

THE
UNDISCOVERED
COUNTRY

Cultural Dialectics

SERIES EDITOR: Raphael Foshay

*The difference between subject and object slices through subject
as well as through object.*

THEODORE ADORNO

Cultural Dialectics provides an open arena in which to debate questions of culture and dialectic — their practices, their theoretical forms, and their relations to one another and to other spheres and modes of inquiry. Approaches that draw on any of the following are especially encouraged: continental philosophy, psychoanalysis, the Frankfurt and Birmingham schools of cultural theory, deconstruction, gender theory, postcoloniality, and interdisciplinarity.

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The Undiscovered Country: Essays in Canadian Intellectual Culture

Ian Angus

THE
UNDISCOVERED
COUNTRY
ESSAYS IN
CANADIAN
INTELLECTUAL
CULTURE
IAN ANGUS



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DEDICATED TO

*George Grant, Roman Onufrijchuk, Rowly Lorimer,
Robbie Schwarzwald, Myrna Kostash, and Claude Couture,
in gratitude for helping me find my way in Canadian studies
understood as articulation of the pressing questions through
engagement in one's own place*

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PREFACE

The essays collected here develop several themes regarding Canadian intellectuals and culture. This work is a companion to my two other books on English Canada.¹ It is organized into three parts, focusing first on critiques of other thinkers, then on critical analyses of English Canadian political culture,* before closing with a final part consisting of material written after the two other books that can stand as an independent articulation of my own views. The text is thus organized to supplement my own arguments “negatively,” as it were, through critique rather than positive argumentation in the first two parts, so that my own position becomes apparent gradually through critical engagement to arrive at the final articulations. Nevertheless, since the essays and lectures were written separately, they can be read individually by those with specific interest in one of the topics. In general, they have not been revised, apart from the correction of errors and small additions or elisions that reflect the changed context and time of publication. There is thus some overlap between the essays that could not be avoided. The introductory chapters to each part, however, include some new material outlining the unity of the essays in order to clarify the selection and organization of this collection and, in some cases, making brief reference to new scholarship.

* It is not always possible to clearly distinguish when one is referring to “English Canada” and when to “Canada” outright, for reasons that are rooted in the constitution of the phenomenon itself. Whenever possible, I do so. By “English Canada” I mean that part of Canada in which the language of ordinary interaction, and therefore most common cultural activity, is English. No reference whatever to the ethnic or racial origin of the individuals is meant. By “Canada” I mean the whole political-cultural-state entity, which comprises the three constituent units of First Nations, the francophone-Québec nation, and “English Canada”—which may or may not be a nation in the sense of a distinct people with a common way of life and belief.

Part I begins with a brief sketch of the Hegelian confidence and progressivism that has dominated Canadian intellectual life. This confidence is not always the direct object of my critique, but it nearly always suffers at least collateral damage in the critiques of the thinkers addressed. Part II focuses on national identity and political culture, including the role of Canadian studies in these.

My own conception as articulated in Part III is at once more utopian and more tragic than that of the first two parts. I have thus used as the title for the collection a phrase taken from one of the most famous tragic speeches in English-speaking culture: Hamlet's "To be or not to be" soliloquy (Act 3, Scene 1, lines 77–83):

Who would fardels bear,
To grunt and sweat under a weary life,
But that the dread of something after death,
The undiscovered country, from whose bourn
No traveller returns, puzzles the will,
And makes us rather bear those ills we have
Than fly to others that we know not of?

A fardel is a pack or a bundle, a burden. For Canadian intellectual culture, the burden is its origin in empire. It is widely recognized that English Canadian political culture has focused on community and plurality, but I argue that this conception contains the risk of becoming simply apologetic and ideological if it ignores the critique of empire that has been equally constitutive of its distinctive character. English Canadian culture is thus caught between its origin in empire and its attempt to adequately critique that origin. English Canadian intellectual culture acquits itself well when it consciously articulates the project of throwing off empire and judges critically failures to so do.

We are delayed before this ultimate possibility that the culture holds out to us as a goal by a fear that is also itself constitutive of the culture: the fear of death, the fear that what is distinctive about Canadian intellectual culture will not survive and perhaps even should not survive — that we will be suffused within empire yet again. This fear leads us to bear the fardel and to slink from confrontation with the ultimate possibility

that the culture places in front of us. Thus, in the book's first two parts, these essays are critical, negative, in the service of a clarity promised. Its third part speaks with a voice increasingly incapable of delivery in the public realm. To refuse to bear the fardels courts a confrontation with death — the Great Unknown source of hope and fear entwined in tragedy. The two appendixes deal with more practical motivations and issues in response to the probing questions of two expert critics.

I am grateful to Raphael Foshay, Pamela MacFarland Holway, and Athabasca University Press for their interest in publishing these essays in a single collection, which I hope allows their critical unity to become clear. The dedication expresses some of the debts that have made my work in Canadian thought possible.

PART I
THE
DOMINANT
HEGELIANISM
OF CANADIAN
INTELLECTUAL
LIFE

1

Introduction: The Instituting *Polemos* of English Canadian Culture

This first part of this collection brings together four essays that critically analyze the work of major thinkers in Canada.* The background for these analyses is the Hegelianism that has dominated Canadian intellectual life.** The essay on Charles Taylor criticizes his Hegelian conception of the modern world. That on James Doull focuses on the Hegelian conception of the relation between particular and universal will that emerged in European modernity. Neither of these thinkers is an ultra-orthodox Hegelian, and the essays take due note of significant departures from Hegel. However, taken together, the critiques attempt to

*One might want to say “English Canada” here, but Charles Taylor’s work deals extensively with Québec, as well as with Canada, even when he writes in English. Add this to the positive reception that Grant’s work has recently found in Québec, as well as James Doull’s analysis of Confederation, and the line becomes difficult to draw. On Grant, see Christian Roy, “Echoes of George Grant in ‘Late Boomer’ Critiques of Post-Quiet Revolution Quebec,” in *Athens and Jerusalem: George Grant’s Theology, Philosophy and Politics*, ed. Ian Angus, Ron Dart, and Randy Peg Peters (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006).

** Instead of defining the dominant Canadian intellectual orientation as “Hegelian,” one might use the term “Canadian Idealism,” as does Robert Meynell in *Canadian Idealism and the Philosophy of Freedom: C.B. Macpherson, George Grant, and Charles Taylor* (Montréal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2011). This would certainly have the advantage of including Kant as a figure to whom constant reference is made, especially in the context of moral philosophy — which itself has a central role in Canadian philosophy

marshal some reasons why a Hegelian conception of modernity is blind to certain key issues, notably the tendency of technology to undermine communal structures of meaning and the persistence of class inequality. They suggest that, against its own self-conception as a reconciliation of opposites, Canadian Hegelianism is a *polemos* for the compromising middle.

The inclusion of C.B. Macpherson with the dominant Hegelianism of Canadian intellectual life is more controversial, but, as Robert Meynell has recently pointed out, his critique of “possessive individualism” and defence of communitarian goals does fit neatly within its political orientation.¹ Macpherson’s project of basing a socialist goal on an internal critique of liberalism as “possessive individualism” importantly points to issues of property and class that structure modern capitalist society. But, as I argue in my essay below, Macpherson ignores the rationalist defence of property as the necessary externalization of individual will and thus fails to achieve the level of the defence of particular will that is analyzed by Doull.* Thus, Macpherson’s ethic of individual self-development, which

(see, for example, John Watson, *An Outline of Philosophy, with Notes Historical and Critical*, 4th ed. [Glasgow: James MacLehose and Sons, 1908], chaps. 9–11; John Watson, *The State in Peace and War* [Glasgow: James MacLehose and Sons, 1919], chap. 6 and pp. 242–43, 252–53; and Leslie Armour, *The Idea of Canada and the Crisis of Community* [Ottawa: Steel Rail Publishing, 1981], chap. 7). But, more important, because Canadian appropriations of Hegel have tended to be sceptical of the final and structuring claim to knowledge of the Absolute in his philosophy, they arguably remain closer to Kant. As Leslie Armour has summed up Watson’s position, one that has remained influential since, “In a sense this [Watson’s principle] is the very opposite of the principle that was usually ascribed to Hegel: The very nature of the Absolute is that of a unity which can be understood as expressed through a plurality. Plurality and ‘opposition’ are not to be overcome but to be fostered” (Leslie Armour, “Canadian Ways of Thinking: Logic, Society, and Canadian Philosophy,” in *Alternative Frontiers: Voices from the Mountain West Canadian Studies Conference*, ed. Allen Seager, Leonard Evenden, Rowland Lorimer, and Robin Mathews [Montréal: Association for Canadian Studies, 1997], 1–22). Despite this, there are some advantages to the denomination “Canadian Hegelianism.” After all, Hegel is no less a persistent reference than Kant. But, most significantly, Hegel’s emphasis on history, combined with its very marginal role in Kant’s philosophy, justifies it, I think. In any case, it is not the name that is most important but rather the description of a dominant philosophy in Canada focused on the maintenance of plurality and the historical interactions of differences. Unlike most of those who study this dominant philosophy, I want not only to recall and explain it but also to criticize it.

* Despite the political similarity of Macpherson’s defence of community to Canadian Hegelianism, or Canadian Idealism, as Robert Meynell terms it, it is too much to suggest

is indeed central to the socialist project, threatens to divide into either, on the one hand, a self-development ethic that would depend on the property assumptions of contemporary capitalism or, on the other hand, the defence of an ethic that has been marginalized by that very development — making it an external critique of market capitalism much like George Grant's.

George Grant criticized Hegelian progressivism and optimism in favour of a lament about technological society.* Hegelian progressivism must assume that tragedy is overcome by hope for the direction

that his philosophical orientation was actually Hegelian. Meynell is no doubt right that Macpherson's ethics of the development of individual capacities is insufficiently grounded and that "a better case can be made for the validity of moral obligations, one that goes beyond its being a mere matter of preference" (Meynell, *Canadian Idealism and the Philosophy of Freedom*, 211). But a second- or third-hand influence from Hegel by way of T. H. Green is not sufficient to claim that Macpherson actually based his ethic on a Hegelian justification in anything but, perhaps, a biographical sense — especially given his critique of Green (72–74).

- * Both Robert C. Sibley and Robert Meynell go to great lengths to argue that, even while Grant himself thought that he departed from Hegelian assumptions, this was not actually so. Sibley argues that "it would be a mistake to think that Grant's turn from Hegel means that he is able to excise Hegel's influence, that he can step outside the magic circle of modernity" (*Northern Spirits: John Watson, George Grant, Charles Taylor, Appropriations of Hegelian Political Thought* [Montréal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2008], 277–78). But Grant no more has to excise all remnants of Hegel's influence to cease to be a Hegelian than one has to destroy all the pieces of a broken glass for it to no longer function as a glass. In Sibley's own phrasing, Hegel may well have remained part of Grant's "theoretical language" without implying that Hegel remained the "philosophic model" as he claims (11). It is a long way from an influence to a framework, or from a conceptual language to a conceptual model. Meynell argues that Grant's Kojévian conception of Hegel is inadequate and that what he thought of as a critique of Hegel actually "brings him closer to recent scholarship that interprets Hegel's work as less mystical than has previously been thought" (Meynell, *Canadian Idealism and the Philosophy of Freedom*, 149). His correlative claim that Grant's "Christianity is strongly influenced by Hegelian idealism" (159) is refuted in the essay on Grant in this collection. Both Sibley and Meynell evince a similar evasion, or violent interpretation in the service of a polemical ideal, to that apparent in Elizabeth Trott and David McGregor discussed in the main text. There is indeed a dominant Hegelianism in Canadian intellectual life, and certainly the interpretation of Hegel is fundamental for assessing this tradition, but such interpretive stretching to claim that *there is no significant intellectual figure that falls outside this tradition* is more evidence of a symptom than an argument. It is reminiscent of Hegel's "night in which all cows are black" in its haste to achieve unity at the price of indistinction (G. W. F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A. V. Miller [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979], 9).

of history and thus must compromise with power. Grant's lament was grounded in his religious conception of philosophy.² The essay in this part focuses on this religious foundation in order to reject a conception of philosophy that would be thus dependent.



It has nearly become a commonplace to remark on the extraordinary influence that Hegel has had on Canadian intellectual life, which is remarkable, especially since Hegel himself explicitly rejected the notion that Canada might offer anything of interest to either history or philosophy.

The fundamental problem of English Canada as a nation derives from its settler status in the New World. If there is nothing worth understanding in the way it has worked with this condition, then it offers nothing worth knowing. So it is, in Hegel's view in 1830 at least, that the New World adds nothing to the universal concerns of history and philosophy.

What has taken place in the New World up to the present time is only an echo of the Old World — the expression of a foreign Life; and as a Land of the Future, it has no interest for us here, for, as regards History, our concern must be with that which has been and that which is. In regard to Philosophy, on the other hand, we have to do with that which (strictly speaking) is neither past nor future, but with that which is, which has an eternal existence — with Reason; and this is quite sufficient to occupy us. Dismissing, then, the New World, and the dreams to which it may give rise, we pass over to the Old World — the scene of the World's History.³

And even if the New World itself would hold the possibility of a new turn in history that would need to be understood by philosophy, we cannot expect that such a possibility could be brought forth in Canada.

The North American Federation has no neighboring State (towards which they occupy a relation similar to that of European States to each other) . . . which they regard with mistrust, and against which they must keep up a standing army. Canada and Mexico are not objects of fear. And England has had fifty years of experience, that free America

is more profitable to her than it was in a state of dependence. . . . America is therefore the land of the future, where, in the ages that lie before us, the burden of the World's History shall reveal itself – perhaps in a contest between North and South America. It is a land of desire for all those who are weary of the historical lumber-room of old Europe.⁴

If there were anything new in the New World, it would be seen in the United States of America. But even in the land of the future, for Hegel, there is not a real modern state, and therefore its pertinence to universal history and philosophy is to be doubted.

As to the political condition of North America, the general object of the existence of this State is not yet fixed and determined, and the necessity for a firm combination does not yet exist; for a real State and a real Government arise only after a distinction of classes has arisen, when wealth and poverty become extreme, and when such a condition of things presents itself that a large portion of the people can no longer satisfy its necessities in the way in which it has been accustomed to do so. But America is hitherto exempt from this pressure, for it has the outlet of colonization constantly and widely open, and multitudes are continually streaming into the plains of the Mississippi. By this means a chief source of discontent is removed, and the continuation of the existing civil condition is guaranteed. A comparison of the United States of North America with European lands is therefore impossible; for in Europe, such a natural outlet for population, notwithstanding all the emigrations that take place, does not exist.⁵

It is obvious that the United States has long since acquired enough state power, class distinction, and territorial boundaries to become a modern state, and there is little doubt that Canada now would qualify as well by Hegel's criteria. But it perhaps still remains unclear what contribution Canada might make to universal history and philosophy if all it achieves is to reproduce the structure of the European state. If Hegel were to be mistaken, and there were to be such a contribution to history and philosophy, surely it should be manifest within Canadian intellectual culture.

Nonetheless, as John Burbidge points out, Hegel did become an extraordinary influence in Canadian intellectual life. He summarizes that “for over a hundred years there has been a consistent interest in Hegel in Canada. . . . It is tempting to think of this as a recent phenomenon, but the tradition goes well into the nineteenth century. Unlike the United States, where most of the early Hegelians were immigrants from Germany, Canada’s Hegelianism came by way of Scotland.”⁶ This influence has not been confined to philosophy in the disciplinary sense but has become significant throughout Canadian thought and culture, so that, in David MacGregor’s words, “thanks to the Scottish influence, belief in community and in the identity of language and action are key features of Hegel’s thought — and of Canadian intellectual life.”⁷ A key symbolic moment in this influence is when John Watson, the premier student of Scottish Hegelian Edward Caird, took the Chair of Philosophy at Queen’s University in 1872. Watson influenced generations of undergraduates, many of whom became United Church ministers, whose influence on Canadian religion and culture was enormous. The three main themes of Canadian Hegelianism were already evident in Watson’s work: the defence of community against rampant individualism, the argument that the state has a moral role as the expression of community, and the interpretation of the Hegelian Absolute — or, religiously understood, God — as always necessarily seen in a plurality of ways.⁸ This influence goes a long way toward explaining the greater influence of community in Canadian life compared to the United States. “Unlike in America, where the early colonists banded together to defend individual liberty against the demands of a distant state, Canadians have had to build a consensus within a widely divergent constituency and to find a community that respects differences.”⁹

It is a basic question whether Canada, or even English-speaking Canada considered separately, can attain enough unity to become a nation — in the sense of a people with a unified culture — at all. The Canadian philosopher Winthrop Pickard Bell, student of the German founder of phenomenology, Edmund Husserl, could wonder while interned in Germany in 1915 whether Canadians could be a nation in the sense of a people sharing common feelings and reactions. “The question is what sort of a people will the mixture produce, or if no mixture results,

what effect will this body of people with diverging types of feeling and thinking have on questions where the common sentiment and united communal instinct of the nation are thought to be the deciding factors.”¹⁰ What is left out of this formulation is the role of empire and its succeeding form of state power in establishing the field within which mixing will take place and the relationship between the mixture that is English Canada with First Nations and Québec. The dominant philosophy in English Canada has been established precisely through ignoring the central role of empire.

There is remarkable agreement on the notion that Canadian philosophy consists in a pluralism oriented to “tolerance, restraint and mutual respect,” though some, such as Gary Madison, argue for “the liberal consensus that now fully dominates Canadian discourse” and that such liberalism allows for cultural rights as “simply variants of basic human rights guaranteeing individuals the right to free association and freedom from discrimination.”¹¹ In this version, Canadian philosophy is essentially indistinguishable from English-speaking liberalism internationally whose Canadian character derives only from the fact that it permeates Canadian mores. It asks neither if it is well grounded in Canadian history nor whether it is adequate to understanding existing power structures, and thus it fails to question whether it is a genuine philosophy or only a comforting ideology.

In contrast, Armour argues that some form of group rights is specific to Canadian liberalism in that “we have grappled from the beginning with the idea of a plurality of communities which may, despite their plurality, legitimate some of the same institutions; and with the idea that, even where there are different institutions, they may express some common principles and some common strategies. We have often thought about the idea — though we have often worried about it too — that these common principles and strategies might embody a single nation.”¹² Given that the fundamental problematic in Canada is the relationship between unity and plurality, it is not surprising that Canadian philosophy has been drawn repeatedly to Hegel — despite his own evaluation of our pathetic prospects. In their comprehensive history of English Canadian philosophy from 1850 to 1950, Leslie Armour and Elizabeth Trott note that its dominant tendency has been a specific kind

of Hegelian relation between identity and difference that they characterize as a philosophical federalism.

Dominantly in English Canadian philosophy reason is used as a device to explore alternatives, to suggest ways of combining apparently contradictory ideas, to discover new ways of passing from one idea to another. Only rarely is it used as an intellectual substitute for force — as a device to defeat one's opponent, to show his ideas to be without foundation, or to discredit his claims to philosophical thought. There is, in short, a kind of philosophical federalism at work, a natural inclination to find out why one's neighbour thinks differently rather than to find out how to show him up as an idiot.¹³

The specific characteristics of Canadian Hegelianism that Armour and Trott delineate include a defence of the public legitimacy and relevance of a plurality of moral-religious traditions, an interpretation of the dialectic as tolerance and compromise, and a skepticism toward the Absolute, at least as an accomplished historical fact, in favour of seeing it as an inclusive moral goal. Such a philosophy is, they argue, a species of "rationalist pluralism" that is skeptical that a single community possesses the truth entire but accepts that it expresses some part of, or perspective on, the truth.¹⁴ Such a rationalist pluralism suggests, unlike the more orthodox Hegelianism of James Doull, for example,¹⁵ an importance of medium-level political identities — such as ethnic groups, religious denominations, or voluntary associations — between the individual and the state. Reflection on the relation of identity and diversity in this spirit has been the dominant tendency of English Canadian philosophy.

One aspect of this tradition that has been underlined by Elizabeth Trott is that, in order for two opposites to be regarded as dialectically related and thus amenable to synthesis, they must contain some common element or metaphor that provides a "central locus from which reason-giving concepts are derived."¹⁶ In the absence of such a common metaphor, diverse moral-religious traditions threaten to become simply different and unrelated rather than resources whose dialectical relation makes a unity from, and in, diversity. Thus, she argues that "promoting similarities is as essential as sensitizing to differences" and concludes

that “if Canada is merely a set of many cultures, then there is no locus for debate or conversation. Fragmented into particulars, it will cease to exist.”¹⁷ Thus, Trott simply assumes that opposites must always be spanned by a Hegelian reconciliation — that whenever two opposites are noted a middle is inevitable.

This dialectic of self and other within a common locus is the core Hegelianism of Canadian philosophy that Armour and Trott not only discover as the dominant tendency up to 1950 but also propagate in their interventions in contemporary debates. But a great deal is at issue in this question of a common metaphor or locus. Without contesting the results of the considerable historical research by Armour and Trott, I want to suggest that the Hegelian dialectical framework has no place for the historical influence of empire in structuring self-other relations. Trott characterizes both Linda Hutcheon and myself as Hegelians because we utilize the concept of “border” in our work.¹⁸ But Hutcheon writes, “the postmodern irony that refuses resolution of contraries — except in the most provisional of terms — would appear to be a useful framework” and claims that it has “translated the existing Canadian emphasis on regionalism in literature, for example, into a concern for the different, the local, the particular — in opposition to the uniform, the universal, the centralized.”¹⁹ To characterize, as Trott does,* the relation between local particularity and uniform universality as a dialectic is to ignore the “contingency, multiplicity, fragmentation, discontinuity” that Hutcheon finds in English Canadian postmodern fiction.²⁰ It is no more appropriate in my case: “Wilderness is not experienced as something to be transformed into civilization, but as a limit to the civilizing project, both an external limit — an outside — and a limit of depth . . . [which requires] acceptance of a kind of abandonment, abjection.”²¹ If we were to add Arthur Kroker’s analysis of the Canadian mind as “a restless oscillation between the pragmatic will to live at all costs of the Americans and a

* In a manner similar to Trott, David McGregor interprets Hutcheon’s irony as Hegelian on the grounds that “the ironic stance is an aspect of marginality, a condition we have seen was as relevant to Hegel as it is to Canadian thinkers today.” Irony and marginality indeed go together, but to interpret Hegel as a thinker of marginality instead of history and progress is indeed a *tour de force*. See David MacGregor, “Canada’s Hegel,” *Literary Review of Canada* 3 (February 1994): 18.

searing lament for that which has been suppressed by the modern, technical order” and Dennis Lee’s “savage fields” as “the strife of world and earth,” the imposition of a Hegelian dialectical form seems even more arbitrary — indeed, it is a claim to synthesis reasserted as a *polemos*.²²

The alternative is to accept the necessity for *polemos* and shed the disguise. This is what George Grant did in 1966 when he realized that the concept of progress inherent in modern society did not allow him to pose with sufficient depth contemporary problems of ethics and meaning. He denied the apologetic dictum that “technology is simply a means which men can use well or badly” in order to argue that “as an end in itself, it inhibits the pursuit of other ends in the society it controls.”²³ For Grant, “technology” was simply another word for modern capitalist society. Charles Taylor is well aware that the instrumental reason (or technology) of modern society poses a basic problem for the “horizons of meaning” that we urgently need and that “the notion of self-determining freedom, pushed to its limit, doesn’t recognize any boundaries,” but ultimately he can only moralize in a disguised *polemos* that “in the end, authenticity can’t, shouldn’t, go all the way with self-determining freedom.”²⁴

The Hegelian dialectical form ignores the structuring of Canada by empire. The structuring force of empire was a main theme in the work of Harold Innis. A colonial economy is defined through its service to the centre of empire, not on its own terms. His staple theory of the Canadian economy explained the origin and significance of this basic fact:

The economic history of Canada has been dominated by the discrepancy between the centre and the margin of Western civilization.

Energy has been directed toward the exploitation of staple products and the tendency has been cumulative. The raw material supplied to the mother country stimulated manufactures of the finished product and also of the products which were in demand in the colony.²⁵

The centre-periphery relationship through which empire functions permeates the whole society that it structures. The settler population depends upon the products of the imperial centre such that there is an early interchange of finished goods for staple resources. Institutions and cultural development are built on this foundation.

Rather than an agreement on a Hegelian dialectical resolution, what prevails is a debate now drawn between those who hold to a Hegelian synthesis and those for whom deep polarity is the form of the relation between opposites. Such an unresolved tension between opposites means that economy and culture remain polemical. One need not deny that they are indeed each other's opposites, and thus in some sense related through a common locus, if that is understood as a field of tension. For the thinkers of polarity, among whom I count myself, the instituting *polemos* in Canadian history is the centre-periphery relationship instituted by empire — a theme that drops out in the Hegelian versions of English Canadian history and culture and whose absence increases the danger of slipping into an apologetic ideology by ignoring structural relations of power.* Thus, one is forced to conclude, the dominant ideology in English Canada has been established precisely through ignoring the central role of empire in the formation of the country.

The relation between identity and plurality can indeed be shown to be constitutive of English Canadian philosophy and culture, and moreover an interesting distinct expression of this perennial philosophical issue can be derived from reflection on Canadian history, but any formulation of identity and plurality in the Canadian context that proceeds without consideration of the structuring imperial relations between centre and periphery slips from being philosophy into ideology by becoming an apology for power.

* I have phrased this as a danger rather than as a fact because I am interested in pinpointing the point at which philosophy slips into ideology in English Canadian discourse rather than entering into an analysis of a particular work. Specifically, Leslie Armour's work is not blind to power relations in the way that a more comforting dialectic is, as one glance at *The Idea of Canada and the Crisis of Community* will show. Armour has commented on Marxist and anarchist analyses of power, for example, that "Marxist 'materialism' is not a kind of Hobbesian scientism but an insistence on the concrete. Proudhon understood the importance of community as something constantly under construction" (Ian Angus, "A Conversation with Leslie Armour," *Symposium: Canadian Journal of Continental Philosophy* 15, no. 1 [Spring 2011]: 89). The specific interpretation of the locus, common metaphor, or concept of identity is crucial for English-Canadian philosophy and its relation to ideology.

2

Charles Taylor's Account of Modernity

Modernity — its nature, critique, and possibility — is Charles Taylor's abiding theme. Modernity has altered the basic relation of religion to society and therefore the experience of meaning in modern society. In Taylor's version of the secularization thesis, the contrast is between "the world that we have lost, one in which the social was grounded in the sacred and secular time in higher times, a society moreover in which the play of structure and anti-structure was held in equilibrium; and this human drama unfolded within the cosmos. All this has been dismantled and replaced by something quite different in the transformation we often roughly call disenchantment."¹ But unlike Weber, with his melancholy acceptance of life within the iron cage, Taylor has persistently sought a recovery of meaning without rejecting the modern age. Modern society produces both a crisis of meaning and the possibility for its recovery, but the condition for this recovery is that "the link with God passes more through our endorsing contested interpretations — for instance, of our political identity as religiously defined, or of God as the authority

and moral source underpinning our ethical life.”² Religion in modernity is thus oriented toward the recovery of meaning in ordinary life. Recovery of meaning is a central task of the critique of modernity.

The Religious Significance of Social Philosophy

Taylor’s thinking on modernity finds its beginning in the philosophy of G.W.F. Hegel not least because modernity was the central organizing idea of Hegel’s philosophy. The principle of particular subjectivity, which was manifested in different ways by the figures of Socrates and Jesus, becomes the foundation of modern society. “Secular life is the positive and definite embodiment of the spiritual kingdom — the kingdom of the will manifesting itself in outward existence.”³ Spirit, *Geist*, comes into its own in the modern world by ceasing to occupy a heaven, or a world of ideas, separate from ordinary reality and by becoming the principle or organization of that reality itself.

Philosophy, in Hegel’s view, is centred on the concept, which is the foundation for speculative reason. Unlike ancient philosophy, which had to create the very basis of conceptual knowledge through abstraction, modern philosophy must bring reason from abstraction to concrete reality. “Hence the task nowadays consists not so much in purging the individual of an immediate, sensuous mode of apprehension, and making him into a substance, that is an object of thought and that thinks, but rather in just the opposite, in freeing determinate thoughts from their fixity so as to give actuality to the universal, and impart it to spiritual life.”⁴ The meaning of the modern world is precisely a reconciliation of reason and reality. As Hegel pointed out in his *Aesthetics*, the ideal of chivalry, of righting wrong through the action of a noble knight, is gone, and we are left with “the prose of life” in which “art is mastery in the portrayal of all the secrets of this ever profounder pure appearance of external realities.”⁵ Taylor has similarly affirmed that the modern moral order consists in “the affirmation of ordinary life” where “the full human life is now defined in terms of labour and production, on the one hand, and marriage and family life, on the other. At the same time, the previous ‘higher’ activities come under vigorous criticism.”⁶ Philosophy

completes itself in modern reality insofar as modern reality completes itself in philosophy.

While this project of reconciliation of reason with reality permeates all the differentiated spheres of modern existence, it pertains most centrally to political philosophy, where the social existence of humans demands a rational form that recognizes each subject's autonomy. "Plato in his *Republic* makes everything depend on the government, and makes disposition the principle of the state; on which account he lays the chief stress on education. The modern theory is diametrically opposed to this, referring everything to the individual will. But here we have no guarantee that the will in question has that right disposition which is essential to the state."⁷ The problem of modern political philosophy is thus to find the forms through which individual wills can be reconciled into a free, egalitarian, and rational order. Thus, it is a key concern of Hegel's political philosophy to identify mediating institutions within civil society that combine individual wills voluntarily, so that the individual does not have to confront the state alone. It is through such mediating institutions that the modern polity can avoid ancient authority, on the one hand, and arbitrary modern subjective will, on the other. Philosophy should thus attend to the formation of individual wills into institutions, that is, the concrete form of reason.

Social reality is thus the realm for resolution of philosophico-theological reason, and social philosophy is the form in which philosophical reason is shown to permeate the mediating institutions and activities of ordinary life.

The Impossibility of Hegelian Reconciliation

The central theme of the reconciliation of philosophy and social reality in Hegel accounts for its persistence as a point of reference in addressing contemporary issues, even though the reconciliation itself, despite its centrality to Hegelian philosophy, has tried the credulity of most readers. Particularly remarkable is the case of Jean Hyppolite, who rejected the idea of Hegel's system while simultaneously taking his work as a model of philosophic discourse, in the sense that we are compelled to

interrogate the positive, specialized sciences “to translate for mankind the meaning that they hold for us.”⁸ This position is predominant no less than it is remarkable in that it rejects the standpoint of the reconciliation of reason and reality in which the task that it articulates was grounded and rendered possible. If reason and reality are not reconciled, then the *telos* of philosophy in the prose of life cannot be founded in reason; it becomes a goal, an argument, a *polemos* — which is to say, no longer a Hegelian conception of philosophy.⁹ Taylor similarly comments that “the results of the empirical sciences should reveal the structure of the Concept, with the degree of approximation and inexactness appropriate to the level of reality concerned. But the sciences had already in his own day broken the bounds of the synthesis which Hegel’s commentary imposed on them.”¹⁰ So it is not surprising that a similar acceptance of Hegel, but not on Hegelian terms, characterizes the final word of Charles Taylor’s *Hegel*. If, as he says, “this magnificent Hegelian synthesis has dissolved,”¹¹ then the reconciliation of Enlightenment reason and romantic expressivism has either to be abandoned or become a project, a goal, so that the failure to have reached the goal can be diagnosed precisely as a failure requiring remedy. “Modern civilization has thus seen the proliferation of Romantic views of private life and fulfilment, along with a growing rationalization and bureaucratization of collective structures, and a frankly exploitative stance towards nature.”¹² First the diagnosis, then the failure: the Hegelian ontology remains a live option because “the opposition . . . continues in different forms to our day. It seems ineradicable from modern civilization, which as heir to the Enlightenment constantly re-awakens expressivist protest, and along with this, the claim of absolute freedom. The very urgency with which the claims are pressed makes the search for a situated subjectivity all the more vital.”¹³ Hegel survives not as reason but as protest, as counter-current to bureaucratic reason, as a romantic promise of reconciliation. Hegel’s problem survives, but not Hegel’s solution. Such a formulation should already give us pause: does not the system define the terms of diagnosis? And if the system is no longer viable, how can the terms of diagnosis survive? Or, if they survive, then they do so in a different form, one that would require a different justification, and imply, one suspects, that the diagnosis cannot remain the same.

One suggestion made by Taylor in this context does shift the grounds of both systemic understanding and diagnosis. He turned to Herder to probe “deeper, unreflective levels of experience” against Hegel’s “complete self-clarity of *Geist*.”¹⁴ This turn opened up a line of inquiry that culminated in his defence of a politics of recognition based in Québec nationalism such that “a society can be organized around a definition of the good life, without this being seen as a depreciation of those who do not personally share this definition.”¹⁵ Such a definition of the good life, insofar as it appropriates the influence of Herder, cannot be a thoroughly rational definition. Or, more exactly, it cannot be expected to be subjected to rational definition prior to the belonging that sustains it. In other words, pre-rational belonging to human collectivities and reflective acceptance of that belonging cannot be made to coincide. This is just another way of saying that the Hegelian synthesis does not obtain: history contains an un-erasable, experiential “prior” in excess of its rational kernel. Such pre-rational belonging to that which “one is and must be” has been investigated by Taylor under the heading of identity, especially in its specifically modern form of authenticity.

I want to turn now to Taylor’s social philosophy, which I understand in the non-Hegelian Hegelian terms sketched above as a search for mediating institutions that can recover authenticity within a society committed to bureaucratic reason. I will argue that Taylor’s understanding of the *polemical* drive for reconciliation fails on two counts: with respect to its account of instrumental reason, or technology, as “particularity” in the Hegelian sense and with respect to the notion of the “direct-access society” that he uses to describe contemporary society. If these arguments might be thought viable, then it would require us to rethink the philosophical project of retaining Hegel for diagnosis and *telos* but rejecting him for ground.

Technology as Hegelian Particularity

In *The Malaise of Modernity*, Taylor distinguishes three endemic issues of modernity: the loss of meaning or, more exactly, the loss of moral horizons; the loss of final ends, or purposes, as a result of the

instrumentalization of reason; and a loss of freedom.¹⁶ He argues that the basic issue is authenticity, a concept that he derives from Herder, and that refers to the idea that “each person has his or her own ‘measure’ . . . [or that] there is a certain way of being that is *my way*.”¹⁷ Since modern individuals strive to define their own identities, it is extremely difficult to recognize any moral horizons, such as were traditionally found in religion, to that search. Moreover, social institutions, communities, and organizations are seen as merely instrumental to the single individual. Such instrumental, bureaucratic, social institutions thereby come to restrain the freedom of the individual. The main burden of Taylor’s argument is thus to develop a concept of authenticity that does not eclipse the horizons of significance that can ground a meaningful identity.

I will not address this argument itself but rather the aspect of modernity that Taylor refers to variously and without distinction as “instrumental reason,” “technological civilization,” and “technology.” Instrumental reason refers to the rationality that emerged from modern physical science and also underlies the bureaucratic form of modern social organization. In general terms, Taylor seems to accept Max Weber’s account of instrumental reason in which “in principle a system of rationally debatable ‘reasons’ stands behind every act of bureaucratic administration, that is, either subsumption under norms or a weighing of ends and means,”¹⁸ while he argues against Weber that technology can be put into a different, non-instrumental framework through authentically modern horizons of meaning. The core of the argument is that technology was developed in the first place for the moral goal of subduing the destructive forces of nature in illness, scarcity, or natural catastrophe in order to improve the conditions for humanity. Thus, “if we come to understand why technology is important here in the first place, then it will of itself be limited and enframed by an ethic of caring.”¹⁹

But why should this be so? Why should the fact that a moral ideal got instrumental reason going in the first place be sufficient reason to believe that instrumental reason still operates within such a framework? Taylor admits that there are many forces in contemporary society that push in the direction of instrumental reason, and

even that “left to themselves they have a tendency to push us in that direction.”²⁰ Without stopping to ask why this should be the case, his argument for authenticity within horizons of significance leads him to deny the necessity of this tendency and to end with a plea for citizen participation. “The effective re-enframing of technology requires common political action to reverse the drift that market and bureaucratic state engender toward greater atomism and instrumentalism.”²¹ I don’t want to argue with this plea on a political level but rather to notice how diagnosis has slipped into exhortation. In Hegelian terms, instrumental reason, or technology, is characterized as “particularity,” the isolated individual in retreat from community, so that the solution is seen as the return to community on a higher level. This is exactly the problem as Hegel saw it in *Philosophy of Right*: the atomism of civil society is to be overcome by the reconciled community and individual of the state, though the Hegelian reconciliation is of course not actual for Taylor. It remains to be done and thus expressed as a *polemos*. Something is missing here.

What is missing is, first, a more thorough analysis of instrumental reason that might show why it tends to dominate our thinking and possibilities for action and, second, an analysis of where-how-why resistance to it arises and how it can be addressed.²² I am suggesting that the understanding of instrumental reason, which is the space of these two questions, has been occluded owing to a Hegelian rendering of the problem of technology. The genuine contemporary problem of technology has been undercut by fitting it into the Hegelian dialectic as the second term of the following triad: (1) unmediated, hierarchical community; (2) isolated, atomistic, particular individuals; and (3) genuine, reconciled, egalitarian community-of-individuals. Without *Aufhebung* between parts (2) and (3), the reconciliation of reason and reality degenerates into exhortation. It is important to note that, in this model, the proposed site of reconciliation is at the level of the society as a whole. If specific technologies provoke resistance, the resolution is at the level of government, not in redesigning the technology so that it has different local effects. While the “state” in Hegelian terms does not mean simply the existing nation-state, it does refer to the whole, the totality of social organization: so while disruption and resistance is local (due to

its association with particularity), reconciliation must be holistic, at the level of the highest social organization.*

What is it about technology, instrumental reason, that militates against this understanding? A lot could be said here, but there is only room for a little. While modern science got started through recourse to the Christian virtue of charity, it has not been held within that horizon of meaning. Anyone these days could name a technology that has “progressed” beyond any sensible relation to human need. This is because the new physical science was at once mathematical and experimental. Its mathematical aspect involved abstraction from experienced objects toward a teleology of formal systematicity.** Its experimental aspect re-established the pertinence of a formal-mathematical system of knowledge to a material domain of objects through a correlative abstracting, and therefore standardizing, of experimental conditions from ordinary experience. The new science was at once formally systematic and inherently tied to technological development through its experimental dimension. As a consequence, it could be applied to an increasing number of new domains. This “infinite task” of progressive scientific development projected the unprecedented idea of “a rational infinite totality of being with a rational science systematically mastering it.”²³ It is thus

* I have made a similar argument in criticism of another Hegelian, James Doull, who understood very clearly the problem posed by contemporary global economy and technology to the Hegelian formulae, in the next chapter.

** Before one jumps to the common conclusion that the new physics was Platonic, in distinction from the Aristotelian science of the Middle Ages, it must be noted that mathematics had undergone a significant reformation since late antiquity such that it was based on a “symbol-generating abstraction” without direct reference to experienced objects. Unlike the ancient *arithmos*, which referred to “a definite number of definite things,” the mathematics taken over by Galileo “intends another concept and not a being.” See Jacob Klein, *Greek Mathematical Thought and the Origin of Algebra*, trans. Eva Brann (New York: Dover, 1968), 46, 174. The severing of concept from intention of experienced objects grounds the two other major characteristics of this form of knowledge. It is only the symbol-system as a whole that can be brought to refer to a domain of objects, and the symbol-system, by virtue of its abstraction from experience, becomes systematic in the sense of postulating an internally consistent and transparent relation between concepts. I have explored the significance of Klein’s thesis for the relations between formal systematicity and concrete experience in “Jacob Klein’s Revision of Husserl’s *Crisis*: A Contribution to the Transcendental History of Reification,” *Philosophy Today* 49, no. 5 (2005): 204–11.

no accident that technology has burst the confines of the nation-state through its immersion in a global economy. In short, modern science contained a theoretical structure of unprecedented universality inherently tied to continuous practical innovation that has made it a force to be reckoned with in modern society that explodes, rather than remaining within, horizons of meaning.

There is, no doubt, a Hegelian reason for the return of Hegel as *polemos* that occludes these explosive features of instrumental reason. Taylor remarks that “whether we leave our society to ‘invisible hand’ mechanisms like the market or try to manage it collectively, we are forced to operate to some degree according to the demands of modern rationality, whether or not it suits our own moral outlook. The only alternative seems to be a kind of inner exile, a self-marginalization.”²⁴ But is there never a time for inner exile? How do we know that now is not such a time? We may hear speaking here the Hegelian confidence that nothing important is lost by giving oneself, and one’s thinking, over to the direction of history. But once reconciliation has become *polemos*, surely such confidence is no longer warranted, or at the very least has become one of several possible decisions. Why is remaining in touch with the larger stream better than attending to the rivulets of poetry, friendship, or local attachment? What hooks the task of philosophy to such a decision?

The “Direct-Access” Society

The upshot of Taylor’s narrative of modernity is the final replacement in our own time of the residues of pre-modern moral order by what he calls the “direct-access society.” The completed modern moral order is constituted in secular time, that is, a time that is shorn of any public reference to the transcendental time of God, cosmos, or Being. Such a society is simultaneous and horizontal such that each member is “immediate to the whole,”²⁵ in clear distinction from pre-modern moral orders that were hierarchical and rooted in sacred time, and in which the relation of each to the whole was mediated by personal dependence on others. For this reason, pre-modern moral orders can be described as

relations of “hierarchical complementarity,” whereas the modern moral order is one of “impersonal equality.”

Disenchantment implies that the three modern institutions of economy, the public sphere, and popular sovereignty become separated from the social order as a whole. In Habermas’s terms, they become “subsystems” differentiated from the lifeworld. “These systemic interconnections, detached from normative contexts and rendered independent as subsystems, challenge the assimilative powers of an all-encompassing lifeworld. They congeal into the ‘second nature’ of a norm-free sociality that can appear as something in the objective world, as an *objectified* context of life.”²⁶ But it is not clear in what sense the public sphere and popular sovereignty can be considered “self-regulating (sub)systems” comparable to the economy. Their arguable separation, or differentiation, from the social system as a whole does not necessarily imply that they are “self-regulating.” A subsystem may have sufficient autonomy to run according to its internal rules and not be directly subservient to those of the whole social order and yet require occasional, or even continuous, intervention from that order to remain viable. It is arguable that the exemplary case for a “self-regulating subsystem” is the economy, even though it is certainly not the only one.

This is, of course, the classic dispute between Marxists and Weberians. Both Taylor and Habermas are Weberians in the sense that they do not regard the economy as especially significant in the differentiation of modernity. Be this as it may, there is a specific point at which I want to argue that Taylor’s account can be found inadequate. In the first place, Taylor’s narrative of extension of an egalitarian moral order does not enter the economic sphere itself. Indeed, the condition for the notion of a self-regulating economy is that labour (in Marxist terms, labour power) is considered as one economic cost among others. This being so, the worker cedes autonomy to those who control the labour process. The conditions of wage labour remain those of command, not egalitarian morality. Taylor admits that there is neither common decision nor a public domain in economic transaction, but that still “it is a ‘sphere’ because the agents in an economy are seen as being linked in a single society, in which their actions reciprocally affect each other in

some systematic way.”²⁷ But, surely, this criterion is too thin: agents are often reciprocally linked in hierarchical and complementary relations of command; such was the case, as Taylor points out, in pre-Revolutionary French rule.²⁸ Taylor seems blind, not only to the persistence of command relations, but to the extent to which they are rooted in the notion of a “self-regulating economy” and thus produced in new forms by modern differentiation. This is, of course, a key question raised by Marxism, especially that variety that emphasizes the production process (rather than the “anarchy of the market”) as the central element of capitalism.* Whatever one wants to make of it, here is a pervasive fact that Taylor’s own analysis cannot logically avoid: the worker and the capitalist are not “immediate to the whole” in the same sense at all. The modern

* Taylor’s critique of Marxism refers to the form of Marxism that diagnoses capitalism through the “anarchy of the market,” which is why he often refers to Lenin in his discussions. He refers in several places to the lesson that is to be learned from the failure of Marxism and communism — between which he sees no meaningful distinction precisely because Lenin’s Marxism is the only one for him. In contrast, my point is about the command relations of the factory that were extended, not eliminated (even in principle), by the subsumption of the economy under the state that characterized communism. In *Modern Social Imaginaries* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004), Taylor’s remarks about Marxism refer primarily to the base-superstructure model, in order to reject “materialist” determination of the social imaginary (32–33, 72–73), and to ill-fated attempts to subsume the economy to state control (171). In *The Malaise of Modernity* (Toronto: House of Anansi, 2003), he claims that both the idea of the economy being run by the “associated producers” and that of doing away with the bureaucratic state are illusory because we have learned that the market is necessary to industrial society (109–10). In *Hegel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), Taylor interprets Marx and Marxism as an attempted synthesis of expressivism and Enlightenment science, and thus as an inheritor of Hegel’s philosophy, but argues that the transition from quantity to quality assumed by a revolutionary change cannot be understood by Marx (as in Hegel) because the boundary between these two would shift. This is what accounts for the self-contradictory conception of revolutionary change in Marxism as both an act of will and a historical necessity. The basic issue according to Taylor is that the immanentization of spirit by Marxism produces a radical concept of freedom that corresponds to Hegel’s absolute freedom in that it is situation-less and therefore empty (551–58). My point is not that there are no lessons to be learned from communism but rather that one of the lessons is that communism occluded, no less than capitalism, the persistence and renovation of hierarchy within modernity, especially within the sphere of work, despite its commitment to egalitarian relations. How to respond to this fact remains a difficult and important problem. However, it is a fact, even though one has to be less than confident of the direction of history to register it.

moral order divides into two at the factory gates. For all the contemporary reasons to revise or abandon Marxism, this basic fact should not be lost. The general point here is that it is simplistic to associate hierarchical social relationships with pre-modern societies and egalitarian ones with modernity. Egalitarian relationships between specific social bodies are perfectly compatible with hierarchical relationships within those bodies themselves. This is true not only in the case of the market. Professors in universities may treat each other as equals, with an inviolable sphere of influence, such that each one gains the freedom to order one's own office, students, and staff in a hierarchical fashion. Equality and hierarchy interweave within modernity, as Weber no less than Marx was able to see through the proliferation of bureaucracy organized "rationally," that is to say, in a top-down structure of the military sort. It may well be this conflict, not that between agency and objectification, that motivates resistance to objectified processes.

Polemos for the Via Media

The modern moral order, according to Taylor, produces a society that is dually constituted by objectified processes — like the self-regulating mechanism of the market, the bureaucratic features of government, or the techniques of mass marketing — and moral agency. "Active and objective categories play complementary roles in our lives. It is inconceivable that we could dispense with the second."²⁹ This claim is characteristic of his approach to critiques of modernity. "The trouble with most of the views that I consider inadequate, and that I want to define mine in contrast to here, is that their sympathies are too narrow. They find their way through the dilemmas of modernity by invalidating some of the crucial goods in contest."³⁰ The two contending forces in modernity are such that, Taylor asserts, the best approach is to steer a middle way between them. "Governing a contemporary society is continually recreating a balance between requirements that tend to undercut each other, constantly finding new creative solutions as the old equilibria become stultifying."³¹ Since the critiques of modernity are made possible by modernity and depend on some of the same basic postulates as what

they are criticizing, the critiques are internal critiques of modernity. They should thus aim at improving modernity, not at abandoning it for something else. Such a “something else” is always conceived by Taylor as an *in principle* impossible attempt to return to features of pre-modern society that has the practical effect of succumbing to the “totalitarian temptation” within modernity.³² The narrative thus mutes its Hegelian triumphalism only slightly.

The tension between collective agency and objectifying processes is thus understood by Taylor as an ineradicable feature of the fully modern society due to its origin in the morality of the social contract. Political action, social analysis, and, one supposes, philosophy also, should recognize that modernity and the critics of modernity belong together and that the task is to balance them, to find some equilibrium, which will always be temporary. This effort defines the pervasive Hegelianism of Taylor’s oeuvre: he seeks the mediation whereby the similarity in the two conflicting tendencies can be recognized and thus the tension can be drawn toward a balance rather than escalating toward a rupture. Like most contemporary Hegelians, he refuses a final *Aufhebung* in which the tension is resolved by being taken to a higher level and contents himself with a perpetual balancing act. Taylor is a philosopher of the *via media*.

Egalitarian Complementarity

“What else is there?” one may ask. Can technology be understood in other terms than Hegelian particularity? Can not only the persistence, but re-creation, of command structures within modernity be addressed? Is there a better path than the middle way? Full answers to these questions would require extensive reflection and, probably, several books as long as Taylor’s often tend to be. But at least a suggestion is in order, a suggestion that speaks to the description of modernity as egalitarian and pre-modernity as hierarchical, because the limits of this dichotomous description imply the limits of Taylor’s account of current possibilities.

One way in which this issue can be raised is to observe that the relation of humans to nature is a non-reciprocal relation. While we may have moral obligations to preserve other natural beings, it is unlikely

that they have such obligations to us. Hans Jonas described this as the general problem of ethics in our time. He began his analysis in the non-reciprocal obligation of parents for their children and argued for a consequent obligation to future generations.³³ While modernity has certainly changed the moral ideal toward which we attempt to educate our children, it is not the case that they can be treated as already the free and equal individuals that the social contract requires. "For it is the future of the whole existence, beyond the direct efficacy of the responsible agent and thus beyond his concrete calculation, which is the invisible co-object of such a responsibility in each of its single, defined occasions."³⁴ Non-reciprocal relations of responsibility to children will not disappear even in the realized modernity of the direct-access society. Children will not have direct access, and responsibility must be taken for bringing them to the stage of partaking in the moral ideal. In short, children and parents are not "immediate to the whole" in the same way.

But apart from this example, Jonas suggests that non-reciprocal relations are precisely those that need thinking about in realized modernity because they are concealed by the assumptions of the modern moral ideal. Perhaps it is relations of complementarity that need to be thought about now. Modern morality tends to regard all complementary relations, because they are non-reciprocal, as hierarchical. Consider the relation of husband and wife in a family. It is commonplace to argue that the previous hierarchical relation between husband ("man") and wife was oppressive in the name of modern equality. But is equality sameness? Can the relations of male and female be thoroughly just the relation of two "individuals"? Contemporary sensitivity to difference suggests that equality and difference may be compatible and, if so, would be the basis for a new ethic that is both in a certain sense modern (because egalitarian) and in a certain sense pre-modern (because complementary). Indeed, perhaps the same issue of what we might call "complementary egalitarianism" is at the ground of the ecology movement also. It is certainly at the basis of a genuine ethic of teaching. To go back to the example of command relations in work, democracy in the workplace would have to reckon with the complementary relations of the division of labour alongside egalitarian relations of self-management.

Obviously, such an ethics of egalitarian complementarity would not displace all simply egalitarian relations, and perhaps not all simply hierarchical ones either. The suggestion is not that all social relations might become of this type but rather that the ethics of such relations may bear an important relationship to the issues of our time — precisely because modern egalitarianism has produced objectified structures and command relations from within itself through the repression of what was true about hierarchy — and could be recaptured as complementarity. This would be the source of a recovery of meaning, of a new twist to the relation between identity and difference.

Religion and Meaning

Taylor has consistently argued that individualism is not the whole of modernity and that new forms of collective action are generated that can balance the tendency of individual self-interest. Such collective action requires “horizons of significance,” but such horizons cannot be generated by individual self-interest. What, then, can generate them? One constant of Taylor’s defence of modernity is his refusal to consider atheism as an outcome of the realized modern ethic. He argues that the secularity of the modern moral ideal is a displacement of religion from its public role in connecting society to sacred time and not a rejection of religion as such. “God can seem the inescapable source for our power to impart order to our lives, both individually and socially.”³⁵ Religion can survive as personal religion and also as an important aspect of political identity. *Sources of the Self* ended with the “promise of a divine affirmation of the human.”³⁶ In *Varieties of Religion Today: William James Revisited*, Taylor said that “a thoroughly post-Durkheimian society would be one in which our religious belonging would be unconnected to our national identity” and then proceeded to find three ways in which this is not likely to come to pass: the persistence of churches, the role of religion in some national identities, and religion as a personal spiritual quest.³⁷ Religion remains in the picture for Taylor because it is the only way he can explain the flip from objectifying processes into collective action. “It is not just a matter of my own experience of the good, but something

which is woven into a cherished and crucial collective identity, whether it be that of a nation, or an ethnic group, or religious movement. Here is a crucial collective good which seems 'consubstantial' with God, or in some essential relation to transcendence."³⁸ While he maintains that modernity pushes religion out of the public realm, it nevertheless seems that it is the persistence of cosmic, natural, and spiritual experiences in individuals and the possibility, though difficulty, of their entering the public domain that provides the recovery of meaning that motivates collective action. My suggestion would indicate, in contrast, that it is the social experiences of egalitarian complementarity in which the recovery of meaning is experienced and that motivate social movements and the critique of modernity because there is some enchantment in complementarity due to its partiality. Since such experiences are in conflict with modern disenchantment, an ethic built on them would have to depart from Hegelian confidence in the direction of the future, risk exile, and embrace the *polemos* of its enchantment.

3

James Doull and the Philosophic Task of Our Time

Hegel and the Philosophic Task of Our Time

In an essay published in 1973, James Doull defined the organization of contemporary society in terms of two principles, “an unlimited technical and economic expansion” and “the utopian confidence that men can live together in unity of purpose.”¹ His goal was to demonstrate the continuing validity of the tripartite Hegelian analysis of the modern state against subsequent criticism. He located the first tendency in the conflict of self-interested particular wills characteristic of civil society and the second in the construction of concrete universality in the state. Thus, “the philosophical interest of the present time does not lie any longer in the philosophies of subjective will. Their common problem was solved long since in the Hegelian phenomenology.”² The continuing validity of the Hegelian analysis of the modern state was understood to be the institutional separation and relation between family, civil society, and the state in which the conceptual relationship between immediate

undifferentiated universality, the reflective self-interested particularity of subjective will, and reflective mediated concrete universality was rooted in historical actuality. His argument against critics of Hegel was that any attempt to undermine this tripartite structure would be a regression. Specifically, liberalism and “anarchic individualism” simply propagate subjective will and do not see its necessary supersession in which “society is common work of promoting what is useful to its members singly and collectively.”³ In this respect Marxism contains a valid legacy of Hegel insofar as it understands civil society as “the total conflict of particular personality and economic life” and that “socialism is in truth this conflict overcome inwardly as well as in the structure of society.”⁴ The philosophic task of our time is thus to promote the universal will inherent in the state, as against the partial realization of modernity in the particular will, and to diagnose the failure of cultural currents that do not attain this understanding.

Defence of the tripartite Hegelian understanding of modern society and thus of the Hegelian understanding of the philosophic task of our time was a persistent feature of Doull’s work from this 1973 essay until his very last work. However, despite his acceptance of the Hegelian diagnosis of the philosophic task of our time, Doull does make two important critiques of what we might call “actually-existing Hegel” in favour of a more thoroughgoing and contemporary Hegelianism. He notes that the Hegelian synthesis in the nineteenth century occurred within nation-states on the European model of a people with a historico-cultural unity (nation) achieving its own state. In contrast, North American states are more advanced because they are not nation-states but federal states whose unity lies in a constitutional order embracing all individuals rather than a previously existing people.⁵ Secondly, the Hegelian nineteenth-century synthesis occurred only within particular nation-states whereas our situation is to find ways of addressing this task in a post-national condition.⁶

The Universal Will of the State

The problem with the Marxist continuation of the Hegelian analysis is, in Doull's view, that it results in "an unmediated fusion of natural will with the universal."⁷ Doull's source for this interpretation of Marxism is a passage from the *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844* in which communism is presented as the synthesis of naturalism and humanism, existence and essence, objectivation and free activity, freedom and necessity, and individual and genus. Return into self-consciousness of the universal is thus understood to cancel the stage of particular will such that "the inner development of this principle has not taken place, namely of opposition of particular wills to the universal and the resolution of this opposition."⁸ Marxism's naturalism seeks to reach universality by leaping over the necessary separation of particular will from immediate universality. Its universality aims directly to synthesize natural immediacy with self-conscious mediation by rejecting the particular subjective will outright rather than surpassing it dialectically.

Doull's interpretation may be taken to contain considerable historical insight into the totalitarian consequences of fascism and communism in suppressing the necessary moment of particular will. Such unmediated universality actually entails a regression comparable to ancient political forms in which the rights of particular will had not yet emerged. Indeed, insofar as it is a regression, it takes a more extreme form than the ancient polities themselves. Moreover, in order to attain historical effectiveness these totalitarian political forms had to enlist the Hegelian universality of the state (though in a distorted form). However, it may well be doubted whether this historical insight applies to Marxism itself or the whole of Marxism. Shlomo Avineri had, in his commentary to Doull's paper in the same volume, already raised the issue of whether there is an "uncritical equation of Marxism, or socialism, with the Soviet Union or the other countries that claim to be Marxist today" in this account.⁹ It is not possible in this note to get into the much-debated issue within Marxism of the role of Marx's 1844 *Manuscripts* in Marx's development and in the formulation of Marxism itself. Suffice it to say that Doull's historical insight must carry the qualification that the relation of Marxism to communism remains assumed rather than shown.

The historical insight was developed further in Doull's late essay "Hegel's *Phenomenology* and Post-Modern Thought," where it provided the basis for a diagnosis of the two dominant cultural tendencies of our current time. An outright acceptance of global technological culture brooking no critique co-exists with a primitivist finite naturalism due, precisely, to the failure to actualize the Hegelian surpassing of particular will by concrete universality. The philosophic task of our time, now called post-modern (due to limiting the term *modern* to the early modern emancipation of particular will), remains identical. "Considered from the side of the Hegelian philosophy, 'post-modernity' is the concrete unity of nature and thought as it appears in the *Sittlichkeit* of the family, society, and state set forth in the *Philosophy of Right*."¹⁰

In commenting on Doull's defence of the necessity, though inadequacy, of particular will and its institutional expression in civil society, Avineri pointed out that Doull's Hegelian claim that "the practical interest of the present age is transparently that science and technology be brought under universal will, and that individuals have their particular freedom explicitly and primarily therein" might itself be considered "what Marxism and socialism are all about."¹¹ Indeed, were the naturalism of the 1844 *Manuscripts* to be considered, as it is by many Marxists, as a passing phase in Marx's development, it might be suggested that the Marxist and Hegelian versions of the philosophic task of our time are identical in demanding a supersession of civil society by the universal will of the state that preserves the necessity and validity of particular will — especially in light of Doull's two revisions of Hegel's idea of reconciliation within the nineteenth-century nation-state, which might well converge with the internationalism and non-national individual of Marxism.

Propertylessness as Lack of Effective Will

Where the Marxist and Hegelian tasks differ, however, is in whether civil society as the institutional actuality of particular will must remain alongside its preservation and cancellation in the state or whether it should be annulled institutionally by its dialectical surpassing. As Hegel noted, subjective particular will has no place in the world unless it is externalized.

“As the private particularity of knowing and willing, the principle of this system of needs contains absolute universality, the universality of freedom, only abstractly and therefore as the principle of property.”¹² Relevant to this difference is the argument made by Marx throughout the period 1843–45 concerning the definition of civil society as the sphere of conflicting particular wills. He asserted that there is “a class in civil society which is not a class of civil society” such that “when the proletariat demands the negation of private property it only lays down as a principle for society what society has already made a principle for the proletariat, and what the latter already involuntarily embodies as the negative result of society.”¹³ Also, “the proletariat and wealth are opposites. As such they form a whole. . . . The proletariat itself can and must liberate itself. . . . It cannot do so without destroying *all* the inhuman living conditions of contemporary society which are concentrated in its own situation.”¹⁴ The necessary externalization of particular will in property contains a contradiction between property holders and the propertyless. The fundamental character of civil society is thus not the conflict of a plurality of particular wills but the systemic contradiction between two opposed classes based in the existence of private property in production that only together form the whole. The persistence of civil society does not guarantee that the particular will is not suppressed but rather guarantees that particular wills remain subservient to their formation into classes and to the interests of those classes as a whole.

