, having been donated by the artist in 1999, five years before the subject passed away.<sup>38</sup> The painting had therefore been in Duncan’s possession for sixty years, from the time it was painted in 1940. As Duncan had no inclination to sell the work, the painting appears to have been produced for non-monetary reasons. Therefore, further examination is needed in order to decipher the motives for the creation of this work.<sup>39</sup>

By examining these portraits of black women during the Second World War, one is able to reclaim some of this “lost history”. Though racism in Canada is often subtle in nature, it can be just as harmful as more overt prejudice. Canadians may not have rejected black men and women from fighting in the Second World War, yet treatment towards them once they joined was peppered with discrimination and abuse. A cursory look at the paintings by Molly Lamb Bobak, Alma Duncan and even Aleksandre Bercovitch show how complex the painter-sitter relationship can be and exemplifies the need for closer readings of titles. Knowledge of the artist and the social climate in which the work was painted is also vital in order to understand underlying messages of a painting. Future scholarship is required on this subject in order to more fully comprehend the lives of the women within these paintings; however, simply stepping back and taking a critical approach to viewing a piece of artwork is an essential step towards becoming aware of these wider colonial and post-colonial issues inherent in Canadian portraiture.

38 Winks, 417.

39 Consulting many of the artists’ diaries in the National Archives of Canada would be a great place to start.



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## Plate List

Figure 1: Molly Lamb Bobak, *Private Roy, Canadian Women's Army Corps*, 1946, oil on masonite, 76.4x60.8cm, Canadian War Museum, painted in Halifax, Canada.

Figure 2: Alma Duncan, *Young Black Girl*, 1940, oil on laminated paperboard, 41.5x33cm, Art Gallery of Ontario, painted in Montreal, Canada.

Figure 3: Aleksandre Bercovitch, *Negress*, 1935, oil on canvas,

93.3x60cm, purchased in 1942 by the Art Gallery of Ontario, painted in Montreal, Canada.

Figure 4: Molly Lamb Bobak, Canteen Njmegen, 1945, oil on canvas, War Museum of Canada, Ottawa, Canada.

Figure 5: Ernst Neumann, Seated Nude, 1941, oil on canvas, 50.8x40.6cm, [www.askart.com](http://www.askart.com) (Auction Site), painted in Montreal, Canada.

# The Opinion-Policy Link or the Process-Policy link?

Representative Democracy, Participatory  
Democracy, and Deliberation

**Taylor Rusnak**

## The Opinion-Policy Link or the Process-Policy Link? Representative Democracy, Participatory Democracy, and Deliberation

If our government created the best policies for everyone, would we be OK with forgoing participation in political institutions? Though many people would say “yes,” the few who say “no” would be tempted to resort to the implausibility of the hypothetical question, “No purple women can develop perfect policies for green men!” For the most part, we understand the quality of our democracy as measured by the extent to which it provides citizens with the policy they want. This makes “yes” the easy answer to the question of policy or participation. On the other hand, if asked whether or not we would prefer a dictatorship to a democracy if the former made better policy, most citizens of Canada, I suspect, would have a more difficult time answering the affirmative. Normatively, we perhaps prefer democracy because it provides us with a means of participation, or some feeling of self-determination. This hypothetical exercise only suggests that the importance of participation is up for debate.

What we do know, however, is that citizens as a whole are less engaged in the political system than ever before. The 2008 federal election had a record low turnout of 59.1%, while the 2011 election raised the numbers only slightly to 61.1%.<sup>1</sup> Though the data are not entirely clear, there is evidence that party membership rates are lower in Canada than in any other Western democracy.<sup>2</sup> Telling is the fact that “democratic deficit” is becoming a cliché description of the relationship between the Canadian government and the Canadian public. According to a study by the Canadian Institute of Wellbeing, the overwhelming majority of Canadians do not believe the federal government has made their lives better.<sup>3</sup> In addition, public opinion surveys have shown that a majority of citizens believe that “those elected to parliament soon lose touch with the people” and believe

1 Elections Canada, “Preliminary Results,” [http://enr.elections.ca/National\\_e.aspx](http://enr.elections.ca/National_e.aspx).

2 William P. Cross and R. Kenneth Carty, “Canadian Democracy,” in *Auditing Canadian Democracy*. (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2010), 227.

3 Democratic Engagement: A Report of the Canadian Index of Wellbeing (January 2010)

that “people like me do not have any say over what the government does”.<sup>4</sup> In a 2005 poll, only 27% of people polled said they trusted the government to do what was right always or most of the time.<sup>5</sup>

A variety of different responses have emerged to deal with this “deficit.” For some, improving how well government policy represents public opinion is the most important task.<sup>6</sup> The proposed solutions involve changing elements of representation, such as electoral reform.<sup>7</sup> However, other movements for change focus directly on renewed levels of participation by ordinary citizens.<sup>8</sup> I will argue that increased deliberative participation is the most important change needed to counter the “democratic deficit” because the process itself has unique benefits that electoral reform, federal structuring or other changes to representation cannot accomplish. I outline representative and participatory-deliberative democratic theory, propose a restructuring of Canadian political parties based on the participatory-deliberative model, and show why prioritizing participation and deliberation can address the democratic malaise better than prioritizing the opinion-policy link. This paper is not meant to be an in-depth review of the literature on democratic theory, but an account of how major problems in Canadian democracy can be addressed.

## Representative Democracy

Late eighteenth century representative government was radically different from today’s democracy.<sup>9</sup> One was government by

4 Cross, 227. Also see Nevitte, Neil (2002), 23; indicates the numbers are 63% and 53% respectively.

5 The poll was conducted by Prof. David Zussman of EKOS for the Trudeau Foundation. See: CTV.ca News Staff, “Trust in federal government hits new low: poll,” Friday November 11, 2005

6 For an example of the opinion-policy link, see Erin Penner, Stuart Soroka, and Kelly Blidook (2006) and Francois Petry and Matthew Mendensohn (2004).

7 See Henry Milner, *Making Every Vote Count: Reassessing Canada’s Electoral System* (Peterborough, Ont., Canada: Broadview Press, 1999).

8 For example, participedia.com, a self-professed “tool for strengthening democracy,” contains articles about cases, experiences, methods, and organizations of participatory governance: [http://www.participedia.net/wiki/Welcome\\_to\\_Participedia](http://www.participedia.net/wiki/Welcome_to_Participedia) and [deliberative-democracy.net](http://deliberative-democracy.net) is the online home for the “Deliberative Democracy Consortium”, which brings together “practitioners and researchers” in an effort to institutionalize deliberative democracy in the United States and around the world. Also see Gigendal, Elisabeth et.al., in Cross, 2010.

9 Bernard Manin, *The Principles of Representative Government* (Cambridge:

the people; one was government for the people. Representative democracy and direct democracy differ from each other. The former involves representatives acting on the citizens' behalf<sup>10</sup> while the latter involves popular participation in decision-making. Four principles of representative democracies can be observed: regular elections of representatives, a degree of independence from the electorate to the representatives, an electorate that is free to express their opinions, and debate.<sup>11</sup> By most versions of democratic theory, a "key characteristic of democracy is the continuing responsiveness of the government to the preferences of its citizens, considered as political equals."<sup>12</sup> This link has become the ultimate test for the quality of *representative* democracy.

