# AUSTRALIAN CANADIAN STUDIES

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## AUSTRALIAN CANADIAN STUDIES

*Australian Canadian Studies* (ACS) is a multidisciplinary journal of Canadian studies. It is the official journal of the Association for Canadian Studies in Australia and New Zealand (ACSANZ) and is published twice a year. ACS is a double blind refereed journal for the humanities and social sciences that welcomes Canadian and comparative Australian - New Zealand - Canadian analysis.
The audience is worldwide.

For two decades now, ACS has provided a forum for a diverse body of scholarship. Contributions from across the full range of humanities and social sciences are sought, including: anthropology, architecture, communications, cultural studies, economics, education, ethnic studies, geography, history, information technology, legal studies, literature, media, musicology, political science, sociology, women's studies, Quebec and other regional studies. Both disciplinary and interdisciplinary analyses are sought and a wide range of methodologies encouraged.

ACS publishes articles, essays and discussion papers, and book reviews. The editor invites submissions on any topic in Canadian studies and the study of Canada, including comparisons between Canada and other countries. Manuscripts should conform to the Chicago Manual of Style, 14th edition. The manuscript title and author's name and address should appear on a separate sheet. To preserve anonymity during the refereeing process, the author's identity should not be exposed in the text.

The Association for Canadian Studies in Australia and New Zealand

## ACSANZ

ACSANZ is an interdisciplinary organisation which recognises and encourages interest in Canadian Studies and aims to promote greater understanding of Canada at all educational levels and in all disciplines.

Support in the form of Grants and Awards is available for teaching and research in a number of areas, particularly the social sciences and humanities, and for work of a comparative nature. To stimulate and support interest in Canadian Studies among future academics, ACSANZ also funds Postgraduate Travel Awards. ACSANZ has held nine biennial conferences.

A major activity is production of the scholarly journal *Australian Canadian Studies*.

Members receive *Australian Canadian Studies*, the *ACSANZ newsletter* and inclusion in the electronic announcements list.

Membership forms can be downloaded from the website:

*Australian Canadian Studies*

Vol. 20, No. 2, 2002

## CONTENTS

# Editorial

Once again we've achieved a good multidisciplinary spread of essays and articles, thanks to a growing interest in our journal from Canadian studies colleagues around the world. The papers in this volume also show a strong comparative focus, demonstrating how Canada and the study of Canada reaches across the globe, indicating how international a field Canadian studies really is.

We welcome back to our Editorial Board David Staines.

David Staines, Dean of Arts and Professor of English at the University of Ottawa, received his B.A. from the University of Toronto (1967) and his M.A. (1968) and Ph.D. (1973) from Harvard University. While he taught at Harvard, he published *The Canadian Imagination: Dimensions of a Literary Culture* (1977). He has also taught at Smith, Mount Holyoke, and the University of Massachusetts where he was Five-College Professor of Canadian Studies. His work in Canadian Literature also includes most recently an edition of *Margaret Laurence: Critical Reflections* (2001) and, with Jean O'Grady, an edition of all of Northrop Frye's writings on Canada, *Northrop Frye on Canada* (2002).

Our Canadian studies network also tells us that David has joined the Advisory Council of ACSUS (Association for Canadian Studies in the United States). As a scholar, author, editor and literary critic, David's contributions to Canadian cultural life were acknowledged by the Royal Society of Canada, which awarded him its prestigious Lorne Pierce Medal. David's input and expertise will be very much valued.

Sonia Mycak

**John Ralston Saul**

# Showcase Lecture

## Presented at the National Institute of the Humanities
## Australian National University, 29 May 2002

I have spoken about this book (*On Equilibrium*) - this is the second place it has come out - it's sort of in this process of coming out around the world and I've spoken about it a lot in Canada and somehow on the plane on the way over I ripped up everything I'd said about it in Canada and started over two or three days in Noosa, relaxing and swimming, to think about what I would say here and so what I wanted to begin by saying was that globalisation is dead. It's over. Now this is a very interesting fact which some people haven't noticed yet. It's over because it's a failure. It's been a failure - clearly a failure - for some time.

Now globalisation - I mean by that a particular idea of a particular nature of internationalism which was put forward about fifteen to twenty years as being the only way in which the world could go. And that one could use a term as general and vague as globalisation and mean actually something not general and vague but something extremely specific and precise which is, you know, the leadership of self-interest; the leadership of economics; naturally economic balance at a world level; an invisible hand coming out of the sky which was always the sign that there was something odd about it. You know, that we're using basically early medieval religious talk to describe Nobel Prize-winning economic theory - you just knew it wasn't going to last a long time. I think it probably went on a little too long as an idea - because it wasn't really an idea.

Anyway, it's over. It's gone. It's dead. But you needn't worry about it actually being alive. What you need to worry about is how is it going to die? Because it can die in many ways. I mean, I can say, you know, economic rationalism - it's not rational. Mergers as a necessity of globalisation have turned out to be disastrous because, they do away with competition - I thought that we were deregulating to get competition. Instead they've done it with the return of monopolies and oligopolies as the result of deregulation. I thought we were doing all of this to get capitalism - not to get monopolies back. I'm in favour of capitalism. I want competition. I don't want monopolies and oligopolies. I think most people feel the same, whether they're on the left or the right.

So it hasn't worked. It hasn't actually delivered. Most of deregulation which could have been done in many other ways doesn't seem to have produced efficiency or competition and, of course, nobody really believes that we are all led by self-interest. If we did, we'd have to feel very, very badly about ourselves because it's a profoundly insulting thing to think that we are as low as a dog, that we can only be led by the thought that there will be a bowl at five o'clock tonight followed by a happy walk - happier off the leash for a short period of time, perhaps, you know - and then back on the leash.

So, what you really have today is an enormous wave moving forward which calls itself globalisation. But it doesn't actually have any real force - so you can see I've had a couple of days at Noosa. It doesn't really have any force. There is no tidal force behind it - it's just the force of the wave itself. It's sort of an isolated thing made up of what people are being taught, a certain language which is being used, things that people have got used to saying - you know, for example, talking about - in civil services talking about citizens as if they were clients. You know, sort of silly stuff like that - really, really silly stuff. You know, how can they be clients? They own the government. They're not coming in to buy anything - they're the owners. So we've got all of that that's sort of carrying all of this wave on and, of course, there are a lot of people who've made their careers on the basis of

the success of this movement and this idea and it's very hard to change your mind when you're riding the crest of a wave - and I won't continue the picture because you know what happens as the wave continues.

So, in other words, globalisation is dead but is unaware of its own death. It's a sort of a zombie, I suppose you could call it - walking on. But as it becomes more and more nervous about what's happening because it isn't working out - you know, look at the percentage of large corporations which go bankrupt or have to cut themselves up into small pieces after doing mergers - it runs 70 to 80 percent. It simply doesn't pay off. So people are getting a little bit worried about that. And as they become more and more worried about this death which they are involved in, you hear louder and louder cries about the inevitability of what's going on. It is inevitable that we will continue to go down a linear path towards this thing - which is called globalisation which is not globalisation - it's a very, as I said, narrow theory of a particular form of internationalism.

So, you hear more and more about inevitability which is - and I'm sure that the Governor-General would agree with me - is bad theology. Whenever you hear people talking about inevitability you know that they're worried - that they don't have the arguments to support their position. So, inevitability - no way back. It's inevitable - there is no way back. Now anybody who does history - and there are academics in this crowd - knows that anybody who says there's no way back doesn't know their history. There's always a way back. It doesn't mean it's good - and that's the interesting thing about this moment is that the way back may be awful. It may be, in fact, leading us to something which is worse than what we have at the moment.

So what I am saying really is that we are at a very interesting and critical moment. A moment filled with enormous dangers and enormous opportunities - and the High Commissioner pulled out that line - we didn't talk about this but, you know, about consideration, and I do think this is one of those moments where human beings

require the most sensual quality of being a human, which is the ability to slow down and consider the directions in which they are going - and the directions in which they might go, on purpose or by mistake. Because if we don't pay attention to where we're going in a problematic period like this, we could find ourselves back in the ugliest periods of nationalism. It is not inevitable that the worst of nationalism cannot come back. It is not. The worst of nationalism can come back in two seconds. It is not inevitable that the worst of protectionism might come back. It's entirely possible. Anything is possible. The return of massive racism is possible. Everything is possible. That's the nature of human history. And believing that we're on a linear path towards an inevitable and certain future is simply naïve because that isn't the way human society has ever evolved.

So it's a moment of consideration - not thinking. Thinking would simply be being rational. You know, thinking and arguing - that's great - but that's only rationality. We have a great deal more than that as human beings and that's why I use the term consideration because consideration includes thinking and arguing. But it includes remembering; it includes ethical behaviour; it includes using our intuition which is one of our most practical qualities; it includes understanding the real meaning of common sense which is really the context, the shared knowledge which we all have. So, a moment for consideration.

There are these great dangers and I always, whenever I am talking about dangers can't help coming back to - you know, the greatest comedy of the last century - so far still the greatest comedy of the common period *Waiting for Godot* (Beckett) - hard lines to deliver but, anyway, it's funny. Vladimir: 'What do we do now?'; Estragon: 'Wait'; Vladimir: 'Yes, but while waiting?'; Estragon: 'What about hanging ourselves'. This is a moment where you have to be extremely careful because if we do not consider the direction we are going in, we will indeed end up hanging ourselves. The other line which is not funny in the play is, Estragon: 'We've lost our rights?'; Vladimir: 'We got rid of them.' It is funny - there you are, I didn't realise. It's such a marvellous

play. What he is saying - what I think Beckett is saying and what I am saying and what a number of other people are saying is there is no such thing in human civilisation as waiting around. There's no such thing as rushing either except in real crises. There are no vacuums. There are no vacuums - vacuums are filled. If we are at a point where an argument which has been made for twenty years really doesn't hold anymore and we're waiting for another argument to appear - if we simply wait around, we will hang ourselves. We will lose our rights because we will lose our opportunity to consider the other directions in which we could be going. And we'll end up going in a very - I think - dangerous or difficult direction. And there are already signs of that dangerous and difficult direction appearing here and there throughout Western civilisation.

I think one of the things we have to do in periods like this is remind ourselves of our strengths as humans. Remind ourselves that we are not driven by other forces. That we make up our minds more or less about the direction of our society. And that's why I put forward at this point - I was trying to think 'How do I do this after a decade of making an analytic argument? How do I put forward an argument which is not foolishly optimistic?' I think this is the sort of point when we have to think about 'What are the human qualities which allow us to take charge of events in order to do what we want with our society?' And the High Commissioner quite rightly said that I'd quoted Watkin Tench from that first boat in 1778 - and there's a line in Watkin Tench's diary which I think is a very important line - an important line for Australia, but an important line for, frankly, our civilisations - which was - and remember this, I mean you know this, but a couple of people who don't know anything about the people who are already here - right, first - and don't really know where they are and don't know yet how to grow anything - it takes them several years to figure out how to grow anything - in really tough circumstances, with a rather peculiar citizen base - a small group of leaders who are truly - a number of them - representatives of almost the best of the

enlightenment - they really have ideas of what you could do with the society - and Tench says: 'The first step in every community which wishes to preserve honesty should be to set the people above want'. Now if you read that in a kind of utilitarian manner: you're sort of here - well, you know, make people comfortable and then after that they'll be honest. But that isn't all that Tench is talking about. You have to put him in the context of the enlightenment and you have to look at those phrases. He's not talking about self-interest. He's talking about the ideal of the public good in the context of eighteenth century happiness. Remember the word 'happiness' didn't mean until recently what Disney tells us it means. Happiness in the eighteenth century meant fulfilling the public good. It's a very, very noble term. And the key word is 'every community which wishes to *preserve* honesty should be to *set* the people above want'. In other words, the standards of the society. It's not about making people better off. It's about the obligations of the citizens to create a certain standard in the society, in order for the society to be able to function.

Now, obviously what I am saying may seem self-evident to you or it may not - the sort of idea that globalisation is dead and it's over, but what I really want to demonstrate to you is really how silly most of these arguments have been. And I don't do this in an insulting way to any particular people. I think people are the victims of the lines that they end up delivering in a sense. When I was here last time, I listened to a leader of a major corporation here - mining - the biggest mining company talking - Mr Anderson - and he was talking about what was happening at the international level - because of globalisation everything was getting bigger. I've never understood that. Because of globalisation everything should get smaller, actually, because the bigger it gets the more you need to be not too heavy on your feet so that you can move around and not get bogged down in the bureaucracy of large corporations. Anyway, but because everything was getting bigger, the steel companies had to cooperate with each other - Australian, Canadian, American, etc. - and so they were 'Setting up purchasing portals with other mining houses.' 'Purchasing portals with other major mining houses.' And I can't remember if it

was me or somebody else - and this was at a meeting of the Australian Directors' Association - somebody stood up and said: 'Isn't that a cartel? Isn't that price fixing?' And he looked quite taken aback and the person said - I wish it was me, but I feel it was somebody else - I'm always a bit slow when I hear things as funny as that. And somebody said: 'Well, what would you do if we kind of regulated things so you couldn't do a cartel price-fixing.' And he said: 'We'd move.' Which is, of course, what a company would say in the United States or Canada or England or France - right? That's what you say - 'Touch us and we'll move. This is globalisation - you can't touch us.' And, of course, what he was imagining because that is what is imagined in that world - what he was imagining was the poor little nation states, weak and isolated with no power at all, citizens with no power at all *vs* the enormously powerful combination of all the steel industries around the world and their friends in other industries.

Now, step back, turn around, come back and re-imagine it, and suddenly what you see is the G7 or the G8 or the OECD - enormously powerful and faced by extremely fragile and weak heavy industrial producers. Fragile, terrified - dependent on stock prices, dependent on investment - very, very weak with very little room to manoeuvre. And suddenly you see the picture completely differently. Suddenly you see how actually simplistic the argument is that the nation state is weaker than ever before - the citizen has less power than ever before. In many ways, the effects of the last quarter century have been to give the citizens, if they wish to use it, more powers than they've ever had - and the nation states more powers than they've ever had, if they wish to use them in a responsible way. So all of that is to take a line of communications guru from Canada, Marshall McLuhan: 'Nothing is inevitable providing we're willing to pay attention. It's all about paying attention to what is actually happening, not to what people try to frighten you into thinking is happening.'

So I've just been through, basically, a decade of analysing the way which I personally think our civilisation works - trying to drag it back through the last 500 years - looking at the last century - the

last 200 years - the last 50 years in particular. And I've been trying to explain how it works and doesn't work and how it often is not what it says it is. And you'll notice that curiously enough, people are always saying that I'm attacking things. Actually, I very rarely attack things - I just describe them. If you describe them accurately enough you don't have to attack them. And at the centre of this has been really our growing obsession with one human quality - a single human quality - rationality - reason - and our tendency to act as if it had, in effect, replaced God, and that we were the servants of this God and that anything we did, therefore, had to be justified as rational because this was the only truth - this was the deity. And what I am really arguing, I suppose, is not that reason doesn't exist, and not that reason isn't one of the six human qualities that I present in this book, but reason is just reason - that's all it is. Why try to make it more than it is. It's just thought and argument. It's not practical; it's not useful; it's thought and argument.

You want a useful quality - use intuition, use ethics, use common sense. They're much more practical, much more down to earth. But what makes reason interesting is precisely the fact that it is not applicable. There is no such thing as applicable reason. And most, therefore, of what we call rational action in our society is false reason - it's not reason at all. It's something else. Which is why it often turns out not to be very sensible even, let alone rational, and I think the prime example of that - and I did a chapter on it in Voltaire's *Bastards* - is the arms trade. That the leading rational elites of the United States, France and England, followed by the Soviet Union, in 1960-63 - starting with a liberal president in the United States, followed by a conservative president in France, followed by a Labour prime minister in Britain, followed by a Marxist leadership in the Soviet Union - came up with this brilliant idea. And the brilliant idea was that arms were expensive and that therefore they would look for a really neat way to pay for the arms. So what they would do was for every airplane they needed, they'd build two and they'd sell one abroad - and that would pay for their weapon at home. Now any kid seven years old would say: 'Daddy - aren't you arming people

who could use their weapons against you? That doesn't really work from a strategic point of view' (the boy wouldn't say it quite that way - the girl might - but, I mean, you know). And, of course, from an international strategic point of view it might take an eleven or twelve year old to figure out that if you're going to pay for your arms at home by selling arms abroad, what you're actually doing is making up a form of international inflation in weaponry which will, in fact, increase the amount of violence abroad which will mean that you're going to need more weapons at home - which you won't be able to pay for - because the other thing that's going to happen is that as you sell more weapons abroad, people are going to realise that they can make money out of it too and they're going to start building weapons and selling them abroad cheaper than you because they come out of the developing world. And suddenly you won't be able to sell your weapons abroad - and you're going to have moved from 1960 to today, from about three wars in the world to about 30 to 45, depending on how you count them. And suddenly, you've got a disaster. Now as I say, you don't even have to do Political Science or Economics 101 to figure out this doesn't work, but this was put in place by the flower of the rational elites of western civilisation - private sector, in the universities and in the public sector. And they still can't deal with the fact that it was possibly the stupidest idea since - and I'm not quite sure when. Just simply, a single digit IQ idea.

So, reason is just reason, economic rationalism - economics has nothing to do with reason - never did. Economics has always been about romanticism. The market place has always been the most romantic thing there is. Public service is not romantic at all. Public service is pretty tough and hard and boring and goes on and on and it's essential and all the rest of it - the private sector - the success of capitalism comes from its romanticism. There's nothing rational about it at all. If it's rational it'll fail you and the next thing you know you're running it like the Soviet Union and it fails. Utilitarianism - there's nothing rational about utilitarianism. It's utilitarianism - it's not rationality. They're two separate things. It doesn't mean utilitarianism is bad, but it becomes bad if you start pretending that it's rationality.

Managerialism - there's nothing rational about managerialism - managerialism's just about managing. What makes it rational? It's not about thought and argument. It's about methodology. Who said methodology was rational? Methodology is methodology - that's all it is.

But, of course, if the deity of the day is reason, then, of course, all of those groups and many, many others feel a desperate need to hide - underneath, in the shadow of it - in order to justify their actions. In reality, things such as managerialism, utilitarianism and so on tend towards the linear - linearity - and a desperate need to believe that they have the truth and that it is justified by this deity. And so, when you have civilisations that fall into linearity - believing in the linear - believing they are going down an inevitable path towards truth - you could only go this way - there is no way back - you suddenly lose all sense of context. You lose the sense of the shape of the civilisation - there are many things which aren't going in that direction and which suggest that your civilisation is actually not going to continue to go in that direction. In other words, as soon as you're on a linear road, you lose the real use of an essential human quality which is memory, context. Suddenly there's no room for ethics. Ethics becomes marginal. How can you have ethics? If things are inevitable, there's no room for ethics. How can you have ethics if what you're dealing with is inevitability? Ethics is all about considering what is the right thing to do. But you just said it was inevitable so there's no consideration to take place. That's why ethics is pushed to the margins in our society. And, of course, something as central as imagination to the success of Western civilisation - our ability to sort of wallow in our imagination - in all sorts of areas - in the private sector, in the arts, in government. To sort of live with uncertainty - rolling around inside us in our imaginations - for endless periods of time. That imagination is terrifying because it is uncertainty and you're on a linear path to truth. So suddenly we have to reduce imagination to become the servant of certainty. Suddenly pure science is a waste of money and it's renamed 'curiosity science' in universities. Think about it. Why would pure science be called curiosity science? Because it frightens

people who want to believe they're dealing with truth and they don't want uncertainty. And instead the emphasis goes to applied science which can be more linear. So, even in creativity we like to think of it more and more as an entertainment industry. Because it's really something to distract us along the path towards the inevitable, as opposed to help us really consider where we're going and why we're going there. In other words, to really enjoy the swirling uncertainty of our imaginations which make us so human.

Linearity is a false idea of progress. All it is is logic. It's just plain old logic. Logic has, you know, certain intellectual uses - I'm not denying that - but basically when you look at history, the comic figure who comes back again and again and again in failing civilisations - the comic figure of history is the earnest foolishness of logic, which is linearity - which is what we now call rationality - and it isn't at all. I promise you in 50 to 100 years when they're looking back for something to really laugh about - about us - you know, the way we laugh about, you know, they used to believe people could save their lives - we think: 'Isn't that the funniest thing you've ever heard?'. They'll just think: 'Do you know they believed that logic was reason?' And they'll laugh - get a good joke out of the idea that all of the things that we say are rational are rational.

So, globalisation is over; it's dead; it hasn't delivered what it said it would deliver. Nobody believes in it - not even the people who say they believe in it believe in it. Enormous sacrifices have been made in the name of this very narrow belief. Enormous cut-backs, for example, in many countries' public services in order to produce a state of prosperity which would allow more money to go into public services. And the fascinating thing is that twenty years later there's more money in Western civilisation, on a country-by-country and an international basis, than ever before in the history of the world. There has never been so much lolly around. I mean there's just multiples - just add zeros onto the amount of money there is in the market place. And yet, on a yearly basis there is less and less money apparently

available for public services in any country in Western civilisation. There's nothing particular about one country. And in spite of more and more money, there is, as we all know and everybody agrees about it, this increasing divide between fewer and fewer rich and more and more who stand somewhere between the middle of the middle class and the bottom of the pile. So, a failure. A failure to deliver on what it said it would deliver. That's not really a problem, you know. Most economic theories last fifteen to twenty years, flame out and disappear. Fifteen to twenty years is a long run - sometimes you only get five to ten - they should be happy. They have really, you know - Napoleon was only in power ten years - they've had twenty - and they have not delivered and, therefore, are on the way out. But the problem is missing the turning - and the turning we're already in the process of missing. You can see over the last five years the gradual return of the ugliest forms of false populism and negative nationalism in country after country. Even in some major governments. You can see the return of basic nineteenth century nationalism in the United States - for better or worse - it's just there - I mean one just has to observe it - to see it there. You can see the continued growth in the number of wars around the world.

In classical terms, what does the failure look like? Well, the failure looks like this. You work for government or private sector; you work for a company that produces feed for cattle. So you come into the office one day and they sort of look a little distraught and they take you into an emergency meeting of the managers from the various sectors and they say: 'We've got a problem. There's a rumour out there that that post-modern feed that we've developed for cows - that incredibly modern, no looking back feed for cows that we developed - you know, the one that we put the latest in hormones and antibiotics and dead sheep into - you know. There's a rumour out that the sheep had something and the dead sheep passed to the cows and they became dead cows and passed it to humans - it's impossible. Nobody's serious. No professional believes it, but there's a rumour. What are we going to do?' And so this conversation then takes place in which there are essentially two positions. One is the soft, soppy, romantic,

ethical, impossible, weak, feminine position (it's a joke) - which is, you know: 'Why don't we just tell the public. Withdraw the product from the market and say we're going to look into things. After all, we have a responsibility.' And then there's the tough, rational, thinking, professional position which is: 'If we tell them, they'll panic. They'll stop buying beef. The industry will be destroyed and our stock will go down and we'll be bankrupt - and, besides, if I say we should take the ethical position, they'll think I'm soft and weak and I'll lose my job.' So, we'll be rational. We'll go into denial for five years and at the end of the five years over a hundred people will be dead and the beef industry will be destroyed. So, actually, the tough, rational position did the exact opposite of what it said it would do. It actually turned out to be the soppy, romantic position. The tough position, the realistic position, was the ethical position which would have saved not only some of the lives, but might actually have saved the beef industry, to some extent at least in the long run. Now, one last comment on it. There was a Royal Commission because, of course, disasters are followed by - and it was lead by Lord Phillips, a High Court Judge - and I'm sure he is a good High Court judge and a very fine man - I haven't met him - I read part of his report and it's a very fine report and I think very honest - about what happened and how people hid things and went into denial and so on. And then when he's talking about the denial, there's a sort of sentence where he says, you know, they held back information from the public and left the public with a feeling of betrayal. Then I sort of read on and in a few pages, I thought this is strange - and I went back and read it again - 'feeling of betrayal' - there was no feeling of betrayal among the public - the public were betrayed. But you see he wouldn't even realise he'd written that because it's so deep in our society that the soppy position is the one that involves ethics and feeling - and that, therefore, even if the public were right, they were still weak because they had feelings as opposed to actually being betrayed. Now that may be overly intellectual. But it's interesting. But I think that if I'd pointed that out to him - which I guess I will, eventually - if this book comes out in England and at that point I suppose I'll end up pointing it out

to him. I think he'd say: 'That isn't what I meant and I would have written they were betrayed.' But it's too late - that's the tough life of publishing - you know, next edition you can edit. The conclusion that I come to is that obsession with certainty is a weakness. It's uncertainty which requires strength and is a sign of our humanity.