Thus, while there is a certain formulation of the philosophic task of our time that unites Hegel and Marx in the socialist task of bringing science and technology under the universal will, there is another sense in which the Marxist task of the emancipation of the proletariat diverges from this socialist task. The two tasks are rooted in the difference between understanding capitalism as a market-dominated society (particular will) and as a form of production of goods (class society). This is the difference that Marx marked in the transition between Parts 1 and 2 of the first volume of *Capital*, in which “the consumption of labour-power is completed, as in the case of every other commodity, outside the limits of the market or of the sphere of circulation.”¹⁵ The mature Marx understood the historically produced existence of propertyless proletarians as the condition for the appearance of labour-power as

a commodity in the sphere of circulation. These two different understandings have co-existed within Marxism considered as a historical force. When Lenin defined capitalism as “the anarchy of the market,” he accepted the common Hegelian-Marxist task of a universal steering of science and technology through the state alongside the specifically Marxist argument for the abolition of civil society. This development indeed succumbs to Doull’s critique of a regressive suppression of particular will. Indeed, Doull’s critical analysis states that both existentialist nationalism (fascism) and (supposedly) universalist Marxism “had to appropriate the spiritual resources of the state” to attain dominance.¹⁶ It does so, however, by ignoring entirely the problem of the externalization of the particular will in property from which Marxism developed. It is this issue that gives rise to the specifically Marxist version of the philosophic task of our time: the emancipation of the propertyless.

Workers’ Democracy as Effective Universality

The suppression of civil society might not take the form described by Doull if it were not suppressed by the state acting as the agent of the concrete universal — if it were not suppressed from outside, but by the entry of the concerns of the universal into the standpoint of the actor within civil society. How might this happen? There was an important Marxist tendency in the early twentieth century called council communism, disparaged by Lenin as an “infantile disorder,” that was concerned to orient the production of goods on the basis of workers’ democracy. It is well known that, while the Bolsheviks used the slogan “All power to the Soviets” during their fight for power, workers’ councils were quickly and effectively shut down after the revolution — which is logical if the state is understood to be the unique bearer of universality. The council communist Anton Pannekoek criticized Leninism as “state capitalistic planning of industry which for the workers means just another form of slavery and exploitation.”¹⁷ Paul Mattick has summarized Pannekoek’s communism in these terms: “the workers organise themselves and society in such a way as to assure a planned social production and distribution determined by the producers themselves.”¹⁸

If the process of production were to be democratically organized it would mean that the concrete universal would dialectically surpass particular will at the point of production itself, not by going beyond market circulation of goods but by entering into their production. It might well be argued that workers' democracy of this sort is exactly the politics implied by the specifically Marxist critique of class and property. However, this critique is not the exclusive property of the council communists. It is also an important trend in anarchism. Kropotkin put it clearly when he argued for "a society where each individual is a producer of both manual and intellectual work; where each able-bodied human being is a worker, and where each worker works in both the field and the industrial workshop; where every aggregation of individuals, large enough to dispose of a certain variety of natural resources — it may be a nation, or rather a region — produces and itself consumes most of its own agricultural and manufactured produce."¹⁹ In this case, the suppression of civil society as a separate sphere would not imply the suppression of particular will as such. The politically active worker at work would experience there the separation and dialectical surpassing of particular will by universality. In short, the institutional separation of civil society that Hegelians demand for the protection of the rights of the individual might not be necessary if another, possibly superior, institution were designed in which the dialectic between particular will and universality were the main issue. This dialectic would be institutionalized in the democratic organization of work processes.

Indeed, one might characterize this solution as an attempt to make property available to all and thus extend the benefits of civil society to all. Within Marxist theory, it has dominantly been understood as the negation of property — where property is understood as exclusive property right — but, as both Hegelians and Marxists know, a negation may also be an affirmation in another sense. C.B. Macpherson understood the rights of workers in the welfare state in these terms. "The rise of the welfare state has created new forms of property and distributed them widely — all of them being rights to a revenue."²⁰ Neoliberalism has demanded a retreat from such new property rights, but perhaps the task of our time is rather their extension such that they become rights to a revenue that mitigate the proletariat's exclusion not only from the

means of production (in the sense of gaining one's livelihood) but also from the actualization of concrete universality. The origin of this task is in the form in which exclusive particular will involves a rupture with nature. It was expressed with great clarity by Rousseau: "The first person who, having fenced off a plot of ground, took it into his head to say *this is mine* and found people simple enough to believe him, was the true founder of civil society."²¹ The suppression of civil society in this sense requires an institutional protection of particular will that can be found in the notion of access to property in the sense of a right to participate in the economic foundation of society. This is an alternative formulation of the philosophic task of our time — call it anarcho-communist — that originates, however, in the same critique of the universalization of particular will that animates the Hegelian and Marxist task.

Conclusion: Self-Rule as the Philosophic Task of Our Time

This argument for workers' democracy as an effective universality that includes the moment of particular will implies that the philosophic task of our time is the realization of self-rule. This would be the unfinished task of modernity. It could not be the purpose of this short note to address all of the philosophical and practical problems confronting the realization of self-rule in our time. My comment has been limited to showing that this task is reasonable in the context of the Hegelian analysis of modern society deployed by James Doull. It requires concretization with regard to exactly the two points on which Doull found it necessary to revise actually-existing Hegelianism: internationalism and federalism. Perhaps it is even the case that the historic transformation of Marxism from a theory of workers' self-rule into an apology for state socialism (or state capitalism, if one prefers) is due precisely to its confinement within the nineteenth-century nation-state — a historical situation that it escaped only in theory.

The realization of self-rule implies that the Hegelian analysis of the relationship between particular will and concrete universality must be rethought. The reflective, mediated, concrete universality that Hegel attributed to the nation-state has been found to have shifted its location. Doull argued that this set a transformed internationalist and federalist

task for a contemporary Hegelianism. The “state” in Hegelian terms is thus not simply the state (or nation-state or nations-state) of sociological observation — a fact that the Fascist and Communist use of the state should also underline. Pertinent to this rethinking is the observation by the great political sociologist Rodberto Michels of the “iron law of oligarchy” that attended the social democratic parties when they achieved state power and that applies with even less reservation to Communist parties. “The appearance of oligarchical phenomena in the very bosom of the revolutionary parties is a conclusive proof of the existence of immanent oligarchical tendencies in every kind of human organization which strives for the attainment of definite ends.”²² The state in a sociological sense seems not only not to fulfill the task of the state in the Hegelian sense but to be a positive barrier to it. As Graeme Nicholson has said, we now experience “the degeneration of the state into *Technik*.”²³

If the apparently universal institution of the state has degenerated due to the failure to realize self-rule, it is also the case that particular will takes a different form than that assigned by Hegel. After all, the Hegelian task of subordinating science and technology to universality has not, as Doull’s cultural analysis demonstrates, been very successful. Yet Doull consistently interpreted technology and the bureaucratic apparatus attendant upon contemporary technology as “particular will” in the Hegelian sense, which he had to do in order to argue that the Hegelian philosophic task of the realization of concrete universality was still our own.²⁴ In his critique of George Grant, he rendered Grant’s Heideggerian conception of technology in such Hegelian terms.²⁵ To interpret science-based technology, which is actualized by huge social organizations and concentration of resources, and which disrupts even the balance of nature, as an instance of the conflict of particular wills in civil society, and thus to imply that its problems could be addressed by a sufficiently interventionist state, is to minimize the difficulties facing self-rule in our time.

Rethinking the relation between particular will and concrete universality in the light of the project of self-rule might thus imply breaking the bounds of a Hegelian dialectic altogether, but this suggestion goes beyond the present argument, which was solely to justify the realization of self-rule as an authentically modern project and as a candidate for the philosophic task of our time.

4

C.B. Macpherson's Developmental Liberalism

The work of C.B. Macpherson is extremely significant for those seeking to understand the cul-de-sac that liberal political theory and institutions have entered. Considering the experience of socialist societies in this century, the necessity for a nonmarket political theory to retain a positive connection to Western liberal values should be beyond dispute. Any post-market society requires, not pious reassurances, but institutional support for individual rights that are the most vehemently defended in the liberal tradition. But of course this is not enough. Contemporary society is already undermining liberal individualism through massive organizations and manipulated consumption. The inability of liberal theory to analyze effectively and propose alternatives to the contemporary decline of the individual suggests that the cul-de-sac is rooted in the conceptual foundations of liberalism itself. Macpherson's rigorous analysis of the market assumptions of liberal theory pinpoints this conceptual inadequacy and attempts to maintain a commitment to liberal values in a post-market society.

Macpherson discerns two inconsistent principles in liberal democratic theory. A utilitarian, consumer ethic that requires and justifies market assumptions can be traced back to Hobbes and Locke, in particular Locke's defence of an unlimited property right. The "possessive individual" that is presupposed by liberal theory survives the transition from natural law to utilitarian justifications because of the persistence of identical market assumptions.¹ A competing ethic was introduced into liberalism by J.S. Mill in the nineteenth century to counter the "crass materialism" of utilitarianism and in response to the growth of an articulate working class.² This principle sees the individual as primarily an active developer of personal capacities, as finding fulfillment in self-development in whatever arena. Macpherson notes that the consumer ethic corresponds closely to the prevailing market society and is, in this sense, realistic, whereas the ethic of self-development contradicts market assumptions. Since Mill, liberalism has struggled with these two inconsistent principles, wavering between "realistic" and "ethical" premises. The goal of Macpherson's critique is to establish this inconsistency, which has never been clearly perceived by liberal theorists, and to contribute to a replacement of utilitarian premises by the ethic of individual self-development.³

This analysis of Macpherson's work begins by taking note of the inconsistent epistemological foundations of the ethical principles of utilitarianism and self-development. It is argued that oversight of the epistemological issue allows Macpherson to ignore the rationalist defence of private property. This is the source of a vacillation as to whether the self-development ethic is central to liberalism or rather imbedded in an older tradition of Western humanism rejected by early liberalism. Since the main tenor of Macpherson's work is to renew liberalism by disentangling it from market assumptions, self-development is most cogently regarded as imbedded in liberalism. In this case, the covert association of market assumptions solely with the utilitarian ethic fatally ignores the rationalist defence of private property. Instead of counterposing the utilitarian and self-development ethics, it is necessary to comprehend the splitting of natural law into these two liberal traditions.

J.S. Mill notes that ethical principles are ultimate ends and, as such, are not provable. However, he also holds that the utilitarian ethic

is, in fact, a principle for many (if not all) persons and that this is the only “proof” that ethical principles permit. “The sole evidence that it is possible to produce that anything is desirable, is that people do actually desire it. If the end which the utilitarian doctrine proposes to itself were not, in theory and in practice, acknowledged to be an end, nothing could ever convince any person that it was so.”⁴ In short, the consumer ethic is justifiable since people do, in fact, pursue happiness through consumer goods. Leaving aside the indeterminateness of the concept of “happiness,” which allows Mill to introduce self-development, the crucial point is this — that consumer behaviour is observable. Mill’s, and earlier liberalism’s, empiricist epistemology lends itself to the validation of discrete, material consumer acts and disallows any other foundation for ethical action. But a capacity is not observable; indeed, one must be able to speak of blocked, muted, or perverted capacities if this principle is to allow a criticism of utilitarian, market society.

Moreover, the manifestation of a capacity is not in discrete acts but rather in a complex of numerous acts that must be conceptually unified before we can speak of a “capacity” inherent in them all. The self-development ethic cannot be justified on an empiricist epistemology. The point is not primarily to convict Mill of inconsistency, though it should not be irrelevant to those who take their political bearings from him. Rather, it is to indicate the idealistic epistemology that underlies the principle of self-development in the continental tradition. The empiricist conception regards knowledge as the collection of discrete facts and the formation of empirical generalizations. By contrast, the idealistic epistemology emphasizes the active subject as the categorical organizer of observable phenomena-facts that only appear within a categorical framework from which they derive meaning. From this point of view, knowledge is an achievement of the subject; the self-development ethic can be generalized from knowledge to the whole of human action. Moreover, it can be seen to rest on a conception of autonomy — the independence of human action from empirical determination. In Kant’s words,

There appears a concept of causality which is justified by the *Critique of Pure Reason*, though subject to no empirical exhibition. That is the

concept of freedom, and if we now discover means to show that freedom does in fact belong to the human will . . . then it will have been proved not only that pure reason can be practical but also that it alone, and not the empirically conditioned reason, is unconditionally practical.⁵

The empiricist ethic cannot give a strong concept of human selfhood and individuality comparable to Kantian idealism. Pleasures are various, and the pursuit of pleasures confines the self to a summation of discrete utilities; coherence of selfhood requires a principle of unification that cannot be found in the variety of pleasures or in a generalization from them. Individuality, in this case, is merely the contiguity of various pleasures in a bodily location. Macpherson is indeed correct to see the justification of rampant consumerism here. In contrast, the principle of self-development presupposes an idealistic epistemology that can justify the notion of autonomy. This is not to imply that ethical principles can be reduced to their epistemological dimensions. However, epistemology is grounded by a theory of experience upon which is developed a concept of self. Consequently, the self that is discussed in ethical discourse is, to a large extent, determined by what is considered to be known about experience through epistemology. Moreover, insofar as ethical action is considered to be “rational,” it conforms to epistemological criteria. In particular, empiricist and idealist positions give divergent accounts of the self, which are central for the notion of the individual. Liberalism has been significantly influenced by two accounts of the self based on differing epistemological theories.

If we return to the question of the market assumptions of liberalism, it can be shown that the competing epistemologies of these principles each provide a different justification of private property. Private property is defended on the utilitarian principle as a means to the production of material goods. In other words, it is claimed that market society maximizes total productive output. If it can be shown that market society no longer maximizes output or, on other grounds (such as distributive justice), that it inhibits pleasure, then market assumptions can be legitimately abandoned. In short, utilitarianism provides only a mediate and revocable defence of private property and market society. However, the idealistic principle of self-development contains a defence of property on

entirely different grounds. Kant defends an exclusionary property right because it externalizes the individual will in the world of things. “Now, through its law of right [and justice], practical reason requires that, in applying [the concept of] your or my property to objects, we not think of [the concept] in terms of sensible conditions, but in abstraction from them, because we are concerned with the determination of the will in accordance with laws of freedom.”⁶ The will requires external possession of property in order to ground its political independence — so much so that Kant terms those without property “passive citizens” and excludes them from voting since they do not have “an independent position among the people.”⁷ On the idealistic epistemology, the defence of property is neither mediate nor revocable; it is an essential prerequisite for the maintenance of individual autonomy in the external and social world. Development of one’s capacities requires a concrete guarantee of independence through possession. If one were to criticize the contemporary centralization of property in large institutions and the consequent decline in autonomy and self-development on this basis, it would not imply a supersession of market society but rather a return to the halcyon days in which property was more widely distributed.

So Macpherson’s two principles rely on different epistemologies and involve two entirely different justifications of private property (and hence market society). In particular, the principle of self-development is also tied to market assumptions and cannot be counter-posed to the utilitarian ethic as the foundation of a critique of market society. Indeed, in order to develop one’s capacities, one must have an exclusive right to them. At the very least, a critique based on autonomy and self-development would have to show how this ethic could be disentangled from its historical justification of private property — a task that Macpherson does not address. (Marx is important from this perspective insofar as he attempts the supersession of both the “consumer” and “autonomy” traditions through his analysis of labour.)

Given these two liberal traditions, it can be asked how they are related to early natural law liberal theory. In fact, Macpherson gives two accounts of this relationship. In *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism*, he argues that the utilitarianism of Bentham was developed within the “façade” of natural law by Locke, who in turn rested on

Hobbes. The same argument is made in *Democratic Theory*. "All these thinkers [Carlyle, Nietzsche, Mill, Ruskin, and Marx] brought back . . . the idea of the essence of man as activity rather than consumption. . . . It was only with the emergence of modern market society . . . that this concept of man was narrowed and turned into almost its opposite."⁸ In this version, self-development is an ethic rooted in the main tradition of Western humanism, which is reversed by early liberalism. From this point of view, it is clear how self-development can be portrayed as an ethic in competition with market society. The problem would be that it is entirely external to the development of liberalism, and there would seem to be no motive within market society that encourages self-development. In this case, Macpherson's work would be an abandonment, not a renewal, of liberalism.

However, in *The Life and Times of Liberal Democracy*, Macpherson presents another account of the relationship of self-development and natural law:

Liberalism had always meant freeing the individual from the outdated restraints of old established institutions. By the time liberalism emerged as liberal democracy this became a claim to free all individuals equally, and to free them to use and develop their human capacities fully. But so long as there was an economy of scarcity, it still seemed to the liberal democrat that the only way to that goal was through the productivity of free-enterprise capitalism.⁹

I take this to mean that the self-development ethic was also present within natural law liberalism and that, consequently, utilitarianism was a narrowing of the two principles to unambiguous consumption. In *Possessive Individualism*, the first assumption of seventeenth-century liberalism is: "What makes a man human is freedom from dependence on the wills of others."¹⁰ In other words, the "consumer" and "autonomy" traditions are taken to coexist in the theorists of natural law. What connects them is a set of historical assumptions that Macpherson has done a great deal to uncover. Briefly put, in conditions of scarcity both the ethic of consumption and the ethic of self-development require private property and a market society. Private property guarantees its owner

that, through the market, he can increase his consumption and develop his capacities (both in labour and in leisure). Macpherson argues that the conquest of scarcity is at hand and takes it for granted that present industrial production does not facilitate self-development.¹¹ In this case, a critique of contemporary market society can rely on both ethics, which are elements of the internal dynamic of liberal theory. They need not be inconsistent, as Macpherson maintains. One can argue that liberalism must rediscover the self-development principle that was originally present in natural law. But it cannot be simply opposed to consumerism, since in this case they have a common basis. And, as noted earlier, the market assumptions must be traced and criticized also in the “autonomy” tradition.

Macpherson’s two accounts of the relation of these principles in the dynamic of liberal theory pull in different directions. If early liberalism equals utilitarianism, then Mill’s self-development principle is a graft that is essentially foreign to liberal theory. Also, this position ignores the defence of private property as externalized autonomous will. If, on the other hand, self-development is an internal liberal principle that has become muted, its incorporation into a renewed liberalism can be expected to be more successful. I think that the latter account is more in keeping with the tenor of the whole of Macpherson’s work. It is indeed a powerful challenge to contemporary liberalism. But in this case, the diagnosis must be wider than presently acknowledged. What must be understood is the split of natural law into the competing strands of consumerism and autonomism. A critique of market society must confront both of these defences of the market. Even more fundamentally, it must seek an epistemological ground beyond the empiricist/idealist dichotomy in a theory of experience that would allow an integration of utilitarian and self-development ethics transformed by taking leave of market assumptions. In short, the market assumptions of the whole of liberalism as they affect its development from natural law to two competing ethical principles must be brought within the framework of a critique of contemporary society.

5

Athens and Jerusalem? Philosophy and Religion in George Grant's Thought

The majority of George Grant's writings deal with moral-political questions of contemporary technological civilization. Very few deal with the foundations of his own thought from which such moral-political questions are addressed. Such a choice in a serious writer and thinker cannot be regarded as a mere detail. It indicates the prevalence of the critical intention and implies the situational, expressive, and stylistic priority of critique even though it does not necessarily imply that critique is the only, or even the most important, activity of thought. Critique directed to the moral-political issues of technological civilization and being is an activity that attempts to retrieve the possibility of justice from the specific manner of its contemporary destitution. Evidently, Grant's conception of justice demanded such an activity of active retrieval to a greater extent than self-justification. Consequently, addressing the theological and philosophical bases of Grant's conception of justice risks an endemic distortion in which it may appear that the explication of this conception ought to prevail over its deployment

or that its deployment is not crucial to the concept itself. To combat this distortion, one must keep firmly in mind that the activity of critique was demanded by Grant's conception of justice to such an extent that it prevailed over the project of self-justification insofar as one may validly judge from written evidence — that is to say, his role as a public philosopher — even though the public function of philosophy cannot be assumed to exhaust philosophy outright.

None of which is to imply, of course, that there were no attempts at self-justification at all. Even so, such attempts generally emerge in the context of specific critiques — indeed, to such an extent that one may surmise that the concept of justice itself gains in definition from its deployment in critiques. Grant's understanding of the object of critique — called variously modernity, empire, liberalism, the universal and homogeneous state, and, most completely, technology — developed significantly over approximately four decades of mature thinking.¹ Gains in defining the concept of justice that underlies critique develop with, although are not direct parallels of, gains in theorizing the concept of technology that is the object of critique. My explication of Grant's concept of justice here, which I will use in order to differ regarding its philosophical and theological foundation, is based on a teleological interpretation of his work. Philosophical dialogue requires that one be open to further determination of the adequate concept and its instantiations or, put negatively, that adequate determination is not already monologically available. If it were, one's duty would be simply to listen thoroughly to its authoritative voice or, if one were that voice, to speak without necessity of listening. Critique (whether oriented to oneself, others, or systemic assumptions inherent in a way of life) is thus an essential activity whose essentiality orients further attempts at adequate determination. Interpretation of any given articulation is consequently oriented teleologically — that is to say, only in the first place to Grant's meaning at a given point, in the second place to the improvements gained in successive formulations (which requires attention to dating and internal temporality), but finally and most importantly to the question itself. Teleological interpretation is the application of philosophical dialogue to the written work of a philosopher. However great one's appreciation of the man himself and his accomplishments,

philosophical interpretation reaches beyond this toward the question itself in which is based such appreciation.

Grant's final position can be termed "Christian Platonism," since it is centrally organized by the claim that the concept of good, or justice, in Plato is "the same" as that inherent in the Gospel stories of Jesus's life. "That [central, pre-technological, Western] account of justice was written down most carefully and most beautifully in 'The Republic' of Plato. For those of us who are Christians, the substance of our belief is that the perfect living out of that justice is unfolded in the Gospels."² Such a sameness, or identity, does not extend to all the details, even all important ones, of either source. It refers to their animating centre. This animating centre is the basis for a synthesis between Christianity and philosophy that was never thoroughly articulated by Grant but that nevertheless provides the unity of his many statements about religion and philosophy. The Platonic element of this synthesis is the notion that Being, "what is," is itself good (and not merely a resource for human use). The Christian element is that the goodness of Being was revealed to humans in the life of Jesus. The necessity of the Christian element thus implies that Greek philosophy was in some manner deficient in expressing the goodness of Being. This deficiency was called by Grant in classical language "charity." Greek philosophy (due to its orientation to reason, which is unequal in humans) did not see the truth that all humans are due charity, or consideration for what they need. The necessity of the Platonic element suggests that the exemplary character of the life of Jesus requires some supplementation by philosophy, or reason, in order that what is due for humans be understood as rooted in Being itself (and not merely, or only, as a human choice). The synthesis of these two elements can be called Christian Platonism. This position has a long and deep history in Western philosophy and religion. Grant's final questioning was oriented toward the nature of this synthesis and toward determining the basics of how he thought it should be understood. How this synthesis should be understood raises many questions, some of which this essay will address.

In this critical examination of Grant's attempted synthesis between religion and philosophy, I will first undertake to explain the Christian Platonist version of that synthesis that he proposed. Second, I will parse

Grant's admission that there are tensions between Christianity and Platonism into five aspects of tension that can be drawn out from the whole corpus of his work. Third, I will argue that Grant's attempted synthesis fails and that this failure is due not to its incomplete articulation but rather to the prior privilege granted to Christian religion in attempting the synthesis, with the consequence that the incorporation of philosophy is always muted and partial in comparison. Fourth, I will explore in a comparative fashion what philosophy might independently have to offer about the crucial matter of what is due to humans. This critique implies a different position with regard to the critique of technological civilization and the two sources of Western civilization in philosophy and Christianity than that held by George Grant, but such implication will not be pursued in this essay.

Justice in Christian Platonism

Grant directly articulated the philosophical and theological bases of his thought in four texts dedicated to this issue dispersed over his writing career: "Philosophy" (1951), "Two Theological Languages" (1953, with addendum 1988), "Religion and the State" (1963), "Faith and the Multi-versity" (1986).³ Even with respect to these works, the last two refer primarily to two external domains of the practice of religion — the state and the university — rather than straightforwardly to its philosophical and religious basis. In the 1988 addendum to "Two Theological Languages," written just a few months before his death, Grant engaged in a fundamental self-criticism of that work, especially the conception of freedom as "human absoluteness of choice," pointing out that "it has taken me a whole lifetime to begin to free myself from the language of modernity," and remarking that "whatever differences there may be between Platonism and Christianity as to how and when truth is given us, it is clear that in both freedom is given us through truth. . . . Grace simply means that the great things of our existing are given us, not made by us and finally not to be understood as arbitrary accidents. Our making takes place within an ultimate givenness."⁴ Teleological interpretation of Grant's philosophy and theology must be oriented toward the adequacy

of articulating this givenness. For Grant, Christian Platonism expressed this givenness necessary to the concept of justice that he deployed in his influential social and political critiques.

Grace is our placing within a given order that is not altered by human making, specifically the apotheosis of making in technology that can be understood as the ontology of our contemporary world. Grant's most mature understanding of technology was in Nietzschean terms as the disposition of a creative will over the world (see the final section in this chapter). "The world is a field of objects which can be known in their working through the 'creative' acts of reasoning and experimenting by the thinking subject who stands over them." To Nietzsche's question "who deserve to be masters of the earth?" Grant replied that "the essential question may not be: who deserve to be masters of the earth; but rather, is it good that the race ever came to consider that mastery was its chief function?" He further noted that he does not know if this other question could even be posed "in the darkness of its impossibility. . . . Because if one says there is one light which is always a light at all times and places, namely that man qua man can only come to a fuller light insofar as he does not find himself beyond good and evil, one has in saying that placed oneself outside modern thought in its highest self-consciousness."⁵ Grant's posing such a question indicates that for him modern thought does not understand its own darkness as darkness but requires an illumination by grace that allows the darkness to be seen and named as such.

The Christian Platonism of George Grant underpins his articulation of this illumination by grace, an articulation that was practised through moral-political critique of contemporary technological civilization. Such critique is based on the historical opposition between modernity and the traditions that have been pulverized by modernity. The theoretical opposition through which this articulation proceeds is the contrast between an increasingly determinate understanding of technology and a more tentative exploration of the foundation of critique in grace. This contrast is based on the historical opposition between modernity and the traditions that have been pulverized by modernity. While Grant never defended tradition for its own sake, but only as a repository of the good, he invoked its voice in the attempt to criticize technological

civilization's turn away from the dual sources of Western grace in Athens and Jerusalem. Thus, "the modern conception of goodness does not include the assertion of a claim upon us which properly orders our desires in terms of owing, and which is itself the route and fulfilment for desire."⁶ Grant's use of the modernity-tradition distinction to address the moral-political questions of technological civilization explains his difficulty in expressing theoretically the good brought forth by technology in aid of charity (despite the issues that demand critique).^{*} His use of the modernity-tradition distinction stems from his conviction that the dual sources of grace in Athens and Jerusalem are in the final analysis one. "Anyone who wishes to partake in philosophy, and also hopes that he or she is made with the sign of Christ, must be aware of some tension in the relation between thought and revelation, though at the same time knowing that finally they must be at one."⁷ While in his critical mode Grant was willing to deploy Christianity and Platonism together, paying the theoretical price of not being able to consistently articulate the truth of technology, in his reflective mode he recognized a tension between these two sources of grace.

The core of the belonging together of Christianity and Greek philosophy was expressed by Grant with reference to Simone Weil's words that "faith is the experience that the intelligence is enlightened by love" and explicated by him as "love is consent to the fact that there is authentic otherness."⁸ This understanding is not specifically Christian, which justifies referring to it generally as the traditional, or old, account of justice in critiques, but rather "the close connection between Socrates and Christ lies in the fact that Socrates is the primal philosophic teacher of

* This difficulty is explained in my *A Border Within: National Identity, Cultural Plurality, and Wilderness* (Montréal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1997), 95, 104, 248n51. Grant had earlier criticized Leo Strauss for not including in his analysis of technology the fact that "the poor, the diseased, the hungry and the tired can hardly be expected to contemplate any such limitation [of technology] with the equanimity of the philosopher" ("Tyranny and Wisdom," in *Technology and Empire: Perspectives on North America* [Toronto: House of Anansi, 1969], 103). I do not see that he ever made good on this criticism in his own work, a fact that can be attributed to the deployment of the modernity-tradition doublet — a dualism that makes it hard to avoid simply choosing one side over the other (however much the superficiality of such a choice is emphasized) and that thus drew him toward Strauss's thoroughly anti-modern critique of technology (despite his remark that was made as a critique of this aspect of Strauss's thinking).

the dependence of what we know on what we love.”⁹ Correlatively, one may assume that Jesus is the primary religious teacher of this dependence. If one seeks to determine the specifically Christian component of this belonging together, it is described by Grant in two turns of phrase: “the fact that Christ declares the price of goodness in the face of evil” and “an extension of what was due to others and an account of how to fulfil that due.”¹⁰ The notion of “an extension of what was due to others” is by no means easy to understand. We can begin our inquiry into Grant’s understanding of Christian Platonism by focusing on what this statement might mean.

If the specifically Christian component consists in an extension of what is due to others, it seems that Socrates must have had an attenuated conception of what is due to others. If he had such an attenuated conception, it would follow that his account requires supplementation by a Christian account and, as the quotation suggests, that this supplementation would extend also to the manner of fulfilling the good. Two classical attempts to resolve this problem seem to be closed to Grant: the supplement through love and the supplement through a greater universality of address.

First, one could argue that Christianity adds love to the Greek concept of justice. However, Grant, in his appropriation of Weil noted in the previous paragraph, attributes an understanding of the dependence of knowledge on love not only to Christianity but also to Greek philosophy — indeed, in such a key manner that it is precisely this characteristic that is the animating centre of their belonging together. This would be buttressed by Grant’s claim that the distinction between various versions of love, such as *eros* and *agape*, should not be so sharp as to undermine the conception of love as a unity.¹¹

Second, one could argue that Socrates’s attenuated conception of what is due to others refers to the others to whom it is due — placing the emphasis on the “account of how to fulfil that due” in the quotation. In other words, one could suggest that Socrates’s philosophic task was inadequately universal in the sense of those to whom the good pertained. One might claim, as has often been done, that this was because of the slave-character of Greek society such that natural differences were not sufficiently overcome — in other words, that the purported universality of Greek philosophy could not be genuinely universal until it was

realized in the Christian incarnation, which demonstrated the universality of the human species. (Note that this interpretation assumes that the slave-character of Greek society was not, or not adequately, overcome by Socrates.) But this option must be closed to Grant also, since it implies that Greek philosophy is in principle incomparable to Christianity in the matter that matters the most — what is the due of humans — if the due of human is interpreted in terms of those to whom it is due. It doesn't imply a synthesis of Greek philosophy and Christianity but a straightforward surpassing of the former by the latter (characteristic of Hegel, among others). How could such a view be characterized as a Christian Platonism?

It seems rather that “what is the due of humans” refers primarily to the *what* itself and secondarily, as a consequence of the specific nature of this *what*, to the account of *how* to fulfill it. If humans are due more than Platonic justice, such that it must be supplemented by Christianity, that “more” must be both absent from Plato and yet compatible with his concept of justice such that “finally they must be at one.”

Let us consider a third possibility. The synthesis between Christianity and Greek philosophy could perhaps be attempted, as Simone Weil did, through the argument that Greek philosophy prepared for the Christian incarnation, showed its necessity, and awaited its fulfillment, even though the fulfillment itself could not be accomplished within Greek philosophy. The *what* in this case would refer to the sensuality of the incarnation, and this sensuality would have implications not present in Plato for its *how*. Weil argued that the search for an adequate mediation was the centre of Greek thought from Pythagoras to Plato.* “Just as the Christ is, on the one hand, the mediator between God and man, and on the other the mediator between man and his neighbour, so mathematical necessity is one the one hand the mediator between God and things, and on the other between each thing and every other thing.”¹² The search for mediation that characterized the Greek attempt to overcome dualism is thus accomplished in the Christian incarnation. Platonism accomplishes

* This notion that it is the sensuality of the incarnation that is the specific supplement of Christianity to Greek philosophy is also the view of Hegel and would require an evaluation of whether such a view could avoid leading toward modernity as Hegel argued. In contrast to Hegel's claim that Greek civilization was haunted by unreconciled “tragic” duality, Weil attributed, correctly in my view, the search for mediation to Greek philosophy.

the intellectual love of God through the mathematical mediation; Christianity renders this intellectual love flesh in the incarnation.

Grant often quoted Nietzsche's phrase "Christianity is Platonism for the people,"¹³ but here he uses it in the opposite sense. While for Nietzsche it referred to the continuation of Platonic two-world theory into Christianity, here it would refer to the continuation of the attempt to mediate and overcome the division between spirit and nature, God and human, self and other, through a human, carnal rendering of the love of God in the story of Jesus. This might be the greatest parallelism that one could imagine that would unite Socrates and Jesus: the same mediation approached by each one from a different side of that duality that is to be mediated: intellect reaching toward flesh, flesh opening toward intellect; one teaching philosophical, the other religious. This interpretation would imply that the lack in Platonic philosophy that requires Christian supplementation consists in the lack of a fully sensual estimation of the price. This is a plausible interpretation of the meaning of the passage where Grant claimed that Christianity provides "an extension of what was due to others." In the same paragraph where that passage appears, Grant claims that Christianity requires of its adherents "to be perfect as God in heaven is perfect" and explicates this statement with reference to Weil's phrase that "matter is our infallible judge,"¹⁴ indicating that it is the role of matter and sensuousness in Christianity due to the incarnation that constitutes its specific difference from Platonism. This interpretation also has the merit of situating the specific difference in the *what* of incarnation and the *how* of the path that it implies. In this case the comparability of Jesus and Socrates is the core of both the synthetic unity and the specific difference of its parts.

Since the specific difference is not to be found in the two classical attempts to locate it through love, or through the universality of address, and given the merits of the third interpretation, I conclude that Grant sought the specific difference of Christianity from the classical account of justice through the incarnation understood as adequate mediation. However, this interpretation contains an implication unaddressed, and perhaps unobserved, by Grant. Since it claims that Plato was not sufficiently aware of the sensuous side of the mediation between spirit and matter, and since it claims that the specific difference nevertheless occurs within the

same account of justice, a genuine synthesis would require some parallel insufficient awareness in the Christian side of the mediation. The logical consequence of the third interpretation of the specific difference is that the Christian incarnation requires supplementation by an appreciation of the intellectual side of the mediation by Plato. In short, that Christianity does not stand alone but requires supplementation by philosophy.

Thus, the third interpretation implies the necessity of the other side of the mediation: that Jesus was not sufficiently aware of the intellectual implications of his claim that God was his father. However, not only do I find no such statement in Grant's or Weil's work, I do not believe that either of them would ever make such a statement. Could such a statement be made by a believing Christian? If not, it seems that the road through Weil to a synthesis of Socrates and Jesus, Greek philosophy and Christian incarnation, could not fail to discount philosophy in a non-symmetrical manner that would destroy the synthesis as equally synthetic from both perspectives to be synthesized. In short, it must render the judgment that Socrates is incomparable to Jesus in the matter that matters the most — what is the due of humans. But it is precisely this comparability that defines Grant's position as Christian Platonism as opposed to a straightforward overcoming of Greek philosophy by Christianity. Such a straightforward overcoming in the issue that matters most would not exclude appropriation of lesser dimensions of Greek philosophy. The appropriation of Greek rationalism at the service of Christian apologetics is, of course, an influential interpretation (consistent with the first interpretation mentioned above) of the relation between these two sources in Western civilization, but it is an interpretation closed to Grant because of his Platonism.* Thus, while the third interpretation through Weil and the incarnation is closest to Grant's intentions, it leaves unresolved a major issue that deserves more detailed scrutiny.

* The subordination of philosophy to religion is a main, perhaps the main, tendency in the Western account of the relation between philosophy and religion. It goes back to the formulations of Philo of Alexandria. Pierre Hadot has pointed out that this subordination generally goes hand in hand with the derogation of philosophy from a way of life to philosophical discourse or reason. See Pierre Hadot, *What Is Ancient Philosophy?* trans. Michael Chase (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2002), especially chap. 11. Thus, religion comes to take charge of the way of life while philosophy is demoted to its rationalization. A genuine encounter between philosophy and religion

Five Tensions Between Christianity and Platonism

How then should we assess Grant's attempt to define the specifically Christian component of Christian Platonism through "an extension of what was due to others"? It was noted above that this synthesis was not presented systematically but emerges through its deployment in critiques. Grant was not unaware of the difficulties of this proposed synthesis. "When we look, in this time of deep uncertainty, at what we are as western people, the central task of thought requires us to be aware of some tension between what comes to us from Athens and what from Jerusalem. I prefer to say what comes to us from Socrates and Christ."¹⁵ I will note five aspects of this tension mentioned in the whole corpus of Grant's work, three with regard to Christianity and two with regard to philosophy.

Christianity and Technology

The first aspect is the most enduring in Grant's work because it derives from the essential direction of his critique of technology. Technology was understood as stemming from the assertion of human will against the world. Thus, any conception of Christianity that was influenced by such a focus on will was compromised both in its critical capacity and in its originality. Western Christianity, as well as Western philosophy, has been fundamentally influenced since the writings of Augustine by making the will central to the definition of humanity. This provoked Grant's sympathy for Orthodox Christianity, which did not undergo the Augustinian influence and was more Platonic in this respect, and Plato, whose tripartite conception of the soul was prior to, and different from, that prepared by the synthesis between Christianity and neo-Platonism in late antiquity. In this respect, though Grant's critique of Western Christianity was deep, it was a Christian criticism that "Western Christianity

must not begin from the common assumption that philosophy is about discursive reason whereas religion is about a whole way of life, since this derogation of philosophy is a product of the very debate that must be re-examined. I have thus attempted to examine this relationship with regard to the ways of life proposed by philosophy versus religion in an attempt to approximate the different ordering of the soul that each proposes. I was lucky when I first encountered philosophy with José Huertas-Jourda to have it clearly communicated that philosophy is a way of life.

simplified the divine love by identifying it too closely with immanent power in the world.”¹⁶ The historical institution of this accommodation to immanent power was the Augustinian synthesis of neo-Platonism and Christianity through the concept of the will.

Modern Science and the Doctrine of Creation

Christian thought became identified with power in another aspect also. In contrast to Leo Strauss, who interpreted modernity as fundamentally a moral-political phenomenon rather than a scientific one, Grant recognized the necessity of the Judeo-Christian concept of the creation of the world by God to the theoretical presuppositions of modern science.* Natural reason tends to complete itself in the thought of the permanence of the world. Even in Plato’s *Timaeus*, where the coming-into-being of the world is considered, this is done under the twin models of pater-nity and *techné*, not as a creation from nothing. When an author creates something from nothing, it is knowable through and through without remainder. Knowledge of the artifact is unhampered by the recalcitrance of either matter or necessary ignorance. It is this entry of the concept of a created world into Western thought that prevents any direct passage from Greek to modern science.** Like the first aspect of the tension, this

* The conceptual reliance of seventeenth-century science on the Judeo-Christian conception of nature as created has been documented by, among many others, M. B. Foster, “The Christian Doctrine of Creation and the Rise of Modern Natural Science,” *Mind* 43, no. 172 (1934): 446–68; “Christian Theology and Modern Science of Nature (i),” *Mind* 44, no. 176 (1935): 439–66; and “Christian Theology and Modern Science of Nature (ii),” *Mind* 45, no. 177 (1936): 1–27. The articles by M. B. Foster were often referred to by Grant in lectures. See my discussion of this point in *A Border Within*, 80–81, 99.

** For this reason, the well-known argument of Lynn White, Jr., in his influential and often republished essay “The Historic Origins of the Ecological Crisis,” *Science* 155, no. 3767 (1967): 1203–7, that this tradition underlies the domination of nature in European modernity should be taken seriously. A more thorough and philosophically convincing account is given in William Leiss, *The Domination of Nature* (New York: George Braziller, 1972). It is difficult to see how the concept of will could be thoroughly expunged from either Judaism or Christianity given the metaphysical account of the relation between God and world upon which they rely — though Grant’s remark that “I’m on the side of Christianity that is farthest away from Judaism, and nearest to the account of Christianity that is close to Hinduism in its philosophic expression” (George Grant, “Conversation: Theology and History,” in *George Grant in Process* [Toronto: House of Anansi, 1978], 102) should likely be interpreted in the light of the issue of the doctrine of will. To this extent, most, if not all,

second one pertains to the role of Christianity in shaping technology, though it is more radical insofar as the concept of creation surely could not be expunged from either the Judaic or Christian traditions without diminishing the power of God in a way that would make it unrecognizable. The Judaic concept of a God that transcends and creates nature that underlies the Christian revelation is in principle anti-natural and thus undermines any and all cosmology. This pertains not only to the Western Christianity whose Augustinian concept of will Grant criticized but to the whole of Judeo-Christian theology as well. This makes the return to Plato more problematic for Grant than it is for Strauss, for instance, since in this respect modern assumptions confirm Christian ontology rather than undermine it. Modern technology is made possible by a Nietzschean-Augustinian concept of the will whose dependence on Christianity is not only for the notion of human freedom as mastery but also in scientifically understanding nature (as that which is mastered) as thoroughly knowable because it is created. The modern understanding of freedom against nature is indebted to Christianity at least in its dominant Western form such that the return to Plato that Grant wants to synthesize with Christianity is doubly problematic. Thus, while the first aspect of the tension serves only to underline the specificity and originality of the synthesis between Christianity and Greek philosophy (Plato) proposed by Grant, the second aspect suggests that such a synthesis is problematic at a deeper level: Is a concept of Christianity (or Judaism) entirely without will conceivable? And, if not, is not Christianity irredeemably implicated in technology? Resolving this issue would require a critique of technology capable of articulating the truth of technology. As noted above, Grant's use of the tradition-modernity doublet in his moral-political critiques made this a point of extreme difficulty for him.

recent attempts by Christians and Jews to respond to the argument of White and others with an ethic of stewardship remain based upon an instrumental relation to nature and stress only a long-term and widely social interpretation of the domination of nature for all humanity and not for partial interests. Consequently, I have argued that a continuation of Grant's critique of technology should take one toward an ecological ethics based on an immanent conception of the sacred (*A Border Within*, 103). It is clear, however, that Grant himself would refuse such an immanence.

Obedience as a Closure of Thought

An even deeper criticism of Christianity was expressed in Grant's notes to himself that were posthumously published as "Obedience." The main thematic of the notes is, characteristically, the critical one that an intelligence not leavened by obedience to that which is not humanly made cannot become an adequate critic of technology. However, in one remarkable passage, Grant contrasted the openness of thinking with closedness and obedience. First he characteristically affirmed that the openness of thinking does not stand above obedience but then, in an uncharacteristic moment, asked, "Is not obedience a closing down of openness?"¹⁷ He added, "yet obedience is dark / how nice it would be to be one of those / to whom the darkness of obedience is not." And, further, "Those fortunate people / for whom obedience has not been darkened / darkened not simply in the sense / of what they should do immediately / but what is obedience." He called those who have escaped such darkening of obedience "happy," mentioning Ellul and Barth, and suggested that "to escape thought / they have been told." I take this to express a doubt that the imbeddedness of thought in a world-order experienced and known as good (i.e., grace) could actually be a reigning thought for him because "modern thought has darkened obedience."

While Grant worked to free himself of the presuppositions of modern thought, he was also aware of the extent to which they had a hold on him. Grant often used the phrasing "I have been told that . . ." when he spoke of himself as a Christian. Here, he notes the happiness that would come with simply being a believing Christian and suggests that the closing down of thought that obedience requires is a price that he cannot pay — perhaps because he is too modern, perhaps because he is a philosopher, perhaps because of both. "Happy are those who can face the Greeks — / without thinking of modern mathematical physics / Happy are those who can get rid of ontology / in their sense of the Bible." In other words, happy are those who can live their Christianity without worrying about its relationship to Greek philosophy.

Furthermore, in the saddened and reluctant awareness "So we are back, always a closing down," I hear the desire that it were not so, that he could straightforwardly assert the Platonic-Christian synthesis. But, at least in this passage, he could not. He could not because he could not see

obedience in any other way than as a closing of the openness of thought. Neither can I. But I think that Grant desired — perhaps believed — that obedience could itself be an opening, even though he could not *think* so. If it were so, there would result a tension between religion and philosophy not only in Western thought but also in Grant's thought as well. This passage suggests such a tension and then tends to mitigate it by attributing it to modernity alone — which in this context must mean, “an error.”

Some attention to the hermeneutic of a passage unpublished by Grant himself cannot be avoided, especially since I have noticed the importance of the primary orientation of his published thought toward moral-political critiques. It may be that we have here the expression of the kinds of doubts that all thinkers face but that are not characteristic of Grant's thought in its basic orientation. After all, it was not published by him and is a thought not characteristic of his published writings. Though Grant certainly indicated that there were important tensions between philosophy and Christianity, I do not know of any published example where this tension is interpreted, as it is in “Obedience,” albeit tentatively, as a sacrifice of philosophical thought to Christianity, as a closing down. I would intrude too much on his solitude if I were to press this thought in the direction of his own beliefs as such. It is significant as a point of interpretation of a doubt about an assumption operative in his critiques. It is also defended in his remarks that assert about Socrates and Jesus that one can appreciate the tension while “at the same time knowing that finally they must be one.”¹⁸ The significance is that this knowing, when questioned as to the manner of its knowing, seems to generate a doubt that it can be known through thought, whereas it may well be the case that “I have been told . . .” — which implies a divergence between the openness demanded by philosophy and the obedience required by religion. Nonetheless, it must remain significant that Grant never published such a doubt himself. It would not fit the modernity-tradition doublet that characterizes his moral-political critiques.

Philosophy and Civil Religion

The previous three aspects of the tension between Athens and Jerusalem pertain to Christianity as the object provoking tension and may thus be called “philosophical” in the sense that the doubts about religion are

raised by philosophy. There are also two “Christian,” or perhaps religious, aspects of the tension with philosophy; they are “religious” in the corresponding sense that they are doubts about philosophy as raised by a Christian religious commitment.

The fourth aspect of the tension is, like the first, thoroughgoing and characteristic of Grant’s work as a whole. In the early (1951) review of philosophy for the Massey Commission, he asserted that “it would seem that unless philosophy is to become a purely negative discipline, it must have some kind of dependence on faith — whatever faith that may be.”¹⁹ He seems to accept the critique of Socrates by Plato and Hegel that critique on its own leads only to *aporia* and requires completion in a constructive doctrine. Note that while Grant himself worked from within the Christian tradition, he admitted the possibility that others might work productively in a similar manner from within other religious traditions. Addressing the question of the proper relation of religion and the state, he observed that “unassisted reason is able to know that without religious beliefs and actions no society whatever can last, but reason is unable to determine which should be the particular public religion.”²⁰ Philosophy cannot determine the content of religion but only the necessity of religion to social order as such. The religious critique of philosophy is that philosophy cannot provide the specific sensuous content to be believed by the many in order to guarantee social order. Thus the necessities of human social life are not adequately addressed by philosophy and require the content-oriented social and moral cement provided by religion.

We might call the above argument the social critique of philosophy by religion. It comprises also the classic observation that “not many men will become philosophers; but that all men are inevitably religious,” especially if religion is taken to refer to any and all “systems of belief,” whether or not they refer to a higher power.²¹ The emphasis of philosophy on intellect in the direction of human life — which requires, we might add, the critique of the specialist use of intellect — implies that, in fact if not in principle, the practice of philosophy is limited to a few. Since this is recognized within philosophy, as well as being subject to a religious critique, this tension pertains to the difficulty of coordinating the separate domains of philosophy and religion, even though this difficulty could not be justly inflated to assert the in principle impossibility of so

coordinating them. It also raises the religious, and perhaps also philosophical, question of whether the religion required as social cement is true religion as such or merely a necessary social illusion — one of many possible civic religions whose social function exhausts its inner content.

The Deaths of Jesus and Socrates

The fifth instance of tension, like the third, cuts directly to the heart of the matter. It appears when Grant directly compares the deaths of Jesus and Socrates or, more exactly, uses the death of Jesus to comment on the death of Socrates — since I do not believe that he anywhere focused on the former in the light of the latter. “Whatever may be said about the consummate serenity and beauty of Socrates at his execution, that scene is not as comprehensively close to the very heart of being as are Gethsemane and Golgotha.”²² In two places in “Faith and the Multiversity,” Grant addressed comparatively the deaths of Socrates and Jesus with respect to their capacity to articulate the practice of dying through which Socrates defined philosophy and that Grant asserts is equally applicable to Christianity.²³ One, he pointed out that in the death scene Socrates asserts that the absence of goodness is madness, not ignorance.²⁴ Two, “the calm, the wit, the practice of thought which are present at Socrates’ death may be compared with the torture, the agony, the prayers, which are present in Christ’s death. Just before drinking the hemlock Socrates makes a wonderful joke; in Gethsemane Christ’s ‘sweat was, as it were, great drops falling to the ground.’ Indeed the difference is also stated in the fact that where Socrates’ wife is absent for most of *Phaedo*, the two Marys stand beneath the cross.”²⁵ With respect to the death of Jesus, Grant refers in the appendix to “Two Theological Languages” to the “appalling admonition ‘Take up your cross and follow me’ [that] cuts to the heart of our existing and indeed to the heart of both being and goodness.”²⁶ It seems to be this that would disturb Socrates’s serenity, and his beauty, which is the essence of a philosophical death (understanding that death is not the highest price) and which makes possible his joke.

What is the nature of this appalling admonition? In one of Grant’s notebooks there are notes for five lectures on Christianity that address “the supreme figure, Jesus Christ. And to understand what Christianity is one must understand why for those of us who are Christians this is the

supreme figure.”²⁷ He states that the primary issue about the good news that Christianity brings is the reconciliation of the contradiction between human suffering and God’s perfection — the question of theodicy — and claims that “it is the extremity of the suffering in Christ’s death which has made these events more dominating in the western world than the death of Socrates.” The incarnation of divinity in the world in the figure of Jesus confers a significance on sensuousness that is deeply manifested in the torture of Jesus. Thus, Jesus’s suffering shows the impossibility of Socrates’s serenity and beauty as a final stance in human life. Grant refers to two statements made by Jesus that illuminate the meaning of his suffering: “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do” and “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” These statements indicate that Jesus’s suffering “is the very absence of God from God. Suffering is absence.”

Grant thus claims that the extremity of Jesus’s suffering marks an absence in Socrates’s story. There is nothing in the philosophy of Socrates that responds to the extreme cruelty of tyrants. In the face of torture, the perfection of good/God recedes or becomes imperceptible. Thus, we must ask: If Socrates had been offered the cross instead of hemlock would that have interrupted his serenity and beauty? Is philosophy only possible in the absence of tyranny? Is the response to the extreme cruelty of tyrants the defining moment of the human condition?

Socrates’s death perhaps benefited from the relatively humane practices of Greek law as applied to free citizens in comparison to the tortures exacted by the Roman imperium. Is it the case that this relatively humane practice, the hemlock, is what allows him to consider that his death is not the highest price, that the highest price is the committing of an injustice? The price for goodness that Socrates knew he had to pay may perhaps not be considered the highest price. Perhaps his experience did not show him that the highest price that can be demanded for the care of his soul and the giving of humans their due is not the committing of an injustice but the absence of God or, in philosophical terms, the good. For to know that one is committing an injustice requires that justice be apparent.* It is this

* At this point in *Crito* (50a–c), where Socrates considers what the laws of Athens would say to him if he were to escape, his ignorance does not seem evident, or at least not as evident as the credibility that he ascribed to the laws.

fifth tension that speaks most directly to the specific difference between Christianity and philosophy with respect to the due for humans. If this specific difference is to be found in the *what* of incarnation and the *how* of the sensuous path that it implies, then one might say that the extreme cruelty of the Roman imperium brought forth a truth not possible in the Greek world because the Christian incarnation conferred ultimate relevance on the cruelty practised on those who sought to fulfill the good to such an extent that their vision of the good was itself eclipsed.

The Failure of Grant's Synthesis Between Religion and Philosophy

In his reflexive self-justification, Grant noted tensions between thought and suffering — the necessity of thought to the good life, the capacity of intense suffering to wipe out the possibility of thought — which take one to the core of the relation between Athens and Jerusalem and thus to the essence of Western civilization. I will risk a summary statement of Grant's understanding of this relation based on the five elements of this tension that I have found in his work: The critique of technology implies a conception of a good that is not of our own making. This good is expressed philosophically by Plato and religiously by Christianity. These two versions of the good, while involving tensions, are ultimately compatible. Platonism is the intellectual understanding of the ontological status of the good. Christianity is the story of suffering that the good undergoes within all humans. The meaning of the good is apparent in the deaths of Socrates and Jesus. The serene and beautiful death of Socrates shows the tragedy of philosophy in the face of the unknowing many. But the ugly shattered body of Jesus under the torture of tyrants shows that suffering and death cannot be overcome adequately by philosophy. Thus Jesus's death reveals something that philosophy cannot. The human cost, and demand, of perfection comes to a limit in the necessity of the sacrifice of the good. The story of this willing sacrifice is superior to any story of perfection without sacrifice or without the most terrible sacrifice that we can imagine. Out of torture comes a truth unknown to Socrates.

Thus one may conclude that philosophy is in the end subordinate to religion: all mediations of spirit and nature begin here. Christianity can assimilate philosophy but not the reverse. The absence in Socrates's death can be seen in comparison to Jesus's. It is not attempted, perhaps it is not proper to attempt, to show an absence in Jesus's death through comparison to Socrates's. This conclusion is not anywhere stated in Grant's work. Yet, if the prior summary I have risked is accurate, I do not see how the conclusion could be avoided. In this case, Grant's claim that the traditional account of God/good in Christianity and Greek philosophy are finally the same must be understood as a one-sided "synthesis," not a true one. The "synthesis" can only be maintained through a higher estimation of the death of Jesus and a subsequent recuperation of philosophy. The human import of Socrates's "wonderful joke" would be subordinate to the suffering of Jesus. If so, the deployment of the tradition-modernity doublet in moral-political critiques obscures a basic and insoluble tension between Christianity and philosophy.

If this conclusion is accepted, several questions pertaining to the tension need consideration: (1) Can the philosophical recognition of the social necessity of a religion be reconciled with the religious critique of philosophy that states that there is one *true* religion? (2) Does the obedience necessary to religion close down the freedom of thought necessary to philosophy? (3) Does the religious recognition of the human cost of the extreme cruelty of tyrants for the perception of the good reveal a limitation in the practice of philosophy? These questions pertain not only to the critical historical understanding that underlies Grant's non-progressive and anti-technological Christianity but also to whether there is a necessary and uneliminable tension between philosophy and religion as such.

The philosopher recognizes that philosophy cannot provide the concrete mythology that the life of a people requires. In *Crito*, Socrates recognizes that the laws and gods of Athens have made him what he is and cannot be abandoned by him just because he is personally threatened. A religion requires that its concrete content that directs the life of a people be regarded not as one mythology among others but as the true religion. Grant uses the death of Jesus to locate an absence in Socrates but never attempts the reverse. Socrates's joke shows us nothing important about Jesus's death. This indicates that Grant accepted Christianity

as true and not as one version of truth (a civic religion) necessary in the social realm. The truth of religion is certified through belief that directs life in a satisfactory manner, legitimating some actions and discouraging others as profane. While the philosopher in a given place and time can accept the beliefs of that place and time because some such set of beliefs is necessary in social life to overcome the deficiency into which humans waver in practice, the beliefs are not accepted as true without reservation but as one of several more or less adequate sets of belief. The adequacy of such beliefs and the practices that they ground is judged with reference to the human good, which is adequately perceived only in philosophy. While there can be accommodation between philosophy and religion because of their intertwining implications in the social and political world, such accommodation can only occur on the basis of a primacy given to either philosophy or religion.

Thus a religious accommodation of philosophy and a philosophical accommodation of religion are not equivalent — in this fact is located not only the failure of Grant's synthesis but the failure of all such attempts at synthesis. The unaided use of human reason in the practice of the good and the obedience of belief do not admit of genuine mediation. All mediations conceal a primacy. This would imply that we must interpret Grant's doubt about obedience as an anguished cry that we could only read posthumously. It must have been a personal, private trial, not a public avowal of truth. It must be read this way since it would otherwise undermine the priority of Christianity in his thought and thus the particular nature of the skewed mediation that he proposed with philosophy. He desired and hoped to experience and to think obedience as an opening, as an incentive to thought, but he could not. The philosopher in him prevented what the Christian wanted to believe. To a philosopher, this anguish is one of the most compelling existential moments manifested throughout Grant's writing. He did not let it stand in the way of his public duty.

Grant argued that Socrates suffered from a lack of insight into the price of goodness in the face of evil, which is a strange though not impossible claim to be made about someone who refused to compromise his philosophic task to save his own life. It is said that Jesus encountered this price when his torture provokes the cry "My God, my God, why hast

thou forsaken me?” This provokes the acceptance of an intervention by a higher person that cannot be explained but only believed — “Thy will be done.” If Socrates had been offered the cross instead of hemlock, would that have interrupted his serenity and beauty? Would he have been able to make his joke? Is philosophy only possible in the absence of tyranny?

The encounter with the gods, the beyond-human forces of creation and destruction, throws the philosopher back to human experience and thought as the only available resources to determine right action. The key philosophical point here is that the gods do not abandon humans here and there for specific reasons. The gods are precisely the beyond-human. To imagine that they have a particular destiny in mind for humans and that they intervene in human affairs is to imagine the beyond as simultaneously present. This could not be a matter for philosophy — which always rebounds from the beyond back to its simply human resources, renouncing divine wisdom for a human striving for wisdom — but is ceded to a belief originating from elsewhere. This is precisely where Grant locates the lack of insight into the price of goodness in the face of evil: the refusal of philosophy to abandon human wisdom for divine wisdom and perfection. If philosophy finds its limit in torture, it also finds its limit in anything that eclipses thought and plunges human life into total darkness. In the recognition of this limit, philosophy can find a motive for the alleviation of such eclipse wherever possible. From such a direction it can think of torture and suffering as the badness, perhaps even evil, that would make its own activity impractical. If Christianity has given us the image of the extreme cruelty of tyrants, it does not follow that the response to that extremity must be in the terms in which it was shown. One can lose philosophy when it is not possible to practice thought, but one is not forsaken.

Socrates’s Joke

Let us end by asking the key question: Is it possible to discover an absence in Jesus’s death through a comparison of his death with that of Socrates? On the cross he cried out for his torturers to be forgiven. We may forgive those that we love, perhaps those to whom we are indifferent,

and maybe even, from time to time, our enemies. But with the death of Jesus, forgiveness is raised to a transcendental level, insofar as it is taken by believers as emblematic of human relations as such, in that it defines humans as forgiven because of and through their ignorance. For Socrates, ignorance masquerading as knowledge is precisely what allows humans to turn away from the good. Ignorance, not of details but of that which is due to humans as such, can't be forgiven. Or, more precisely, acceptance of ignorance, abandonment of the search for knowledge, is culpability itself. Socrates's sublime serenity is not accomplished by forgiving the ignorant but by understanding that the ignorant are, precisely, ignorant — since they make claims to knowledge about the best way to live — and by accepting his own ignorance — which requires a search for knowledge; that is, living philosophy among the multitude of non-philosophers. This is part of his joke. Philosophy can never erase its outside in the multitude and the civil religion they require.