Pitkin provides one of the most influential accounts of representation in democracy. Through "substantive" representation, representatives act "in the interest of the represented, in a manner responsive to them".<sup>13</sup> The "interests" by which the representative acts are the aggregate preferences of individuals.<sup>14</sup> She acknowledges that the representative acts within an elaborate network of pressures, demands, and obligations. They also face difficulty in determining the interests of both individuals (as dialogue is not incorporated into elections), and the constituency as a whole.<sup>15</sup> Thus, the concept of "representative democracy" refers to the over-all structure and functioning of the system.<sup>16</sup>

The debate between representative democracy and participatory democracy reflects assumptions about the role of democracy itself. "Realist" versions of democracy, such as described by Nordlinger and Sartori, stress accountability, political representation, and leadership.<sup>17</sup> For Sartori, democracy is simply a byproduct of

Cambridge University Press, 1997), 4.

10 Ibid., 5.

11 Ibid., 6

12 Robert Alan Dahl, *Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1971), 1.

13 Hannah Fenichel Pitkin, *The Concept of Representation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), 209.

14 Peter Fabienne, *Democratic Legitimacy* (New York: Routledge, 2009), 7-9, and Richard C.G. Johnston, "Political Parties and the Electoral System," in *The Oxford Handbook of Canadian Politics*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 208-225.

15 Pitkin, 219-220.

16 Ibid., 222

17 Eric A. Nordlinger, *On the Autonomy of the Democratic State* (Cambridge,

political competition between leaders.<sup>18</sup> These conceptions would lead one to argue for institutional changes that provide incentives for the representative to *better* act in citizens' interests. As I will show, in the modern Canadian context, representation in government, although necessary, is no longer sufficient for citizens with complex identities who desire to participate in decisions that affect their lives. The link between the legislative representative and "acting for" (representing) in the legislature is too strong. The consequence is a lack of trust of government and disempowerment of citizens. Furthermore, there is a lack of legitimacy in current forms of representation, partly a consequence of, and partly resulting in, a lack of engagement.

### **Deliberative Democracy**

Before delving further into these problems, it is necessary to discuss participatory and deliberative democratic theory. There is a rich literature on participatory democracy, and a wide variety of ideas among the theorists about what it means and how it should manifest itself. Warren writes the various changes that have come about in society, and the new forms of political participation via emerging communications technology, civil society associations, and other institutions that exist outside the state, and discusses new methods of participation such as interest groups and civil society associations.<sup>19</sup> Laclau and Mouffe discuss new social movement actors that function outside of existing representative democracy.<sup>20</sup> Participatory democrats find their roots in ancient conceptions of citizenship from writers like Rousseau.<sup>21</sup> To them, "an average of 12 crosses on a ballot during a lifetime is an insufficient test of democratic citizenship".<sup>22</sup> Meaningful participation is when a person "has a sense of her involvement in a total enterprise, a sense where her effort fits into an overall plan, when she identifies with the collective goals, has a feeling of efficacy with respect to the accomplishment

Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1981) and Giovanni Sartori, *The Theory of Democracy Revisited* (Chatham, N.J.: Chatham House Publishers, 1987.)

18 Sartori, 152.

19 Mark E. Warren, "What Can Democratic Representation Mean Today?" in *Representation and Democratic Theory* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2004), 202.

20 Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics* (London: Verso, 1985).

21 Geraint Parry and George Moyser. In Beetham, David ed. (1994), 45.

22 Ibid; p. 46

of the goals, and has a stake in the results of the total enterprise”.<sup>23</sup> Participatory democracy has historically been associated with social movements, while a new branch of the theory, deliberative democracy, has changed the focus to the content and quality of participation.<sup>24</sup> In Cohen’s ideal procedure of deliberative democracy:

“...participants regard one another as equals; they aim to defend and criticize institutions and programs in terms of considerations that others have reason to accept, given the fact of reasonable pluralism and the assumption that those others are reasonable...”<sup>25</sup>

For participatory democrats, counter to the more minimalist versions of representative democracy, democracy should be a transformative process<sup>26</sup>, not a mere aggregation of individual interests. “Transformation” through democratic participation takes place at the individual, local, and national level.

These “talk-centric” theories of democracy are different from voting-centric theories of democracy. Talk-centric focuses on the communicative processes of opinion and the formation that precedes voting. This is at the crux of participatory-deliberative democratic theory. Importantly, participants in deliberation can “find reasons they can accept in collective actions, not necessarily the ones they completely endorse or find maximally advantageous”.<sup>27</sup> Voting-centric views are the foundation of prioritizing substantive representation in representative democratic theory. This model views democracy as the fair aggregation of fixed preferences and interests.

However, questions in deliberative democratic theory per-

23 Dimitrios I. Roussopoulos and George C. Benello, 57.

24 “Deliberative Democracy and Opinion Formation,” PHD Thesis (2004). Accessed December 12, 2011. [www.kaspermhansen.eu/Work/Hansen2004.pdf](http://www.kaspermhansen.eu/Work/Hansen2004.pdf), 94.

25 Joshua Cohen, *Philosophy, Politics, Democracy: Selected Essays* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2009), 161.

26 Catherine Frost, “Getting to Yes: People, Practices, and the Paradox of Multicultural Democracy,” in *Representation and Democratic Theory* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2004), 58.

27 Archon Fung and Erik Olin Wright, *Deepening Democracy: Institutional Innovations in Empowered Participatory Governance* (London: Verso, 2003), 17.



sist, such as the extent to which deliberation must be “complete” and what topics should be deliberated. Ultimately, deliberative democracy is not an alternative to representative democracy; it is an expansion of it.<sup>28</sup> As this is the case, I focus here on applying a practical form of it as a basis for discussing why increased deliberation and participation will most effectively address the “democratic deficit”. In this paper, participation and deliberative democracy shall both be used to refer to meaningful involvement in policy outcomes and opportunities for deliberation amongst citizens, and between citizens and policy-makers.

### The Model

Political distrust and alienation has left Canadians with low and ever declining confidence in political parties. Few Canadians participate in party activities. Though the data is not entirely clear, there is evidence that party membership rates are lower in Canada than in any other Western democracy.<sup>29</sup> It is imperative to discuss the role of parties because they are supposed to be the dominant institutions of representation and participation. Although Canadians see political parties as a fundamental aspect of democracy, a paradox lies in the fact that people do not believe that joining a party will allow them to influence policy.<sup>30</sup>

This perception is warranted. Public participation in policy decisions has been limited to passing consultations about ideas and agendas that are already formulated and controlled by the government. Opportunities for meaningful participation outside elections are limited. Electoral reform has even been considered as a way for the electorate to reconnect to political parties, but there is no indication that citizens broadly support electoral reform.<sup>31</sup>

Cross advocates for party-operated policy foundations because they would allow for the marriage of political realities of brokerage politics and the parliamentary system with serious consider-

28 Delli Carpini, Michael X., Fay L. Cook, and Lawrence R. Jacobs, “Public Deliberation, Discursive Participation, and Citizen Engagement: A Review of the Empirical Literature,” *Annual Review of Political Science* 7 (2004): 317.

29 Cross, 227.

30 William Cross and Lisa Young, “Are Canadian Political Parties Empty Vessels?” *IRPP* 12.4 (2006): 22

31 Neil Nevitte, *Value Change and Governance in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002), 29.

ation of public policy.<sup>32</sup> I would extend this idea to the restructuring of parties as a combination of a policy foundation and a deliberative poll.<sup>33</sup> Agenda setting and policy formation would be the result of multiple local, deliberative meetings that take place across the country. The forums would involve deliberation amongst citizens, and, importantly, amongst citizens and their elected (or potential) representatives. Public funding of parties, limits on campaign spending, and a mandatory percentage of party budget dedicated to this function would make it financially attainable.<sup>34</sup> Regardless, the benefits for democracy outweigh the financial costs. The deliberative forums would first be conducted like a non-partisan policy-foundation, and then would be followed by a partisan forum. The reason for this is to ensure parties and citizens are exposed to a diversity of opinions in their opinion and will formation, then are provided with a way to meaningfully connect to their party's final platforms.