So economic theories - being essentially romantic and theatrical, actually require that theatrical, romantic is an essential line of the burden of romanticism - actually require the willing suspension of disbelief. You know, money is all about the willing suspension of disbelief. The market place is all about - we all know that - it's not an insult to say it. It's actually a compliment to say that the market place is romantic, surely. It's what's so interesting about it is how romantic it is and how it has so little memory and it constantly sort of falls in love and goes completely mad and blows itself up and falls off the cliff - and then picks itself right up and goes off again - you know. And that bankers who lent money to property speculators who, you know, flamed up and flamed down and a few years later they're lending money to the same people. But that's essential for the marketplace. It is romantic. It cannot have memory. It cannot be rational or it fails. Or it becomes just plodding administration. And that's not what it is. So, what I'm saying really is that the willing suspension of disbelief about the current romantic theory is gone. Nobody believes in it anymore. The play is over. They're just continuing to act even though the lights have gone down. And the time has come to consider how to turn the corner to something which will not be a step backwards to one of our previous disasters. Remembering the dangers of the rise of negative nationalism in Europe and the constant increase in violence around the world. David Malouf wrote in one of his books: 'What does it mean anyway - freedom?' and then a little later on in the conversation one of the characters says: 'The aim of life was freedom and joy. To use time well,' he believed, 'frees us and freedom and joy in the end are one.' To use time well - that's consideration; freedom and joy - that's eighteenth century happiness - fulfilling the public good.

So what this book - I always get to this book at the end - I can't get to it sooner - I don't know why - this book is an attempt to talk about what I think are the essential human qualities and I think there are about six of them. It really doesn't matter whether you agree with me or not because if at the very least I've made you think that there are six others, or you agree with three and you have three others, or there are nine - I mean, fine. But this is my argument for what it's worth. I think we have about six qualities. I think that they are of equal value. Not one of them has any more importance than another. They are, in alphabetical order: common sense; ethics; imagination; intuition; memory and reason - and it's wonderful that there the alphabet worked for me - it does have a meaning after all - because instead of starting with reason which would have meant I'd spend half the book explaining what reason wasn't, by the time I'd got to reason it got what was left. So I was able very easily to talk about what it really is. Six qualities - I think the way they function - and I'm not a great advocate of defining things and I don't think that works terribly well - there are thousands of definitions of all of these terms. I think the way you know what reason is is you look at the other five. They actually take shape in the mirror of the others. They work in coordination or in tension with each other. It's a little bit like - and I know nothing about science but I sort of tried this out with John Polanyi, a Canadian Nobel Prize winning chemist, and he said it was OK, so it's his fault - that basically you have a force field with six atoms on it and they're both pulled together and pushed apart at the same time, and that that constant moving tension among those qualities, if we use them all or try to use them, this is what makes us human and what makes them qualities and what makes us interesting.

Let me just talk for a few minutes about one of them - about ethics. I said a moment ago that linearity and inevitability had marginalised ethics and made it impossible to really use it on a daily basis without making an enormous effort. We're often hearing, you know, what we need are more leaders, what we need are more heroes - and it always sounds as if the ethical act is an heroic act. Well, actually, I don't think that the ethical act is an heroic act at all. I think ethics

is something that is ordinary and normal and banal as can be. It's something that should be built into our every day and the more that you take it out of the details of the every day, the more you make it impossible ever to use it when the big moments come. And the people who are presented to us as ethical heroes - as if they were abnormal - not like us - I'm not pre-judging you, I'm prejudging them, you know - they're not like the normal people - they're abnormal; they're special; they're ethical martyrs, ethical heroes. Actually, they're normal people. But the thing is they're very determinedly normal people and when the world became abnormal, they remained normal. And as fascism sort of rolled around them, they remained non-fascist and became martyrs, or whatever your example is. And it's that normality of ethics which made them ethical heroes and ethical martyrs. Not that they were somehow Arnold Schwarzenegger on the side of good.

So let me just deal with a couple of things surrounding ethics and what I think we can do to normalise them. First, the whole idea that we're driven by self-interest is, as I said at the beginning, one of the most demeaning ideas to be put forward in the last century. If you wanted to know that the arguments surrounding economic rationalism and globalisation would not last, all you had to do was look at that thought - that declaration - that human beings are principally driven by self-interest, and you knew it wouldn't last. There is nothing serious in our past - no writer, no experience which indicates that we are run or that you can run a civilisation successfully on the basis of self-interest. Not that we don't have it. I have it. Everybody in this room has self-interest, I think. But it doesn't run us. It's just one of our characteristics - not one of our qualities. It's one of our forces, one of our characteristics - and it's important. But to think that it runs us is very naïve and very insulting. What that has led to is something very difficult for us which is a serious confusing - and I say this knowing that I'm, you know, in the capital and I think these are interesting things to think about - a serious contradiction and confusion between social contract and the commercial contract. And when I talk to

judges today, and academics - legal or academics - they agree that
there is a real problem - that we've reached the stage where we
actually can't differentiate properly between the social contract and
the commercial contract. And that makes it more and more difficult
for us to make sense of what we're doing. To make sense of the fact
that we're not primarily driven by self-interest.

Now let me give you a little example of how confused we've become.
The employment contract - I have to say it like that so it doesn't
sound so boring - the employment contract. The employment
contract was invented basically as a utilitarian tool to regulate
relationships based on interest - right? Somebody who is employed
wants to be sure they get certain things: somebody who is employing
wants to be sure they get certain things - so you have a contract
- basically, a commercial contract. Nothing wrong with that. But
gradually, over the last hundred years, for a whole series of reasons
- some of them good, some of them bad and some of them just
unconscious - the employment contract has grown and grown and
grown, to the point where it has become something which determines
the shape of our lives. We educate people to go through school,
university, get PhDs, MAs, whatever - become experts in building
bridges or nuclear reactors or airplanes or whatever. And the day
they are hired by whoever - public, private, partnerships, whatever
- the day they are hired, all of their knowledge in their area of
understanding is purchased by their employer. Plus they purchase
the opinions of the employee on that subject. And we don't even
think it's surprising. Who said that employment gave the employer
the right to get total and utter control over the one thing that that
person knows something about? I, as a citizen, actually expect that,
for example, if you are an expert in building bridges, that actually
what your contribution as a citizen will be is that you will speak up
and tell me about bridges. And suddenly you're not available to me
as a citizen because you have been purchased, literally, through this
contract. I would say that the biggest limitation on freedom of speech
in Western civilisations today is the employment contract. It's a major
problem - which is probably why we don't talk about it at all. And

what's interesting is that it has been promoted, to a very high level, as something which sounds fabulous at first - loyalty. All the time you hear about loyalty. Well loyalty has its moments. You know, in war etc. there are moments for loyalty. But loyalty isn't actually the primary characteristic of an active citizen. The primary characteristic of an active citizen is speaking up and being annoying. Not being in agreement - being in disagreement. Being in the discussion. Loyalty is a Spartan idea of what a citizen should be - keep your mouth shut and be loyal, and it comes in part out of the employment contract getting so out of control. It's a form of false patriotism when it's applied to non-crisis situations. It produces conformity in the citizen and this puts at a disadvantage the whole idea of participation and speaking out.

One more - actually, two more ideas and then I'll finish. The company as a person relates to these other things. The history in the Industrial Revolution in one minute. You know, two hundred or so years ago new machinery - can't finance it because of the way you can sue people, etc. etc. Come up with a brilliant, theatrical, romantic idea - let's pretend companies are people before the law. Absolutely fantastic theatre. It's not surprising it comes just about the same time as does the rise of romanticism. So we put into law - starts in England - spreads around the English-speaking world - spreads around the rest of the world. Able to raise money, create large companies, Industrial Revolution, prosperity. OK? And I missed the whole social policy part, which actually was more important. But that's another minute and I don't have it.

It really worked. It was a great idea. Two hundred years later, we've got a lot of money around - remember I mentioned that a moment ago. We don't actually need any more to have a theatrical idea that nobody actually believes in, in order for us to raise funds for corporations. We actually have lots and lots of funds for corporations. Our problem, actually, is the opposite. Our problem is that the ability of the corporations to pretend that they are people before the law works in favour of the larger corporations and against the smaller

ones - to say nothing of the individual citizen. And so that actually we're in a kind of - and I use this term advisedly - ethnic cleansing, in which the larger corporations are gobbling up the smaller corporations and making competition more and more difficult. And that is made possible to some extent - to a great extent, in fact - by this ability of the corporations to use the law as if they were people. And beyond that, it's being used to obscure products and product standards. And so, to make it very difficult for the consumer to make decisions in the free market. So, for example, the libel laws, which are designed for real people, are increasingly used by corporations to prevent people criticising their products. It's very, very interesting as a phenomenon.

And, finally, to show you how far we've gone down the road of lunacy and that this is really a tired, degenerated idea. If you are born poor and you begin to succeed and get a reasonable income, you know, and you pay your taxes, etc. and you reach a sort of point - and I don't know where it is in Australia - in Canada it'd be about $150,000 a year income - when suddenly your accountant says to you: 'You know, you can't afford to be a person anymore. You've got to become a company pretending to be a person. Because companies pretending to be people pay less taxes than real people.' So once you understand that, it isn't hard to understand why it's difficult to act normally as a citizen, because even the tax structure prefers objects pretending to be people to real people. Again, it was a fine idea two hundred years ago. It served its purpose. Why not just do away with it? Why not just say, you know, charters of rights and bills of rights and all the rest of it are designed by the law, are designed for real people, and let's have something else for corporations, separate things. Take out the commercial law and the corporate contracts - and separate it out. I promise you it will be good both for the citizens and the citizenry and for the marketplace.

And then, finally, intellectual property - I can do this in about three minutes. You've been hearing more and more that the third or fourth industrial revolution is going to be intellectual property and that we're going to make money out of owning knowledge. I actually thought

that the freedom of speech and the participation of the citizen was based upon our ability to talk freely about what we knew. So that if what we're actually doing is saying the best way to make money in our society is to take as much of what we know as possible and to limit the use of it, then we're actually trying to make ourselves richer by limiting our freedom of speech which, if you look at our own history, will be extremely self-destructive because we actually became rich in Western civilisation by not limiting our freedom of speech. And that shows you that, again, we're very far down the road of forgetting the nature of practical ethics, of ethics used in a perfectly normal way. And people will say, well, you know, today with large corporations, transnationals etc. there's nothing you can do - intellectual property is intellectual property and it's going to have the power that it has - and there you are. But look at the pharmaceutical companies. It was said you couldn't do anything about the price of medication - AIDS medication, for example. Nothing. And yet a little group of citizens - not even the government, of South Africa started a campaign and in a short time became so powerful that the government of South Africa joined in with them and within a short period of time the cartel of pharmaceutical companies said 'We give in. But it's not a precedent.' Two weeks later, or something, Brazil introduced a law which said: 'If you charge us more than we want to pay, we're going to make them our way - cheap.' And they gave in. A couple of weeks later, France introduced somewhat the same legislation. These are paper tigers. They're very, very fragile - as soon as citizens stand up. And for a very simple reason and that is they, unlike you, live from consumption. You don't need to consume what they want you to consume in the way they want you to consume it. So if you don't consume the way they want it, they're dead - and they know it. So you're strong and they're weak.

Let me sort of end by saying that I think that there is an enormous opportunity to come around this bend in an interesting way which will be good for democracy, it'll be good for the nation state, it'll be good for the free market, it'll be good for competition, it'll be good for freedom of speech. But in order to get around it, I think it's not

only an obligation but a very interesting opportunity to sort of step back. You get these opportunities every 100, 150 years - to actually step back and say: 'Well what are our qualities as human beings? What will allow us to step away from feeling passive and put upon and feel that we actually have power and have the ability to shape our society?' And the way into that is to think about what your qualities are and how you use them and what comes out of you - what comes out of your relationships with other people - inside your country and in other countries? So I think that there's enormous opportunity to think, to consider, to shape our lives and our societies - to reduce the concept of loyalty to its proper place and to promote the concept of normalising non-conformity. After all, in a democracy it's non-conformity that ought to be normal and conformity that ought to be abnormal. And that idea - that very simple idea - of using your qualities in order to normalise non-conformity is the key to the reengagement of the responsible individual.

John Ralston's Saul's latest book *On Equilibrium* is published by Penguin Books.

Further details available at http://www.penguin.com.au/

S. Timothy Maloney

# Cultural Diversity, NAFTA, and the World Trade Organization: A Canadian-American Divide

In its negotiations for multilateral trade agreements such as NAFTA and the WTO, the United States government has routinely adopted a hard-line bargaining stance regarding "cultural products." It views items such as books, magazines, music CDs, and films and videos as commodities like other commercial goods, to which world markets should be open without restriction. The United States position is that both access restrictions and subsidies favouring domestic producers in the cultural domain are "trade distorting practices," and the existence of either should result in the imposition of countervailing duties. Such penalties have been enshrined in the regulatory frameworks of both NAFTA and the WTO, and the United States obtained a WTO tribunal ruling in the late 1990s against Canadian restrictions on split-run American magazines (for example, "Canadian" editions of *Time* and *Sports Illustrated*, which feature minimal Canadian content) and against Canada's subsidies to its domestic magazine industry.

The Canadian position on cultural issues is that tangible expressions of national culture are fundamental to every nation's self-image and sovereignty, and should therefore not be thought of as commodities like raw materials or manufactured goods. Rather, they should be protected and nurtured, even if it means restricting domestic markets or subsidising domestic production. The issue of "cultural diversity," as the issue is now termed, is one of fundamental disagreement between the United States and Canada, and led Canada to spearhead the creation of the International Network for Cultural Diversity (INCD)[1] in 2000, and to provide financial support for the work of the INCD secretariat, currently located in Ottawa.

The INCD, a non-governmental organisation which represents the cultural sector in international gatherings such as the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS), has raised concern internationally that the ability of states to encourage and support their own artists and cultural producers may well be lost in the WTO's Doha round of negotiations. The INCD's championing of the need for cultural "carve-outs" or exemptions in multilateral trade negotiations has elicited a formal Declaration on Cultural Diversity by the Council of Europe's Committee of Ministers[2] and a Universal Declaration and an Action Plan on Cultural Diversity by UNESCO's governing body, its General Conference.[3] In fact, UNESCO's Universal Declaration speaks in terms of cultural diversity as a "common heritage of humanity" and makes its protection "an ethical imperative, inseparable from respect for human dignity."

Let us briefly examine the issue of cultural diversity and the genesis of Canada's position on it. Fifty-one years ago, the National Commission on Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences, informally called the Massey-Levesque Commission,[4] noted the extreme vulnerability of Canada to foreign influences, and drew particular attention to the easy availability of United States books, newspapers and magazines in Canada. Since over 90% of Canada's population, now at 32 million people, lives within about 50 miles of the United States border, Canadians have long been within easy reach of American radio and television signals, even before cable and satellite systems increased the penetration of United States signals into the Canadian market. The Commission expressed concern that "a vast and disproportionate amount of [popular-culture] material coming from a single alien source [the United States] may stifle rather than stimulate our own creative effort."

The situation has not changed dramatically since 1951, despite the regulatory and policy frameworks that successive Canadian governments have implemented. Canadians are avid consumers of cultural "products." An average of over 13 million Canadians per year attended performances of theatre, music, dance and opera in the

mid-to-late 1990s (Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage). The numbers representing Canadian consumption of popular culture (CDs, films, books, and magazines) are even more dramatic. The problem for Canadian creators, producers and distributors is that much of what Canadians consume comes from elsewhere, particularly the United States. The multinational corporations that dominate the so-called "entertainment" field worldwide, such as AOL Time Warner, Walt Disney, Bertelsmann, Vivendi and Sony, all of which enjoy economies of scale unimaginable for domestic Canadian producers, dominate the publishing, film, video and sound-recording markets in Canada. For example,

- Foreign subsidiaries earn 61% of the annual revenues from book sales in Canada while publishing only 22% of Canadian titles (Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage);

- Multinationals earn 89% of all monies generated by the sale of audio discs in Canada but produce only 28% of CDs with Canadian content (Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage);

- Non-Canadian companies generate 90% of the over $1 billion in annual box-office revenues from films distributed in Canada (Marsh), and Canadian films earn only 2% of domestic box office revenue (Statistics Canada).

In contrast, "a study of thirteen European countries documented some 400 measures that favour the production of domestic cultural products. In France, for example, television networks are allowed to purchase programming only from domestically owned distributors; [and] foreign investment in publishing is limited to [a] 20% [share of] joint venture[s]" (Statistics Canada). Such stringent protective regulations do not exist in Canada, which has a more open market for foreign cultural products than exists in many countries. Such measures as exist in Canada (for example, publishing subsidies, postal subsidies for magazine publishers and Canadian-content regulations for broadcasters) have usually been attempts to level the playing field for Canadian cultural enterprises *within Canada*, not manoeuvres designed solely to limit foreign access to the Canadian market. The reality

is that Canadian creators and producers have only restricted access to the one market in which they *should* have a legitimate hope of thriving, their own; and Canadian consumers are not benefiting from equal access to domestically produced cultural products. The same situation exists in many smaller countries today, as the multinational products and services can easily out-price local creators and producers.

The Massey Commission report of 1951 drew attention to the large amounts of money spent on national defence, and asked: "What, we may ask ourselves, are we defending?" In response, the report itself suggested: "We are defending civilization, our share of it, our contribution to it[,]… [t]he things… which give our civilization its character and its meaning. It would be paradoxical to defend something which we are unwilling to strengthen and enrich, and which we would even allow to decline" (Applebaum).

Those of us who care about these issues will be watching carefully as events unfold, hoping that the tide of globalisation will ebb before the free-market forces have wiped out domestic cultural industries in Canada and elsewhere. While removing trade barriers seems a laudable goal in theory, few governments appear to have thought through the ramifications of leaving the elements of their own national cultures unprotected in the rush to join the global parade. Neither total protection nor total freedom is good for everyone. The middle ground - that is, allowing reasonable access by foreign producers while creating an environment amenable to appropriate domestic production - has traditionally served Canada and its cultural sector well. Let us hope that the middle ground is not given up in the coming months, and that future multilateral trade negotiations will result in agreements that will benefit all.

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**Notes**

[1] For more information, see the INCD Web site at http://www.incd.net.

[2] The full text of the Committee of Ministers' Declaration on Cultural Diversity may be viewed at http://cm.coe.int/ta/decl/2000/2000dec2.htm.

[3] The full text of the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity may be viewed at http://www.unesco.org/confgen/press_rel/021101_clt_diversity.shtm

[4] The full text of the Royal Commission's report is available on the National Library of Canada's web site: http://www.nlc-bnc.ca/massey/emassey.htm.

**Jane Sellwood**

# Teaching Canadian Studies in Japan

I teach Canadian Studies in Sapporo, Hokkaido in the northern part of Japan at Hokkai Gakuen University in the Faculty of Humanities' American, British and Canadian Studies Program. The faculty offers general courses in these areas of study taught in English as well as in Japanese. The Canadian Studies courses I teach include *Kanada Bunka* (Canadian Culture) and *Kanada Shakkai Ron* (Canadian Society). I plan and develop the content of these courses, which I teach in English to third and fourth year undergraduates. With a Masters degree in Canadian Studies and a PhD in English with a dissertation on Canadian Literature, my focus in my Canadian Culture course is on literature and art, and, in my Canadian Society course, on present-day values and issues such as multiculturalism. I have also taught, at the second year level, a course on L.M. Montgomery's *Anne of Green Gables*, using both the written text and the video as materials. "Red-haired Anne" continues to be as intriguing a figure with my Japanese students as she has been in recent Canadian scholarship.

The content and assessment of my Canadian Studies courses is at a basic level. Unlike Canadian Studies courses taught to fluent English speakers, my classes must take into consideration the language level of the students I teach; they are learning English as a foreign language. The balance of my teaching load is made up of English language courses in the four skill areas - writing, reading, speaking and listening.

The advantage, I believe, of teaching Canadian Studies courses at this level is that in my planning I am compelled to pare the content down to what seem to be the most important issues. For example, in

my Canadian Society course, which 'tours' Canada's provinces and Northern territories, I emphasise multiculturalism, Aboriginal issues and relations between French and English Canada. In my Canadian Literature course I choose short texts by major authors such as Joy Kogawa and plan discussions to highlight values and themes that emerge from the material. Since media in Japan emphasise American news and programmes, most students know very little about Canadian culture, society, politics, economics and geography. I give my students an introduction to these features of Canada.

Fortunately, excellent opportunities for research exist at my university. I receive a generous book allowance annually, which allows me to order current publications. In addition, both the Japanese Association of Canadian Studies and the Canadian Literary Society of Japan are very active scholarly organisations and provide excellent venues to present research. I have had the opportunity to give papers to both organisations at their annual conferences. My own institution publishes a humanities faculty journal and a Hokkai Gakuen University journal to which I contribute papers. During my annual visits home to Canada I use the university libraries in both Victoria, British Columbia and in Ottawa, Ontario to gather research.

Recently there has been a rapid growth in the number of programmes in Canadian Studies throughout Japan at the post-secondary education level. This increase no doubt is a function of general interest in internationalisation, coupled with the realisation that Canada is a culturally diverse county. Moreover, factors such as its perceived natural beauty, quality of academic and language programmes, comfort and safety have led to a tremendous growth in Japanese overseas study in Canada. Ties with Canada are strong both at my university and in Hokkaido. Hokkai Gakuen University has faculty and student exchange programmes with the University of Lethbridge, Alberta and Brock University in St. Catherine's, Ontario. The Hokkaido Canada Society, based in Sapporo, offers academics and the public the opportunity to hear and meet Canadian speakers on Canadian subjects. The Association of Canadian Teachers in Japan

is also valuable for keeping in contact with other Canadians and staying abreast of issues that affect our positions as foreign teachers.

As an English speaker teaching at a Japanese university, I am fortunate that my courses require me to teach in my own language. However, I would advise anyone with aspirations to teach Canadian Studies in Japan at the very least to be familiar with Japanese, and, ideally, to be a fluent speaker. Like most of the English-speaker instructors, my employment at Hokkai Gakuen University is on the basis of a generous two-year renewable contract. Opportunities for academic advancement here often depend on linguistic and marital considerations. At my university, some Westerners, bilingual and married to Japanese citizens, are tenured.

In addition, the organisational culture of Japanese universities differs from that in Western higher education. Many issues regarding curriculum and policy are very much the responsibility of the higher echelons of administration. The cultural value of 'keeping face' necessitates that problems are expected to be resolved within the faculty. For our group of contract instructors to go above the head or the dean with any issue would mean that the whole faculty would lose face.

Nevertheless, relations between the teaching faculty and the administration are generally benevolent, and socialising with Japanese faculty members and friends is open, generous and friendly. There are several parties in an academic term at which copious amounts of food and drink are consumed. Daily contact with faculty members can be quite formal at times, so these social opportunities make for closer ties with colleagues. I belong to the university faculty's tennis club, which is active on weekends in the spring and fall, and provides another occasion for semi-serious social interaction. Japanese faculty and friends have invited me to kimono dressing, tea ceremony and *sakura* (cherry blossom) outdoor parties, and temple viewing. In addition, I have seen *kabuki* performed in Tokyo, watched *sumo* regularly on television, and climbed mountains and experienced *onsen* (hot spring baths) in Hokkaido. During my first year in Japan, I visited many

famous temples in Kyoto and Nara, including the famous deer in Nara Park. As a result of these experiences, my insights into Japanese culture have broadened considerably.

For anyone interested in teaching Canadian Studies in Japan, the Canadian Embassy here estimates there are over 177 university and college courses with at least 50 percent Canadian content. Some of these institutions include the following: Chiba University, Kansai Gakuin University, Kobe Gakuin University, Meiji University, Niigata University, Ritsumeikan University, Tsukuba University, Aiichi Gakuin University, Hokkai Gakuen University and Sophia University. The names and addresses of these institutions can be obtained from the Canadian Embassy in Tokyo: 7-3-38, Akasaka, Minato-ku, Tokyo.