Socrates suffers, though not to the greatest extremity, but the suffering does not reveal anything to him. It is something that he must overcome in order to continue to practice philosophy. Suffering is blind, ignorant, inevitable, but . . . a distraction. The philosopher must say: torture teaches us nothing. The extreme cruelty of tyrants eclipses the specifically human due. One must avoid such eclipse at all costs to maintain the human image of justice. Nonetheless, the truth of such torture is precisely its meaninglessness, its destruction of meaning, with regard to the due of humans. Perhaps, the philosopher may respond to the Christian, Socrates did not mis-estimate the price of goodness for human life. It may be that he did not see what the worst price could be — absence of the good, which would demand that philosophy become more tragic than Socrates allowed — but that worst price does not alter the task of philosophy. We do not know what Socrates might have said of the torture of slaves by the Athenian courts or of the slaves' lives shattered in metal mines. The extreme cruelty of the Roman imperium shows us only the image of that which is to be avoided. It brought forth no truth. Consequently, such cruelty defines also the human limit of forgiveness: Not knowing what they do is precisely that for which they are not to be forgiven if the human due is to be protected. Such ignorance is madness. The philosopher asks the Christian: What would it mean for madness to

be forgiven? To forgive the person and condemn the madness? — thus separating the person from the madness, making it an attribute that doesn't touch the essence. But we are speaking of the due for humans. To forgive madness is precisely to depart from philosophy.

Then what of the “appalling admonition ‘Take up your cross and follow me’”? Is this the Christian core that might disturb Socrates's serenity and beauty? But what does this admonition mean? To accept one's destiny? Or to turn one's fate into destiny by meeting its challenge face on? It couldn't be simply a Stoic *amor fati* but perhaps a Nietzschean one: an acceptance, a facing and transforming, of the challenge that the particularities of one's time, place, and condition have posed, thereby turning them into a comment on the human condition as such. If the meaning of the appalling admonition is to turn the particularities of one's place and time into an understanding of the good for humans, I don't see anything particularly and specifically Christian about it. This is the task of philosophy itself. It makes possible Socrates's joke.

To find Socrates's joke wonderful, George Grant must be a friend of philosophy, a friend of the lover of wisdom. One hears cadences that suggest that he was more than a friend, a lover of wisdom himself: the doubt about obedience, the attempt to expunge will that leads him toward silence about the doctrine of creation, the suggestion that the fight against madness is the fundamental human task. To the extent that these cadences infuse his critiques, they express a commitment to philosophy independent of religion. Grant noticed and emphasized that, despite his view that Christianity and Platonic philosophy are finally at one in their account of the good, there is a *tension* between what is given in these sources. For there to be a tension, neither can be simply derived from the other. They must have a separate and distinct reality in order for a tension to appear, even if they are finally in agreement. Thus, it would seem that George Grant had an independent commitment to philosophy in order to diagnose this tension.

But, here again, we begin to stray from the sources toward the man himself. In an interview he said, “Christianity is only a kind of beacon flashing into darkness. That beacon does not overcome the necessity of philosophy in a way that certain theologians seem to think it does.”²⁸ If he were more than a friend — and in his notes to himself and interviews

it seems clear that he was — he found sufficient reasons for reticence in the critiques with which he entered the public realm, where he did not speak as a philosopher, but as a Christian philosopher — which, in the end, is to say “as a Christian.” In his critiques Grant deployed the conceptual opposition modernity-tradition in order to renew the dual source of Western grace. Thus he spoke of modernity as darkness, a metaphor that unites Greek and Christian sources, and neither as madness nor sin, which divides them — even though he did leave evidence that madness was his own private trial.²⁹

The darkness that Grant strove to illuminate as darkness requires that light emerge from outside. The motive for the philosopher’s turning away from the reflections in the cave is given no account by Plato; it is confined to an “if.” If the turning away from the darkness toward the light of the good for humans remains unaccounted for, or accidental (as it does in Plato), one has an opening to a Christian interpretation of the motive for the turning even though it does not yet arrive at such an interpretation itself. If the motive is understood as originating from outside the darkness (as in neo-Platonism) then the synthesis with Christianity is underway. To this extent Simone Weil is right about the anticipation of Christianity among the Greeks. Her account of God in Plato claims that in *Timaeus* 27d–28b, “the Model is the source of transcendental inspiration — and therefore the Artificer fitly corresponds to the Father, the Soul of the World to the Son, and the Model to the Spirit.”³⁰ However, this interpretation shifts from Socrates’s questioning in the Greek public spaces to the definition of all such places as thoroughly plunged into darkness.³¹ It is the middle Plato’s metaphor of the cave that grounds this synthesis.* Mediation between Christianity and Greek philosophy must substitute a metaphysical Plato for an *aporetic* inquiring Socrates. A Socratic philosophy — and if philosophy

* One does not have to agree with Hannah Arendt’s penetrating claim that the image of the good was substituted for the more genuinely philosophic image of the beautiful under the influence of Plato’s later assessment that the *polis* had been plunged into darkness to notice that the attempted synthesis between Platonism and Christianity both expugns the non-political dimensions of philosophy and elevates philosophy in a manner that eclipses the specificity of politics. See Hannah Arendt, “What Is Authority?” in *Between Past and Future* (New York: The Viking Press, 1968), 112; and *The Human Condition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958), 20.

is un-Socratic, is it philosophy? — though it grapples with darkness, is never plunged into a darkness that encompasses the entire human world. Not in the late Greek *polis*, not in contemporary technology. In speaking of the darknesses of contemporary technology, Grant spoke of darkness as such, but if ignorance loses its plurality it comes to define the whole human world such that philosophy is domesticated by religion. It is here that his modernity-tradition doublet that structured the moral-political critiques comes to obscure the difference between the two pre-modern sources of the good. There are always resources in partial everyday human understandings, infused as they are with ignorance of the best, that turn toward the unrestricted good for humans. If not, philosophy is impossible and one must simply wait for the news from elsewhere.

When Crito asked how to bury Socrates after the poison has done its work, he replied, “Any way you like . . . that is, if you can catch me and I don’t slip through your fingers.” (I assume that this is the passage to which Grant referred as Socrates’s joke.) He laughed and added, ostensibly to the others, “I can’t persuade Crito that I am this Socrates here who is talking to you now and marshalling all the arguments. He thinks that I am the one whom he will see presently lying dead, and he asks me how he is to bury me!” Referring to Crito’s promise to the court that he would ensure that Socrates would not escape, he continued, “He undertook that I should stay, but you must assure him that when I am dead I shall not stay, but depart and be gone. That will help Crito bear it more easily, and keep him from being distressed on my account when he sees my body being burned or buried, as if something dreadful were happening to me.”³²

It’s always a mistake to explain a joke, but, anyway, note three riffs: when my soul no longer inhabits my body, I am no longer here;* I am here now (this is indeed me); my enemies can’t hold me (this is a reassuring fact). Socrates leaves with dignity and knows that leaving is necessary and, at times, reassuring. I think, as Grant apparently did not, that the wonderful quality of such a joke shows something about human wisdom

* Note that this doesn’t necessarily imply that the soul lives after the body (as *Phaedo* but not *Crito* asserts) but only that life consists in the coincidence of soul and body and thus that death occurs when the coincidence ceases.

not present in Jesus's death. Jesus died in public, Socrates in private. His joke affirms in dignity and with joy: "I am here!" In ignorance but without madness or despair: "it's time to go." But, then, I haven't heard the good news, and they say that all would change if I did. Would I really be lucky to subordinate philosophy and experience the closing down of thought by obedience and thereby to trade the battle against madness for the rigours of belief? It's all Greek to me.*

Appendix: Grant's Mature Understanding of Technology

While Heidegger succeeded Nietzsche as Grant's reference point in analyzing technology, such that his definition became "the endeavour which summons forth everything (both human and non-human) to give its reasons,"³³ this was done in such a manner that Heideggerian "summoning forth" could be folded back into Nietzschean "will." In the key essay "The Question Concerning Technology," Heidegger's thought had undergone a fundamental shift with regard to technology based on his earlier critique of Nietzsche's concept of will. Technology manifests itself as, indeed, a "challenging revealing" but one that is "a kind of unconcealment" so that, in the end, he states that "modern technology as an

* There is only one of George Grant's remarks about the difference between Socrates and Jesus that I have not responded to in this essay: that Socrates's wife was absent from his death scene whereas the two Marys were present at Jesus's. While he regards this as equivalent to the difference between Jesus's sweat and Socrates's joke ("Faith and the Multiversity," in *Technology and Justice* (Toronto: House of Anansi, 1986): 72), I am not sure that this is so. Thus, I have only responded adequately to this point through my defence of Socrates's joke insofar as the two differences are indeed equivalent. Grant's is a profound observation with great significance for philosophy. A proper discussion would require accounts of philosophical friendship, the relation between philosophers and non-philosophers, the love that philosophers can have for non-philosophers, and the relation that this love has to the good for humans. Not only is such a task far beyond the scope of this essay, but it would not affect the current argument substantially. That is to say, such an account can be given within philosophy, so that while this observation is profound, it does not imply a necessary absence in the practice of philosophy. The very complexity of the response that this remark demands suggests that the difference between philosophers and non-philosophers is fundamental for philosophers, whereas the remark immediately seems to suggest that no such difference ought to be significant and thus that the response should be simple.

ordering revealing is, then, no merely human doing.”³⁴ The sovereignty of human will in technology is, for Heidegger, merely a self-misunderstanding, and actually a response in which humans themselves are called forth when the world is manifested as presence — thus technology becomes an episode in the history of metaphysics. But for Grant, and Nietzsche, the sovereignty of will is an actuality of historical decisiveness. As Grant said, “Europeans somehow seem to have come to an apprehension of the whole as ‘will.’”³⁵ While Nietzsche was content to propagate the will unleashed by modernity, Grant considered this unleashing itself as the danger from which grace appears to deliver humans. To the extent that Grant continued to define technology through the phenomenon of “will,” he never really accepted a Heideggerian account.* As a consequence he did not appreciate (until very late in an unpublished note) the extent to which Heidegger’s conception of “meditative thinking” represented an alternative to technological thinking.³⁶

* For this reason I must now, as a self-criticism based in teleological interpretation, suggest that the Nietzschean and Heideggerian phases of Grant’s view of technology were not really philosophically distinct but signify only a change in the major reference. My earlier periodization of Grant’s understanding of technology did point out that his appropriation of Heidegger was partial, limited to the explication of technology, and did not extend to the account of philosophy as metaphysics that enabled that explication. Nevertheless, my overly textual interpretation did not consider these factors as sufficient to undermine the distinctness of a Heideggerian period. See my *A Border Within*, 98.

PART II

IS CANADA
A NATION?

6

Introduction: National Identity as Solidarity

The chapters in this part of the collection deal with the concept of national identity, its relation to internal plurality, Canadian studies as an intellectual-political project, and the left-nationalist discourse stemming from the 1960s that at one point had an influence on national politics. In addition, the English Canadian tradition of thought represented by these studies is put to work as a critique of an influential contemporary concept of empire that ignores the importance of location and in a revisiting of the difference in political culture between Canada and the United States.

The first chapter introduces the philosophical work of Winthrop Pickard Bell and analyzes his 1915 lecture on whether Canada might become a nation after the First World War. Though Bell is known as a historian of Atlantic Canada, his work has so far been unknown in Canadian studies and philosophy. Recently, I have been privileged to bring two of Bell's philosophical works before the scholarly public.¹ This essay is the first descriptive and analytical study of Bell's contribution to Canadian intellectual history and philosophy.

The chapters on Gad Horowitz and Canadian studies explain that the construction of a national identity in English Canada beginning in the 1960s was part of a left-nationalist project aiming at a form of social solidarity that could address social inequality. Explaining this project, as well as developing it in a contemporary context, allows me to demonstrate its validity and significance by arguing that a critique of empire remains imperial if it does not address limits to its extension. It is this, in the end, that defines the difference between Canadian and US political cultures: a sense of limitation as necessary and civilizing versus a justification of expansion without limit.

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Around 1880 or 1881, the Métis of Batoche and St. Laurent got very tired of having to pay for wood they cut for planks and firewood. I led the discontent. I could not understand why this was happening, since it was still wild country. In Manitoba, four or five years after it became a province we could still cut wood on unoccupied land for free.²

GABRIEL DUMONT

Unlike many other interdisciplinary innovations, Canadian studies, like women's studies and labour studies, began in relation to a public project of social criticism and counter-hegemony.³ It is questionable whether it has any meaning outside that context. Canadian studies was inaugurated by a problematic relationship between Canada and its international situation — a certain configuration between inside and outside. Inside, we were woefully ignorant of ourselves; outside, we were woefully compliant with US hegemony. Canadian studies was one of a number of initiatives whose strengthening of our self-knowledge was intended to contribute to independence both at home and in international affairs. What independence could afford was perhaps less clear, but it was never too far from a critique of laissez-faire capitalism and the recovery of community. That project may still make sense, but the inside-outside configuration that gave rise to it has considerably altered.

Canadian studies was a consequence of the left-nationalist discourse that arose in the early 1970s.⁴ Particular studies by individual researchers

were fitted into a larger public context in relation to a theory of dependent industrialization associated with Harold Innis and a lament for the failure of cultural autonomy associated with George Grant. However, the mainstream of Canadian studies, and other cultural consequences such as the cultural policy discourse, took off by separating itself from this public context, arguing that Canadian studies had no necessary relation to “nationalism” or any other public project. Thus, the “successes” of Canadian studies have not been part of the formation of a national-popular will as left-nationalism expected but have occurred within established university structures. This is clearly not a matter of individual failures but a social and economic trend that has not been swayed from its course, despite some important attempts to situate individual studies within a national project.

Even here, I would be cautious about speaking straightforwardly of “success.” My experience in teaching is that Canadians are still surprised to find that a serious tradition of social and political thought exists in English Canada. It is still an uphill struggle to get Canadians to pay attention to their own context and history. Moreover, Canadian studies still remains a poor cousin in most university structures. In the present context, we cannot help but be aware that ignorance of one’s own history is a general problem in the world due to the commodification of culture and its centralized production. Our problem has not been resolved but instead has become a common condition.

The separation from a public project has been exacerbated by further trends. Subsequent economic developments, notably the free trade agreements, but also the concentration of capital and new technological innovations, have undermined the theory of dependent industrialization. Similarly, the successes of Canadian cultural products on the international scene — notably novels written in English and theories of multiculturalism — have undermined the assertion of cultural dependency. Moreover, we cannot underplay the role played by Canadian corporations and political institutions in maintaining economic and cultural dependency elsewhere. As a consequence, most thinkers have simply abandoned the framework that gave meaning to individual studies, and the choice of Canadian themes has once again become simply a matter of individual research programs.

With the disintegration of the national project, there have arisen a number of assertions generally associated with the name of postmodernism: whenever identity is mentioned, it is suggested that identity is always plural and contested; whenever dependency is mentioned, it is pointed out that there are Canadian “success stories” in the international economy; whenever oppression is mentioned, only the most extreme cases receive attention, thus concealing the multiple layers of domination and their extension throughout society. These assertions work to obscure the important heritage of left-nationalism through a caricature that it was supposedly homogenizing, special pleading, and itself oppressive because of its orientation toward the national state. Neither of these positions is adequate. The task is to continue the critique of dependency and frustrated identity in a more plural context, neither abandon social criticism and a public project, on the one hand, nor assert it unchanged on the other.

But how can one do this? What is the public project that can unify individual studies in the present climate? What is first needed is some clarity about the current situation: the combination of neoliberal political-economic hegemony with the intensification of the national security state. The renewal of public skepticism toward the American agenda is, in this context, important. The international interest in Canada as another paradigm of English-speaking politics and culture is a good sign. Social critics can use these public entry points into more critical discourses: dependency has not disappeared; it is evident in the relations between regions and classes in Canada, as well as internationally. The plurality of nations within the Canadian nations-state requires analysis of internal imperialism, which runs parallel with international inequalities. The critique of empire needs to be turned against the history and pretensions of the British Empire and the Canadian state as well as turned outward toward the United States. Perhaps most important, the defence of community in Canadian thought needs to be radicalized into a political and philosophical inquiry into the grounds of human solidarity — for it is this that the neoliberal economy and the national security state most threatens.

These issues represent a new emphasis in Canadian studies. The turn inward toward self-discovery never involved the parochialism

that the caricature suggests, but the interplay between domestic and international concerns is now more intense than ever. The hope for community and social solidarity expressed through the creation of Canadian studies requires renewal. Recovery of social solidarity within Canada can motivate international involvement and steer it away from liberal guilt toward an analysis of the sources of exploitation. Social criticism aware of its tradition in Canada has a certain style and emphasis that can contribute meaningfully to new international debates. For this, we still need to know our history, because human solidarity finds its grounds in particular histories. The turn inward also opens outward. We must now explore the terms of the new configuration that is being set into place.

7

Winthrop Pickard Bell on the Idea of a Nation

W. P. Bell: A Biographical and Philosophical Introduction

Winthrop Pickard Bell (1884–1965) was the only Canadian student of German philosopher Edmund Husserl (1859–1938), who was the founder of phenomenological philosophy.¹ Born in Halifax, Bell completed a BA in mathematics (1904) at University of Mount Allison College, today known as Mount Allison University, and received an MA in philosophy (1909) from Harvard University, where he studied under well-known American philosopher Josiah Royce. In 1911, Bell went to Göttingen University to pursue doctoral studies with Husserl. With the outbreak of the First World War in 1914, he was placed under house arrest, held in the temporary prison facility at the university, and subsequently transferred to Ruhleben prison camp on 12 January 1915, from which he was released after the end of the war in late 1918.*

* Ruhleben was a civilian prison camp located 10 kilometres west of Berlin. It contained between 4,000 and 5,500 mostly British prisoners. Internal affairs of the camp — such as arts, music, sports, and academic lectures — were organized by prisoners. See the website *The Ruhleben Story* at <http://ruhleben.tripod.com/index.html>, which gives a list of prisoners that includes Winthrop Pickard Bell's name.

Apart from the final oral examination and its acceptance by the faculty, Bell had completed his dissertation on Josiah Royce and other requirements for his PhD prior to his arrest. Since Bell was denied permission to leave the camp for his dissertation defence, Husserl took the examining committee into the temporary university prison to conduct it. While in Ruhleben, Bell gave and attended many lectures, which were recorded in his notebooks from the period.

Later, Bell taught philosophy at the University of Toronto (1921–22) and Harvard University (1922–27). While at Harvard, Bell concentrated on teaching Husserl's phenomenology, as well as epistemology and logic from a phenomenological point of view, and working on the philosophy of value. The phenomenology of value was Bell's main philosophical interest, on which he wrote two unpublished manuscripts, and which ties his work to the preoccupations of phenomenology in the Göttingen period.² In 1927, Bell returned to Canada to work in the family business and reside in Chester Basin, Nova Scotia. During this latter period, Bell conducted historical research and in 1951 was elected as president of the Nova Scotia Historical Society. In Atlantic Canada, Bell is primarily known as a historian and a benefactor of Mount Allison University.

In 1915, or perhaps early 1916, while in Ruhleben prison camp, Bell gave a lecture called "Canadian Problems and Possibilities" to other internees at the camp.³ Though the lecture was given to a general audience and makes no explicit reference to Husserlian phenomenology, it nevertheless develops a systematic phenomenological account of the national form of group belonging and, as such, makes a substantial contribution to phenomenological sociology and political science as well as grounding that contribution in phenomenological philosophy.⁴ The nature of Bell's intervention depended upon his study of Husserlian phenomenology and thus represents a significant, indeed unique, contribution to Canadian intellectual life. Bell was the first phenomenological philosopher in Canada, and this lecture was the first application of Husserlian phenomenology to Canadian issues.*

* The study of the history of English Canadian philosophy by Leslie Armour and Elizabeth Trott, *The Faces of Reason: An Essay on Philosophy and Culture in English Canada, 1850–1950*

For Bell, the nation is a value-laden unity that confers value on objects in the surrounding world and lays the groundwork for “abstractions such as honor, fidelity, and fame that have been able to fire men to the noblest heroisms and the greatest sacrifices.”⁵ National belonging is thus a way in which the world is made meaningful and valuable to its members such that ethical principles and their political embodiments have a claim upon them. Value is not added on afterward by the individual subject — as we may tend to assume nowadays. As Bell explained in his lectures on value given in *Ruhleben* at approximately the same time as the lecture on Canada, the realm of value qualities is essentially a realm of meanings that themselves contain value.

It may seem to some of you that I am using the word Value in an unaccountably wide and vague sense. Beauty, Moral Goodness, Health, Economic Efficiency you feel to be values. But these other elements you are not used to recognizing as such. . . . One might point out the peculiar feature common to all these qualities, that they are *in themselves* as essences either “positive” or “negative.” . . . If you have realized the gracefulness, the delicacy, the purity, and so on in their particular constitutive complexion in a certain case, the beauty is not *another* and *additional constitutive* quality; but *those* themselves constitute the beauty, and in each case and instance of a peculiar *type* of beauty.⁶

(Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1981), finds no influence of Husserlian phenomenology in Canada up to 1950 (516). In his study of the history of phenomenological philosophy, Herbert Spiegelberg does not mention Canada in his survey of countries and regions where it has gained an influence, though he does devote two sentences to Canada in the section on Great Britain and Bell is mentioned in the US section and identified as a Canadian (*The Phenomenological Movement: A Historical Introduction*, 2 vols. [The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1971], 2: 626, 627). The evidence of these two comprehensive histories is conclusive in establishing that no major Canadian philosopher or school derived from Husserl prior to 1950. Since Bell’s work has remained unpublished in the Mount Allison University archives, it is no fault of these histories that they do not mention him. Thus, as far as current evidence suggests, Bell’s philosophical work represents a unique instance of Canadian phenomenological philosophy prior to 1950.

Such a fundamental inquiry into the perception of value could, in Bell's view, ground more specific studies into a determinate field of value such as the nation. One of the important characteristics of such value-perception is that it is held by its adherents in the realm of intuitive feeling, rather than through rational analysis — even though posterior rational analysis by phenomenological philosophy can show the ground of feeling in value-perception. Such value-qualities are qualities “that ‘break through language and escape’ — or rather are held in the finely graduated and more or less general identity of their essences only in the intuitive feeling for them. And this varies tremendously in its sensitiveness from man to man. For each of us finite beings many of the rarest and finest of these qualities remain forever ‘elusive.’”⁷ Bell's phenomenological study of the nation centred on the interrelationship of value and feeling in the historical context of the possible emergence of a new nation.

The world-historical context of Bell's lecture on Canada is significant. It could already be anticipated that the end of the First World War would involve the breakup of nineteenth-century empires and that new nations would step onto the world political scene. While the first use of the phrase “self-determination of nations” was by U S President Woodrow Wilson in 1918, various forms of this political desire had become important before the war and could already be expected to play a significant role afterward. Consider as one example the formation of Czechoslovakia in 1918 out of the ruin of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Czechoslovakia's first President, T.G. Masaryk (1850–1937), was a friend of Edmund Husserl, and it could be argued that Czechoslovakia's humanist national philosophy was a near cousin to phenomenology.⁸ This world-historical context no doubt constituted the felt necessity to propose a phenomenological definition of the cultural essence of the nation, with specific reference to whether Canada was at that time a nation or was capable of becoming one.

The late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in Canadian intellectual life, as Carl Berger has documented, consisted of an opposition between the camps of imperialism and nationalism.⁹ Nationalists thought that the Empire was Canada's past and that the future lay in development of a distinct and unique nation, whereas advocates of imperialism thought that Canada's future would continue to be within the

British Empire. Bell's exposition clearly takes the nationalist route: he began by stating that "the Canadian is surely and irrevocably a different man from the Englishman," notes difficulties holding Canada back from becoming a nation, and ends by posing the question of what constitutes a nation as such.¹⁰

The Idea of a Nation

Bell's reflections on the idea of a nation are oriented toward whether the developing society of his day could forge itself into a nation, that is to say, a people with distinctive value-perceptions. He was concerned with the relations such a new nation might have with the British Empire and the United States after the First World War. He thought that divergence from Britain was already a fact and suggested that one possible development was that Canada might remain within the Empire due to common traditions. If Canada did not become a nation, its fate likely was to be absorbed into the United States — which was in the process of becoming a unity forged from people from diverse origins. Bell's focus is thus dual: on whether Canada is a nation and on defining the essence, or fundamental character, of national belonging itself.

Much as in Ernest Renan's classic essay "What Is a Nation?" Bell surveys the various proposed definitions of a nation through race, language, religion, law, government, etc., to judge that none of these are satisfactory.¹¹ Indeed, he concludes, "one can find no empirical definition of a nation," even though it does have characteristics by which it can be perceived as such — instincts, prejudices, ideals, taste, and, above all, tradition.* A nation is not merely a sum of individuals but

* Significantly, Eric Hobsbawm, in *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), concludes his survey of the definition of a nation with the remark that "there is no way of telling the observer how to distinguish a nation from other entities *a priori*. . . . All such objective definitions have failed" (5). Bell agrees that there is no objective or, as he says, "empirical," definition of the nation, though he would not agree that there is no *a priori* and, in that sense, objective definition. See Winthrop Pickard Bell, "Canadian Problems and Possibilities," *Symposium: Canadian Journal of Continental Philosophy*, 16, no. 2 (Fall 2012): 54–55. It is here that his phenomenological background allows a distinction that Hobsbawm and many others miss.

a kind of whole, and its characteristics exist only as related to the “super-individual life,” or “super-individual being,” that is a nation. His leading metaphor is that of an organic unity; a nation is like a plant and not like a stone. When a stone is broken up, it yields smaller pieces of the same stone. When a plant is broken up, the pieces — roots, flower, leaves, etc. — cannot survive on their own because they are different among themselves. The unity exists only at the level of the plant; the parts are unified through their complementary differences, not through their identity or similarity. It is for this reason that a nation cannot be imposed by will or decision; it has to grow because each part has to be readied and formed so as to fit with the others. As Bell says, “Now these [parts] are all elements of the life of the nation as an organism, and not simply common characteristics or properties of a collection of individuals.”¹² But even though the parts in an organic unity are not the same, they are nevertheless mutually related in such a way that there is also a unity among this diversity. The parts of several plants cannot be assembled into a hodgepodge, as it were, to create a new plant. To say that a plant must grow, not be created, is also to say that the diverse parts have a kind of unity. The kind of unity that can be ascribed to a nation is of the form that Husserl later called “higher-order persons” and that Bell renders into English as “super-individual life” or “super-individual being.”* The life of human collectivity operates so that “such

* Even though there is no evidence that Husserl used this term prior to the early 1920s, Bell’s English terms show such an identity of meaning that one suspects that the German equivalent was conveyed to him by Husserl verbally. See David Carr, “Personalities of a Higher Order,” in *Interpreting Husserl: Critical and Comparative Studies* (Dordrecht: Martinus Nijhoff, 1987), 267–78. In *Ideas II*, of whose investigations Bell would have been aware because Husserl was working on them while Bell was in Göttingen (even though they were not published until much later), Husserl was already concerned with the “social objectivities” such as marriage and friendship that are constituted in human communities (Edmund Husserl, *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy, Second Book: Studies in the Phenomenology of Constitution*, trans. Richard Rojcewicz and André Schuwer, *Collected Works*, vol. 3 [Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1989], 210–11). The term “social objectivities” refers to higher-level social-spiritual unities such as nation, class, family, association, etc. As Husserl later phrased it, “With communalization proper, *social communalization*, there become constituted within the Objective world, as spiritual Objectivities of a peculiar kind, the various types of social communities with their possible hierarchical order — , among them the pre-eminent types that have the character of ‘personalities of a higher order’” (Edmund Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations*, trans. Dorion

factors as tendencies and tradition *affect* the individuals but are *borne only* by the super-individual being. No individuals incorporate these things, only the nation as a whole does that.”¹³

We should keep in mind the important distinction between an empire and a nation. For Bell, India is not a nation, nor Britain or the Turkish (Ottoman) Empire.¹⁴ Some existent, cultural, super-individual unities to which we may loosely refer as nations are actually empires because they contain several distinct peoples connected only by a system of government and law. These variations show that the essence of a nation is not present in an imperial political order. The essence of a nation requires a cultural whole that permeates the life of a people and not merely an external connection such as law, trade, etc. Why, then, should it be expected that Canada become a nation in the sense of a unified people? While Bell does not address this question directly, the difference in his treatment of the francophone people and the diversity of immigrants implies an answer: while Canada could contain two (French and English), or even perhaps several, peoples united only by government and law, it cannot contain an infinite, irreducible plurality without ceasing to have the unity that being a nation requires. The difference is that immigrants immigrate as individuals and for there to be a sufficient unity they must become part of a new nation. Perhaps there may be more than one such new nation united in a country that is like an empire in the sense that the peoples remain distinct, but it cannot be the case that each immigrant unites only with similar immigrants such that Canada is only a plurality of pre-Canadian, old-world peoples. Or, if it does so remain, it is not a nation in any sense and is destined to remain a colony of the Empire or, more likely, become absorbed into the

Cairns [The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1969], 132; cf. Winthrop Pickard Bell, “Canadian Problems and Possibilities,” 55, 56). While Cairns’s translation of “Personalitäten höherer Ordnung” as higher-order “personalities” is linguistically correct, Husserl’s terminology here compresses two aspects of the phenomenon that should be distinguished. Note that “personality” emphasizes the difference of one “person” from another. “Higher-order persons,” which I have used, corresponds more directly to Husserl’s meaning of the “person-character” of such social unities. It does follow, however, from their “person-character” that such characters are different in their cultural form and thus analogous to “personalities.” See on this point Ian Angus, *Primal Scenes of Communication* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2000), 69–72.

new American nation to the south. It seems that the unity that defines a nation must “surmount” (in Bell’s term) its parts in such a way as to create a unity that encompasses all in the same way and thus confer a certain homogeneity on the nation. In Bell’s analysis of what constitutes a nation as such, there seems to be a tension between viewing the nations as made up of parts of an organic whole, in which case they are different and complementary parts, and parts of a homogeneous or aggregate whole, in which case the parts are each alike. Or, in order to maintain the metaphor of an organic whole, one needs to define what it is that makes the different parts of an organic whole parts of *this* organic whole: what makes the parts of a mountain ash tree parts of this kind of tree, indeed of this specific tree, such that they fit together into a whole? What sort of unity that surmounts differences is this? And how does this organic analogy apply to the nations?

Renan concluded that a “nation’s existence is . . . a daily plebiscite, as the individual’s existence is a perpetual affirmation of life.”¹⁵ A nation exists through the daily agreement of each one to belong to the nation. With this, Renan established that a nation is a cultural unity in Husserl’s sense — that it cannot be derived from a material or empirical cause and that it is constructed as a higher-level belonging from individuals as persons. But this formulation suggests that the nation is *nothing more* than each individual’s assent and in this fails to grasp the phenomenological concept of “person of a higher order.” It leaves systematically unclear the form of this agreement and obscures the fact that single individuals can consciously withdraw their assent without destroying the higher unity as such. Renan’s formulation also suggests that the nation is a phenomenon of the *will* — that a nation is not only a communalization constructing a higher unity but also one that is established by design and cannot be retained without at least a certain minimal degree of will on the part of each member.

In contrast, Bell insists that a nation grows by incorporating differences into a unity. The use of terms such as “growth” and “development” in the context of an organic concept of unity is precisely to say that the nation is not brought about by an act of will or decision on the part of individuals. “For gentlemen, whether the concept of the British Nation shall include the colonies or not, or whether these shall grow to be

sister nations within a common bond of race and language and empire is something which historical events and government policies may hinder or further, but which no human *decision* can *determine*.”¹⁶ To this extent the formation of a nation is independent of state policy, even though state policy may affect its development — because state policy is not just an individual decision even though it is not the whole either. “The unity of national being has shown itself historically capable of *surmounting differences* of race and of languages.”¹⁷ It is this “surmounting” that grounds the form of unity essential to a nation. Such surmounting need not eliminate differences by imposing homogeneity, of course, but it must “get beyond” such differences while nevertheless retaining some aspects of them.* The act of surmounting differences renders such differences secondary to the unity of the nation and the nation as thus impervious to the persistence of such differences. Such “surmounting,” when understood as the essence of the cultural unity of the nation, would ground historical studies of the many ways in which surmounting has been accomplished, and it would include this plurality of ways as one important ground (alongside the prior differences among peoples) for the difference in the character of nations.

One can note, however, that there is one variation that Bell did not consistently carry through: the element of the “relation to a state” in defining a nation. To do so would make it apparent that a nation may or may not have control, or aim at control, of a state. A state, like any other objective or empirical element, is not constitutive of a nation as such. A state may coincide with a nation, or, as during the period of “national self-determination” that has been so influential in the twentieth century, a nation may aim to become a state. But also a state may include many nations and thus be an empire or another form of multinational state, and a nation may cover more than one state, or one state and parts of others. There is simply no essential relationship here. Bell’s discussion of Canada comes close to this point only when it claims that the state cannot bring about a nation by an act of will. But the difference is greater

* Bell’s concept of “surmounting” thus invites comparison with Hegel’s notion of *Aufhebung*, or sublation, which likewise involves both transcendence and preservation. However, not enough is said by Bell about what he means by this concept to make such a systematic comparison.

than that. At the level of free variation of possibility, Canada could fail to become a nation and remain an independent state or successfully become a nation and be incorporated into the United States. By failing to vary the element of “state,” Bell fails to formulate clearly the independence of the state from nation — even though he is quite astute in remarking on what happens if they are collapsed: “almost the only national characteristics capable of creation or development by propaganda are national prejudices and national conceit!”¹⁸ The failure to vary systematically with respect to the state is why Bell assumes without discussion that it is the government’s right and duty to oversee the mixture that will become the Canadian people. This failure might even be thought a contradiction: Even though he cedes the government all rights in overseeing the factors that might form a nation, he nevertheless does not grant that the nation is the sort of unity that the state can create by an act of will. “Growth may be artificially helped or hindered, but in *neither* case can the living organism be artificially *created* out of its constituent parts.”¹⁹ Moreover, he does not consider that a people might sustain itself, and perhaps even form itself, against the opposition of a state. For the same reason, though this was not an issue on his historical agenda, he fails to ask what happens when a state loses the loyalty of its nation or nations.

A New Nation as a Part-Whole Synthesis

The essence of the nation is thus an organic cultural unity that grows or develops, and is therefore not a product of will, and that is defined by its capacity to surmount its parts. This unity is instantiated in a given nation in a tradition. The particular character of a nation’s tradition gives it a tendency to act in one way rather than another. “There are national *tendencies*, none the less definite in being usually hidden from those living in the midst of them. And, of supreme importance as the atmosphere of national life — the medium of its continuity — we have national *tradition*.”²⁰ Nations are not merely factual things but also exhibit essential relationships depending on what kind of unity is in question. Bell thus claims in classic Husserlian fashion that the nation, as a cultural unity in the intelligible universe inhabited by humans, is subject to “a broad

scale of laws which govern the motivation of all human action not as a merely factual order of things to be empirically determined, but as *a priori* relations of the eternal nature of the structure of any intelligible universe — in this case essential relations between value-qualities as such.”²¹ His example is that of the traditions of English and French Canada, which have not mixed, and cannot be expected to mix, in view of the specific character of the diversity of the two traditions. Bell’s emphasis here is somewhat narrowly focused on the Catholic nature of francophone tradition, but his estimation that the two traditions exist alongside each other without mixing seems rather to have hit the mark. To this day there has been translation and mutual accommodation but neither integration nor mixture of the essential traditions.

In the case of a nation-in-forma­tion such as Canada, it is the possibility of this surmounting of parts that is most at issue. The mixture necessary to a new nation occurs by pulling together and surpassing diverse elements from pre-existing cultures and nations into a new kind of super-individual whole with distinctive characteristics (though not necessarily into a homogeneity). Criticism, if criticism there be, of the pre-existing cultures or nations is valid, according to Bell, insofar as they resist such integration. To define it precisely: if the pre-existing elements resist becoming parts in a new whole, insofar as they demand to remain as parts within a pre-existing whole, then they may rightly be unwelcome within the new whole. Criticism is not of the integrity or accomplishments of the original whole (nation) but of the capacity to become a functioning part in a new whole.

The concrete question of whether Canada can be expected to become a nation thus depends on whether its parts, which come from fragments of previous nations, can be surmounted within a new whole. This surmounting, should it be possible, is not fundamentally a human action but a question of the formation of a national tradition. The issue is “in general, the difficulty of finding any deeper instincts and feeling in which these people [constituents of Canada] are at one.”²²

What Bell defines in the nation as a “surmounting” is a specific case of a part-whole relationship that defines an organic unity.²³ Since a nation is a new unity in which the old elements have become parts, it is fair to ask what sort of new unity the nation is. Bell proposes that the

new nation of Canada — or the English-speaking part of Canada, since he does not view a unification of English and French parts as possible — must constitute a unity that, while it does not necessarily surmount all differences, does do so in a central respect insofar as it constitutes a new unity. In what way does the super-individual being surmount its parts? More exactly, we have to recognize that there are several forms of new unity that can emerge. The different elements could be completely fused so that no residue of their difference remained, thus creating a new nation by eliminating the differences entirely. We may call this form a “fusing” of the parts. It is tempting to assume that this is the only model of a new nation, that anything short of complete fusion means that Canada has not become a nation and remains simply a fragmentary assemblage of differences. But this would be an error. Bell’s terminology, and explanation of, “surmounting” leaves open the possibility that differences between the elements persist but that they have been precisely “surmounted,” that is to say, rendered less significant than the participation of the elements in a new unity. In fact, one would have to say, if parts become so tightly fused so as to become indistinguishable then they are no longer parts of an organic unity. Bell acknowledged that the use of the term “organic unity” allows that the relation between part and whole poses important issues for understanding individuality. “The parts of an *organic* whole are united to form this whole in a manner (or according to ‘*Kategorien*,’ to express ourselves philosophically) different from that in which parts can exist in a *non-organic* unity. This again is the starting point for a whole series of philosophical problems involving the possible relations of whole and part and the fascinating and still almost entirely unsolved problem of individuality.”²⁴ If the parts of a fused whole were to be cut apart, they would yield homogeneous parts — much as a stone would yield homogeneous parts in distinction from the qualitatively different parts of a dog. Individual cells or organs, to appropriate an example used by Bell, retain their qualitative differences from other cells or organs even while they are made into a whole by being integrated into the totality appropriate to a living being.

Bell’s analysis allows for these two different forms of unity in the formation of a nation — fused versus integrated — that correspond to the difference between the “melting pot” favoured in the United States

and the “mosaic” in Canada. Nonetheless, even a model that allows for significant internal differences must, to become the unity of a nation, “surmount” those differences in some fashion. While Canada could tolerate a duality, or perhaps slightly more, of peoples united only by the weak tie of government and law, immigrant groups must in principle become parts of such peoples or Canada would lack enough unity to be a nation. This is the a priori and objective, though cultural and historical, essential difference between an immigrant group and a people-nation — what later came to be called a “founding people.”

Bell shows, in other words, that internal diversity cannot itself be the basis for a certain kind of unity, that is, a new form of part-whole relation when applied to the nation, but that internal diversity does not have to be expelled, only “surmounted.”* With this analysis of national belonging, Bell leaves us at the threshold of a contemporary problem: How can a form of national unity develop that allows for, and even promotes, internal differences?

- * This is why I have rejected the hermeneutical us/them posing of the question of multiculturalism in favour of an us/we relation that allows for a shared multicultural context that can become a source for a tradition as well as differences that define elements that are not shared across the entire nation. It is a matter of two “levels” of identification, not of two opposing identifications on the same level. See Ian Angus, *A Border Within: National Identity, Cultural Plurality, and Wilderness* (Montréal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1997), chap. 6.

8

Canadian Studies: Retrospect and Prospect

Something has changed since the initial rationale for Canadian studies was put in place in the 1970s. There is not much clarity, and certainly no agreement, on *what* has changed nor *how* it has changed, but the fact of change is almost beyond question. Current decisions on what to do in centres and institutes of Canadian studies, what emphases to push in the curriculum, and on research priorities, depend upon a reasonably clear understanding of where we are now. So I want to try to track this change in some detail by looking at the original rationale, and recent critiques of that rationale, in order to make a proposal about where we are now. I will not attempt to lay out in any detail the implications of my proposal, since they are subject to considerable debate, differences in local conditions, and the priorities and experiences of individual researchers.

The external context of Canadian studies in both government and universities has shifted substantially. In distinction from the non-benign neglect prior to the new programs of the 1970s, both government and universities play a significant

role in Canadian studies now. We inherit a tradition of funding of Canadian studies by the federal government. The priorities driving that funding have recently changed, however. The principle of arms-length funding for academic research has given way to the notion that government funding for Canadian studies should enhance the free trade agenda embraced by the Liberal and Conservative political parties. The implicit vision of Canadian studies in this shift is that research should seek to exploit the comparative advantage of Canadian cultural products in the world market. The branding of “Canada” in the international arena as a home of freedom and tolerance is a part of this agenda.¹

Connected to this shift, though not reducible to it, is the growth in interest in both Canadian cultural products and Canadian studies abroad. Similarly, in contemporary Canadian universities, in stark distinction from the 1960s and 1970s, there is a large amount of research in the field of Canadian studies being done in the established social science and humanities disciplines.² The argument of the 1970s that Canadian studies centres and programs have to do this work because the disciplines do not do it is no longer viable. However, unless one should overestimate the ability of universities to reform themselves on fundamental matters, it should be pointed out that this has been accomplished by the reformed labour laws giving first priority to Canadians in hiring professors. Canadians, in general, have more interest in Canada than non-Canadians. Thus, the study of Canada in the established disciplines has improved. Given these important shifts, it is again timely to ask what is the rationale for Canadian studies and to measure the present prospects through our dependence on, and distance from, their original rationale.

The Original Rationale for Canadian Studies in the 1970s

*The English-Canadian people are just beginning to recognize that Canada is a semi-autonomous region of the continent. They realize too that a dependent capitalist region is economically depressed. . . . The strength of Canadian capitalism is its power to suppress its own contradictions. However, the more Americanized Canada becomes, the more disruptive are the effects of the contradictions. Soon enough, Ottawa's role will be to defend openly the advanced colonialism it has imposed on the Canadian people — with no intention of doing anything about it.*³

DANIEL DRACHE

The first issue that comes to mind is whether one might be assuming too much to speak of an “original rationale.” Perhaps one should speak, as is more popular nowadays, in the plural, and perhaps one should also avoid a complex and overdetermined term like “original.” However, as I hope to show in the following analysis, the rationale was in an important sense a unity. Though it consisted of several components, it was their fusing into a complex unity that achieved the cultural and political power of the rationale. This phrasing should also help us keep in mind that, though the unity has indeed decomposed, this does not imply that every component of the rationale has, individually considered, lost its viability. In referring to the “originality” of this rationale, I do not mean to suggest that no institutions of, or justifications for, Canadian studies preceded the 1970s.* The point is rather that, at this point in

* John H. Wadland distinguishes two phases in the emergence of Canadian studies, one beginning with the founding of Carleton University's Institute for Canadian Studies in 1957 and the second beginning in the late 1960s and early 1970s — which is the period that I refer to here as “the original rationale” (see Wadland, “Voices in Search of a Conversation: An Unfinished Project,” *Journal of Canadian Studies* 35, no. 1 [Spring 2000]: 53–55). A complete historical analysis would require accounting for this first period, which was, in Wadland's view, dominated by an interdisciplinary conception parallel to American Studies in the United States. Jill Vickers tells the story of the founding and development of the Institute of Canadian Studies at Carleton University, in which it is notable that the early history does not exhibit the features that can be isolated in the 1970s rationale (“Thirty-Five Years on the Beaver Patrol: Canadian Studies as a Collective Scholarly Activity,” in *Outside the Lines: Issues in Interdisciplinary Research*, ed. Liora Salter and

time, components of the rationale — some of which may have existed previously — jelled into a powerful formulation that made a difference: institutions were founded, reforms of existing programs were made, new intellectual perspectives were opened up, left-nationalism became influential in the public sphere, and these innovations even affected government policy to some extent. The original rationale was “instituting” in this sense: it was the intellectual basis for institutions and institutional changes to be put into place. It is this instituting feature that allows us to speak of a before and after and therefore to see Canadian studies as coming into being, or coalescing into a maturity if you prefer, in the 1970s. It is this same instituting power that requires us to measure our distance from this period now and ask what is different in our situation.

The situation attending the rise of Canadian studies was dominated by the cognate issue of the decreasing percentage of Canadian professors in Canadian universities and the Americanization of the professoriate. One of the inquiries of the time, *The Waterloo Report* (1969), documented the predominance of American faculty, the dearth of courses with Canadian content, the predominance of American graduate students, and the tendency toward adopting American procedures in university functioning at the University of Waterloo. It was argued that these phenomena were intrinsically related, that the defence of “cosmopolitanism” was a farce, and that “colonization describes the situation reasonably accurately.”⁴ These claims about the colonization of Canadian universities were documented in greater detail in *The Struggle for Canadian Universities*, a dossier edited by Robin Mathews and James Steele in 1969. In that text, the larger rationale behind the issue was defined through the role that universities might be expected to have in national culture and definition.

Alison Hearn [Montréal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996]). It seems to me that it is nevertheless the case that the subsequent formation of Canadian studies rests primarily on the institutional and intellectual foundations of the 1970s that I have analyzed in this essay. Nevertheless, it would require similar analysis of what Wadland's first phase to fully substantiate, or reject, the case that I make here.

For if we do not train and employ Canadians and they continue to be a diminishing proportion of Canadian university faculties, then both the short-term and the long-term effects will be most serious. It is not melodramatic to say that one of the most important centres of national definition will be sapped of its relevance, and will lose contact in almost every meaningful cultural way with the rest of the nation. The Canadian university will cease, moreover, to be a cosmopolitan institution, that is, possessing a majority of excellent home scholars to which are added a vital supply of scholars from different and alien cultures offering as many different kinds of cultural and scholarly conditioning as possible. The Canadian university will become a truly “alien” university, for it will be staffed by an increasingly large majority of scholars whose primary community is not the Canadian community; whose primary national experience is not Canadian; whose primary interests do not merge with and show respect for the seriousness of Canadian problems and the unique relevance of their solutions.⁵

In light of contemporary and subsequent misrepresentations, it is necessary to point out that the authors stressed that “the presence of foreign scholars is absolutely essential to the intellectual well-being of universities, not only in Canada, but everywhere in the world, and we deplore the practices of many countries which severely impede the international mobility of scholars.”⁶

To Know Ourselves, popularly known as *The Symons Report* (1975), clarified the issues further, noting that intellectuals have a social responsibility to the community as well as an intellectual responsibility to scholarship and that citizens need knowledge produced in the university to make informed decisions.⁷ Its point of reference for social responsibility was called “the community,” and it explicitly rejected attempts to “inculcate belief” or “hold Canada together” in favour of “the critical intellect.”⁸ Echoing the Mathews and Steele dossier, *The Symons Report* emphasized that this was not a parochial perspective, that Canadians need to know about others as well as themselves, and that Canadian studies “can open the door to the rest of the world to an extent and in a way that has never been possible before.”⁹ Moreover, Canadian universities also have a responsibility to the international community; the

study of Canada's problems can aid understanding of other countries' problems also.¹⁰ *The Symons Report* crystallized the movement for the Canadianization of Canadian universities and influenced many of the institutional changes that were put in place. A government report written a few years later concluded that "many universities have reacted positively to the report of the Commission on Canadian Studies, and *To Know Ourselves* seems to have influenced curriculum and policy at these institutions. However, many have not and in some of our postsecondary institutions both the Commission and the issue of Canadian studies have been discretely ignored."¹¹

To the extent that Canadian studies has found a place in our universities, it is as a consequence of the Canadianization movement of the 1970s. The rationale was clearly articulated by *The Symons Report* in classical terms as the search for self-knowledge.

[Canadian studies] must be based on more compelling reasons than ideological promotion — they must be based on nothing less than the urgent need and growing desire amongst Canadians for self-knowledge: to know who we are; what we want at this time and in this place; where we have been; where we are going; how we can get from one to the other; what, as a people, we have and what we need; what our responsibilities are to ourselves and to others.¹²

It has been carefully documented that the origin of area studies is in the geopolitical interests of the United States during the Cold War.¹³ Nevertheless, Canadian studies originated differently, in a movement for Canadianization that was an integral part of the social movements of the 1960s and early 1970s whose overall purpose was neatly summed up, in contrast to instrumental study of "the others" for geopolitical advantage, as self-knowledge.

If the overall rationale was "self-knowledge," it nevertheless can be parsed into several components. I suggest that there were three distinct aspects to this rationale: (1) the economic, political, and cultural dependency of Canada on the United States; (2) citizenship issues oriented to the Canadian polity; and (3) a social project demanding democratization within Canadian society.

The political ferment of the 1960s produced a left-nationalist discourse in Canada that has had several long-distance effects on society and culture. It was nationalist insofar as it regarded the dependency of the Canadian economy and state on the United States as the most significant structural instance of power. It was “left,” often Marxist, insofar as the source of this dependence and the main barrier to independence was defined as capitalism. There were, of course, many debates about how these two designations might fit together. At either extreme there were Marxists who refused the relevance of any dominance by the United States, and there were nationalists for whom the class basis of Canadian society was irrelevant, but on the whole the game was in the middle: Canadian dependency within an international capitalist system.* This analysis was one of the main influences on the development of Canadian studies. Self-knowledge was understood to be part of the struggle for independence to open a space for changing a class structure that stabilized exploitation and inequality.**

While the more “left” of left-nationalists tended to refer to the “community” as the referent of their analysis, often leaving it unclear whether this was meant in Marxist class terms or in populist ones, the sense of Canadian dependence and the need for more independent government also had an impact in a more liberal sense through reference to citizenship. The argument for the social responsibility of universities in *The Symons Report* claims that “universities have failed to meet the research needs of this country and its citizens.”¹⁴ University-based research was

* David Cameron notes that the movement against US economic and university dominance as factors in the rise of Canadian studies in *Taking Stock: Canadian Studies in the Nineties* (Montréal: Association for Canadian Studies, 1996), 19, 21.

** To this extent I would disagree with Andrew Nurse, who suggests that an original patriotism or nationalism in Canadian studies was succeeded at a later date by critical studies of Canadian state and society. I would argue that they were coterminous from the beginning and, even, that the critical focus was the leading one. The actual chronology is not mentioned by Nurse, though, and he may have in mind an earlier period than the 1970s, especially since he is Director of the Centre for Canadian Studies at Mount Allison University, which is one of the oldest centres in Canada — in which case there would be no disagreement. (See note 5.) I do, however, strongly agree with his assertion that critical scholarship is the task for the twenty-first century. See Andrew Nurse, “Too Much of a Good Thing? The Case for Canadian Studies in the 21st Century,” *Canada Watch*, Fall 2007, 27, 29.

taken to refer to needs outside the university, though the terms in which this was expressed allowed for a great deal of overlap, ambiguity, and debate about what social groups and what needs were at issue.

Two decades later, David Cameron counted two main rationales for Canadian studies that were operative in *The Symons Report* in the later report *Taking Stock: Canadian Studies in the Nineties* (1996): “the desire to understand one’s character and destiny” and the “concern to strengthen citizenship and public values.”¹⁵ But the thing to understand is that these two were part of a single rationale in the earlier period. Citizenship, public values, and social struggle were the arena in which self-knowledge could be expressed and have an impact. Dependency and citizenship were held together by the notion that a new social project was awakening, of which Canadian studies was a part, that would address the inequalities of Canadian society by joining the process of decolonization underway in the world at large. It is for this reason that Canadian studies has had little impact in Québec: the struggle for decolonization there was oriented toward the sovereigntist movement, which has remained since that time the focus of progressive struggle in Québec. But it should not be imagined that these two movements were opposed. The struggle for Québec independence was oriented against the same English Canadian establishment at which the growing English Canadian left-nationalist movement targeted its own critiques. English Canadian left-nationalism supported and explained the purposes of Québec nationalism. There was a moment at which it seemed that they might renegotiate the inherited tension between their communities. The last gasp of this possibility before it expired in the 1988 election on free trade (which was opposed by a majority in English Canada and supported by a majority in Québec) was probably the effort by Susan Crean and Marcel Rioux to explain the commonalities of the two progressive nationalisms that was published in both official languages in the early 1980s.¹⁶

These three aspects of the 1970s rationale for Canadian studies — dependency, citizenship, and class struggle — were compressed in the idea of self-knowledge. They formed a framework, even if largely unconscious, within which arguments for the social responsibility of universities could be expressed. Thus, a space was created for a rich dialogue and debate about the proper way to fulfill this mandate. The key importance of

the rationale of the 1970s was, for this reason, the fusing of these three aspects into a single rationale encompassing social issues in Canada, imperialism on the international scene, and decolonization as a historical state of the world. The language of self-knowledge achieved a hegemonic status through the coincidence of these three components, whose extent might range from reform to revolution. This coincidence defines the historic moment in which the original rationale for Canadian studies was put into place.

By the 1990s, we can see this synthesis unravelling in the *Cameron Report*. Self-knowledge and citizenship begin to seem like two separate rationales, indicating that one's own destiny and that of the political community to which one belongs are perceived as distinct, rather than fused. When Cameron asks, "Why *Canadian* studies?" as distinct from interdisciplinary studies in general, the answer is that "Canada, obviously, is alone in being the only sovereign territory or jurisdiction mentioned which has the status of a sovereign state, with all that that implies in the way of institutions, networks, functions, and international standing."¹⁷ This rationale leads back solely to the existence of the current Canadian state. It implies that, if there were no state-related problems, then the citizenship rationale would be undermined. The retreat to a state-based rationale for Canadian studies in the *Cameron Report* is based on the unravelling of the synthesis of the 1970s. By the 1990s, the three aspects looked like distinct concerns, and one could only point to actually existing institutions rather than critical analysis and a social project for justifications. The strong instituting rationale for Canadian studies and the heroic period of institution building were already well over by the 1990s. It has all been deconstruction since then.

These were the compactions that gave the strong rationale its strength: dependency and exploitation were understood as national dependence in the face of American imperialism, community was understood as national community, the social project was understood as achieving national independence in order to gain the power through which social exploitation and inequality within Canada could be addressed. Attending to national weakness was first, but it was continuous with attending to the same sorts of issues within the current state of Canada. It is such compactions of meaning that open a cultural and historical moment and

an intense space for political and intellectual creativity. In measuring our distance from this rationale, it will not be surprising that it is the ambiguities and elisions associated with the term “national” that are central in the unravelling that has been underway since at least the 1990s. In Roy Miki’s words, “when the influx of globalization makes the nation strange to itself, the present takes on the face of the uncanny and what was (now previously) in place is set adrift — to encounter the spectres of loss, nostalgia and liminality.”¹⁸ We can already note that while awareness of the structural inequalities of Native peoples and francophone Québécois was high on the list of the issues to address within Canada, it did not penetrate into the national focus of the rationale itself. To this extent it is fair to say that Canadian studies was primarily an English Canadian project rooted in the political culture of English Canada, an English Canada “looking for its Lévesque,” as Gad Horowitz often said at the time.¹⁹ It is no wonder that those other groups have followed the implications of their own liberation struggles elsewhere. One index of this development is the common contemporary use of the term nations-state, or multinational state, in referring to Canada. In this context, it is helpful, I think, to retreat from identification with “Canada” outright and to speak of English Canada, so that its relation to other groups can be posed as a problem and not hidden under an apparent solution.²⁰

Recent Critiques of the Original Rationale

*Looking back, I have come to recognize the power that nationalism had in shaping the contours of my life and the lives of Japanese Canadians who were forever marked by the mass uprooting of the 1940s. While we often perceived ourselves, and were perceived, as outsiders in the Canadian nation, we were always in a process of negotiation with its racialized boundaries. In the light of this dynamic, the movement to seek redress was born out of Canadian conditions and placed us deeply inside the language of this nation’s democratic values. . . . In a strange twist . . . Art could see himself as “Canadian” because he had become the “Japanese Canadian” named in the redress settlement.*²¹

ROY MIKI

If the unravelling of the strong rationale was already visible in the 1990s, it would be subject to many more critiques later. These critiques can be schematized according to whether their object is the concept of the nation, questions about whether other identities can or should be seen as dependent on the nation, or the growth in importance of identities that do not appear attached to the nation at all.

Perhaps the most pervasive critique of Canadian studies is that it has been focused on a unifying, homogenizing concept of the nation that has entailed a consequent blindness to division and systematic inequality within Canada. There is a considerable range to this charge. Some critics content themselves with the minimal charge that national identity is on the wane. For example, Donald Savoie points out that "it is becoming clear that East-West economic ties will matter less in the future and thus political ties will also matter less. This weakening of national identity may well make regional ones stronger."²² Given that regionalism based on staple resource extraction was a key theme of dependency theory, and that an east-west economic policy dominated by central Canada historically resisted the north-south pull of the US economy, this development after the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) and North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) can be explained in a manner continuous with the theoretical paradigms of the 1970s. Gilles Bourque and Jules Duchastel summarize the situation by noting that "since the early 1980s under a neoliberal regime, this transformation of Canadian identity from universal citizenship to particularistic identities has grown even stronger."²³ Weakening national economic integration and social identity are consequences of the policies pursued by the Canadian federal government, whose priorities are directed by dominant interests in the global economy. Other charges seek to overturn the previous paradigm completely. Jill Vickers claimed already in 1994 that "it is hard for anyone other than white males of the majoritarian culture to find a sense of identity in the discourse represented by the founding consensus."²⁴ This view has been echoed recently by Peter Hodgins, who states that "traditionally defined Canadian studies programs tended to replicate the discourse of the Canadian State in their mapping of the field."²⁵ The maximum level of the charge that Canadian studies focused on the nation is that it did so exclusively, to the detriment of all other communities and identities,

and further, that it equated the nation with the state and thereby participated in the repressive and coercive power of the state.

The question about the relation between Canadian studies and the state affects both identities such as those attached to gender or other social movements that appear globally and the issue of identities within Canada such as those discussed under multiculturalism. Several recent studies of multiculturalism have analyzed it as a strategy of the Canadian state and a fantasy of unity,²⁶ though one should be wary of regarding this approach as new since they were preceded by Anthony Wilden's 1980 application of Lacanian theory to the discourse of Canadian identity in *The Imaginary Canadian*.^{*} Joan Sangster has pointed out that "there have been a multitude of academic challenges that have emerged to idealized notions of the nation, emanating from critical race studies, queer studies, Native studies, and perhaps that forgotten approach in these times, class analysis."²⁷ The question is whether those idealized notions of the nation have been propagated by Canadian studies or have been the object of its critique. Posed in this way, the answer probably has to be "both," depending on the authors one cites, but Sangster's reference to class analysis serves to remind us, I think, that it was a major tendency in the heroic days of Canadian studies when critique of the state as an instrument of class domination was a prominent theme. There were liberal and apologetic elements always, of course, but they did not give the discourse of the original rationale either its focus or its originality — which came from developing a Canadian version of the anti-imperialism of the 1960s — and cannot account for its success in the public realm. To equate Canadian studies as a whole with apology for the state is go too far. Specifically, it is uncritically to confuse "state" and "nation" when their distinction was itself a crucial element

* The superiority of Wilden's Lacanian approach to others of the Lacanian-Deleuzian variety is that he analyzed the imaginary (in Lacan's sense) relations as symmetrical covering real relations of dominance. His multi-levelled approach analyzed Canada as a colony as well as relations of dominance within Canada. The later Lacanians tend to analyze the relations of dominance in Canada in order to deny, or deny the relevance of, the domination of Canada. Wilden's work, even though highly original, thus fit within the decolonizing critique of the 1970s, whereas the contemporary impasse stems from the denial of one level of critique in order to affirm another — which is itself an imaginary resolution. See Anthony Wilden, *The Imaginary Canadian* (Vancouver: Pulp Press, 1980).

of a critical stance in much earlier work in Canadian studies: the nation, as a national community, was to be awakened through a critique of the state and of class structure. When Sangster argues that the new theoretical paradigms oriented to radical diversity “are absolutely essential to the health and longevity of Canadian Studies,” I think it shows that their critique is preceded within Canadian studies because of the earlier critique of class exploitation and national dependency and, though it can be taken further, is a continuation of the initial social responsibility of university studies to further a social project.