The accessibility of these deliberative forums is key, so parties would need to actively seek a wide range of citizen involvement outside of election time. Special consideration of circumstances would be made to ensure they are accessible to the least empowered in the community, in order to address the concerns about participation being an option only to higher income citizens.<sup>35</sup> This implies means these forums would not be implemented uniformly everywhere, but changing times, frequency, place, and size to accommodate different to social needs.

Policy, party platforms, and policy decisions are the outcome, but policy is not the purpose of this model. The purpose of party restructuring is to provide citizens with a means of participation and to include public deliberation within the existing political institutions. Voting for a party will take place as it did before, but party-platforms and policies will be the result of public deliberation. Thus, the basis of decision-making by both the electorate and

32 Cross, 158.

33 Fishkin's deliberative poll involves randomly selected a group of ordinary citizens (as representative as possible) who receive extensive information on an issue, and proceed to participate in a weekend of deliberation. The citizens are polled before and after the deliberation process, and the results are televised. See James S. Fishkin and Robert C. Luskin, "The quest for deliberative democracy," in *Innovation, Deliberation, representation, and association* (New York: Routledge, 2000).

34 Cross, 159.

35 Ibid., 100.

the government will be deeper than aggregate self-interests. The foundations for representation will be more legitimate, because the platforms being voted on have a participatory base, and are justified to the electorate and party members. Moreover, citizen engagement will increase because their participation will be “meaningful”.

The Representative-Representing Problem Returning to issues brought up earlier, I propose that solutions are to be found in the *process* of policy-making, not in solely the outcome. The highly prioritized opinion-policy link in democracy is the foundation of a minimalist version.<sup>36</sup> The current form of representation in the legislature is disempowering because a power gap emerges between ordinary citizens and their representatives and the masses become alienated and dissatisfied.<sup>37</sup> Donald Savoie writes about the concentration of power in the hands of party leaders. According to him, policy decision-making is increasingly occurring behind closed doors.<sup>38</sup> Disempowerment of citizens is less a consequence of the resulting policies, but of the process that marginalizes them after elections.

The reliance on representation is also disempowering because people do not perceive ways within the institution in which they can influence government. For example, after their 2008 win, the Conservatives held a convention in Winnipeg for party members to come and talk policy with party leaders and fellow citizens. However, none of the ideas endorsed at the convention were included in the Conservative throne speech. Interestingly, a party spokesman had indicated that the convention would be “just like any other consultation [Harper and his cabinet] would have with any stakeholder group”. Except in this case, the stakeholders were regular citizens, and their participation was meaningless. And the Conservatives are not the only party to show such brass. The Liberal’s 2008 Green Shift was not ratified or even debated by party members.<sup>39</sup> Ordinary citizens perceive this gap; Cross and Young (2006) find that few

36 Warren, 217.

37 Peter Bachrach and Aryeh Botwinick, *Power and Empowerment: A Radical Theory of Participatory Democracy* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1992), 32.

38 Donald Savoie, *Governing from the Centre: the Concentration of Power in Canadian Politics* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999).

39 Savoie.

people join parties because they want to influence policy.<sup>40</sup>

Voter turnout in Canada is declining and people are losing faith in the country's representative institutions. This shows that voting for a representative is no longer meaningful enough participation for citizens. Lack of support for electoral reforms also indicates the discontent goes beyond how well public opinion is represented. Most people are eager to get involved in politics when they believe their decisions directly affect their futures.<sup>41</sup> Therefore new forums of meaningful participation within government are necessary to re-engage citizens. Gastil studied "real-world" deliberative initiatives and found that participants experienced increased feelings of self-efficacy and sense of community identity.<sup>42</sup> Pattie and Johnson also found that individuals who participate in political discussions with their fellow citizens feel more effective, empowered, and sure of their final opinions.<sup>43</sup>

One reason why participation is key to this process, Anne Phillips accounts, are the "politics of presence,"<sup>44</sup> which links participation to group identity and empowerment. When a marginalized group is fighting for recognition in politics, representation alone is insufficient. Who is doing the representation is significant. Meaningful participation in government provides minorities with a reason to remain attached to political institutions.<sup>45</sup> Bachrach and Botwinick argue that political participation nurtures and heightens group identity as cohesive and politically aware actors. The civil rights movement and the women's movement are evidence of this positive group process, which endangers a sense of empowerment.<sup>46</sup> Applying this reasoning to the Canadian population, meaningful avenues for participation will lead to a greater sense of empowerment and attachment to political institutions. This does not mean

40 Cross and Young, 14-21.

41 Thomas Zittel and Dieter Fuchs, *Participatory Democracy and Political Participation: Can Participatory Engineering Bring Citizen's Back In?* (Oxon: Routledge, Taylor and Francis Group, 2007), 18.

42 John Gastil, "No Taxation Without Deliberation," Accessed April 21, 2009, [http://www.deliberativedemocracy.net/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=section&layout=blog&id=1&Itemid=68](http://www.deliberativedemocracy.net/index.php?option=com_content&view=section&layout=blog&id=1&Itemid=68), last accessed December 12, 2011.

43 C.J. Pattie, and R.J. Johnston, "Its Good to Talk, Disagreement and Tolerance", *British Journal of Political Science* 38, (2008), 696.

44 Bachrach and Aryeh, 30.

45 Monica Brito and David Runciman, *Representation* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2008), 91.

46 Bachrach and Aryeh, 30.

that only specific interest groups will reap the benefits of participation. Bachrach, Botwinick, Gastil, Fishkin, and other scholars have all found that deliberation results in an increased concern for the public good. Also, citizen involvement contributes to stronger communities because horizontal networks that generate trust build social capital.<sup>47</sup> Though reforms focusing on representation may help alleviate some of the feelings of lack of efficacy, party restructuring that deals with increased participation and deliberation would have the same result while providing other related benefits. For one, it has been found that political trust increases by participating in deliberative forums. Delli Carpini found that citizens who participate in deliberative discussions became more knowledgeable about the issue, more trusting, and more likely to report participating in the future.<sup>48</sup> Cook and Jacobs also found that individuals who participated in deliberative forums developed increased trust and levels of interest in and knowledge about politics.<sup>49</sup> Voting-centric democracy is not conducive to citizens deliberating with each other. Nor is it conducive to citizens deliberating with their elected representatives. If participating in a deliberative forum improves peoples' feelings toward each other, it could also have this effect on feelings towards government if elected representatives and other party members are involved. Trust is a "fundamental social and political orientation" that is linked to the effective performance of democratic systems.<sup>50</sup>

The link between low socioeconomic conditions and low levels of participation is also important. In Warren's discussion of trust and democracy, he finds that people in a low socioeconomic bracket are not less civic minded. Instead, they tend to trust political institutions less than higher income people, and therefore do not get engaged.<sup>51</sup> Although Nevitte did not find this connection, it was

47 See Bachrach and Aryeh, John Gastil, and Fishkin et.al. (2009), Susan D. Phillips and Michael Orsini, "Mapping the Links: Citizen Involvement in Policy Processes," *CPRN Discussion Paper* No. F (April 2002), <http://www.cprn.org>, 8.

48 Julia Abelson and Francois-Pierre Gauvin, "Assessing the Impacts of Public Participation: Concepts, Evidence, and Policy Implications" *CPRN Discussion Paper*, (March 2006), <http://www.cprn.org>, 22.