As I write this brief outline of my experience teaching Canadian Studies in Japan, my projected sojourn is another six to eight years. I have been here since 1996, so I will be quite an expatriate by the time I return to Canada. While my experience with my Japanese students is invaluable, I also value the constant contact via email, letters, and telephone calls with my family and friends in Canada and my Canadian Studies colleagues both in Japan and abroad.

Howard Cody

# MMP Meets Westminster: Early Lessons from the New Zealand Experience

In 1993 New Zealand grafted a German-model mixed member proportional electoral system (MMP) onto a traditional Westminster-modelled Parliament that New Zealanders had elected for decades by the first-past-the-post (FPP) plurality system. MMP features a ballot with two separate votes, one for an electorate candidate and the other for a party list. New Zealanders supporting MMP wished this change to impose institutional constraints that would end cabinet and Prime Ministerial "elective dictatorships," impose fairness between parties by giving each party parliamentary representation reflecting its share of the party vote, provide a more diverse representation of women and minorities in Parliament, and replace Westminster partisan adversarialism and one party rule with inter-party consensus and cooperation (Karp 130-131; Nagel 158). New Zealand became the first country to impose coalition-inducing proportionality on a majoritarian Westminster institutional system or polity.

July-August 2001 Wellington interviews with Members of Parliament from four parties, including leaders of two small parties, with Clerk David McGee, and with the Electoral Commission's Paul Harris and Stephen Church of the Victoria University of Wellington, exploit five years' perspective after October 1996's first MMP election. What did New Zealanders desire and expect from MMP, and how and how well is MMP operating? What lessons can Canadians and Britons presently considering electoral reforms draw from the New Zealand experience? Specifically, how much, and in which ways, can they realistically expect proportionality to change their Westminster politics? This discussion describes the situation shortly before the July 2002 election

that provided a second consecutive minority coalition government led by the Labour party. We cautiously suggest that New Zealanders are gradually creating a distinctive, broadly representative, but not consensual model accommodating proportionality with a Westminster political culture. Their model may suggest better than Germany how Westminster systems might operate under proportional representation.

Jonathan Boston usefully cautions that it is too soon to appreciate whether early experiences with MMP qualify as transitional and temporary phenomena or as suggestive of lasting effects or characteristics of the new system (2). Over time MMP may - or may not - transform New Zealand's political culture. In MMP's first five years New Zealanders experienced two rather different coalition governments. The first MMP election in 1996 produced an unstable National party-led centre-right coalition. A relatively stable centre-left coalition under Labour followed MMP's second election in 1999 and continued after the 2002 election. In a sense New Zealanders already have seen MMP operate poorly and well. FPP and MMP have both offered New Zealanders what one might expect of these systems in a Westminster-modelled Parliament. That is, FPP concentrated power on the single party Crown authority executive model (an unchecked Prime Minister, cabinet and bureaucracy) still practiced in Britain and Canada, whereas MMP generally divides power between a large party and one or more smaller "nudge" parties in a coalition ministry. Most New Zealanders were more dissatisfied with certain leaders and policies under FPP than with the majoritarian one party government that FPP facilitates. They introduced a proportional alternative with foreseeable but disorienting features, some of which they now deplore.

## New Zealand before MMP

Plurality elections with a Westminster Parliament generally operated as advertised in New Zealand. They produced what their champions consider their greatest advantage: disciplined single-party governments that secured clear mandates and kept their campaign

promises, then faced an electorate that imposed accountability for their policies. As David Denemark observes, the absence of a federal system, a written constitution, a constitutionally entrenched Bill of Rights, and a second thought upper chamber with the power to review and revise government policies, combined to give New Zealand the world's purest and least restrained Westminster system (70). Tellingly, although New Zealanders called this situation an "elected dictatorship," it did not disturb them before the 1980s. In fact, in 1951 New Zealanders abolished their appointed Legislative Council upper house, which resembled Canada's Senate and like its Canadian counterpart had served as a weak check on the executive. Observe that the second chamber was terminated rather than replaced; a stronger and more democratically legitimate house of review like Australia's Senate enjoyed little support. The absence of support for an upper house with an elected restraint on the government, or for constitutionally entrenched rights in a written constitution, suggests that New Zealanders lack Americans' enthusiasm for checks and balances or for any institutionally imposed second look at the executive's policies on principle. This feature of their political culture is significant. It demonstrates an enduring attachment to Westminster practices with a mandate mentality that is hindering New Zealanders' acceptance of some predictable consequences of MMP's proportionality.

In the absence of a general preference for checks on power, it took an improbable series of cumulatively disorienting and alienating events in New Zealand politics to discredit FPP. Briefly, these included, in relatively rapid succession, the election of majority governments in 1978 and 1981 in which the victorious National party placed second in the popular vote (the so-called "stolen" elections) but governed under Robert Muldoon in an especially partisan and confrontational manner in line with Muldoon's personality; the 1984 election of a Labour government under David Lange that abruptly introduced neo-liberal reforms to New Zealand's economy that were more drastic than anything proposed by the country's political right; the appointment by Attorney General Geoffrey Palmer (one of very few prominent

politicians to support reform) of a Royal Commission on the Electoral System that proposed German-style MMP for New Zealand in 1986; Lange's 1987 campaign promise to stage a referendum on this recommendation when he misread his briefing notes by overlooking the word "not" and saying the opposite of what he intended; National party leader Jim Bolger's 1990 promise to hold a referendum to exploit Labour's refusal to hold one despite National's overwhelming opposition to electoral system change; and National's victory followed by two referenda (Aimer 147-151). Although MMP polled 71% support in the 1992 multiple-choice referendum, second thoughts by the runoff a year later reduced the margin for MMP to 54%-46% over FPP (Aimer 151; Boston 5; Denmark 91).

New Zealanders' accounts for MMP's implementation reveal that their political culture still features stronger personal distrust of politicians than suspicion of institutional power. The capacity for governments to make changes expeditiously, combined with an established acceptance of referenda, worked against two successive governments when they lost control of the momentum for reform. The referendum experience suggests that in the proper circumstances a highly centralised polity can carry out change that is systemic and seemingly far-reaching - but not necessarily consequential in operation - more easily than one constrained by constitutional checks like Canada or the United States. It also illustrates the cynicism about politics and politicians that New Zealanders share with their trans-Tasman Australian cousins. When it became clear that two successive governments and most National and Labour MPs opposed replacing FPP, many voters supported change largely to spite their politicians. But the same cynicism about politics and politicians that helped effect MMP may yet be turned against it.

Although Germany was the only country with MMP in the 1980s, at no time did MMP's New Zealand supporters nominate the German political system as a role model for New Zealand beyond MMP itself. Germans practise a "politics of collective identities" placing a collective group representation and cooperative spirit above

individualism and partisan competition (Allen 340). Germany has developed a consensus politics featuring behind the scenes consultation and half-hearted partisanship on the floor of the Bundestag in clear contrast to Westminster-style adversarialism.[1] Yet what a small party MP called New Zealanders' typically Westminster "left versus right tribal instinct" that polarises issues into exactly two sides while de-legitimising everything else endures relatively intact under MMP. The Royal Commission, which placed a high priority on securing fair and effective representation for parties, women, Maori and minorities, did not propose that MMP facilitate a transition to a collegial or consensus political culture (Denemark 84-86).[2] Nor does the public support such a course. Since electoral reform, polls have indicated that New Zealanders consider broader representation, and more electoral options thanks to their two votes, as MMP's most attractive features (MMP Review Committee 82). Although many New Zealanders no doubt wanted and expected MMP to reduce adversarialism in politics, they have not addressed how or whether proportionality can and should change the behaviour of politicians and the conduct of politics in a Westminster Parliament. This helps to explain a disillusionment with MMP's early performance that has maintained many New Zealanders' political cynicism, and the outcome of the non-binding ("indicative") 1999 referendum in which 81.5% voted to return the House to its pre-MMP total of 99 MPs from its 120 MPs under MMP.

## The Operation of MMP in New Zealand: Introduction

The continuing attachment to majoritarian Westminster norms has influenced New Zealand's experience with MMP and has attenuated MMP's impact on politics. So have trends that may partially supersede and offset institutional reforms' effects. The literature on parliamentary systems, especially in Westminster countries like Canada and Britain that have a weak review chamber, is detecting and deploring a momentum towards a personal and presidential style of politics. Prime Ministers are concentrating power

in their own offices to the detriment of cabinet and Parliament, in effect installing an American-style presidential politics but without the checks and balances with which American chief executives must contend.[3] Even before MMP, New Zealanders recognised their elections' presidential quality. MMP's two-vote character, in which the second vote for a closed list of largely anonymous party nominees determines each party's overall parliamentary representation, has made voters' assessments of the party leaders even more consequential. Each party must make its own leader attractive to the electorate to maximise its party vote and hence its share of MPs (Boston and Church 238; Williams 23). This situation makes parties assign their follow-the-leader cohesion a higher priority than ever, at least at election time. It also encourages them to replace leaders between elections when they need a new leader to bolster the party vote, as National did in 2001 and may do again in the wake of a poor showing in 2002. Besides, New Zealand's media, as in Canada and Britain, report political news with a horse race approach. Television in particular emphasises personalities, especially party leaders, over policies. An emphasis on leaders benefits less ideological leader-focused larger parties, in New Zealand's case centre-left Labour and centre-right National, and disadvantages smaller parties to the extent that they are more ideological and policy-driven.

## Small Parties and MMP

MMP's features that generate the most debate in New Zealand concern the roles of its smaller nudge parties and list MPs. One thing is clear: MMP will not survive unless or until New Zealanders accept the modest power position that MMP awards small parties and most list MPs. Polls continue to show public support for MMP's broadly representative outcomes if little else. Representativeness is meaningful largely to the extent that the Alliance, ACT, Green and New Zealand First MPs have an impact in Parliament and as potential coalition partners. In the 1999 and 2002 elections these and other small parties gained 30% and 38% of the party votes respectively, with

none polling above ten percent. The small parties' overall support level has long been impressive; they even received 30% of the votes in 1993, the last FPP election. So is the fact that some 35% of 1999 and 2002 voters split their ballots by selecting an electorate MP of one party, but choosing a different party for their list vote. Only 15% of German voters split their ballots. Despite all this, New Zealand's third parties face serious obstacles to securing a respected role, only some of which are self-inflicted.

Proportional systems with two large and one or more smaller parties follow two coalition models. In one, which prevailed in Germany for most of the past half century and which may resume with the 2006 election, a small balance-wheel centre party forms coalitions with large centre-left and centre-right parties. Under this model politics gravitates towards the middle. Large parties campaign from the left or right, but must govern from the centre to conform to their coalition partner and to Germany's political culture. Although New Zealanders claim to reject partisan polarisation, their left-versus-right mindset precludes interest in the German model or in consensus politics. No German Free Democrat-style pivot party is in sight, although United Future New Zealand could grow into this role. New Zealand's politics seems more attuned to the second model, in which more ideological small coalition partners nudge centre-left and centre-right parties towards the poles. In theory, this coalition model can intensify ideological polarisation, as larger parties may campaign from near the centre but must move farther left or right than they would like in order to keep their coalition together.

However, New Zealand's small splinter parties, often ominously dominated by other parties' least loyal "party-hoppers," are neither disciplined nor respected enough to force New Zealand's large parties to conform to either model. Enduring public support for majoritarian mandate-respecting Westminster norms, or wide opposition to many of MMP's effects, places New Zealand's small parties in a no-win dilemma that resembles the Australian Senate's well-known "veto or echo" predicament.[4] Small parties in both chambers, whose

members have been elected all or nearly all proportionally rather than directly, suffer at least a whiff of illegitimacy in a Westminster culture. New Zealand polls and newspaper columns reveal a widespread perception that small parties exercise undeserved power (MMP Review Committee 84; Allan). When small parties are assertive and demanding, they command attention but invite criticism for presumptuous impertinence, obstruction and time wasting. Some New Zealanders may mistake for real policy influence the publicity and good sound bites generated by small parties and their MPs, like the Greens' colourful but hardly influential Nandor Tanczos. Yet when small parties are agreeable and cooperative, like Labour Prime Minister Helen Clark's late Alliance partner under Jim Anderton, they look weak, irrelevant and unnecessary - and they lose support as Alliance did after 1999. New Zealand's political culture and realities of coalition politics helped to break Alliance apart by nudging Anderton and his allies (renamed the Progressive Coalition in 2002) towards the middle, while driving away the party's left (now the Alliance rump) that prefers to maintain sharp distinctiveness in ideology and policy. Neither coalition model is supposed to operate in this way.[5]

In a "presidential" Westminster polity, a government's popularity benefits the Prime Minister and his or her party, but it did nothing for a coalition partner like Anderton's Alliance. The public has supported Helen Clark and her centre-left policies, and Anderton has been duly cooperative. Demanding major policy concessions from this Prime Minister as its price for maintaining the coalition would have damaged Alliance severely. Alliance found itself in a predicament where its performance as a supportive coalition partner did nothing for the party or its leader. Voters who approve of the government's performance and a Prime Minister's personal style, predictably enough, will vote for the Prime Minister's party, not a junior coalition partner. On the other hand, when a government is unpopular, its coalition partner suffers a discrediting guilt by association. A coalition partner that deserts a government, regardless of the government's popularity, faces charges of irresponsibility and perfidy. Note New

Zealand First's fate after its 1998 implosion and subsequent departure from its coalition with National. As long as New Zealanders expect governments to carry out their mandates without delays, it is hard to see how small coalition parties can carve out a respected and influential role in New Zealand politics. But, as noted, they also have a related problem. New Zealanders associate small parties with the proportionally elected list MPs who provide small parties with all but three of their current forty-one MPs.

## List MPs under MMP

Mixed member systems necessarily create two classes of MPs, those who carry a single member electorate (New Zealand's sixty-seven electorate MPs increased to sixty-nine in the 2002 election) and those elected through party lists (fifty-three, decreased to fifty-one in 2002). The issue is whether New Zealanders, like Germans, consider their two classes of MPs equally legitimate. So far, most do not. Leery of MMP from the beginning, most Labour and National MPs and ministers have predicted that second class list MPs unaccountable to voters would discredit MMP. However, many of MMP's most outspoken critics, like National MP Wyatt Creech, left the scene with the 2002 election. New MPs and ministers without ties to FPP are replacing them. Most electorate MPs - but not the public - have begun to accept their list colleagues. Columnist Colin James proposes to give New Zealanders "another couple of elections" to "get the hang of European-style politics."[6] Fair enough, but small parties first must show solidarity and discipline, and create loyal niche constituencies, to move New Zealanders from Westminster norms towards the acceptance of small party influence required for list MPs to enjoy respect.

Proportional systems, mixed and pure alike, intend list MPs to provide each qualifying party with parliamentary representation consistent with its support in the voting public. Recall that New Zealanders tell pollsters they consider this a desirable result, although many believe

New Zealand's threshold for parliamentary representation at 5% of the national vote or - especially - one electorate seat is too permissive. List MPs have no official electorate or constituents to service through casework and through the myriad of social responsibilities that electorate MPs perform with varying levels of skill and enthusiasm, although their parties assign them electorates to look after. One electorate MP divided his list colleagues into three groups. He asserted that one group, the largest comprising perhaps half of list MPs, to date have found little to do besides (as he put it) take their pay like Australian Senators. He did not intend this as a compliment. Most Australian Senators have carved out a niche of sorts by serving usually unobtrusively on parliamentary committees and in representing their parties in various capacities in their home states. These activities, and their relatively anonymous party lists, afford them little public profile or esteem. Because parties in both countries control list rankings, list MPs and Senators must please only their party's leaders and activists. To be sure, hardly any electorate MPs in the Australian and New Zealand Houses of Representatives exercise more freedom than their proportionally elected if generally more anonymous list counterparts. Even so, list MPs, like small parties, must carve out a more conspicuous niche in New Zealand politics if they wish to command the public's attention and respect.

The second set of list MPs works diligently at servicing their assigned electorates. Many Australian Senators also perform this function. While this activity appears useful, "party hack" Senators' longstanding lack of respect in Australia suggests that it makes little impression on the public at large, even over the course of decades. Members of the third and smallest group define their assignment - we must assume with their party's approval or at its instigation - as representing minority ethnic groups in New Zealand's increasingly multicultural society. National's Pansy Wong and (before 2002) Arthur Anae played this role with growing Chinese and Samoan communities that had previously lacked parliamentary representation as such. They performed the most beneficial functions of non-minister list MPs, less because their communities need special representation than because

their assignments afford them more profile and respect than other list MPs.

One list MP confessed her dislike of the pseudo-electorate responsibilities her party expects her to perform in the electorate where she was defeated in 1999. She noted that the Royal Commission had hoped list MPs would devote their time to broader issues that their parties assign them to investigate, perhaps through select committee work. Smaller parties like ACT and Greens, whose caucuses since 2002 have consisted wholly of list MPs, have made a virtue of necessity by assigning MPs without constituents to cover broad issue as well as geographic areas of responsibility. A few like ACT's ubiquitous Rodney Hide and the Greens' Tanczos attract considerable attention. Even if small parties outside the coalition enjoy no policy influence, their supporters across the country, Greens especially, can see that their views are receiving publicity. It will benefit MMP's public reputation and the parties themselves if the large parties can devise visible and constructive responsibilities for their mostly non-ethnic list MPs.

One particularly distressing aspect of list MPs' status derives from New Zealanders' continued association of democratic legitimacy and accountability with an individual MP's holding an electorate seat. The often-heard lament about list MPs that "you don't vote for them but they get in anyway" reflects dissatisfaction with a system that permits dual candidacies for candidates who cannot carry their own electorate to enter Parliament through their party's list. There is especially strong disdain for large party MPs who secure a seat in this manner. Only a belief in FPP elections' monopoly on legitimacy can explain this view's currency under MMP. Many New Zealanders refuse to acknowledge that, as in Australia, Canada, the United States and Britain, some potentially outstanding MPs and ministers cannot win their electorates simply because their parties are weak there. Of these five countries, only New Zealand has created formal institutional structures offering "prize" candidates an alternate route to the "people's" house.

A Green MP's argument that party lists are desirable because they permit New Zealanders who perform well as ministers to serve in Parliament despite an absence of campaigning and constituency service talents, or without having to attend to time-stealing constituency work, enjoys little public acceptance. Yet the well-regarded Finance Minister Michael Cullen and (before 2002) Women's Affairs Minister Laila Harre were elected from the coalition parties' lists. New Zealanders may be equally unimpressed to hear that some Canadians, including Canadian Alliance party leader Stephen Harper, argue that elections put into Parliament good politicians but poor administrators. Harper proposes to open Canada's ministries to specialist non-MPs on the American model. Perhaps Fiona Barker et al., recalling Colin James, correctly attribute New Zealanders' anti-list MP bias to a preoccupation with electorate MPs that only a successful experience with MMP can erode given enough time (309). But MMP's success requires list MPs outside the ministry to elevate their public profile and demonstrate that they are not "butt lazy," as one of their fellow MPs uncharitably described most of them, and as a sizeable portion of the public may perceive them until persuaded otherwise.

## MMP and the Representation of Maori, Women and Minorities

Whatever else MMP may have accomplished, it undeniably has enhanced the parliamentary representation of Maori, women and some minorities in New Zealand. New Zealand created four electorates and a separate roll for Maori in 1867, in part to ensure that the then-minority Pakeha (non-Maori, nearly all Anglo-Saxons at the time) would dominate the government (Arseneau 135-136). MMP's introduction brought a fifth Maori electorate; rapidly growing numbers introduced a sixth in 1999 and a seventh in 2002. Maori may choose to enrol on the Maori or the general roll; they now divide about equally between them. Maori MPs rose from seven to sixteen under MMP by 1999, some 13% of the total and near the 15% largely

urban and relatively youthful Maori population share. Fully 21% of MPs elected in 2002 claim some Maori ancestry. Most Maori are of mixed race and often well under half Maori by ancestry, but if they consider themselves Maori the law accepts them as such and they may vote on the Maori roll (Durie 7).[7]

The 31% 2001 female MPs, mostly elected from party lists, represented a major increase from 21% just before MMP. Even with female representation reduced to 28% in 2002, New Zealand continues to rank among the countries with the highest proportion of women in Parliament. The past two Prime Ministers have been women. In conspicuous contrast to Margaret Thatcher's practice, many of Helen Clark's ministers also have been female. MMP has increased the number of women, Maori, and ethnic minority MPs in part because parties feel obligated to place them in high positions on their lists to secure these groups' all-important party votes. To be sure, as Therese Arseneau points out, strong party discipline precludes cross-party caucuses for Maori, women and minorities that can maximise parliamentary minorities' leverage (143-144). A South Island cross-party caucus does exist, but it has little to do in the absence of strong inter-island grievances. South Islanders appear satisfied with a guarantee of sixteen electorate MPs. Their island's relative population decline keeps adding North Island electorate MPs (two in 1999 and two more in 2002) at list MPs' expense to maintain the required population equality in electorates. Perhaps a South of Bombay Hills caucus or support for an upper chamber for the regions will emerge once the Auckland area's relentless immigration-fuelled growth locates most New Zealanders and their MPs in the northern 25% of the country.

Sheer numbers aside, how much influence do minorities actually exercise under MMP? Any such discussion must begin with Maori. Enhanced representation of self-defined Maori, especially through the increasingly numerous Maori electorates, has troubled some Pakeha mostly but not exclusively on the right side of politics, and especially in the ACT party. ACT wants the separate Maori electorates

abolished. Many other Pakeha and a few Maori argue that special seats destructively promote racial distinctions and consciousness while segmenting New Zealand's population and making it harder to deal with Maori issues. Besides, they claim that MMP is producing enough Maori MPs that special electorates are not needed.[8] But many Maori want to keep their electorates as validating symbols of their special status - and to retain MMP. A Maori MP argued that MMP has rescued New Zealand from a major problem in the streets by forcing governments finally to take Maori issues seriously and by affording Maori a more visible role in New Zealand's politics. After all, if proportional representation makes every vote and parliamentary seat potentially important, minorities - Maori particularly - can exercise real leverage at last (Arseneau 136; Durie 15-16). Eventually, MMP may encourage the founding of a Maori nudge party (apart from Alliance's Mana Motuhake component) with the potential for a major impact on New Zealand politics. This outcome could hurt Labour, which traditionally takes the majority of Maori votes. The Maori attraction to strong personalities could facilitate such a movement if a charismatic leader emerges, but an offsetting tribal diversity and individuality militate against this development (Sullivan 183).

Women's roles can assume three forms: moving Parliament's policy style and atmosphere towards a "feminine" collegiality, forcing attention onto women's issues, and providing simple presence. Interviewees agreed that enhanced female membership in New Zealand's Parliament and ministry has made little difference. Women MPs, Prime Minister Clark conspicuously included, are products and practitioners of Westminster politics who no more exemplify "feminine" behaviour (like placing consensus seeking above competition) than their male colleagues. A gay MP did observe that female MPs, as in other countries, seem more open to sexual minorities than men. While this can influence certain social policies in sexual minorities' favour, New Zealanders deny that their female MPs and ministers emphasise supposed women's issues like health, welfare and education. Some writers assert that women benefit from simple presence or "mirror" representation to "see themselves" in

Parliament: "being there" when decisions are made advantages women (Phillips 140). They note that British Labourite Nye Bevan wanted representatives to "speak with the authentic accents" of those who elected them. Bevan thought MPs should share class, race, or gender experiences with their voters (Phillips 172). But some feminists want more. They argue that interests are gendered. A sizeable female presence is necessary - though New Zealand's experience suggests it is by no means sufficient - to reach the critical mass threshold that can advance a women's agenda (Tremblay 440, 448). In any case, without resorting to quotas (Greens excepted) New Zealand's women have achieved a substantial presence in a ministry that, even without an openly female-oriented political style or policy outcomes, MMP has helped place first among Anglo-Saxon countries in its gender diversity.

## MMP's Unintended and Underappreciated Consequences

In proposing MMP for New Zealand, the Royal Commission identified fairness between parties as perhaps the main attribute that led it to prefer MMP to other electoral systems. But once reforms are implemented, the law of unintended consequences takes effect. In New Zealand, MMP has alienated many by perpetuating tight party solidarity and exposing dealings between parties, it has surprised others with arcane strategic considerations that most New Zealanders do not appreciate, and it has impressed all too few with its relatively inconspicuous improvements to parliamentary business.