The question of the state is even more cutting when it comes to the First Nations, since there is little doubt that any reference to the community as national cannot be made compatible with the history of colonialism. The assertion of Native claims to sovereignty is non-symmetrical with claims to recognition of cultural diversity within Canada.²⁸ It is for this reason that Marianne Boelscher-Ignace and Ronald E. Ignace conclude that “multiculturalism is no closer to acknowledging our collective inherent rights to cultural and political autonomy than were earlier policies aimed at integration and assimilation.”²⁹ Yasmeen Abu-Laban similarly argues that “we should prepare for a new order of identity politics, more complex, and resistant to assertions of a single national identity, history or narrative. A realistic and tenable response means Canadians will have to deal with the continuing legacy of settler-colonialism.”³⁰ This will indeed require a change in the project of Canadian studies insofar it has been articulated through the notion of the nation as the overriding community and thus has necessarily obscured the colonialism involved in the formation of that unity — though even in this case it can be said that dependency theory and class analysis are continuous with the critiques that are more commonly called “post-colonial” nowadays. When nationalist economist Mel Watkins turned his attention to the dependency of the Dene people within the Canadian nation-state, he argued in a manner consistent with the dependency of Canada on US ownership. “Aboriginal peoples, right across Canada, self-evidently need control over their own economic development. That does not mean a stark choice between either ‘traditional’ activity or wage-employment with non-aboriginal controlled enterprises. There is a third way, the way of

alternative development.”³¹ At least for the critical thinkers attached to dependency and class analysis, the reference to the Canadian nation was secondary to a more basic commitment to the equality and autonomy of all peoples, even within the founding discourse of Canadian studies.

I do not pretend to have summarized all the critiques of Canadian studies that have appeared or might appear soon. Nor do I want to make any excuse for the apologetic strains in early Canadian studies. My aim has been to sketch the ground of these critiques in order to be able to place them in relation to the work of the instituting period. Specifically, I want to recall the critical strain of dependency theory and class analysis in the 1970s rationale and suggest that, while many of the new critiques add something not present earlier, there is nevertheless a certain continuity with this strain. While the whole of the 1970s rationale was not dependency theory and class analysis, these fitted sufficiently well to be an influential element of the founding discourse of Canadian studies.

It seems to me that all of the recent critiques can be related to the fact that the term “nation” in the 1970s rationale was the umbrella term, or perhaps better, the “fusing” term, through which its other aspects were integrated and subsumed. But the term “nation” in this sense does not mean the same as “state.” A nation is a people, whereas a state is a modern organizational form with many repressive aspects. The centrality of the nation to the original rationale of Canadian studies never meant a defence of the Canadian state. The difference of the contemporary situation has to be found elsewhere than in a new discovery of the repressive power of the state. Phrased in negative terms, what has changed is that the nation can no longer be assumed to be the major and coordinating locus of community and identity. With the loss of that central term, the other aspects of the original rationale begin to float apart; this dissolution encourages further attempts that pluralize the project of critique and address it to diverse audiences. Thus, it has come to seem that the project of Canadian studies must either be based on the assumption of a homogeneous national identity or devolve into an ever-proliferating plurality of diverse identities — both of which are caricatures. In the face of this contemporary opposition, at the very least I hope to have shown that there is more continuity than either side asserts and that issues of identity are more complex than this.

The instituting rationale hitched the classic ideal of self-knowledge to Canadian studies through the assumption that the nation was the centrally relevant community. It is easy enough now to observe that I can aim to know myself through the study of Plato or Marx, the American Beats of the 1950s, the difficult struggle of Czech national consciousness, women's history in Africa, or in many or all of the various university-level studies that we may engage in. This was observed at the time by opponents of Canadian studies. C.B. Macpherson summarized the Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT) position in 1969 by stating its disagreement with "the postulate that the Canadian university's function is the advancement of Canadian culture rather than the advancement of learning *per se*."³² It seems quite clear that the opposition expressed here between "Canadian culture" and "learning *per se*" only appears in that form because of the effective exclusion of concerns about Canada from curriculum and research in 1969. The "national community" could be the focus of a new instituting rationale precisely because it was virtually absent from the research and teaching of Canadian universities. In such a context, talk of "learning *per se*" becomes an apology for the failure of universities to contribute to Canadian culture. Since this situation no longer obtains, one would expect that the dichotomy that it represents should no longer obtain also. It would seem logical to regard Canadian studies as *part* of learning as a *whole*, rather than in an *either-or* manner that stems from the exclusion of Canadian concerns and the opposition by so-called "universalists" against Canadian studies. That these so-called universalists are not really universalists is shown well enough by the either-or posing that excludes Canada from universal concerns. But the strange thing is that this faulty opposition seems to have survived the growth of Canadian studies and to be even now the main trope through which the study of Canada is disparaged — because it is *not* universal. As Joan Sangster has remarked, there is a prevailing false dichotomy between the study of Canada, which might be considered "too particular, too local, a narrow nationalist endeavour," and studying the world.³³ But, of course, Canada is a part of the world, and, as long as the study of Canada is being carried out, useful contrasts and comparisons can be made. As Andrew Nurse has argued, "the experiences of Canada and Canadians are not

secondary to a consideration of a wider context. . . . Consideration of Canada can illustrate important dynamics associated with globalization.”³⁴ Similarly, there has been a false dichotomy between the study of the plural and diverse relations of dependency and exploitation within Canada and the study of those relations insofar as they pertain to Canada in the international arena — which assumes and demands that there be some sort of unity to the phenomenon of Canada.³⁵ If the current intellectual situation is characterized by anything, it seems to be the persistence of false dichotomies serving the rhetorical denial of the worth, even the universal worth, of studying Canada.

What has changed since the original rationale such that this muddle has come into being is that the notion of a national community cannot play a coordinating and integrating role because it is no longer absent. Its absence made it the locus of a desire that provided the glue with which the three aspects of the rationale could be compacted and that gave it its public impact. The increase in Canadian studies since those days has made sure that it can no longer play that function and, in that sense, it is fair to ask, with Colin Coates, “does the success of the Canadianization of Canadian universities justify the withering of Canadian Studies?”³⁶ If, as he suggests, the answer is “no,” it must nevertheless be the case that the rationale for Canadian studies must change as a result. This new rationale must come from Canada *in* the world, not Canada *or* the world. Moreover, it must come from the plural voices of critique *in* Canada, and *of* Canada, that propose a plurality of diverse identities: regional, gender, English Canadian, Canadian, and, perhaps, the post-national person. To be Canadian is not our only identity, nor can it be any longer the absent focus for all our identities. There are *sub-national* (ethnic, regional), *extra-national* (gender, social movement, diasporic), and *cosmopolitan* (individual, global) communities and identities that have come into visibility with the decline of the absent, organizing, unity of the national community. But the national community remains as one referent. It does not disappear, though it becomes one among many. This event itself is one issue that we should all take seriously and whose meaning we should explore.

A New Rationale for Canadian Studies?

If, by the old political culture, the pre-revolutionary culture, we mean the Canada, in which the institutions and morality of the public interest dominated over the private, there is at least anecdotal evidence from my interviewees . . . that the public space in which that interest had agency has not been completely evacuated. These are instances of the reiteration, after so many years of a grim morality of survival-of-the-fittest, of something like hope. There is the persistent identification with the idea of Canada as a shared “commons” of social consciousness.³⁷

MYRNA KOSTASH

The basic question is thus whether there is a new rationale for Canadian studies that modifies the original rationale for the 1970s but remains in sufficient continuity with it to warrant the name “Canadian studies.” The original rationale was a strong one, corresponding to a heroic period of founding Canadian studies programs and anticipating a connection to a reformist or revolutionary social project outside the university. This gave way to a period of retreat from such large projects and expectations so that during the 1990s period of the *Cameron Report* a weak rationale predominated in which the mere existence of a Canadian component to a study was enough to qualify it as Canadian studies, exemplified primarily by the institutional studies of political science and those of Canadian literature in English. This tendency has accelerated into the new millennium and basically describes where we are now.

The *Cameron Report* noted that by the 1990s approximately 80 percent of university faculty were Canadian citizens.³⁸ With the rise of a greater number of Canadian studies in the disciplines, the rationale tended to turn toward interdisciplinarity,³⁹ so that the weak rationale consists mainly in rounding out across the disciplines the studies undertaken within disciplines. With the decay of the absent organizing centre played by the “national community” in the strong rationale, the plurality of studies known as Canadian studies lost its unity and its relation to a social project. It seems that its connection to the classical ideal of self-knowledge suffers in this situation too, both because it can be seen to apply to studies outside Canada and because studies within Canada

may not be relevant to a given learner. It is notable that when Symons reasserted the validity of the “knowing ourselves” rationale in 2000, the meaning of being Canadian was neither addressed nor justified in relation to competing ways of understanding community and identity, positing, moreover, that “it is unhelpful to think of Canadian Studies as a mission.”⁴⁰ It is not possible for the ideal of self-knowledge to be held together with Canadian studies by a weak rationale such as has predominated since the 1990s. It needs to be either abandoned or reformulated in a manner adequate to the new social and intellectual conditions.

It would be foolish to enter into any predictions of the future, but it is already evident that the pursuit of a new agenda for Canadian studies will encounter two major obstacles. With a predominantly Canadian faculty and much Canadian work being done in the disciplines, a strongly interdisciplinary rationale will perhaps leave Canadian studies in a weak position in a time of fiscal restraint and cutback, since the disciplinary structure of the university still determines many decisions. Since the federal government has now exempted US citizens (as well as Mexicans and Chileans) from the policy of hiring Canadians first into faculty positions, the predominantly Canadian character of university faculty may deteriorate.⁴¹

I want to conclude with a proposal through which the ideal of self-knowledge can be recovered and extended in a contemporary context through a significant conceptual relation to Canada. This proposal will take off from my two arguments above: One, that critiques of the new multiple forms of dependency can be seen as a continuation of the strong rationale of the 1970s, whereas the forms of community and identity to which it is applied have been pluralized. Two, that it is a false opposition that construes the world as universal and Canada as merely particular, or construes the study of the plural and diverse relations of dependency and exploitation within Canada as incompatible with there being some sort of unity to the phenomenon of Canada. I am suggesting that, as I have argued previously, “the end of left-nationalism (as a dependency critique of Canadian society) does not mean the end of dependency as such. Rather, it implies a recognition of the *multiple forms of dependency* that exist in contemporary society and requires that each be analyzed in terms of the *specific linkage* that ties it to the system as a whole.”⁴²

In short, it means investigating the relations of power in a plurality of communities and identities.

My main point has been that this proposal can be understood as preceded in the heroic period of Canadian studies and manifests itself with the loss of the absent organizing unity of the “national community,” a loss that becomes inevitable once it has given rise to its institutions — though we should not forget the corrosive influence of neoliberalism on the concepts of community and social responsibility. Developing this proposal will require some meditation on the relationship between universal and particular.

Let me preface this proposal with an observation. Despite the greater amount of study of Canada both within the disciplines and in programs of Canadian studies, it is usually the case that the object of study is Canadian whereas the theory through which it is studied is not. Local particularity, global universality. Except that it is not really global. The centres of theory are the United States and France, to some extent Germany and Great Britain. Behind the prestige of the international theory debates exist the realities of publishing centres, size, language, the state subsidies for translation that have propagated French theory, and a host of other political-economic factors. The “international” is still not straightforwardly global but consists of a number of centres that construct a dependency on theory by apparently theory-less hinterlands. It is still radical to study the history of Canadian theory, that is to say, of attempts to understand the world as such and not just one or another of its contents. The English and French traditions still communicate very little on this level. First Nations traditions still struggle to survive and be heard outside their immediate communities. This division between the inside-ness of a case or example and the outside-ness of theory relegates issues within Canada to a merely particular status while conferring universality on the latest theory imported from Paris. Local content, international form. The mission of Canadian studies, and the mission of the other relevant communities, is *to make theory* from the history of exploitation and dependency to which they have been subjected, to refuse to be a case and become instead a way of understanding the world.

A book published by the Alliance of Independent Publishers called *Keywords: Nature* can perhaps illustrate what I mean. The book consists

of six essays on the concept of nature and related social practices in Africa, America, the Arab World, China, Europe, and India that will be immediately translated into four world languages. There will be future similar books on experience, gender, identity, and truth. As the series preface explains, “the collection thereby aims to produce an intercultural dialogue and an exploration of globalization with, as a point of departure, local points of view on essential themes.”⁴³ The positive aspect of this experiment is that universal, “essential” themes are situated within particular cultures and histories in a manner that may provoke a different exploration of the particularity-universality nexus than that settled by hegemonic imperial relationships. However, if one looks at the excellent essay “The Idea of Nature in America” by the noted scholar Leo Marx, it makes no mention of either Canada or Latin America. This ambiguity of the term “America” has been with us for some time. If one were to investigate the concept of nature in Canada, or in Latin America for that matter, significant differences would appear. Clearly, the process initiated by this book could go further, and I am sure that the editors and contributors understand that the process of rethinking the relation between experiential content and conceptual form that it represents can be accelerated and perhaps even that pressing this process further is exactly the rethinking of the relation between particular and universal that is demanded of us today. Canadian studies seems to me today situated within this process of accelerating particularization and universalization.

So to my concluding proposal. While Canada is a locality in an international context, a locality in which place and locality have been something of an obsession, the pressure toward locality in discovering universal resources does not stop with “Canada” but moves on to other localities and particularities. Nevertheless, “Canada” is a relevant stop on its way, which puts Canadian studies at one significant node of an important intellectual turning of our time. This could be the basis of a new strong rationale: rethinking the relation of particularity and universality, a push to levels “beneath” the nations-state to uncover the communities and identities constituted through the localities and an attention to the different histories, and temporalities, that are lived there. This would require a new approach to universality, one vigilant against

the forms of power through which universalities have been constituted. Such a rationale could claim to be a revival of the ideal of self-knowledge and to contain within itself a relation to a decolonizing social project.

I have sought to show a certain continuity between the critique of dependency and exploitation included in the original rationale and more recent critiques, to reject the newer critiques only when they caricature the concept of nation as if it were identical to the state in the original rationale or deny the possibility of national community at all, and otherwise to accept the pluralization of the critique of power that I believe was implicit, if muted, in the original rationale itself.

9

Gad Horowitz and the Political Culture of English Canada

In a series of short, intense articles written between the mid-1960s and the early 1970s, Gad Horowitz made a remarkably pertinent and prescient contribution to the thinking of the political culture of English Canada in order to define the parameters of a socialist political will. That contribution was made in the context of the politics of the 1960s, which attempted to synthesize a socialist politics of class with a nationalist politics of community. Any similar attempt forty years later needs to both acknowledge his founding contribution and measure its own distance from the theoretical discourse of the 1960s. It is one indication of that distance that many of Horowitz's essays were written in small journals, without footnotes, and in a definite first person. What was being said was the most important thing. The burying of substantive argument under mounds of scholarly apparatus — such as in this essay — that predominates today is an index to what extent form has submerged content. Writing is no longer political but *about* politics.

The impetus behind Gad Horowitz's theory of English Canadian political culture is much more a matter of political will than a social scientific hypothesis. Political will pertains to the kind of life that one thinks humans should live and what approximation to that life one can attempt to live here and now. Social scientific investigations only take on meaning within the classic conception of politics as the definition and enactment of the good life. Thus, my interpretation of Horowitz's contribution is based in the socialist project that animated it and what that legacy should mean for us now. Both in the 1960s and today, the socialist project is animated by the conviction that substantive equality, primarily though not exclusively in the economy, is the foundation of decent human relations.

From a Conservative Past to a Socialist Future

The starting point of Horowitz's articles of the 1960s was the fragment theory of Louis Hartz, which analyzed the political cultures of New World societies in terms of their origins in European societies.* For example, the liberal theory of John Locke in England was a component of a political culture that also included Tory and socialist elements. The social

* It has been consequently assumed by many commentators that Horowitz's contribution to thinking the political culture of English Canada thus stands or falls with the validity of the Hartzian approach in general. This is not so, especially since there are other historical, political, and philosophical interpretations that corroborate Horowitz's contribution. There are his dialogues with the work of John Porter and George Grant noted in the text below, for example. See also Leslie Armour, *The Idea of Canada and the Crisis of Community* (Ottawa: Steel Rail, 1981), which argues on historical grounds for the predominance of pre-Enlightenment communitarian influences in Canada, and Leslie Armour and Elizabeth Trott, *The Faces of Reason: An Essay on Philosophy and Culture in English Canada, 1850–1950* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1981), which argues for the predominance of communitarian conceptions of political life in Canadian philosophy. The reduction of the Horowitz thesis to its Hartzian origin, rather than its consideration within the framework of interpretations of English-Canadian culture, depends in large part on a disciplinary blindness deriving from the established canons of political science as institutionalized in Canadian universities.

Hartz's tracing of the liberal fragment to John Locke has been debated. Frank M. Coleman, in *Hobbes and America* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1977), argues for the greater significance of Hobbes. However this may be — and historical interpretation

groups that emigrated to America, however, were overwhelmingly drawn toward liberal theory because of their social location. Thus, the liberal fragment of English politics became dominant in the political culture of America. In the United States, it not only became dominant but defined the limits of the political culture. Conservatism in the United States is really old-fashioned free trade liberalism. Socialism has never really entered into the political culture, being associated with immigrants and tending to fade as they stayed longer.

Without rejecting the Hartzian theory of the dominance of the liberal fragment in Canada, Horowitz substantively modified it through his observation of Canadian politics. The beginning of Québec nationalism prompted him to observe that the American liberal component

should welcome such debates — it does not undermine the thesis of the dominance of the liberal fragment in the United States as such but only pertains to which elements played a larger role in that liberalism (see especially 72–75).

Whether the Hartzian approach is valid, of course, depends in large part upon what one takes it to be. I will not engage in a general evaluation of the Hartzian approach here but rather sublimate it into a consideration of Horowitz. Hartzian fragment theory is, in my view, a mid-level theory, that is to say, its usefulness consists in specifying questions for empirical research and in concretizing political theory with regard to specific, mainly national, cultural contexts. Therefore, it cannot be simply refuted by empirical research nor can it achieve the purity of political theory. In general, I agree with H. D. Forbes that most of the critiques are quibbles and that Horowitz's work is an interpretive attempt to account for a real difference in political culture. See "Hartz-Horowitz at Twenty: Nationalism, Toryism and Socialism in Canada and the United States," *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 20, no. 2 (June 1987): 305. (Forbes's article usefully refers to most of the critical literature on the so-called Hartz-Horowitz theory.) This does not mean, however, that such an interpretation cannot be subject to conceptual refinement or supplanted by a better interpretation. Forbes's general point that greater clarification of the notion of "corporate-collectivist-organic ideas" is needed — which Horowitz uses to point to similarities between Toryism and socialism when compared to the individualist-contract character of liberalism — is well taken. This is a matter of historical interpretation, and hermeneutic matters do not admit of right or wrong answers but of better or worse interpretation. One of the key aspects of a productive interpretation is that it selects a relevant axis of comparison. The difference between Canadian and American political cultures and the difference between the dominant liberal-contract theory and collectivist alternatives remain relevant differences for a politics that regards liberalism as an inadequate view of the good life and is situated in English Canada. This evaluation itself, of course, rests on "higher" or more universal grounds.

didn't even exist in Québec.* He thus concurred with the well-known analysis of the Quiet Revolution in terms of a rapid shift from a collectivist, pre-Enlightenment, feudal, hierarchical society to a collectivist, post-Enlightenment, modern, egalitarian society. "Now, when a society that thinks in collectivist terms changes in a progressive direction . . . it is likely to change the *content* of its thinking, but not its *terms*. The content changes from authoritarian conservatism to democratic progressivism, but the terms, the very basic patterns of thought — remain those of collectivism."¹ English Canada, though it had bought into the liberal fragment to a much greater degree, also contained a pre-Enlightenment collectivist component that distinguished its politics from those of the United States. In a manner analogous to Québec, English

* The interpretation of French Canada, and Latin America, as feudal fragments was deeply rooted in Hartzian theory. See Louis Hartz et al., *The Founding of New Societies: Studies in the History of the United States, Latin America, South Africa, Canada, and Australia* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1964), chap. 7 ("The Structure of Canadian History," by Kenneth D. McRae) and chap. 5 ("The Heritage of Latin America," by Richard M. Morse). This interpretation of Québec has been contested H. D. Forbes in "Hartz-Horowitz at Twenty: Nationalism, Toryism and Socialism in Canada and the United States," *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 20, no. 2 (June 1987): 287–315, which brought forth the reply by Nelson Wiseman in "A Note on 'Hartz-Horowitz at Twenty': The Case of French Canada," *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 21, no. 4 (December 1988): 795–806, and Forbes's counter-reply, "Rejoinder to 'A Note on Hartz-Horowitz at Twenty': The Case of French Canada," in the same issue (807–11). What is remarkable about this debate is the way in which the issue of whether French Canada is a feudal fragment tends to be shunted toward the issue of *when* liberal elements entered that society. But the issue of *when* is not a major one for the question of the origin of a political culture — though it must needs be important for historians. The recent re-evaluation of Trudeau by Claude Couture in *Paddling with the Current* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1998), chap. 3, for example, argues that liberal influences were active in Québec a hundred years before Trudeau through recounting the life of Étienne Parent. This point certainly cuts against caricatures of Québec society, like Trudeau's, that saw it as still semi-feudal just prior to the 1960s and is for this reason politically important, but it in no way cuts against the claim that Québec society in its origin was primarily a feudal fragment. While the Hartzian theory does not deny later influences and is, in principle, agnostic as to when and how they enter, its focus and singular contribution is oriented toward the original constitution of a political culture. A full interpretation must also account for later influences and their future possibilities. Industrialization and the formation of a unionized working class play this role of later influences, and a socialist political will projects the combination of later influences with origins into the future for Horowitz — to this extent it is right to view Horowitz's theory as a modification of Marxism to English-Canadian political culture.

Canada contained the possibility of transforming its collectivist component from its Tory form into a socialist alternative to liberalism. Horowitz argued that the political value of the Hartzian approach was to show the roots of socialism in Canada to lie in its non-liberal past. As he often repeated, the problem in English Canada was that we had not found our Lévesque.² While the analysis of the 1960s transformation in Québec was conventional, Horowitz's argument for a parallel English Canadian nationalism was not.³ It went so far as to claim that a partnership between these two nationalisms could transform Canada in a socialist direction and that the success of either would depend on that of the other.*

There was a fly in the ointment, though. English Canada didn't seem to be on the move in anything like the same way as Québec. "We English Canadians are too pragmatic, too pudding headed, to undertake such a task."⁴ Québec had its own problems, too, in its colonial mentality, that might lead it to settle for an incremental increase in autonomy rather than a sudden break — though the existence of the forces represented by Lévesque might break through.⁵ Well, politics never attains the clarity of logic, but that was not the main issue here. It could not be predicted with certainty, since it was a matter of political will whether the necessary self-consciousness and break with the past would come. Québec was further ahead in self-consciousness, certainly, but in neither case was the matter of political will clear — certainly not in the 1960s, probably no more so today.

Only with independent self-assertion of the two communities could the question of federalism, or living in proximity and perhaps in common, be clearly addressed. This possibility was, and is, seriously impeded by the asymmetrical structure of Canada's current federal system. While the French-speaking community had an effective base in the Québec government, there wasn't, and still isn't, any representative of English Canada as such. The nine provinces do not represent it and the Ottawa government does not either. The first because they represent too little —

* This argument by Horowitz was quoted by René Lévesque in *Option Québec* (Ottawa: Les Editions de l'homme, 1928), 49. The attempt to put together French and English nationalism under a progressive left-wing agenda has had a continued, though minor, effect in Canadian intellectual life. See, for example, Susan Crean and Marcel Rioux, *Two Nations* (Toronto: James Lorimer, 1983), which was published in both English and French.

regional divisions within English Canada — the second because it represents too much: “from the English Canadian point of view, it [Ottawa] has often been seen as so heavily influenced by the French, so much in need of making ‘concessions’ to them, that it cannot, in its symbols and policies, express English Canada.”⁶ The political solution had to be special status for Québec, but the more basic problem was the absence of a political representative of English Canada that could negotiate the future of Canada with Québec. Later constitutional debates tried without success to address this structural asymmetry through proposed reforms.⁷ This failure has led to the current impasse where English Canadians see Ottawa as a representative of Québec, or a too-deferential accommodation of Québec, whereas French-speaking Québeckers see it as an instrument of English Canada. No one sees Ottawa as the expression of their interests and views, though some accept the impasse itself as inevitable.

The problem was where to find the political will for the two nationalisms. Indeed. Well, history is not over and the future remains uncertain. But the past is clear enough. The political will was not there. And, in its absence, it has gone as Horowitz told us forty years ago. Greater power for Québec, a necessity for its growing self-consciousness and confidence, has meant devolution of federal powers to the provinces, undermining any sense of national identity for English Canada.⁸ Special status, coming slowly to Québec rather than in a sudden show of autonomy, has meant that they have been “assimilated into the surrounding North American homogeneity.”⁹ The failure to find English Canadian nationalism has meant an unsatisfied but continuing identification with Ottawa. In short, a country that shunts aside its own best traditions and aspirations in order to fit more easily into the unmixed liberal hegemony assaulting us from the south while meanwhile succumbing to internal fragmentation. What was needed? Horowitz said that too. “It is time to *dignify* French Canada’s demands, to recognize them as normal human demands, by making the same demands for ourselves. Harmonious interpersonal relations can exist only among fully developed persons. The same applies, not metaphorically but strictly, to nations, whether they are within a single state or not.”¹⁰

The authoritarian collectivist component of English Canadian political culture, our distinctive thread, was our chance to build an egalitarian

collectivist future — from Toryism to socialism. The “between” here, the passage from-to, could only be forged by political will. In his confrontations with the work of sociologist John Porter and philosopher George Grant, Horowitz produced a distinctive version of the political will that might come to forge socialism in Canada. In an activist interpretation rather against the grain of Porter’s sociological realism, and admitting that “Porter himself does not elaborate this argument sufficiently,” he argued that the core of the classic *The Vertical Mosaic* is “the insistence that the undemocratic characteristics of Canadian society are perpetuated by uncreative politics, and that uncreative politics are perpetuated by ethnic and regional fragmentation.”¹¹ A creative politics would be socialist insofar as it would be based on class difference. This difference would subsume other differences and create identification with an English Canadian nationalist project. “When politics is not based on class, but on regional or ethnic divisions, the personal troubles of ordinary people are not readily transformed into issues.”¹² Notice that this formulation shifts from the Marxist or quasi-Marxist category of “class” to a populist rhetoric of “ordinary people.” While it is not drawn out here, this formulation suggests a Gramscian notion that the “people” (consisting, as it does, of different groups) can form a new hegemonic alliance, or unity, through a focus on class. Class is thus claimed to be the unifying element, so that the task of the Canadian Left is “to encourage the translation of regional and ethnic conflicts into class terms,”¹³ whereas other differences — notably region and ethnicity — have only divisive potential.

Aside from political-party affiliation, Horowitz also thought that “a class politics in Canada would take for granted that the nation exists and will not be dismembered.”¹⁴ The “nation” here is meant to be Canada — not really a nation but a collection of two or more nations — so that the translation into class terms of socialist political will aims both at unifying English Canada and, in a higher-level dialogue, allowing a federal unity with a class-conscious, independent Québec. “English Canadian intellectuals, like those of other under-developed nations plagued by tribalism, must become self-conscious nation builders, as ‘survivance’ conscious as the Québécois.”¹⁵ The nation that they should struggle to build should focus its collective energy on addressing the question of class.

Horowitz thought that a class politics would be expressed through the New Democratic Party, even going so far as to suggest in 1965 that the NDP might achieve real gains in Québec.¹⁶ The NDP seems to have failed to live up to this possibility — if it ever really existed.* Its fortunes in Québec remain insignificant, whereas it has succeeded in English Canada only to the extent that it has left aside explicit class identification and aimed directly at the “national-popular” vote. Its high point was in the 1980s, when Ed Broadbent based his campaign on “ordinary Canadians.” Horowitz appears to say in the last chapter of *Canadian Labour in Politics* that the formation of the NDP from the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation in 1961 was a retreat from class politics. On paper, this is certainly true, particularly if one remains focused on the Regina Manifesto. But the NDP was closer to the unions than the CCF, and the CCF’s basis in agrarian socialism was undermined by the shift to an urban labour base. It seems clear that any sort of socialist alternative in Canada had to find a way to unify these, and other, tendencies. In Gramscian terms, the political task was to forge a national-popular bloc from the various critical and socialist tendencies rather than polarize them along class lines — which would lead to their disintegration and thereby to the marginalization of the socialist alternative.¹⁷

Horowitz defined a leftist by the “belief that, ultimately, inequality is the most noxious of social problems,”¹⁸ but he did not seem to consider that problems of region and ethnicity were also problems of inequality. He might have replied, of course, that inequalities of region and ethnicity are thoroughly influenced by inequality of class — and this is indeed true. But it is not the case that inequalities of region and ethnicity, insofar as they are problems of inequality (and not racial prejudice, for example, unless one were to define this as a form of unequal treatment), are *only* problems of inequality. Or, to say it differently but to come to the same point, inequalities between regions and ethnicities are not only inequalities of class. The economic and

* The historic landslide of the NDP in Québec in the 2011 federal election that made it the official opposition may require a mitigation of this statement (which was written in 2007). However, it is likely that the NDP can maintain or improve this status only by moving toward the centre of the political spectrum — which would mean that it would still fail to live up to the possibility that Horowitz countenanced.

political ruling class in Canada, especially in the 1960s but still today, is a class rooted in central Canada with European roots and outlook. Critique of these non-class forms of inequality is surely not marginal to political polarization tending to highlight inequality. The same might be said of the inequality of women, an issue that didn't arise in these essays: while it might well be "merely bourgeois" to agitate for the equal treatment of women within the capitalist system, unequal treatment of women is genuine inequality all the same. It may well be *insufficient* for a leftist to argue for gender equality, but it is also inadequate to suggest that gender equality is either nothing or a disguised form of class inequality. Of course, a lot more has been said and done about these matters since Horowitz wrote these articles. But this retrospective reflection does allow one to pinpoint a key problem with his analysis: Posing the question as *either* falling into regional and ethnic, and perhaps gender, particularism *or* unifying them all under a class politics oriented to inequality is a false and misleading opposition. Beyond those aspects of ethnic, regional, and gender inequality that can be traced back to class inequality, there are also distinct forms of inequality manifested in these issues. It is no doubt true that politics since the 1960s has tended to accept this opposition in the terms inherited from the 1960s that Horowitz uses here, though in a mirror image: regional, ethnic, and gender politics have been articulated, at least in their dominant and successful forms, by pushing away the question of class inequality. One could well accept Horowitz's definition of a leftist but recognize that inequality takes various forms that need to be *hooked into* a universalist perspective rather than *opposed to* it.

The dialogue and confrontation with George Grant was more extended than that with Porter because, it would seem, Grant personified the collectivist Tory legacy in Canada that Horowitz was seeking the political will to turn in a socialist direction.¹⁹ During the mid-1960s, Grant based his political views on his analysis of European modernity as based in the domination of nature by technology. He saw the dominant form of technology as the imperialism of the United States, though he admitted the possibility of other forms — such as communism. In such a society, "people think of the world as indifferent stuff which they are absolutely free to control in any way they want through technology. . . .

The technological society is one in which men are bent on dominating and controlling human and non-human nature.”²⁰ Drawn to Grant’s compelling description of the contemporary world, and heartened by Grant’s willingness to call the dominant form of technological society capitalist, Horowitz — like many English Canadian socialists at the time — found in Grant’s work a deep source of historical continuity for the attempt to forge a popular socialist political will.²¹ He coined the term “Red Tory” in this context. “Thus, at the very highest level, the red tory is a philosopher who combines elements of toryism and socialism so thoroughly in a single integrated *Weltanschauung* that it is impossible to say that he is a proponent of one as *against* the other.”²² In every one of his conversations and interviews with Grant, Horowitz raised the question of whether the socialist alternative was really just another form of technological society as Grant suggested or assumed. In every one of his writings on Grant, he criticized what he called Grant’s pessimism and insisted that socialism was a genuine alternative to the society Grant analyzed. He claimed that Grant “*identifies* the inevitability of technological progress with the inevitable failure of any attempt to control and use it for human purposes. It *assumes* that progress is *entirely* incompatible with any ideology but liberalism because liberalism alone gives it complete freedom.”²³ Stressing the continuity between the conception of an organic, hierarchically articulated whole that underlies Toryism and an organic, egalitarian whole that motivates socialists, Horowitz argued that “a young new leftist would say that it is not the total overcoming of chance [by technology] that is involved, but rather the total overcoming of the human suffering which is necessitated by repression and by domination. So that chance and even strife will remain, but not the type of suffering that emerges precisely out of the distortion of the human organism and the human psyche to suit the requirements of the machine.”²⁴ Against Grant’s conservative equation of the technological control of nature with the technological domination of human nature, Horowitz attempted to keep open the possibility of a technological overcoming of human suffering without technological control of human beings. The problem, of course, is that this is the traditional promise of liberalism. Twentieth-century politics and philosophy have largely been defined by the recognition that the domination of nature

cannot be held apart from the domination of humans as nature. Massive bureaucracies, armies, and corporations that dominate the individual seem to be the necessary price of modern technology. The power of Grant's philosophy consisted precisely in his capacity to capture this relationship. The articulation of a socialist alternative would have to do more than reassert a liberal possibility that was already historically surpassed and shown to be based in an inadequate understanding of the phenomenon of technology.

Despite Grant's willingness to see the validity of overcoming unnecessary repression, and unwillingness to say that suffering is in itself good, he held to "the ancient tradition that human greatness and nobility are not possible without the virtues of moderation and courage. And this in some sense must mean the overcoming of passion."²⁵ Like many socialists of the time, Horowitz wanted to take on board Grant's philosophical account of European modernity but to mute its rhetoric of lament with one of decision, will, and an orientation toward the future.²⁶ He was looking for a socialism grounded in one's place within an organic whole but without the repression of individual passion that such a conservative image has traditionally required. It is no wonder that such a search for an egalitarian and passionate socialism oriented toward the overcoming of suffering would lead to his next book being heavily influenced by Herbert Marcuse.²⁷

But instead of moving on, let us tarry with this signal moment in the demand for a political will for Canadian socialism. There is no doubt that in some sense it is a lost and forgotten moment, but in what sense? Horowitz presented us with an alternative between fragmentation into particularisms — especially those of region and ethnicity, where "in the absence of a Canadian identity, we identify — all of us, though to varying degrees — with the American national community"²⁸ — and the forging of an English Canadian identity that could match that of French-speaking Québec and negotiate a new federalism. The latter alternative required the political will to polarize Canadian politics around the centrality of class, which could then unify the fragmenting forces of region and ethnicity. I have suggested, albeit quickly, that two threads of this analysis can be seen to be vulnerable: the argument for the centrality of class politics to socialism and the argument that technological society can

be made to serve human purposes.* A contemporary socialist political theory would have to address these two issues in a different manner. Perhaps in this way what can be recovered from this forgotten moment can be infused with new life for the future.

The Failure of the Collectivist Component

Horowitz's essays of the 1960s brought together the two themes of nationalism and red tory political culture in order to contribute to the formation of a socialist political will. In the absence of socialist transformation, it is remarkable to see how many of his dire "predictions" have come into being: internal fragmentation, subsumption within the American identity, devolution of federal powers to the provinces due to the assertion of Québec's claim to sovereignty within the current framework of Confederation — loss of commonality in general. The context for this miasma has been provided by free trade agreements with the United States orchestrated by the capitalist class in Canada. The problem remains the same, though intensified, but the solution needs to be rethought.** Given where the abandonment of the socialist politics of the 1960s has

* I will leave out of consideration the interesting historical question of whether these two points of vulnerability become visible only in retrospect or whether they were available alternatives at the time. Note, however, that the centrality of class was a key point of the national liberation politics that predominated in the 1960s (and which Horowitz tried to adapt to English Canada). The second point was made by Grant in his conversations with Horowitz. Socialists tried to deny the necessity of the technological control of human beings even while it was the descriptive power of exactly this in corporate capitalism that attracted them to Grant. If a socialist alternative is to be opened up here it cannot be by accepting a Grant-like analysis of the present and then simply denying it to the future by asserting a political will.

** Horowitz himself has suggested that his 1960s rejection of Grant's pessimism needs to be retracted in the light of subsequent experience: "And for the socialist in Horowitz it's really disturbing to think that whatever prospects there are of anything less than a monolithically liberal society in English Canada are going to disappear. . . . Back then I accused Grant of being too pessimistic. But now, I don't think so" (Cara Spittal, "Interview of Gad Horowitz," 6 August 2007 [private circulation, copy provided by Gad Horowitz]). The common accusation of pessimism against Grant is superficial, however. The bigger issue is whether his analysis of technology was accurate. Horowitz doesn't indicate in this interview the grounds for his re-evaluation.

led us, it is perhaps worthwhile to think within a contemporary framework about what part of it retains relevance.

Whereas Horowitz claimed continuity with a certain strain of conservatism from the Left, the ascendancy of a purely right-wing, business conservatism in the 1980s led some conservatives to look for deeper foundations for their politics and to admit a certain commonality with the Left. Charles Taylor's influential book *Radical Tories* (1982) attempted to revive a distinctive conservative Canadian tradition of political thought.* He referred to the malaise of Canadian politics in the 1970s and early 1980s, which he laid directly at the feet of "the rhetoric of a dominant liberal ideology which placed few limits on man's [*sic*] freedom to shape his future, and which envisaged unprecedented technological achievement and material abundance."²⁹ His list of Canadian conservatives contained many expected names (Leacock, Creighton, Morton, Grant) but also some surprises (Purdy, Forsey) that he wanted to rescue from their inclusion in a liberal or socialist canon. From each of these Taylor gathered central aspects of conservative thought: the importance of history and tradition, national sovereignty, place and environment (this is how he roped in Purdy), a sense of wonder, and, most important, a conception of society as an "organic whole." The philosophical core of conservatism is an organic whole that goes even beyond society to include humans within nature and to ultimately reconcile them with a transcendent God.

Taylor's book was given urgency by a persistent worry: Is conservatism more than a defence of power and privilege? So successfully was this worry put to rest that he claimed that conservatism is not bound by ideology, citing its "socialist" use of public industry, and arguing that it incorporates a defence of human rights normally associated with liberalism.**³⁰ His argument reached its apogee in the chapter on

* To avoid misunderstanding: the journalist Charles Taylor, who is author of the influential *Radical Tories: The Conservative Tradition in Canada* (Toronto: House of Anansi, 1982, republished 2006), is not the same person as the philosopher Charles Taylor who is discussed in the second essay in this collection.

** It is tempting to wonder what Taylor would have made of John Boyko's careful documentation of the relentless distortion of the NDP as Communist totalitarians by the Conservative Party and the deployment of illegal police surveillance by Conservative Ontario Premier Drew. John Boyko, *Into the Hurricane: Attacking Socialism and the CCF* (Winnipeg: J. Gordon Shillingford Publishing, 2006), chap. 4 and p. 101.

George Grant, since the term “Red Tory” was coined by Gad Horowitz in his writing about Grant. Grant argued that technological society becomes more centralized, homogeneous, and bureaucratic through the uprooting of all pre-modern traditions and attachments to place and particularity. It must be a tyranny, in this sense. Yet the core of conservatism is belonging within a larger “organic” whole in which this political moment is an aspect of a longer history, history a moment of the expression of a people, a people rooted in a tradition of a particular place, and the tradition of a particular place encompassed by a unity of nature and history called God. The fragmenting and individualizing nature of modern society must drive such a conception to the margins and underground.*

So how does it stand with contemporary conservatism? In an afterword to the 2006 edition of *Radical Tories*, Rudyard Griffiths argued that the contemporary relevance of Taylor’s pilgrimage is minimal — after all, free trade was ushered in by the Conservative Party. He asserted that the “Radical Tory program of rooting-out ‘un-Canadian’ influences in our culture” is finished (but neither Taylor, nor Grant, nor Horowitz ever defended such parochialism), that Canadian nationalism can survive in the new globalizing age, and that the conservative idea of participation in a larger whole “happens all the time in our day-to-day lives.”³¹ In short, everything’s fine. Clearly, there is no place for Red Toryism in the current Conservative Party or anywhere else on the political spectrum. It only remains to wonder if this really should be cause for jubilation.

The core of our response to this question depends on whether the red tory assessment of the failure of liberalism is accurate. If there is anything valuable in it, there may be a relevance for philosophical conservatism even if its political expression has disappeared or changed radically. Michael Ignatieff’s post-national cosmopolitanism provides a contemporary litmus test for the contemporary viability of

* Though Grant’s *Lament for a Nation* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1970), oriented itself to the loss of national sovereignty signified in the defeat of Diefenbaker’s government, it is more deeply about the necessity of that loss. Thus, argues Grant, conservatism in practice becomes exactly the justification of “the continuing rule of the business man and the right of the greedy” from which Taylor looked to the Red Tory to rescue conservative politics. Taylor quotes this phrase of Grant’s from *Lament for a Nation* at *Radical Tories*, 144.

conservatism's critique of liberalism. The attempt to fuse state power with human rights is the best face that can be put on contemporary liberalism; otherwise it too would represent only the rule of the business class.* Denis Smith argues that Ignatieff "writes as a courtier in the antechambers of power, periodically adjusting his pronouncements to keep within hailing distance of Blair's Downing Street and Bush's White House,"³² and this indeed seems to be the crux of the matter: the economic and military power of the modern state is clearly an apparatus required by modern technology in George Grant's sense. The story of Ignatieff's retreat from human rights is the story of the divergence of power and good in the modern state that shatters the hopes of liberalism. But there is a dilemma here: Ignatieff has argued that "the function of human rights . . . is to protect real men and women in all their history, language, and culture, in all their incorrigible and irreducible difference,"³³ but the function of "protecting," to be effective, must, for liberal internationalists, make peace with the power of the state and technology, in particular, military technology. Thus it yields a slippery slope toward the extension of power at the expense of rights. It seems that one must either accept this dilemma as unsurpassable in our time and attempt to keep one's footing on the slippery slope, or one must look elsewhere for the defence of human rights.

But where is this elsewhere? All contemporary Canadian political parties are liberal in this sense. The Conservative Party expresses the raw interests of the business class; the Liberals try to dress this up with human rights but succumb to the tyranny of technology; NDP foreign

* Denis Smith follows rigorously Ignatieff's evolution from post-Yugoslav ethnic conflict, through the "war on terror," to the invasion of Iraq in *Ignatieff's World* (Toronto: James Lorimer, 2006). Smith documents Ignatieff's progressive retreat from the priority of human rights to the recognition that international defence of human rights presupposes that "a great power must have vital interests in the region" (55), to defence of the new American empire (92), targeted assassinations (113), a worry that the modern state system may disintegrate (123), and, finally, "letting torture in by the back door" (118). Perhaps most irritating for Canadians are his willingness to speak as an American while in the United States (73, 148) and his notion that the core of Canadian political thought is that "the state creates the nation" (Ignatieff, quoted in Smith, at 134). Grant was Ignatieff's uncle, in a powerful political family with deep roots in Upper Canada. Smith ends by wondering what Grant would have thought of Ignatieff's assigning of Canada to a subordinate role in the American empire (147). Indeed.

policy shows no evidence of being fundamentally different but wants the international defence of human rights without the concession to the mechanisms of coercive power that they entail.* The liberal ideology and power structure that corresponds to the homogenizing and deracinating forces of technology certainly has preferred its free enterprise variant, but the repressed CCF-NDP has posed no philosophical alternative comparable to red tory conservatism. Its socialism is not in principle different from the “socialism” of government intervention and ownership to which conservatives, not even “red” ones, have resorted to provide the infrastructure of the capitalist system. Political conservatism of the red tory type no more gained expression in the corridors of power than the CCF-NDP. Philosophical “conservatism” may express something true about human beings, but it does so at the expense of having a voice in the public realm.

The conservative idea of participation in an organic whole, loosed from its connection to a practical politics, is no longer necessarily conservative at all. The idea that individual humans form meaningful lives through participation in larger unities is a philosophical idea meaningful apart from any political conclusions that might be drawn from it. Indeed, what conclusions might be drawn is a matter for political debate and not logical inference. A thoroughgoing philosophical individualism must regard any rooted collective identities as an imposition, a tyranny from a pre-modern past. Correlatively, if this motive of participation in a larger whole is washed out by the technological assumptions of conventional politics, it may still be able to motivate a politics of place, sovereignty, and solidarity outside, and in opposition to, such conventions.

* This is the irony of John Boyko's history in *Into the Hurricane: Attacking Socialism and the CCF*: he documents effectively the fact that the failure of CCF-NDP politics to enter the corridors of power was dependent less on their own failures and more on the concerted attack and misrepresentation that all other parties, the business class, and much of organized religion made on it. But, while the founding ideas of the CCF were certainly anti-capitalist and “based on an ideological premise that was outside the Canadian mainstream” (155), Boyko does not contest that it progressively abandoned this premise (13–14). So the CCF-NDP seems to have suffered the repression often visited on a radical alternative without enjoying the difference from liberal ideology to which such an alternative pretends.

Social Movements Against Inequality

How would such a politics express itself? In what sense would it trace its lineage back to the socialist nationalism of the 1960s?

If the Red Tory cannot be found anywhere on the political spectrum nowadays, any more than a radical left-wing alternative to capitalism, it does not follow that it can be found nowhere in Canadian society. It may well be that this sense of participation in a larger whole is what motivates many in their political participation, even though it is washed out by institutions and procedures. Perhaps the new social movements of environmentalism, feminism, anti-poverty activism, and so forth have sprung forth because of a deep sense of individual participation in the community and the world combined with the perception that official politics is devoid of exactly such participation. I think that this is what Bob Davis had in mind when he recently claimed to be not a Red Tory but a Tory Red.³⁴ Perhaps the continuing capacity of humans, and citizens, to care about the destiny of their place, their nation, and their world is based upon an involvement that liberal ontology cannot recognize. Maybe the red tory, or tory red, phenomenon is characteristic of a certain formation of Canadian society, stretched between modernity and tradition, that has had a formative influence on the character of Canadians. Its red part, as was Horowitz's definition of a leftist, must be focused on the question of inequality. Our question is: How can a politics of community and place — the red tory component that continues to animate Canadian politics far beyond what is institutionally acceptable — be combined with a rigorous focus on inequality?

While the Hartzian form of analysis that Horowitz adopted as his starting point does not deny that new forces come into being in the historical *present*, its specific contribution is to focus on the past, on the *origin* of the class fragments. These fragments themselves are understood on a Marxist model: aristocracy, bourgeoisie, proletariat — perhaps including the peasantry. In this sense is likely true that Hartzian analysis is primarily a corrective to crude Marxism.³⁵ It may be this emphasis that led Horowitz in his essays of the 1960s simply to assume that the collectivist past of English Canada could be turned toward a socialist future through a polarizing class politics — in which “class” stands for

the working class understood in a Marxist way. I suggested above that other forms of inequality in region, ethnicity, and gender should not be opposed to class in this way but that they should be seen as complementary forms of inequality to be overcome by socialist will. A stricter focus on Canadian history would suggest, I think, that these other forms of inequality have also brought forth forms of solidarity and that these new forms of community must not be negated but built upon by the socialist project. In general one could say, then, that particular communities should not be opposed to a universal, or potentially universal, one so that in the absence of the universal they reassert themselves as destructive *particularisms*. Rather, particular solidarities are the ground for the growth of more universal ones. Insofar as the socialist political will is tied to a universal critique of inequality, it must infuse particular communities with its universality, not negate their particular forms. I would say that it is a faulty formulation of the relation between particularity and universality in the politics of the 1960s that we must leave behind now. It is this faulty counter-posing of particular and universal that led later movements, when dissatisfied with class, to turn against the universal socialist project — thereby they became *particularist*, that is to say, confined within their particularity rather than using it as a springboard to ever more inclusive forms of solidarity.* If we understand socialist politics as going *through*, not against, particularities toward the universal in this way, issues of region, ethnicity, gender, etc., become central to the formation of a socialist national-popular will. On this basis, these newer movements can be brought alongside a more traditional leftist politics of class.

If one would rewind the socialist thread of the 1960s socialist-nationalist synthesis in this way, how would one rewind the nationalist thread? It's not too much to say that nationalism is treated almost everywhere as a dead dog these days, not only because of the atrocities committed in its name in the last few decades but also because of a

* This explains why, as H.D. Forbes points out in "Hartz-Horowitz at Twenty: Nationalism, Toryism and Socialism in Canada and the United States," the category of collectivism is unclear in Horowitz even though it is true that there is such a thing when considered in comparison to liberalism. The problem of collectivism is here understood to be the question of the origin of human solidarity in its many forms, only one of which is the nation.

greater awareness of the homogenizing and centralizing forces within Canada, expressed through the Canadian state, that delegitimize it as a pole of identification. Here, again, we can take some direction from the plurality of particular communities straining toward some approximation to universality. The nation-state — or in Canada the nations-state (English Canada, Québec, First Nations) — is not the universal form of community (even within Canada, apart from other forms of community and solidarity on a global level). It is potentially, insofar as it enacts this solidarity in policy and practice, one form of social solidarity that to some extent coordinates others and to another extent deals only with a thin layer of identification. Contemporary neoliberal politics, of course, undermines even this thin layer of national solidarity. Still, to the extent that we defend social programs, medicare, and the rudiments of a common civilized life, we are forced to articulate common perspectives and values oriented toward a national identification. The nations-state is one form of the contemporary encounter with the question of the grounds of human solidarity.

It cannot be ignored, however, that English Canada has failed to assert itself as a nation over the last forty years. It still has no form of political expression and doesn't seem to want one — so much so that it has come to be accepted that one of the virtues of our “moderate” political system is its avoidance of issues of principle in favour of muddling through. Starkly drawn political principle, it would seem, courts the danger of radical and immoderate action. If there is some merit to this view, and I think there is, then the failure of English Canada to assert itself as a nation is not only a failure but is a thoroughly precedented one in the history of our political culture. Perhaps the invisibility of English Canada to itself is a significant part of its own identity. It is hard to know what to do with this thought but impossible to un-think it given our fortunes since the 1960s.

It would seem to me that English Canadian intellectuals should continue to follow Gad Horowitz insofar as they should speak of, and think for, English Canada and avoid the delusionary notion of Canada — except as a confluence of its (at least) three sources. Not only my suggestion above, but also Horowitz's analysis of the 1960s, shows that, even though we may imagine the contrary, we are not simply

Canadians but English Canadians who are thereby Canadians. We owe this clarity to the other groups who comprise Canada to help create a space for their self-expression. We also owe it to ourselves because, even if our politics remains a muddle, intellectual life cannot be so. The relation between politics and intellectual expression has become less clear. English Canadian intellectuals shouldn't any more think of themselves as nation builders, but they should be builders of the self-expression of the fragment, and fragmented, identity of English Canada.

So how should we look back at the 1960s? Rediscovering and extending the universal critique of inequality in the particular movements of our time. Recovering and reinventing the grounds of human solidarity. Intransigence in the face of privilege and complacency.

10

Empire, Border, Place: A Critique of Hardt and Negri's Concept of Empire

It is now almost a commonplace to note that since the Seattle 1999 protests against the neoliberal market-oriented version of globalization a new coalition against global market hegemony has been struggling to emerge. While this emergence may seem to have been derailed by the more recent US and British intervention in Iraq, it is more likely that it has entered into the global peace movement that sprang into existence simultaneously. New developments are bound to follow. This recent history has had the advantage of demonstrating the mutual relation between neoliberal economics and the military and political imperatives of empire, which has been popularly expressed in the slogan "No blood for oil!" Theorizing these components and their relationship will clearly become important to the thinking of the new global opposition.

It is perhaps because of its appearance in the middle of these significant transformations (2000) that Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri's book *Empire* has become a major point of reference for contemporary radical thought. Also, its attempt

to synthesize a large number of developments previously called post-modernism, post-colonialism, autonomism, etc., and earlier radical theories such as Marxism, anarchism, and syndicalism within a long historical narrative gives the book a scope that focuses many diverse and compelling issues. At times, the book appears to claim a status for contemporary struggles such as that occupied by *Capital* in the nineteenth century. Despite the merit of the book in having brought the concept of empire into international currency again, I will argue that its concept of empire is thoroughly misguided on both theoretical and political grounds.*

The key theoretical nexus of *Empire* is the close relation between lack of boundaries and the production of subjectivities (or, as they are more often called nowadays, identities). Whereas one previously moved from one institution to another, “the production of subjectivity in imperial society tends not to be limited to any specific places. One is always still in the family, always still in school, always still in prison, and so forth. . . . The indefiniteness of the *place* of the production corresponds to the indeterminacy of the *form* of the subjectivities produced.”¹ The continuous overflowing of boundaries generates new subjectivities from which political opposition to empire can be expected. “Here is where the primary site of struggle seems to emerge, on the terrain of the production and regulation of subjectivities” (321).

This analysis is based on the use of two theoretical terms that function throughout the text: one, the distinction between inside and outside and, two, the notion of history as overcoming the regulation and stability required by empire. Hardt and Negri’s claim that contemporary empire “has no limits” (xiv) is buttressed by a historical argument that links capitalist expansion to the necessity to look outside itself because “the capitalist market is one machine that has always run counter to any division between inside and outside” (190). Postmodern capitalist production thus eliminates its outside such that contemporary empire is distinct from classical imperialism precisely because “the dialectic

* I will not address other general negative features of their analysis such as the slippage between the concepts of multitude and proletariat or the serious tendency to avoid conceptual analysis with narrative — for instance, in the development of the concept of biopower, where Foucault is said to be surpassed by Deleuze and then Italian autonomism is said to trump both of them — all of this without a single attempt at analyzing the conceptual structure of these theories in any detail.

of sovereignty between the civil order and the natural order has come to an end” and “the modern dialectic of inside and outside has been replaced by a play of degrees and intensities, of hybridity and artificiality” (187–88). History is thus understood as this process of elimination of the outside that comes to an apogee in contemporary empire and that prepares the ground for overcoming the limits imposed upon subjectivity by imperial sovereignty. Empire is a “non-place” because power is “both everywhere and nowhere” even though it is “criss-crossed by so many fault lines that it only appears as a continuous, uniform space” (190). These fault lines are constituted by the “deterritorializing power of the multitude” which both “sustains Empire and at the same time [is] the force that calls for and makes necessary its destruction” (61). Understood in this way, as a non-place that has annihilated its outside, it is no wonder that it does not matter to Hardt and Negri *from where* the critique of empire is articulated.

The inside-outside distinction and the related notion of history as the surpassing of limitations is the theoretical core of Hardt and Negri’s account of contemporary empire. My critique will address both of these components from the standpoint of an appropriation of the more productive concept of empire in Canadian social and political thought.

The Epistemic Status of Dependency

The background of my critique of Hardt and Negri is the development and utilization of the concept of empire in Canadian social and political thought. Its origin in a dependent economy and nation has, throughout its existence, even in conservative versions, contested the imperial assumptions of social and political thought in the United States and other imperial centres. This is not meant as special pleading or as the adoption of a victim status. Moreover, it does not imply that Canada is in the same position as the most exploited nations of the world, for which reason it has sometimes been called a “first-world dependency.” Rather, I want to suggest that Canada proposes to its social and political thinkers an epistemic issue that, when thoroughly taken up, requires a critique of central assumptions in international, or imperial, thought. This chapter

concerns itself specifically with the assumption about borders inherent in the concept of empire as proposed by Hardt and Negri that binds their concept of empire itself to imperial assumptions.

Nor do I want to suggest that this epistemic issue is unique to Canada as such. It is unique only in the history and theoretic form in which the issue is taken up. Mexican philosopher Leopoldo Zea explained it this way: “problems like the ones Latin American philosophy raises about its identity seem only parochial, that is regional, and because of that limited to a relative point of view proper to a concrete man, and thus, alien to what is truly universal.”² Issues in dependent regions, whose articulation must pass through the publication centres of empire, are treated as “cases,” whereas issues of human universality can be treated directly if one resides at the centre, that is to say, shares the assumptions that underpin empire. These assumptions cannot be simply dropped at will but require a critical interrogation. It is with regard to this critical interrogation that dependency has a privileged epistemic status.

To this extent, the epistemic claim that I am making for Canada could also be redeemed in Latin America or other dependencies. The point is that a new global critical discourse must go through the particularities of place to forge a universalizing dialogue. Thus one can recognize in J.M. Coetzee’s forceful articulation that opposition to empire consists not in fulfilling history but in escaping from it a statement that can be brought productively into dialogue with other critiques that embrace their dependent position as an epistemic vantage for the critique of empire:

What has made it impossible to live in time like fish in water, like birds in air, like children? It is the fault of Empire! Empire has created the time of history. Empire has located its existence not in the smooth recurrent spinning time of the cycle of the seasons but in the jagged time of rise and fall, of beginning and end, of catastrophe. Empire dooms itself to live in history and plot against history. One thought alone preoccupies the submerged mind of Empire: how not to end, how not to die, how to prolong its era. By day it pursues its enemies. It is cunning and ruthless, it sends its bloodhounds everywhere. By night it feeds on images of disaster: the sack of cities, the rape of populations, pyramids of bones, acres of desolation. A mad vision yet a virulent one.³

We may begin to suspect that overcoming empire cannot be achieved through the fulfilment of history but rather through a rupture with history itself.

The epistemic issue is not a denial of universality in favour of an assertion of the plurality of empirical contexts. Universal concepts and claims are unavoidable in any theoretical discourse. The point is that such unavoidable universal claims often render relations of dependency invisible when they are articulated from the centre and imported into different situations. The predominance of imperial centres in the propagation of ideas, even critical ideas, is central to this circumstance. An adequate critique of empire that can sustain an anti-hegemonic coalition against the neoliberal market-oriented version of globalization requires a new concept of universalization that would not go directly from imperial instance to theoretical universality but from dependency, through empire, into dialogue with other dependencies, and toward a new universality. The epistemic status of dependency is in the implication of a critique of centrism. "A centrism consists in the subsumption of diverse experiences and contents under an explanatory scheme that is presupposed as universal although it incorporates elements that arose in a particular history. A return to concrete and particular experiences thus does not negate universality, but opens the possibility that a genuine universality might emerge through the displacement of centrisms."⁴ Critique of empire without an acknowledgement of dependency — that is to say, a critique of the epistemological and political assumptions inherent in centrism — remains an imperial critique.

Canadian Social and Political Thought

Any quick characterization of Canadian social and political thought would be bound to be superficial. Nonetheless, if one focuses on what is specific and distinctive in that tradition, there is a suspicion of history articulated through an archaic encounter with wilderness, a defence of place articulated as a critique of imperial space, and a defence of particularity as that which is overlooked and sacrificed in the universal claims of the centre. Let us note some instances.

The focus on empire as history is a widely recognized element of Canadian social and political thought. It developed in thinking through the status of a colony of three successive empires: France, Britain, and the United States. In the influential conclusion to *The Fur Trade in Canada*, Harold Innis wrote that “the economic history of Canada has been dominated by the discrepancy between the centre and the margin of Western civilization. Energy has been directed toward the exploitation of staple products and the tendency has been cumulative. The raw material supplied to the mother country stimulated manufactures of the finished product and also of the products which were in demand in the colony. . . . The general tendencies in the industrial areas of western civilization, especially in the United States and Great Britain, have a pronounced effect on Canada’s export of staples.”⁵ Understanding Canada has thus meant understanding the structure of empire and its dependent colonial relations, which has required an emphasis on space, and therefore on transportation and communications. Thus when one reads in Hardt and Negri’s *Empire* that “the great industrial and financial powers thus produce not only commodities but also subjectivities. . . . Communication not only expresses but also organizes the movement of globalization” (32), one may perhaps be forgiven for reading on in the hope of hearing something new.