49 Ibid.

50 Nevitte, 23.

51 Orlando Patterson, "Liberty against the democratic state: on the historical and contemporary sources of American distrust," in *Democracy and Trust* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 151.

found that more empowered citizens *were* more likely to trust government.<sup>52</sup> Thus it may be most accurate to attribute disengagement of low-income citizens to a lack of resources. It is expensive to hire a babysitter, travel to a meeting, or subscribe to a newspaper.<sup>53</sup> This is amplified by high opportunity costs. Opportunities for meaningful participation automatically lower these costs, and focused efforts by the parties can also help equalize political engagement for those who desire it.

Johnston and Harrison found in that in Alberta there is a stronger link between trust and assessments of the health of democracy, than between support for institutional reforms and the health of democracy. The implication is that programs that enhance trust in government will be more effective in overcoming the negative feelings of citizens towards government. Overall, the data suggests widespread support for changes that will enhance democratic practices and disperse political decision-making.<sup>54</sup> Considering the state of distrust across Canada, coupled with the desire for more citizen engagement, the conclusions of Johnston and Harrison can be applied across the country. In addition, Beierle and Cayford studied 239 cases of public involvement over 30 years of environmental decision-making in US and found that there was broad acceptance of the decision outcomes where agencies were responsive, the quality of deliberation was high, and participations had at least moderate control over the process.<sup>55</sup>

In sum, the process of participation matters.<sup>56</sup> Meaningful participation and deliberation increase the level of acceptance of policy outcomes, increase trust in government, and increase feelings of self-efficacy and empowerment. This mediates the feelings of alienation citizens have from their representatives. Due to the multiple personal and group benefits, more of which will be discussed next, the process to policy matters as much, if not more, than the final policy itself. Therefore the model of party-based deliberative

52 Nevitte, 25.

53 Cross, 100.

54 W.A. Johnston, Harvey Krahn and Trevor Harrison, "Democracy, Political Institutions, and Trust: The Limits of Current Electoral Reform Proposals," *The Canadian Journal of Sociology* 31.2 (Spring 2006): 165-182.

55 Thomas C. Beierle and Jerry Cayford, *Democracy in Practice: Public Participation in Environmental Decisions*, USA: Resources for the Future, 2002.

56 Abelson and Gauvin, 24.

forums is a more complete answer to Canadian issues of trust and empowerment in political parties than changes to the opinion-policy link. The restructuring would allow citizens to see their efforts reflected in policy platforms, but, most importantly, they would reflect the results of deliberation. I will now discuss the importance of deliberation in its relevance to legitimacy.

### Legitimacy Deficient Representation

Canadians are also casting doubts on the democratic legitimacy of dominant forms of political representation.<sup>57</sup> Pitkin's work appeared too definitive at a time when society began to focus more decidedly on questions of rights and distributive justice.<sup>58</sup> As a consequence, the model of representative democracy we accept today is lacking in legitimacy. A democratic political decision is legitimate when it is justifiable to individuals whose lives it affects through reasons they can accept as valid. A legitimate political order is justified to all those living under its laws.<sup>59</sup> Thus, in deliberative democracy "accountability is primarily understood in terms of "giving an account" of something; that is, publicly articulating, explaining, and most importantly justifying public policy".<sup>60</sup> In Canada's representative democracy, politicians are *held* to account, but they rarely account *for* their policy agendas and decisions. Canada's parties spend less time on policy study and development than they do on elections.<sup>61</sup> Elections today are less concerned with policy content than the election of candidates. Opinion building is not done through deliberation where the discussion of policy is advocative; it is done by journalists and politicians for the public, not among the public.<sup>62</sup> The result is party politics that lack participation, deliberation, policy alternatives, and most importantly, legitimacy.<sup>63</sup>

In Canada, ethnic, cultural, sexual, and other forms of diversity have also enhanced interest in this form of legitimacy because

57 David Laycock, ed. *Representation and Democratic Theory* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2004,) viii.

58 *Ibid.*, xiii.

59 Melissa Williams, "Sharing the River: Aboriginal Representation in Canadian Political Institutions," in *Representation and Democratic Theory* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2004), 102.

60 Delli Carpini et al., 317.

61 Cross, 158.

62 *Ibid.*

63 *Ibid.*



they make the realities of minority exclusion by the majoritarian principles of representative democracy “more palpable”.<sup>64</sup> This is an aspect of citizens’ reluctance to rely on top-down decision-making, distant representation, and passing participation. Diversity in Canada is both a source of anxiety and a distinct foundation of identity. The “defining narrative” of Canada is always a search of unity.<sup>65</sup> Though the national unity question is, relatively speaking, off the political agenda, regional, national (Aboriginal and Québécois), and religious identities have not found an agreed-upon relationship to the country as a whole. In a 2011 study by the Association for Canadian Studies, it was found that contradictions exist in Canadians views about multiculturalism. While 49% of respondents disagreed that “immigrations should give up their customs and traditions” and become more like the “majority” population, only 45% agreed with this statement. On the other hand, 86% of respondents reported enjoying interacting with people from different cultures, and 80% believed that young people should make efforts to preserve the cultural traditions of their families.<sup>66</sup> An explanation for the paradoxes in Canadian views is the lack of opportunities available to engage in conversation with other citizens and the government about what they mean. Answering opinion polls and electing representatives to government are not activities conducive to the “Canadian conversation.”

### Potential End

Nonetheless, the Canadian identity is grounded in diversity.<sup>67</sup> The very fact of federalism was an accommodative measure. Even acknowledging the view that Canada is composed of multiple nations, tolerance and trust in one another is key. Pluralism shows up in a wide variety of policy arenas, even beyond directly accommodative or multiculturalist measures. By submitting these problems

64 Phillips and Orsini, 6.

65 Gerald Kernerman, “The New Constitutionalism and the Polarizing Performance of the Canadian Conversation,” in *Representation and Democratic Theory* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2004), 161.

66 Jack Jedwab and Sid Bannerjee, “Multiculturalism with Concerns,” <http://www.acs-aec.ca/en/social-research/multiculturalism-diversity/> and Randy Boswell, “Canadians cool to embracing multicultural values: study,” <http://www.vancouver.sun.com/technology/Canadians+cool+embracing+multicultural+value+s+study/5520797/story.html>, last accessed December 12, 2011.

67 Kernerman, 165.



and policies to democratic review in the voting-centric model of representative democracy, we risk a majoritarian decision (such as a referendum) where nobody is required to account for their reasons, or a closed elite-bargaining process.<sup>68</sup> The first masks the moral diversity of the Canadian community while citizens largely reject the second. Both are illegitimate.

According to Warren, trust is rationally warranted when another's interests are linked to the satisfaction of your own. In general, trust can be given when there is this commonality of interests, but in politics situations, where conflict exists about things that matter, this commonality cannot be taken for granted.<sup>69</sup> There has been a shift in preference for "horizontal" governance, which recognizes that representative governments alone may not have the legitimacy to solve complex policy problems in a diverse society. Horizontal governance moves from top-down, aggregative translating of preferences and majority rule to collaboration and coordination.<sup>70</sup> Relying on representatives to carry out these conversations (which appear in a wide variety of arenas) independently of citizens, does not lead to genuine deliberation and legitimacy being achieved. Direct democracy without deliberation risks drowning the voices and rights of minorities, and citizens do not want to rely solely on their representatives to bargain over these that affect their lives.

Deliberative participation can be instrumental in generating the trust necessary for representation to be legitimate because participants justify their reasons to others. Fishkin et al. finds that deliberative polls promote mutual respect – even among deeply divided communities, and tends to lead to greater consideration of the common good and generalizable interests. It is the actual face-to-face interaction, and genuine participation in debate, not the mere distribution of policy-relevant information, that contributes to the changes of opinion and preference of the participants.<sup>71</sup> Recall that the goal is not to produce uniform policy or consensus but to focus on the process itself.