In the referendum campaign for MMP, some of its champions suggested that New Zealanders exasperated with tight party discipline and party polarisation should choose MMP to remedy these defects. MMP has not done so. Instead, it strengthens the perceived need for parties' internal cohesion (Boston 274). Because every vote matters in a closely balanced coalition government, parties large and small now must maintain solidarity more than ever. But MMP makes smaller coalition parties' internal divisions more apparent by directing attention to their strange political bedfellows and exposing

many parliamentary processes to public scrutiny. Consider the damage done by New Zealand First's 1996-1998 tensions and Alliance's 2002 implosion. MMP also enhances transparency by publicising inter-party relations, especially between coalition partners. That is, much of the intra-party bargaining and divisions of the past that single party ministries often could conceal have been replaced by inter-party relations for all to see. Canadian Liberal party strategist Warren Kinsella warns that the media thrive on backroom shenanigans and things that go wrong while they exploit all evidence of "misfortune, conflict, and an unkillable distrust of political success" (187, 219, 222). In New Zealand, which shares Australia's destructive tall poppy syndrome, visible political manoeuvrings hand the media irresistible opportunities to confirm an already cynical public's suspicions about politics. Admittedly, uncovering sleaze in one of the world's cleanest politics presents a challenge - New Zealand inconveniently ranks behind only Scandinavia in the absence of serious political corruption - but the media ensure that no good reform goes unpunished. Thanks to MMP-facilitated transparency, they now can uncover more 'sleaze' than ever. While New Zealand's media revelations would scandalise few Europeans or North Americans, they damage public trust in MMP and politics in general.

The new MMP regime creates some novel strategic considerations for political operatives. Because overall parliamentary seats are apportioned on the basis of the second or party list vote, each party must maximise its party vote. For this reason parties will run strong candidates in hopeless electorates to encourage supporters there to turn out and add to the all-important party vote. They reward these candidates with safe places on the list, which many prefer because they want no electorate responsibilities as MPs. Also, the opportunity for ballot splitting has attracted more attention than anyone foresaw. Small party members assert that New Zealand, with the same 85% turnout in 1999 as in 1990 and 1993 but (ominously?) just 77% in 2002, has thus far escaped the dramatic turnout declines of Canada (down to 61% in 2000) and Britain (only 59% in 2001) because MMP lets New Zealanders vote for their preferred electorate candidate and

also for a party with a realistic chance of playing a role in government. New Zealand's mandatory enrolment but voluntary voting makes its persistently high rate of voter participation worthy of investigation. Barring unexpected discoveries, MMP deserves at least some credit for maintaining high voter participation. On the other hand, polls report that 30% of New Zealanders, and at least 40% of Maori, Pacific Islanders, and young voters, still did not realise that MMP gives them two votes - even after two MMP elections (MMP Review Committee 90).

Still another consequence of MMP, in this case less noticed in the media than party leaders, personalities and 'sleaze,' concerns inter-party parliamentary activities. To be sure, MMP has not weakened Parliament's partisanship or most parties' cohesiveness, nor has it changed the atmosphere of the place in a collegial consensus seeking direction. Across party lines MPs do not work better together, they are not more comfortable with each other, and they do not like each other better than before MMP. However, New Zealanders and their media, as in Britain, Australia and Canada, generally disregard parliamentary committees. Thanks to MMP, parliamentary select committees finally can exploit the opportunities that pre-MMP reforms afford them. They operate with less partisanship now that the government, technically a minority as Labour and Alliance had only 59 of the 120 MPs in 2001 and 54 after the 2002 election, usually lacks committee majorities. Committees call in ministers and hold them to account in a manner unthinkable before MMP. The government no longer can force its legislation through committees unchanged. Members of all parties participate in devising amendments, most of which the government has accepted. Many amendments are substantive. Most observers believe that committees have improved the legislative process. Some even consider them an informal and semi-independent but still welcome substitute review chamber where opposition parties restrain the executive rather like in the Australian Senate - and better than in either House in Britain or Canada. Still, the Prime Minister and government eventually get what they want. They only need more time and skill in managing

MPs of all parties than was the case before MMP. The system still does not feature strong checks and balances, nor is it prone to deadlock. In short, MMP has changed the policy process to some extent, for the better if we value closer scrutiny with broader representation and (less so) wider participation - but not quite in the way, or as consequentially, as many New Zealanders may believe.

## Discussion

New Zealand's MMP has an uncertain future. To date Westminster has emerged reasonably intact from an encounter with MMP that has manifested more continuity than change. Perhaps the prevailing culture, the party system, and prominent personalities can combine to attenuate the impact of electoral system changes indefinitely. If Australia's proportional Senate suggests anything after fifty-three years, several decades with MMP might not win New Zealanders' affection for list MPs. An MMP Review Committee chaired by Speaker Jonathan Hunt observed in its August 2001 report that New Zealanders admire MMP's enhancing representation in Parliament, offering them more choice in elections from their two votes, and forcing governments to consult with others before imposing their policies. The same poll respondents fault MMP for awarding minor parties too much power, making politics more messy and confusing, making policy decisions take too long, preventing governments from taking decisive action or hard decisions, and - by the largest margin of all - making list MPs less accountable to voters than electorate MPs (MMP Review Committee 74-84). Yet an outside observer notices how little politics has changed under MMP: collegiality remains elusive, small parties have stayed weak, governments and the large parties that head them still get their way, and so on. The most popular further reforms include making party-hopping MPs resign their seats (since enacted) and reducing Parliament's size (MMP Review Committee 85). Neither reform addresses any of the five perceived MMP deficiencies listed above. Many New Zealanders disoriented by MMP harbour unrealistic

expectations in a Westminster polity. They wish enhanced representation and fairness between parties to complement, not replace, their bipolar mandate mindset and disdain for list MPs. For now, the public's satisfaction with the 2002 election outcome that produced another Labour-led minority coalition government is making MMP rather popular (Small). But this popularity remains hostage to the government's public standing. If the minority coalition or even the Prime Minister herself loses support, so may MMP.

We can identify MMP's chief beneficiaries, who might make common cause to help MMP survive. Women, minorities, Maori, small parties and list MPs all benefit from MMP's closed party lists. All might work to secure support for the list arrangement, even if lists give parties an excuse to nominate few women and minorities in electorates. Over time list MPs may validate the principle of non-geographic representation that will permit even electorate MPs to champion groups with which they identify. For example, a gay MP may attend to gays' concerns better when New Zealanders accept a non-geographic representational model. Some believe such a practice can segment society undesirably. However, this includes many ACT supporters who need MMP's party lists for parliamentary representation. New Zealand already may be forging a multicultural society where diverse cultures and lifestyles enjoy a respected status in political life. For better or worse MMP can facilitate this outcome.

A multicultural New Zealand can provide both good and bad news for Maori. The Maori conception of a dualist New Zealand - themselves and Pakeha or everyone else, including other Pacific Islanders - reflects their 1840 Waitangi Treaty-legitimised demands for parallel status in various institutions (Denemark 79). But Maori bipolar notions of New Zealand society are becoming incompatible with reality and unsustainable in the long run. Immigration has given Asians and Pacific Islanders 6% of New Zealand's people each; current projections place Asians about even with Maori by 2011. Maori likely will remain disinclined to work in concert with those they suspect may soon endanger their privileged position in New Zealand

(Samson). Yet all of these minorities can exploit MMP by advancing multiculturalism better than when most New Zealanders and their government were more committed to FPP and an Anglo-Saxon society of individuals. Thus, if managed adroitly, other groups' growing strength can also work to Maori tactical advantage.

The Hunt Committee's poll findings to the contrary, nudge third parties have little influence in MMP New Zealand. Inter-party coalitions resemble hostage situations. In theory smaller partners make large parties hostage to some of their demands. If a large party cannot satisfy small parties, the latter can transfer their support to another large party or force an early election. Germany's small centre pivot party model, in which the Free Democrats abandoned the Social Democrats for the Christian Democrats in 1982 and helped keep the new coalition in power for sixteen years, shows how coalitions can give centre parties considerable leverage. But New Zealand's MMP-induced coalition politics destabilises small coalition parties beset by their confirmed party-hoppers' lack of solidarity and discipline, while it deepens tensions between ideologues and pragmatists. Besides, Alliance or Greens in coalition with Labour, or ACT in coalition with National, cannot expect a coalition role where it can plausibly threaten to move its support elsewhere or benefit from forcing an early election. Labour aggravated Alliance divisions by co-opting Alliance moderates while stranding the left where it proved unable to win list seats as a separate party in the 2002 election. Alliance, not Labour, has served as the hostage in this situation. The same could happen in a National-ACT coalition, as ACT's right likely cannot elect MPs on its own. Forcing an early election can prove suicidal for small parties, and the large parties know it. Thus, most leverage in New Zealand resides as ever with large parties, especially since the 2002 election afforded Prime Minister Clark the desirable "Norwegian" pivot position where she can alternatively draw support from small parties to her left (Greens) and right (United Future), depending on the issue (James 2 Mar 02). It will stay there until a centre party (United Future?) plausibly can support either Labour or National or unless

New Zealanders better respect small parties - and, by association, list MPs (James 5 Nov 02).

New Zealand's experience may suggest how Westminster majoritarian norms can affect electoral reform efforts in Britain and Canada. The ongoing initiatives in Britain to change the House of Commons electoral system and to reform the House of Lords betray the majority principle's allure. The 1998 (Roy) Jenkins Commission proposals reflected the commission's mandate to seek a Commons electoral formula retaining the stable government that FPP provides, even though broad proportionality also was an objective (Reynolds 177-178).[9] In Britain "stable government" is a euphemism for a single-party majority and ministry. Jenkins recommended keeping some 80% of Commons seats on a single member basis, albeit with alternate vote (AV) similar to Australia's House of Representatives. The rest would "top up" British regions' representation from open party lists. This model aspires to preserve the Commons' current atmosphere, avert coalition ministries, and keep small parties from power. Most formulas for Lords reform propose a review chamber with no veto power, to operate like New Zealand's select committees but with greater public visibility. They also would create two classes of members, some elected and the rest appointed (for one such proposal, see Smith, also Tempest). The British might consider New Zealand's experience with party lists and two classes of MPs before they further reform either chamber.

Some Canadians are calling for reforms to restore competitive and unpredictable elections to end the cynicism, apathy, regional tensions, and declining turnout that they attribute to FPP and to the domination of the policy process by the Liberal party and the Prime Minister personally (for examples, see Simpson xiii, 196; and Robinson). Proportional representation supporter Henry Milner asserts from his observations in Scandinavia that proportionality would address these concerns by facilitating an inclusive and accommodative consensus-seeking politics featuring higher turnout and a greater connectedness between voters and parties (Milner 1997,

97; Milner 1999, 37-49). But an enduring attachment to Westminster norms suggests that New Zealand's still evolving model may give Canadians more insight than Europe on how proportional politics would operate in Canada.

When some Canadians examine New Zealand's experience under MMP, they dislike what they see. Louis Massicotte criticises New Zealand First's behavior as a "slippery partner" in its coalition with National that made coalition-inducing electoral systems less appealing (16). Kent Weaver thinks that National's replacing Prime Minister Bolger over coalition tensions decisively discredited MMP with Canada's political elite. He also speculates that MMP would exacerbate Canada's regionalism (80-81). Some other Canadians attack coalition politics in general as "prone to pernicious combinations of ideological incoherence, policy stalemate, and political instability" (Clarke 307).

Some optimism is justified. Polls suggest that MMP has enhanced New Zealanders' views of their politics and politicians, even without a consensual political style (Karpe 135, 137). New Zealand's experience also may support David Laycock's speculation that proportional representation (usefully, in his view) would limit new, insurgent, or small Canadian parties' potential by making them nudge parties permanently attached to larger established parties and unable to exercise strong policy influence or attain major party status (137-139). But no one should expect institutional reforms by themselves to transform a Westminster culture into a less partisan "politics of collective identities."

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## NOTES

## Notes

[1] On the operation of MMP in Germany, see Scarrow, 55-69.

[2] Many New Zealanders still ignore Germany under MMP, as when they speculate on how a Labour-Green coalition might operate without considering Germany's Social Democrat-Green coalition experience. Note, for example, Roughan, John. "Unbending Greens Could Sound MMP Death Knell." *New Zealand Herald*, 1 June 2002.

[3] For Jean Chretien's Canada, see Savoie. On "President" Tony Blair, see Foley.

[4] On Australian Senators' situation, see Cody, especially 103-109.

[5] On the Alliance party's divisions between its centre-left nudge and farther left niche elements, see James, 28 November 2001, and 4 April 2002 (unsigned editorial).

[6] See James, 9 January 2002. Most New Zealanders do *not* share the views expressed in the title "We Need More and Better-Paid MPs."

[7] Durie predicts 33% of New Zealand's children may be Maori by 2051.

[8] For ACT's objections to separate Maori representation, see MMP Review Committee, 21.

[9] For a Jenkins Commission member's defence of the Jenkins recommendations as better for Britain than FPP because they would increase representational diversity, see Lipsey.

**Barbara Ann Hocking and
Michele Harvey-Blankenship**

# Genetics as a Tool of Justice, History and Identity

## Introduction

The genetic revolution is prompting an increasing search for and means of providing individual identity. Genetic information is emerging as a form of individual currency in advanced western democracies like Canada and Australia. Biological credit cards have been mooted and directed to consumer genetic advertising which has presaged the advent of 'personalised medicine.' In this age of genetic commerce our biological understanding of the word 'genetics' has changed (Katz Rothman 21). For where once "gene" was "the name given to the force that transmits qualities from parent to child" (what are now called "genes") can be broken down to "stretches of DNA that code for the production of specific proteins" (Katz Rothman 21). With those proteins comes knowledge of our identity. This highlights that DNA is providing solutions to many problems in the development in contemporary western medicine and health care. The power of molecular biology in this context is such that it has been said that genetics has become "one of the substitute forums for religion" (Somerville 4) because it provides possibilities as diverse as "immortalising our genetic selves" (Somerville 75) - with claims and counter-claims igniting the scientific and bio-ethics world concerning possibilities of human cloning.[1]

Less dramatic but similarly exciting the public interest in gene technology are announcements of the "discovery of a gene for …"

(Smith 1) and implications that "science can save Superman." So great has been the emphasis upon genetics in health care in the United States, United Kingdom, Canada and Australia that there has been an argument that those countries are moving towards a highly individualised concept of health care, one pivoting around the user-pays health care system. The Internet facilitates that form of health care, as Badger explains:

> The majority of people who access adult genetic testing or screening services in the United States, Canada and Australia do so within a public clinical or medical research context. However, an increasing number of health care products including genetic diagnostic and susceptibility tests are being marketed direct-to-consumers (DTC) over the Internet. It has been argued that the Internet is directly facilitating people in the advanced liberal democracies to become more active in seeking out information about, and managing, their own health care.

That development is exemplified by companies such as the United Kingdom-based Sciona you and your genes service.[2] Marketing claims made by companies supplying DTC genetic testing now abound in these countries, representing in one view the ultimate "rolling-back" of State-provided readily accessible health care, the individuation of health care, and the blurring of what are private parties and what are public duties in the modern health care context (Lemmens, Mykitiuk).

In offering a new form of 'personalised medicine' such companies personify the new western democracy genetic consumer and health care systems constructed around both the "geneticisation" of medicine and health care (Badger) and user-pays medicine (Mykitiuk). This has provoked critical analyses of the contrasting health priorities of the first world and third world. In Australia, while genetic research harnesses large amounts of public and private medical funding, its benefits are largely for those of the affluent and healthy majority while

access to adequate general health facilities, together with lack of fundamental resources such as clean water and sanitation, and diseases such as rheumatic fever (for which it has been difficult to find a pharmaceutical company that will finance clinical trials on a vaccine) continue to plague remote Australian Aboriginal communities (Jopson 4). While the same could be said of most hi-tech medicine, the analysis points to the need to appropriately prioritise all health spending particularly in societies where resources are severely limited and where some citizens have third-world health problems amidst the prevailing first-world health affluence.

In the developed world as genetic screening advances, potential law suits have been mooted that could draw upon developments in negligence law such as the medical failure to warn cases, particularly those concerning "wrongful birth" (brought by parents) and "wrongful life" (brought by children) (McGivern 41). Similarly individualistic is the emergence of the 'isn't mine won't pay' paternity dispute that has seen fathers turn to DNA to refute paternity and even to claim maintenance fraud. High profile paternity disputes have included those over film star Liz Hurley's baby son Damian, with rumours of rubbish bin samples in another putative fatherhood claim against millionaire Steve Bing. A recent Australian case in the County Court in Melbourne has seen the putative father sue his ex-wife for fraud and damages based upon the child support he had paid the mother, and expenses incurred in supporting 'his' children including the cost of taking them to Macdonalds![3] The landmark legal battle - where the identity of both the man and woman were withheld to protect the children - resulted in the woman being ordered to pay her former husband $70,000 (AUS) compensation for pain and suffering and loss of income. As one commentator has observed, the insistence upon biological parenthood in these cases may bring about the "birth of the blues" (Smith 33) because it is bereft of recognition of the value of social not purely biological parenthood. Or as Karpin and O'Connell remark:

> This then is an example in which legal rights and responsibilities are determined by a DNA profile that is relied upon to evidence facts. It is particularly interesting to pit the certainty of this kind of genetic evidence against the traditional evidence which consisted of testimony as to dates and circumstances. One is viewed as highly reliable but the other is not (Karpin and O'Connell 77).

Whatever the emotional rights or wrongs, wrongful belief in biological parenthood is emerging as an actionable wrong in a legal sense and paternity fraud is being pursued in some cases with all the commitment that some might prefer reserved for corporate fraud.

The issue of consent with respect to both taking DNA samples and then testing them is challenging the legal systems in all these countries. There are complications to that consent given the widespread commercialisation of genetic research (Nicol, Otlowski and Chalmers 80). There are complications in the family context where disputes arise over paternity. In confronting the issues of DNA for paternity testing, the Australian Law Reform Commission has flagged a possible recommendation that human genetic material be classed as the personal property of the sample source, so that traditional causes of action in conversion would apply. Indeed the Chief Justice of the Family Court of Australia has called for legislation to make it a criminal offence to carry out a paternity test by stealth, using a child's DNA sample without their permission (Smith 33), and the Australian Law Reform Commission canvasses this possibility in its recent Working Paper.[4] The possibility that DNA can be stolen has been convincingly canvassed in academic comment (Skene).

Another development common to both Canada and Australia concerns uses of genetics in the context of crime-related identification. Cross-jurisdictional legal and ethical commonalities that have emerged in this context include the representativeness of the databases against which samples are matched, the right of a suspect or an accused to refuse to provide a sample and to have it

tested, and how the DNA evidence is used in courtrooms (Lincoln 19; Hocking et al 1997). In Canada, Australia and the United Kingdom inquiries have been undertaken into the explosion of genetic research, particularly concerning such complex issues as ethical and legal implications of research into links between genetics and behaviour and privacy and discrimination implications of advances in genetic technologies.

Little is known however of other uses of genetics and in particular of the ways in which genetic information can be used to establish identity in post-conflict situations and draw attention to human rights abuses in countries which have suffered under despotic regimes. Yet a key scientific initiative that is continuing in Canada has placed DNA at the forefront of the fight for human rights and justice for countries ravaged by war and military dictatorships. That is the use of genetic technology topic we address in this paper. At a time when there is considerable political prevarication concerning recognition of refugee status in Australia in particular, the circumstances of the reunifications outlined here may contribute to greater understanding of the circumstances that so many of those claiming refugee status have had to endure. Here the consent issue is not so much that it cannot be fully informed but that inter-generational disappearances hinder the possibility of tracking identity for those who seek to establish it so they can be reunified with what biological family they still have.

## Children and Genetics

The stealing or kidnapping of children by regimes of various political persuasions and of varying political rationales has only recently received public attention in countries such as Canada and Australia. Among the revelations is the case of Spain, where it has been revealed that "Franco stole children from leftist opponents" (Tremlett); and that of Australia, where the 'stolen generation' of Aboriginal children has prompted a recent film (*Rabbit Proof Fence*[5])

and ongoing debates about a compensation scheme for what has been characterised as genocide.[6]

## The Children in El Salvador

In 1982, when Odir was three months old, he saw his mother, Maria, shot during a military sweep in El Higueral, a small village in El Salvador. His mother had taken him to the river to wash clothing. Because of her partial deafness, Maria heard neither the military enter the village nor her neighbours fleeing. The military was continuing a campaign to "remove the water from the fish" - remove the support from the guerrillas. Since Odir's village was in the middle of a guerrilla stronghold, it was suspected of supporting guerrilla activity. The military swept through to destroy the community. Much of the village had fled by the time the military arrived. In fact, Odir's older brother, Cristobal, who was three years old at the time, had fled with his grandmother to a nearby village. Unfortunately his grandmother died soon afterwards and he spent the next three years in an orphanage. Thankfully, an aunt found him and he was brought back to the village. Odir was not as lucky; the military plucked him from his mother and put him in a helicopter with other children from the village.

Twenty miles away, at the military barracks, an announcement was made to the locals that children were available for those who wanted them. They were "given out like chickens" remembers Ricardo, another boy who was kidnapped. The Hernandez family took Odir. They had two daughters and wanted a son. Odir grew up in their household thinking that his family was dead. The twelve year civil war in El Salvador left approximately 75,000 people dead. Among the casualties were hundreds of children who had been kidnapped and trafficked. Personal statements of children being kidnapped were so numerous that an organisation, Asociacion Pro-Busqueda de Ninos y Ninas Desaparecidos (Association for the Search of Disappeared Children) was formed. The NGO formally documented hundreds of

cases of kidnapped children and began investigating the circumstances surrounding each case, the legality of each case, and of course, the location of the children. They have found children all over the world, in Europe, the United States, and Central America, including El Salvador.

So far, over 500 cases have been reported and are being investigated by Asociacion Pro-Busqueda, NGO in El Salvador, and Physicians for Human Rights in the United States. It is estimated that more than 2,000 children have been kidnapped and trafficked. The testimonies describe children being wrenched from their mother's arms; others depict children being the sole survivors of their family or their village. Virtually all of the cases were military crimes. In some cases the children were taken to the local military base and given out to the local community - as happened with Odir. With the help of shady lawyers and weak administrations, the children were funnelled through adoption agencies to unsuspecting families around the world. Asociacion Pro-Busqueda has been dedicated to reuniting the children with their biological families, enlisting the assistance of scientists qualified in the provision of genetic services to assist in their investigations.

## The Remains

Nine years after Odir was kidnapped, a war broke out between Croatia and Serbia when Croatia declared independence from Yugoslavia. The Serbian army (JNA) entered Croatia in September 1991 and one of the first cities they attacked was Vukavar, eighty miles northwest of the Serbian border. For three months the JNA bombed Vukavar. The civilian population hid in barracks and bomb shelters. As the defence lines weakened, injured soldiers and frightened civilians gathered in the hospital in the centre of Vukavar as it was rumoured that the hospital's staff and patients would soon be evacuated by international observers.

On the morning of November 19, the JNA took over the city of Vukavar. That same day, the JNA agreed to allow the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to evacuate the hospital. The following morning JNA officials denied access by the ICRC and the UN to evacuate the hospital. Meanwhile, the JNA evacuated the staff, the sick, and the wounded, loaded them onto buses and transported them to a local state-run farm cooperative called Ovcara. The hospital staff and patients were held inside the farm buildings, being verbally assaulted or physically beaten. As night fell, they were taken away in groups of twenty not to be seen again.

Five years later, under the protection of the United Nations War Crimes Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY), exhumations were begun of more than 300 sets of remains. Traditional forensic anthropological and pathological techniques were used to preliminarily identify the remains. The 64 cases that were used as physical evidence for ICTY required an additional degree of certainty achieved using genetic identification techniques. One of the authors, Dr Michele Harvey-Blankenship, was asked to provide this additional evidence in her capacity as a geneticist.[7]

## The Lab

Spots of blood on two pieces of filter paper in envelopes appear before me on the lab bench. One belongs to Odir; the other belongs to his putative brother. In the deep freezer, there are teeth and bone samples from each of the sets of remains from Vukavar. With each set of remains, there is at least one blood sample to which the DNA from the bone or tooth must be compared. DNA is extracted from the blood samples and the polymerase chain reaction (PCR) is used to amplify a region of mitochondrial DNA (King). Mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA) is particularly suited for human rights work as it is maternally inherited. Therefore, a sample is needed only from one side of the individual's family and this sample can be relatively distant, for example a maternal great aunt or uncle. One

region of mtDNA, the hypervariable region, allows us to differentiate maternal families. Each nucleotide (building block) of DNA of both samples is compared. If the 1200 base pairs match identically, there is a probability that the two individuals could be from the same biological family. If they do not match, the two individuals are not from the same biological family.