This political economy serves to explain the meditation, perhaps obsession, with identity and place that has pervaded Canadian literature and social and political thought. Northrop Frye pointed out that the dominant question in Canadian literature was “Where is here?”⁶ In his marvellous public poem “Civil Elegies,” Dennis Lee put it this way:^{*}

To rail and flail at a dying civilization,
 To rage in imperial space, condemning
 Soviet bombers, american bombers — to go on saying
 No to history is good.⁷

* So as not to mislead, or misuse, I must point out that these lines are followed by: “And yet a man does well to leave that game behind, and go and find / some saner version of integrity, / although he will not reach it where he longs to, in the / vacant spaces of his mind — they are so / occupied. Better however to try.” Here Lee expresses the need to pass beyond rage at imperial space toward some more encompassing position, the

A sense that historical progress is the stuff of empire and that place is the motive for critique binds Canadian social and political thought to a certain environmentalism that, on a global scale, has argued for a key significance for the concept of place. For example, one eminent American voice speaks of “place as an experience and propose[s] a model of what it meant to ‘live in place’ for most of human time, presenting it initially in terms of the steps that a child takes growing into a natural community. . . . The heart of a place is the home, and the heart of the home is the hearth. Our place is part of who we are.”⁸ Being mindful of such a connection between the thought of a dependent colony and the environmental critique of industrial civilization leads one to balk at a statement by Hardt and Negri such as “it is false . . . to claim that we can (re)establish local identities that are in some sense *outside* and protected against the global flows of capital and Empire” (45). Who would imagine that any place is “protected” and outside in that sense? Who would imagine that that makes it entirely “inside,” though? Nothing in Canada is “protected” from the American empire, but does that mean that we are totally inside and that there is nothing to “protect”? One might well begin to suspect that this dualistic vocabulary is simply too gross to capture what is at issue here.

A formulation that goes beyond such a simple alternative is found in the classic words of George Grant, the Canadian philosopher of dependency. “In human life there must always be place for love of the good and love of one’s own. Love of the good is man’s highest end, but it is of the nature of things that we come to know and to love what is good by first meeting it in that which is our own — this particular body, this family, these friends, this woman, this part of the world, this set of traditions, this civilization. At the simplest level of one’s own body, it is clear that one has to love it yet pass beyond concentration on it.”⁹ It is not a question of *either* particularity *or* universality — which is the false choice that

difficulty of this task, and yet the necessity to undertake it. In Canadian social and political thought this has usually taken the form of some experience of the sacred that underpins the critical attitude, held in difficult union with the inability to articulate this sacred because of the complicity of language in “imperial space.” These lines were written before awareness of gender-inclusive language was widespread. Naturally, I have not changed the lines.

empire would thrust upon us — but of how/which/where particularity can *pass beyond* itself to a genuine universality. The dilemma imposed by empire is that our particularities, those in a dependent relation to the centre(s), are ruled out, cannot pass beyond themselves, and thus we are pressed to renounce them. Those who rage against imperial space are prompted to search for a genuine universality at the same time as rejecting imperial claims to it. Of this, Hardt and Negri's simple inside/outside dilemma knows nothing.

Frontier Versus Border

If it now seems at least provisionally credible to retract any credit that Hardt and Negri have received simply for recirculating the concept of empire, then a critical examination of what they mean by the concept and its limitations in theorizing the standpoint of the opposition is in order. *Empire* consists in two parallel narratives of political sovereignty and bio-production whose integrity would require an adequate synthesis of the two. My current argument pertains only to the narrative of political sovereignty. If valid, however, this argument would also pertain to the purported synthesis, since “empire is the political subject that effectively regulates these global exchanges, the sovereign power that governs the world” (xi). I will focus on two aspects of the book. Under the heading of “borders,” I will consider the first set of phenomena, which they refer to as “hybrid identities, flexible hierarchies, and plural exchanges” (xii) that issue in the assumption, or prejudice, that every kind of a restriction of a flow is interpreted, or rather assumed, to be a repression. A second and related phenomenon is the rejection of any kind of a politics of place, despite the recognition that such a politics has emerged in opposition to the new empire. These two themes, while apparently minor in their large text, seem to me to go to the heart of what is both politically and philosophically specific to the argument of the book and cannot be attributed to the new situation in which it has appeared and that the authors often get credit simply for noticing.

Let me begin with the narrative of sovereignty that argues that empire has emerged from the history of American constitutionalism but

is no longer limited by the conditions of that emergence and pertains instead to a global network that has no centre and where sovereignty resides in the United Nations.

The contemporary idea of Empire is born through the global expansion of the internal U.S. constitutional project. . . . International right always had to be a negotiated, contractual process among *external* parties. . . . Today right involves instead an internal and constitutive institutional process. The networks of agreements and associations, the channels of mediation and conflict resolution, and the coordination of the various dynamics of states are all institutionalized within Empire. We are experiencing a first phase of the transformation of the global frontier into an open space of imperial sovereignty (182).

Empire has a special relationship to the United States in two senses. Most critical attention to the book has concentrated on whether the empire really has no centre as Hardt and Negri argue or whether the empire is really old-style US imperialism. The other special relationship to the United States, according to Hardt and Negri, is that the US military is the “peace police” called for by “the supranational organizations of peace” (181). Thus, the global military role of the US is, in their view, not enough to define the empire as American imperialism. Critics have suggested that this is not an adequate account of the US role, and Hardt has conceded that the 2003 war with Iraq seems to justify a return to more traditional accounts of US imperialism.¹⁰ I want to focus instead on their account of the genesis of the sovereignty of empire within US constitutionalism.

Hardt and Negri claim that US sovereignty is that of an “extensive empire” consisting of three aspects: immanent productivity, finitude, and a consequent “tendency toward an open, expansive project operating on an unbounded terrain” (165). Such sovereignty is based on the rejection of a transcendent power in favour of a constituent multitude (immanent productivity). Conflicts due to a plurality within the multitude, however, lead to a negation of constituent power and a dialectical return toward traditional transcendent sovereignty (finitude). This tension is not actually resolved as such but remains as an internal tension that is

postponed through an expansive tendency. In contrast to modern sovereignty, which resides at the limit of the nation-state, and which recreates this limit in its imperialist expansionism, US sovereignty paradoxically combines its expansive tendency with continuous reterritorializations (167). In this way, Hardt and Negri reformulate the importance of the frontier to the US state, a frontier that the classical account of Frederick Jackson Turner called “the meeting point of civilization and barbarism.”¹¹

In their subsequent historical narrative, Hardt and Negri attempt to demonstrate that the United States was torn between a tendency toward returning to a classical European imperialism and an overcoming of itself toward a deterritorialized empire. This came to a decision point in the early twentieth century in the opposition between Roosevelt and Wilson. Wilson’s proposal of “the idea of peace as product of a new world network of powers” (175) extended the US constitutional project beyond its borders and laid the foundation of the new empire whose constitution resides in the United Nations. This decision-point was reached because, as they say, “the great open American spaces ran out,” “open terrain was limited” (172), “the open terrain had been used up” (174), closing off the “boundless frontier of freedom” (406).

At this point I want to make my first observation about Hardt and Negri’s argument, or narrative. At the climax of a politico-cultural discourse about the origin of the empire’s concept of sovereignty, they resort to an apparently unambiguous geographical closure. Not a geo-political or geo-cultural space, but a simply geographical space is the only one that can “run out” or be “used up” in this way. The politico-cultural discourse is brought to a decision-point because of an entirely non-political, non-cultural, geographical determinism. The open land just ran out. They do not consider that it might have been displaced — onto the space race as “the final frontier,” for example — and still today be a constituent component of US political culture. They do consider that this space was not actually open, but inhabited, though they discount this feature since “this contradiction may not properly be conceived as a crisis since Native Americans are so dramatically excluded from and external to the workings of the constitutional machine” (170). The frontier was, according to Hardt and Negri, “a frontier of liberty” because “across the great open spaces the constituent tendency wins out over the constitutional

decree, the tendency of immanence over regulative reflection, and the initiative of the multitude over the centralization of power” (169). It is this expansive liberty that the Yankees have been so kind as to export.

One should notice here not only the theoretical incoherence of closing a politico-cultural discourse with a geographical determinism but also the inadequacy of the account of closing itself. To say that the great open spaces ran out is to assume that it was somehow impossible for the expansive tendency to turn either north or south when it hit the Pacific Ocean. The Rio Grande and the 49th parallel are geographical markers, but they are not a geographical closure to the US expansive tendency in a determinist sense. They are geo-political and geo-cultural borders. The account of the constitution of these borders as borders requires politico-cultural, including military, explanation. The lack of such explanation in Hardt and Negri’s theoretical narrative is not a mere absence. It takes us to the core of the failure of their concept of empire.

Borders as Repressive

It is not that Hardt and Negri never recognize politico-cultural barriers to US constitutionalism. “Black slavery, a practice inherited from the colonial powers, was an insurmountable barrier to the formation of a free people” (170), and women, they claim, “occupied a very similar position” (171) because “they could be neither completely included nor entirely excluded” (171). This contradiction, unlike the position of the Native Americans, “posed a crisis . . . because it blocked the free circulation, mixing, and equality that animate its foundation” (171). “The enormous barriers between black and white, free and slave, blocked the imperial integration machine and deflated the ideological pretense to open spaces. . . . What was in play was a redefinition of the *space* of the nation” (172). This space that they now describe is clearly politico-cultural. It is a space of inequality, restriction of movement, and thus crisis. It is on the same page, in the next paragraph, at the beginning of the next section, after the utilization of a politico-cultural conception of space with respect to this *restriction* of movement, that they say, of the closure of the frontier of freedom, that the open spaces simply ran out!

It seems that, when it is a matter of the restriction of movement within the US constitutional space, a politico-cultural concept of space is called for, but when it is a matter of the halting of the expansive tendency at the Rio Grande and the 49th parallel, a merely quantitative geographical determinism will do. It is this difference in theoretical deployment of concepts that renders the difference between the “internal” restrictions of movement of African Americans and women and the “external” ones of Mexico, Canada, and also Native Americans. It is not, or at least not proven to be, the difference between the cases themselves. They avoid precisely this question of the difference between the cases by deploying a geographical conception of closure to make the one set of cases seem unproblematic. In this respect it is revealing that, despite their supposed anti-Hegelianism, Hardt and Negri share Hegel’s analysis of the United States, in its fundamentals, that it is “constantly and widely open” and that “the North American Federation has no neighboring state.”¹² Whereas a concept of a border requires that one theorize the constitution of an inside-outside relation within politico-cultural space, Hardt and Negri define externality through a geographical determinism and internality through politico-cultural space. This unaccountable divergence of registers means that they can never investigate the constitution of an inside-outside relation; they resort to a continual rhetoric of “no outside” that pervades the narrative but that cannot formulate the necessity of the outside to the constitution of the inside.

Restrictions to movement are assumed to be, and clearly marked as, repressive. The notion that a restriction of movement, such as an external border to the US expansive tendency, might not be repressive, might be the opportunity for something else to exist, is unthinkable. This is characteristic Yankee ideology. It is for this reason that I have previously defined the United States not through the supposed empty (geographical) frontier but through the (politico-cultural) Monroe Doctrine. “The United States names itself ‘America’ since its outward rush is not self-limiting but would extend as far as the natural limit of the continent. The frontier thus continues itself in the Monroe Doctrine, in which Americans claim the right to interference in all the affairs of the continent.”¹³ (The reference in this quotation to the “natural limit of the continent” does not make this argument a geographical determinism,

because its natural quality has been rendered politico-cultural by naming it “America.”) The natural limit is thus a marker of a political project. The frontier is a politico-cultural project, as is its closure. The closure is demanded by the existence of other politico-cultural projects south of the Rio Grande, north of the 49th parallel, and among the Native Americans. It is unthinkable in Hardt and Negri’s theoretical narrative that this restriction of movement might be seen as enabling by these other political projects — that the outside might not be merely an outside but a limitation, a border, that lets difference appear. It is this that limits their theoretical perspective to one within US expansionism; it never looks at such a politico-cultural project from the outside. In other words, the border is theorized from only one side, from which it appears as an unaccountable closure, an irrational limit to the expansion of freedom. From the other side, this border appears as a necessary halt to expansionism so that our different, particular politico-cultural project can appear in the world. Such a perspective is made unthinkable in Hardt and Negri’s account due to the unaccountable switch from a politico-cultural concept of space to a merely quantitative one. It thus constitutes an unexamined assumption within the theoretical narrative. This would cast in another light the often-remarked fact that what has been called “postmodernism” has a particular relation to the United States.

The Irreversibility of Deterritorialization?

The so-called freedom within US sovereign space is predicated on the repression of other politico-cultural projects outside it that are either run over by the expansive tendency or are able to secure their existence by militarily or diplomatically inscribing a politico-cultural border at which the expansive tendency has to stop. It may well be that this politico-cultural closure provokes an internal crisis for the US constitution. Hardt and Negri say that “an American place was territorialized in the name of a constitution of freedom and at the same time continually deterritorialized through the opening up of frontiers and exodus” (381). The analysis of deterritorialization and reterritorialization is derived from Deleuze, who observed this phenomenon in American

literature (471, n16), and was described theoretically by Deleuze and Guattari in the following way:

Unconscious representation therefore comprises essentially, by virtue of its own *law*, a represented that is displaced in relation to an agency in a constant state of displacement. . . . Displacement refers to very different movements: at times, the movement through which desiring-production is continually overcoming the limit, becoming deterritorialized, causing its flows to escape, going beyond the threshold of representation; at times, on the contrary, the movement through which the limit itself is displaced, and now passes into the interior of the representation that performs the artificial reterritorializations of desire.¹⁴

The consequence of this analysis is that “one can never go far enough in the direction of deterritorialization: you haven’t seen anything yet — an irreversible process.” The irreversibility of this process is what generates the observation of “a profoundly artificial nature in the perverted reterritorializations.”¹⁵ But one should ask whether reterritorializations are always perverted. It may not seem so at first, given their emphasis on the “proliferation” and “multiplication” of deterritorializations.¹⁶ But such proliferations are written upon the primary deterritorialization, which they complicate and reproduce but never undo. The consequence of this phrasing is that all defences of space are understood in terms of reterritorialization and, being so understood, cannot destructure the primary deterritorialization. Since “reterritorialization must not be confused with a return to a primitive or older territoriality; it necessarily implies a set of artifices by which one element, itself deterritorialized, serves as a new territoriality for another, which has lost its territoriality as well,”¹⁷ any politics of place is figured as attempting perversely to reverse a deterritorialization that it, in principle, cannot reverse. Continued attempts to defend and extend a prior border that inscribed a limit to expansion and proliferation so that a different politico-cultural project could emerge cannot be captured by this vocabulary. Thus, Deleuze and Guattari’s analysis leads them to cast all attempts at localizations within the deterritorialized system as artificial and perverted since they

do not stand outside the system but are reactions generated by the process of deterritorialization itself.

Hardt and Negri reproduce this position of progressive history within their analysis, remarking as a mere aside that “against all moralisms and all positions of resentment and nostalgia . . . this new imperial terrain provides greater possibilities for creation and liberation” (218). It is this unquestioned acceptance of the progressive character of empire that produces the theoretical incoherence and historical inadequacy of the closure of the frontier. At every point that a politics of locality emerges, they argue instead for the “production of locality” by empire and that “the local moment or perspective gives priority to the reterritorializing barriers or boundaries and the global moment privileges the mobility of deterritorializing flows” (45). They imagine that a politics of locality is dispensed with by the notion that “we should be done once and for all with the search for an outside, a standpoint that imagines a purity for our politics” (46). On this ground, they dismiss local autonomy (342), the politics of de-linking proposed by Samir Amin (283–84, 307), the nation-state (43, 335–36, 361–62), use value (209), and new social movements (275).¹⁸ It’s hard to suspect that they have been watching contemporary environmental and other politics very closely when they suppose that such groups operate with a conception of locality as separate from the global. But their analysis works hard to discredit such a politics when the rather obvious *connection* between local and global is taken as equivalent to the grandiose and unsubstantiated claim that locality is *entirely produced* by the global empire and contains *nothing more* than a reactive reterritorialization. They suppose that the claim that there is “no outside” to the empire serves adequately to dismiss such a politics because it is imagined to be based on such a notion of a pure outside.

This, then, is my second point: It is a politics of location that provides the best political marker for opposition to neoliberal globalization. Hardt and Negri, basing themselves on Deleuze and Guattari, interpret every politics of place as a perverse reterritorialization, and they assert that emancipation consists in going further in the same direction of deterritorialization. “In its deterritorialized autonomy . . . this biopolitical existence of the multitude has the potential to be transformed

into an autonomous mass of intelligent productivity, into an absolute democratic power” (344). To the contrary, I am suggesting that there is a valid politics of place (which must be distinguished from fundamentalism) that goes neither forward nor back, that looks for a hole in the wall to construct a sideways exit. The forward-back metaphor assumes a linear and progressive model of history that Marx shared with modern progressivism. It undergirds the further assumption that there is a symmetry between problem and solution, that the analysis of the system points in the same direction as its overcoming. One would have thought that this element of Marxism was the least likely to survive the displacements of the last century. Walter Benjamin, among others, sought to displace this assumption.¹⁹ But Hardt and Negri here continue to follow Deleuze and Guattari, who reproduce it without comment in acknowledging their debt to Marx for an account of the double movement of capitalism.

On the one hand, capitalism can proceed only by continually developing the subjective essence of abstract wealth or production for the sake of production . . . but on the other hand and at the same time, it can do so only in the framework of its own limited purpose. . . . Under the first aspect capitalism is continually surpassing its own limits, always deterritorializing further . . . but under the second, strictly complementary, aspect, capitalism is continually confronting limits and barriers that are interior and immanent to itself and that, precisely because they are immanent, let themselves be overcome only provided they are reproduced on a wider scale (always more reterritorialization — local, world-wide, planetary).²⁰

The description of a double movement of abstraction and return to concreteness in which the concrete is always *nothing more* than the product of abstraction is what undergirds a conception of history as unidirectional and thus characterizes any doubts about this concept of time — such as articulated through the new anti-imperial politics of place — as regressive in the sense of denying the inevitability and force of the initial abstraction.

Place, Borders, Coalition

The two critical points that I have made converge on a central issue: How can one find a limit to the expansive tendency of empire? The inscription of a border and a politics of place both pertain to the construction of a limit to expansion and thus to “hybrid identities, flexible hierarchies, and plural exchanges” (xii). While deterritorialization cannot be exactly reversed, it is not true that this implies that emancipation must lie in further deterritorialization and that all reterritorializations are perverse, or fundamentalist. They are artificial — a matter of human artifice — to be sure. However, it can be argued that the most profound and effective anti-neoliberal globalization politics in recent years has been inspired precisely by inventive reterritorializations, localizations that retrieve what has been pushed aside by empire and preserved by borders. It is a politics of limit to empire so that a plurality of differences can occur — differences *from* empire, not the putative consumer differences that are equalized by exchanges. Leonard Cohen has pointed to the problem of empire in this fashion:

Things are going to slide in all directions.

Won't be nothing.

Nothing you can measure anymore.²¹

How exactly to define limits, draw borders, to open a space where measure can be taken, will take a great deal of political debate and action in deciding. There is a lot more to be said and done about this, but I doubt whether the perspective put forward in *Empire* will be of much use in this important matter. The authors' concept of abstraction is too dualistic, their concept of border too one-sided, their concept of history too unilinear, their concept of place too shallow, to have much long-term resonance in the anti-neoliberal globalization alliance. I would put my bets on the construction of borders that allow Others to flourish, a politics of place and a defence of communities against exchange value. This is a very different politics, whose difference is perhaps now obscured by the common opposition to empire. But it is different enough that one may expect it to become generally visible before too long.

How, then, does this politics derived from the Canadian concept of empire differ from that offered by Hardt and Negri? In the first place, it understands empire, as they do, as a continuously expanding deterritorialization (the replacement of place by space). Second, while Hardt and Negri understand empire as restraining further history through regulation of exchanges, it understands the historical impetus as itself built on and continuing the imperial adventure. Critique thus divorces itself from history and seeks a rupture, not with previous history, but with history itself — with the continuum of human experience forged by the original displacement (that they call deterritorialization). This unhistorical, archaic moment in critique is represented as nature or wilderness, not as an initial form to be subsumed into civilization but as a persisting archaic dimension to contemporary experience. Thus, the critique of empire is not as a direct unfolding of the repressed within empire but as the recovery and possible healing of the original displacement itself. Such a recovery of place, thrust out as an impossible reactionary fantasy of return by Hardt and Negri, is really a contemporary attempt to think within one's location and to found a place that seeks a certain solidarity with those who experienced the original displacement. This is indeed a different conception of the past, not as that which has been necessarily overcome so that unprecedented possibilities may appear but as the story of a tragedy that demands the recovery of hopes buried by imperial history. From this point of view, Hardt and Negri's *Empire* is merely a retelling of Marxist progressivism — along with its sneering at the "rural idiocy" of peasants — in a situation that demands a deepening and refashioning of critique.

The past is not mere nostalgia, and neither is a recovery of place. The unhelpful and simplistic binary oppositions through which Hardt and Negri characterize empire — inside-outside, deterritorialization-reterritorialization — express their unwillingness to drive critique not merely to the contemporary limitations of empire but all the way back to the original displacement from which it emerged. The notion that this displacement was a necessary moment for the history of liberation to begin shows the extent to which their concept of liberation is itself imbedded within imperial deterritorialization, displacement. It is an imperial critique of empire.

The Canadian analysis of empire suggests that the expansive tendency of empire must be halted at a border in order for a different, non-imperial politics to begin. This other politics is of course not unaffected by the imperial politics that always attempts to reach over the border to annihilate the different. Nor is it always benign. The point is that it is not entirely explained, or organized, by empire. Thus the border separating Canada from the United States has allowed elements of a non-imperial politics to be articulated and survive. Examples: a universal medicare system, multiculturalism, gay marriage, a peacekeeping military, the separation of Nunavut, etc. Of course all of these are endangered by forces within Canada as well as from the empire. Still, none of them would be possible without the border. The border must be understood as enabling, not as simply a temporary limit that empire will overcome but as itself the source of the alternative.

With this understanding of border as enabling difference, one can analyze contemporary social movements in a manner entirely different from Hardt and Negri. First of all, the resources of the nation-state in protecting a space for an experimentation with alternatives should not be written off entirely (even given its reduced resources in the era of globalization). Nor regional and city movements. If one poses the question, not from the perspective of empire, but from that of the alternative, attempts by a coalition of critical social movements to capture spaces of opportunity necessarily lead them to address the continuing functions of such governments (which operate only because they contain a border that hampers direct imperial rule). But even more important, I think that the critical role of contemporary movements themselves in defending and redesigning self-reliant and diverse communities can be articulated through this concept of a border.²² In short, it's all about geography — but as a politico-cultural space neither as a supposed bare determinism of “the land just ran out” nor as a mathematical space. It's about how we will live *here*. That is the critical moment when all the global exchanges of empire hover to see whether they will win *here*, whether we will be just another anywhere, or whether this will be our place. This project has been underway for some time. We have already begun to engage in the next step of a dialogue between places, the intersection between non-imperial locations, from which the anti-imperial coalition is being

formed. Theory must catch up with these events and, in order to do this, must criticize the terms in which such events are rendered. I don't claim to have sustained a full alternative here, but I do hope to have shown that the Hardt and Negri version, though much discussed, not only does not do the job but muddies the key issues.

The Difference
Between
Canadian
and American
Political
Cultures
Revisited

The attempt to define the difference between the political cultures of Canada and the United States has somewhat of a perennial character, continuously renewed in the light of new political developments and new intellectual currents, both within these two countries and also in dialogue with writers further afield. That is as it should be. National political traditions allow for, and depend upon, continuous renovation by reinterpretation and critique. Inability to settle finally the question is not the sign of a failure, but of success, insofar as the capacity of a national political tradition to provide a context for continuous debate determines its continuing vitality. Continuing debate does not invalidate the concept of a national political tradition, nor its difference from its neighbour, but rather allows further evidence for a specification of the contextual assumptions that define an internal belonging and the alternatives rejected as absurd that define its outside. The concept of a national political tradition refers to this framework, or context, that cannot be elaborated outside of the

various positions in the debate but is nevertheless not reducible to one or another of these positions themselves. Productive history depends upon logical undecidability.

In the case of a comparison of national political cultures, some common denominator is necessary. The common origin of Canada and the United States in the English political tradition, combined with the difference in the manner in which each achieved a break with the British Empire, provides a relevant axis of comparison in this case. The significance of the American revolutionary break, under the influence of eighteenth-century political ideas of natural right, and the consequent influence that this revolution has had on all New World nations, has meant that Canadian political culture has often been articulated in contrast to the pervasive individualism and a-historicism of the United States.

I want to revisit this established *topos* in this paper with reference to the recent analysis by Michael Dorland and Maurice Charland in *Law, Rhetoric, and Irony in the Formation of Canadian Civil Culture* (2002) that roots Canadian communitarian and diverse political culture in the role and nature of law.¹ My argument will be in four parts: First, I sketch the conventional account of Canadian political culture as an intersection of community and diversity. Second, I consider in general terms the argument by Dorland and Charland for the centrality of law to this conventional account of Canadian political culture and note that at a key juncture this argument is supported by relying on an essay by Jacques Derrida on the US Declaration of Independence that describes it as a “sovereign performative.” Third, I rely on J. Claude Evans and Hannah Arendt to point out that the precedent of the revolution was the “rights of Englishmen” and thus not a sovereign performative in the sense of an auto-institution of a new civil society. Fourth, I propose a more subtle examination of the difference between the two political cultures through an analysis of the specific difference between the performative status of the British North America Act and that of the American Declaration of Independence. In conclusion, I will make a general point about what is missing in this sort of comparative analysis of Canadian and US political cultures — an account of the limits and blindnesses of the respective traditions, which can be seen

in the different manners in which they camouflage the closure of political alternatives deriving, respectively, from the continuance of imperial power within the Canadian nations-state and from the denial of political education by a supposedly always-already independent people.

Community and Diversity

It has been commonplace to describe the different character of Canadian identity from that of the United States with reference to the greater communitarian component of Canadian political culture. Whether this communitarianism is attributed to the influence of a non-revolutionary political tradition, Loyalism, a harsh winter climate, or French-English accommodation, it is widely accepted that “America reflects the influence of its classically liberal, Whig, individualistic, antistatist, populist, ideological origins. Canada . . . can still be seen as Tory-mercantilist, group-oriented, statist, deferential to authority – a ‘socialist monarchy,’ to use Robertson Davies’ phrase.”² Of course it is not quite this simple. As Robin Mathews has pointed out, the ideological character of the United States also exists within Canada as one element of the political culture.³ No doubt one could find communitarian elements within the United States. However, as I have previously argued, the specificity of a culture cannot be defined by looking for elements within it that are irreducibly unique. Rather, “what is inside is separated from the outside, not by a unique content, but by a distinctive relation between contents.”⁴ Culture is a pattern. Elements from outside enter into and alter that pattern without the pattern losing its specificity and distinctiveness. Thus, one way to elucidate a cultural pattern is to articulate the resonances that formative historical experiences have to philosophical expressions, resonances that shift when they enter into a different cultural pattern.

The communitarian emphasis has been matched by a particular manner of dealing with cultural diversity. Canadian philosophy has been characterized by what Leslie Armour and Elizabeth Trott have called “philosophical federalism,” defined as “a natural inclination to find out why one’s neighbour thinks differently rather than to find out how to show him up as an idiot.”⁵ Probably because of a weak national identity,

Canadian culture has tended to assume that there is no one overarching identity or community that effectively could subsume the plurality of communities. Thus, multicultural policies, everyday practices, and philosophical articulations tend not only to have a communitarian bias but also to assume a plurality of relevant communities.

Of course, we have been reminded by novelists and empirical sociologists that the United States has never been in actual fact the melting pot that its ideology promoted. The difference can be more precisely stated in terms of the public representations of cultural diversity that form the political culture and reside in institutions. In the United States the substantive ethical commitments of communities to a way of life tend to be barred from public life and thought, whereas in Canada they rather become the content of political culture. In the United States, a supposedly a-cultural proceduralism dominates public life, whereas dynamic cultural communities are regarded as the private concern of individuals. Thus, Leslie Armour has concluded that “what we have in common cannot be expressed through a single community. . . . This pluralism is related to our communitarianism.”⁶ This particular mixture of identity and diversity has been much debated politically, but it is from a comparative viewpoint the core feature of Canadian political culture around which debates and disagreements have swirled.

The Canadian Constitution and the Enlightenment

The thesis that Canadian political culture is oriented toward political representation of diverse communities is given a new twist by Michael Dorland and Maurice Charland by their focus on the role of law. Their account is “concerned with the symbolic dimensions of the transition from aristocratic, landed power to the democratic and bourgeois forms of an emerging public sphere as this was experienced in the Canadian colonial context” (36). They suggest that the events summarized in the term “conquest” refer to “the sudden bringing together of two separate, already completely formed ‘societies,’ each with its own institutions, and each with its own respective frames of collective reference” (80). British rule was based in a conception of a benevolent paternal sovereign

who thus gives reasons for his actions and, at least to a limited extent, thereby gains the consent of the governed. That led to the practice of imperial recognition of established structures of governance that pre-existed conquest and that inaugurated the basic problem of Canada by mitigating the supremacy of English law through a limited recognition of French civil law. Consequently, the “apolitical public sphere” (Habermas) of the French *ancien régime*, in which public speech seeks individual novelty at the service of established hierarchy, that predominated in New France was displaced so that francophones sought subsequently to promote their society by insisting on their rights as British subjects (99). That both gave an importance to law itself that was not present in a society ruled by civil law and situated law as the medium in which political controversy in Canada would be addressed. “The point is not that Canadians are particularly more law-abiding, but that authority remained invested in received law” (152). Thus, the well-known and significant fact that Canada was not in its inauguration, nor has since been, a revolutionary polity is supplemented by Dorland and Charland through the history of incorporation of Lower and Upper Canada into a single polity.

Later than the French and American revolutions, but no less constitutional, the British North America Act “marks the moment where Canada falls away from Great Britain, not acquiring sovereignty in a grand gesture, nor exactly finding sovereignty at all, but crafting its own constitution nevertheless” (146). We are living out the late consequences of these debates today as our era has entered into a *contretemps* with its Enlightenment origins and the then anomalous case of Canada may today have become paradigmatic.

The particular mixture of identity and diversity in Canadian civil culture is from a comparative viewpoint the core feature of Canadian political culture around which debates and disagreements have swirled. Dorland and Charland’s version of this thesis focuses on the role of law such that the gradual universalization of the rights of Englishmen becomes the main characteristic of official Canadian civil culture. How would one characterize the motive force of such a universalization?

It looks initially like a hermeneutic judgment: limited precedent in the past, application to the present, showing of a limitation in

purported universality, and extension to a more satisfactory universal. Hans-Georg Gadamer has illuminated this aspect of a hermeneutic judgment whereby it enacts a historical continuity unlike an Enlightenment break with the past: "For, within the enlightenment, the very concept of authority becomes deformed. . . . There is no such unconditional antithesis between tradition and reason. . . . Even the most genuine and solid tradition does not persist by nature because of the inertia of what once existed. . . . It is, essentially, preservation, such as is active in all historical change. But preservation is an act of reason, although an inconspicuous one."⁷ The similar focus of tradition, precedent-prejudice, and application suggests that unlike Enlightenment political cultures that focus on extra-political natural rights that require an absolute performative beginning and a written constitution, Canadian political culture is characterized by a continuity of hermeneutic interpretation in which claims situated within that continuity may enter into the tradition, but claims that do not, or cannot, find any partial precedent are shunted aside (often with the violence of the state). This conclusion would accord with the Dorland-Charland analysis and also with those of many other commentators who have emphasized the conservative and traditional cast of Canadian culture. It resonates with the contemporary hermeneutic rethinking of the Enlightenment.

To clarify the specificity of the Canadian constitution, Dorland and Charland turn to an essay by Jacques Derrida entitled "Declarations of Independence" in which he addressed the question of how a people constitutes itself as such through an analysis of the American Declaration of Independence. Such a declaration, Derrida claims, necessarily contains an undecidability as to whether the act is performative or constative, whether it *accomplishes* independence in declaring it or whether the declaration *describes* an independence already underway. Representatives sign the declaration in the name of "the people," which must therefore exist prior to the act of signing, but the act of signing brings "the people" into existence, since before the declaration they were not "the people" of the United States but only British subjects. He calls this speech act a "sovereign performative" in which "the signature invents the signer" and aims to show that "this obscurity, this undecidability between, let us say, a performative structure and a constative structure, is *required*

in order to produce the sought-after effect. It is essential to the very positing or position of a right as such. . . . I would even go so far as to say that every signature finds itself thus affected.”⁸

However, the constitution of Canada as a dominion occurred quite differently. Dorland and Charland identify that difference as the submission to an authority that is other, in contrast to self-proclamation, a submission that invests “the principle of legality itself” (147) with metaphysical significance by arguing that the principle of legal continuity constitutes an authority based in prior political history in which race, religion, and language are of public significance. Whereas Derrida argues that constitutional authority is deferred into the future perfect tense since Jefferson is only a representative of “the people” that the declaration itself constitutes, the deferral of authority in the Canadian constitution occurs as a deferral to established authority by the signer himself (John A. Macdonald). Thus, “law as sanctioned procedure is held against the ‘sovereignty’ of unhindered will” (149) that would be unleashed by a revolutionary beginning. Apparently, Canada is to the United States as hermeneutics is to deconstruction.

Revolution as Sovereign Performative?

In explicating their law-oriented version of the conservative and traditional constitution of Canada by way of a critique of Derrida’s specification of the self-constituting logic of declarations of independence that limits it to revolutionary declarations, Dorland and Charland illustrate the relevance of the Canadian case to current international debate concerning the foundation of law. Elsewhere Derrida has explicated the paradox of performativity in the act of foundation: “Since the origin of authority, the foundation or ground, the position of the law can’t by definition rest on anything but themselves, they are themselves a violence without ground.”⁹ That refers not to the violence of the Revolutionary War, which depends on the opposition of another constituted force (the British Empire), but the violence that continues down to our own day because of its inherence in the exercise of state power as such because of its foundation in a self-constituting act that recognizes no precedents.

Nonetheless, Derrida's argument cannot simply be taken at face value. J. Claude Evans has distinguished two aspects of Derrida's argument that are treated as virtually equivalent: first, the constitution of the people and, second, the fact that signing occurs through representatives of the people.¹⁰ It would seem that the second aspect is dependent on the first, that the people must be constituted as such in order to be represented. However, this is one of the assumptions about the constitution of a people that Derrida seeks to question. The implication, or assumption, of his argument is that a people is constituted as such only when it represents itself by choosing representatives. Criticizing this implication, or assumption, Evans points out that the people existed prior to the Declaration in the framework of a colony, including representative institutions that functioned within that framework. However, the Declaration does not limit the people to the colonial framework but rather appeals to "the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God" to support their claim for entitlement — which had been exercised in some fashion by the representatives to the various continental congresses since 1774 and in the prior (by two days) Resolution of Independence. Thus, says Evans *contra* Derrida, it is not that there was no people prior to the signing of the Declaration. Rather, "there was indeed a 'self' prior to the signing of the Declaration, and that 'self's' *right* to declare independence is the topic of the Declaration."¹¹ The constitution of the people in the framework of a colony preceded the declaration of its right to independence.

The Declaration is indeed a performative act, but not a self-constituting one exemplifying a necessary undecidability, since "the issue was transformation, not creation."¹² That transformation appealed to the Nature and God of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment to justify its independence, but the constitution of the people as such was the work of colonization practices of the British Empire. Hannah Arendt agreed with the tenor of this analysis. She attributed the "surprising stability" of the American revolution in comparison with all other modern revolutions to the fact that "the act of foundation, namely the colonization of the American continent, had preceded the Declaration of Independence, so that the framing of the Constitution, falling back on existing charters and agreements, confirmed and legalized an already existing body politic rather than made it anew."¹³ While Arendt recognizes that a new

beginning must “carry with itself a measure of complete arbitrariness,” which cannot be based in an absolute such as God, Nature, or reason and thus falls into “the vicious circle in which all beginning is inevitably caught,” nevertheless, “what saves the act of beginning from its own arbitrariness is that it carries its own principle within itself, or, to be more precise, that beginning and principle, *principium* and principle, are not only related to each other, but are coeval.”¹⁴ Thus, the element of arbitrariness that occurs in self-foundation resides in the act of declaring oneself to be independent, not in the act of the constitution of the people itself, which is prior to the act that declares its independence. “Necessary undecidability” must refer to the self-assertion of (the right to) independence, not the existence of the people as such.

If there is merit in this argument, it suggests that the inherent violence of the self-founding state that Derrida specifies also cannot be accepted in the terms that he proposes. Moreover, it bodes ill for a comparison between the American Revolution and the British North America Act through the undecidability of a sovereign will — or, deconstructive self-inauguration versus hermeneutic tradition. The point is not the obvious and general one that even a revolutionary break has precedents but that the specific precedents in the case of the American Declaration trace “the people” back to its prior constitution as a disaffected segment of English subjects. “No taxation without representation,” after all, is a slogan possible only for a previously constituted group with recognized rights. The Americans rebelled as disaffected Englishmen who, at least in their own view, were offered no other recourse and whose rights to representation because of taxation are rooted in the history of regulation of the monarchy that goes back to the Magna Carta. While revolutionary break is possible, even for Englishmen, it does not constitute “the people” *ab initio* but only *de novo*. If there is an inherent violence in the state, it does not derive from self-foundation but from precisely this transformation (or from the way in which this transformation continues the violence inherent in the Empire, that is to say, to the extent that it is not a break at all). If Evans’s analysis of the American case holds, then one might further limit Derrida’s logic to the French case. Perhaps a model of popular insurrection in the face of absolutist rule would be the only case of a “sovereign performative”— except by God, of course,

who said “let there be light”— but a comparison to the French case is outside the present purpose.

If Jefferson’s signature does not defer to a people understood in a future perfect tense as Derrida claims, then it refers to a people in the process of self-constitution in which the Declaration is an important punctual point but not a point of origination as such. The wholly self-constituted people in the future perfect refers to partial precedents based on the rights of Englishmen. But this begins to sound like the Canadian case, in which constitution is an act within an ongoing tradition of a people — a hermeneutic judgment rather than a self-constituting performative. The specific historical difference is that the American case does not ask the British parliament to authorize its independence; rather, the Declaration of Independence authorizes it to perform its own independence. But in both cases “the people” who undertake this break were constituted prior to that break.

The Revolution of Englishmen

In what, then, does the revolutionary break consist? Precisely in the judgment that the monarch has lost his benevolence and his reasons have become sufficiently devoid of persuasive ability to win consent. It is not an “absolute” judgment in the sense that it might be the *in principle* locus of all legitimacy, but it is one possible for all Englishmen if they are forced to conclude that the monarchy has strayed from the ancient constitution of his legitimacy. Thus, the American revolutionary break is not a product of straightforwardly human will but a temporal product of a people with constituted right that have come to the judgment that they have a right to independence. That right, to be sure, is buttressed by an appeal outside of traditional authority to God and Nature. From our twenty-first-century viewpoint we may say that whereas the American Revolution did present itself in eighteenth-century Enlightenment terms as the constitution of society itself from a state of nature, it was, in fact, a historical judgment. The judgment that constitutes the break shifts sovereignty from the monarchy to another source. If there were a contending claim to the monarchy, such as in Scotland,

sovereignty might be shifted to “our rightful king” and contested in a civil war, but in its absence the necessity to give reasons and provide good government passes over to “the people” as priorly constituted and is buttressed by Nature and God to exceed its colonial limitations in favour of independence.

What does this mean for the Canadian case, which often clarifies itself mainly through comparison to the United States? Dorland and Charland rest content with the observation that Derrida’s sovereign performative does not apply to Canada, but the previous analysis has shown that it doesn’t apply to the United States either. The temporal structure of deferral seems to remain the same: a future “people” preceded in the past and undergoing a hermeneutic process of transformation. The difference is in the shift in authority that is based in the judgment of the failure of the monarchy to abide by “the law” of the ancient constitution. One could, of course, investigate the difference in historical contexts that gave rise in one case to a polarization (1776) and in the other an acceptance of independence (1867), but the theoretical issue is resolved. It is the action of the monarchy and its inability to persuade the colonists that they are being treated equally to the subjects at home that renders the sovereign illegitimate.

If Derrida is wrong about the sovereign performative that he attributes to the American Declaration of Independence, then the specificity of “the law” as constitutive of Canadian civil culture disappears. Dorland and Charland’s argument for Canadian specificity in this respect depends upon a characterization that ignores the constitutive fact that Americans rebelled as Englishmen and not as de-historicized “sovereign wills.” The performance of independence comes down to a difference between being let go and having to insist on the matter. Thus, Canada is not to the United States as hermeneutics is to deconstruction. Because the self-performative does not genuinely describe the Enlightenment constitution, the difference is reduced to two species of hermeneutical judgment.* Despite the natural and a-historical language of natural

* Note that the important distinction between modern and ancient constitutionalism does not affect this analysis. According to James Tully, “the language of modern constitutionalism which has come to be authoritative was designed to exclude or assimilate cultural diversity and justify uniformity” and has succeeded by replacing and denigrating the

rights, the Enlightenment assumptions of the modern constitution do not explain its own dependence on a prior political identity. That dependence is obscured by the fact that modern constitutions are instituted by a unique founding act rather than accumulated through time, experience, and accommodation. But the founding act is a transformation, not an auto-institution, of identity into an independence previously denied.

Conclusion: The Limits to Civility

Canadian political culture appears to take the form of a Gadamerian hermeneutic judgment because of its historical and traditional character. The hermeneutic critique of the Enlightenment suggests that the tradition-oriented character of Canadian culture and law is shared even by the American revolutionary culture despite its Enlightenment-oriented misunderstanding of itself. Evans's critique of Derrida made that point: The American Revolution is not as self-founding as it appears. If it is recognized that this break was possible because of the existence of a prior public identity, then the issue is one of transformation, not radical, unprecedented inauguration.

While Canadian history perhaps shows more clearly than others the historical continuity that allows transformation, that recognition is more likely a common property of the twentieth-century rethinking of the Enlightenment than a specifically Canadian theme. If the American Revolution was a historical judgment possible for Englishmen, then the key issue within the frame of international social and political theory is to investigate the constitution of autonomous political identities and the origin of state violence. Let us draw the conclusion from the above account with regard to each of these issues: One, there is no "zero-degree

ancient constitution, whose adherents were "defenders of diversity," custom, and the myriad accommodations from which a tradition has emerged. I do not doubt that this difference clarifies political cultures in Canada and the United States at least until the Canadian Constitution Act, 1982. My point is that even a modern constitution does not itself performatively bring into being the identity of the people whose independence and rights it seeks to guarantee. This identity is previously constituted through the Empire operating under the ancient constitution. James Tully, *Strange Multiplicity: Constitutionalism in an Age of Diversity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 58.

identity” within political culture. All transformations occur on the ground of previously formed identities. The political problem is, thus, not self-constitution but rather how identities already formed under imperial power can assert a right to independence. Two, the origin of the violence of the state is not to be found in the assertion of its sovereign will in self-foundation, as Derrida claims, but, one must conclude, stems from elsewhere.

Since the performance of independence comes down to a difference between being let go and having to insist on the matter, it devolves upon the continuities and breaks established by each outcome. The deferral to authority in being let go maintains a continuity of law, authority, and respect for good government. It confirms that a pre-existent identity can attain independence under the law. The break is thus focused exclusively on the transition to independence itself. A revolutionary break, to the contrary, while it accomplishes precisely the transition to independence, does so through a break with law, authority, and respect for good government. It thus grounds a cultural tendency to confuse independence with rebellion toward government as such, a tendency that I would suggest we can see in popular and political culture south of the border up to our own time, in which infantilism is invested with political significance.

The corresponding confusion on the Canadian side would be to suppose that independence could be established without any threat to the order of Empire. More exactly, one tends not to ask what identities have not been so benignly blessed by the Empire. There must be something wrong with them that they have not also been let go; they cannot be ready for independence. Thus, the focus on law, authority, and good government established by the continuity with Empire grounds an official culture of disdain for the unready and unwashed, making it a very difficult task to probe the limits of civility, of the Crown’s paternal concern.

With respect to the violence of the state, I suggest that there are two corresponding blindnesses. In Canada, the left-out and marginalized are reckoned incapable of independence, though their existence is not open to doubt. It is the mantle of official existence that is in question. In the United States, everyone is reckoned independent — not capable, but

already so — and the rigours of independence are concealed beneath the presupposition of the political significance of infantile rebellion. Thus, the violence of the state in Canada consists in the denial of a place in official culture, and the goal of many marginalized groups is to achieve such a place. They must prove themselves worthy of self-rule. In the United States, such violence is always arbitrary because every rebellion is, in principle, an assertion of independence. One is drawn to suspect that there is no such thing as good government, that it could only be the violence of the victor.

Thus, in conclusion, the law-oriented version of the thesis that Canadian culture is oriented toward a communitarian representation of diversity as presented by Michael Dorland and Maurice Charland constitutes an apology for official culture in Canada, an apology that fails to probe effectively the limits of civility. An investigation of Canadian political culture that fails to investigate denials of independence consequently fails to encounter the significance of its constituting act.

PART III
LOCATIVE
THOUGHT

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Introduction: Philosophy, Culture, Critique

The final part of this collection consists of two lectures. The first, which dates from 2001, represents an attempt to define some of the issues for socio-cultural critique in the period of neoliberal globalization. The second, from 2011, which was a follow-up lecture to my book *Identity and Justice*, asserts the continuing significance of the dispossession wrought by empire. Taken together, they try to articulate an approach to English Canadian culture in a critical spirit that would be adequate to deal with the cultural conflicts of the neoliberal globalization that defines our time. It will be only too apparent that much more needs to be done in this vein.

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The groundbreaking work of Leslie Armour and Elizabeth Trott on the history of English Canadian philosophy had already asserted that the virtues of tolerance, community, and accommodation too often led also to superficiality and avoidance.

The blandness which is often complained about in Canadian life has, no doubt, many explanations, but it is worth noticing that all the components of the cultural and geographical milieu about which we have been talking tend toward a pattern of orderly and tranquil social change and this fact in itself has been an influence on the pattern of problems to be confronted. A strong communitarian tendency implies that social change must take a community with it as a unity. Such a situation is apt to put string pressure on individuals to conform and to leave them rootless and forlorn if they break with the community. A plurality of such communities spread out in space and, because of successive waves of immigration, representing, in time, a series of adjustments to the new environment, provided a response. In Canada, the individual has usually been able to evade the pressure to conform by merging with another community and to avoid the feeling of rootlessness by casting his lot with his new choice.¹

It is by no means an easy task to revitalize the polemical vocation of cultural critique in such a climate. Nonetheless, the new round of polarizations evident in both culture and politics since the 1999 Seattle protest against neoliberal globalization requires exactly that.

Philosophy is a complex discourse concerning the way that humans live, strive to live, and ought to live.² Thus it cannot be a self-contained or technical discourse. There are now several proofs with the form of Gödel's proof that a complex discourse cannot be consistent and complete — that is to say, it can neither determine the truth or falsehood of every statement within its domain nor cover without remainder the field of its application. Thus, philosophy is immersed in history. Its formalizations are dependent on unformalized temporally and spatially extended experience. Such experience has been given expressive formation in artistic, political, and everyday activities such that it can be called a tradition. Philosophy operates within that tradition and upon that tradition to articulate the striving of human life.

Thus I start from the proposition that philosophy is not a-cultural in the way that a formal symbolism can be a-cultural but is a moment within a cultural tradition in which certain concepts become problematic and are investigated. One cannot, and does not, investigate everything

all at once. Investigation and critique thus rely on and occur within a culture as a system of meaning that is already ongoing and play a role in its understanding of its past and in its future orientation while they hold up certain contemporary practices and concepts to scrutiny. Critique in this sense is *immanent*. It relies on certain ethical ideals within a culture in order to show that specific practices contradict these ideals.

Any form of social critique requires a standard by which the relevant practices are measured. Immanent criticism is internal to a political culture, which means that the social critic appeals to a measure — for example the ethical standard of equality — that is widely accepted throughout the political culture in order to argue both that it is systematically denied to some and that the concept of equality heretofore prevailing has been inadequate. These “internalist” assumptions in the classic immanent model of critique have led to the contemporary concern that it cannot be applied in conditions of cultural plurality. One simplistic alternative, which unfortunately appears to be a major contemporary temptation, is to equate the measure with the ethical standards of one’s own culture. In this case, critique, if it can be called that, is limited to showing that the other group does not measure up to one’s own ideals. This is not a big surprise, since one of the defining features of a different culture is that it is oriented around different ethical ideals. But this simplistic reduction responds to a real problem: if philosophy occurs within a cultural tradition then it does not seem to be able to criticize other cultural traditions except in an ethnocentric manner by reducing them to the evaluations rooted in one’s own cultural mores and their justifications. So, often it is said nowadays that “ideology” is just *your* values, whereas *my* values are just true, not ideological. The enlightened person does not seem to be able to go any further than recognizing his or her own values as also ideological.

But if philosophy must be understood to be an internal moment of a historical culture, and if the measuring standard that social critique requires cannot be internal to any one culture, have we not come to an impasse? Do we, as some argue nowadays, have to abandon social critique entirely or, alternatively, do we necessarily regress into an ethnocentric, merely polemical conception of critique? Only if this apparent contradiction can be resolved is there any hope of rescuing social critique in

conditions of cultural plurality — only if there is some sort of “standing-between” cultures, of belonging to one but not being entirely external to others, of combining a critical distance from one’s own political culture with some access to others.

Let us begin with the observation that every social critique that pertains to a plurality of cultures requires that these cultures have already come into some sort of relationship. If they were entirely separate it would not be possible to compare them, or even to elaborate a social critique that applies to them both. Each would simply operate separately on its own terms. Cultures have come into relation in a number of ways: travellers and explorers, colonialism and imperialism, treaty and federation, immigration and exile, to name a few. Relations of immigration and exile, especially in both the aftermath and continuing reality of colonialism and imperialism, are what characterize our own time. It is here that the experience and philosophical reflection of English Canada can be useful in exploring conditions of cultural plurality in a rather different mode: in a multicultural society, the cultural condition is from the first multicultural — that is to say, characterized by the interplay of diverse cultures; a culture is not formed separately but exists through its interrelation with other cultures, which means an encounter with its own limit. Cultural interchange is, or ought to be, understood not through the relation between us-and-them groups, but between us-and-we groups. This mode of the condition of cultural plurality provides the basis, I have argued in a critique of Charles Taylor, for sufficient distance from one’s own culture and sufficient access to others, to constitute a kind of “standing-between” that can unravel the contradiction of social critique within cultural plurality.³

As a consequence of cultural plurality, especially religious plurality, in Canada, Canadian philosophy has tended to articulate a conception of totality, or the Absolute, in a plural form.⁴ That is to say, totality, though in itself total and therefore inclusive of everything, is understood by human groups in various forms. Expressed in religious terms, there is one God but humans interpret God in various ways. For an individual, this means that one’s conception of all that is must take a certain determinate form. Nevertheless, this concept is accompanied by the awareness that the determinate form is not itself ultimate but is one of

many expressions of the ultimate. Thus a certain distance is introduced between the ultimate itself and the language in which it is expressed. At the same time, the condition for recognizing the legitimacy of other expressions of the ultimate is satisfied.

A similar double-tier representation has appeared in the political field through multiculturalism: one can be a member of a particular cultural group and at the same time a member of the multicultural society that encompasses many such particular groups. This is a reflexive relationship of content and context, not an us-them, or self-other, relationship but a relationship between a particular “us” and a universal “we” that encompasses a complex interrelationship of us-groups through history. The “we” of national identity is not counter-posed to the “us” of a particular ethnocultural identity but is the context of interaction between such particular groups. Particular and universal aspects are different but not separate. That is to say, to the extent that the universal national “we” legitimates and validates membership in one’s particular “us,” then the members of that us-group have greater reason to fit into the we-group.* Conversely, to the extent that the us-group views its own ultimate commitments as not the only form of legitimate ultimate commitment, it accepts not only the possibility but the necessity of the ultimate commitments of other us-groups. This particular-universal relationship evolves historically in order to shape and define both a shared multi-culture and the particular cultural groups that constitute it.

* This reflexive relationship sets up the possibility of what has been called a “charmed loop,” insofar as the recognition of particular commitments reinforces the shared context and the legitimacy of the shared context reinforces the legitimacy of particular interpretations of ultimacy. See Vernon E. Cronen, Kenneth M. Johnson, and John W. Lannamann, “Paradoxes, Double Binds, and Reflexive Loops: An Alternative Theoretical Perspective,” *Family Process* 20 (March 1982): 101–2, where it is explained that “charmed loops are also reflexive but generate no trouble.” They distinguish charmed loops from the problematic kind that they call “strange loops.” Nonetheless, this is a historical relationship, not a merely logical one, and there is also the possibility that the denial of the particular ultimate commitments to other groups can de-legitimize the shared context and the ability of particular groups to own, and not share, the context de-legitimize the particular commitments of excluded groups so that the relationship may become what we might call a “vicious loop.” The difference here is between a charmed reflexive relationship in which an action reinforces a benign relationship between context and content and a vicious one in which content destroys context and context destroys content, leading to a breakdown or violent turn in the relationship.

A historical interrelationship of particular and universal is made possible by a plural context of interaction in which the ultimacies of a given group appear to themselves as a given determinate form of ultimacy as such. This possibility has emerged from English Canadian politics and philosophy and constitutes a proposal for understanding the conditions of cultural plurality in a post-colonial world.

However, the dominant Hegelian form of understanding the relation between plurality and history understands the historical interaction between different communities on a too-pacific model of compromise that forgets a couple of basic points. First, plural communities are not opposites in a Hegelian sense; they are pre-existing and have different origins. Since they do not break off from an original unity, the process of bridging them must be different from a Hegelian dialectic, which is defined by a confidence in the direction of history. Second, Hegelianism implies that communities are moral “stages” at different levels of development, an assumption that is problematic in its implication of ranking communities, in any case, but is particularly problematic for understanding the societies and cultures of First Nations — who have always, for fundamental reasons, been suspicious of such evolutionary assumptions.

In contrast, the two threads in this tradition upon which I pull express a reciprocal tension, a continuing *polemos*, characteristic of English Canadian intellectual tradition and historical life that confounds a reassuring dialectic of history: critique of empire, understood as the domination of large areas sustaining different ways of life by forces foreign to them, and defence of particularity, understood as a way of life rooted in a particular historical tradition containing a conception of the good life to which it aspires. At this point, it is possible to evaluate critically certain aspects of the tradition. The critique of empire was often partial, criticizing American empire but not British, for example, and the defence of particularity, which was articulated universally and without restriction, in practice stopped at Canada — often as a consequence obscuring the fact that Canada is not a nation but a multinational state — but, more importantly, overlooking localities and traditions that have been incorporated into Canada through the continuation of empire. Thus, one can draw a distinction between

“official culture,” in which aspects of English Canadian culture receive partial acknowledgement within an apologetic discourse, and “unofficial culture,” in which the officially unacknowledged elements have purchase in everyday life, artistic expression, etc. The implication is that accounts of English Canadian culture that focus only on the theme of community, through of course preferable to American and neoliberal individualism, become apologetic if they are not situated alongside the critique of empire. My task has been to emancipate what I thought good in this tradition from its hesitations and evasions in order to articulate a defence of locality and its grounded aspiration to the good life, that is to say, the claim to universalization imbedded in locality.

A Border Within argued that, due to the persistence of empire in English Canadian culture and politics, history must be understood as continuity, statecraft, and official culture. Break with empire, the possibility of independence manifested in unofficial culture, comes through geography, the risk of the periphery. This argument rests on a critique of “centrism” in which the productivity and importance of peripheral place is asserted.

A centrism consists in the subsumption of diverse experiences and contents under an explanatory scheme that is *presupposed as universal although it incorporates elements that arose in a particular history*.

A return to concrete and diverse experiences thus does not negate universality, but opens the possibility that a genuine universality might emerge through the displacement of centrisms. Such a new and genuine universality cannot be attained in traditional fashion by ignoring one’s location — which leads precisely to the false postulation of one’s standpoint as straightforwardly universal that underlies a centrism — but only by embracing one’s own and opening it to thought.⁵

Critique of empire in a contemporary context through a defence of local subsistence and sustainability connects the specifically English Canadian tradition to an international movement against the neoliberal global regime.

What exactly do I mean by empire? My analysis moves from the political-intellectual culture of English Canada toward a definition of

empire as a monopoly over the form of interaction by one party to it. Any genuine negotiation of the terms of association by the parties to the negotiation is thus non-imperialist. One consequence of this conception of empire is that I treat the capitalist market structure as a form of imperial monopoly comparable to the British Empire in its relation to colonized peoples. While it isn't the case that a critique of capitalism can be entirely subsumed under the concept of empire, if I have shown that the critique of capitalism requires also a critique of empire — since capital accumulation requires political dominance — then I would be satisfied.*

To what extent is this tied to conceiving of English Canada as a nation? I hope to have shown the existence of an intellectual tradition of intrinsic interest and upon which one can build productively. The origin of this attempt was in the left-nationalism of the 1970s that attempted, with limited success, to assert against the American empire a Canadian nationalism defined through social and economic equality as well as national independence. While one might argue that national identity has advantages for a sense of belonging and solidarity that can ground communitarian social welfare, and this has certainly had an impact in Canadian history, it seems that the period of our history in which this was a viable politics is passing, if not gone. I have come to suspect that, since the task of left-nationalism represented through English Canada as a nation requires the self-assertion of a nation that is constitutively incapable of such self-assertion, there is no solution to it in this form. I have become interested in what this tradition can teach us of inhabitation for the global world that is upon us, and on its potential dialogue with other traditions of inhabitation. It is likely that the problems of the role of English Canada within Canada are already receding and that its contribution cannot be realized within the capitalist state form as such. If a genuine form of association arose in which there was no monopoly of the rules of interaction between constituent groups, then it would not be

* It is perhaps not always clear that the critique of globalization must be aimed exclusively at capitalism and not at globalization per se. To a some extent, I have used the term "globalization" as a shorthand for "the neoliberal global socio-economic regime," and to that extent it is clear that some form of global consciousness and solidarity is the political challenge for our time. This is one aspect of the "universalization" that I speak about in philosophical terms.

a state but a form of free association. In this respect, I agree with Graeme Nicholson, who has written that “particular laws, rulings, and measures, undertaken in the framework of a state and judiciary, actually derive their justification from ancient and informal provisions of civilization.”⁶

This argument requires a principle of association that would rest on the legitimacy of particular traditions based on inhabitation but demand also a form of association with other traditions. This form of association would link sovereignties horizontally rather than subsuming them vertically in an imperial form. Looking through the history of political theory, the closest to this that I can find is Pierre-Joseph Proudhon’s anarchist conception of federation. This type of association allows the internal structure of a form of life to remain unmolested by the external association into which it enters.* Thus, external association does not subsume internal sovereignty, which it simply leaves alone. Moreover, external association is for delimited purposes and never unconditional. Only in this form can the defence of particularity that has a hold, though not a dominance, within the English Canadian tradition become a universal form of association that leaves particularities their own ways of life.

It seems that English Canada has a weak identity not capable of realization as such and that the only form of realization is in a principle of locality before, beside, and beyond the national one in which inhabitation grounds an identity that is local and universalization is through treaty.

* There is a difficulty with this approach to politics that must be addressed: in making external association conditional and in principle incapable of determining internal relations, there is a possibility that some internal relations do not sufficiently defend human rights nor are a viable aspiration to the human good. The principle of association defined through “negotiating the rules of interaction between communities” does not say anything about structural inequalities within communities or aggressive and expansionary tendencies within them. I have in no sense resolved this issue, though my argument does suggest that the question is not well posed if it assumes that there are such legitimate universal concepts in abstraction from their articulation and realization within different particular traditions. Such an assumption would be an imperial one.