The idea that one must find reasons that are compelling to

68 C.G. Richard, Johnston et al., *The Challenge of Direct Democracy: The 1992 Canadian Referendum*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996), 252.

69 Warren, 337.

70 Phillips and Orsini, 3.

71 Fishkin et.al., 2009.

others distinguishes deliberative democracy from the aggregative conception of democracy. Robert Putnam, a social capital theorist, explains that through interaction, people learn that those whose opinions differ from their own are nonetheless reasonable people to whom they can relate in other ways. Talking is particularly useful when it exposes citizens to ideas, opinions, hopes, and beliefs of people outside their ordinary social group.<sup>72</sup> This is because it increases tolerance. Opportunities for meaningful political deliberation would expose citizens to reasonable people with different viewpoints.

Those who critique participation and deliberation believe it can foster inequality, fractionalization, regionalization, and polarization.<sup>73</sup> There is some evidence that deliberation can actually decrease tolerance, because it draws attention to perceived negative consequences of tolerating certain groups.<sup>74</sup> Therefore, due to Canadian pluralist brokerage practices, elitist representative democracy is the best option.<sup>75</sup> However, there is also evidence that shows the opposite. Gastil writes that deliberation can lead to coherent collective interests and strong bonds amongst citizens. Fishkin found through a deliberative project in Northern Ireland that trust and tolerance increased amongst Protestants and Catholics.<sup>76</sup> Pattie and Johnson, in studying conversation networks in the United Kingdom, found that the frequency of discussion and the likelihood of encountering alternative views increased tolerance of divergent opinions and lifestyles, as well as feelings of empowerment.<sup>77</sup> There is a political precedence of tolerance in Canada, but a lack of deliberation and participation in the political institutions has given way

<sup>72</sup> See Robert D. Putnam, *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy* (Princeton: N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1993) and *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000).

<sup>73</sup> Bachrach and Aryeh, 23.

<sup>74</sup> Russell L. Hanson, "Deliberation, Tolerance, and Democracy" in *Reconsidering the Democratic Public* (United States: Pennsylvania State University, 1993), 274.

<sup>75</sup> Lori Turnbull, "Fostering Canadians' Role in Public Policy: A Strategy for Institutionalizing Public Involvement in Policy," *CPRN Discussion Paper*, <http://www.cprn.org>, 2011, 12.

<sup>76</sup> See Fishkin's presentation from the University of Chicago's New Science of Virtues Meeting

<sup>77</sup> C.J. Pattie and R.J. Johnston, 696.

to uncertainty amongst Canadian values and a lack of legitimacy in the institutions meant to represent these values.

According to Tindall, deliberation can pressure outliers' opinions closer to the group norm, thus producing false consensus.<sup>78</sup> However, Pattie and Johnson (2008) found that diversity of opinion was successfully maintained in deliberation. Political ideas were sharpened by discussion, which also fostered tolerance.<sup>79</sup> Deliberation enlarges the perspectives and knowledge of individuals by exposing them to others' perspectives, experiences, and knowledge.<sup>80</sup> According to Stewart:

“As others in a diverse group tell differing stories, embodying values that likely diverge from or even contradict their own; one result is often a growing recognition of the complexity of the issue at hand, as well perhaps as perception that the views of others also have some validity, given the revealed context and experience of “the other.” Exploration of these diverse perspectives usually leads citizens to speak about what they are willing to trade-off, as well as where there can be no compromise”<sup>81</sup>

This clearly has implications for representation. Representatives and citizens, after participating in deliberation, will understand (despite possibly disagreeing with) the tradeoffs necessary in diverse societies, and thus will be more likely to act and vote in a way representative of this understanding. Deliberative democracy is good for Canada, in all its diversity, because it combines open and free debate with equal expression of opinions advancing that everyone's interests are considered. It tends to promote decisions based on general interest and tempers self-interest. Finally, deliberative democracy encourages reflective opinions based on informed choices.<sup>82</sup> Party restructuring provides a forum for meaningful citizen participation

78 Tindall.

79 C.J. Pattie and R.J. Johnston, 696.

80 Warren, 340.

81 Phillip D. Stewart, “Connecting the Deliberative Public to its Elected Representatives,” (2005): 1-2.

82 Hansen, 99.

and an avenue for representatives to engage with their electorate. This will address the democratic malaise in Canada by increasing the number of Canadians who trust the government to do what is right, and who believe it has had a positive impact in their lives. The justifying of reasons to one another enhances democratic legitimacy, trust, and therefore representative legitimacy. In Canada, trust and legitimacy are particularly important due to great diversity.

### Conclusion

The restructured party would facilitate the empowerment and legitimacy needed to address the “democratic deficit” in Canada. Representatives and citizens alike would deliberate problems and policy and give reasons for justifying and changing their views. Disagreements will of course persist, but the majority-centric practice of voting will have a deeper basis for decisions than individual self-interest. According to Warren, institutions that encourage deliberation, the discovery of common interests, and ease political conflict (differing opinions) in social routine will generate warranted social trust in the political system<sup>83</sup>. In addition to the individual and community benefits of participation, citizen involvement also strengthens representative democracy. Participation can lead to new conceptualizations of individual and collective self-interest, which is something representative democracy does not provide in itself.<sup>84</sup> Low voter turnout and declining and low party membership must not be taken merely as evidence that interest in politics is waning, but rather as indicators of the current mechanisms’ failure.<sup>85</sup>

Canadian citizens do not accept the hierarchical structure and authoritative decision-making procedures that have become representative democracy.<sup>86</sup> Changes to representation are insufficient to deal with these feelings of discontent. Overall, Canadians are less willing to rely on elected representatives as sole advocates. They want a seat at the table.<sup>87</sup> Moreover, meaningful insight into public concerns, struggles, values, and permissions, is accessible

83 See Warren,.

84 Bachrach and Botwinick, 29.

85 Turnbull, v.

86 Richard Nadeau, “Satisfaction with Democracy: The Canadian Paradox” in *Value Change and Governance in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002), 52.

87 Turnbull, 11.

to policymakers only through reports from public deliberations or from direct participation in such deliberation:

“Neither public opinion polls, nor organized special interests can inform policymakers about what the public struggles with when it deliberates complex issues, about what elements of an issue are most important to the public, and what trade-offs they are ready to make to secure or achieve what they value. Only when a diverse public deliberates do these concerns, values, and permissions emerge in such a manner that they have both authenticity and a substantial degree of durability. Polls provide only snapshots of individual views, while in deliberation individual perspectives are inevitably enriched, modified, elaborated, and thus become more thoughtful, more complex and often more persistent public views.”<sup>88</sup>

Political representation is a two-level game. The representative must at once communicate and negotiate within the constituency from which she is elected, and the broader representative institutions.<sup>89</sup> Broadening the participatory and deliberation basis of representation creates a foundation for this role that addresses its current problems.