## Odir's DNA

The sequence from Odir's blood sample matched identically with that of his putative brother. From this information alone, the scientists could not conclude that these two men were from the same biological family. This sequence had then to be compared to that of the population to ensure that the sequence is unique. If the sequence is unique, identity can be concluded. If it is not unique further genetic analysis must be undertaken. Odir and Cristobal's sequence was seen in another family in the database who were not maternally related. Therefore, their sequence is a "public" sequence. Further genetic analysis therefore had to increase the likelihood that these two men were from the same biological family.

Nuclear DNA is inherited from both parents - one set of chromosomes from the mother, another set from the father. Nuclear DNA is particularly useful when parents or a large number of distant relatives (aunts, uncles, grandparents) can donate samples for analysis (King). For Odir, these samples were not available. Although his putative mother, Maria Imelda, had survived her bullet wounds, she had died of natural causes during the initial course of the investigation. His father was not known and all grandparents were dead. Fortunately, Odir had a younger sister. Four years after Odir was kidnapped, his mother had a daughter, Maria Lucia. The scientific team added Maria Lucia's DNA to their analysis.

Maria Lucia's mitochondrial DNA was identical to Odir's. This was expected as all of these children were from the same mother. Fifteen different nuclear DNA markers from different chromosomes were

then analysed. At the completion of our analysis, there was enough similarity between Odir's, Cristobal's and Maria Lucia's nuclear DNA to overwhelmingly suggest that they were maternal siblings.

In fact the odds that the three individuals were from the same biological family was 1 in 20 million. Soon after the news was received, a reunion between the two families was planned. After a two-hour hike through a butterfly-filled jungle, surrounded by their neighbors, seventeen year-old Odir met his sister for the first time in his life. Cristobal saw his brother for the first time since his kidnapping. Their shy smiles were identical.

## Vukavar DNA

The mitochondrial DNA from all potential relatives (263) of missing of Vukavar and all of the sets of remains (66) was sequenced. Each formed a separate DNA sequence database. Each sequence from the sets of remains was compared with all of the sequences from the database formed from the DNA database of the relatives. Once a match was confirmed, the sequence would then be compared to all known mitochondrial hypervariable sequences. A likelihood ration would be calculated from this comparison allowing us to state the degree of certainty that a set of remains belonged to a particular biological family. Forty-four sets of remains could be identified. Nineteen of the samples contained mitochondrial DNA whose sequence did not match any person in the database of potential relatives. In other words, a representative blood sample from the maternal lineage of every victim was not collected. DNA was not obtained from three of the forensic samples. The evidence was used by the United Nations War Crimes Tribunal in The Hague for the case to try the mayor of Vukavar for the murders[8] although he died before the trial could proceed.

## Global Perspectives on Trafficking of Children

Stealing and trafficking of children has become commonplace during periods of political or civil unrest. Increasingly they are being used as soldiers of war. The same techniques described above have been used for the identification of the children of the Desaparecidos of Argentina (King; Penchaszadeh, 1992, 1997). Dozens of Argentinean children have been identified and hundreds are estimated to have been trafficked. Cases of kidnapped and trafficked children have been documented in Guatemala, Bosnia, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, and the list goes on. Some children have found themselves alone after parents have been killed, others find themselves lost after mass skirmishes, others still find themselves plucked from their families and forced into either welcoming or horrifying situations. Each one of them is a child, with a biological family, with an identity, with a history. The assistance of genetics outlined here is one way in which advanced liberal democracies such as Canada can give these children a little of what they have lost. In fact, these efforts are now continuing at the University of Toronto. The story of these families provides a background against which to re-evaluate current responses to the refugee crisis - including the Australian 'Pacific solution' - with its complementary detention centre and temporary protection visa regimes - a policy that has been adopted and resolutely adhered to by both major political parties and one that originated with the now formally defunct One Nation party (Hocking and Stern).

## The Global Future

With the western world being called to war, and with the acceleration of terrorist activity, threats and responses to threats, it is timely to paraphrase the words of Louise Arbour, former Chief Prosecutor for the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia when she observed that crimes are committed by people, not by abstract entities like nationalities. The victims are not

abstractions either, although they are often perceived as such when their numbers accumulate by the thousands. In fact many of the victims are children. A recent UNICEF report, "Adult Wars, Child Soldiers," has reported that about 300,000 children are fighting in armed conflicts around the world (Morris 14). Furthermore, many have been recruited by groups involved in recent terrorist attacks (Morris 14). The population of Iraq is approximately 50% children, and children form the overwhelming proportion of the population of ASEAN nations. Their vulnerability is exemplified in the reunification project.

Identifying the remains of people who are unaccounted for following the collapse of the World Trade Centre and the Bali Bombing is also drawing upon DNA technology. Precious DNA, collected from clothing and toiletries and samples from hairbrushes, can assist with the identification of the human remains (Lyall 6). In some cases traditional DNA methods are of limited assistance given the extensive damage to many of the remains. New technologies such as SNP (single nucleotide polymorphism) analysis is believed to offer the best hope of identifying victims.[9] Professor James Dale has observed that when the technology was devised, it was intended as a screen for genetic diseases and that "we obviously had no idea at the time that it would ever be used in such circumstances as these." Dictatorships, trafficking and terrorism are putting health-related techniques to uses that appear frighteningly likely to escalate. There is no disputing the irony of the uses of DNA in this context. For as Karpin and O'Connell note concerning the MatriLine project, which is one of the services offered by the Oxford Ancestors project, a genetic mapping exercise:

> There is something ironic in the scientists of a former colonial power that was engaged in the global market in slavery reuniting Jendayi with the ancestors from whom she was forcibly disconnected (65).

So it is that in the modern globalisation context, in the interests of family closure and family reunification, the techniques described

above have been used to identify hundreds of sets of remains - a fraction of those scattered along the landscape of former Yugoslavia. Similar investigations have occurred in Haiti, Guatemala, Honduras and Rwanda to name a few. The list seems endless. The remains have been found in wells, in mass graves, strewn along hillsides, washed up on beaches. The similarity among the cases that links them together is that each of these individuals was an innocent victim protected by the Geneva Conventions. The Conventions were broken and the victims and their families deserve justice. This justice can come from their identification. Identification confirms their fate, allowing the families closure and marking the victims as a part of history that one hopes will never happen again.

There is a saying in the laboratory: "We should be working our way out of necessity." It is disappointing to write that we cannot see when genetic services will not be needed to assist in documenting international human rights violations. Accurate and scientific techniques to assist in the resolution of human rights abuses have been lacking. Now that genetic techniques are available, judicial bodies are requiring solid, quantitative and accurate evidence. By providing this evidence, families can be reunited with their missing, kin no longer have to agonise over the whereabouts and safety of their missing family member, identities of the victims can document the barbaric events, and justice - insofar as there can be any justice in this context - can be served.

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**Notes**

[1] See BioNews, 12 March 2001: "Reproductive cloning isn't safe" referring to the "shambolic" conference in Rome on 8 March at which Antinori and Zavos told scientists and journalists of their intention to offer cloning to infertile couples some time in the next two years. http//www.progress.org.uk/News; See also "The Clone Ranger," *The Australian Women's Weekly*, Feb. 2002, 66-70.

[2] See http://www.sciona.com

[3] See "Ex-wife to pay for birth deceit," *Courier Mail*, 23 November 2002, 6. The case is discussed in the Australian Law Reform Commission Issues Paper 26 (2001) at 415, and was the subject of an ABC TV 7.30 Report story under the rubric of "ticklish issue about DNA and paternity" (5 March 2001).

[4] See Australian Law Reform Commission and Stapleton.

[5] See http://www.smh.com.au/articles/2002/11/27/1038386208793.html

[6] See B.A. Hocking's paper "The Nation State Looms Large: How the Australian Legal Struggle over the Stolen Generation presaged our Treatment of Globally Displaced Persons," forthcoming in *Feminist Law Journal.*

[7] Dr Harvey-Blankenship was then working in the laboratory of Mary-Claire King in Seattle.

[8] See http://www.un.org/icty/rappannu-e/1998/index.htm

[9] See the article "Discovery helps bring closure to families." *Inside QUT*, Sept 17-14 October 2002, 1.

**Makarand Paranjape**

# Triple Ambivalence: Australia, Canada and South Asia in the Diasporic Imagination

## Introduction

An interview with Anita Rau Badami in the *Globe and Mail* was titled: "One foot in India and a couple of toes in Canada." Speaking of her experience as a Canadian writer of Indian origin in the context of the launch of her just released novel, *The Hero's Walk,* Anita Rau Badami observed: "I was 29 years in India and 10 years here, so I have one foot in India and a couple of toes here." Badami's own resolution of the crisis of being diasporic is eloquently expressed in her affirmation of the blessings of double vision: "We are both doomed and blessed, to be suspended between two worlds, always looking back, but with two gorgeous places to inhabit, in our imaginations or our hearts." In my opinion, however, such affirmations serve to camouflage the central impulse of many of the novels of the South Asian diaspora. That is why, inverting her statement, I am tempted to characterise the experience of such writers as "One foot in Canada and a couple of toes in India." Indeed, I shall argue that the main thrust of South Asian diasporic writers is usually away from India and towards Canada, Australia or whatever their destinations are. In other words, it is an out of India or away from India experience that is being recorded. However, diasporic texts themselves function in a sort of camouflage mode, which creates a series of ambivalences or uncertainties. This, then, is my central argument in a paper which, to use Peter van de Veer's phrase, is about the dialectics of longing and belonging, that is about the way in which diasporic fictions relate to their homelands.

This paper, which tries to compare texts and attitudes in three continents - North America, South Asia and Australia - does so by using the writings of the diaspora as a bridge. This is a sort of triangular comparison, which results as much in creative and critical ambivalences as in clear or categorical insights. One reason for this is the heterogeneous nature of the texts involved. My method is to approach the literary material through some carefully chosen theoretical interlocutors so as to clarify the broader issues involved as well as to attempt productive generalisations before attempting actual analysis of specific texts. For the Australian section I attempt to problematise both Australian attitudes to (South) Asia and South Asian attitudes to Australia using the game of cricket as a metaphor for my comparison. Then I concentrate mostly on two novels, Mena Abdulla's *The Time of the Peacock* (1965) and Chandani Lokuge's *If the Moon Smiled* (2000). These two women's South Asian texts from two different phases also represent two contrasting attitudes to the homeland and the adopted country. What makes them similar is that neither is an example of simple affirmation or negation. In the Canadian section, I first attempt a typology or chronological categorisation of South Asian Canadian writing using diasporan writers and critics like Uma Parmeswaran and Victor Ramraj, before focussing on two groups of writers, the twice diasporic Indo-Caribbean and Indo-African Canadian on the one hand, and the post-1960 direct immigrants from India on the other. M. G. Vassanji and Rohinton Mistry serve as examples of each type.

I am especially interested in the relationship between diasporas and homelands because I believe that this will help us understand not only how diasporas regard themselves, but also how homelands come to be created and defined. What the growing body of research on this area suggests is a complex and reciprocal relationship between the two, rather than a simplistic unilinear trajectory of influence or impact. As van der Veer puts it: "the theme of belonging opposes rootedness to uprootedness, establishment to marginality. The theme of longing harps on the desire for change and movement, but relates this to the enigma of arrival, which brings a similar desire to return to what one

has left" (4). In other words, a nation needs a diaspora to reaffirm its own sense of rootedness, while the migrant who did not feel like an Indian in India may suddenly discover his Indianness as a diasporan. Or, in van der Veer's words, "Those who do not think of themselves as Indians before migration become Indians in the diaspora" (7).

Diasporas and homelands are therefore best seen as structurally interdependent, though in the case of South Asia this may not seem immediately obvious. One reason for this is that the region that is today known as South Asia consists of several independent nation states, most of which arguably share a cultural commonality and continuity stretching four or more thousand years. Thus there is confusion and overlapping of the categories of nation, culture, ethnicity, religion, race, language and even caste, when it comes to defining the identity of the diasporan. Any one or more of these categories in conjunction or even contradiction defines what can be called the South Asian diaspora. This is one reason that I have retained the somewhat ambiguous idea of the homeland in my paper. A homeland can be a nation, a region, a linguistic area located in South Asia or a language, ethnic, or religious group originally from South Asia or a combination of both. When considering the South Asian diaspora, the challenge, in van der Veer's words, is neither to "unify and homogenize" all the diasporic cultures into "Indian culture overseas" nor to "deconstruct the South Asian diaspora to the point of dissolution" (8).

The reason why homelands and diasporas are structurally interdependent is that, just as homelands give rise to diasporas, diasporas also have the capacity to shape, if not create homelands. So, while it is obvious that forced or free migration from the subcontinent gave rise to what we can today identify as diasporan communities across the world, these communities, or at least some of their members, contributed immensely to the creation of the modern nation states of the region. To be more specific, the idea of India as an independent, modern nation was formed not just within its geographical borders but in the greater India of the diaspora.

Let us not forget that Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi became a Mahatma not in India, but among the indentured labourers whose rights and dignity he fought for in distant South Africa. It was his fight against racism, imperialism and apartheid that made him take on the most powerful empire in history - and, so to say - win. Similarly, Mohammad Ali Jinnah had withdrawn to England but was called back to assume the leadership of the Muslim League in its struggle that led to the separate Muslim homeland of Pakistan. More recently, both Sikh and Tamil separatism in Punjab and Sri Lanka respectively have been supported, if not controlled, by diasporic communities. But the best example of the diaspora creating the homeland is that of Israel; in this case, a modern nation was invented and willed into existence by a community of diasporic people concentrated mostly in Europe.

If we were to apply this idea to what Rushdie calls "imaginary homelands," those fictional territories that are created in literature, I think that the structural interdependence that I spoke of earlier still holds. The canonical texts of native literatures are often authored far away by exiled or diasporic writers refashioning a home not so much away from home as from abroad. The long and distinguished line of expatriates who shaped twentieth century American literature is an example. If we consider Indian English literature today, it would be no exaggeration to say that most of its best known writers live abroad: Naipaul, Rushdie, Raja Rao, Kamala Markandaya, Anita Desai, G.V.Desani, Vikram Seth, Rohinton Mistry - the list seems to be endless. In fact, a leading Canadian Punjabi poet, Ajmer Rode, is now a part of the syllabus of modern Punjabi poetry in India.

We could sum up this ambivalent, complex and dialectical relationship between diasporas and homelands in the words of Victor Ramraj: "Diasporic writings are invariably concerned with the individual's or community's attachment to the centrifugal homeland. But this attachment is countered by a yearning for a sense of belonging to the current place of abode" (216). This makes diasporic narratives both transitional and liminal. The texts themselves are journeys between source cultures and target cultures, between

homelands and diasporas, until the two overlap, change places, or merge. While I am interested in this broader issue of the relationship between diasporas and homelands, my focus in this paper is on South Asian Australian and South Asian Canadian literature. What I propose to do is not to offer extensive and elaborate readings of texts, but concentrate instead on the possible models or coordinates that will help us map these literatures.

## Part I: South Asian Australia

To a person of colour from South Asia, Australia presents itself as a vast, sparsely populated continent, with a culture that is at once familiar and unfamiliar. It is familiar because of the shared and enduring connection with the British Empire. While Australians, like South Asians, resisted the empire in many ways, unlike South Asians they also supported and extended it. The cultural institutions are similar - for instance, the traffic keeps to the left - and knowledge of British literature, history and culture are as widespread as in educated South Asia. And yet, South Asians are definitely viewed as outsiders or 'Others' to what is the dominant or culture-defining group, the white Anglo-Australian majority. On the one hand, this group would like to present Australia as a country that is liberal, egalitarian, hospitable, practically crime-free, progressive, multicultural, contemporary and yet relaxed, informal, sporting, pleasant, fair and decent - which indeed it is. But beneath these signs of welcome, there is also a distinct sense that the South Asian is an alien, a foreigner, not really a barbarian, but certainly not quite up to par. We are at once put into our place, as it were, reminded that we can almost never be 'real' Australians.

What is produced, consequently, is a certain complexity of attitudes that is at the heart of my paper. This complexity, on the one hand, concerns Australian attitudes to Asia, of which the South Asian diaspora is a part. On the other hand, South Asian, especially diasporan, representations of Australia and of their experience here, also show an ambivalence. That is why this section of the paper

about the Australia-Asia relationship has two parts. In the first, I wish to explore Australian attitudes to Asia and in the second, Asian, especially diasporan, accounts of Australia. This gives the first part of my paper a certain kind of symmetry: what we see, in fact, is a double ambivalence and it is this doubling - mirrored, mirroring - that I wish to highlight.

## Australian Attitudes to Asia

Perhaps the best way to start this section is with a cricketing story. Cricket has now become one of the most interesting and studied sites of the colonial and postcolonial encounter (Nandy 1989, Appadurai); and it is certainly one of the strongest links that Australia and South Asia share. However, it also serves to underline the sometimes hidden link between Australia and South Asia, the colonial link that is still cherished by many Australians. Hence, behind the Asia-Australia relationship is the presence of another country, Britain. Indeed, it might be argued that what Britain did to Australia holds, in some sense, a key to what Australians, in turn, did to the Asians. This is the point of the cricketing story.

The story concerns the famous "bodyline" series of 1932-1933 when the touring English team, lead by Douglas Jardine, captured the ashes 4-1 against Australia on Australian soil. When the English team set out, no one would have given them half a chance of winning. The reason was, among other things, the demolition man on the Australian squad, the incredible batting machine Don Bradman, who was known to treat English bowling with contempt. However, few had reckoned with Jardine's obsession to win or the extent to which he would go. Jardine equipped his team with five fast bowlers, instructing them to bowl at the body of the Australian batsmen. Even when the batsmen stood exposing the wickets, the bowlers aimed at them, usually at the head or chest. This is what came to be termed "bodyline cricket." Though England won, the relations between the two countries were severely strained. Telegrams were sent back and forth threatening dire consequences. Jardine was accused of

unsportsmanly behaviour and later stepped down as captain of the English team. Bodyline bowling, too, was banned. All this is so well known that there are books written about it. See, for instance, *Cricket and Empire: The 1932-33 Bodyline Tour of Australia* by Ric Sissons and Brian Stoddart.

What concerns me is the interpretation that Ashis Nandy gives to the happenings in this series. Nandy suggests that Jardine's approach was typical of the British attitude to Australia. It not only reflected his class superiority and desire to teach the Aussies a lesson, to remind them of their place, so to speak, but also imperial arrogance towards a colony. Ironically, Jardine's main weapon against the Australians was Harold Larwood. Larwood was a working class person who had actually been a miner. Cricket for him had been an avenue for social and economic advancement. That he was bowling to other 'blokes' like himself only underlined how much the Australians had internalised the contempt of the British for them. Larwood's career only serves to emphasise his own tragedy and isolation. He chose to settle down in Australia though he had been hated so fiercely there.

Jardine, too, was an interesting figure. Disliked by his opponents and abhorred by Australians, he was nevertheless a daringly innovative captain who inspired fierce loyalty in his teammates. He was also a good defensive batsman, especially against pace bowling. In the following season, when the West Indian pace bowlers adopted the same strategy against him, he made a courageous 137, though battered and bruised. Nicknamed the "Iron Duke," aristocratic in his manners and often aloof to the point of being arrogant, Jardine was known to be a thorough gentleman. Ironically, Jardine himself had a colonial past. Though integrated completely into the English ruling classes, he was of Scottish descent and had actually been born in Malabar Hill, Bombay. When he led the MCC against India later in 1933-1934, he never used bodyline bowling against Indian batsmen. In fact, he annoyed the British authorities by mixing freely with Indians. He retired from first class cricket after the third test in Madras. It

is curious that Jardine treated Australians with contempt but was sympathetic to the Indians.

In "The need to have inferiors and enemies," Nandy cites the bodyline series to brace his argument that Australian attitudes to the Aborigines and Asians stem from their own inferiority vis à vis the British. To put it simply, the British treated them badly, so they needed to have their own inferiors in order to feel a bit like the British:

> White Australia had to learn to despise the browns and the yellows of Asia and Australia because it itself was despised and the contempt had been internalised.... Official Australia *has* to try to share the white man's civilising mission because that is very nearly its only means of gatecrashing into the Anglo-Saxon world as an equal partner (11).

Hence, Australia's participation in every major war has been on the side of the dominant power - the two World Wars, South Korea, Vietnam, and even the Gulf War.

The fissures and contradictions in Australian self-perception arising from its ambivalent relationship with the colonialist centre are thus magnified and refracted in the manner in which it treats its 'Others.' As Bob Hodge and Vijay Mishra show so clearly in *Dark Side of the Dream*, Australian claims to greatness and nationhood, ostensibly founded on their break with colonialist Britain, are at best facile, if not downright suspect:

> On the contrary we see the culture and its literature as still determined massively by its complicity with an imperialist enterprise, coexisting in a necessary but compromised symbiosis with moments and forces of subversion and resistance from within the society (x).

What is required, in other words, is to distinguish between a complicit and a resistant postcolonialism, a difference that seems to be elided in works such as *The Empire Writes Back*. Settler colonies, like

Australia, not only share a complex relationship with their imperial progenitors, but also structural features. Each colony, as a fragment in a metropolitan complex, is a part of a larger colonial system, though at times at odds against it. So even as Australia resists Britain, defining its cultural and political independence from it and thus asserting its national identity, it also serves, in its own way, not only as an agent of colonialism but as a minor colonising power in its own right. The latter aspect of Australia becomes especially obvious in its treatment of Aborigines, and I maintain, Asians. The methods of 'Othering' follow classic imperialistic patterns. Hodge and Mishra assert that Australia's own imperialism remains unacknowledged because it cannot be legitimately accommodated to the national myth (xiii). The result, therefore, is a sort of "fissure" or "contradiction," if not schizophrenia, in the Australian psyche: the official notion of the self as shaped by egalitarian and working class ideology versus the imperial compulsions and collusions, both at home and abroad. Australia, as a postcolonial nation, demands both autonomy and dependence, both resistance to imperialism and reconciliation with it. Older dispossession of the Aborigines is thus replaced or substituted by new marginalisation of minorities and immigrants while the claims of Australian fair play and democracy are simultaneously advanced.

The insights of political psychologists like Nandy and social critics like Hodge and Mishra are supported by the considerable volume of literature on Australia's perceptions of Asia. It is these perceptions which may be considered as forming the pre-history of the broader issue of Australia-Asia relations, and are still useful in understanding the mutual ambivalence between the two. Among the best of these studies is David Walker's *Anxious Nation: Australia and the Rise of Asia, 1850-1939*. Walker goes to great lengths to show the enormous fear and paranoia that characterised early Australian attitudes to Asia. This fear and paranoia is found in the whole genre of "invasion narratives," notable among which is William Lane's *White or Yellow: A Story of the Race War of AD 1908*. In this book China is the enemy whereas in *The Coloured Conquest* by Rata (R.T. Roydhouse) it is Japan that is demonised (also see Lepervanche; Waddell et. al).

That is why it is all the more instructive, if not ironic, that a few years ago, Stephen FitzGerald asked *Is Australia an Asian Country?* in his eponymous publication. Though the question was rhetorical, it did raise important issues concerning not just the identity and self-perception of but also the nature of the Asian influence on Australia. The simple answer to the question, at least for the present, is no. But the more complex answer has to do not only with Australia's proximity to Asia, but with the inevitable impact of the larger continent's culture and economy upon Australia. FitzGerald argues that in the world to come Asia, especially China, will have a dominant role to play in the region. Hence, Australia needs to be more "Asia-literate," to position itself better to take advantage of the changes that are inevitable, instead of relying merely on its colonial past and proximity with the Western powers. FitzGerald's book was welcomed by some but met with a deep hostility by others. That the paranoia and fear of an Asian invasion still remain is evident in literature emanating from the ultra-right and other nationalist organisations. In "The Asianisation of Australia: An Exposé of the Asian Future Being Forced upon Australia," posted on the web, the unnamed authors cite experts to prove that that their fear is not unfounded:

> What does the future hold for our nation? Australia's most respected demographic expert, Charles Price, has already published his projections: 'the year 2020 would see some 2.7 million persons of unmixed Asian origin and about 3.9 million persons of part Asian ancestry; a Total Descent figure of 6.6 million persons of whole or part Asian origin; that is, 26.7% of the total Australian population.' So, it is expected that in just over 20 years, over a quarter of Australia's population will be of Asian origin!!!