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Social Movements Versus the Global Neoliberal Regime

With the emergence of substantial internationally organized protests at recent meetings of the World Trade Organization, the International Monetary Fund, the Summit of the Americas discussion of Free Trade Area of the Americas, G8/G20, and other international free trade regulatory agencies, social movements have managed to re-politicize the measures taken to promote the unrestricted movement, accumulation, and realization of capital.¹ This is in clear contrast to the mood in Western capitalist nations after the fall of Communism in 1989, when the announcement of the “end of history” anticipated an era of social consensus on the fundamental organization of society. Clearly marking the end of complacency in this regard, a *Globe and Mail* editorial (28 October 2000) recognized that, nowadays, “polemics mirror those that accompanied the rise of national capitalism a century ago.” Global capitalism, while still dominant and making new strides in breaking down social barriers to investment and realization of capital, is certainly not unopposed. However, I

will argue that capital in its current globalizing phase is not “returning” us to the classic conflicts of nineteenth-century capitalism, so that the classic critique by Marx could again be deemed accurate (with a few updates).² Rather, the current conjuncture of globalizing capital must be confronted and theorized in contemporary terms that would be adequate to explain its new and emerging features. It is the task of critical intellectuals to abandon not only the obscurantism and platitudes of neoliberalism but many certainties of the Left as well, in order to define and aid the opposing forces whose emergence we are witnessing today. This is not to say, of course, that the current situation is utterly new — if there could ever be such a thing — but that the form of old issues has mutated sufficiently that they need to be addressed anew. In this sense, this essay retreads the classic issue in socialist political thought of the relationship between universality and particularity, which can also be phrased as the claim that equality does not mean sameness, or identity. It is this relation between a plurality of particularities and an emergent universality that is at issue in the current opposition to neoliberal, free trade globalization.

My argument has two internally connected emphases: the nature of the system and some thoughts on the opposition. By reason of its double emphases, what I have to say will tend to waver between apology and hope. This is the character of a political discourse, in that it weaves together, or wavers between, what has made my life livable and what may make the world livable for all of us.

I would like to address several key themes for an alternative hegemony — I was going to say “an alternative hegemony in Canada today” but, as I think we know, the nation-state, and even the nation itself, is being destabilized in the current confrontation. The controversy thus embraces Canada, what Canada will be, and its role in the global world order, and is for that reason not simply “in” Canada. To this extent, it renders problematic the whole field of concern that has defined Canadian studies. I have argued before that a “rhetoric of lament” was constitutive of both Red Toryism and left-nationalism “insofar as it uncovers the historic failure of Canadian government to provide the policies that might lead the country from a cycle of dependence towards an independent economic and cultural existence.”³ It is now too late for lament. Or,

better: since history's final page remains to be turned and the project of a communitarian and independent polity still awaits its redemption, when we begin to lament the loss of lament, we enter the space of the contemporary confrontation. A political discourse must describe the confrontation itself, but it does so from within the confrontation.

I will focus on three themes: first, whether the current global system should be conceptualized primarily through "technology" or as "capitalist"; second, the contemporary political confrontation between the neoliberal, free trade vision of globalization and the emerging opposition, which is based on an alliance between social movements; and, third, the role of intellectuals in this confrontation.

My argument depends on a two-tier conception in which certain issues can be traced back to the institution of modernity as the domination of nature for human purposes and others to the specifically capitalist form of this domination. The answer to the question of whether the system should be called "technology"—or, as I would rather say, "technicity"—versus "capitalism" is "both," but not "both/and." "Both" because capitalism is the globally dominant form of "technicity," even though it is not the only possible form, but not "and" because this form is not on the same level as that of which it is one form. Modernity, as technicity, is the over-arching phenomenon, I will argue.

However, it is key to my argument that these two tiers, or levels, bear an interesting and complex relationship. Thus, even though modern technicity is the fundamental phenomenon, this does not mean that the political issues of specifically capitalist globalization are irrelevant to technicity. Nor does it mean that technicity is totally determinant of the main features of global capitalism. In short, I want to propose a conception of the relationship between these two levels in which there is not a one-way determination from the most comprehensive to the most specific, nor a determination in the reverse direction, but rather a complex dynamic of mutual determination that I call a "constitutive paradox."⁴ The coherence of everything I will say depends upon the theoretical viability of this conception of the relationship between two levels of significance.

We can define the first, more restricted, tier to refer to the institutions that are defined and held together by global capitalism. The

second, more extensive, tier refers to the processes that constructed and reinforce modernity understood as the domination of nature for human purposes. At this level, global capitalism can be compared to fascism and communism as alternative forms of modernity. More restricted political comparisons — such as that between free trade neoliberalism and redistributive social democracy — also illustrate the fact that the general structure of modernity can take different institutional forms. The widest issues of contemporary politics are about the preferred form modernity should take. For simplicity, we can thus refer to the “institutional form” of globalizing capitalism in distinction from the “general structure” of modernity. These are the two tiers.

One could describe the general structure of modernity as “limiting” the political options available at the institutional level. Or one could assert the ethico-political importance of the available political options within the general structure. Both of these emphases, while correct as far as they go, pose the issue one-sidedly in terms of the influence of one “level” on the other. I want to describe the relationship between levels as one of reciprocal determination or influence (which is not the simple addition of two one-way determinations), and here, perhaps, the metaphor of tiers or levels breaks down. My argument is that these two tiers are in a relationship that can be called a “constitutive paradox.” A relation of constitutive paradox comes into being when there is a mutually referring, hierarchical relationship between two levels of abstraction, but this hierarchy cannot be stabilized and reverses itself. Thus, at one moment, modernity is the context for the specific form of capitalism and, at another, capitalism is the context for the expansion of the project of modernity. The reversal of the content/context relationship means that the self-referential relation between two levels becomes paradoxical. This paradox is constitutive of social relations. It is no less effective for being paradoxical.

Now I want to return from this theoretical kernel of my argument to my three themes: Should we understand the system as “capitalism” or “technicity”? How should we understand the confrontation between neoliberal globalization and social movements? And what is the role of intellectuals in this confrontation? But first, in order to open up this discussion in the way that the new features of the present demand, I want to sketch briefly those aspects of Left discourse that must be left behind.

Beyond the Certainties of Radical Discourse

Since capitalism has now officially become controversial again, it would seem that the Left could reassert the main lines of its classic critique of capitalism. However, a valid critique must be as contemporary as its object. There are six components of the Left's critique of capitalism that are now obsolete or, at the very least, need to be radically questioned. While their origin, and often clearest expression, is in Marxism, these ideas have a life well beyond any political orthodoxy. Here, I can just list them with only the barest commentary:

1. The project of changing capitalism into a more free and egalitarian, post-capitalist social form has generally been tied to the notion of historical progress, the idea that each successive social formation improves on its predecessor. History as a whole is thus characterized, at least implicitly, as the story of the growth of freedom and, insofar as the freedom of one is taken to be linked to the freedom of all, as the progressive attainment of human equality. The notion of progress is rooted in a Eurocentric focus of history and in a conception of the domination of nature for human purposes that has become incredible.
2. The locus of social change has been placed almost exclusively at the level of the politics of the nation-state. Even though the factory was understood as an important, even crucial, site of struggle, the locus of change between social formations was tied to the conquest of state power in both revolutionary and social-democratic traditions.
3. Related to this state-orientation, there was no theory of bureaucracy, nor the problems of how to manage a large and complex society, as an independent problem for modern societies, whatever their capitalist, socialist, or Communist form. The apparatus of the state was seen as capable of being turned toward other ends and, correlatively, as not involving distinct problematic prerequisites of its own.
4. Again related again to this state-orientation, the industrial form of production, with its military-like internal organization, was regarded as an attained form of progress and, therefore, not as a

point of political contestation. The organization of work, especially its hierarchical structure, was not questioned — even when it was argued that workers’ representatives should sit on factory, or company, boards. While this is perhaps clearest in Lenin’s and even Gramsci’s acceptance of Fordism and scientific management as simply “rational” forms of factory organization, it also functioned as an assumption within social democracy.

5. The notion that social change issues from the confrontation of well-defined classes, despite the ethical motivations of a majority of socialists, served to stifle the ethical impulse and to derail thinking about how it could be institutionalized and encouraged. The notion that the working class is the privileged agent of social change, and that socialism can be seen as an immanent development of the contradictions of capitalism, served to cloud the practical politics of how change could be instituted.
6. Finally, and this is more an absence than an assumption, there was no concept of democracy as general participation in everyday decision making. Whether in the Leninist conception of the party or the social democratic reduction of politics to representative parliamentary politics, the concept of democracy was not opened up to expansion. It was either derided as “bourgeois” or simply accepted as the only viable form of “democracy.”

These six features of the socialist opposition to capitalism define the limits of what can be called the “discourse,” or “imaginary,” of the Left in both its revolutionary and social democratic forms. Certainly, left-wing activists and thinkers will be able to quote to me exceptions to these generalizations and point to groups who contested them in practice. The Council Communists, anarchists, certain trends within social democracy, the co-operative movement, the “refusal to work” tendency, and many more, departed from one or more of these assumptions. Nevertheless, these groups and tendencies did not influence the mainstream of the critique of capitalism, especially with regard to how such groups thought about their own activity. In many cases, there was a remarkable divergence between the practical activity of such groups and the

discourse, or imaginary, that they articulated. For example, the politics of the New Left was primarily a politics of new social movements, as we would call it now, even though it was articulated in terms of “anti-imperialism” and Marxism. Indeed, I would argue, if I could take more space, that to the extent that this ossified language became hegemonic within the New Left, its creative politics degenerated. In any case, this six-point schematization is not meant to denigrate decentralizing and democratic tendencies in the history of socialism but rather to argue that, despite their marginalization, they must become important to us again now. Indeed, it seems to me that the very extent to which previous groups and tendencies questioned these assumptions of left-wing orthodoxy is the measure of their importance to us today.

In our current situation, we need to break with the assumption of progress, of an agent defined by capitalism that achieves progress, and the notion that such progress takes place primarily through the established institutions of the nation-state. We need to think of history more in terms of a break than continuity, more as a regress to be avoided than a completion of progress, and more in terms of an ethical imperative that stands outside history than a competition for control of the industrial and state apparatus. We need to wonder more fundamentally who, and why, agents strive for change and, perhaps most important, we have to cure ourselves of an obsession with success — even though despite, or perhaps because of, this obsession, success has been a very occasional experience indeed.

The Hegemony of Globalization

I will begin by clarifying the hegemonic alliance at work in contemporary globalization with reference to the period of welfare state Fordism that preceded it. Every stable social formation establishes its stability through a hegemonic alliance that permeates the social whole with ideas and practices that cement its constitutive relationships. Such an “institution” of a hegemonic formation may be analyzed through its three basic components. An instituted order defines a key *site* where most important social struggles occur, a key *actor* whose position in that site renders

it of strategic significance for social stability or change, and a *rhetoric* that emanates from this site through the actor but extends to the social whole to the extent that it can elaborate a hegemonic alliance.⁵ The key site in the Fordist period was the nation-state, whereby the citizen-actor articulated an inclusive rhetoric of *social welfare* that permeated the politics of the Fordist period as a whole. The rhetoric of social welfare was expressed in the success of the welfare state in enacting policies with a fair degree of success in mitigating the social conflicts of class, region, and conquest. Such an institutional rhetoric is not simply partisan, to be sure; it was wide enough to encompass the political disagreements of social democrats, liberals, and conservatives and to enable a genuine politics between these groups on the proper means to safeguard social welfare. In this sense, an institutional rhetoric defines the limits within which currently meaningful political discourse occurs by defining the key term around which political debates revolve. The era of the welfare state succeeded in establishing the nation as the key political site through a hegemonic alliance that defined people primarily as citizens. Such a definition became possible through the marginalizing of other, potentially competing, definitions based on the inequalities of class, region, and conquest. This marginalization defined the means of redress of other inequalities as a politics of citizens working through the nation-state. The “becoming-central” of citizen identity is thus crucial to the era of the welfare state. It did not eradicate other identities or social cleavages but “hooked” them into citizen identities through the rhetoric of social welfare. Thus, one of the most important characteristics of citizen identity was its inclusive nature. All adults had, or could, become citizens.*

These three factors of site, actor, and rhetoric work in a reinforcing circle. There is nothing “behind” them; they are not derivable from an obscured, or hidden, more “ultimate” reality. The successful

* The importance of a “fair” immigration policy can be seen from this point of view. Also, the necessity of an international politics focused on the citizen rights guaranteed in other countries. For, if others could not become Canadians, they could attain similar rights elsewhere. The problem of “stateless persons” and of persons within Canada who are not citizens “like” other citizens are thus insoluble dilemmas for such a politics of social welfare. These issues came to the fore with the decline and, perhaps, breakdown of the social welfare state.

hooking-together of these three components such that they override other possible hegemonic alliances is accomplished by the creative politics of an era. It is not derivable from anterior factors such as economic, psychological, or technological factors. Rather, these become “factors” precisely by being hooked into the hegemonic formation. Not everything was included, of course: revolutionary politics was out; so was “possessive individualism”— what we now call neoliberalism. The creative politics of the welfare state succeeded precisely by marginalizing such “extreme” adherences to equality or freedom and confining their appearance to bit parts on the stage set by social welfare. A hegemonic totality is instituted precisely thus, by the affirmation of a central site, a key actor, and an inclusive rhetoric that, working to reinforce each other, allow other concerns to appear only insofar as they are moulded to fit under the hegemonic umbrella. Or, put more exactly, they undergo a double mutation: either concerns such as equality are moulded to exclude equality within work, or “private enterprise,” for example, or the concern for equality within work is marginalized to become a “radical” and “unrealistic” option. This is the sign of a hegemonic rhetoric: that other concerns are moulded to become compatible with it or, alternatively, rejected as unrealistic. In this way, the bounds of “reality” are set by the process of hegemonic institution.

Since my current purpose is not a critique of the welfare state, I will not go into any detail concerning its assumptions that served to marginalize other concerns. Inequality in work organization, the “family wage” that assumed a male household head as primary wage earner, reduction of wealth to money, consumerism, the clientism encouraged by government bureaucracies — all of these played their part. Rather, I want to use this picture of the welfare state to aid a portrayal of the tendencies that are coming into view in the period of its decline, a period that — as we are all now well aware — is characterized by the decline of the nation-state and the rise of globalizing economic forces. However, to pose the issue in terms of a simple opposition between the nation-state and globalization would fail to capture the dynamics at issue. Remember, the Free Trade Agreement and North American Free Trade Agreement were agreements between nation-states; the Multilateral Agreement on Investment and similar pacts are negotiated between sovereign governments.

Nonetheless, there is something new about the current situation. Unlike in the era of the welfare state, governments of nation-states are less dedicated to the citizens they supposedly represent and more oriented toward agreements with other states that would ensure the free flow of capital — primarily investment capital, since the battle for access to national markets for consumer goods produced elsewhere is by and large won. Investment capital has the ear of national governments.* Local and regional capitals cry out in vain for protection from massive international capital — if they cry out at all, since many have already accepted their demise as necessary by accepting the “free trade” slogan of the period. Small and family businesses, local enterprises, less-movable capital investment, are all left out of the pending hegemony of international investment capital. It’s not just capitalism, but capital with a particularly movable character based on a massive and international scale.

However, if movable international capital were all there were to it, the pressure would be merely external on nation-states, and it would be hard to explain the rapid change of direction of national political parties during the period of the decline of the welfare state. In all countries, one party has emerged as the leader of the free market forces with such an intensity as to carry along the others in its wake and marginalize doubters. In Canada, the Conservative Party, in hardly its traditional role, abandoned national and regional capital and came to speak for those enterprises within Canada that were on the verge of internationalization. About-to-globalize national capitals have allied with nation-states and already-movable international capital to pressure nation-states internally toward international agreements dedicated to undoing all restrictions on the movement of capital.

* Investment is understood in the widest sense in current international agreements. With reference to the MIA, for example, Andrew Jackson has shown that it refers to “every stage of the investment cycle — pre-investment, operation and management, and repatriation of profits and dividends. An investment includes rights under contract, intellectual property rights, claims to money and performance, real estate, and government concessions and licences, including rights of access to natural resources and the right to contract to governments.” Andrew Jackson, “The MIA: What Is It?” in *Dismantling Democracy: The Multilateral Agreement on Investment and Its Impact*, ed. Andrew Jackson and Matthew Sanger (Ottawa and Toronto: Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives and James Lorimer, 1988), 12.

Smaller local, regional, and family businesses have been caught in the rush. They have no resources, ideological or otherwise, to oppose — or even register their doubts — about a conception of capitalism in which all social restraints are removed. Even social democrats, who have long since accepted the inevitability of capitalism and restricted their efforts to a mild redistribution of income, have been pulled along. Often, the only actually existing critique of capitalism seems to be a nostalgic cry for a return to the welfare state, for capitalism plus social welfare. There are the remnants of revolutionary Marxists, to be sure, whose root-and-branch critique of capitalism seems to regain its force in the era of globalization — except that it does so without the voice of the working class that was to be the agent of change.

In my view, it is important to notice that we are not experiencing a return to “the logic of capital” but are in the midst of a new hegemonic alliance. Investment capital, multinational corporations, would-be-globalizers, and nation-states (captured by leading free trade parties) and populist moderate right-wingers have worked out their differences sufficiently to propose a new hegemonic alliance whose single coherent thread seems to be opposition to all social restrictions to the free movement of capital. Each faction has more detailed complaints and proposals, of course, but this is the single common thread that has allowed the alliance to be stitched together. I will use the term “community” to refer to all those bonds of social solidarity that would restrict “free trade” in an attempt to tie it to some conception of social responsibility. What this conception might be is still vague, precisely because the forces that might attempt a counter-alliance, and another hegemony, have not crystallized to the same extent. These forces include traditional communities; social movements; family, local and regional capitals; and others who — for a multiplicity of reasons — have much to lose from unrestricted free trade. It is at this point that a lapse into the traditional political discourse, or imaginary, of the Left becomes counterproductive: to narrow the opposition coalition to “the working class” would undercut the whole project from the outset; to think that history is on our side would underestimate the radical change of direction required; the exclusive concentration on the “logic of capital” would turn us away from the tasks of creating a participatory democracy that, it can well be argued, cuts most tellingly

at the main characteristic of the free trade alliance — its elite character, its necessary commitment of social responsibility understood as a delegation of power from the top — in short, the undermining of genuine democracy. The inability of political parties of whatever persuasion genuinely to alter the direction of government once they enter it, and the consequent cynicism with respect to politics widespread in all the “democracies,” points to the *institutional* character of the changes required. The opposition to the free movement of capital must institute a new conception of the social good through a rhetoric that binds all its forces and appeals beyond themselves. It must uncover and respect the *sites* of the new social struggle. It must assert community against the so-called necessities of the market.

Technicity and/or Capitalism?

The phenomenon of neoliberal globalization expresses itself politically primarily as the pressure to reduce to zero restrictions on the movement, investment, and realization of capital. Such a reduction, the pending globalizing hegemony would instruct us, would allow the free flow of resources and goods around the world without the obstructions that nation-states, regions, cities, and communities sometimes attempt to put in place. The image of the world contained in such a proposal is of a complex closed sphere of interconnected circuits, what one might call a “cybernetic totality,” or a “self-referential closed system.”

This image of a self-referential closed system is deeply rooted in the modern imagination. It depends on the objectification of the world accomplished by modern science and technology. Prior to the notion of combining all factors through the streamlining of communication circuits, all factors must be unloosed from subjective, unthematic participations, or what we might call local attachments. This process of abstraction and objectification produces factors that can then be linked into a system. Unlike a pre-modern conception of knowledge, in which each objectified component refers back to its origin in pre-scientific experience and forward to its teleological goal, a cybernetic conception refers to the “horizontal” relations between distinct factors whose

process of formation is assumed and left uninvestigated. Horizontal relations between factors can be unified into a (ideally) closed system precisely insofar as the process of abstraction and objectification is itself obscured and left out of the conception of knowledge.

It is this conception of a self-referential, cybernetic, systemic relation between factors that provides the image of the world proposed by the pending globalizing hegemony. It is no wonder that computers and the so-called “new economy” play a role in this hegemony much larger than their role in the economic reality of actual people. Free trade capitalism proposes itself as the best, or even only, form in which globalization can take place. In this sense, it can be called ideological insofar as it attempts to define competing forms as simply irrational from the beginning and, thereby, narrow the terrain of political argument.

Every self-referential system of sufficient complexity, and a global system must obviously be complex, has what we can call “nodes” that link the circuits of the complex organization. The stock market is an important node, for example, in which the industries that extract resources necessary to production are linked to sources of capital that can finance resource extraction. The nation-state is another node, in which, to take only one example, the educational prerequisites of the workforce required by a global economy are linked to resources and organizations that can provide such education. Another important node is advertising, in which consumption preferences, but, more important, the stimulation of consumption levels themselves are linked to products. The circuits of the global system are all interwoven. They pass through nodes that organize the system by relaying and translating the exigencies of one circuit into information for another. Nodes are the internal perceptual organs of the global body whereby it monitors its own state and attains, or attempts to attain, a temporary equilibrium.

Contemporary political discourse is primarily about the role of such nodes, and their relative importance, in the global system. At present, social democrats are mainly concerned to emphasize that the nation-state and its redistribution of wealth is not an “external” drag on the system but plays an important role in providing the prerequisites for its functioning — like an educated workforce, for example, or the funding of health care through a state system that reduces the drain on private

industry. Neoliberals, of course, are engaged in a one-sided polemic against the state node as a merely unnecessary “interference” in the system. However, even they do not envision the elimination of police forces or deregulation of the stock market. The nation-state will remain a significant node for the foreseeable future; the arguments are over what its role will be and what will be its source of funding.

In this way, neoliberalism attempts to narrow the debate on political alternatives over the form globalization will take. It proposes “free trade capitalism” as the only rational form of a global order. Nonetheless, there is a much wider range of alternatives available for the key nodes of the global system. It is important to remember that the system is not yet in place. The pending hegemony is oriented toward globalization as an active process and thus perhaps necessarily overstates its position in order to marginalize the more balanced views that might slow the process in the short term. Even the *Globe and Mail* editorial quoted earlier pointed out that labour does not move over national borders with the ease of capital. One important politics of the nation-state node will be the extent to which all labour might legally move internationally, thereby undermining the distinction between legal and illegal labour that decisively affects the level of wages. Nonetheless, all the political alternatives oriented toward positioning and streamlining the nodes presuppose the rationality, desirability, or inevitability of the global information circuit.

If the free market hegemony is only one form of the emerging global cybernetic system, then it is necessary to sketch the outlines of the system that stands behind the constrained spectrum of contemporary politics. In this, I am not much interested in the question “how does it work?” but in the conditions necessary for the system to exist as a system. The system in question is one that aims, to the greatest extent possible, to be a self-referential and self-regulating cybernetic system encompassing, in the first place, the production-consumption circuit and, insofar as this circuit is the dominant one, other social circuits. As a starting point, I suggest that all human dwelling involves an ontological relation between a form of society, a form of labour, and a form of nature. I say “a form of” because the historical and cultural forms of these ontological relations vary considerably. Notwithstanding these

variations, however, interrelated forms of society, labour, and nature constitute the primary level of all human dwelling.

The dominant contemporary form of society is consumer society; the dominant contemporary form of labour is scientific technology; and the dominant contemporary form in which humans appropriate nature is as a storehouse of resources. These three forms are interrelated such that, for example, the growth of scientific technology through the development of modern science occurred in tandem with the critique of any immanent teleology in nature such that it became conceived as devoid of intrinsic value and was taken to be merely a means toward humanly posited ends. Similarly, the profusion of manufactured objects required by consumer society requires a continuous development of technologies in order to bring new goods onto the market. Also, the lack of any concept of an inherent natural limit to human action reinforces both the proliferation of new technologies and the reorganization of human self-conceptions of identity through consumer activities. This triad of “consumerism – scientific technology – resources” comprises a unique contemporary form of human dwelling. It is overlaid on other forms that have not yet completely disappeared, the most important being the most recent – production-oriented capital – but remnants of feudal, tribal, and other forms of human dwelling still remain. Nevertheless, the institutional prerequisites of the unique contemporary form of dwelling represented by this triad are in place and can be expected increasingly to displace earlier forms and draw them into its ambit.

I have thus suggested that the “free trade capitalism” advocated by neoliberalism attempts to narrow the range of political alternatives available within the current system by proposing a hegemonic alliance that marginalizes the claims of communities. To oversimplify, the only nodes that they acknowledge are the stock market, the police powers of the state, and the stockpiles of information in computer banks. There is nothing necessary about this politics, and the opening of other possibilities through the defence of communities is an essential contemporary task. However, there is also a deeper question that pertains to the direction of contemporary society as a whole toward the image of the self-regulating system rooted in modernity as such. It is much more difficult to say what, or even whether, contemporary politics can

address this issue, rooted as it is in long-term historical and institutional trends.

I am thus proposing a two-tier conception of society: the first pertains to the alternatives that vie for hegemony and aim to steer the system by affecting the nodes where its circuits overlap. This is the realm within established institutions where the battle against neoliberalism is largely fought through rhetorical and political attempts to gain hegemony. Underneath this manifest level arise questions concerning the institution, in an active sense, of the prerequisites of the system itself: How and why did consumer society emerge? Why is labour today continuously pushed into the form of scientific technology? Why does nature appear as without inherent worth, as merely a stockpile of resources? Instituting, as the bringing-into-being of such prerequisites, is outside, or, better, *beneath* the politics of hegemony.⁶ It is difficult to say what politics, if any, might delay, or even genuinely question, such deep-seated historical commitments. This level of deep-seated historical instituted meaning is sedimented in practices and organizations to such an extent that they often seem inevitable even though they have made our society take the specific form that it has taken and are thus tokens of its historical and cultural particularity. Every hegemonic politics is a foreshortening of the possibilities inherent within historical sedimented institution and achieves its difference from other hegemonic projects precisely by the character of its foreshortening. Difficult as it is to imagine without underestimating the prodigious nature of the project, contemporary social movements have come to question the historic institution of contemporary dwelling as well as the foreshortening proposed by neoliberalism.

Social Movements: A Necessary Interruption

The two-tiered conception of society that I have proposed helps to clarify some tensions within contemporary social movements, tensions that I believe illuminate the complex character of the turning that we are experiencing in our time.

Social movements intervene in the self-referential system established by the circuits of consumerism, scientific technology, and natural

resources to interrupt the formation of the identities of the subjects produced and reproduced within the system. Subjectivity is an essential part of the system's self-referentiality and reproducibility. The system exists through the externalization of humanity and nature such that they can appear as factors within a self-referential system cut off from the sources of these factors in spontaneous creativity. As such, this system must reduce and reproduce subjectivity, not as this creative source, but as a factor internal to the system.

Subjectivity thus appears at three distinct points of the system. Subjectivity appears as a "resource," whether human or natural, that can be utilized by scientific technology to produce objects for consumption. Subjectivity appears as the consumer subjectivity that reproduces itself through choices to buy that form an identity for the individual consumer within the multitude of differential options offered by the market. Subjectivity appears as the scientific subject that works for the corporation in its use of technology to bring new goods onto the market that will stimulate desires for new consumer identities. Thus, subjectivity is not a single factor within the system but a plurality of subject-positions that function in the production and reproduction of the system. The system proffers possibilities for identification through which identities are constructed that reinforce the components of consumerism, scientific technology, and natural resources. The system that is externalized "is" subjectivity itself, formed through externalization into a systematic organization of "factors." Social movements intervene in this self-reproduction of the system, first, to interrupt its reproduction, second, to propose new possibilities for identification, and thus, third, to dislocate the self-referential reproduction of the system. The new subjectivities constructed within social movements open other possibilities, other futures, by redefining the present.

There is, of course, a constant tendency to turn the processes and results of social movements back into factors of the system. Movements, and the individuals who comprise them, remain subject to the systemic processes that attempt to interpolate them as factors. The struggle between new identifications and factors goes on within each person, who can never definitively step outside the system, but who, given the break enabled by social movements, is engaged in identifications that

escape being defined as factors of the system. Thus, social movements are subject to an accommodationist tendency whereby they are pushed to consider their realistic place within the world-system — despite the fact that, if they had considered such “realism” at the outset, they would never have got started. Social movements must always be restarted, for it is at their inception, in the moment of new identification, that their distinctive importance lies. Alongside the accommodationist tendency, there is this continually rediscovered necessity to start again, to be born again, to propose otherwise. It is no wonder that the metaphors of birth and life spontaneously emerge wherever social movements interrupt the system. There is also a third element of social movements, which is not quite a third tendency, that comes out when the “otherwise” hardens into a definite plan, rather than being a perpetual willingness to start again. It is what we might call a negative utopia: the environmental movement might regard the human ability to dominate nature as simply a mistake, a characteristic simply to be expunged, which would, of course, eliminate along with it that which is distinctive about human beings. The feminist movement might regard patriarchy as a simple fall from the grace of a female-dominated society that would erase what is distinctive about men. This tendency, or “hardening of the otherwise into a negative utopia,” inhabits contemporary social movements because of their necessity to maintain their “otherwise” against the accommodationist tendency of the system. Luckily, the tendency toward a negative utopia is always being undone by the most basic aspect of the movements themselves — the desire to go elsewhere, to overflow the channels provided, that encounters a diversity that will not fit within the negative utopia. Despite the tendencies toward accommodation and negative utopia, social movements discover and rediscover themselves in the simple desire to “propose otherwise,” not to fit in the self-reproducing circuits.

In the face of the neoliberal assault, many critics have returned to a defence of the welfare state to argue for its continued viability in the era of globalization. While there is certainly a place for intervention in the global economy by the nation-state, the problem is rather the deeper and wider one of how to revitalize and reinvent community regulation at all levels of society and in relation to a plurality of communities. This

question has a further dimension: Can the plurality of social movements combine to produce a “total” alternative to global capitalism? There are two distinct issues involved in this question. First, how can such a form of combination occur that would not erase the particularity of each movement and community? Second, what model of change would be adequate to the contemporary situation? With respect to the latter question, I have argued elsewhere that a strategy of displacement, rather than revolutionary overthrow, is appropriate.⁷ Here, I want to follow up the question of the form of combination between movements that could make a new hegemonic alliance possible. Of course, this is a political question whose answer can only be found in the fortunes of political activism. Recent anti-globalization mobilizations on the streets of Seattle, Prague, Québec City, and Toronto have brought home, even to the editors of the *Globe and Mail*, that such a politics is already underway. My attempt is simply to articulate theoretically the significance of events that are already going on.

Five Tasks for Intellectuals

One major role of intellectuals in the current confrontation does not diverge greatly from the time-honoured task of the intellectual: critique — showing the limits of the current system in the exploitation and misery that it causes.* A second task in the new alliance is to bring into relief the new features of the alliance and, even more important, to think through the implications of current practices. These two traditional tasks of critical intellectuals include showing the systemic injustices produced by the system and aiding the opposition by attempting to bring its practice to greater theoretical clarity.

* In case it should be supposed that I am here ridiculously inflating the role of university professors, let me clarify that the term “intellectuals” is used here to refer, in a Gramscian sense, to anyone who accepts the task of articulating and clarifying social practice, especially social change. Some in universities may accept this role, but I take it as obvious that very few do. I also take it as given that the greater number of intellectuals in this sense are activists whose base is in social movements themselves.

But while these traditional tasks remain important, they are no longer sufficient. Due to the plurality of groups and discourses in the alliance, the intellectual must take on the additional task of translating the norms being violated to different communities. This may enable the reasons imbedded in their different particularities for embracing the common principle of alliance to ground a new conception of the “public” as the interaction between, and alliance of, communities.

A fourth task can be defined in relation to the violation of norms. It is crucially important now to oppose the pervasive tendencies to cynicism and hectic consumption through the recovery, preservation, and appropriation of ethical norms themselves. Such norms are imbedded in the religious, philosophical, and political traditions that are being liquidated today by the corporatization of artistic, cultural, and intellectual life — not least, though not solely, in the universities. In this, it is not so much a matter of preserving specific norms themselves but of preserving the cultural heritage whereby norms have been, and are, formed.⁸

A fifth task: continuing the project of Canadian studies. The importance of the preservation and critical appropriation of cultural heritages brings me back to the issue that I posed in passing at the outset — that the role of Canada, and the Canadian cultural-political heritage, has become questionable in the context of the global alliance against the globalization of free trade. Here, I think, it is important to view the cultural and political heritages of nations imbricated in the historical construction of Canada as important resources for the ethical norms whose violation is now at issue. In extensive interviews with young Canadians, Myrna Kostash recently found that, when they said “Canada,” it was imbued with a content of social justice that they experienced as endangered today.

If, by the old political culture, the pre-revolutionary political culture, we mean the Canada in which the institutions and morality of the public interest dominated over the private, there is at least anecdotal evidence from my interviewees . . . that the public space in which that interest had agency has not been completely evacuated. These are instances of the reiteration, after so many years of a grim morality of survival-of-the-fittest, of something like hope. There is the persistent identification with the idea of Canada as a shared “commons” of social consciousness.⁹

This may be the most important task for those of us involved with “Canadian studies” today — to uncover, preserve, and critically continue those traditions that have contributed to opposing and leavening the corporate agenda through the construction of communities.

Continuing
Dispossession:
Clearances as
a Literary and
Philosophical
Theme

Critique, Hope, and Inhabitation

*a blue heron
and it occurs to me
that if I were to die at this moment
that picture would accompany me
wherever I am going
for part of the way*
AL PURDY,
"The Last Picture in the World"¹

The study of culture in English Canada seems now to be suffused with the sense that something has come to an end. In this sense it perhaps participates in a wider feeling of fatigue, that the cultural resources at our disposal are insufficient to address the current situation. This situation presents itself as one of either impending catastrophe or long-term decline and corresponds to the already-underway normalization of Canada as a junior member of the world's dominant nations. There is not much sense any more that the embedded structural inequalities of the past can be criticized and confronted in a manner that would motivate renewal. Within such a mood of

dejection and even despair, the activity of criticism itself runs the danger of promoting cynicism by showing the ideals of the past as always already implicated in power structures and thereby contributing to the very impasse that it would diagnose. In order to refuse this repackaging as cynicism, critique must admit to its secret alliance with hope, as naïve and precarious as hope may seem at the moment. It may be impossible to speak this hope positively, but it must be acknowledged to lurk within the negation of the negation.² I will speak of dispossession as historical fact and literary remembrance to confront the continuing dispossession that must be negated in any speech about justice. The hope for justice may well appear to us hedged and tentative, its implementation unclear and even impossible, its demand too high for redemption. But thought without hope for justice would retreat from its public responsibility — which is to tell the truth apart from pragmatic compromise.

There is an ancient figure of thought that describes the idea of criticism through the metaphor of distance. We need to “get some distance,” we say, or “move beyond” or “get outside,” in order not to be overwhelmed by the effects of proximity and involvement. As Marshall McLuhan famously encapsulated it, fish know nothing of water.³ Distance from involvement allows criticism. The notion that travel broadens the mind stems from a similar proposition: that encounter with the strange ways of others allows one to see the ways of one’s own people as simply one way of doing things and not the only way or the only properly human way. As Xenophanes of Colophon is reputed to have said, if horses had gods, they would look like horses, and the gods of cattle would look like cattle.⁴ Through distance, I can understand that the human form of human gods is just a deformation due to the particularities of humans and is not the necessary form of gods as such. Travel is a good remedy for narcissism.

The humanizing task of literature also fits into this figure of distance: stories that show that the different ways of other people are not evidence of a lack of humanity but rather of a different way of being human, that open us to a different attitude toward our own practices and beliefs. Martha Nussbaum’s recent defence of the humanities repeats this classic figure under the name “narrative imagination,” which focuses on “what it might be like to be in the shoes of a person different from oneself, to be an intelligent reader of that person’s story, and to understand the

emotions and wishes and desires that someone so placed might have.”⁵ Critical distance depends upon prising apart particularity and universality, such that one’s own particular practices are no longer confused with universal and necessary forms and other particular forms become equally possible exemplars of universality. This prising apart opens a discursive space that makes the figure of criticism as distance possible.

Without for a moment suggesting that one can do without this original distancing, or even that its enlightening potential is exhausted, I want to suggest that it has come upon a limit that has something to do with the uniqueness of our own place in space and time. To give some force to this suggestion, I will explore another metaphor for thought, one that suggests we need to “get inside” and “live within,” we might say, or *inhabit* the particularity of a form of life. The danger of the metaphor of distance is that it may seem as if nearness or particularity is itself error. However, if we read our stories for what they show of inhabitation, their particularity may not discount them from universality but be precisely the clue that turns them toward universalization. Inhabitation, I want to suggest, is a leading and founding metaphor for the need and desire of our time. If the fish were in our place, perhaps what it might most need to know would be water. Or, for ourselves, what we most need to know *here* and *now* is air, water, food, tools — the nearness and particularity of a way of life that may be sustained. If there is something to this, inhabitation further suggests that there is an unacknowledged symbiosis between universality understood through distance and the dispossession of peoples that disrupts and prevents inhabitation — in other words, that the discursive space constructed through prising apart particularity and universality is implicated in contemporary homelessness. I take it as sufficiently established that universality can be neither discarded nor ignored without producing an incoherent discourse. Put in rhetorical language, no discourse can be ordered without a God-term. The suspicion that universality in the form of distance has reinforced dispossession thus means that a recovery of inhabitation projects another form of universality that would incorporate the hope that I hesitantly mentioned at first. What I want to say here will not focus on inhabitation directly but on the continuing dispossession that makes inhabitation a goal for thought, writing, and criticism — not so much on justice as on its systematic absence.

English Canadian Culture

*The dream of tory origins
Is full of lies and blanks,
Though what remains when it is gone,
To prove that we're not Yanks?*

DENNIS LEE, "When I Went Up to Rosedale"⁶

We have been living through a historical period in which the concept of identity has been a major preoccupation in English Canada. The historical period that is now ending can be dated from after the Second World War — let us say when the Canadian Citizenship Act was passed in 1946. This act referred to Canadians as British subjects and allowed immigrants who were not already British subjects to undertake the Oath of Allegiance for Purposes of Citizenship, which made reference to the current monarch. Only in 1977 was it clarified that the reference to the Queen was in her capacity as Queen of Canada, not that of Great Britain, and the term "British subject" replaced by "Commonwealth citizen." However, this official history is just the tip of the iceberg: Canada was ceasing to be a British Dominion *in the eyes of its citizens*, and the question arose as to who we were. The period from 1946 to, let's say, 2002 — when the first Canadian troops were deployed in Afghanistan — was characterized by a progressive retreat from British to Commonwealth and then to Canadian citizenship and a consequent withdrawal of previously established referents for identity that led to the necessity to give some new content to the idea of being Canadian. Using 2002 to date, if not the end of this period, then at least the beginning of its end, means to suggest that Canada is becoming a normal nation whose international activities represent neither more nor less than the self-interest of its dominant class and that is as self-satisfied in its official identity as any other nation.

The attempt to articulate an English Canadian identity required a retreat from larger English-speaking identities into which we were drawn. The increasing distance from Britain meant an increasing pull toward the United States. The notion of a distinct identity required a defence of its "particularity" as against the universal claims of the

American empire.* Thus, the reversal of the figure of criticism was built into the situation that produced an anxiety about identity. The fundamental question was the relation between the particularity of our own form of life and human universality. In a situation in which the metaphor of distance was insufficient, there was the beginning of a turn toward inhabitation, though it took place exclusively in the form of belonging to a *national* community.⁷

Alongside the rich discourse about identity, an intractable issue blocked resolution or definition of English Canadian identity. There is no political body that represents English Canada, neither the federal government, nor the provinces, nor any other form of political representation — which explains why cultural forms, both popular and intellectual, have played a major role in this discourse. English Canada tends to disappear “up” into Canada itself or “down” into the various regional, ethnic, etc., groups that make it up. The slide between English Canada and other identities, up or down, means that its social identity is caught in what I call a “constitutive paradox.” Since it cannot function as a fixed container, the various elements within English Canada come to stand for English Canada itself. Multiculturalism has most often played this role: English Canada may seem to be no more than the many different groups that comprise it.

The discourse of the identity of English Canada from 1946 to 2002 had three main components.⁸ First, it contained a communitarian component that goes back to the settlement of many areas by ethnic communities, the Loyalist rejection of American individualism that was combined with its defence of monarchy, and, as many have argued, the human solidarity brought forth by the rigours of a harsh climate. This component goes a long way toward explaining the more generous social welfare policies that have predominated here in comparison to those of our neighbour to the south. Second, there has always been a plurality of linguistic,

* The classic formulation of this defence of particularity in Canada is of course by George Grant. For example: “The belief in Canada’s continued existence has always appealed against universalism. It appealed to particularity against the wider loyalty to the continent. If universalism is the most ‘valid modern trend,’ then is it not right for Canadians to welcome our integration into the empire?” *Lament for a Nation* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1970), 85.

ethnic, and religious communities so that one community could never adequately represent the whole, a fact that asserted itself in the debates that led up to the Canadian Multiculturalism Act of 1988. Reflection on the relation of identity and diversity in this spirit has been a dominant theme in English Canadian culture. The third component is more controversial but also, in my own view, more important, since it structured the very possibility of the discourse itself as a withdrawal from larger English-speaking collectivities. There was a critique of empire rooted in the historical dominance of Canada by French, British, and American empires and the consequent popular attempt to find independence in far-flung settlements. Critique of empire extended to recognition of how power structured perception and thought as well as political economy.

These three components comprised a discourse of English Canadian culture in which identity was the overriding, ordering theme. This discourse has not yet disappeared, but it is clear that its end has already begun. Signs of this end include: abandonment of the communitarian component through increasing acceptance of the liberal individualism dominant in other English-speaking polities; reduction of the large-scale questions about plural identities and forms of life in the multiculturalism debate to an official policy — a policy that has itself come under harsh criticism;* abandonment of Canada's international peacekeeping role for partisan participation in conflicts. We are beginning to see a newly confident Canada with which English Canada largely identifies and for which the question of our identity both at home and internationally is not a source of anxiety. We are replacing doubt with an unreflective confidence that parades itself as self-knowledge precisely by not asking any difficult questions.**

* The *Globe and Mail* has recently argued that "multiculturalism should be struck from the national vocabulary. [Canadian values] shouldn't be lost in an endless discussion about the accommodation of differences." As if the recognition of differences implies the absence of a common discourse! — in which case how, in what discourse, would such recognition take place? See "Editorial: Strike Multiculturalism from the National Vocabulary," *Globe and Mail*, 8 October 2010, <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/time-to-lead/part-6-editorial-strike-multiculturalism-from-the-national-vocabulary/article1314363/>.

** It is this cultural attitude that both reflects and reinforces the fact that "Canada is an imperialist country — not a superpower, but a power that nevertheless benefits from and

At times I fear that I am almost alone in noticing that this is the last act of a tragedy — a tragedy not only because it is an outcome eminently to be regretted but because the outcome stems from an internal failure sufficiently to criticize the individualism and capitalism of the society within which it was articulated. When Gad Horowitz said that English Canada was still “looking for its Lévesque,”⁹ no one sufficiently appreciated that it was of the nature of this social formation to project a goal that it could never possess without throwing aside the history of compromise and “muddling through” that had made it what it was — that is to say, ceasing to be itself. What the beginning of the end allows us to see is that the notion of a national identity and community in English Canada cannot play a coordinating and integrating role because it is no longer absent. Its absence made it the locus of a desire that provided the glue with which the three components of the discourse could be compacted and therefore gave it its public impact. Perhaps now pulling on the controversial thread of critique of empire in the English Canadian discourse about identity may allow a renewal of critical thought whose continuity with our history does not fall into the evasions that have led to the current ending. The turn toward particularity in the period of identity-anxiety stopped too soon at the nation-state and now needs to be pushed toward inhabitation in a more radical sense.

actively participates in the global system of domination in which the wealth and resources of the Third World are systematically plundered by capital of the Global North.” Todd Gordon, *Imperialist Canada* (Winnipeg: Arbeiter Ring, 2010), 9. It should be pointed out, however, that this formulation — which summarizes the book’s argument and therefore, one assumes, aims at precision — obscures the conceptualization of imperialism by simultaneously invoking the Cold War era designation of the imperialized nations as the “Third World” and the Willy Brandt-derived evasion through the displacement North-South. Neither of these encapsulates the fundamental relations of imperialism. Moreover, Gordon’s assertion that this contemporary situation invalidates the historical analyses of dependency theory (15–22) fails to take into account the significant changes set into place by international capitalism’s recent neoliberal regime and simply reasserts in an ahistorical fashion the prior analysis of Marxists who failed to analyze the specificity of the capitalist class in Canada. It is, of course, quite consistent to accept the historical validity of the dependency theory, its continuing relevance as a significant current of the identity of English Canada (1946–2002), and yet note its passing (at least in the sense of *national* dependency) in the current stage. My analysis in *A Border Within: National Identity, Cultural Plurality, and Wilderness* (Montréal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1997) (27–47) follows this route.

Clearances

Did we come for nothing? We thought we were summoned, the aging head-waiters, the minor singers, the second-rate priests. But we couldn't escape into these self-descriptions, nor lose ourselves in the atlas of coming and going.

LEONARD COHEN, *Book of Mercy*¹⁰

When I read the short story *Clearances*, by Alistair MacLeod, I trembled at the scale of his accomplishment, his amazing capacity to distill centuries of suffering and bring it into the present day, combined with a simplicity and terseness of prose.¹¹ For years I had dreamed of putting the experience of the Clearances into a political-philosophical reflection. To anyone with a Scottish background, the term “Clearances” evokes a mixture of nostalgia and rage, and of other unnamed emotions that have come down through centuries. For others, of course, the event probably needs explanation. The last great rebellion of Highland Scotland against the incursion of England and the already subjugated Lowlands ended in 1745 with the defeat at Culloden.* After that, the clan-system of the Highlands was destroyed by both gradual destitution and violent shocks. The chiefs were turned into property holders, often absentee ones, and the general population who served no role in the southern-dominated capitalist system were cleared to make room for sheep.

MacLeod's story tells of a descendent of these people who leaves Cape Breton only once in his life, to fight in the Second World War. On leave in England for one week, he takes a trip to the northwest of Scotland. There he encounters a shepherd speaking the Gaelic who becomes his friend. Noting both the Canadian uniform and the Gaelic, the shepherd asks, “You are from Canada? You are from the Clearances?” Notice that the “you” in this address expresses an identity between the descendent and the ancestor across time though the historical event. His absence in Scotland is expressed through a reference back in time that

* This explanation should account for the quick reference to Culloden in my *Identity and Justice* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008), 84, in explaining how the context of empire structures self-other relations and also, perhaps, that my dream of a philosophical-political reflection on the Clearances is partially, though secretly, redeemed in that text.

renders him still in place. His place is rendered through the memory of dispossession. Notice also that he is a shepherd, that he has survived by coming to terms with the sheep that replaced the people. The language still survives to link these two people across two divided destinies that, as long as memory survives, can perhaps struggle to remain, or become, one.

The shepherd goes on to ask him, "Is it possible that in Canada you can own and keep your land?" While at this point he answers in the affirmative, at the end of the story, back in Cape Breton, his son urges him to go along with an offer to sell his land to American tourists for a summer residence, an urging he experiences as "a family betrayal." The tourist had said, "not many people here," to which he replied, "a lot of them gone to the States. A lot of the younger people gone to Halifax or southern Ontario." Empty land, that is to say, land *emptied* of the people who worked there and inhabited it. The way that all of America was emptied, we should not forget, of other peoples that inhabited it. As the tourist says, "nice and quiet." The son's betrayal is neither unmotivated nor mean. It is urged by the need to make a living and the desire to pass on a future to his children. The story ends without a decision.

Can he keep his own land? He answered "yes," with the dream that so many of the displaced from the Old World placed in the New, but it is doubtful that he will be able to retain his land and even more doubtful that it will pass to his descendents. The land is now worth more as an empty view of the ocean than as a place where humans mixed their labour with the land and risked their lives on the sea to survive. The first time, sheep were worth more than the people. Now it is the view. The first time, it was the force of the landowner that expelled them. Now it is the "free market" economy that forces the son to look elsewhere to care for his family. Will the son, this time, be able to evade the fate of his ancestors? Will the land be more than a means for money making? Will the people be able properly to inhabit their land?

The bare bones of this story do not do justice to its compressed and allusive depth. MacLeod has managed to express that the Clearances continue, that one must still leave behind what one loves due to the need to survive, that we do not simply enter into the future but are cut off from the past, and thus that the future looms terribly as a betrayal of the past. A family betrayal. This time the son, the disloyal future; last time,

the father, the chief of a clan turned into a landowner who evicted his tenant relations. Thus the mythology of Culloden among Scots to this day, the site of the final defeat of the Highland Scots rebellion that at its peak had threatened to invade London and, one says with trepidation, was held back as much by the unthinkable of this possibility of confronting the centre of empire as by the balance of arms. John Prebble is the popular historian of this moment and its consequences.

At Colloden, and during the military occupation of the glens, the British government first defeated a tribal uprising and then destroyed the society that had made it possible. The exploitation of the country during the next hundred years was within the same plan of development — new economies introduced for the greater wealth of the few, and the unproductive obstacle of a native population removed or reduced. In the beginning the men who introduced the change were of the same blood, tongue and family as the people. They used the advantages given them by the old society to profit from the new, but in the end they were gone with their clans. The Lowlander has inherited the hills, and the tartan is a shroud.¹²

From this point, the Scots were incorporated into the Empire, not least as troops for its expansion and defence against the rebellions of other peoples who were losing their lands and way of life. This tragedy dogs the Scots thereafter: having lost their own land and way of life, many of them participated in the military adventures that forced the same on other people. “Highland soldiers were the first of Britain’s colonial levies, called to arms to police their own hills and then to fight in the Crown’s imperial wars. Until they were disciplined and regimented like any English battalion of the line, until their peculiar identity had become a harmless military caricature, they were treated with suspicion and distrust.”¹³ It is this suspicion to which Alistair MacLeod refers when he uses General Wolfe’s words to describe the Highland troops on the Plains of Abraham as the linchpin of his novel *No Great Mischief* — “They are hardy, intrepid, accustomed to a rough country, and no great mischief if they fall.”¹⁴ The double-sidedness can be neither resolved through a choice nor bridged by a dialectic: dispossession

leads to emigration, exile, and nostalgia but also to despair, capitulation, and collaboration.

But not always. Consider the case of Angus MacDonald, who had been with Montrose until the Glencoe Massacre (1692) in the aftermath of the Jacobite Uprising of 1689. Afterward, his descendent, named Angus P. McDonald, found his way to America, where he married into the Nez Perce tribe. Based on his Highland experiences, Angus admired their similar attachment to the land as the embodiment of community when he met them through his work for the Hudson's Bay Company in the 1840s. James Hunter has told the story:

The part of the world where Angus McDonald was born in 1816 was among the first to be subject to disruption of the sort which Angus was afterwards to witness in the American West. The destruction of the Lordship of the Isles; the Glencoe massacre; clearance and eviction of the sort which occurred in the Strath of Kildonan: these events were to affect Highlanders in a way that was analogous to the impact on Native Americans of occurrences like the Nez Perce War. . . . Both on the Flathead Reservation and in the Scottish Highlands, for example, people whose language and traditions have long been under threat are presently making strenuous efforts to ensure that these key aspects of their collective identities are safeguarded and regenerated.¹⁵

For many of the peoples who populated America due to the ravaging of their land, culture, and tradition in the Old World, as well as for those peoples upon whom the same process was inflicted in the New, any discussion of culture now must include an account of dispossession that would explain their polemical relation to the current order. Indeed, any account of culture that intends to go beyond the merely apologetic to understand that which has made our era what it is needs such a concept of dispossession.

Such, I believe, is the intention of Alistair MacLeod's short story. Its achievement in twenty pages I find simply staggering. For anyone whose national and family history is caught up in the Clearances, for anyone with even a slight knowledge of what it has meant, MacLeod's story makes a connection between historical epochs magisterial in its

implications. It refers to the historical clearances that we must not forget, but even more it situates our Canada, now, as the site of renewed clearances. It demands a deeper penetration into what happens with the buying and selling of land, to what is hidden by the current cant over the supposedly free market, to the anxiety of identity without the possibility of inhabitation.

The power of a well-crafted narrative articulates such a demand to a reader's experience. Such a story demands a reader who will fill in its compressed allusion with personal and family depth. Yet it seems clear that not all, perhaps even not many, readers will fill this bill. It demands a reader who in a sense already understands what the story is saying before it is read. The story participates in a history, articulates that history and transmits it, makes it present, but it is not that history. It alludes to, but does not tell, the whole story. Its huge ambition works because of this compression, but the compression demands a reader who can decompress. What does the story say to one for whom this whole history is unknown or, at best, a parochial concern of a too-self-involved people?

Clearances and English Canadian Culture

*not willing another empire but history's pulsemeasured with another hand,
as continents roll over in their sleep*

DIONNE BRAND, *Inventory*¹⁶

A story is about particular people — it narrates an event — yet every good story wants to say something beyond that. Other peoples have suffered their clearances too. Indeed, they are too numerous to list, let alone tell. All of those other stories could help us make sense of the continuing clearance, of the betrayal of the past by the future and of the future by the past, of the cut in time from which emigration appears as the only solution and to which empire provides the only continuity that makes these events into a single history.

Let me consider briefly just one other. In *Disappearing Moon Cafe*, Sky Lee brackets her story of the Wong family by Wong Gwei Chang's

mission to retrieve the bones of the dead railway workers for the Benevolent Associations in Vancouver. The allusion to Canada's national dream, and its cost in backbreaking work, loneliness, and death, alerts the reader that telling the story of the Wong family is an exercise in recovering bones and fulfilling one's duty to the ancestors that bears an unsettling relation to the national state. The writer, Kae, understands that "I am the resolution to this story." She remarks that her friend "has a dual personality" to which Hermia responds, "maybe all free women do."¹⁷ If the one who articulates the Wong family history of incest, secrecy, and suppression of women becomes free, she does so only at the cost of a duality that implicates her in the secrecy and suppression. Gwei Chang, the seeker of bones, reflects at the end of his life that "it wasn't the white hysteria that frightened him as much as what chinamen had allowed themselves to become in the face of it — pitiful men, with no end for their self-pity in sight. All the more pitiful because they once had divine authority, if only over their downtrodden women."¹⁸ Kae's story tells, as it must, of the white hysteria, the dispersed bones produced by the railway, but also of pitiful Chinamen, and, above all, the suffering of women — a suffering perpetrated by women upon women, by mother-in-law upon daughter-in-law, in the name of the male line — much as the name of empire forms the context within which English Canadian culture produces an anxiety of identity.

The suppression of women from time out of mind in the name of the male line cannot neatly be separated from the oppression of women by women, just as the clearance of the Highlands cannot be separated from the role of Highland troops in robbing other nations of their lands. If there ever was an original justice — of a freedom of women untouched by their role in suppression or a Gaelic-speaking Highland inhabitation untouched by participation in imperial aggression — it is not for us. The inheritors of dispossession know that survival means implication in the mechanisms of continuing dispossession. Justice must be the rebellion against this implication in empire even while knowing that it is inevitable. Angus MacDonald saw analogies to Highland inhabitation in the tribal society of Native Americans. Kae will write the story of free women even while portraying the role of women in the suppression of women. Such justice cannot be a rebellion of the innocent but of those who confront

empire and in the same moment rise against their own implication in that empire. A negation of the negation to be sure, but one that does not yield a positive Hegelian enthusiasm for the result of history. One that is haunted by a nostalgia for a lost and unrecoverable prior and that goes into the future shadowed by the partiality of any justice that can be brought forth after dispossession. A justice crossed by tragedy.

To see one woman disintegrate is tragic, but to watch an entire house fall — that has the makings of a great Chinese tragedy. I know I've had to turn my face away many times. In front of me, there is nothing to speak of except torpid text and a throbbing cursor on a black-and-white computer screen — electric shadows — but even this is too evocative of the old pain. I am afraid to look intently. I might turn to stone, petrified by the accumulated weight and unrelenting pressure of so many generations of rage.¹⁹

The temptation, one that will never be erased because it is the source of ideology in its reassuring partiality, is to tell only the stories that fit into the world as it has come to be. That turns away from the nostalgia, the secrecy, the old pain, in the name of a sleek, well-oiled key that will open the lock to a successful future. Myrna Kostash addresses the writer of such apologetic stories:

But you do not think that all stories must be told. It is the only way out of the myth, you say — this leave-taking without story or significance. It is the only freedom. But I say, what about those who never did leave a trace, whom history never inscribed? For whom myth is not the untrustworthy grandiloquence of story, as you would have it, but the modest trace elements of people's secrets held in common? I look at your "freedom" from secrets and see the sly get-away of a single man whose story is already accounted for anyway. After all, you belong to The Word.²⁰

Canada now, and its culture, is the place of both The Word and the modest trace of secrets, to borrow Kostash's phrasing. There is an optimistic implication with empire that selects and moulds its stories carefully to

slide ideologically into the well-oiled future. As Dionne Brand has written, reflecting that both torturers and victims have become invisible here, “Who the hell are you? That’s a dangerous question. And this is a dangerous city. You could be anybody here. That is what first took me when I walked among people on the streets. Then one morning I sat on the subway train and I heard a laughter that reminded me of when I was little, and right away I knew it would be easy to disappear here.”²¹ One can disappear into the indistinction of forgetting that official culture proposes, or one can ask about who one is, in which case one must confront one’s anxious and unsettling implication in empire’s success that wills itself to tell all, that risks being turned to stone by the immense weight of turning against the tide of history. Between these two alternatives one must choose. Culture remains polemical.

Locative Thought

history tells such

beautiful lies

& if

& if

ROY MIKI, “five takes for a poem on family”²²

One thing should be clear by now: that a philosophy and cultural theory without a concept of clearance would be an apology for the continuation of structures of power that derive from empire. Thus, it would degenerate into ideology. I have argued in *Identity and Justice* and attempted to sustain here in a different fashion that the secret of Canada is the unofficial dream of self-rule by the dispossessed.²³ It is kept secret through the perpetuation of the lie that the empire, then the nations-state, sets the neutral rules whereby its parts interact, a lie whose ideological expression is the notion that self-other relations in Canada have achieved “tolerance, restraint and mutual respect.”²⁴ This analysis implies a critique of official culture that shows that its tendency is to cover up its opposite in a land-based ethic, to substitute historical continuity for the break represented through inhabitation of the land.²⁵

Empire is the dominance of the way of life of a people by an external power. We may define dispossession as being pushed out of one's place by an external power that makes impossible the continuation of the patterns of work and culture that have sustained life until that historical moment. Inhabitation, the negation of this negation, is the inverse. It is the sustenance of the life of a people that is expressed in work and culture through the continuity of time. After dispossession, such inhabitation becomes both the object of nostalgia for a prehistoric condition and that of desire for a future state. Inhabitation is the name for a mode of existence without empire. Thus, it may become the locus for hope.

I give the name "locative thought" to that thought that seeks inhabitation. Location in English when used as a noun often means simply "place" or "site," but it can also be used as a verb to mean "locating" or "being located," which refers to the locative case in Latin. In this active sense, location involves placing in relation to other places. Inhabitation replaces the metaphor of distance with one of proximity, though its contrast with dispossession excludes the possibility of a pure and unbroken proximity as such. Proximity is the form of nostalgia and desire of belonging, through work and culture, in a place. We have in Canada the example of peoples whose thinking is in place. James (Sákéj) Youngblood Henderson states that Aboriginal knowledge "reflects the complexity of a state of being within a certain ecology" and goes on to explain that "experience is the way to determine personal gifts and patterns in ecology. Experiencing the realms is a personal necessity and forges an intimate relationship with the world."²⁶ Such thinking would be, in the terms that I have suggested here, the active component in inhabitation.

I have been saying that the figure of criticism has reversed toward inhabitation and that this reversal is rooted in the beginning of the end of English Canadian culture's age of anxiety. Within that culture and time, stories were told that hearkened back to earlier instituting moments of dispossession and illustrated the continuing dispossession that cut the culture off from its goals. But locative thought is not inhabitation as such; it is thought in which the figure of criticism has reversed from distance toward inhabitation. Locative thought is the thinking of a people seeking its place and therefore of a people that has not yet found its place. A

people that has undergone dispossession. In our case this is not a single clearance but a plurality that encounters fellow stories not in the site of the original dispossession but in the site after immigration structured by the hope, or dream, that one can own and keep one's own land. The irony is intended. The hope of keeping one's own land occurs in the place where dispossession has been visited upon the original inhabitants.