The theoretical space of representation and democracy today is not broad enough to effectively include concepts of rights, citizenship, justice, equality, inclusion, and multiculturalism<sup>90</sup>. The social and political needs of Canada can not be accomplished through a democracy based on “systemic mechanisms and bargaining of particular interests”.<sup>91</sup> Normatively and practically, there needs to be a more participatory and deliberative basis for policymaking, because it can address these complex ideas. It is increasing participatory conditions of representation that will improve the state of our

88 Stewart, Philip D., (2005); p. 2

89 Williams in *Representation and Democratic Theory* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2004), 113.

90 Laycock, viii.

91 Zittel and Fuchs, 39.

democracy.<sup>92</sup> Representatives today are responsible for more than “acting for” their citizens; they are responsible for engaging the citizenry in the process of public deliberation.<sup>93</sup>

Different countries have attempted to re-engage citizens in different ways. Italy, Japan and New Zealand focused on the electoral system. In Germany, reforms gave citizens a greater role in local administration.<sup>94</sup> Participation is a supplement to representation. Representation, of course, is logistically necessary and has functional advantages. However, we do not have to accept representative institutions in their current forms.<sup>95</sup> Expanding participation is clearly a qualitative rather than quantitative endeavor.<sup>96</sup> It is not just about the number of opportunities to participate. It is about how deliberation takes place and what makes participation meaningful. Ultimately the benefits outweigh the concerns. The current Occupy Movement indicates a cultural shift in how we think about government and democracy. To quote Joshua Cohen, “Democracy... is always a work in progress”.<sup>97</sup> An important step in reinvigorating democracy in Canada as a legitimate, representative, and transformative process is by making changes to political parties.

92 Laycock, ix.

93 Greg Pyczk, “Demanding Deliberative Democracy and Representation,” in *Representation and Democratic Theory* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2004), 184.

94 Nevitte, 29.

95 Laycock, xvi-xix.

96 Zittel and Fuchs, 17.

97 Cohen, 336.

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Kinetic Energy in Michael Ondaatje's  
"The gate in his head"

**Gabrielle Lemoine**

## Kinetic Energy in Ondaatje's "The gate in his head"

Michael Ondaatje's "The gate in his head" is a description of the creative process; chaos "poured" onto a page through a gate overflowing with creative mess. The energy flows from line to line, a series on kinetic images, movement, blind faith. Ondaatje does not glorify creativity. It is not an image of perfection, but a paralyzed moment, "shapeless, awkward" (26). It is evident that the poet is moving towards the postmodern school of thought; the impermanence of life, death, movement, creativity, moments dancing around the page, arranged carefully in a meaningless way, perfection flying from "blind" (17) eyes. What is the creative process, Ondaatje asks? Similar to the chaotic atom, it is a whirlpool of implosion, a random love, a gorgeous breakdown.

What Ondaatje finds revealing about Victor's mind is "not clarity but the sense of shift" (4). Creativity is unclear, but this lack of clarity is specifically what breaks the flood gates of the mind. Clarity interests no one in Ondaatje's world. Nothing stands still. Nothing is whole. We are confronted with "busted trees" (6), "melted tires" (7), "turning pages" (10), "camouflage" (12). Ondaatje cannot stand still in the midst of this movement, his mind, in order to achieve some kind of harmony, must move with the chaos of the world; it is in these moments that the flood gates are broken. Although his mind relishes in chaos, searching or yearning for it, the chaos is not complete but contained in "nets" (17). The tension between control and ruthless abandon nears the breaking point, but I suppose the love Ondaatje feels for his work at once sets it free and holds it back. In a world where randomness is order and chance is fate, love is both a weakness and a strength. We can count on nothing, but can love almost everything, as Ondaatje loves whatever he writes, knowing that his words may turn on him. They already are turning, and cannot stand still.

What can we make of a permanent art form in this world bursting with kinetic energy? How can we cope with attachment, with love? According to Ondaatje this lack of clarity is nothing less than "a stunning white bird" (22). He has the courage to accept change, to move as quickly and as freely as the nothingness that surrounds and engulfs him. His words may be "caught at the wrong moment" (25) but they are "beautiful" (25) and "formed"



(25) nonetheless. Shapelessness, awkwardness, and clarity need not be mutually exclusive. Ondaatje concludes that one must speed up the mind and embrace nothing and everything: movement, change, and fear. He loves the chaos as he loves the words it produces, for despite their movement they were once a part of him: “And that is this writing should be then” (24).

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**Treasure Eleven:**  
Exhibition Review of  
“90 Treasures, 90 Stories, 90 Years.”  
McCord Museum, 2011

**Kristen Pye**

**Treasure Eleven:  
Exhibition Review of “90 Treasures, 90 Stories, 90  
Years.”  
McCord Museum, 2011**

**I**n celebration of its 90th anniversary, the McCord Museum in Montréal presented 90 Trésors, 90 Histoires, 90 Ans, an exhibition of treasures from the McCord vault, the Ali Baba cavern of “la belle ville.” This most recent exhibition is a study in the intentional tangle of genres; beside the 19th-century birch bark handkerchief case from the Huron-Wendat clan lies a first edition copy of Canadian Naturalist; next to a pair of embroidered silk brocade shoes hangs the vivid oil-painted photograph of a confederation-era skating carnival.

But the stories behind the objects are even more bewitching than their arrangement. In a delightful act of inspired curation, the minds at work behind 90 Trésors included, beside each artifact, the story of its life in Canada. The longcase mahogany clock is no longer simply an objet d’art- it is a living thing, with its slender second hand ticking briskly around the ornate gold and silver face like the beat of an excited heart. It is this energy that drives the exhibition and injects it with a vitalizing potion of context and corporeality. The accompanying text reveals that the regal clock was brought to New France in the 1630s, finding a home in the Ursuline Convent for girls. However, when starvation hit the French colony, the dignified timepiece was reduced to a petty pawn, traded to a local farmer by one Marie-Madeleine de La Peltrie in exchange for livestock.

Each piece is its own entity, a stand-alone artifact enriched by juxtaposition. The first treasures reveal themselves to be exactly that; this is certainly not a collection in which the eye does a glancing sweep. Each piece demands the careful scrutinization usually reserved for only a select few in any given exhibition.

But what of Treasure Eleven? The lines and planes of its

classic form are iconic, virtually untouched by each era's date-stamping aesthetics. Its bold stripes and punchy colouring have resisted all the ephemeral trends of the decades, so generationally transcendent is its essence. Discourses have been written on its mythical clout. It is Le Chandail de Hockey, the original hockey sweater of Roch Carrier's eponymous book. It is not just the mighty red, white and blue of the Montreal Canadiens, it is the jersey of the Montreal Canadien – number 9, Maurice "Rocket" Richard.

As with all conflicts of the people, visual culture will inherently attach itself to political action, giving a face to a name. Maurice Richard's hockey jersey is one such symbol – a veritable metaphor for separatism in Canada over the past half-century.

Through a glass display case in the McCord's ninety-part treasury, visitors could examine this concept in full: cuff to cuff, collar to hem.

It is, of course, just a standard, regulation hockey sweater. The dominant colour, still vibrant after sixty years, is the corn poppy red of Monet's *Les Coquelicots*. Four cobalt blue stripes, framed by a narrow white band yellowing with age, cross the sweater's chest, waistline, and arms. Another stripe of white punctuates the uniform around the cuffs and collar. Emblazoned across the chest is the emblematic red "C" of the Canadiens' iconic logo, containing within it a smaller white "H." Beneath the collar is a knotted lace looped through four garnets to fasten shut the brief v-neck. Beyond any visual cue however, the sweater functions in a much greater symbolic role: that of a highly contentious, highly Canadian state of affairs.

In the discourse surrounding contemporary separatist affairs in Canada, red and blue represent factions on all sides of the issue. Not to be read as trivial, colour is the most obvious indication of not only political but also socio-cultural affiliation. Richard's sweater is predominantly liberal red, slashed with the blue of separatist presence and halved by a v-neck divide knotted roughly together by the white lace of federalism. For most, a hockey sweater does not constitute art. Though certainly worthy of display – in the Hockey Hall of Fame, perhaps – a jersey is no more than a

mass-produced object of utilitarian sporting gear. At its best, it represents a world of people brought together by the love of a game. At its worst, it is a symbol of both craze and consumerism, and most certainly not art. It is a thing so materially worshipped as to have rendered a young Roch Carrier a marginalized outcast when attired in anything else.