The article goes on to argue how this policy of favouring the Asianisation of Australia is not only misguided but also fraudulent. Luckily, such views constitute a small fringe of Australian society; this

particular website recorded only 7401 hits from 26th October 2000 to 10th September 2001. FitzGerald's book, therefore, raises a question that cannot be answered easily. Is Australia an Asian country? At present, probably not, but in the future, more and more likely. This situation is met by contradictory responses in Australia and further emphasises Australia's ambivalence towards Asia. Not the least of the problems is what constitutes "Asia" in the Australian imaginary. In all likelihood, as the material that I have cited shows, "South Asia" does not have a well-defined place in the Australian mentality; by "Asia" is invariably meant Southeast Asia and China. This confusion of what Asia means only adds to the ambivalence that I have been describing.

Of course, it is far from my purpose to suggest that these fissures or contradictions are peculiar to Australia, though they may indeed have a special Australian manifestation. The fact is that all nation states are built upon such contradictions and schizoid tendencies. Indeed, the modern project itself, of which the nation is just part, is itself ridden with such paradoxes and fault lines. What is more, the diasporan or the immigrant may not be entirely innocent of such ambivalences himself. He or she may simultaneously claim equality under the general dispensation of democracy while also invoking the contrary principle, seeking and securing special privileges by capitalising on his or her difference. If Hodge and Mishra characterise the typical Australian as a figure who "masks an unlimited ambiguity under his excessive simplicities" (xvi), I would argue that the diasporan immigrant also hides a complex ambiguity of privilege and victimhood under the mask of straightforward oppression or deprivation.

## Asian Accounts of Australia

The literary output of South Asian Australians is neither vast nor especially impressive, at least for now; the secondary material is equally scanty. The best known writers can be counted on the fingers of two hands - an illustrative list (in alphabetical order) would include Mena Abdullah, Chitra Fernando, Yasmine Gooneratne, Adib Khan,

Chandani Lokuge, Ernest MacIntyre, Christine Mangala and Satendra Pratap Nandan. Perhaps a few others might also be added, but the list is still small. My purpose here is not to offer a detailed analysis of these authors or their texts but to assess this body of work so as to detect its shape, direction and quality. I am especially interested in understanding South Asian attitudes to Australia as are evident in these writings. One of the most curious components of this diaspora, which I shall not engage with, is the large Anglo-Indian community. It is still uncertain if a distinct body of writing by this community may be identified. More likely, both the community and its writers might display a willingness to integrate themselves into the dominant, White Australian majority (Moore). It is my conjecture that there is little effort on their part to retain a distinct South Asian identity in the larger Australian social mix. There is also some literature in languages other than English, such as Sinhala or Tamil, but I shall not be looking at that either. My method here is to select one text from each of the two distinct phases of this writing to identify patterns of diasporic consciousness in this literature, especially as they pertain to perceptions of Australia. My choice of these two texts is not entirely arbitrary. Both are texts by women and therefore offer a sense of double dispersal; both are also stories of growing up, though in different ways. But more importantly, both represent the complexities of the diasporic experience, its refusal to yield to simple formulas of explanation or understanding.

Before actually discussing these texts, it might be interesting, if not instructive, to propose a periodisation. In the first instance, Indians first impinged themselves on the Australian psyche during the Great Revolt of 1857-58, when gory reports of heathens slaughtering Englishmen, raping their wives and murdering their children were printed daily in all Australian newspapers (D'Cruz 1993). Later South Asians arrived in person. There are various accounts of the first South Asians in Australia. According to one version, there were Indian camel drivers in Australia from 1860, though they were all called "Afghans." There were also Indian, mostly Punjabi, farmers in Queensland and New South Wales since the first decades of the

twentieth century. According to one theory these Punjabis came to Australia about the same time that they went to Canada, around 1907. Apparently the regiment that was destined for Canada actually went via Australia. When they returned to India, they brought back stories of unlimited stretches of land waiting to be farmed and settled in two continents. Several of these early immigrants, who came to be known as Afghans, were actually Indians. The large stock of wild camels in Australia has in fact descended from Indian camels brought by these early farmers and traders. Even the number of these first South Asian immigrants is very uncertain. In the early decades of the twentieth century, it is estimated to be anywhere from 100 to 7000 (Walker 36; Awasthi and Chandra). This early period, which may be considered to last right up to the 1960s, may better be characterised by orature rather than literature.

The next phase may be said to begin in the late 1950s or early 1960s and last well into the 1980s, before the recent burst of South Asian creativity in Australia. This is what I would call the "quiet" phase, to borrow a phrase from Paul Sharrad's excellent essay on Mena Abdullah (252). The contemporary phase, however, will give rise to a subsequent one in which really significant writing is likely to emerge. It is tempting to suggest a major shift or progression from the quiet to the contemporary phase; for instance, we could make a plausible case for considering the quiet phase to be basically assimilationist, whereas the contemporary phase begins to show signs of a more openly critical engagement with Australia. I intend to show that any such simplification runs the risk of being a falsification.

The most obvious candidate for a representative text of the quiet phase is Mena Abdullah's *The Time of the Peacock*. Abdullah's stories started appearing in periodicals as early as 1953. They were first collected in book form in 1965, before the Aborigines got their vote or before multiculturalism became an official policy in Australia. The manner in which the book was reviewed shows that it met with a largely positive, if condescending, reception. The intriguing thing about the book was that it was published as jointly authored by

Abdullah and Ray Matthews, though many of the stories were first published individually as Abdullah's. Matthews was a reasonably well known poet and journalist of the period. The extent to which he co-authored or contributed to the stories needs to be examined. This requires a comparison of the original manuscripts and the various versions of the stories until they appear in book form under the joint authorship. My conjecture is that like the first slave narratives which always appeared with several authenticating documents by white writers, Abdullah's early diasporan text in Australia also needed a similar method of legitimisation and validation. As a strategy to gain entry into a dominant culture, it had to disguise itself and also to mask its own radical difference. At any rate, under their jointly authored version, the stories did very well indeed, even being prescribed as school texts, presumably because they showed how well immigrants behave when they come to a new country.

Sharrad shows how, to all appearances, this is a text of collusion and conformity. A somewhat simpleminded postcolonialist reading would regard the book merely as "an old-fashioned work collaborating uncritically with the white settler nationalist project" (253). The naïve child narrator, according to such a reading, enables "the white adult reader to feel benignly condescending towards all kinds of difference represented" (253). However, such a facile reading would do injustice to the complexity of the narrative. As Sharrad shows:

> Identity remains very much a conflictual and central issue across *Time of the Peacock* in ways that can be read productively from a contemporary viewpoint. If it is not stridently oppositional, it is nonetheless, not simply or passively consenting to assimilation. The co-authorship, for example, can be read not as capitulation to the mainstream so much as a strategic means of intervention into it and a resistance to exclusivist notions of ethnicity. The troubled intersections of national, ethnic, linguistic, religious, class and gender identities fragment homogenising essentialist constructions (253).

As the conclusion of the story "Mirbani" demonstrates, the diasporic space is neither India nor Australia, though it has strong connections with both:

> 'It is not India,' said Father.
> 'And it is not the Punjab,' said Uncle Seyed.
> 'It is just us,' said Ama
> (Abdullah and Mathews 31).

Invoking Homi K. Bhabha, Sharrad calls this third space "untranslatable" because it is not a simple re-rendering of the South Asian home in the transplanted space of the Australian nation, but a secret time, the time of the peacock, that signifies private experiences and illuminations. *The Time of the Peacock*, then, is not merely a straightforward prescription for assimilation, offered through the device of a child narrator, that recommends how immigrants should leave their old cultures behind and adjust themselves to their new environment. It suggests, rather, a more complex engagement with a new land that calls into question inherited values and cultural mores. In the resultant conflicts and tensions, characters learn how to grow and cope with the complexities of a diasporic existence. I would, however, admit that the dominant culture of the host country is not interrogated as consistently or rigorously as that of the homeland.

Contrarily, in the contemporary phase of South Asian Australian literature, the adopted or host country also comes in for criticism. In one of the most eloquent and moving accounts of this predicament, Chandani Lokuge in her first novel, *If the Moon Smiled*, shows the isolation, alienation and loneliness of her female protagonist, Manthri, as she negotiates the difficult journey from Sri Lanka to Australia. In this novel it is as if Nimmi, Mena Abdullah's child protagonist in *The Time of the Peacock*, has grown up. Not only for reasons of symmetry do I choose texts by women writers as representative of the two periods, but because the experience of expatriation is perhaps unpacked with much greater poignancy by women writers. In Manthri's case, it is literally a double expatriation.

First she has to leave the safe, secure and idyllic home of her father, the place of her artless fantasies for self-fulfilment, a green and innocent world, to go to her husband's home. Her husband, Mahendra, on utterly flimsy grounds, suspects her of infidelity, or should I say, "impurity." He thinks that she is not a virgin because the white bed sheet remains unstained; she has not bled on their wedding night as he expects a virgin to. Her crime in her husband's eyes is severe because she has not been faithful to her husband-to-be. Manthri, though blameless, feels guilty partly because on her wedding night she has fantasised making love to the handsome and virile Thilakasiri, a farmhand who works on her father's estate. The unstained bed sheet, crumpled but utterly white, continues to haunt Manthri's marriage, even when she and her husband immigrate to Australia. This journey symbolises her second expatriation. First she has left her father's home; now she has left her fatherland.

Manthri's passivity and propensity to suffer stoically may be attributed to her traditional upbringing. The weight of the ancient Buddhist traditions combined with centuries of patriarchy makes her more acted upon than acting. Several rites of purification and penance have marked even her first menstruation in her transition from girlhood to womanhood. Every such rite of passage comes with its own trials and traumas. If marriage brings her her husband's continual coldness and disapproval, motherhood brings her a disobedient and delinquent son. If Devake is unable to live up to his father's expectations, Nelum, the daughter, who is a brilliant student, also rebels. Refusing to marry the "boy" chosen for her by her father, she runs away from home. Shattered, Manthri returns to her father and to Sri Lanka, even teaches in a school for some time, trying to recover. However, she has to return to Australia. What choices does she have? Adultery? A furtive, but passionate relationship, as dangerous as it is alluring? Unable to do even that, unhappy and distraught, she suffers a nervous breakdown and has to be institutionalised. Her fate always to be in the hands of others, she seems like a doomed creature without choices. Despite its lyrical passages and evocative prose, Lokuge's novel paints a very grim picture of Manthri's life.

Moving back and forth between Sri Lanka and Australia, the novel grounds the diasporan experience in older cycles of karma, dukkha and transmigration. After years in Australia, when Manthri returns to Sri Lanka she finds a country under siege:

> Home at last. To set foot on Lankan soil. Each time I come back, I know I have been away too long. It is a tranquil night. I walk the short distance to the terminal. The security is frightening. I have to avoid walking into a bayonet. They all seem pointed at me (153).

The tropical paradise of her childhood has been turned into an army camp bristling with guns. It is here that Nelum runs away the night before her arranged marriage to an eligible and upper caste groom. Home, as it used to be, offers no solace to Manthri. Her return to Australia is not much better:

> I face Australia once more. Like the first time, in the whitening dawn. But alone. The breeze fondles my neck and stiffens it. I pull the collar of my overcoat tightly across my body. My knees seem encased in ice. I seem to be losing control of my legs. I cling to my trolley (190).

The bayonets of the army are here replaced by the icy chill, the numbness of abandonment and isolation. It is not as if Mahendra, the husband, is much better off in the end. After Manthri has been hospitalised and both children gone from their home, he finds himself lost and disoriented: "He pauses now and then, feeling frail and grey," but "he will not admit to loneliness" (204). What is worse, despite all the years that have passed, "He has not forgiven himself, nor her." Unforgiving, unforgiven, he lives in his own kind of hell.

The story that Lakuge's novel tells is one of disintegration and dispersal, not of the movement from one home to another. Once the homeland is lost, it cannot be retrieved, not just because no return to the past is possible, but also because the homeland itself is war-torn. The parents who represented solidity and solace for Manthri are now old and weak; the expensive Pajero in which she is picked up from

the airport to be taken to their country estate cannot protect either Manthri or her family from the ravages of time. Australia, despite its prosperity and opportunities, does not give Manthri the freedom to develop a new self. Instead, its relentless pressures shatter the fragile unity of her beleaguered nuclear family. Both the children grow up and drift away. The icy barrier between the husband and the wife neither melts nor is it overcome. Both end up isolated and empty.

To say the least, attitudes to both the homeland and to Australia are ambivalent in this novel. Both countries and systems come under criticism for different reasons. The rigid and hidebound traditions of Sri Lanka are seen to constrict lives and limit human happiness, just as independence and individuality of modern Australia draw people apart and render them isolated. The novel does not offer any solutions, but instead shows characters to be severely handicapped in what they can do to obtain their own happiness. Neither Manthri's passivity nor Mahendra's assertiveness saves either of them from the existential pain and suffering that seems to be their fate. Their move from Sri Lanka to Australia, in this sense, cannot be considered a progression or even an evolution from one state to another, but a transition that does not reduce their susceptibility to emotional and psychic distress. The void and futility at the heart of life's journeys is highlighted in a poignant but wordless exchange between Manthri and her mother-in-law. The latter has lost her son for no reason because Manthri has not gained a husband:

> But how can there by such easy solutions? Her last words, so swollen with unspoken accusations, hurl me into silence: 'It is too late, I think, Manthri, to make amends. I thought that by crossing the seas he would begin a new life. So I gave him my blessings. But how can we cross the chasm that estranges us from ourselves?' (126).

In the context of the novel, the estrangement of diaspora, the sorrow of the passage across the black water, is only a part of the larger alienation of human beings from themselves. Certainly, traditions, customs, practices, the false expectations and values that people

adhere to, the hardness and coldness of hearts, the pressures of living in a new country, the clash of the new and the old worlds, the independence and self-assertiveness of children - all contribute to this essential self-estrangement. But the sense of doom seems to run deeper and is irreducible. Speckled with fleeting passages of beauty though it may be, the novel is elegiac in tone, moving forwards into an inexorable gloom.

## Part II: South Asian Canada

In this section of my paper I look for ways of mapping the South Asian Canadian attitudes to the homeland. In his essay "Diasporas and Multiculturalism," Victor Ramraj refers to two key types of diasporas: traditionalist and assimilationist (217). The former retains its separate identity, while the latter gradually merges with the mainstream of the host country and, eventually, ceases to regard itself as a diaspora. These two positions are closely related to the host country's own attitude to the diaspora. Milton Israel, citing Christopher Bagely's work, outlines the types of responses that mark the receiving society's response to South Asian immigrants: "1) Ethnocentric and opposed to their culture, values and lifestyle; 2) accommodating and understanding of the context of cultural transfer" (10). He also notes two corresponding models of the South Asian immigrant response: "the effort to maintain ties with the motherland; and acculturation and adaptation to the host society" (10-11). In the South Asian experience in Canada, we find both attitudes present through a complex layering. It is this complexity that I propose to map, suggesting a broad attitudinal patterning for each of its layers.

Uma Parmeswaran in "Ganga in Assiniboine: Prospects for Indo-Canadian Literature" identifies four phases of the immigrant experience to Canada. First is the experience of encountering the "vastness and harshness of the Canadian landscape," which she believes the South Asians avoided totally because they largely went to cities (83). Second, she names "the struggle of the immigrants to establish themselves in their own esteem and in society" (83).

Again, Parmeswaran believes that South Asians have not achieved this totally because, despite being settled financially, they still feel unsettled (84). Third, the second-generation Canadians of South Asian origin "realize that home is here, not elsewhere" (85). Fourth, she claims "the affirmation that home is here but 'here' is not exclusively English … but a place where one can be oneself, assimilating if one is comfortable doing so, being different if one chooses to be so" (85). That is, there are Canadians who write in Punjabi, Gujarati or English, yet almost none of them have produced works set in Canada.

In a later essay, "Literature of the Indian Diaspora in Canada: An Overview," Parmeswaran offers another chronological description of the South Asian diaspora in general and then applies that framework to Canada. She speaks of "two very distinct waves of emigration," one which took place during the colonial period, and the other after independence. The first wave consists of three phases: indentured labourers, traders and educated people. The first phase of the first wave does not apply to Canada where no indentured labourers came. Instead, farmers from Punjab, hearing accounts of cheap virgin land from Sikh soldiers passing through Canada, arrived in the first decade of the twentieth century (7). However, further immigration was blocked after the infamous *Komagatu Maru* incident of 1914. The second wave, starting in the early 1950s, is also divided into phases, each a decade long. The 1960s "may be called the gold rush period" (6); the 1970s are dubbed the reactionary decade; the 1980s "brought into the open the racism that till then had been latent and covert" (7). While Parmeswaran does not predict what the 1990s would be like, they might be called the decade of multiculturalism.

While I find Parmeswaran's work extremely useful, I think it is simpler to conceive of the South Asian diaspora in Canada in four distinct layers, each with its own literature. The first consists of the five thousand immigrants who came to Canada from 1905-1908 and their descendents. The literature of this group was, until recently, mostly oral and unrecorded. The early texts of this group are not

easily available. The second group consists of Indo-Caribbean and Indo-African immigrants. Their forefathers had already left India as a part of the old, colonial diaspora of the nineteenth century and early twentieth century. More recently, they moved farther north west, from Africa or the Caribbean, to Canada. A good number of the well-known South Asian Canadian writers, including Neil Bissoondath, Cyril Dabydeen, Ramabai Espinet, Reshad Gool (Ved Devajee) Arnold Itwaru, Ismith Khan, Harold Sonny Ladoo, Farida Karodia, Sam Selvon and M.G.Vassanji, belong to this group. The third group consists of those who have come to Canada directly from the sub-continent after 1960. This group is made up mostly of highly educated, professional, upwardly mobile workers and professionals. Writers like Anita Rau Badami, Himani Bannerji, Rana Bose, Saros Cowasjee, Rienzi Cruz, Lakshmi Gill, Surjeet Kalsey, Rohinton Mistry, Bharati Mukherjee (the Canadian phase, that is), Suniti Namjoshi, Uma Parmeswaran, Balachandra Rajan, Ajmer Rode, Suwanda Sugunasiri and others belong to this group. What is interesting is that this group may be further sub-divided into two categories by their choice of language. The dominant category includes those who write in English, the language of international power and prosperity. However, in recent years, a body of rich literature in Punjabi and Hindi has also taken root in Canada. There is, thus, a new *vernacular* tradition in diasporic literature that demands our attention. Finally, there is a fourth group which includes the descendants of those who may belong to any of the three mentioned above. These are writers born and brought up in Canada. Their links with India are at best tenuous and tentative. Yet, culturally, they form a distinct voice within multicultural Canada.

What kind of generalisations might possibly be made about these four distinct layers or groups within the South Asian diaspora? Three of these four groups may be defined more effectively by the setting of most of their writings. The second group consisting of Indo-Caribbean and Indo-African writers depict what we could call an "in-Canada" experience. "West Indian Writing in Canada," Ramraj observes, "is largely *immigrant writing*, preoccupied with the complexities,

contradictions and ambivalences associated with leaving one society and adjusting to another" (102). In the Canadian context, this is usually an experience of the hostility and racism encountered by the immigrant, and the transition from the older diasporic homeland to the new, northern home in Canada. These writers may take either a traditionalist or an assimilationist stance, or a retreatist versus integrationist stance, but I would still consider their work as moving away from the homeland *towards* Canada. The fourth group, too, writes mostly about the Canadian experience; in fact, their stance is not only *towards* Canada, but *within* Canada. There is no other homeland for them to compare their present location with; Canada is the only homeland they know. Yet their heritage distinguishes them from 'unmarked' or default Canadians. Their texts attempt to explore the special challenges and problems of their Canadian, albeit hyphenated, identities.

The third layer or group of South Asian immigrants, however, writes mostly about India or the subcontinent. In her highly perceptive essay, "Ganga in the Assiniboine," Uma Parmeswaran citing Suwanda Sugunasiri's survey of South Asian Canadian writers, observes:

> Surjeet Kalsey, of Vancouver, has compiled the Panjabi [sic] section of the study. She lists approximately 75 poets, 30 short-story writers, and a few novelists and playwrights. However, except for rare pieces, like a drama on the *Komagata Maru* episode, produced in 1979, these writers seem to have altogether eschewed the Canadian setting. Pragna Enros's compilation of Gujarati writing shows the same trend (85).

This is also true of those who write in English. No writer has produced, to my knowledge, a major work set in Canada. So the great Canadian or millennial novel, one that will do justice to the totality of the Canadian, multicultural experience is yet to be written by a South Asian Canadian writer.

The fact that this group of Indo-Canadian writers keep going back to India for their fictional material might suggest that they are moving

away from Canada, towards India or the homeland, in the classic, Jewish sense of the diaspora. However, I am not sure this is the case. If one considers Rohinton Mistry, perhaps the most gifted and respected of this group, one notices that his two novels *Such a Long Journey* and *A Fine Balance* are elegiac, not nostalgic in tone. They do not celebrate the homeland but mourn its relentless and innumerable atrocities and tragedies. What they actually enact is a farewell to India, not a passage to India. In that sense, despite what such texts appear to be, they in fact end up demonstrating a self-legitimising logic of leaving the homeland behind and, therefore, at least indirectly, of embracing the new diasporic home. These texts justify, in subtle and indirect ways, the immigrant writers' subject position and the cultural choices that such a position entails. However, I would not like to simplify the issue of the location of culture by implying that place of residence is identical to a cultural position or that the politics of culture is solely determined by the place of residence. What is more likely is that instead of worshipping the leftovers and relics of a now inaccessible homeland as the old diaspora of indentured labourers did, the new diaspora of international Indian English writers live close to their market, in the comforts of the suburbia of advanced capital, but draw their raw material from the inexhaustible imaginative resources of that messy and disorderly subcontinent that is India.

Thus, what seems to be a longing for the homeland is actually a critique of the host country, a plea for better terms of living and assimilation. The speaker in Lakshmi Gill's poem "Out of Canada" complains that she cannot die here in Canada and wishes, instead, to "sit at the foothills of the Himalayas/ and leave hard Canada for the hardy Canadians":

> I cannot die here, on the streets
> Of Moncton, I tell myself over and over -
> people wouldn't know where to send my body.
> I cannot die here in this country
> Where would I be buried? (50).

However, to my mind, the longing that the poem expresses is actually a veiled plea for belonging to a more receptive, friendly, equitable, and less racist, alienating or strange Canada, where at the end of it all, her bones can find not just a place to rest, but the peace that comes with homecoming.

In a sense, the poem illustrates how diasporic women in general experience multiple repression as a function of what Israel calls "negative status arising from race, culture, gender and class": "For the Indo-Canadian woman, lacking the traditional support system, the result is often isolation and alienation" (11). Citing the work of Josephine Naidoo, he mentions "self-paced acculturation" as the strategy adopted by Indian women. Canada offers "cultural self-determination" and "culture-based creativity" while forcing immigrants to conform to general societal norms (11-12). Therefore, what Gill's speaker will eventually do is to seek such "self-paced acculturation" to get used to living and, indeed, dying in Canada.

In this respect, these novels are part of a larger process of moving away from the homeland towards the host country. In a descriptive scheme designed as early as 1965, Johan D. Speckerman talks of the following five phases of diasporic experience:

> (1) immigration (causing social disarray and anomie); (2) acculturation (a reorientation of traditional institutions and the adoption of new ones); (3) establishment (growth in numbers, residential footing and economic security); (4) incorporation (increased urban social patterns and the rise of a middle class); and (5) accelerated development (including greater occupational mobility, educational attainment, and political representation) (cited in Clarke et al 3).

To put it differently, Mistry's winning the Governor-General's medal and other honours in Canadian society for his work on India suggests not just the rewards of writing novels which are critical of homelands but do not threaten the host country. It also indicates Mistry's effort to

say farewell to India and to accelerate his development as a Canadian citizen.