In seeking inhabitation, one of our key tasks is to recognize the inhabitation of others. It would be tempting to say that the plurality of stories of dispossession can be totalized into a universal concept of not-dispossession, emancipation through inhabitation, or justice. Regarding the horizon of our age, which is manifested in nostalgia and desire, it is not possible to say whether inhabitation in this universal sense is a political project capable of realization. But without such a horizon, the projects we imagine will not speak truthfully to our condition but will degenerate into the apology and ideology of official culture. So we must leave the place of inhabitation indeterminate between a political vision of the good life and a philosophical image of justice. Locative thought needs hope, and seeks it in "the modest trace elements of people's secrets held in common,"²⁷ as Myrna Kostash said, even though the place of this hope remains indeterminate — for we are not in place but on the way.

APPENDIX 1

Jean-Philippe Warren, “Are Multiple Nations the Solution? An Interview with Ian Angus”

J - P W: Most Québécois are ignorant of this stream of thought that was extremely influential in English Canada in the 1960s and 1970s. Can you say a few words on the principles and claims of “dependency theory”?

IA: Let me begin with Harold Innis.¹ He is one of the strongest influences in my work on Canada. Harold Innis is the key English Canadian dependency theorist. Innis’s work is the most important political economy-oriented history of Canada, because Canada is understood in terms of the staple resources that predominated both at certain points of time and in different regions. Resource extraction was by a dependent colony to the advantage of an imperial centre ruled by a capitalist class with both national and imperial connections. These relationships of communication and transportation structure social development to the advantage of the empire and the disadvantage of the colonial residents and workers. Paris fashions underlay the fur trade. On the basis of Innis’s economic dependency theory, one can begin to analyze phenomena throughout society and thought and to show how this dependency makes it difficult for us to address directly the political problems with which we are faced. This has been the task of much of my work, what one might call a political theory and even philosophy of dependency.

J - P W: Can you be more specific about this?

IA: The fish off the Grand Banks was probably the first of Canadian staples. The first period of Canadian history is shaped by cod fisheries because it was this raw material that was exported to Europe. Then came the fur trade, and later on mining and materials of that sort, and then wheat (in a movement that goes from East to West). In British Columbia, the export of lumber is still very important for our local economy (even to this day the number of new housing starts in the United States is an index of how good the economy in British Columbia is!).

Innis had the great virtue of treating the Canadian economy not as a separate entity but in terms of its dependent relation to an imperial centre. First France, then England, and then the United States. It changed over time. To me that is the ground on which one asks any serious questions about Canada and its present situation and the future. While my own work is not political economy, I believe that any serious asking of political and philosophical questions must bear in mind the formative influence of economic interests. To begin from the problem of dependency is to keep foremost the notion that our national institutions derive from unequal economic and political relations. The debate between Marxism and dependency theory in the 1970s was an important moment in which the specifics of this history and its present significance were debated. Unfortunately, that debate was abandoned rather than resolved, because of the onslaught of aggressive free trade neoliberalism that came after. In Latin America, also, one has been cut off from these earlier debates. In order to confront the continuing legacy of dependency we need to uncover and push forward these issues.

J-PW: As you know, there is a very ongoing strong debate in Québec about the relevancy and necessity of nationalism in a modern or even postmodern society. Some argue that nationalism is by its own nature inevitably racist or xenophobic. On the opposite side, some scholars, as George Grant, viewed favourably Québec nationalism. What is your position on nationalism in general and on Québec nationalism in particular?

IA: Perhaps I can break that question into two parts.

I need first to separate the question of English Canadian nationalism from Québec nationalism. This separation struck me somewhere

around the mid-1980s, I think. There were two influences. One was a francophone reviewer of a SSHRC [Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada] proposal that I wrote. This reviewer pointed out that when I said Canadian I was really referring to strictly English Canadian writers. I had to admit that was true. I wanted to talk about Canada but didn't know about Québec sufficiently. Later, Robert S. Schwartzwald (who is currently the editor of the *International Journal of Canadian Studies* and has recently taken up a chair of English studies at the Université de Montréal), with whom I worked a lot at the University of Massachusetts, said to me: Why don't you just talk about English Canada? And somehow (was it the time or my own stupidity?) this came like a revelation to me. It liberated me to say what I wanted to say without dealing with the problem of how to deal with the parts of Canada, and specifically the francophone Canada with which I didn't have first-hand experience. For me, thinking politically and philosophically is done in the first person; it's I or WE. For that reason I always avoided speaking for others. Speaking for others is a way of continuing their dependency by appropriating an imperial, central voice. I think one should speak about that to which one belongs. This was very important to me. It made me see that there are three main groupings of people in Canada: First Nations, the francophones, mainly in Québec, and what I call English Canada. I emphasize that I use this name not because of the people's origins but because of the language they speak. In Québec you will easily understand this, but here, this statement is a very controversial one because people tend to think of individuals rather than the language. This is related to the fact that language and communication are quite often treated superficially in English Canada as simply a means, of transportation, of communication, as opposed to a forming influence in public life. I later focused on the notion of a medium of communication in developing what I call a dependency theory of communication.

After that realization, my work focused specifically on English Canada. My reflections came together in *A Border Within*. I was very concerned to address what was already a rising feeling, mainly because of the problems in the Balkans at the time, that nationalism was necessarily a violent and exclusive creed. I went to some effort in that book to show that nationalism is amenable to many different forms and

politics. It is what would be called in theoretical terms a floating signifier. Nationalism can be attached to a proletarian class dimension, which we have seen earlier in history. It can be attached to a kind of peasant revolution or peasant movement for independence. It can be an aggressive nationalism of the Fascist type. I tried to show that you can't condemn nationalism outright. That was my first point. The second point that I wanted to make concerned the specific formation of English Canadian nationalism. This nationalism had tried to maintain independence from the American empire. In that context I considered it a progressive force.

As for Québec nationalism, it seems to me, and I am speaking as an outsider, but having watched politics in Québec for quite a long time now, it seems to me that one of the most important things there is that the nationalist moment has been the focus, the point of attraction as it were, for most progressive feelings and movements for a long time, that is, from about 1965 through to at least 2000. Nationalism had, in Québec (as well as in English Canada, but more or less without any relationship to that in Québec), a positive connotation, a socially progressive connotation.

Now we have entered into a new period again with the stronger forces of globalization, and it is difficult to measure how much has changed with regard to this. But I would still say that any politics that seeks to be independent, either in English Canada or Québec, is going to have to encounter the power of United States at some point. It is complicated in Québec by your relation to English Canada and Ottawa and so on; but this is true in Latin America too. The United States has always wanted to run the continent, the Americas. And any independent politics, be it here, in Venezuela or Cuba, always encounters the problem of the United States, and therefore always, to be sensible and genuine, it has to have a nationalist component. I still think that.

J - P W: You spoke about a thirty-five-year period that stretches between 1965 and 2000. During this period Québec nationalist sentiment not only remained strong but corresponded to a shift in the collective reference. French Canadians began referring to themselves as Québécois. We tend to overlook the fact that English Canada underwent as well a formidable transformation of its national identity. It gave itself symbols:

a national anthem, a flag, a multicultural policy, and so forth. How can we describe this transformation from Canada in the 1950s (with mainly a British component) to Canada as it is conceived now?

IA: In my essay published in the *Cahiers de recherche sociologique*, I used the linguistic term “slide,” to explain the way in which in English Canada we talk usually not of English Canada but of Canada. When we referred to Canada, until perhaps recently, we thought simply of ourselves and not so much the First Nations and Québec. Those people are different from us. So when we speak of Canada we should in some sense include them. We haven’t really done that. We slid from the sense of our particular language and culture to Canada — and back and forth. So there’s been no real explicit difference between English Canada and Canada in our minds, as it were. That has led to a kind of unconsciousness of ourselves. I think it’s one of the historical features of Canada that is most strange and interesting. In Québec, you can easily form a difference between the sorts of associations you have when you think of Québec City and the National Assembly and when you think of Ottawa and Canada. Given the dispersal of English Canada, we don’t identify as a group through any kind of provincial or regional institution. Ottawa has therefore been the focus of English Canadian nationalism. This has, in a certain sense, erased the politics of Québec and of the First Nations. Not deliberately but through a slide. This is the best way I can explain it. Since the early 1970s, Québec and the First Nations have been much more vocal in asserting their claims to some ownership of Canada, or some treaties with Canada. As a consequence, there has grown over this period (the last thirty-five years, let’s say) in English Canada an increasing awareness that we are a fragment of this country. We are not the country itself. That opinion is not anywhere near as predominant as it ought to be. I think all of our affairs here would be much better if everybody in English Canada knew that they occupied a fragment and that we should talk with the other fragments of Canada on the basis of equality. My thinking of about this has pushed that possibility to its extreme. I’m trying to think about what it would mean to think about Canada as the place of a dialogue between independent nations, to be a nations-state rather than a nation-state.

J-P W: You emphasize the fact that there are three fragments or three nations in Canada. Still you say the nation-state is an outdated concept, and you replace this concept by the concept of a “nations-state,” emphasizing the plural.

IA: This is a politically very complex question. I think that my work, and the work of a lot of English Canadian nationalists, assumed for a long time (as it was common to assume) that every nation should become its own state. Therefore there was a lot of sympathy amongst a certain left English Canadian nationalism for Québec nationalism. We were of course a small group compared to the whole society. Perhaps you didn't notice us, but we were there! I remember that during the 1970 October Crisis, with the political group I was involved with, when the War Measures Act was proclaimed we went out into the streets with a pamphlet explaining who Pierre Laporte was, why he was targeted, and trying to explain, not to justify, but to explain that this was not an arbitrary act, that he had been picked for his role in labour disputes prior to that time, etc. We were trying hard to educate Anglophones about what was going on in Québec. We fully expected to be arrested for our activities. So much for reminiscence. The last ten or fifteen years have shown us that it is possible for the notion that every distinct group must have its state to get pushed too far, into a chaotic and exclusivist situation. So I think there is a bit of a dilemma now. There has been more recognition that it is perhaps possible under some circumstances for several nations to exist in the same state. Perhaps if that is done properly it might be a better way of avoiding conflict. One must analyze the play of forces in specific circumstances.

J-P W: When one reads your work, one does not have the impression you associate yourself with Pierre Elliott Trudeau's political philosophy. Yet, what you just said is on the same wavelength as what he was arguing: that the recognition of different nations in Canada does not justify the claim by every nation to possess its own state. How does your position differ from not only Pierre Elliott Trudeau's position but also Will Kymlicka's position?

IA: I don't feel myself close to either one of those thinkers. Yes, they have recognized some realities that I think need to be recognized. It's no longer possible to accept the position of the early twentieth century, the national liberation position — without qualification at least — that every nation should become a state. That's a change in my point of view, and I think that I would give to Trudeau his recognition of that. I would also give to Kymlicka his proper recognition that there are three distinct groups in Canada, all of which need to enter into negotiation about the future of the nations-state. He is right about that. However, a genuine nations-state that includes people of different nations and institutions must include different institutions from different nations. Not just people from dominant institutions. Even more important, the public situation must not put one of the groups into a central position.

This is really the question in Canada of the legacy of empire. Ultimately Ottawa replaced the British and the French Empires. Canada is the only non-revolutionary New World nation. Thus, there was no discontinuity between the imperial power and that which constituted the national state in 1867. It is my view that we cannot adequately confront the political issues that face us now without confronting the long-run effects of the imperial basis of the Canadian state. But there seems to be no, or very little, political will to confront such a basic issue. Thus, contemporary Canadian politics seems to me to involve little more than the noise produced by constantly spinning wheels.

Ottawa has now become subservient to Washington, but it still is the locus of imperial power within Canada. To simply say one can take this over and move into it, as if all could be equal, I think, is delusional. It is a delusion inherent in liberalism. That was the problem with Trudeau. Early in his career he did recognize this (in his writing in *The Asbestos Strike*, for example), but then, on entering the Liberal party, he renounced his old ideals and accepted English institutions in Ottawa as ultimately as fair and equal as British tradition has always said they are. But they've looked always a lot fairer and equal to the ruling class in Britain than they have to the nations forcibly included into the empire. Acknowledgement of this basic imperial fact would be my major difference with both Trudeau and Kymlicka. There is for me a need for a whole process of decolonization, of getting rid of the legacy of empire. This is

a huge historical project! It has to go right into the institutions, reform them, and make them not the legacy of one conquering power.

I'm not answering the question, at this point in time, of whether Québec and Canada should stay together. I'm not even answering that question because the conditions for talking about it in a sensible way are not there at present.

J - P W: How can one affirm such a thing? To play here the role of a naïve devil's advocate, I would reply that we live in a democracy, that everyone can speak openly about these matters and that we have been debating these questions for quite some time. What is missing?

IA: One book that was been very important for me is a book by Christian Dufour, called in English *The Quebec Challenge*.² The central notion in that book is that the politics of different nations gets caught at certain points of trauma and repeats the trauma. For me this idea has brought together some interesting ideas from psychoanalytic literary theory into politics. At that time I was reading a lot of literary theory. Dufour convinced me that (now this is probably an oversimplification but it's a useful one) the politics of Québec is caught in the trauma of the 1760 Conquest. I don't know if this is so much true as it was. As for the politics of English Canada, it is caught in the trauma of Manifest Destiny, that is of the United States's certitude that it owns the continent. Québécois are trying to show their difference from us and we are trying to show our differences from the Americans! That is fine. There is no actual problem with that, except that public debates are formed by historical moments that have importance long after they happen. We are perhaps entering into a different moment. The relationship between Québec and English Canada is really quite significantly changing, although it is too soon to say how. With the aggressive posturing, and indeed the very dangerous posturing, in the American government now that it is the only world power, we are going to rediscover the necessity of the critique of empire. It's happening in English Canada. We are entering into a different period in which forces are shifting. These historical shifts of forces are what really determines what can be debated and what cannot be debated. You can't just start to talk about something and expect that it

really just generally goes into the public sphere. There is structuring of debates, some of which is done deliberately, but it's never entirely under somebody's control. Partly it is shifting historical events, partly it is the dominant hegemony, partly it's whether there is some vision of change. All of this is much more important, deeper, than representative parliamentary institutions.

J-P W: To help unfold the debate on these questions, you introduce the concept of the border. You oppose this concept to the concept of the frontier that shapes the imagery of the United States. What exactly is the distinction you would draw between the border and the frontier?

I A: This distinction was for me a big breakthrough. I was in the United States when I uncovered this. The notion of the frontier is the notion of the expanding line, the pushing of the line between civilization and barbarism farther west. Frederick Jackson Turner, the theorist of this in the United States, understood frontier as a line between barbarism and civilization. The American concept therefore is that barbarism — that is to say really in practice the Native Americans — is pushed back. This notion of expansion is really built into their very basic self-conception. There really is no limit in principle to the United States of America except the continent of America (or, if you like, two continents, depending on how you count). The political expression of this is the Monroe Doctrine, which is the notion that the US has the right to intervene in all the Americas. They understand themselves as the Enlightenment promoters of freedom. Therefore anybody who would be opposed to them would be either Native barbarians, as it were, on the one side, or European aristocracy on the other side. This gives them the right to expand everywhere.

The more I looked into this, the more I became convinced that really this is not what happened historically in Canada. I started to try to think about how to conceptualize the different cultural mentality in Canada. To me the idea of border was a clue. That is the notion that Canada, Canadians, and certainly English Canadian nationalists, wanted to maintain the border between Canada and the United States. If you look at the map, except for the part by the Great Lakes and all of that,

the frontier between the two countries is really just a geographical line; there is no reason why it should be there rather than farther south or farther north. In other words it is a political line. It's not really a geographical line in the same way that the Rocky Mountains or the coast or the rivers are geographical line.

I was quite influenced by Northrop Frye's conception of the garrison mentality. Although it is a little bit strictly negative formulation of the phenomenon. It seems to me that the idea of the garrison mentality is really the idea of a border. A garrison is an enclosed space. So rather than push civilization outward and outward and eliminate the wilderness or barbarism, as in the United States, in Canada we have a tendency to make sparks of civilization that coexist with wilderness. The difference between a border and a frontier is that with a border, you need to have a relation. You have a relation between something that is inside and something that is outside. The focus on the border sustains the relation. Whereas if you have the notion of expansion, as in the United States, the inside expands, and if it expands continually it actually wipes out the outside. If you look at English Canadian culture you find many cases in which there is this border maintaining the inside-outside relationship in some way.

The border between Canada and the United States started to have lots of metaphorical possibility. I started to see it as something that constitutes the English Canadian collective mentality. I started to see it in many other places. I would be very interested if someone were to apply this understanding on the basis of Québécois experience.

J - P W: Can you give a few examples?

I A: Well, take multiculturalism. When people immigrate to Canada we don't expect them to become exactly like us, to *melt*, as they put it in the US. What that means is that we are both different from them, there is a border, but also they are within. So you have a border within. I'm talking in theory now. I am aware of racism and other sorts of exclusion. But the idea is that immigrants can come to influence the thing that is inside. This is a historical experience with some metaphorical possibilities for contemporary culture and politics. It is a border, not as an

absolute exclusion, but as maintaining a relationship. Multiculturalism I see as one form of that. This may be partly the British Columbia influence, but there is also a strong ecological conception or a conception of nature that is related to us — both different from us but to which we maintain a relationship. Now in Canada, English Canada, I think there are two forms of this: There is on the one hand the notion that nature is so big, so sublime in philosophical terminology, that it overflows any concept of it, such that that one can use it, use it, and use it, and it will always be there. There is that kind of rapacious element that is possible. But at the same time there is the possibility of a more ecological relation of humans maintaining nature and maintaining the relationship, being concerned with maintaining a relationship. I think that is the core idea of the border.

This thinking led me to a fundamental critique of Charles Taylor's conception of multiculturalism. He still uses the "we/they" formulation. We are "we" and they are "they." In my mind this is an absolute difference. Whereas multiculturalism is a "we/us" relationship. I am both a member of a specific group within the polity and I'm also a member of the polity itself. It's a relationship between two elements, two levels of my own identity. Not a relationship between "we" and "they." If you say it's a relationship between "we" and "they," you still presuppose some one group holding the central power. This is the imperial legacy. So it becomes an English Canadian and perhaps for a certain French Canadian elite too, holding the power regarding who will be recognized within the country.

As the logic of this work has developed over the last few years, I've become more and more focused on this question of who holds the power to decide and who holds the power to define. In an anticipatory sort of way, what would happen if no one group could decide? What would happen in a genuinely postcolonial situation, if there were a Canada but the definition of Canada were not held either by English Canadians, or French Canadians, or the First Nations? Where the identity itself, and the institutions in which it is expressed, was genuinely opened to debate between the three groups? It wouldn't be a "we/they" situation. It would be a "we/us" situation. That commonality would be open to further definition. This is what I've been working on. I have some further

formulation of it in a new manuscript called *Identity and Justice*, which I hope will be out later this year.

J-PW: When you quote people belong to the English Canadian tradition, the names that you invoke are those of George Grant and the red tory intellectual and political tradition. Can you say a few words about this red tory tradition? It seems as paradoxical as the border is!

IA: Discovering George Grant and the red tory tradition was of enormous significance for me. I realized then (and I still think it is the case) that this is the most characteristically English Canadian political thinking that there is. It's of great significance because it doesn't formulate the problem of modernity in the same way as the dominant liberal tradition, which we normally get from the United States. There is a notion of the maintenance of community — the necessity of community to any balanced and just society. This comes very much into the socialist tradition. Gad Horowitz argued this in the 1960s, and I think he was on to something very important. Not just in terms of specific figures, and so on, but something about the collective mentality of English Canadians that is in some sense quite conservative but in some sense also much more communitarian than American Liberalism.

I have in most of my writing on Canada tried to follow out this communitarianism. It has many more roots than George Grant talked about. The Ukrainians in northern Alberta, for example, had a very strong communitarian tradition that the British form of the division of land into square miles did a lot to repress. But despite the official settlement of the West — and the way it formed a kind of British Enlightenment gridwork — the Ukrainians in northern Alberta, the Doukhobors, etc., and many different groups that came to Canada as groups, have also brought in this communitarian component. The settlement of Québec prior to the French Revolution had this collective component as well. This gives us a way of thinking about politics that gets you out of the either/or of a conservative hierarchical collectivism versus a liberal egalitarianism and individualism. It gives you the hope of putting together a kind of collectivism or communitarianism with a kind of egalitarianism. This is a political idea, not a political reality. It is nevertheless a way of

reformulating the socialist idea in the contemporary world, specifically in the Canadian context, that would avoid some of the majoritarian and the homogenizing components of the socialist tradition that are problematic. Moreover, it has had an effect on the institutions and collective imaginary of the country.

J-P W: For a Québec Nationalist, the 1980 and the 1995 referendums were considered bitter defeats. But we tend to forget that English Canadian left-nationalists saw the 1988 election on free trade in similar terms, that is, as a defeat. What was it the defeat of, exactly?

I A: For English Canadian left-nationalists, the 1988 free trade election was deeply disappointing. As you probably remember, a majority of people in English Canada voted against the government promoting FTA (Free Trade Agreement). A lot of people, including me, would have thought that people in Québec would have seen the danger from the United States and wouldn't have wanted it either. That was a myopic understanding. It was a too simple understanding of the forces in Québec. I started to realize that there are two nationalist projects in Canada. I started to appreciate, as did many others at that time, that we were really on different paths. Whether we wanted to be or not, we were. There are other things that have contributed to that along the way. The staunch federalist position of the NDP in Québec until its reformation in Québec was another factor.

In any case, the Free Trade Agreement (1988) was a bitter defeat for the English Canadian Left. Almost by definition the Left is not the mainstream opinion in society, but since then the isolation of the Left from public opinion has become much worse. Even the moderate, NDP Left has a hard time reaching the public. More radical opinion and analysis is severely pushed out. There are many reasons for this, of course, but perhaps it helps explain the continuing significance of the trauma of 1988. The trauma is the defeat of the traditional Left in Canada and its way of understanding political possibilities. I do think that some reformation of the collective mentality is now underway due in large part to the aggressive US military policy that is accompanying economic globalization. I hope that the Left, and the critique of empire, can enter into the new politics that is emerging, but it's too soon to say what will appear.

J - P W: As in English Canada, in Québec the nationalist movement was both nationalist and leftist. The PQ has always been more socially inclined than the provincial Liberal party. At this election, it was mainly for nationalist reasons that the PQ decided to support the Mulroney free trade platform. Do you think that this it is another case of nationalists prioritizing, if I may say, their nationalist concerns over their socialist concerns? Would not that election bring water to the mill of Trudeau's contention that all nationalisms are fundamentally right-wing?

IA: I don't think that this an adequate way to understand it. In fact I would rather say the opposite. It is because nationalism in Québec has been the focus for the progressive movement that people wouldn't let go of nationalism vis-à-vis Ottawa. Although I think it was in some respects politically shortsighted, because I think that in the long run Washington is the bigger enemy, I must acknowledge that this is not normally the way things are perceived in Québec. The end result of this conflict of interpretations is that the different progressive forces in Canada have been related to their specific communities and to what is felt as the major issue within those specific communities. When I talk about the failure to articulate a socialist ideal, I mean a socialist ideal that would work for the country as a whole. The critical forces in the country have always been fragmented. We have not been able to find a form in which they could be articulated together. In many ways the politics of Canada is the politics of certain powerful groups being able to stumble from success to success, not because they are really successful but because the new critical forces in the country have been unsuccessful! It doesn't seem that anybody really believes in Ottawa at all anymore, as far as I can tell, as a way of running the country. It's just that there is no alternative! It's just that there is no coalition that can offer a politically realistic alternative. 1988 was traumatic for us here, and to some extent we are still dominated by the pessimism provoked by this trauma.

J - P W: You speak elsewhere of the fact that Canada has been swallowed by the American empire. But, on the one hand, in my classroom and around me most people are inclined to say that Canadians are living in a very socially inclined society. On the other hand, although the 1988

election on free trade was supposed to be the end of Canada as we knew it, since then the feeling that we form as Canadians a different political and social community from the United States has never been stronger, or so it seems. How do you account for this? How can we explain that we have never seen so many Canadian flags waving as we do now?

IA: Flag waving and “we’re the best country in the world stuff” is in fact very American. The fact that it is a Canadian flag really doesn’t make a big difference to me. I continue to be as concerned by the swallowing of Canada into the American empire as was George Grant. At the time George Grant wrote *The Empire, Yes or No?* just after the Second World War, this had not yet totally happened, despite him claiming otherwise. But today we may say that this has basically happened. The economy, popular culture, the commercial mentality, etc., all flow from south to north. I’m not that impressed by small-scale survivals of a national or regional identity in Canada. It can too easily become a comforting myth. On the other hand, if one poses the question of what will be necessary for progressive and socialist forces within Canada to have some success, one will have to confront the reality of economic, political, and cultural dependency again, just as was necessary in the past.

Grant was of the political opinion at that time that only an imperial tie with Britain would be strong enough to fight back the American empire. That is a political judgment. By the time I was thinking about these things, in the early 1970s and later, it seemed to me that the domination of the Canadian economy was so thorough by the United States that it wasn’t even an issue of whether we were going to be incorporated. We essentially had become part of the American empire, while the British tie was minimal and decreasing steadily. This explains the great trauma of Vietnam, and its importance in Canada for making a whole generation worry very much about our relationship with the United States. We wanted to distance ourselves from the American empire.

Even today the social and political activists interviewed by my friend Myrna Kostash in her book *The Next Canada* are attached to the notion of Canada as in some sense a better polity. It does come up in their conversations. So there is a sense in which, yes, as I said at the beginning, I think that when one stands as a critic and wants to see a

more just society as possible in Canada, then one has to raise the question, “Well, first of all we have to have enough independence so it matters what we think and do,” and so you end up with the question of American imperialism again, which is an old-fashioned terminology but still designates something real. In many ways that is almost an undercurrent in people’s, especially young people’s, thinking. They are quite happy to be directly citizens of the world most of the time and feel Canadian only on the rebound, that is, only when they try to create or defend something that they think is worthwhile. In this sense, they still live the reality of dependency.

J-P W: Horowitz was convinced in the 1960s that Canada formed a conservative society as opposed to a more liberal United States. Today most Canadians would agree to the opposite: Canada is a liberal society as opposed to a very (neo-)conservative United States!

IA: The answer lies in part in the fact that the American political language has begun to dominate the landscape. The Tory conservatism that Horowitz, Grant, and others were talking about is not what most people have in mind now when they think about conservatism. They are not thinking back to Edmund Burke. That is what Horowitz and Grant meant by conservatism. They meant the idea of an organic community. Conservatism in the States, especially neoconservatism, is the combination of two elements: the first means preserving, or conserving, early liberalism in which we didn’t have all these social concerns and state interference (what is normally called neoliberalism); the second is a conservative social morality based in fundamentalist Christianity (which is normally called neoconservatism).

I lived in the States for seven years and had to realize that I had to express my ideas with a different vocabulary because their political terminology is just different. Any kind of concern for one’s fellow person is there called liberalism. That is only twentieth-century liberalism, beginning with Hobhouse and T. H. Green within the English-speaking tradition. If we were just to say we accept that terminology and pose the question descriptively, not about political ideals but about Canada as it is versus the US, it is true that we still have that social liberalism more

here — without suggesting this is where my political allegiances are — in Sheila Coppins and some of the people who have been pushed out of the Liberal party by the Martin fiscal Liberals. There is a bit of an ambiguity here in the question depending on whether it is Hobhouse social liberalism that one means by liberalism or whether it is a conservative Toryism or “conservative” neoliberalism that one is calling conservatism. In this sense, we could certainly contrast Canadian social liberalism with US neoliberalism (which they call conservative).

If we could talk about this a lot more we would need to investigate the specific political culture of our country, and this is an important thing to think through. The twentieth-century social liberalism incorporated certain socialist ideas, that is to say communitarian ideas. I guess John Stuart Mill, who in his late life was the first who saw socialism as having a legitimate point against a liberal competitive society. That brings a communitarian component into a certain social liberalism, such that Charles Taylor and others can now argue that communitarianism is a form of liberalism. Personally I have my doubts about this. I would be closer to the notion that saw communitarianism as either organic Toryism or socialist on the other hand. The political culture of Canada would be best investigated that way. But liberal communitarianism is a product of Canada, and it should be understood against the deeper background that I have been painting.

J - P W: You say that there is a future for the new social movements. How is this future shaped or linked to the current Canadian and international situation?

I A: This question takes us back to the question of the 1988 trauma and what can be done to get beyond it. English Canadian radicalism has been oriented toward Ottawa until very recently. Thus there was a governmentalist bias throughout almost all of it. New social movements are different in this respect. They obviously arrive and become important at a time in which there is a declining influence of the nation-state vis-à-vis a global economy. One of the things this means for the future is that the critical and communitarian emphasis is not primarily oriented toward government. And this can create a problem. It creates a problem

certainly for the NDP. A lot of people who align themselves with the social movements don't vote for the NDP. They sometimes even find, because of the contingencies of local politics, that other parties are more friendly toward them. The NDP tends to have the view that all these people should vote for them because they are the progressive party, which is not a good attitude anyway. How will this come down in the future? I don't know, but I think we will see really shifting political alignments. We've already seen some really drastic ones, when for example the traditional Tory party in the 1980s became the party of free trade, a bizarre sort of thing to happen. And then the Martin Liberals have now become the party of free trade. We have seen terrific political realignments as a consequence of the global free trade economy. It happens in other countries as well, not just Canada. And the importance of this is that it all depends on how they are reacting to the global forces, primarily but not exclusively, economic forces. Back to social movements, I think that social movements are probably the voice of attachment to place and I think that a new relationship between global universal concerns and an attachment to place is the name of the new politics. Therefore they will remain important, much more important than they are being given credit for. It is not size that matters here, but where the dynamic of social criticism and an anticipation of the new is found.

APPENDIX 2

Bob Hanke, “Conversation on the University: An Interview with Ian Angus”

BH: From the very beginning, your book is marked by a deep ambivalence about the university and its future.¹ You begin by recounting the story of the chronic underfunding of Canadian universities, but an unusual teaching experience with Rilke’s *Letters to a Young Poet* sparked a deeper reflection on your students’ lack of, or fear of, commitment. Was there anything else that gave impetus to writing about the idea of the university?

IA: I first entered university in 1967, which was a time of protest and change around the world that profoundly affected universities. At that time I discovered the politics of the Left and social movements, and simultaneously I discovered philosophy. These two passions have largely come to define my life. With that background I assumed that it was natural that the university should be in the forefront of social change. Step by step I realized that this is simply not the case, that it was rather a special time in the 1960s that put the university at the forefront. Meanwhile, I had myself become deeply attached to what I understood to be the mission of the university itself: the university is an/the institution of thought and as such is committed to individual and social enlightenment even if it is at some distance from practice. In fact, this distance has its advantages too. Even though the university operates in a capitalist environment, it nevertheless has had different principles working inside it that were essential to social criticism and social change. While this understanding percolated my

teaching and writing, as it were, I didn't really reflect on it any further than that.

Then, in 2001 I became caught up in the controversy at Simon Fraser University over administration interference in the proposed hiring of David Noble for the J.S. Woodsworth Chair of the Humanities. During this controversy and in a number of public meetings afterward I had to articulate more clearly the issues involved — academic freedom, the right to criticize, the role of free thought in democracy, etc. — as well as the problems with hierarchical decision making, the creation of a managerial class in the administration, corporate connections, etc., in the university as it actually functions. That's when I started to speak and write about the university as an institution.

The experience teaching Rilke's *Letters* happened during the same period, though it wasn't connected to the Noble events. As I tell the story in the book, I was struck by the way in which the radical claim of Rilke to put enlightenment at the forefront of a properly lived human life just didn't resonate with the students at all. They just took it for granted that compromise is the order of the day; they didn't seem to expect to live full lives determined by themselves. This seemed to me then, as it does now, more important than the fact that they could appreciate some valid points in *The Communist Manifesto*. At that point I began to ask deeper questions about my commitment to enlightenment as a teacher and a thinker, about the undermining of the university's institutional commitment to enlightenment through its submission to the corporate agenda, and about the necessity of free thought to both individual enlightenment and democratic culture. This story, and my reflections on it, seemed like a good place to start the book.

ВН: You define the university as an institution of thought whose essence is "loving the questions." As James Côté and Anton Allahar's *Ivory Tower Blues: A University System in Crisis* and Christopher Newfield's *Unmaking the Public University: The Forty-Year Assault on the Middle Class* have shown, the public university in Canada and the US is in crisis. The contemporary university as a place and time to think is in jeopardy. Why do you think that a critique of how the university works must deploy a "moral," rather than political philosophical, language?

IA: The phrase “love the questions” comes from Rilke and is, I think, a wonderful description of the basic dilemma of a philosophical and poetic life — which is the kind of life that the university should stimulate in every student. We all have to live without final answers, but we also have to live on our own responsibility. This means that a full, free, and thoughtful life requires learning to live without answers or, to say it better, with answers that are built into the questions themselves, so that the values of free inquiry, commitment, solidarity, etc., are found within radical questioning. In this sense they are not answers like other answers. They are answers that preserve the questions, not commitments to a final framework but commitments to keep looking, commitment to the path rather than arrival at a destination. This is what is meant by enlightenment, and for this reason it is not just another value but a value that is rooted in the practice of inquiry itself.

I don’t separate a moral language from a political or a philosophical one. Of course, I don’t mean a “moralizing” or sermonizing language. Rather, I mean to emphasize that a political or a philosophical critique needs an evaluative, ethical component because the university has an inherent connection to “the good life,” which is the question of politics in the classical sense. Every social arrangement can be looked at in this way, of course. Economic institutions, private property for example, can be evaluated with respect to how, and to what degree, they promote or impede the good life. But the situation of the university has an additional component. It is not only a social arrangement like many others but is also an institution with a specific mandate, a mandate rooted in its history and organization, a mandate of intelligence, teaching, scholarship, writing, self-understanding — all of which I sum up in the philosophical concept of “enlightenment.”

It is at this point that I would want to point out that even though political and philosophical critiques overlap to some extent because enlightenment is a part of the good life, they are not identical. First of all, some conception of the good life is implicit in the totality of social institutions, whereas the philosophical concept of enlightenment is not so rooted. Thus, any institutionalization of enlightenment will always be partial and there always remains the possibility of critique of institutions. A political critique will point to social groups, point out who

benefits and who does not, will reveal both the obvious and the hidden workings of inequality and oppression. This is important. It must mobilize the moral forces of language and draw on the sedimented ethical impulses of ordinary life and popular struggle. But an exclusively political critique can fall into a merely partisan point of view if it loses its connection to philosophical justification.

ВН: The contemporary public university, in Canada and elsewhere, has been characterized as the corporate university. Your discussion is framed by a battle between the public university and the corporate university in which corporatization, commercialization, managerialism, and commodification are winning. While these political-economic processes are real, their analysis has sometimes contributed to a narrative of decline in which external factors impinge upon internal actors and a picture of control in which upper-level management controls lower-level faculty-managers. Are there any aspects of the Canadian public university, as a centre of knowledge culture, that remain non-capitalist or anti-capitalist? To put the question in Bourdieusian terms, are there any ways in which Canadian academic fields remain relatively autonomous from the state or the market?

ІА: I had encountered, and used, the phrase “corporatization of the university” for a few years, along with other people, because of the changes that I observed around me over the last several decades, but I had never thought through what this phrase might mean. That was the starting point for the investigation that led to the book. I then broke the question of corporatization into three separate questions focusing on teaching, research and application, and technological change. The analysis is quite different in each case, so one has to be careful about exactly what one is referring to. I also had to get into the history of the university in order to be able to assess whether, and for how long, people had expected anything more from the university than service to the current power. For a long time, it turns out. But the university has never been entirely free of service to the prevailing power; it is rather that it has never been entirely subservient — it has been a space in which there was some distance from social power.

In our own time, the transition that is taking place is from the public university to the corporate university. Given the obvious problems with the corporate model, it is tempting to subscribe to a narrative of decline. In fact, I think that most older academics do spontaneously explain the current circumstance as a decline, since they have personally experienced better times in the university. I didn't want to subscribe to this for several separate reasons: First, I admit to being skeptical to narratives of decline from a golden age in general, even though I'm equally skeptical of progressivist narratives which give over all evaluative and ethical issues to the verdict of history — which means the verdict of the stronger. Second, the public university is not an original state, anyway. It came about during the twentieth century mainly and became widespread during the expansion of universities after the Second World War. Third, when one focuses on the technological aspects of contemporary changes, there is really no chance that they could be reversed (even if this were desirable). So, the virtues of the university have to be reinvented for our own time, and the future, not simply recaptured. Time is more complex than our forward-back metaphors would indicate. Sometimes one can recapture a lost virtue by reinventing it in new conditions. That is what we need to do now, so I had to problematize narratives of both progress and decline.

Yes, I do think that some aspects of the university still resist corporate forces, even though they are very embattled now. Faculty still struggle to teach in a way that serves scholarship and enlightenment. Students still come to university with high expectations. I don't know that there is a general formula for what still remains of value, though. Or, perhaps, it is simply that the study that would identify its features hasn't been done yet. It is important to note that the corporatization of scientific research preceded that of the humanities and social sciences, so to some extent the discussion now is based upon the extension of a process that has been underway for some time. It would be useful to inquire into which parts of the natural sciences have resisted corporatization and what success they have had. In general, though, as I argue in the book, I think that the seminar is the core of the university and the place that is most driven by the search for enlightenment of all who genuinely participate. It is from seminar-based learning that I would expect the most.

BH: The massification of the public university has created some big, depersonalized campus environments that call to mind the 1960s critique of the “knowledge factory.” Yet, academic strategic planning texts, which inscribe the relations between administration, faculty, and students, are replete with the term “community.” My sense is that the myth of a unified, organic scholarly community only survives in managerial discourse. What is your sense?

IA: You make a good point. The rhetoric of community is everywhere these days and serves to mask a lack of the genuine thing. The same is true of the word “public.” But can we abandon either term? I agree that the 1960s term “knowledge factory” still has some effectiveness, but it has that effect only to the extent that one still expects something more, or other, from the university — and what is the basis for this expectation? We need some terms with which to describe alternative scenarios of knowledge production, transmission, and application. I think that we have to fight over these terms or we’ll end up without any basis to make criticism at all. There is a deeper issue of whether such terms imply a “nostalgia for a common language” that cannot be recaptured given the contemporary proliferation of knowledge forms. I would accept that this is to a large extent true but argue that this is exactly one of those points at which we have to recapture the best of the past by reinvention in the future. I have argued in a short essay that will soon come out that interdisciplinary studies can perform this role, but this is where we need to have a lot more discussion and debate, because the public role of the university in the future hangs on it.²

BH: Your book draws on two key concepts to analyze the transformation of the university: enlightenment and techno-science. You discuss how the concept of enlightenment goes back to Socrates but is given a modern interpretation in Kant’s essay “What Is Enlightenment” (1784). In your “Note on Enlightenment,” we read that Horkheimer and Adorno’s *Dialectic of the Enlightenment* (1944) was an intervention in the twentieth century that revealed how enlightenment becomes a myth that leads to social domination rather than progress. In any case, in the body of the text, you skip from Kant’s emphasis on the public use of reason to a

phenomenological approach to the “instituting moment” of the institution. Can you elaborate on this “instituting moment” and the philosophy you are drawing upon? Is this where Edmund Husserl comes into the philosophical picture?

IA: Yes, this is where I rely upon Husserl and the phenomenological tradition. In his late work Husserl invented a new procedure for philosophical criticism in order to take apart the way in which assumptions based in modern mathematical science have filtered into social institutions and become taken for granted in the way one thinks and acts. One needs to “think backward,” as it were, to show how these assumptions have been institutionalized in a tradition or “become traditioned,” as Husserl would say. I think that phenomenology is an underutilized resource for social and political criticism, and in my more philosophical works I have tried to make that point.³ Husserl uses this method of thinking backward — which he calls “unbuilding” (*Abbau*) and is the origin of Heidegger’s “destructuring of the history of metaphysics” and Derrida’s “deconstruction”— to displace contemporary thinking from the horizon of modern mathematical physics. It can perhaps be illustrated by noticing that “education” comes to mean something different for us after the introduction of compulsory schooling. Education inevitably becomes caught up with social discipline and hierarchy. Thinking in this way allows one to see the importance of the social movements of our time — feminism, environmentalism, etc. — in destabilizing these traditional assumptions and opening up new possibilities. Social movements can thus be seen as “the new in the new,” whereas many commentators analyze them in terms that take them back to “the old in the new.” Thinking possibility as higher than actuality is a key touchstone of phenomenology, which I want to say resonates with the new social movements as an opening of possibility.

ВН: In Italian Marxist thinking about post-Fordism, there was a return to Marx’s concept of the “general intellect” in order to rethink work, immaterial labour, and the question of subjectivity. Following this tradition, we could say that the public university is articulated to post-Fordist, informational or techno-capitalism, and academic labour has always

been immaterial labour. What, if anything, would you add to what you have said about digital labour and subjectivity in the new academy?

IA: The analysis of information in the book attempts to show why the proliferation of information continually produces a crisis of identity. The network society is criss-crossed by struggles over identity. There is an important difference between subjectivity and identity here. The subjectivity directly produced in the network society simply completes the existing circuits, whereas identity involves a struggle for understanding of the network. The Italian Marxist tendency has produced some interesting analyses, but I think that it, in continuity with classical Marxism, fails to theorize the construction of identity and therefore fails to show how a working-class identity, or a more contemporary network-based identity, can become the subject of history in Marx's sense. This passage between the production of subjectivity by the system and the emergence of a revolutionary subject — the relation between a class *in* itself and a class *for* itself in Marxist terminology — was simply assumed into existence by classical Marxism, as it is today by Hardt and Negri, for example. It amounts to wish-fulfillment and not social analysis. The book's analysis of identity-construction in the network society aims to fill this lacuna, but it can't be filled by any sort of a necessity — which is where the concept of enlightenment comes in. The construction of a coherent identity is based on a struggle for enlightenment in the new conditions of the network society.

BH: I was intrigued by your story about teaching Humanities 202: Great Texts in the Humanities II one summer. There is the moment when you realize that your students were untouched by Rilke's *Letters to a Young Poet*. Yet these same students could approve of Marx's *Manifesto of the Communist Party*. I have also had the sinking feeling that the oral tradition and the art of eloquent speaking is no longer sufficient to move the Internet and mobile media users in large lecture halls. Such teaching experiences raise broader issues of what Côté and Allahar call the "dis-engagement contract" between faculty and students. In their sociological account, students have become reluctant intellectuals and faculty have become reluctant gatekeepers. However, the administration's rhetoric of "student engagement" makes overworked faculty more responsible for

the “student experience” and lacks any notion of the indebted student-worker subject and how they are (un)attached to ideals or commitments within a democratic society. In this situation, how can we show students what self-expression and intellectual self-development is?

IA: I think that you’re right about the loss of oral tradition in the university. This oral tradition was very important to the English-speaking tradition of the liberal arts. Professors no longer structure lectures carefully and muster their rhetorical powers to move students. It was through listening to my teacher in phenomenology, José Huertas-Jourda, lecture that I understood how philosophy could come to shape a life. Without life-changing experiences in the university, students go into their working life with the influences from their family undiminished. The only social shaping is the commodity economy. This bodes very ill for the future. The idea of a “disengagement contract” is a useful one, and I agree that the administration uses the rhetoric of responsibility to students to shut down genuine faculty attempts to disrupt these smooth transitions to make room for thought. What can we do? I think that we do our best to teach the way that we were taught, keep the traditions going, reinvent it in new conditions, and also seek new places in which teaching can take place. We need to take teaching outside the university and to students who want it for life-reasons, not for job-reasons. My earlier Semaphore book *Emergent Publics* came out of a project planned for public television and later used in discussion with the voluntary project The Critical University in Vancouver.⁴

BH: Democracy is no longer part of the atmosphere of the university, but “innovation” and “collaboration” are. While writing these questions, I received an email from the Mitacs-Accelerate Program, which “builds and subsidizes research projects, in any discipline, between academia and industry.” They say they “can help your research collaboration” by:

- Leveraging funding from new or existing industrial collaborations
- Funding graduate students and postdocs
- Funding projects from 4–24 months
- Providing funding to attract graduate students and postdocs

Scrolling down to one of my current research interests — “Information and Communication Technology” — I find that my scholarly attention is directed to the area of “Banking and Finance.” This kind of propaganda is part of our everyday email. How can we maintain the ideal of a “democratic university,” and its social function, once the “social” is reduced to the market?

IA: The analysis of identity struggles in the network society in the book is meant to show that the social can never actually be reduced to the market even though that is the intention of the dominant neoliberal social forces now. If it could, then you’re right that there would be nothing positive that we could do. But identity struggles continuously arise in new forms, because information piles up without coherence, and it is our job to bring the project of enlightenment to these identity struggles. So, there are always some out there — students and non-students — who recognize what is going on when one speaks about these matters. This is where we have to intervene. It’s certainly not easy, but it is important not to confuse the attempt to reduce the network society to its neoliberal form with an actually achieved, or achievable, state of things. It is because the network society could take another form than the dominant neoliberal one that the university could take on the project of enlightenment in a new form.

BH: In your view, an “ethical basis for critique can be found in the history of the university and not merely superimposed upon it.” Can you elaborate on this?

IA: Well, I tried to explain above why a moral language must be deployed in critique. We all experience the social-political world as morally laden, and critique, to be effective, must work with sedimented ethical layers and make them explicit. I believe that this is how an intellectual may speak to others in the society and contribute to political movement. However, there is a danger here that must be carefully addressed. It is not useful for me to just sally forth with a lot of moral language that denounces social institutions — at least not at this point in time. It’s likely to be seen as just moralizing; indeed, it’s likely to degenerate into moralizing.

But wringing one's hands that the world isn't the way it should be isn't useful, either. It seems to me that there is a tendency among many intellectuals today to go too far in the other direction — to jettison an ethical language altogether because it may degenerate into hand-wringing.

The solution, it seems to me, is to connect with an ethical, evaluative language that has a certain purchase on the institution itself because of its history and functioning. This is not possible with all institutions, of course. If the institution contains no claim to a “higher,” moral goal then one can't appeal to it. But in the case of the university, there is a very articulate debate about its purpose that has accompanied the institution from the beginning. It is an institution of thought and has never operated without thought about its own purpose and function. It is for this reason that I tell the story of the modern university. I tell it quickly, without the detail that historians would like, but with the purpose of uncovering the purpose of the university in evaluative terms that I can then deploy in a contemporary context. Even so, I do not think it sufficient to just “apply” these criteria from the past, and I save some critical words for those who articulate such a conservative, backward-looking critique, which does tend to slide into nostalgia and hand-wringing. But one can start from this evaluative history as a basis for addressing contemporary issues. One begins from some commonality, if not agreement at least to a common set of references, as the basis for critique and proposal. The proposals, however, one has to articulate in one's own voice and submit to others for discussion. If this strategy works, it should terminate in an intensification of debate and commitment, not a set of received truths.

BH: You sketch a history of the modern university that includes Wilhelm Von Humboldt's and Cardinal Newman's classical models of the university as well as Matthew Arnold's writing on “culture” and “civilization.” I was surprised to learn that with Arnold's secularization of “culture,” you highlight how the aim of liberal arts education was not merely to oppose ignorance but also to oppose the organization of industrial capitalism. Knowledge is not only expanding one's area of ignorance but “changing—or at least holding at bay— the organized force of ignorance.” Turning to the contemporary university, we have seen a decentring of

the humanities and the liberal arts in favour of research based on scientific reason and professional studies. At York, for example, the Faculty of Arts and Atkinson Faculty of Liberal and Professional Studies have been “restructured” into the Faculty of Liberal and Professional Studies. In these times, what are the prospects for reinventing the liberal arts tradition?

IA: I want to be clear about this. I’m not saying that the Arnoldian conception of culture was anti-capitalist in the sense of proposing a revolutionary overthrow of the capitalist system. I’m saying that it needed to oppose the “organized force of ignorance” rooted in capitalism to keep open the social space for “culture.” This involved a certain appreciation of the social situation of culture. The earlier project of enlightenment was simply to lift the individual out of the lower social layers, which were “ignorant” in the sense that they were deprived of education. The Arnoldian model realizes that one can’t be simply “lifted out,” because capitalism organizes and propagates a mechanical view of life throughout society. It is in this sense that it opposes the mechanization of culture under capitalism, but it did not propose the possibility of changing the system into something else. However, one can see how this possibility arose out of a radicalization of the Arnoldian vision in the later conditions of the twentieth century. Raymond Williams and cultural studies in Britain took this further step, for example.

The restructuring that you refer to is underway everywhere these days. I think that it is dangerous to separate ourselves from these developments and concentrate our efforts in a department of critical studies whose funding could be easily cut. One should participate in the “applied” restructurings and find places where students and practitioners encounter ethical and political issues themselves. That is an entry point. I have also tried to emphasize in the book, partly through the discussion of T. H. Huxley, that the contemporary university can’t be separated from its function as job training, so one has to enter into the job training and show how the “humanistic” questions still arise there.

BH: On the one hand, with the 1960s California idea of the “multi-versity,” the university abandons its modern ideal of unified knowledge

and repurposes itself to adapt to the status quo. During the 1990s, the liberal arts tradition comes under attack with the rise of the new “high-tech” economy. The liberal arts are defended to some degree but have become just another stream of studies. You conclude that a new nexus of knowledge and new unity of science-technology-communication ends the humanistic ideal of self-knowledge. You break your discussion of techno-science into three issues: the corporatization of the university, the commodification of the university, and the emergence of a new model of knowledge.

First of all, what would you say to faculty who still object to any claim, first made by Harold Innis about his own university (of Toronto), that the university has become a kind of corporation? In Žižekian terms, we could say that faculty know that the university has become a kind of corporation and yet they sometimes act as if they do not know this.

IA: Indeed. It is difficult to accept the bad news, keep up the struggle, and look for new paths all at once. Consequently, I think that some people keep up their will to struggle by saying “it’s not (yet) all that bad.” After all, it is very easy to just slip into despair and accept that there’s nothing left worth struggling for in the university. This is also why some people are drawn to conservative arguments that suggest that the university must be returned to what it once was. I think that many of us have only recently turned our attention to analyze the institution within which we ourselves work. Until a sufficiently enlightening analysis is widely distributed, many people will rely on conflicting and partially contradictory ideas. That is the normal condition of being human. It is only sustained thought and analysis that can infuse some coherence into one’s responses. So I recognize that many people oppose the corporate university today with insufficient understanding, but we must realize that it is based upon a recognition that something has gone drastically wrong. It is our job to build upon this recognition, improve the analysis, and bring the understanding to a higher level where it can inform action in an improved way.

BH: Second, you describe how the university is relocated from national economy to become a corporation that “operates” within a global

economy. The Canadian university has become a public-private enterprise and degrees have become products in an educational market, but I wonder if the globalization of the university has been overemphasized. While the University of Toronto's MaRS Discovery District has global public-private partnerships, most other universities' global ambitions are more limited to attracting and recruiting more international students. Has the globalization of the university been overemphasized?

IA: It depends on what you are referring to here. You are probably right that few universities have direct links with global corporations, though many would like to have them, and that attraction of international students — which really means students who can be charged very high fees — is the more limited goal of many universities. The point about the loss of national economy, however, is a bit different. The balance between the nation-state and the capitalist economy in the period of national economy meant that the university could at once play a role in between these two dominant institutions and also represent the whole social realm as a field of knowledge. The university was both in and out of the national economy, and this positioning is what its earlier claim to enlightenment was based on. It is this double role that has been lost. With the globalization of the economy and the decline in power of the nation-state, the university has been subsumed into the social forces and can no longer claim to represent the totality as a field of knowledge. I don't think that this has been overemphasized. In fact, I think that there is still very little understanding of the relationship between this historic institutional shift and the changes in paradigms of knowledge that have been debated over the last several decades. This is the point that I was trying to make here: that the decline of knowledge understood as representation of the whole is essentially connected to the loss of the framing institutions of national economy. A whole sociology of knowledge is implied in this short analysis, one that, as far as I know, has yet to be written. For example, it implies that Georg Lukács's claim that bourgeois philosophy and science represents the totality in a mechanical form is now obsolete. Network philosophy and science represents knowledge as applied in specific contexts. It does not refer to totality at all. This has important implications for Lukács's correlative claim that

proletarian knowledge enacts the totality as praxis. My analysis suggests that socially critical knowledge enacts identity as self-construction from information-bits. I came upon this in the context of understanding how technological changes have influenced the university in a way that cannot be reduced to corporate influence. Both because I wanted to keep the book focused on the university and as widely accessible to non-specialist readers as possible, I did not follow up this insight any further. But for a thinker like me, who was formed by the classic theories of the Frankfurt School and phenomenology, this thread may well be the most significant to follow up in the future.

BH: While the corporate model of education you describe identifies owners, managers, workers, product, and support staff, and you delve into the consumer model of education and changes in academic work (including the growing casualization of academic labour), you don't mention faculty unions. What is the role of academic labour unions in the corporate university? Is the party-form of a union obsolete within the network university?

IA: I do mention faculty unions briefly, but you're right that I don't provide any full analysis of their role. On the one hand, I do think that faculty unions could bring many of the changes toward corporatization to the bargaining table and thus might well be a beneficial influence. On the other hand, it would depend on the faculty being public-spirited about such bargaining and not merely pursuing their own self-interest. This is by no means impossible. We see how other public-sector unions, such as nurses, for example, have bravely fought for public health care as the larger concern within which their own work takes place. Faculty, however, often see themselves as "middle class" and not as workers; they also often subscribe to an individualist credo in which they are not really employees of the university but rather people who work "at" the university. So I would be cautiously optimistic about faculty unionization, especially if younger faculty, and faculty without tenure, place their work within the larger context of social unionism that places the unionized worker within the larger community. This has been the credo of the Canadian Labour Congress. Not only in the university but in the

economy at large, many workers have begun to see themselves as entrepreneurs within the market, and the network university can be expected to reinforce this mentality. The market has sunk down into the daily activity and thinking of many workers and has tended to replace the big industry model that pitted workers and their organizations against the owners. This is a complex process, and by describing it quickly I don't want to give the impression that the structure of big industry is, or is likely to be, overcome. But I do think that enough change has come about to be able to say that the success of social unionism depends on the extent to which we can revitalize the notion of "public" in this market-dominated environment. This can't be an automatic consequence of unionism even though unionism is likely a force that could give it some effect.

BH: In US cultural studies, James Carey once made an important distinction between the "transmission" versus "ritual" of communication that appears to have dissolved. If one examines university education today, knowledge is reduced to sending or conveying information, and education has "degenerated towards the simple transmission of knowledge." At the same time, however, education is a "ritual" where a particular neo-liberal view of the world is portrayed, confirmed and, in some courses, altered. What is to be done to shift gears from knowledge transmission to building knowledge culture?

IA: Carey's distinction was useful, though I don't think that his term "ritual" expresses all that is important about communication when it is understood through the etymology that connects it to "community." Communication in all its forms is a "bringing-together" or "making-common." Transmission accomplishes this by taking a content from one place to another and thus enabling the origin and destination to be brought together by sharing the same content. Community requires communication through events that bring them together, whether it be Sunday church services or rock concerts. So I don't think it's really a question of shifting from one model of communication to another but rather of seeing the construction of community as the more basic level of communication that is always going on, even when the manifest concern is

transmission. My book *Primal Scenes of Communication* goes into this in more detail.⁵ Shifting gears can be accomplished by pointing out that the assumptions inherent in transmission — of the non-creativity of the receiver, that all change is disruption or noise, that the sender and receiver pre-exist fully formed prior to the communication — never obtain, really, and that there is always something more basic going on. This more basic something is the construction of community, the “how” of bringing-together, that the knowledge university continues to accomplish even while it disavows that it does so. It is this latter contradiction that can be exploited in the shift to which you refer.

BH: The digital galaxy of the Internet, broadband, and software has added another layer to print culture and technology. New media require new research methods as well as classroom strategies. What is your position on the question of technology in teaching and learning?

IA: I don’t have an “in principle” answer to this question. My teaching still revolves around the lecture and the seminar and will likely continue to do so. I don’t think that new teaching technologies are inherently bad, but I do question the transmission model of knowledge that usually lies behind using them. For example, PowerPoint presentations are very much used now, to the extent that some students think that a lecture is a failure without them — yet why do students have to copy this outline down, when it could be simply emailed to them? The issues of lecture structure can be usefully discussed in class, since I find that most students simply assume a transmission model, based on their experience, and have never really thought about it. If they do think about it, they tend to agree that learning is an active process and not about swallowing what someone else has told you — but they may not want learning in this deeper sense from the university at all. This is the “disengagement contract” that Côté and Allahar point to and that you mentioned earlier. And they may be right. The university may no longer have the significance for enlightenment that it once had. But I don’t think that everyone who uses a new teaching technology is necessarily buying into all this. I would address the question on a case-by-case basis. I do think that it is important, however, that some of us keep alive the basic media of communication

on which the university was based: oral seminar interaction, reading, and writing. New communication technologies will change this structure, and that's not bad if they are introduced with a clear idea of what was made possible by the old media and how it can be preserved/transformed by new media.

BH: The university, as a public sphere or space, dedicated to academic freedom of inquiry and critical thinking, is in decline. The high-profile cases of the violation of academic freedom that you cite show that critical thinking is out and "ritual blaming is in." What concerns me even more is Jerry Zaslove's prescient observation, which you share in a footnote, "that the disabling factor in intellectual work is not the external threat to academic freedom but the internal compliance with the social agenda." The neoliberal turn within the university creates a chilly climate not only for assistant professors on the tenure track but contract faculty on the tenuous-track. For these "hidden academics," exercising the "freedom to express freely one's opinion about the institution, its administration, or the system in which one works" is to risk being unhired the next time you apply for a short-term, per-course contract. Tenure is the foundation of academic freedom for full-time faculty, but for contract, adjunct, or contingent faculty, the ability to "ask and confront genuine questions" is curtailed to an even greater degree. How can the academic freedom of these academic workers be expanded?

IA: Jerry is an astute critic of the university, and his comment is quite accurate about the current state of the academy. The changes that we are discussing have been brought about without general discussion, or even awareness, in the academy so that it has not really been a question of succumbing to pressure from the outside. The administration has caved in largely through the underfunding that has produced grave fiscal problems. Faculty often anticipate the exigencies of the administrative-managerial model and apply the pressure themselves, sad to say. These days one hears a lot of suggestions ruled out of hand among faculty themselves with reference to the "fact" that "the Dean, or the President, won't go for it." They censor themselves before the fact. University faculty are often very timid people. So Jerry's right that we shouldn't think

that all faculty are in open revolt against the corporate university. They have often already internalized the agenda, and, of course, those who are less powerful in the hierarchy always find it more difficult to dissent.

For those whom you wittily call “the tenuous-track” faculty, the situation is more extreme already. For them, the university is already essentially a corporation that they have little ability to influence and to which they must regularly go in search of work — low-paying work at that. It is these people who really prove that academic work isn’t done for the money but for the love of it. Their capacity to criticize the system is always held hostage to the next contract. The lack of traditional academic rights in this sector can be most effectively combated if they are in a union with tenured faculty. The tenured faculty should be able to see that the degradation of the rights of contract faculty degrades the university that it is their duty to protect. There are significant barriers in the way of such collaboration, but I do not see much chance for improvement if these two groups are kept separate. If tenured faculty will not fight this battle then contract faculty will have to go it alone, and this will be a difficult struggle. It has a chance, though, because the increasing reliance on contract faculty means that the university can’t function without them. In my view, non-replacement of retiring faculty will likely mean that universities turn to primarily contract faculty within the next two decades. In this way the administration can undermine academic freedom, research time, wages, and tenure without confronting tenured faculty directly. If this is so, then the future of the university will likely be decided by the extent to which contract faculty can unionize and demand academic rights.

ВН: You argue that network university is a node in the network society based on techno-science, which is the leading edge of techno-capitalism. As you also point out, when the academic milieu inside the university no longer differs from the milieu outside, the “double, inside-outside” relationship of the modern university to society ends. Where can we find a standpoint for reflexivity in a network university? How can we imagine the coming network university as a non-capitalist, or even anti-capitalist, institution?