Above all, however, the hockey sweater is a uniform – an identifying garment donned by the members of a collective. As a mode of dress, it wields the power to unify independents and build unyielding alliances be it amongst a hockey team or a nation. Within the notion of a uniform, there is solidarity and there is oneness. As such, we should look upon the McCord Museum’s eleventh treasure not as a liberal body of red slashed with the blue streak of separatism but rather as a symbol of national unity behind a jersey of singularity. Beside General James Wolfe’s manuscript journal and across from the Mi’kmaq beaded headdress, “The Rocket” Richard’s hockey sweater remained on display in the McCord until mid-September but the notion of Canadian separatism embodied by this artifact will remain current until we refer to ourselves not as francophone and anglophone but rather as one citizenry united under the common title of Canadien.

**Birthing in the Arctic:**  
The Ungava Bay, Rankin Inlet, and Puvirnituk  
Models

**Drew Childerhose**

## **Birthing in the Arctic: The Ungava Bay, Rankin Inlet, and Puvirnituk Models**

The scarcity of medical services in Inuit communities has been a pressing issue since colonization in the mid-twentieth century. Soon thereafter, it became standard practice for expecting Inuit mothers to be flown south at 36 weeks and kept there for the duration of their pregnancies. The connections, stability and community that the mother had previously experienced at home were all but relinquished. Birthing became a terrifying and isolating experience for mothers. However, in recent times, renewed agency within Inuit communities has resulted in alternative birthing services for women. This renewed agency through midwifery has challenged Eurocentric conformity and empowered Inuit women with the choice of birthing at home, or at least close to home. The purpose of this paper is to serve as an overview of birthing in the North, aiming to illustrate its importance, while refuting prior concerns of safety. The “Past” represents a historical address of birthing in the North and how it has arrived at a decisive moment, which is where the next section arrives at. The “Present” illustrates a dissection and contrast of the three birthing techniques currently in practice. The last section, Agency, proposes that the creation of Inuit birthing centres has given power to both individual women and the communities where they practice. Although birthing numbers are still relatively small, the situation of birthing in the Arctic is bigger than just birth rates. The agency offered by Inuit midwives will have a lasting impact on both mothers and their communities.

### **The Past**

Medicalization and the notion of hospitalized births are new concepts for the Inuit. For most of history, Inuit birthed naturally in the North. For centuries, birth was considered community affair and midwifery a learned experience. As with many Inuit ways of life, there is no standard way of birthing and childbirth means many different things to the Inuit and practices vary considerably from community to community. Birthing methods range from “squatting with



hands braced on posts, or lying on their backs with their feet braced against a pad held by the midwife” (Douglas “Childbirth Among Canadian Inuit” 120) to the mother being left on her own. These methods contradict the persistent argument that Westernized birthing is “more for the comfort of the doctor than for the mother” (NAHO Exploring 1). As a result of the scarcity and isolation in the North, some births would truly be a family affair, even absent of a midwife. In some Inuit communities, men and children were involved in the process, should no one else be available (NAHO, Celebrating 12). For years, birthing in the North persisted as a “community event.”

It wasn’t until after World War II that concerns of Northern sovereignty emerged and the Canadian government began to colonize the Canadian Arctic. Colonization resulted in the systematic medicalization of Inuit health. Community health centres were established and Inuit women were expected to give birth at these centres rather than in their own communities. Eventually, it became standard that pregnant women were evacuated from communities and transported to Southern hospitals, where they would stay for weeks or sometimes months “Van Wagner et al. 384). In many cases, any birth labeled higher than “low-risk” was considered too dangerous to take place in the North.

The new practice meant that women were forcibly taken away from their support systems of mothers, sisters, husbands and children. Many Inuit felt that flying to non-Inuit-run birthing centres meant that, “this intimate, integral part of our life was taken from us and replaced by a medical model that separated our families, stole the power of the birthing experience from our women, and weakened the health, strength, and spirit of our communities” (Van Wagner et al. 384).

And yet, according to the National Aboriginal Health Organization, the practice of at-home birthing is not without its own risks:

“Isolation, teen pregnancies, housing shortages, domestic violence, poor nutrition, the high cost of living, persistent organic pollutants in country foods, the lack of knowledge about available services, and the general insensitivity of the medical system to Inuit culture are all factors that compli-

cate the delivery of maternity care programs and services” (NAHO “Exploring Models for Quality Maternity Care” 3).

### **The Present**

Calls for change in the medical field throughout the Arctic have been widespread: the remote areas have been plagued with a lack of accountability, a lack of resources, and the persistence of medical services that fall well below North American standards. Many towns lack accessibility; from one another and from the South. Within the communities, educational and medical institutions exist, yet had until only recently done so only in the form that the Canadian government desired. As a result, medical services are characterized by Eurocentric practices and a continuing disregard for traditional ways of medicine. Inferior medical services offered in the Arctic are combined with often-indifferent medical professionals within institutions operating in a Western fashion.

Over the past 25 years, agency has been at the forefront of Inuit relations with an increase of power and accountability within communities creating amends between modern and traditional medicine. Yet, as will be showcased in the subsequent section, birthing will only truly be successful if it done on Inuit terms.

I address three regions on the Arctic with considerably different birthing methods: Ungava Bay, Nunavut, representing the most Eurocentric style of birthing, as physicians speak mostly English; Rankin Inlet, with a recent midwifery program founded by Inuit; and Puvirnituq, Nunavik, with its birthing centre generally regarded as a successful fusion of Inuit and western practices.

### **Ungava Bay**

Ungava Bay consists of seven communities along the eastern seaboard of Nunavik, and like all communities in northern Quebec, they are “isolated fly-in-only communities without road connections between communities or to southern towns and cities” (Simonet et al. 1). Birthing centres in Nunavik are, to a large extent, very Eurocentric, with “physicians in Tulattavick Hospital (Kuuujuaq)... responsible for providing most maternity care, and for arranging medical evacuation if tertiary care was expected to considered nec-

essary” (Simonet et al. 3). The model was essentially transplanted from Southern Canada and not designed with Arctic Inuit culture in mind. Instead of midwives it is “physicians in Tulattavik Hospital (Kuujjuaq) [that are] responsible for providing most maternity care” (Simonet et al. 2). The services offered by healthcare professionals represent a divide between Inuit and Westerners, as services are primarily offered in French and English, not in Inuktitut or Inuttitut.

This disconnect between healthcare providers and Inuit is not limited to language. Unlike community-based risk analysis models that were established on the western shores of Nunavik, Ungava Bay solely uses a biomedical model of risk analysis for birthing, that combined with Western physicians as primary birthing attendants represents the most Western style of birthing currently done in the North.

The Ungava Bay model has been fairly successful. Between 1989 and 2000, there were “1197 births” (Simonet et al. 3) in Ungava Bay with prenatal deaths being “10.9 per 1000” (Simonet et al. 3), falling within the Canadian National average and above the Quebec average of “6.7 per 1000” (Simonet et al. 3) during the same period. With a neonatal death rate of “5.0 per 1000” (Simonet et al. 3) Ungava Bay has the lowest neonatal death rate in the Canadian Arctic. But do other models offer other benefits to mothers without comprising safety?

### **Rankin Inlet**

Rankin Inlet, Nunavut, is a coastal town of 2,400 that experienced major growth in the 1950s after the Arctic’s first mine was established there in 1957. However, the turbulent times were short as the copper and nickel mines ceased within a decade. In many ways, Rankin Inlet is not unlike most communities in the Arctic; isolated, humble in size, and lacking proper amenities for the once nomadic residents who have been placed in the Rankin Inlet.