Ultimately, however, the diasporic experience need not be reduced to either a simple-minded rejection of the homeland and acceptance of the home country, or vice-versa. What happens, especially to the writers in the third category, is a more complex process of confluence. Akin to what Homi Bhabha calls "hybridization," this process is not a superimposition of one culture on the other, nor is it a facile transplantation. As Parmeswarn puts it in "Ganga in the Assiniboine: Prospects for Indo-Canadian Literature:"

> Every immigrant transplants part of his native land
> to the new country, and the transplant may be said to
> have taken root once the immigrant figuratively sees his
> native river in the river that runs in his adopted place;
> not Ganga *as* the Assiniboine or the Assiniboine as
> the Ganga, both of which imply a simple transference
> or substitution, but Ganga *in* the Assiniboine, which
> implies a flowing into, a merger that enriches the river.
> The confluence of any two rivers is sacred for the Hindu
> ethos, perhaps because it is symbolic of this enrichment.
> In the literary context of the immigrant experience this
> image has an added dimension. At the confluence, the
> rivers are distinct, and one can see the seam of the two
> separate streams as they join (79-80).

Earlier, in the summer of 2000, I actually stood with Parmeswarn at such a confluence of the Assiniboine and Red rivers in Winnipeg, the city where she has lived for the last thirty-five years. She pointed to the merging streams and said, "Look, can you see that the two rivers have different colours?" When I watched carefully, I noticed that she was right. One was mud red, while the other looked a greenish gray. I thought that was an apt metaphor for the Indo-Canadian experience; it was impossible to determine where the one ended and the other began.

This third group of South Asian Canadian writers are in the privileged position of actually seeing the distinct strands of their lives merge to create a new type of culture. Perhaps their children, the writers who belong to the fourth layer, do not have this privilege. To them is given a different task, of disentangling or describing the features of their merged or hyphenated identities. It is only this third group that have access to the Indian and the Canadian, both separately *and* together.

## Conclusion

I have compared two sets of South Asian diasporic texts, one from Australia and the other from Canada, so as to show both their similarities and differences. The Australian texts, fewer in number as they are, fall into essentially two periods or categories: the early or naïve phase and the contemporary phase. The Canadian texts, on the other hand, show four distinct phases, but are more readily divided by whether their works are set in India or in Canada. While most of the Indo-Caribbean and Indo-African Canadian writers address the 'in Canada' experience, the post-1960 immigrants who have come directly to Canada from India seem to hark back to their Indian roots for literary raw material. Yet this apparent harking back to the mother country, India, actually camouflages the drive towards Canada. Despite these differences, both sets of texts display their special kinds of ambiguity and ambivalence, both in their identity politics and in their attitudes to the homeland/adopted country.

It will not suffice, however, to end this paper by leaving unchallenged the notion of ambivalence itself. Clearly, 'ambivalence' as the ubiquitous/generic/global diasporic response to both homelands and countries of residence is unsatisfactory. Taking recourse in a generalised sense of ambivalence to explain both Australian and Canadian attitudes to South Asia and South Asian diasporic attitudes to Australia and Canada would, thus, be tantamount to substituting older false clarities with newer, perhaps equally false, indeterminacies. Instead, I propose to sketch, albeit briefly, the specificities of these ambivalences.

As I have already suggested, both kinds of ambivalence - what the host country feels towards its 'Others' and what the South Asian diaspora feels for the host country - have a deep connection with the crisis of nation and nationality. In Australia's case, it had to do with how to reconcile an imperial legacy of oppression with its own racist response to Aborigines and immigrants, while in Canada's case there is a similar history of oppression of the first nations and of coloured immigrants. In his new book *Ornamentalism*, David Cannadine argues that it was class, not race, that drove the British empire. Revolted by the breakdown of the class system in England, British ruling classes sought to create an idealised world of class hierarchy in their empire. However, I believe that in effect class and race are intertwined. In the case of Australia, the two hierarchies support one another. As the British looked down upon the Australians, the Australians looked down upon the immigrants. Australian resistance to and collaboration with the imperial project served the needs of Australian nationalism and identity-formation. In a way, it was an example of an Australian primordialism that served to legitimise the nation state. Later, the initial paranoia gave way to an acceptance of multiculturalism as Australia attempted to reconcile itself to its racist past, and to fashion a new future. One could make a similar argument for Canada substituting Britain in the later years by the United States of America.

The ambivalence of the South Asian diaspora in these countries is also linked to the crisis of nationalism, but from the other, post-national end, as it were. As deterritorialised and dislocated communities, diasporas have a special need to forge their own sense of location wherever they are. While older diasporas fetishised the homeland, the new diasporas commodify it. This difference is easily seen when we compare the work of M. G. Vassanji and Rohinton Mistry. That is why I have argued that although Indo-Canadian writers seem to go back almost compulsively to an India they have bid farewell, their real target or focus is Canada. These 'passages to India' are actually 'away-from-India and toward Canada' narratives. I have tried to illustrate this movement in the works of writers like Rohinton Mistry.

In the case of the Indo-Australian texts a clear pattern is yet to emerge, although I definitely sense a pervasive and unresolved biculturalism in most of them. Many of the authors resort to a generational divide or progression to resolve the contrary pulls of the homeland and country of residence. On both sides, then, there is a resistance and reconciliation at work, even if the resistance is vigorous and the reconciliation reluctant.

The two Australian texts that I have chosen illustrate, in other words, two different kinds of ambivalence. Each of them tries to create its own unique sense of locality in the face of the experience of displacement. Abdullah's stories are less threatening because they succeed in creating a sense of neighbourhood as a concrete, material reality in the new country, Australia. I use the word neighbourhood as an actual and situated community, in a definite spatial context, in contrast to 'virtual' communities of various kinds. Lokuge's book, on the other hand, illustrates what Appadurai has termed the "growing disjuncture between territory, subjectivity, and collective social movement" (189). In that sense, locality does lose its "ontological moorings" in *If the Moon Smiled*, becoming instead, inverted and introverted. It is no longer spatial and social, but assumes a complex phenomenological dimension, mediated through the anguished inscape of Manthri's mind. None of the relief of a virtual neighbourhood enabled and produced through Internet or electronic media is offered here, nor solace in larger projects of transnational identity and solidarity, but only the solitude and anomie of subjectivities under stress. There is no release here into a postmodern free play where the self can gloriously and continuously reinvent itself depending on the context and contingency. Instead, we see only withdrawal and breakdown.

Whether the diasporic passage is successful, as in Abdullah's text, or unsuccessful, as in Lokuge's work, its trajectory is marked by a unique provocation to produce new localities. That these localities cannot be easily absorbed or subsumed by the existing nation state, whether of the homeland or the host country, is obvious. In fact, neither of

the two texts is typical in this regard of the literature of the South Asian diaspora in Australia. If anything, each is rather unusual and challenging. Yet I have made a case to consider them representative texts of the two periods of this literature, the earlier quiet period and the more loquacious contemporary one. My purpose has been to show that the experience of diaspora is marked by a series of ambivalences and indeterminacies. It is an interstitial site that is somehow untranslatable either to the dialect of the homeland or the language of the adopted country. Instead, it mirrors the ambivalence that the host country feels towards its minorities and racial 'Others,' even as it interrogates the certitudes and solaces of the irretrievable homeland that it has left behind. It is this tenuousness that gives it its rich ambiguity and complexity. My purpose is not to suggest that all texts of the diaspora are major literary works, but that they certainly point to and promise an area of fertile cultural possibilities.

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**Maggie Pickering**

# Jumping the Fence: Women, Horses and Mobility

 A horse rears up and splits the sky
Calls down thunder and fire
I slide, helpless, crumpled beneath iron feet –
Open myself to blood and dirt;
Earth claims me and stamps me as its own;
Above the sun is blotted out and
I know I am part of this place (Pickering 1999).

And God took a handful of southerly wind, blew his
breath over it and created a horse (Mitchell 69).

In the words of women who wrote of their everyday lives, of their activities and tasks, and of the land that informed their identity, it is easy to overlook the impact of their daily contact with the horse and its influence on the development of their sense of place. That moment of reaching out and touching a horse was often hidden behind a screen of more immediate information. Of the phrase 'saddled the horse,' which appeared so frequently in women's diaries, letters and journals, we are more likely to ask of the woman: 'Where were you going?' or 'Who are you going to see?' or 'How far do you plan to travel?' even 'What are you wearing?' Rarely do we consider what 'saddled the horse' meant to women whose independence and mobility was reliant on their ability to ride. Within the phrase

'saddled the horse' lay the boundaries of a woman's world on the frontiers of Australia and Canada.

To sit upon the back of a horse is a sudden departure from the pedestrian world into a place where one's body's capabilities are extended by the horse upon which one rides. Riding a horse gave women a physical equality with men that they had in no other arena of life.[1] The mobility of the horse and the ability to communicate with the horse regardless of strength or physical prowess negated gender. Being able to ride counterbalanced gender differences between men and women on the land. Riding a horse not only added physical status to a woman, but it served as an equaliser on the frontier (Armitage 1981, 169).

This article looks at the impact of the horse on the lives of women who lived on the frontier in both Australia and Canada. Its focus is on women's relationship to the land and the ways in which their ability to ride transcended the gendered barriers that inhibited women from articulating a strong sense of place with the land upon which they lived. The article is part of a wider work that focuses on women's relationship to place in the New Worlds of Australia and Canada (Pickering 2001). The women represented here have all articulated their sense of belonging through the physical sensation of riding. In comparing women's experience across time and place, it is the physicality of the experience both between rider and horse and rider and the environment that is examined. What emerges are similarities that cross the boundaries of nations in understanding women's responses to the land and the articulation of a sense of place in Canada and Australia.

A horse brings mobility and a power of movement unknown by those who have not felt it. The act of riding has a universality within it that transcends time and space and locates the rider in place. The physical sensations of riding, the interaction between horses and humans are the same today as they were one hundred years ago. The reasons for riding are different, but the motion, the physical experience are the same.

In 1844 Annie Baxter (1816-1905), the wife of a New South Wales grazier, wrote in her journal of altering her husband's pantaloons to ride in them. For Annie the speed and exhilaration of galloping behind the cattle were a release from her unhappy domestic situation: "There is a great excitement in cattle hunting and I glory in it" (Frost 1992, 125). Annie was renowned as a good horsewoman. She often hunted both dingoes and kangaroos, riding out with two or three big dogs, armed with a pistol and riding a "splendid horse." Annie's ability to jump the fence was quite literal. She recorded in her journal that a Mr Black had shown several ladies a fence behind his house and challenged them to jump their horses over it. They all, perhaps prudently, refused. Annie relished her reputation as the one woman who would put her horse at the fence and clear it easily (Frost 1992, 118-119).

For elite nineteenth century women the mobility and sense of place offered by horse riding had to be mediated via the side-saddle.[2] By the late nineteenth century, whether respectable white women rode side-saddle or astride was a hotly debated issue, with discussion focussed on the effect of such a method on women's heath, sexuality and bodies. It is interesting to note that Annie Baxter would ride astride after cattle or out hunting, but when riding in 'public' would always ride side-saddle; in either case she was skillful and proficient. Riding astride was a part of the reconceptualising of women's bodies, movement and clothes that occurred around the end of the nineteenth century. As with the bicycle, riding astride was linked to "images of female emancipation" (Russell 33-35) (Winkworth 105). Riding astride was also taken to be a sexual display, blurring the difference between 'good' and 'bad' women. When a respectable woman rode a horse side-saddle, her legs were covered by her long habit that swept to the line of her boot. When women began to ride astride, though they rode in long divided skirts, the existence of their legs could not be denied. The more overt display of women's legs, especially clad in riding trousers and boots was taken to signify a blurring of distinctions between the sexes and thus a threat to male power.

Hester McClung, who travelled in 1873 in the same area of the Colorado Rockies as the most famous exponent of riding astride, Isabella Bird, wrote of the moment when she first rode astride. (Armitage 1993). Hester, in contrast to the famously independent Isabella, was travelling with her family who had come to the mountains as a health cure for the youngest son. The thirty-year-old Hester travelled in the role of unmarried older sister and was much more dictated to by convention than the radical Isabella Bird or the rebellious Annie Baxter. Hester was shocked when she realised she must ride astride: "It seemed an impossibility at first, but we were encouraged by the refined Mr. M. who said… this was the only safe way" (Armitage 1993, 26). Hester made it clear that she was only encouraged to ride astride by the obviously genteel Mr M. Her record, however, was delightfully free of fear and inhibition. Her words spilled over the reserve of Victorian gentility as she described the empowerment and freedom of movement the experience gave her. The party had travelled up to a spectacular waterfall and river rapids, a round trip of only twelve miles. Hester wrote of their return:

> Our homeward ride was pleasant, not only because of the mountain scenery but also on account of the mere pleasure of the ride…I think that letting a ballot slip through my fingers into the ballot box – that ungraceful, unwomanly act that is to convert us some day into masculine beings – I think that even that will not make me feel more free, more unfettered, in plain language, more man-like than I did that day while galloping on my great black charger (Armitage 1993, 27).

For women on the frontiers of Australia and Canada the ability to ride with confidence and comfort often set the boundaries of the land over which they could move. For those women who mastered the horse or even one horse, a new level of mobility and independence was available. For those who relied on their men to harness a horse and drive them, getting off their property was a matter of chance and

factors outside of their immediate control. To ride gave an opportunity of a connection to the natural world less restricted in its vista, wilder in its outlook and somehow interconnected with the movement, instincts and understanding of the animal being ridden. There was a great divide between women who could and loved to ride and those who never mastered the skill. Monica Hopkins, as a new emigrant to the Canadian West, wrote in 1910 of the isolation faced by women who could not ride or drive:

> Helene and I stayed with Mrs. Morton and Betty. They see so few people … Betty is able to get away occasionally for she has her own saddle horse which she broke in herself – a mean cayuse[3] that neither of her brothers would get on. I am so sorry for Mrs. Morton;…she rarely leaves the place for months on end; in fact, she told me the last time she had been away was when she was down to see us last Christmas (Hopkins 96).

In Australia women faced the same isolation if they could not ride or did not have access to a horse or wheeled vehicle. Henry Lawson's short story, "A Double Buggy at Lahey's Creek," took as its central theme the desire of Mary, Joe Wilson's wife, to have a buggy in which she could drive herself.

> Ever since we were married it had been Mary's great ambition to have a buggy. The house or furniture didn't matter so much – out there in the Bush where we were – but where there were no railways or coaches, and the roads were long and mostly hot and dusty, a buggy was the great thing (Lawson 733).

While driving a horse-drawn vehicle was also an acquired skill it did not match the speed and versatility of riding. Wheeled vehicles were confined to roads and tracks and limited by fences and gates, while a good rider and horse could literally jump the fence. Moreover it was riding which permitted the rider to "become the horse" in a unity of movement (Probyn 41). It was the movement that resulted in a

physical engagement with the land, and the deepening of a sense of place. The women in this article shared a commonality of an investment in the land, be it in an emotional, physical or economic sense. It was an investment expressed in terms of livelihood and occupation. Through their movement, particularly on horseback, they catalogued, observed and captured the elusive essence of the land in their words. Through the physical engagement with the land these women shared a bodily engagement with the world around them that gave birth to a profound sense of the importance of that place in their lives.

Writing, in the form of letters, a journal or diary gave women the room to construct a new view of themselves in relation to the new place in which they lived.[4] Letter-writing served as a way of keeping family and friends in touch with the ever-evolving self. Letters became like a map of the self, providing signposts both for the woman writing and for those reading of her new life (Buss 38). More than an "immigrant's guide," these letters charted the changing consciousness of the New World, "translating a whole new world through the translation of the self" (Buss 49). The horse and women's horsemanship played an important role in this process of translation. The physical movement of riding gave women a space in which they experienced the interconnections between the land, animals and self (Bird 1989, 1998).

This interaction was recorded in the letters of Monica Hopkins (1884-1974) who came to settle in the Canadian West in 1909. Monica came to the Canadian West fresh from the safety of a respectable middle-class life in England. Although she had expressed a love of horses, she did not know how to ride and was unfamiliar with handling horses. Monica was the daughter of a Wesleyan minister and her childhood and education had prepared her for a comfortable, stationary, middle-class existence, and for marriage to a minister or professional. Instead Monica married Billie Hopkins on 25 August 1909 in Leeds County York. She then accompanied him to their small

log cabin on the banks of Fish Creek in the foothills of Alberta, nine miles south-east of the tiny township of Priddis.

The country around Priddis was pretty. It seemed a slightly smaller version of the giant open spaces further south around Pincher Creek and north of Peace River. The hills provided a pocket of protection against that feeling of being naked under the sky that the more exposed prairie gives. The little town was nestled between rolling hills that stretch themselves gradually into the long endless swells of the prairie. When Billie and Monica set off on the final leg of their journey in their new green democrat,[5] it was probable that she had never seen such huge mountains as those that dominated the landscape from every point as they drove out of Calgary. Something of the excitement of such a completely different landscape seeped into Monica's early letters. As they bumped along under that massive sky and felt the power of the wide open spaces, the almost oceanic rolling of the high plains as they ran up against the Rocky Mountains, surely Monica felt a mixture of fear, intimidation and intoxication at the life she had travelled so far to lead.

When Monica sat down and wrote of her journey from England to her husband's ranch south-east of Calgary, she framed her account with details of the weather. Her uncertainty in the face of the land and her lack of skills and materials to cope with it expressed the burden of her alienation. When they got off the train in Calgary, she wrote:

> The rain was coming down in buckets and all the protection I had was a white lace sunshade…it vindicated its existence by keeping me dry in spots as I made my first appearance at 2:30 in the morning of a very wet day (Hopkins 5).

The couple left for the ranch around two in the afternoon and again Monica wrote of feeling out of place, uncertain about how to react. As they drove home across the prairie she related how she caused the horses to bolt by again using her increasingly incongruous sunshade:

The country was open and the sun beat down on us…I
leaned down and fished up my sunshade that was lying
on the floor near my feet. Its pristine glory was already
beginning to fade somewhat, but I opened it and held
it aloft something after the manner of Grannie when
she drove in Hyde Park. Unfortunately, our horses
are not quite as well schooled as hers were, for with a
startled snort away they went, nearly pulling Billie over
the dashboard. I hung on for dear life, still holding the
sunshade over my head. I could hear Billie yelling but
was far too occupied in keeping myself in the democrat
to listen to what he was talking about, until one extra
loud roar reached me, 'Put that damned umbrella down!'
(letter dated 21 September 1909) (Hopkins 6).

As they continued she looked at the last shack on the way out to their
ranch and admitted to herself a vulnerability: "[F]or the first time I
had a funny feeling inside me, not exactly afraid but not quite so sure
of myself. England and all my people did seem so far away" (letter
dated Still September) (Hopkins 7).

Monica's letters give a vivid account of her first two years as she
gradually found her place in the foothills. It is only possible to
guess how Monica touched up these letters, what she expanded and
what she left out. Yet what is more important in understanding her
developing sense of place are the stories she chose to tell and the way
she constructed her changing self through the letters.

The first days spent accompanying Billie out to cut hay on the range
set the boundaries of Monica's world. Her ability to move about in
that world was reliant on her confidence in handling horses. After
meeting several of the neighbouring women Monica was quick to
understand this:

Several of them have ridden over alone, others have
come in all sorts of vehicles and one arrived in a wagon
with a small baby bumping around in an apple box…they
all live so far away and those that do not ride and are

> dependent on their menfolk to take them about evidently
> do not get taken out very much; I've decided that I'm not
> going to be dependent on anyone so I ride nearly every
> day, generally just around the place but I have been out
> on the range alone (Hopkins 17).

For Monica to have independence she had to gain the riding skills necessary to get herself safely about the range, into town or to visit neighbours. Her letters traced a development in her confidence of her place in the new landscape. As she learnt to ride her writing reflected an increasing ease and a sense of belonging to the new land. She soon became skillful enough to be useful in helping bring down the cattle from the mountains, or in the biannual round up of horses from the hills.

The cycles of life on the land acted to dissolve her homesickness and wrapped her in the immediacy of the task at hand. She wrote of turning her hand to anything, from the joy of being skillful enough to ride a good horse out mustering, to the pressing need to sow the potatoes in the garden:

> [Billie] has given me Dolly, his saddle mare, to ride….
> She is lovely to ride, so easy and up on the bit. She can
> turn on a six pence and has nearly had me off a couple
> of times for she knows a great deal more about 'running
> in' horses than I do. Yesterday when we were out and the
> bunch we were after made a break, she seemed to know
> exactly what to do (11 May 1911) (Hopkins 128).

Monica's perception of place was influenced through her ability to ride and thus be involved in the running of the ranch. Without this mobility Monica's experience and her consequent passion for the place she lived would have been very different.

Like Monica, Dr Mary Percy Jackson came to Canada from England having had limited contact with horses. She quickly discovered that the small amount of riding she had done in England for exercise was completely inadequate as preparation for the kind of riding she

needed on the frontier in Canada. Mary, twenty years Monica's junior, was inheritor to the vision of the New Woman. [6] The New Worlds of Australia and Canada were openly promoted as places of opportunity and adventure. For Mary such opportunity and adventure were not to be found in Birmingham. She sought a wider arena for her talents.

In 1929 Mary replied to an advertisement placed in the *British Medical Journal* by the Canadian Ministry of Public Health. For Mary a medical practice on one of the last areas of frontier in Canada held possibilities of both service and adventure. The job advertisement had stated that the ability to ride a horse was considered a distinct advantage. For Mary this in itself was an attraction. So at the age of twenty-five she left Birmingham, a safe job in the hospital, and her family and friends, and travelled to Northern Alberta to the Peace River to be the first doctor in this area.

The Peace River Prairie was high and spare and wild, further north than Edmonton and well within the Arctic Circle. The winters were long and incredibly cold with temperatures regularly reaching below minus forty degrees Celsius. Though Mary arrived in 1929 the harsh land and extreme conditions created a settlement removed from the technological advancements of the post-war years. Mary's district covered 640 square kilometers (250 square miles) according to the government. According to the locals it was upwards of 900 square kilometers (350 square miles). Midwifery and dentistry dominated the medical practice described in the letters. Often it was not the difficulty of the diagnoses or the treatment that was the focus of her narrative but the extreme conditions she faced in reaching her patients. Her transport methods were various and often bizarre. Mostly she rode her own horse and when he was exhausted she borrowed horses. She also rode in cars, a steamboat, wagons, sleighs, dog sleighs and cabooses. [7]

Her letters, written predominantly to her parents between 1929 and 1931, form a diary-like record of her first few years in the savage land of Northern Alberta. The letters map the way the land began to unfold to Mary so that she would never leave this particularly wild

corner of Canada. Unlike Monica, Mary did not rely on the land for her livelihood. Because of the amount of time she spent travelling over it and being alone in the land, she did, however, engage with the world around her in a very physical way. As she rode through the land in all types of weather and all times of the day and night to treat her patients, she perceived the place through the sensory receptor of her body. In her letters, the land and its effect on her portray a profound interaction between herself (her mind, spirit and body) and the world around her.

As Mary's letters progressed there was an observable relationship between her gaining confidence in her riding and beginning to feel comfortable on the land rather than intimidated by it. It was often after an exhilarating ride that Mary wrote very evocatively of the land that she was coming to call home. As she travelled to treat her patients she engaged with the incredible silence of the bush around her. All she could hear was the thud of her horse's hooves, the creak of her saddle and the pulsing immensity of the land she rode through (letter dated 19 September 1929) (Jackson 10).

For Mary the land existed as separate to her income. She had no need to exert any control over it, no need to harness it, nor understand its moods and ways. Her job, however, forced her to experience the land in all types of weather, at all times of the day and night. She was challenged to understand the land. If she did not learn she would never safely negotiate her way through it. In her journeys to and from her shack, in her crisscrossing of the land to treat her patients, Mary experienced nature in a very raw way, and her letters reflected this.

Mary's letters were filled with the physical challenges that came from living in such an extreme environment. She wrote of returning from seeing a patient and taking her hand out of her glove to open the door to her shack and receiving a nasty case of frostbite. Mary was aware of the land at nearly every moment of her life. The land pushed its way toward her, and it was impossible to retreat from it. In the winter the cold was always there. She would go to bed at eleven o'clock at night and get up at four o'clock in the morning to stoke the fire. If she slept

through, she would wake to a frozen world. Her blankets, clothes, bread, and every drop of water in the house would freeze solid until she could get the shack warm enough for it all to thaw.