IA: At the end of the book, I hang my expectations for a new critical university on the role that it can play — and has already played to some extent for the last few decades — in bringing into intellectual discussion the identity movements of network society. This would be a non-capitalist activity even if it occurred within a capitalist environment. My supposition is that such identity movements are important to people as citizens, social actors, and individuals. The question is where would the resources come from that could pay for such an activity. I explore some suggestions about this but do not come up with a definite plan. In general, though, such an allocation of resources demands a revitalization of the notion of the public. Without some notion of public education the university as a critical institution is doomed.

ВН: Your book ends with an appeal to the notion of the public and the public interest. To revive the public university, university-based academics could reflect on the public issues raised by social movements. They could produce publications, courses, and citizenship. By putting the public university on the map of what matters to the public, the public university might have a future. While you see the “public” in a transformed sense, you do not address the theme of the commons. Are the concepts of the “public interest” and the “commons” compatible or incompatible with each other?

IA: The concepts of the “public” and the “commons” are different ways of coming at the same issue. The public has usually referred to the citizen in modern nation-states and might appear to be a limited concept in that respect, but there are also other references, such as the city or locale and now, with the Internet, non-localizable references of the public. The “commons” refers much more to the idea of property. I would recommend here the classic works by C.B. Macpherson on the “exclusive property right” that came into existence with capitalism in contrast to the “limited property right” characteristic of pre-capitalist societies. I have argued elsewhere that an environmental socialism requires a revitalization of the notion of common property,⁶ but I didn’t want to get into that in this book because the whole thing could spin out of control. In fact, I got into writing this book when Arbeiter Ring Publishing, a

wonderful group of people in Winnipeg, asked me to write another little book for their Semaphore series. The previous book was called *Emergent Publics* and phrased a lot of similar issues through the idea of the public. This time I thought that it would be a good way for my concerns about the university to reach a non-specialized audience. So, yes, “public” and “common property,” or “the commons,” are ways of getting at the same thing. This thing is how to reinvent socialism for the twenty-first century.

BH: From a technocultural materialist perspective, the mode of information, the communication structure of the university, and the Foucauldian question of the “formation, circulation, and utilization of knowledge” and power, is what makes the study of the media, knowledge, and the “network university” so urgent and necessary. As you say, communication studies is a recognized academic discipline, but in my opinion, it has left the question of digital media in an academic setting to people working in education. One of the major contributions of your book is to show how humanities-oriented communication studies might begin to articulate critical media studies and critical university studies. How might such an articulation contribute to making the university into a space not only of reflection and reform, but a space of — in the Edufactory collective’s terms (<http://www.edu-factory.org/wp/>) — conflicts and transformation?

IA: You’re right that it’s surprising how these discourses have been kept separate. When I researched the background literature prior to writing the book, I found a lot of material in established genres: the idea of the university, higher education studies (often of a rather limited focus), recent studies of corporate influence, humanities professors bemoaning the current state of the world, etc. There were also some useful sociological studies of corporatization and some provocative late lectures by Jacques Derrida, etc. But there was very little work that used a relatively articulated intellectual framework to propose specific analyses and raise larger issues. Especially toward the end of the book, I found that I had to work out for myself a communication theory of the university that synthesized the ethical core of liberal studies with an analysis of media that are currently in transition and a social theory of network

society. I think that I was able to work this out sufficiently to sketch the analysis of contemporary possibilities with which the book ends, but there is a lot more work needed on this aspect of the argument. I hope that others will take up this issue as well, since it has both large-scale and local aspects that demand study and discussion. In distinction from academic research that follows established paradigms within the division of knowledge, work like this comes on to the agenda because of practical issues. It divides up the intellectual pie in a different way and makes new connections. In this way it can, I believe, contribute to the productive ferment around higher education today. I think that it's too soon to say exactly what is possible, but the first step is to underline the political decisions behind the managerial direction. This is a beginning of "conflicts and transformation," I would say, though the university is an established institution and the process of change is likely to be long and arduous. As well, it depends on the political environment outside.

ВН: 2009 was a year of education protests in fifty-one countries on five continents, including Canada. In January, after eighty-five days, the strike by CUPE 3903 representing teaching assistants, contract faculty, and graduate assistants ended when the union was forced back to work by the Ontario "education premier," Dalton McGuinty. With the support of the NDP, the link between the casualization of labour and the quality of education was put before the public in the Ontario Legislative Assembly, but public opinion was overwhelmingly hostile. In September, *The Trotsky* premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival. This Canadian comedy mixes the high-school genre film with biography of Leon Trotsky to pose the serious question of whether the energies that gave rise to student protest in the 1960s could be mobilized in the present historical conjuncture. The film's answer is in the affirmative. Given the limits on faculty and students' time and energy, I think communication studies is in a unique disciplinary position to confront the aesthetics and efficacy of protest and demonstrations. The traditional symbolic repertoire builds community but has been less successful in effecting changes in educational policy. How might a communication theory of the university help us study and discuss these issues?

IA: It has been important to the rightward turn of the last twenty-five years or so that a majority of people have been kept from seeing their common interest. There has been a push to lower taxes at the municipal, provincial, and national levels, for example, without any sense that services are going to be lost. Of course, everyone wants lower taxes, but everyone also wants social services. Sufficient numbers of people have been persuaded that they can buy back with their individual income the services that they lose due to lower taxes. But this is only true for a small minority. For the majority the solution must come with the pooling of resources through taxation (or perhaps some other form of joining social resources) to promote services in which a general level of well-being is guaranteed. How this can be reconciled with a loss of power by the national state to global corporations is a difficult and long-term question that depends on the revitalization of the public dimension of existence in new conditions. I have made some suggestions in my work but I won't recall them now. This question needs to be explored by many collaborating thinkers and activists. I don't think that the answer is already sitting out there but will be designed by the emergent social movements of our time as they design new forms of common property and a new public space in opposition to global capital. I have tried to show in the latter section of my book how the struggle for the university might be inserted into this larger struggle through the construction and reconstruction of identity that is a continual process in the network society.

So my initial response is to avoid what seems on the face of it to be special pleading for the discipline of communication and to suggest that all academics can and should spend some of their energy addressing public issues, especially the issues raised by social movements, and that tenure and promotion committees should include this in their criteria of academic publication. But in another sense your question goes deeper. Social movements, with their traditional means of protest, have come to an obstacle in that protest is now accepted and contained. This was apparent during the recent protests at the Olympics in Vancouver. One has to push in some way beyond this closure. (But, it must be said, simply breaking windows does not accomplish this.) While I would dismiss neither the mobilizing function of demonstrations nor the validity

of supporting those elected representatives who are on board, there is a valid perception among both activists and some commentators that traditional protest has become ineffective. This is a large question with important political implications, and I won't try to do more than recognize the salience of the issue now.

What can communication analysis of the university add to this situation? When I began to write this book I had no expectation of relying on communication theory at all. I think that it is significant that in order to analyze the irreversible contemporary changes in the university that are due to technology, I needed to draw upon the communication theory that I knew and apply it to the current transformation. I don't think that this is just my own background but is something in the nature of the situation itself. Contemporary transformations are happening precisely through fundamental transformations in the dominant media of communication. To this extent, communication analysts might bring something especially necessary to the table. I have argued before that a renewed democratic ethos would operate at the inside/outside seam of the contemporary system and that this outside is defined by the limit of translatability between dominant media of communication.⁷ In this sense I think that the future of communication studies is tied to the possibility of new forms of democratic ethos. But I don't think that I can say much more than this, because what is needed is a lot of specific analyses of different sites to drive this idea forward. The inside/outside dynamic is, I think, well exemplified by the way in which the street protests during the Seattle WTO demonstrations resonated with the contributions of some of the Third World and civil society representatives inside. Put another way, both piecemeal reform and total revolution are unacceptable at this point, though for very different reasons that I don't have space to analyze now. The analysis of closure, and the possibility of opening, cannot be controlled by any one perspective, but it can be fostered by analyses of what slips out of control by dominant organizations and that which, for reasons of public/common discourse, can't be simply dismissed as outside. If I were to set up an Institute of Public Communication it would focus on this problem. It can be seen in the university and in many other contemporary sites, but a general theory of it is not yet available. There is a lot of work yet to do.

NOTES

Preface

- 1 Ian Angus, *A Border Within: National Identity, Cultural Plurality, and Wilderness* (Montréal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1997), and *Identity and Justice* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008).

1 Introduction: The Instituting *Polemos* of English-Canadian Culture

- 1 Robert Meynell, *Canadian Idealism and the Philosophy of Freedom: C. B. Macpherson, George Grant and Charles Taylor* (Montréal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2011), 6–9.
- 2 My account of Grant's departure from Hegelianism and acceptance of the idea that technology defines modernity is in *A Border Within: National Identity, Cultural Plurality, and Wilderness* (Montréal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1997), 76–81.
- 3 G. W. F. Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, trans. J. Sibree (New York: Dover, 1956), 87 (paragraph break omitted); based on lectures given in 1830–31 and supplemented with Hegel's notes from previous years.
- 4 Ibid., 86 (paragraph break omitted).
- 5 Ibid., 85–86.
- 6 John Burbidge, "Hegel in Canada," *Owl of Minerva* 25, no. 2 (Spring 1994): 215–16.
- 7 David MacGregor, "Canada's Hegel," *Literary Review of Canada* 3 (February 1994): 18.
- 8 See Leslie Armour, "Canadian Ways of Thinking: Logic, Society, and Canadian Philosophy," in *Alternative Frontiers: Voices from the Mountain West Canadian Studies Conference*, ed. Allen Seager, Leonard Evenden, Rowland Lorimer, and Robin Mathews (Montréal: Association for Canadian Studies, 1997), 1–22; Burbidge, "Hegel in Canada"; and Elizabeth Trott, "Caird, Watson, and the Reconciliation of Opposites," in *Anglo-American Idealism, 1865–1927*, ed. W. J. Mander (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2000), 81–92.
- 9 Burbidge, "Hegel in Canada," 217. See also Kenneth L. Schmitz, "Community, The Elusive Unity," *Review of Metaphysics* 37, no. 2 (December 1983): 243–64.
- 10 Winthrop Pickard Bell, "The Idea of a Nation," edited, with an introduction, by Ian Angus, *Symposium: Canadian Journal of Continental Philosophy* 16, no. 2 (Fall 2012): 52.
- 11 G. B. Madison, "Nationality and Universality," in G. B. Madison, Paul Fairfield, and Ingrid Harris, *Is There a Canadian Philosophy?* (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 2000), 16, 21, 39.
- 12 Leslie Armour, *The Idea of Canada and the Crisis of Community* (Ottawa: Steel Rail, 1981), x.

- 13 Leslie Armour and Elizabeth Trott, *The Faces of Reason: An Essay on Philosophy and Culture in English Canada, 1850–1950* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1981), 3–4.
- 14 This short summary is based upon Leslie Armour, “Canadian Ways of Thinking,” “Canada and the History of Philosophy,” in *Canada: Theoretical Discourse/Discours théoriques*, ed. Terry Goldie, Carmen Lambert, and Rowland Lorimer (Montréal: Association for Canadian Studies, 1994), and “The Canadian Tradition and the Common Good,” *Études maritainiennes* 5 (April 1989): 23–40; and on Elizabeth Trott, “Caird, Watson, and the Reconciliation of Opposites,” and “Bradley and the Canadian Connection,” in *Philosophy After F. H. Bradley*, ed. James Bradley (Bristol: Thoemmes Press, 1996), 57–72.
- 15 See James Doull, “The Philosophical Basis of Constitutional Discussion in Canada,” and “Hegel’s *Phenomenology* and Post-Modern Thought,” in *Philosophy and Freedom: The Legacy of James Doull*, ed. David G. Peddle and Neil G. Robertson (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003), 281–300, and “Hegel and Contemporary Liberalism, Anarchism, Socialism: A Defense of the *Rechtsphilosophie* Against Marx and His Contemporary Followers,” in *The Legacy of Hegel*, ed. J. J. O’Malley et al. (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1973), 224–48.
- 16 Elizabeth Trott, “Multiculturalism, Charles Taylor, and the Idea of Canada,” in Seager et al., *Alternative Frontiers*, 4. See also Elizabeth Trott, “Western Mindscapes: A Philosophical Challenge,” *American Review of Canadian Studies* 31, no. 4 (Winter 2001): 639–45.
- 17 Trott, “Multiculturalism, Charles Taylor, and the Idea of Canada,” 14–15.
- 18 Trott, “Western Mindscapes: A Philosophical Challenge,” 3, 7.
- 19 Linda Hutcheon, *The Canadian Postmodern: A Study of Contemporary English-Canadian Fiction* (Don Mills, ON: Oxford University Press, 1988), 4, 19.
- 20 Ibid., 19.
- 21 Angus, *A Border Within*, 129–30.
- 22 Arthur Kroker, *Technology and the Canadian Mind: Innis/McLuhan/Grant* (Montréal: New World Perspectives, 1984), 7; Dennis Lee, *Savage Fields: An Essay in Literature and Cosmology* (Toronto: House of Anansi, 1977), 11.
- 23 George Grant, *Philosophy in the Mass Age* (Toronto: Copp Clark, 1966), vii.
- 24 Charles Taylor, *The Ethics of Authenticity* (Toronto: House of Anansi, 1991), 68.
- 25 Harold Innis, “Conclusion from *The Fur Trade in Canada*,” in *A Passion for Identity: An Introduction to Canadian Studies*, 2nd ed., ed. David Taras, Beverly Rasporich, and Eli Mandel (Scarborough, ON: Nelson Canada, 1993), 18–19.

2 Charles Taylor’s Account of Modernity

- 1 Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007), 61. See also Charles Taylor, *Modern Social Imaginaries* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004), 49.
- 2 Taylor, *A Secular Age*, 554.
- 3 G. W. F. Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, trans. J. Sibree (New York: Dover, 1956), 442. All of my references to this text remove the arbitrary capitalization of nouns.
- 4 G. W. F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A. V. Miller (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), 19–20.
- 5 G. W. F. Hegel, *Aesthetics, Vol. 1*, trans. T. M. Knox (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975), 196.

- 6 Taylor, *Modern Social Imaginaries*, 102; and *Sources of the Self* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989), 213.
- 7 Hegel, *Philosophy of History*, 449.
- 8 Jean Hyppolite, "The Structure of Philosophic Language According to the 'Preface' to Hegel's *Phenomenology of Mind*," in *The Structuralist Controversy: The Languages of Criticism and the Sciences of Man*, ed. Richard Macksey and Eugenio Donato (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1972), 160. For his comments on Hegel's system, see 158. See also his more explicit statement that "there is little doubt that in general Kierkegaard is right against Hegel," in *Studies on Marx and Hegel*, trans. John O'Neill (New York: Basic Books, 1969), 22.
- 9 My non-Hegelian, phenomenological conception of the relationship of philosophy to *polemos* has been expressed in "In Praise of Fire: Responsibility, Manifestation, Polemos, Circumspection," *New Yearbook for Phenomenology and Phenomenological Philosophy* 4 (2004): 21–52.
- 10 Charles Taylor, *Hegel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 543.
- 11 *Ibid.*, 537.
- 12 *Ibid.*, 541.
- 13 *Ibid.*, 571.
- 14 *Ibid.*, 569.
- 15 Charles Taylor, *Multiculturalism and "The Politics of Recognition"* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 59. I have criticized this understanding of multiculturalism in Angus, *A Border Within*, 147–54.
- 16 Taylor, *Malaise of Modernity* (Toronto: House of Anansi, 2003), 10.
- 17 *Ibid.*, 28–29.
- 18 Max Weber, *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, trans. H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976), 220.
- 19 Taylor, *Malaise of Modernity*, 106.
- 20 *Ibid.*, 109.
- 21 *Ibid.*, 120.
- 22 I am not going to pursue here the question of the origin of social movements attempting to limit instrumental reason in contemporary society. I have attempted such an analysis in *Primal Scenes of Communication: Communication, Consumerism, Social Movements* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2000); and *Emergent Publics: An Essay on Social Movements and Democracy* (Winnipeg: Arbeiter Ring, 2001).
- 23 Edmund Husserl, *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*, trans. David Carr (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1970), 21–22.
- 24 Taylor, *Malaise of Modernity*, 87.
- 25 Taylor, *Modern Social Imaginaries*, 157.
- 26 Jürgen Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action*, vol. 2, *Lifeworld and System: A Critique of Functionalist Reason*, trans. T. McCarthy (Boston: Beacon Press, 1987), 173.
- 27 Taylor, *Modern Social Imaginaries*, 104.
- 28 *Ibid.*, 71.
- 29 *Ibid.*, 165.
- 30 Taylor, *Sources of the Self*, 502–3.
- 31 Taylor, *Malaise of Modernity*, 111.
- 32 Taylor, *Modern Social Imaginaries*, 171.

- 33 Hans Jonas, *The Imperative of Responsibility* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 108–22.
- 34 Ibid., 107.
- 35 Taylor, *Modern Social Imaginaries*, 193.
- 36 Taylor, *Sources of the Self*, 521.
- 37 Charles Taylor, *Varieties of Religion Today: William James Revisited* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), 111–16.
- 38 Taylor, *A Secular Age*, 545.

3 James Doull and the Philosophic Task of Our Time

- 1 James Doull, “Hegel and Contemporary Liberalism, Anarchism, Socialism: A Defense of the *Rechtsphilosophie* Against Marx and His Contemporary Followers,” in *The Legacy of Hegel*, ed. J. J. O’Malley et al. (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1973), 226.
- 2 Ibid., 228.
- 3 Ibid., 234, 240.
- 4 Ibid., 247.
- 5 James Doull, “The Philosophical Basis of Constitutional Discussion in Canada,” in *Philosophy and Freedom: The Legacy of James Doull*, ed. David G. Peddle and Neil G. Robertson (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003), 402–3. See also David G. Peddle and Neil G. Robertson, “North American Freedom: James Doull’s Recent Political Thought,” also in *Philosophy and Freedom*, 476–80.
- 6 James Doull, “Hegel’s *Phenomenology* and Post-Modern Thought,” in *Philosophy and Freedom*, ed. Peddle and Robertson, 294; Doull, “Hegel and Contemporary Liberalism, Anarchism, Socialism,” 248.
- 7 Doull, “Hegel and Contemporary Liberalism, Anarchism, Socialism,” 247.
- 8 Ibid., 244. The same diagnosis is also asserted in James Doull, “Would Hegel Today Be a Hegelian?” *Dialogue* 9, no. 2 (1970): 227.
- 9 Shlomo Avineri, “Comment on Doull’s ‘Hegel and Contemporary Liberalism, Anarchism, Socialism,’” in *The Legacy of Hegel*, ed. O’Malley et al., 249.
- 10 Doull, “Hegel’s *Phenomenology* and Post-Modern Thought,” 291.
- 11 Avineri, “Comment on Doull’s ‘Hegel and Contemporary Liberalism, Anarchism, Socialism,’” 252, quoting Doull’s text at 229.
- 12 G. W. F. Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, trans. T. M. Knox (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969), 134.
- 13 Karl Marx, “Contribution to the Critique of Hegel’s *Philosophy of Right*: Introduction” (1843), in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, ed. Robert C. Tucker (New York: W. W. Norton, 1978), 64, 65 (emphasis removed).
- 14 Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, “Alienation and Social Classes,” an excerpt from *The Holy Family* (1845), in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, 134.
- 15 Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. 1, trans. Samuel Moore and Edward Aveling (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1970), 175–76.
- 16 Doull, “Hegel’s *Phenomenology* and Post-Modern Thought,” 295; see also Doull, “Hegel and Contemporary Liberalism, Anarchism, Socialism,” 230.
- 17 Anton Pannekoek, *Lenin as Philosopher* (London: Merlin Press, 1975), 119.
- 18 Paul Mattick, “Anton Pannekoek (1873–1960),” in Pannekoek, *Lenin as Philosopher*, 132.
- 19 Peter Kropotkin, *Fields, Factories and Workshops of Tomorrow* (New York: Harper, 1974), 26.

- 20 C.B. Macpherson, "A Political Theory of Property," in *Democratic Theory: Essays in Retrieval* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973), 131.
- 21 Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Discourse on the Origin and Foundations of Inequality*, trans. Roger D. Masters (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1964), 141.
- 22 Robert Michels, *Political Parties*, trans. Eden Paul and Cedar Paul (New York: Dover, 1959), 11.
- 23 Graeme Nicholson, "Heidegger and the Dialectic of Modernity," in *Philosophy and Freedom*, ed. Peddle and Robertson, 390.
- 24 Doull, "Hegel and Contemporary Liberalism, Anarchism, Socialism," 226, 228, 229; Doull, "Heidegger and the State," in *Philosophy and Freedom*, ed. Peddle and Robertson, 357–58, 365, 368–69; Doull, "The Doull-Fackenheim Debate: Would Hegel Today Be a Hegelian?" in *Philosophy and Freedom*, 340–41; Graeme Nicholson, "Heidegger and the Dialectic of Modernity," in *Philosophy and Freedom*, 387–88, 390; David G. Peddle and Neil G. Robertson, "North American Freedom: James Doull's Recent Political Thought," in *Philosophy and Freedom*, 477–78.
- 25 Doull, "Heidegger and the State," 375; David G. Peddle and Neil G. Robertson, "Lamentation and Speculation: George Grant, James Doull and the Possibility of Canada," *Animus* 7 (2002): 14–15.

4 C. B. Macpherson's Developmental Liberalism

- 1 C.B. Macpherson, *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism, Hobbes to Locke* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), 2 and 270–72; and C.B. Macpherson, *Democratic Theory: Essays in Retrieval* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973), 4.
- 2 C.B. Macpherson, *The Life and Times of Liberal Democracy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 45–48; *Possessive Individualism*, 275; and *Democratic Theory*, 5.
- 3 Macpherson, *Life and Times*, 51 and 99–101; *Democratic Theory*, 22–23; and *Possessive Individualism*, 275.
- 4 J.S. Mill, *Utilitarianism* (London: Everyman's Library, 1968), 32.
- 5 Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, trans. Lewis White Beck (New York: Liberal Arts Press, 1956), 15.
- 6 Immanuel Kant, *Metaphysical Elements of Justice* (part 1 of *The Metaphysics of Morals*), trans. John Ladd (New York: Liberal Arts Press, 1965), 61.
- 7 Immanuel Kant, "The Metaphysics of Morals," in *Kant's Political Writings*, ed. Hans Reiss (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 139–40. Kant includes as property owners tradesmen who produce objects for public sale.
- 8 Macpherson, *Democratic Theory*, 5; and *Possessive Individualism*, 270.
- 9 Macpherson, *Life and Times*, 21–22.
- 10 Macpherson, *Possessive Individualism*, 263.
- 11 Macpherson, *Democratic Theory*, 19–23, 30–38, 55, 62–63, 72, and 139n19.

5 Athens and Jerusalem? Philosophy and Religion in George Grant's Thought

- 1 I have previously noted four stages in Grant's thinking about modernity and technology that can be associated with the successive influences of Hegel, Strauss-Ellul, Nietzsche, and Heidegger, in Ian Angus, *A Border Within: National Identity, Cultural Plurality, and Wilderness* (Montréal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1997), 81–95.

- 2 George Grant, *English-Speaking Justice* (Sackville, NB: Mount Allison University, 1974), 93.
- 3 Except in the second case, where the dating is based on Grant's internal comment in the addendum to the 1990 publication of the text, these dates refer to first publication. "Philosophy" appeared in *Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences (The Massey Commission)* (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1951), 119–33; "Two Theological Languages," in *Two Theological Languages by George Grant and Other Essays in Honour of His Work*, ed. Wayne Whillier (Queenston, ON: Edwin Mellen Press, 1990), 1–18; "Religion and the State," first published in *Queen's Quarterly* in 1963, in *Technology and Empire* (Toronto: House of Anansi, 1969), 43–60; and "Faith and the Multiversity," in *Technology and Justice* (Toronto: House of Anansi, 1986): 35–77.
- 4 Grant, "Two Theological Languages," appendix, 17, 17, 16.
- 5 George Grant, "Revolution and Tradition" in *Tradition and Revolution*, ed. Lionel Rubinoff (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1971), 93, 94, 95.
- 6 George Grant, "Thinking About Technology," in *Technology and Justice*, 30.
- 7 Grant, "Two Theological Languages," appendix, 18.
- 8 Grant, "Faith and the Multiversity," 38.
- 9 *Ibid.*, 72.
- 10 *Ibid.*, 42, 54.
- 11 Grant, "Faith and the Multiversity," 73.
- 12 Simone Weil, "The Pythagorean Doctrine," in *Intimations of Christianity Among the Ancient Greeks*, trans. Elizabeth Chase Geissbuhler (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1976), 185.
- 13 For example, Grant, "Faith and the Multiversity," 72. The phrase is from Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, preface.
- 14 Grant, "Faith and the Multiversity," 55.
- 15 Grant, "Two Theological Languages," appendix, 18. Grant had already spoken of this "tension" in "The University Curriculum," in *Technology and Empire*, 121.
- 16 Grant, "Faith and the Multiversity," 76.
- 17 Grant, "Obedience," in *The Idler* 29 (July–August 1990): 28. All subsequent quotes in this paragraph are from "Obedience" on the same page.
- 18 Grant, "Two Theological Languages," appendix, 18.
- 19 Grant, "Philosophy," 122, but cf. 132–33.
- 20 Grant, "Religion and the State," 54.
- 21 *Ibid.*, 59, 46.
- 22 Grant, "Two Theological Languages," appendix, 19.
- 23 Grant, "Faith and the Multiversity," 71–72.
- 24 *Ibid.*, 43.
- 25 *Ibid.*, 72.
- 26 Grant, "Two Theological Languages," appendix, 19.
- 27 George Grant, "Five Lectures on Christianity for 1B6," McMaster Notebook A, 1976; copied by Randy Peg Peters with the permission of Sheila Grant in May 2002. All subsequent quotations in this paragraph are from this source.
- 28 George Grant, "Conversation: Theology and History," in *George Grant in Process*, ed. Larry Schmidt (Toronto: House of Anansi, 1978), 101.
- 29 "Those of us who are much lesser thinkers than Nietzsche can be taken up with that

immoderation (and I am sure that the central characteristic of modern thought which touches us all is immoderation) which is not good for one's sanity. I am sure that most of you here are less prone to madness than myself . . .": George Grant, Notebook M, 1977; copied by Randy Peg Peters with the permission of Sheila Grant in May 2002.

- 30 Simone Weil, "God in Plato," in *On Science, Necessity and the Love of God: Essays*, ed. and trans. Richard Rees (London: Oxford University Press, 1968), 133.
- 31 Ibid., 108.
- 32 *Phaedo*, 115c–e; Hugh Tredennick translation.
- 33 Grant, *English-Speaking Justice*, 88.
- 34 Martin Heidegger, "The Question Concerning Technology," in *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays* (New York: Harper and Row, 1977), 16–17.
- 35 Grant, "Thinking about Technology," 18.
- 36 In that note Grant claims a convergence between Simone Weil's notion of "attention" and Heidegger's concepts of thinking (*Denken*) and releasement (*Gelassenheit*). *Gelassenheit* has been usually translated into English versions of Heidegger as "letting-be," but I use the more recognized and adequate translation of Meister Eckhart's term that influenced Heidegger. In Heidegger's works on technology, the term used for a non-technological form of thinking is *Besinnung*. See "The Age of the World Picture" and "Science and Reflection," in *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays* (115 and 155, respectively), where the translator uses the misleading term "reflection." The note can be found in George Grant, "Notes for Lectures on Simone Weil," McMaster Notebooks, 1975; copied with the permission of Sheila Grant in May 2002.

6 Introduction: National Identity as Solidarity

- 1 Winthrop Pickard Bell, "The Idea of a Nation," ed., and with an introduction by, Ian Angus, *Symposium: Canadian Journal of Continental Philosophy* 16, no. 2 (Fall 2012): 34–46; and Winthrop Pickard Bell, "The Work of Philosophy," ed. Ian Angus, *New Yearbook for Phenomenology and Phenomenological Philosophy* 12 (forthcoming).
- 2 Gabriel Dumont, *Gabriel Dumont Speaks*, trans. Michael Barnholden (Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1993), 37.
- 3 Sections of this introduction were printed as an opinion piece on the future of Canadian studies titled "Toward a Recovery of Social Solidarity?" in *Canada Watch*, Fall 2007, 22–23.
- 4 Ian Angus, *A Border Within: National Identity, Cultural Plurality, and Wilderness* (Montréal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1997), 27–40.

7 Winthrop Pickard Bell on the Idea of a Nation

- 1 An outline of Winthrop Bell's life and writings, as well as the archival holdings, is available from the section of the Mount Allison University Archives website devoted to Bell, which can be found at <http://www.mta.ca/wpbell/index.htm>.
- 2 I am referring here to two other works available in the Winthrop Pickard Bell fonds at the Mount Allison University Archives: (1) a Harvard University manuscript titled "An Essay in the Philosophy of Values" (6501/11/2, files 26, 27), which consists of about 292 written pages in minute script, including additions, emendations repetitions, and redraftings; (2) the *Ruhleben* notebooks (6501/9/2). Notebooks

- nos. 27, 28, and 29, which were the basis for a series of lectures, can be referred to as the "Ruhleben Notebooks on the Philosophy of Value." These notebooks contain approximately 300 pages of small handwritten text, including revisions, additions, and corrections. These are the two most extensive philosophical manuscripts in the archive, indicating that this topic was Bell's main philosophical interest. As late as 1950 he reviewed a book on the philosophy of values for the *Dalhousie Review*: see *Dalhousie Review* 29, no. 1 (1950): 104–5.
- 3 The lecture is available in the Winthrop Pickard Bell fonds at the Mount Allison University Archives, 6501/9/2, Ruhleben notebook no. 11. It appeared in edited form, with an introduction by Ian Angus, all under the title "The Idea of a Nation," *Symposium: Canadian Journal of Continental Philosophy*, 16, no. 2 (Fall 2012): 34–46. References to Bell's work refer to this edition, with the title "Canadian Problems and Possibilities," which is retained for his edited text.
 - 4 Bell's reliance on Husserlian phenomenology is evident in his contemporaneous (1915) Ruhleben lecture "The Work of Philosophy," which will appear (edited, with an introduction by Ian Angus) in *The New Yearbook for Phenomenology and Phenomenological Philosophy* 12 (forthcoming).
 - 5 Bell, "Canadian Problems and Possibilities," 56.
 - 6 Winthrop Pickard Bell, Ruhleben Notebooks on the Philosophy of Value, notebook no. 27, lecture 3, p. 17.
 - 7 *Ibid.*, p. 15, with interpolation.
 - 8 See Jan Patočka, "Masaryk's and Husserl's Conception of the Spiritual Crisis of European Humanity," in *Jan Patočka: Philosophy and Selected Writings*, ed. and trans. Erazim Kohák (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989).
 - 9 Carl Berger, *The Sense of Power: Studies in the Ideas of Canadian Imperialism 1867–1914* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970); and Carl Berger, ed., *Imperialism and Nationalism, 1884–1914: A Conflict in Canadian Thought* (Toronto: Copp Clark, 1969).
 - 10 Bell, "Canadian Problems and Possibilities," 59.
 - 11 Ernest Renan, "What Is a Nation?" in *The Poetry of the Celtic Races, and Other Studies*, trans. William G. Hutchinson (Port Washington, NY: Kennikat Press, 1970).
 - 12 Bell, "Canadian Problems and Possibilities," 56.
 - 13 *Ibid.*, 56.
 - 14 *Ibid.*, 55.
 - 15 Renan, "What Is a Nation?" 6.
 - 16 Bell, "Canadian Problems and Possibilities," 55–56.
 - 17 *Ibid.*, 55.
 - 18 *Ibid.*, 56–57.
 - 19 *Ibid.*, 56.
 - 20 *Ibid.*, 56.
 - 21 *Ibid.*, 54.
 - 22 *Ibid.*, 57.
 - 23 Bell refers in his manuscript "An Essay in the Philosophy of Values" to Husserl's distinction between independent and non-independent objects or contents in such a manner as to render it indistinct from the distinction of an organic whole from an aggregate, using the contrast between a piece of coal and the leg of a dog to make the analysis.
 - 24 Bell, "The Work of Philosophy" (forthcoming).

8 Canadian Studies: Retrospect and Prospect

- 1 Richard Nimijean has documented this shift, which began in the late 1990s and has occurred under both Liberal and Conservative governments. See his articles "Canadian Studies and the Harper Foreign Policy Agenda," *Inroads* 22 (2008), <http://www.inroadsjournal.ca/canadian-studies-and-the-%E2%80%A8harper-foreign-policy-agenda/>; "The Ongoing Crisis of Canadian Studies," *Canada Watch*, Fall 2007, 14–16; "Articulating the 'Canadian Way,'" *British Journal of Canadian Studies*, 18, no. 1 (2005): 26–52; and "The Politics of Branding Canada," *Mexican Journal of Canadian Studies* 11 (2006): 67–85.
- 2 T.H.B. Symons has pointed to the argument against Canadian studies programs on the grounds that there is more Canadian content in the regular curriculum in "The State of Canadian Studies in the Year 2000: Some Observations," *Journal of Canadian Studies / Revue d'études canadiennes* 35, no. 1 (Spring 2000): 28.
- 3 D. Drache, "The Canadian Bourgeoisie and Its National Consciousness," in *Close the 49th Parallel: The Americanization of Canada*, ed. Ian Lumsden (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970), 22 (paragraph break removed).
- 4 Cyril Byrne, Ken MacKinnon, and Robin Mathews, *The Waterloo Report* (New Canada Press, 1969), 7.
- 5 *The Struggle for Canadian Universities*, a dossier edited by Robin Mathews and James Steele (Toronto: New Press, 1969), 3–4.
- 6 *Ibid.*, 2.
- 7 *The Symons Report: An Abridged Version of Volumes 1 and 2 of To Know Ourselves, the Report of the Commission on Canadian Studies* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1978), 18–20.
- 8 *The Symons Report*, 18–19, 17.
- 9 *Ibid.*, 18.
- 10 *Ibid.*, 20.
- 11 James E. Page, *Reflections on the Symons Report: The State of Canadian Studies in 1980*, report prepared for the Department of the Secretary of State of Canada (Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services, 1981), 228.
- 12 *The Symons Report*, 17–18.
- 13 Immanuel Wallerstein, "The Unintended Consequences of Cold War Area Studies," in Noam Chomsky et al., *The Cold War and the University: Toward an Intellectual History of the Postwar Years* (New York: New Press, 1997).
- 14 *The Symons Report*, 20.
- 15 David Cameron, *Taking Stock: Canadian Studies in the Nineties* (Montréal: Association of Canadian Studies, 1996), 25.
- 16 Susan Crean and Marcel Rioux, *Two Nations: An Essay on the Culture and Politics of Canada and Quebec in a World of American Pre-eminence* (Toronto: James Lorimer, 1983); and Marcel Rioux and Susan Crean, *Deux pays pour vivre : un plaidoyer* (Laval, QC: Éditions coopératives Albert Saint-Martin, 1980).
- 17 *Ibid.*, 42. This state-based rationale is continuous with the observation that "the Canadian condition is as valid and as unremarkable as the achievement of peoples who have made their cultural and social identity more or less coterminous with their juridical existence" (4).
- 18 Roy Miki, "Altered States: Global Currents, the Spectral Nation, and the Production of 'Asian Canadian,'" *Journal of Canadian Studies* 35, no. 3 (Fall 2000): 47.

- 19 Gad Horowitz, "Part III: A Symposium on René Lévesque," *Canadian Dimension* 5 (January–March 1968): 21; "Tories, Socialists and the Demise of Canada," *Canadian Dimension* 2 (May–June 1965): 15; and "Québec and Canadian Nationalism: Two Views," *Canadian Forum* 50 (January 1971): 357.
- 20 Following Horowitz (and some others) on the use of the term English Canada for this reason, see Philip Resnick, *Thinking English Canada* (Toronto: Stoddart, 1994); and Ian Angus, *A Border Within: National Identity, Cultural Plurality, and Wilderness* (Montréal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1997).
- 21 Roy Miki, *Redress: Inside the Japanese Canadian Call for Justice* (Vancouver: Raincoast Books, 2005), 11.
- 22 Donald J. Savoie, "All Things Canadian Are Now Regional," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 35, no. 1 (Spring 2000): 214.
- 23 Gilles Bourque and Jules Duchastel, "Erosion of the Nation-State and the Transformation of National Identities in Canada," in *Sociology for the Twenty-First Century*, ed. Janet L. Abu-Lughod (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 186–87.
- 24 Jill Vickers, "Liberating Theory in Canadian Studies," in *Canada: Theoretical Discourse / Discours théoriques*, ed. Terry Goldie, Carmen Lambert, and Rowland Lorimer (Montréal: Association for Canadian Studies, 1994), 363.
- 25 Peter Hodgins, "The Future of Canadian Studies: A Gen-Xer's Perspective," in *Canada Watch*, Fall 2007, 21. Richard Nimjeian also claims that "the strong sense of national identity, rooted in diversity, is often conflated with a homogeneous national identity" in order to conclude that governments talk a better game of diversity than they practice: "The Ongoing Crisis of Canadian Studies," *Canada Watch*, Fall 2007, 14.
- 26 See Kieran Keohane, *Symptoms of Canada: An Essay on the Canadian Identity* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997); Richard Day, *Multiculturalism and the History of Canadian Diversity* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000); and Eva Mackey, *The House of Difference: Cultural Politics and National Identity in Canada* (London and New York: Routledge, 1999). I attempt to appreciate the validity of this approach as a critique of the state but to criticize its limits as a description of the social field in "Cultural Plurality and Democracy," in "Post-Canada," special issue, *International Journal of Canadian Studies* 25 (Spring 2002): 69–85. It is common for speakers about multiculturalism in Europe and elsewhere to find themselves hedged in by the assumption that Canada has solved the problem of cultural diversity and thus prodded to become defenders of state policy — a problem that can be addressed, I think, by a refusal to speak in that voice and an assertion that, although the problem is neither solved nor can solutions in one context be simply imported into another, Canada does have a rich discourse about multiculturalism that can be profitably read by others elsewhere.
- 27 Joan Sangster, "Has Canadian Studies Had Its Day?" *Canada Watch*, Fall 2007, 18.
- 28 See in this connection my discussion of several documents of the Métis people as containing a theory of legitimate government, in *Identity and Justice* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008), 44–48.
- 29 Marianne Boelscher-Ignace and Ronald E. Ignace, "The Old Wolf in Sheep's Clothing? Canadian Aboriginal Peoples and Multiculturalism," in *Multiculturalism in a World of Leaking Boundaries*, ed. Dieter Haselbach (Münster: Lit Verlag, 1998), 152–53.

- 30 Yasmeen Abu-Laban, "The Future and the Legacy: Globalization and the Canadian Settler-State," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 35, no. 4 (Winter 2001): 274.
- 31 Mel Watkins, "The Dene Nation: From Underdevelopment to Development (1977)," in *Staples and Beyond: Selected Writings of Mel Watkins* (Montréal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2006), 69.
- 32 Letter in reply to Mathews from Professor Macpherson, March 7, 1969, included in *The Struggle for Canadian Universities*, 110.
- 33 Sangster, "Has Canadian Studies Had Its Day?" 19.
- 34 Andrew Nurse, "Too Much of a Good Thing? The Case for Canadian Studies in the 21st Century," *Canada Watch*, Fall 2007, 29.
- 35 I began to track and criticize this false dichotomy in Canadian studies with my review of *Canada: Theoretical Discourse / Discours théorétiques*, ed. Terry Goldie, Carmen Lambert, and Rowland Lorimer (Montréal: Association for Canadian Studies, 1994), which first appeared as "Missing Links in Canadian Theoretical Discourse" in *Journal of Canadian Studies* 3, no. 1 (Spring 1996) and was reprinted as appendix 1 to *A Border Within*.
- 36 Colin Coates, "Canadian Studies: A Victim of Its Own Success?" *Canada Watch*, Fall 2007, 7.
- 37 Myrna Kostash, *The Next Canada: In Search of Our Future Nation* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 2000), 317 (paragraph break omitted).
- 38 David Cameron, *Taking Stock: Canadian Studies in the Nineties*, 58.
- 39 Ibid., 40–44.
- 40 T.H.B. Symons, "The State of Canadian Studies in the Year 2000," 50.
- 41 See the website of Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/workplaceskills/foreign_workers/acadexem.shtml, under "Positions Exempt from HRSDC Labour Market Opinions," which points out that foreign workers who need a CIC work permit but do not require an HRSDC labour market opinion include (among others): "Citizens of the U.S. and Mexico appointed as professors under the university, college and seminary levels of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA); and Citizens of Chile appointed as professors under the Canada-Chile Free Trade Agreement (CCFTA)."
- 42 Angus, *A Border Within*, 45.
- 43 Nadia Tazi, ed., *Keywords: Nature* (New York: Other Press, 2005), vii–viii.

9 Gad Horowitz and the Political Culture of English Canada

- 1 Gad Horowitz, "Nouveau Partie Démocratique," *Canadian Dimension* 2 (July–August 1965): 16.
- 2 Gad Horowitz, "Part III: A Symposium on René Lévesque," *Canadian Dimension* 5 (January–March 1968): 21; "Tories, Socialists and the Demise of Canada," *Canadian Dimension* 2 (May–June 1965): 15; and "Québec and Canadian Nationalism: Two Views," *Canadian Forum* 50 (January 1971): 357.
- 3 Gad Horowitz, "The Future of English Canada," *Canadian Dimension* 2 (July–August 1965): 2; and "Le statut particulier, formule libératrice pour les deux communautés," *Le Devoir*, 30 June 1967.
- 4 Horowitz, "Part III: A Symposium on René Lévesque," 20.
- 5 Ibid.
- 6 Horowitz, "The Future of English Canada," 25.

- 7 For example, Philip Resnick, *Toward a Canada-Québec Union* (Montréal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1991).
- 8 Horowitz, "Trudeau and Trudeauism," *Canadian Dimension* 48 (May 1968): 30.
- 9 Horowitz, "Part III: A Symposium on René Lévesque," 20.
- 10 Horowitz, "The Future of English Canada," 25.
- 11 Gad Horowitz, "Creative Politics," *Canadian Dimension* 3 (November–December 1965): 14. This article, together with its continuation, "Mosaics and Identity" (*Canadian Dimension* 3 [January–February 1966]: 19), constitute Horowitz's dialogue with John Porter.
- 12 Horowitz, "Creative Politics," 15.
- 13 Ibid.
- 14 Ibid.
- 15 Horowitz, "Mosaics and Identity," 19.
- 16 Horowitz, "Nouveau Partie Démocratique," 16–17.
- 17 Gad Horowitz, *Canadian Labour in Politics* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1968), esp. 261.
- 18 Horowitz, *Canadian Labour in Politics* "Toward the Democratic Class Struggle," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 1, no. 3 (1966): 7.
- 19 Horowitz had two televised conversations with Grant (CBC, 7 and 14 February 1966) and conducted an interview with Grant, "Technology and Man," which first appeared in the *Journal of Canadian Studies* 4, no. 3 (August 1969): 3–6. These conversations and the interview are now available in Arthur Davis and Henry Roper, eds., *Collected Works of George Grant*, vol. 3, 1960–1969 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005). In addition, Horowitz published the articles "Tories, Socialists and the Demise of Canada" (mainly a review of Grant's book *Lament for a Nation*), in *Canadian Dimension* 2 (May–June 1965): 15–18, and "Conservatism, Liberalism and Socialism in Canada," in the *Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science* 32, no. 2 (May 1966): 143–71, which was revised to form the first chapter of *Canadian Labour in Politics*.
- 20 George Grant, in "Technology and Man," in Davis and Roper, *Collected Works of George Grant*, vol. 3, 1960–1969, 595.
- 21 See my own account of one such encounter in "For a Canadian Philosophy: George Grant," *Canadian Journal of Political and Social Theory* 13, nos. 1–2 (1989): 140–43.
- 22 Horowitz, *Canadian Labour in Politics*, 23.
- 23 Horowitz, "Tories, Socialists and the Demise of Canada," 15.
- 24 Horowitz, "Technology and Man," 598.
- 25 Ibid., 598–99.
- 26 See my *A Border Within: National Identity, Cultural Plurality, and Wilderness* (Montréal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1997), 30–35.
- 27 Gad Horowitz, *Repression: Basic and Surplus Repression in Psychoanalytic Theory* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1977).
- 28 Horowitz, "Mosaics and Identity," 19.
- 29 Charles Taylor, *Radical Tories* (Toronto: House of Anansi, 1982, reprinted 2006), 7.
- 30 Ibid., 113, 71, 189.
- 31 Ibid., 221–22.
- 32 Ibid., 145.
- 33 Michael Ignatieff, *The Rights Revolution* (Toronto: House of Anansi, 2000), 43.

- 34 Bob Davis, "The Death of Isaiah Berlin," *The Friend* 3, no. 2 (2001): 20.
- 35 H.D. Forbes, "Hartz-Horowitz at Twenty: Nationalism, Toryism and Socialism in Canada and the United States," *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 20, no. 2 (June 1987): 287–315; and Gad Horowitz, "Notes on 'Conservatism, Liberalism and Socialism in Canada,'" *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 11, no. 2 (June 1978): 383–99.

10 Empire, Border, Place: A Critique of Hardt and Negri's Concept of Empire

- 1 Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000), 195 (emphasis in the original). All further references to this book are given in the text, by page number.
- 2 Leopoldo Zea, "Identity: A Latin American Philosophical Problem," *Philosophical Forum* 20 (1988–89): 33.
- 3 J.M. Coetzee, *Waiting for the Barbarians* (New York: Penguin, 1999), 131.
- 4 Ian Angus, *A Border Within: National Identity, Cultural Plurality, and Wilderness* (Montréal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1997), 110.
- 5 Harold Innis, "Conclusion from *The Fur Trade in Canada*," in *A Passion for Identity*, ed. David Taras, Beverly Rasporich, and Eli Mandel (Scarborough, ON: Nelson Canada, 1993), 18–19.
- 6 Northrop Frye, "Conclusion to *A Literary History of Canada*," in *The Bush Garden: Essays on the Canadian Imagination* (Toronto: House of Anansi, 1971), 215–53.
- 7 Dennis Lee, *Civil Elegies and Other Poems* (Toronto: House of Anansi, 1972), 56.
- 8 Gary Snyder, "The Place, the Region and the Commons," in *The Practice of the Wild* (San Francisco: North Point Press, 1990), 25–27.
- 9 George Grant, "Canadian Fate and Imperialism," in *Technology and Empire* (Toronto: House of Anansi, 1969), 73.
- 10 Michael Hardt, "Global Elites Must Realise That U.S. Imperialism Isn't in Their Interest," *Guardian*, December 18, 2002.
- 11 Frederick Jackson Turner, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History," in *Frontier and Section* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1961), 38.
- 12 G.W.F. Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, trans. J. Sibree (New York: Dover, 1956), 86.
- 13 Angus, *A Border Within*, 128.
- 14 Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Robert Hurley, Mark Seem, and Helen R. Lane (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983), 313.
- 15 Ibid., 321.
- 16 Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (London: Athlone Press, 1988), for example, 183.
- 17 Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 174.
- 18 Deleuze and Guattari reject Amin's politics of de-linking on the same basis: see *Anti-Oedipus*, 239. For an argument that the resurgence of community requires limiting the regime of exchange, see Ian Angus, "Subsistence as a Social Right: A New Political Ideal for Socialism?" in *Studies in Political Economy* 65 (Summer 2001): 117–35.
- 19 Walter Benjamin, "Theses on the Philosophy of History," in *Illuminations*, ed. with an introduction by Hannah Arendt (London: Fontana, 1973), 253–64.
- 20 Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, 259.
- 21 Leonard Cohen, "The Future," on the CD *The Future* (1992).

- 22 Since I cannot really sustain this claim here, I refer to two of my other works in which the analysis of social movements in these terms underlines the difference from Hardt and Negri: Ian Angus, *Emergent Publics: An Essay on Social Movements and Democracy* (Winnipeg: Arbeiter Ring, 2001), and *Primal Scenes of Communication: Communication, Consumerism, Social Movements* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2000).

11 The Difference Between Canadian and American Political Cultures Revisited

- 1 Michael Dorland and Maurice Charland, *Law, Rhetoric and Irony in the Formation of Canadian Civil Culture* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002). All further references to this book are in the text, by page number.
- 2 Seymour Martin Lipset, *Continental Divide: The Values and Institutions of the United States and Canada* (Toronto: C.D. Howe Institute, 1989), 212.
- 3 Robin Mathews, *The Canadian Identity* (Ottawa: Steel Rail, 1989).
- 4 Ian Angus, *A Border Within: National Identity, Cultural Plurality, and Wilderness* (Montréal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1997), 107.
- 5 Leslie Armour and Elizabeth Trott, *The Faces of Reason: An Essay on Philosophy and Culture in English Canada, 1850–1950* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1981), 4.
- 6 Leslie Armour, *The Idea of Canada and the Crisis of Community* (Ottawa: Steel Rail, 1981), 109.
- 7 Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, trans. Garrett Barden and John Cumming (New York: Crossroad, 1975), 248, 250.
- 8 Jacques Derrida, "Declarations of Independence," *New Political Science* 15 (Summer 1986): 146, 9–10.
- 9 Jacques Derrida, "Force of Law: The 'Mystical Foundation of Authority,'" in *Deconstruction and the Possibility of Justice*, ed. Drucilla Cornell, Michel Rosenfeld, and David Gray Carlson (New York: Routledge, 1992), 14.
- 10 J. Claude Evans, "Deconstructing the Declaration: A Case Study in Programmatology," *Man and World* 23 (1990): 181.
- 11 *Ibid.*, 183.
- 12 *Ibid.*, 184.
- 13 Hannah Arendt, "What Is Authority?" in *Between Past and Future* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1976), 140.
- 14 Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution* (New York: Viking, 1965), 207, 205, 214.

12 Introduction: Philosophy, Culture, Critique

- 1 Leslie Armour and Elizabeth Trott, *The Faces of Reason: An Essay on Philosophy and Culture in English Canada 1850–1950* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1981), 23.
- 2 This introduction is based in part on "Cultural Plurality and Critique in English Canadian Social and Political Thought," a paper presented at the annual meeting of the Association for Canadian Studies, Toronto, 4–6 November 2010, and my opening remarks at the "Roundtable on Ian Angus's *Identity and Justice*," at the "Ideas of Place and Particularity: Modern Horizons" conference, Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario, 21 October 2011.
- 3 Ian Angus, *A Border Within: National Identity, Cultural Plurality, and Wilderness* (Montréal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1997), 147–54.

- 4 This point has been made with historical thoroughness and philosophical clarity in the work of Leslie Armour. In one formulation, he defined the “rationalist pluralism” of Canadian philosophy as “the belief that reason itself demanded a continuing activity and a certain kind of pluralism”: “Canadian Ways of Thinking: Logic, Society, and Canadian Philosophy,” in *Alternative Frontiers: Voices from the Mountain West Canadian Studies Conference*, ed. Allen Seager, Leonard Evenden, Rowland Lorimer, and Robin Mathews (Montréal: Association for Canadian Studies, 1997), 3.
- 5 Angus, *A Border Within*, 110.
- 6 Graeme Nicholson, *Justifying Our Existence: An Essay in Applied Phenomenology* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 140.

13 Social Movements Versus the Global Neoliberal Regime

- 1 This essay is based on “Globalization Versus Social Movements,” a paper presented at the annual meeting of the Association for Canadian Studies, Laval University, Québec City, 26 May 2001.
- 2 Such as is apparent in, for example, James Laxer, *In Search of a New Left* (Toronto: Penguin, 1997), esp. at 192, 146.
- 3 Ian Angus, *A Border Within: National Identity, Cultural Plurality, and Wilderness* (Montréal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1997), 31.
- 4 I have previously discussed the concept of constitutive paradox in *(Dis)figurations: Discourse/Critique/Ethics* (London: Verso, 2000), 36–49, 51–52, 124–26.
- 5 This conception of a “social order” is elaborated with reference to Fordism in Angus, *A Border Within*, 27–47.
- 6 For an elaboration of this concept of institution, see Ian Angus, *Primal Scenes of Communication: Communication, Consumerism, Social Movements* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2000), 4–6, 189–91.
- 7 Angus, *A Border Within*, 182–85, 191–93.
- 8 See Jeremy Brecher, Tim Costello, and Brendan Smith, *Globalization from Below: The Power of Solidarity* (Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 2000), 110.
- 9 Myrna Kostash, *The Next Canada: In Search of Our Future Nation* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 2000), 317 (paragraph break omitted).

14 Continuing Dispossession: Clearances as a Literary and Philosophical Theme

- 1 Al Purdy, “The Last Picture in the World,” in *Beyond Remembering: The Collected Poems of Al Purdy* (Madeira Park, BC: Harbour Publishing, 2000), 580.
- 2 While this phrasing seems to imply a Hegelian resolution, I have sketched the ground of a phenomenological account that doesn’t imply an “identity of identity and difference” in “Phenomenology as Critique of Institutions: Movements, Authentic Sociality and Nothingness,” *PhaenEx* 1, no. 1 (Spring–Summer 2006): 175–96, <http://www.phaenex.uwindsor.ca/ojs/leddy/index.php/phaenex/article/view/36/114>. The concept of infinity in that work is being identified here with hope.
- 3 Marshall McLuhan and Quentin Fiore, *War and Peace in the Global Village* (Toronto: McGraw-Hill, 1968), 175.
- 4 According to Clement of Alexandria: see Clement, *Miscellanies*, 5.110 and 7.22.
- 5 Martha C. Nussbaum, *Not For Profit: Why Democracy Needs the Humanities* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 95–96.

- 6 Dennis Lee, "When I Went Up to Rosedale," in *The Gods* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1979), 17.
- 7 See Ian Angus, "Locality and Universalization: Where Is Canadian Studies?" *Journal of Canadian Studies* 35, no. 3 (Fall 2000): 15–32 (special issue, "Locating Canadian Cultures in the Twenty-First Century"). The substance of this argument was incorporated into my *Identity and Justice* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008), 20–26.
- 8 I am drawing here on my two main discussions of this issue without presenting the evidence on which it is based. See Ian Angus, *A Border Within: National Identity, Cultural Plurality, and Wilderness* (Montréal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1997), chap. 2, and *Identity and Justice*, 13–23, 78–82.
- 9 See Gad Horowitz, "Part III: A Symposium on René Lévesque," *Canadian Dimension* 5 (January–March 1968): 21; "Tories, Socialists and the Demise of Canada," in *Canadian Dimension* 2 (May–June 1965): 15; and "Québec and Canadian Nationalism: Two Views," *Canadian Forum* 50 (January 1971): 357. For my appreciation of the important role of Gad Horowitz in thinking English Canada, see chapter 9 in this collection.
- 10 Leonard Cohen, *Book of Mercy* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1984), no. 17.
- 11 Alistair MacLeod, "Clearances," in *Island: The Collected Stories* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 2000), 413–31.
- 12 John Prebble, *The Highland Clearances* (London: Penguin Books, 1963), 304 (the final page in the book; the last sentence is a separate paragraph). "It is worth remembering, too, that while the rest of Scotland was permitting the expulsion of its Highland people it was also forming that romantic attachment to kilt and tartan that scarcely compensates for the disappearance of the race to whom such things were once a commonplace reality. The chiefs remain, in Edinburgh and London, but the people are gone" (8, in the foreword).
- 13 John Prebble, *Mutiny: Highland Regiments in Revolt, 1743–1804* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1975), 20.
- 14 Alistair MacLeod, *No Great Mischief* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1999), 237.
- 15 James Hunter, *Glencoe and the Indians* (Edinburgh and London: Mainstream Publishing, 1996), 189.
- 16 Dionne Brand, *Inventory* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 2006), 11.
- 17 Sky Lee, *Disappearing Moon Cafe* (Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 1990), 281–82.
- 18 *Ibid.*, 302.
- 19 *Ibid.*, 241.
- 20 Myrna Kostash, *The Doomed Bridegroom: A Memoir* (Edmonton: NeWest Press, 1998), 145.
- 21 Dionne Brand, *What We All Long For* (Toronto: Vintage Canada, 2005), 309.
- 22 Roy Miki, "five takes for a poem on family," in *saving face: poems selected, 1976–1988* (Winnipeg: Turnstone Press, 1991), 37.
- 23 Angus, *Identity and Justice*, 83–86.
- 24 G. B. Madison, "Nationality and Universality," in G. B. Madison, Paul Fairfield, and Ingrid Harris, *Is There a Canadian Philosophy?* (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 2000), 16. It is no less ideological to claim that we are "really" already a *métis* nation held back only by imperial models and ideas so that one can then claim betrayal by an intellectual class rather than confronting systematic dispossession and inequality. See John Ralston Saul, *A Fair Country: Telling Truths About Canada* (Toronto: Viking Canada, 2008), 106–7.

- 25 For this analysis, see Angus, *A Border Within*, 111–18.
- 26 James (Sákéj) Youngblood Henderson, “Ayupachi: Empowering Aboriginal Thought,” in *Reclaiming Indigenous Voice and Vision*, ed. Marie Battiste (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2009), 264–65. See also Marie Battiste and James (Sákéj) Youngblood Henderson, *Protecting Indigenous Knowledge and Heritage: A Global Challenge* (Saskatoon: Purich, 2000).
- 27 Kostash, *The Doomed Bridegroom*, 145.

Appendix 1 Jean-Philippe Warren, “Are Multiple Nations the Solution? An Interview with Ian Angus”

- 1 Note by Jean-Philippe Warren: Harold Innis completed his PhD at the University of Chicago and taught political economy at the University of Toronto from 1920 to 1952. He wrote many works documenting the dependent nature of Canadian economic history, including *The Fur Trade in Canada* (1930), *The Cod Fisheries* (1940), and *Essays in Canadian Economic History* (1956). He was the main influence on those nationalist and socialist political economists in English Canada of the 1960s and 1970s, such as Melville Watkins, Daniel Drache, and R. T. Naylor, who used Innis’s analysis of the colonial nature of the Canadian economy to argue that a socialist politics requires also a nationalist dimension.
- 2 Christian Dufour, *Le défi québécois : essai* (Montréal: Éditions de l’Hexagone, 1989). The English edition is *A Canadian Challenge: Le défi québécois* (Lantzville and Halifax: Oolichan Books and the Institute for Research on Public Policy, 1990).

Appendix 2 Bob Hanke, “Conversation on the University: An Interview with Ian Angus”

- 1 The book on which this discussion is based is Ian Angus, *Love the Questions: University Education and Enlightenment* (Winnipeg: Arbeiter Ring, 2009).
- 2 Ian Angus, “The Telos of the Good Life: Reflections on Interdisciplinarity and Models of Knowledge,” in *Valences of Interdisciplinarity: Theory, Pedagogy, Practice*, ed. Raphael Foshay (Edmonton: Athabasca University Press, 2012): 47–71.
- 3 I try to summarize the phenomenological underpinnings of my social-political criticism in an essay titled “Phenomenology as Critique of Institutions: Movements, Authentic Sociality and Nothingness,” *PhaenEx* 1, no. 1 (Spring–Summer 2006): 175–96, which is available at <http://www.phaenex.uwindsor.ca/ojs/leddy/index.php/phaenex/article/view/36>.
- 4 See the account of The Critical University in Vancouver by Mark Coté, Richard J. F. Day, and Grieg De Peuter in “Academicus Affinitatus: Academic Dissent, Community Education, and Critical U,” in *Utopian Pedagogy: Radical Experiments Against Neoliberal Globalization*, ed. Mark Coté, Richard J. F. Day, and Grieg De Peuter (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007).
- 5 Ian Angus, *Primal Scenes of Communication: Communication, Consumerism, Social Movements* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2000).
- 6 See Ian Angus, “Subsistence as a Social Right: A New Political Ideal for Socialism?” in *Studies in Political Economy* 65 (Summer 2001): 117–35.
- 7 Ian Angus, “Media, Expression and a New Politics: Eight Theses,” in *Media and Cultural Politics* 1, no. 1 (2005): 89–92.

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Appendix 2 was published as "Ian Angus, In Conversation with Bob Hanke," *Canadian Journal of Media Studies* 7 (June 2010). Available at <http://cjms.fims.uwo.ca/issues/07-01/index.html>.

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