One of the frontrunners to regaining agency within the Arctic came in the shape of the Rankin Inlet Birthing Centre. The centre opened in 1993 as a result of a “major clinical and anthropological study of childbirth in the Kivalliq Region” (Douglas “Rankin Inlet Birth Centre” 180) which concluded that “the practice of evacuation

for childbirth had caused cultural and social disruption” (Douglas “Rankin Inlet Birth Centre” 180).

The centre opened with the hope of rebuilding culture from birth upwards, emphasizing the connections that birthing at home can have within a community. To determine what may be a “high risk pregnancy,” a “biomedical risk-scoring system” is used to determine whether or not women should be sent South (Douglas “Rankin Inlet Birth Centre” 181). This is largely believed to be a restrictive system, and is a large component of why birthing in the Rankin Inlet has been limited. Another problem is the language barrier, as doctors and midwives from Southern Canada rotate through the region (Douglas “Rankin Inlet Birth Centre” 181). Medical staff is predominately from the South, lacking cultural attachment with the land or the communities. The staff members rarely stay, resulting in the centre suffering from “chronic staff shortages” (Douglas “Rankin Inlet Birth Centre” 181). As a result of the biomedical risk model and staff shortages, the centre has struggled to gain success, since it’s foundation in 1993 and until 2005, “238 out of the 506 births by women in Rankin Inlet took place at the Centre, the rest occurring after evacuation to larger centres” (Douglas “Rankin Inlet Birth Centre” 180). The problem is compounded by the lack of innovation or agency that is involved with the Rankin Inlet birthing centre, Douglas goes as far to say that “it has never become an Inuit institution, nor is it an integral part of the Inuit community” (“Rankin Inlet Birth Centre” 184). In that sense, Rankin Inlet has partially failed to integrate a sense of community into its birthing practices. The future addition of Inuit midwives could help with the problem, but until it becomes an Inuit-run institution the only clear advantage is that flying South is no longer a requirement for giving birth.

### **Puvirnitug**

Puvirnitug is an isolated community of 1,400 in Nunavik (Northern Quebec). With over 500, 000 square kilometres of tundra, the area is sparsely populated. Progressive advancements in natal care came, however, with the opening of the first birthing centre in 1986. Pressure was placed by “Inuit groups, such as the Pauktutit/

Inuit Women's Association, [with their] wish to balance the preservation of their culture with prenatal outcomes" (Douglas "Childbirth Among Canadian Inuit" 118) and "as a direct result of organization by Inuit women and activism for Inuit cultural revival and self-government" (Van Wagner et al 384-385). The centre works to merge traditional and modern medical practices (NAHO "Exploring Models for Quality Maternity Care" 2-3). Since its inception, two additional centres have opened; one in Inukjuak and the other in Saluit. Together the three give "75% of the Hudson coast population... access to intrapartum care in their home communities" (Van Wagner et al. 386). Put simply, Inuulitsivik gave Nunavik inhabitants the option to stay in the North and have natural births characterized by more traditional Inuit traditions.

Perhaps what is most interesting is that the Inuulitsivik model does not work on the same model of risk that Eurocentric societies have adopted. The risk factors for Inuit are much more broad with "risk screening is seen as a social cultural, and community process rather than simply a biomedical one" (Van Wagner et al. 387). The success of the Inuulitsivik model has been widely acknowledged, with studies showing that births by midwives are no more dangerous than their counterparts in the South. Scholars have argued that Inuutlisivik may not just be more accessible for those in the remote North, but an "appropriate model of care which may help care providers to better understand and meet the needs of pregnant Inuit women" (Simonet et al. 3).

### **Regaining Agency**

Midwifery has served as an incredible opportunity for Inuit to make progressive decisions that have led to legal changes throughout Canada. Since the first birthing centre opened in 1986 in Puvirnituq, Midwifery was legal or at least regulated in most Canadian provinces. Inuulitsivik is interesting as it "predates the legal recognition of midwifery in Quebec by more than a decade" (Van Wagner et al. 389) and eventually helped lead to Quebec creating the Independent Midwifery Act in September 1999 (Benoit et al. 13). Growth throughout Canada has been sporadic, with many provinces now recognizing midwifery as a legitimate alternative to the

hospitalization birthing process.

In many aspects, there are no risk-based arguments for illegality within midwifery in the North. Simonet and other scholars find that although Nunavik is incredibly remote and the births are led by Inuit midwives, “risks of prenatal death were somewhat but not significantly higher” (Simonet et al. 1) even though non-westernized standards of birthing have been implemented.

However, affecting laws and regulations in Canada is an inconsequential decision for the Inuit whom have struggled, and continue to struggle, though childbirth. Agency via birthing has been achieved through the Inuulitsivik birthing model. Although the Puvirnituk centre was opened with the help of Quallunaaq (non-Inuit) midwives (Van Wagner et al 385) from New Zealand or the United Kingdom, an educational program has since been established and has served as a successful way of integrating Inuit women into the midwife profession.

The Inuulitsivik Midwifery Education Program has incorporated Inuit traditions, like storytelling (Van Wagner et al. 388), into the medical education system. The program has provided a legitimate voice for Inuit women in a system that predates Quebec’s regulations. Additionally, a joint venture between Nunavut Arctic College and the University College of the North in Thompson, Manitoba offer a midwifery program that has “at least 5 students... at various stages of this program” (Douglas “Rankin Inlet Birth Centre” 181).

Inuit midwifery also addresses one of the greatest challenges with healthcare in the North: sustaining medical workers. Since the implementation of medical centres in the North, the transportation of doctors from the South to the North has been very problematic. The story with midwives is slightly different, as “historically, nurse-midwives in the Arctic were recruited from either the United Kingdom, or New Zealand, as Canada possessed no native midwifery tradition” (Douglas “Childbirth Among Canadian Inuit” 124). In both cases, the professionals had few, if any connections with the land, or the people that they were serving. This, in combination with the tough living conditions of the Arctic has led to medical centres being understaffed and medical professionals only staying for short periods of time. However, the advent of having midwives chosen

from within the community directly addresses this problem. The Inuulitsivik Midwifery Education Program represents a shift that is concentrated solely on Inuit, and because of that should be considered for all programs in the North, not simply birthing.

### **Conclusion**

For Inuit mothers, birthing cannot just happen in their communities, but has to include integrated community members. For this to happen, both language and connections within the town must be given utmost importance. Since birthing went “back to the North,” multiple points of contention have seen favourable results, the largest of which is Midwifery, however it is far from perfect.

The consequences from failing to make birthing a community-based activity are seen in Rankin’s Inlet and Ungava Bay where Inuit midwives or misguided programs have failed to make amends with the communities. The birthing centre in Rankin Inlet or the Western physicians in Ungava Bay are nothing more than southern institutions in the Arctic, regardless of how successful the birth rates are, that is only part of the solution.

The Inuulitsivik model has succeeded due to the fact that it not only uses a community based risk analysis but also has helped Inuit women regain agency. The model represents a shift from a Southern perspective on birthing to a community-based Inuit way, focusing on local midwives. The model has not simply passed, but rivaled Canadian averages concerning death rates. The system in Nunavik has been incredibly successful and has brought jobs and comfort to a community that has proven itself to be sustainable.

Agency needs to transcend all institutions in the Arctic, and the Inuulitsivik birthing model is a showcase of what could and should become the norm. Numbers and percentages are important, but reviving communities and culture is of equal importance. For that reason alone, the Inuulitsivik model is the only birthing centre model that has a place in the future.

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