It is possible to argue that because of Mary's movement over the land as she rode huge distances, she was able to experience something of the essence of the place in which she lived. In living and travelling alone and moving so constantly in a landscape largely free from the transforming hand of European settlement, there was the opportunity to sense something of the magnitude of the land around her. She struggled to convey this in a letter to her parents that captured her feelings of isolation, insignificance, fear, and wonder:

> You can't think how weird it feels at night, living all by myself in this little house. I've got the whole valley to myself. There's not a light to be seen. All around are old burnt-off tree trunks, very white in the moonlight, and the Spruce trees are intensely black against the sky and make a noise like the sea in this wind. The sound of river has almost gone, now it's freezing over. It feels as though Brutus [her dog] and I are utterly isolated in the middle of this immense country. Letter 11 November 1929 (Jackson 122).

Mary's letters trace an expansion of her self in response to the place in which she lived. She found it hard to explain the feeling of space stretching on and on all around her, and how her movement in that space connected her to the natural world. Her perception of place was informed through her riding over the prairie and through her isolated home set in the middle of the prairie.

The physical fact of the horse in the lives of women in the New World was a major determinant of how they responded to and engaged with the land. In Australia, Alice Duncan Kemp wrote of her experience of travel in the Channel Country of South West Queensland in the 1920s on horseback, and touched on this theme of connection to the natural world. Her point was that to move through the land on horseback opened herself, her senses, and mind, to a

deeper engagement with the land around her. Alice also mourned the passing of the opportunity to gain knowledge of the land as travel became dominated by the modern conveniences of cars and planes:

> One of the charms of the outback is the fascination of travel in the open, over a country teeming with native history, under the stars, kissed by sun and winds. When the motor-car and aeroplane take the place of the horse and camel and physical laws and necessities no longer regulate our journey across the country that glorious feeling of being one with the land… will have passed from our ken for ever (Duncan-Kemp 1961, 115).

Alice's reference to the connection between travelling on a horse through the land and an awareness of the physical laws of nature was important. For Alice to travel safely these physical laws had to be understood and adhered to. In the desert country of her childhood water dictated travel, and knowing the country intimately and intelligently was the only way a person travelling on horseback could survive. Travel in cars and planes cushioned the occupants from the physicality of the heat of the sun, or the cold of the wind. In cars, planes and trains the land is interpreted through glass. The climate is controlled by air conditioning or heating, and we travel at speeds outside the natural rhythms of the landscape though which we are moving. As Alice Duncan-Kemp said, we are removed from that "glorious feeling of being one with the land" (1961, 115).

Women who emigrated to the frontier of Australia and Canada were often compelled to learn to ride, and not only to ride, but to saddle, harness, feed and water their horses. As both Mary Jackson and Monica Hopkins mentioned, skills that they both strove so hard to attain were for other women a birthright. Particularly for those born on the frontier in Australia and Canada, learning to ride was a necessity not tied to class or wealth as it was in England, but a way of life.

For Alice Duncan-Kemp riding was part of her earliest education, and she wrote of the value of the lessons she learnt from the stockmen

who taught her horse husbandry and riding skills. Alice and her sisters were taught to ride bareback with only a halter for a bridle. They found this difficult at first and fell repeatedly, but the Aboriginal stockmen encouraged them back on, and eventually Alice was good enough to be given her own stockhorse:

> Will I ever forget the excitement and thrill of that day when I was given a stock-horse for my own, to ride at musters and to look after, along with a saddle and a bridle which were my own? And the thrill of a thoroughbred horse, probably a lot more intelligent than I, galloping beneath me, weaving among a mob of seething cattle and by some sixth sense, made more acute by intensive training, bring out the right cow and the right calf from the midst of a thousand head of milling bellowing beasts (Duncan-Kemp 1961, 182-3).

Throughout Alice's recollections of her childhood on her family's cattle station of Mooraberrie, horses and rider were a central theme of her life. Her movement over the land was made possible by her relationship with the indigenous people and her ability to ride well.[8] Alice wrote that survival in the inhospitable country of the sandhills often depended on the calibre of the horse you were riding.[9] She noted that it was not until people actually moved out into the land that they realised how narrow the boundary was between life and death in the waterless and unfenced stretches of land, and how very often the only buffer between that boundary was a good horse (Duncan Kemp 1952, 89).

In contrast to Alice Duncan Kemp, Judith Wallace was not encouraged by her parents to learn to ride or to partake in the workings of the station. Judith was born in 1932, near Glen Innes, New South Wales. Her mother was an Englishwoman who could not ride and whose prejudices blinded her to the beauty of the place where they lived. It was only when Judith and her sister were eventually provided with ponies that they had access to a connection with the land beyond the garden. This was a connection her mother was never

to make. The girls were given ponies by their Aunt Maude, who had grown up on Ilparren (the cattle station owned by Judith's family) and realised the importance of the mobility that ponies would provide her young nieces. On these ponies the girls quickly discovered a world outside of the walls of the garden and the places they could reach by walking. Judith realised the significance of the ponies:

> Much as we loved Ilparren we would have become bored, as our elder sisters did, if we had not had the ponies to make us mobile. For their chief value was not as pets but as a means of transport, of getting about the ten thousand acres and being able to participate in life on the station (Wallace 52).

Riding gave them independence and the opportunity to experience the land beyond the domestic setting. Judith recalled riding home from town in the dark, having been delayed by a violent storm. As the girls realised that their horses were quite surefooted and placid in the dark, they relaxed and let them pick their way over the log strewn ground. All around them was the landscape in its night cloaked glory:

> [W]e became more and more enthralled by the beauty of the moonlit landscape around us and we rode in spellbound silence. In the gathering darkness the loss of a sense of distance, the shrinking of our view, brought about a feeling of closeness to the land around us that we had never before experienced. We were unsure of our route, but we did not think of ourselves as lost. We had no fear of the bush at all (Wallace 85).

The arrival of the ponies was crucial in expanding Judith's sense of place beyond childhood nostalgia. Because she could ride, her world around her was opened up, and she engaged with the land in a way that was never possible for her horse-hating mother. On their ponies and later on stock horses the younger girls explored the paddocks and hills. It was on these rides that Judith received another vision of Ilparren. Once the sisters knew their way up into the hills they rode up by themselves and explored the back reaches of the station. As

they reached the peak of each hill they were greeted with another. As they explored the waterfalls and the creeks in the hill country their fascination with the isolated land grew. For Judith and her younger sisters Ilparren, surrounded as it was on all sides by a wilderness of forest covered mountains, touched the real world only at the front gate. It was "otherwise boundless, extending forever into the timeless, unending bush" (Wallace 126). Judith's sense of place was informed and enhanced by her movement across the country. Through her riding she was able to receive a far broader and more connected interpretation of place than her mother and older sisters possessed. Her loss when Ilparren was sold was all the greater because of this, but her sense of place was also expanded. The book she wrote out of this sense of place demonstrated the extent to which she was able to carry Ilparren with her after she left. Her ability to recall intimate portraits of the land and her movement over it, even from a distance of time and space, demonstrated the richness of her memory.

The women in this article have all felt the stretch and snatch of the stride of a horse at full gallop. They have felt the liberating freedom that comes with moving at one with such a powerful animal. They have been in turn terrified and intoxicated with the heady speed of a fine horse. For many of these women riding horses enabled them to engage and respond to place outside of the traditional feminine space of the house and garden. Riding meant mobility and mobility meant independence, and therefore new possibilities to visit other women, travel long distances safely and in relative comfort, and explore the immediate world around them. Moving through the land on horseback allowed an engagement with the space around them in a unique way. Through an understanding of horses, through watching them and learning to interpret their movements and moods, these women were able to receive a broader awareness of the world around them, a multidimensional view of the land. It was a vision that was not confined to nationalistic expressions of 'place' but instead was far more local and specific in its articulation of a sense of place.

Horse riding is an embodied form of transport. The physical sensations of riding for Monica Hopkins and Mary Jackson in Canada were similar to those of Alice Duncan-Kemp and Judith Wallace in Australia. Though these women came from disparate backgrounds and moved over lands that were opposite in their shape and form, their perception of place was influenced by the movement of the horses they rode. The growth of a sense of place out of such an experience is difficult to map. What is more obvious is the ease with which these women gradually wrote of their surroundings and the knowledge that they gained in travelling over the land. Their words acknowledge the power of the horse to take you to a different place, to enable you to see different things in the land, to receive messages carried on the wind and through the footfalls of your horse, up into your body. The physical connection between a woman and the horse she was riding opened her to an engagement with the place through which she rode.

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## Notes

[1]Such equality is still reflected today where the Olympic disciplines of Dressage, Showjumping and Three Day Eventing are the only events where men and women compete on equal terms.

[2] This article is not concerned with writing a history of women's riding whether it be astride or side saddle, rather it seeks to understand the physicality of riding in developing a sense of place.

[3] "Cayuse" was a term used to describe the horses bred by the Indians, they were often small and wild, but renowned for their endurance and hardiness.

[4] See for example A. Hasluck's *Portrait With Background*; Peter Cowan's *A Faithful Picture: the letters of Eliza & Thomas Brown at York in the Swan River Colony 1841-1852*; Mrs. Charles Meredith's *Notes & Sketches of New South Wales: During a Residence in that Colony from 1889 to 1844*; Lucy Frost's *The Journal of Annie Baxter Dawbin 1858-1868*; Patricia Clarke's *A Colonial Woman: the life & times of Mary Braidwood Mowle*; and David Adams's *The Letters of Rachel Henning*.

[5] A "democrat" is a Canadian term for a buggy usually drawn by two horses.

[6] The New Woman was a figure of feminist rebellion who emerged in English fiction and social commentary in the 1880s and 1890s (Ledger 465). See Devereux for a discussion on increased use of the expression 'New Woman' after the First World War expanded opportunities for women to work outside the home.

[7] A "caboose" is a sleigh drawn by a horse but with a little cabin on top with benches and a stove.

[8] For a discussion of the ways in which women's sense of place was influenced by indigenous people see Pickering, 2000.

[9] See McLaren and Cooper for a history of the development of the saddle horse in Australia.

**Yuen-fong Woon**

# Gaining Voice and Agency: The Emergence of Asian Canadian Literature since the 1980s

## Introduction

The term "Asian Canadian literature" here refers to literature with ethnic-specific subject matter produced by authors of Asian ancestry residing in Canada. However, as the term "Asian" encompasses people from diverse origins, I shall limit my paper to Canadian writers of Japanese and Chinese ancestry.[1] As will be described below, there is a considerable degree of convergence and solidarity amongst literary members of these two groups.

I shall first trace the origins and emergence of Asian Canadian literature (or rather East Asian Canadian literature). Using works in prose (novels, oral histories, myths, memoirs and the like) rather than poetry as examples, I shall describe the common themes and approaches, and end the paper with my views on the prospects and dangers of institutionalisation and commodification of this body of literature.

## A Quiet People

Pre-War immigrants from China and Japan to Canada were mostly a quiet and unassertive people. This quietness provided the context in which the dominant group - Anglo Canadian - was able to ascribe them ethnic stereotypes, such as "inscrutable" or "docile" (Cheung 1993, 2-3; Ng 1999, 157-8, 161-3, 172; Deer 1999a, 12-13; Editorial 1994, 4-5; Goellnicht 1989, 295). In a society where individual assertiveness was the norm, being quiet carried with it negative connotations of deviousness - quietly plotting to subvert

the world - or passivity and therefore willingness to be victims who deserved to be abused (Chao 1997, 36-7).

Being quiet and unassertive, Chinese and Japanese migrants also gave members of the dominant group the opportunity for historical erasure and whitewashing. Piere Berton's celebrated work *The Last Spike* (1971), an account of the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway, attributes the glory to Dunsmuir and Onderdonk and makes no mention of the 15,700 railway builders recruited from China, let alone their harsh living and working conditions, their superhuman efforts in dynamiting through the most dangerous section of the Canadian Rockies and the high death toll involved (Cheung 1993, 6). To give another example, Canadian history texts make little reference to the injustices done to their own citizens in the 1940s, when 21,000 Canadians of Japanese ancestry (over 60% of whom were local-born) were persecuted, removed, exiled, and their properties auctioned off arbitrarily - the accumulation of over half a century of anti-Asian institutional discrimination and violence (Miki 1998, 101-3).

Joy Kogawa's celebrated book, *Obasan* (1981), begins with two memorable lines:

> There is a silence that does not speak
> There is a silence that will not speak

Two theories have been put forward by scholars to explain the unassertiveness of early immigrants from China and Japan, one stressing family and community constraints, and the other, racial oppression (Cheung 1993, 3-4, 20, 26). According to the first theory, Japanese and Chinese in the pre-War days were socialised from childhood to be quiet and unassertive. In their traditional cultures, being quiet was considered a virtue. It signified pensiveness, gracefulness, fortitude and stoic endurance. Voice, by contrast, carried the negative connotations of noisiness, disruptiveness and trouble-making (Cheung 1993, 8-9, 127).

Adding to childhood socialisation was family and community pressure. Households with illegal immigrants were careful to protect such secrets by keeping family members quiet. Community leaders,

marginalised and isolated from both homeland and mainstream societies, developed an exaggerated eagerness for power and hierarchical control. They played an important role in keeping members obedient and unchallenging (Lee 1999, 18-19, 26).

According to the second theory, most early Chinese and Japanese were oppressed from the moment of arrival. As contract labourers, they were silenced by their own recruiters who in turn served the white establishment. As domestic servants or other service workers, they were expected to show deference to white employers or patrons. Even the local-born or naturalised citizens among them had no political voice (as all "Orientals" were disenfranchised from the beginning of Canada's nationhood) and no legal voice (as those who could not vote were not allowed to become lawyers). Attempts to relocate to mainstream neighbourhoods were met with physical violence, thus keeping their residences confined to Chinatowns or Japantowns (Cheung 1993, 10; Goellnicht 1989, 292; Chan 1984, 71; Deer 1999b, 37).

Between 1942 and 1949, in the name of wartime emergencies, the federal government took away the collective voice of Canadians of Japanese ancestry. Japanese language newspapers were closed down, radios confiscated and letters heavily censored. Families and established communities were deliberately broken up and scattered. In response to such extreme measures of racial oppression, adults put on a mask, enduring insult with silence and fortitude, and children were warned not to speak for fear of drawing attention to themselves (Goellnicht 1989, 295-6; Cheung 1993, 6-7, 10-11, 128, 140).

## From Yellow Peril to Model Minorities (1940s - 1960s)

Racial oppression and cultural upbringing could not totally muffle early voices of protest by "Orientals." Indeed, as early as 1919, a Chinese poem was carved on the wall of the Immigration Building in Victoria, expressing discontent at the humiliating treatment and forcible confinement of Chinese immigrants upon arrival. However,

the poem was not "discovered" and translated until 1980 when the building was torn down (Chan 1984, 57). Edith Eaton (1865-1914), an offspring of a British father and a Chinese mother, was a creative writer who in the late nineteenth century depicted the suffering of Chinese immigrants. Writing under the pen name Sui Sin Far, she protested against the discriminatory treatment they received in Canada (Sui Sin Far 1995). Again, her work was only noticed in the 1980s - this time by scholars in the United States who claimed her as their own, as she also resided there for a considerable amount of time (Doyle 1994, 50-58; Chao 1997, 19-20).

For a variety of reasons,[2] second generation Japanese Canadians (*nisei*) were more numerous and relatively more vocal than their Chinese Canadian counterparts (Beauregard 1999, 53). In the late 1930s, the nisei founded an English language newspaper *The New Canadian*. Although the tone was largely assimilationist, this newspaper represented their collective voice. Amongst the contributors was Muriel Kitigawa, who in her writing protested loudly against the Federal Government's unfair treatment of Japanese Canadians in the 1940s (Kitigawa 1985). Her work was forgotten with the dispersal of the Japanese community after the War. It was not "rediscovered" until the late 1970s when Joy Kogawa was looking for material in the Public Archive in Ottawa to write her novel *Obasan* (Davidson 1993, 84; Watada 1999, 80; Cheung 1993, 153).

Indeed, as a direct consequence of the traumatic events of the 1940s, Japanese Canadians experienced "social amnesia" and self-imposed cultural erasure. To avoid calling attention to themselves, they never congregated or lived on the same street, nor re-established Japanese language schools or newspapers. *Nisei* parents almost never discussed the harsh treatment and sufferings of the 1940s with their children (*sansei*). Instead, they sought rapid assimilation for themselves and their descendants (Cheung 1993, 141-3; Adachi 1992, 355-368; Miki 1998, 66-7, 110-3).

In the Anglo conformity era of the 1950s and 1960s, Chinese and Japanese Canadians were praised as model minorities: quiet,

uncomplaining, hardworking and never demanding of welfare (Adachi 1991, 371-2). In an ironic twist of fate, what were considered negative traits before the War were now regarded as positive characteristics for other Canadians to emulate.

Chinese and Japanese Canadians continued to be a quiet people during this period. Even though institutional discrimination ended in the late 1940s, informal and subtle forms of prejudice and discrimination continued in mainstream society. Most Asian Canadians were confined to the service and menial sectors. Even the self-employed were busy struggling for their livelihood. While valuing public education as a means of upward mobility, Asian Canadian parents often encouraged their children to focus on acquiring practical skills (Chan 1984, 57-8).

It is small wonder that up until the late 1960s, there was an absence of writers among Asian Canadians, even though a significant number had made successful breakthroughs into various professions which were formally the exclusive domain of the dominant group. For the small minority of Asian Canadian youth brave enough to aspire to a writing career, there was a lack of mentors and role models. Anybody with an Asian-sounding name was automatically regarded as having inferior English language skills, and no mainstream publisher or editor would take his or her manuscripts seriously (Chan 1984, 69; Miki 1998, 71, 112-3).

## Pan East Asian Canadian Movement (1970s-1980s)

The late 1960s and early 1970s were a turbulent decade for North America. In Canada, the FLQ Crisis in October 1970[3] led to the invocation of the War Measures Act by Prime Minister Trudeau - a move which shook the liberal white community. Articles and editorials appeared in major newspapers condemning the government for overreacting, arguing that the invocation of this Act in times of peace would lead to the eventual erosion of civil liberties. These critics reminded the federal government that the War Measures Act,

last invoked in December 1941, was not lifted until four years after the official end of the Second World War. It was directed in the first instance against Canada's own law abiding and loyal citizens: Canadians of Japanese ancestry (Adachi 1991, 368-170). Ironic though it may seem, it was such a critique by the enlightened sector of mainstream society that aroused the Japanese Canadian community from their social amnesia. The *sansei*, who had so far been kept in the dark, began to question their parents and grandparents about the traumatic events of the 1940s (Watada 1999, 81-82).

Across the border were more turbulent events: demonstrations and protests launched by Asian American students in 1969-70 on campuses of major universities in the United States. It occurred in the wake of the Civil Rights Movement and the Anti-Vietnam War rallies. The students demanded the establishment of Asian American courses, programmes and centres. They also clamoured for ongoing funding for ethnic writers. This uphill battle finally resulted in the founding of Asian American Studies Programs, Asian American Writers' Workshops, and Asian American Magazines (of which *Bridge* and *Amerasia* are the most prominent) in the late 1960s. The outcome was a flowering of Asian American literature in different parts of the United States up to this day (Chan 1984, 70; Beauregard 1999, 55).

In Canada, the 1970s saw third generation Asian youth entering adulthood. They learnt from public schools and wider society that being quiet and unassuming were not virtues but weaknesses in this assertive society. They resented the subtle prejudice and discrimination practised by gate-keepers in mainstream society, passing them over for promotion or career advancement (Chao 1997, 23). With the growth of political activism, these youth broke through silencing by mainstream society and by their own family and community elders. Having a good command of English, a number aspired to use literary form to gain voice and agency for themselves and members of their ethnic group (Watada 1999, 83; Deer 1999a, 13-14).

The Pan East Asian Canadian Movement was the result of the coming together of third generation Chinese and Japanese Canadian youth in Toronto and Vancouver, some of whom had travelled to the University of Berkeley in the late 1960s to witness and participate in the Asian American Students Movement (Watada 1999, 82-83). The first joint cultural event launched by Chinese and Japanese Canadians was a historical photography exhibition entitled "Asian Canadian Experience," held in 1972 at the Student Union Building of the University of British Columbia in Vancouver. It was followed by a conference with the same title. This joint event was a major turning point, for it was the first time the term "Asian Canadian" was formally used. It eventually replaced such terms as "Asiatics" or "Orientals" used by mainstream media.

The sansei in Toronto founded *The Powell Street Review*: an English language newspaper which replaced the now defunct *New Canadian* founded by the *nisei* in the late 1930s. In a parallel development, the Chinese Canadian group in Vancouver set up their own radio station known as Pender Guy, founded the Chinese community's first English language newspaper (*Gum Shan Po*), and established the Chinese Canadian Writers' Workshop.

By 1979, the first Asian Canadian anthology was published under the title *Inalienable Rice*. Supported by a small publication grant from the federal government, it was a modest eighty-three page magazine, a loose collection of literary writing put together by the *Powell Street Review* and Chinese Canadian Writers Workshop. Nevertheless, it marked the beginning of Asian Canadian literature (Wong-Chu 1994, 1-2). A significant number of the contributors have gone on to become outstanding writers in their own right.

New developments in the 1980s provided further impetus to this growing literary movement. The Asian factor which re-entered the consciousness of mainstream Canada in the late 1960s had grown more important. Economic miracles in East and Southeast Asia could not be ignored, neither could the rapid increase in foreign students and new immigrants from Asia (Ricou 1994, 89; Editorial 1994,

7; Miki 1998, 213-214). In the intellectual scene, interest in post-colonial and ethnic literature was growing among the new generation of scholars and university students, and white feminists sought solidarity with aboriginal women and women of colour (Young 2001, 93, 103; Miki 1998, 104). It is in this milieu that the second Asian Canadian anthology entitled *Many Mouthed Birds* (edited by Bennett Lee and Jim Wong-Chu) was born. It is an impressive volume jointly published in 1991 by Douglas McIntyre in Canada and the University of Washington Press in the United States.

Asian Canadian literature continues to be promoted by a "collective agency,"[4] this time in the form of the Asian Canadian Writers Workshop which is more inclusive than the Chinese Canadian Writers Workshop of the late 1970s (Beauregard 1999, 54). As a seventy-member association founded in 1994, the Asian Canadian Writers Workshop provides young and upcoming writers with mentoring. It assists authors in developing manuscripts and finding suitable publishers. It publishes a newsletter (*Rice Paper*) three times a year, organises public readings, focused workshops and conferences, and hosts annual cultural events such as the Asian Heritage Month in Vancouver (Chao 1997, 185).

Even with all these developments, the Pan East Asian Canadian Movement is much weaker than its counterpart in the United States. There is still no permanent meeting place - members take turns hosting workshops in their private homes. No base budget is set aside by Canadian universities for Asian Canadian Studies Programmes. Currently, there is no government funding designated for ethnic-specific research, writing or publications by Asian Canadians. Relying on open competition for increasingly restrictive funding sources, Asian Canadian projects and manuscripts are often at the mercy of racist backlash which flares up periodically in mainstream society. I shall return to this point in the final section of the paper.

## Asian Canadian Writing: Some Common Themes and Approaches

As part of Canada's ethnic and post-colonial literature, Asian Canadian writing shares some common themes and approaches. Below is a list - by no means an exhaustive one - that I have extrapolated from Asian Canadian novels, memoirs, oral histories and myths.

### *Breaking Silence*

Joy Kogawa's first novel *Obasan* (1981) and its sequel *Itsuka* (1992) take the lead in depicting the pain and dire consequences of silence for the well-being of the individual and the Japanese Canadian community. Taken together, these two novels show that for individual and community healing, silence must turn to sound and voice (Rose 1988, 218-219, 224; Davidson 1993, 22; Banerjee 1999, 110; Cheung 1993, 126, 145-146; Goellnicht 1989, 294-5; Miki 1998, 114).

Following Kogawa's theme are oral histories and memoirs by other Asian Canadian writers. These allow direct voices from the margin to be heard - voices from women, children and men at the bottom of the hierarchy both within the ethnic community's power structure and that of the mainstream society. Voices are also heard from offspring of mixed marriages who have hitherto been marginalised by both ethnic and mainstream societies (Deer 1999b, 44; Ng 1994, 92-4; Yee 1987, 15-16; Chao 1997, 89, 92-93). Examples of breaking silence include Lim Sing's *Westcoast Chinese Boy* (1979), Wayson Choy's *The Chinese Shadows* (1999), and Catherine Lang's *O-Bon in Chimunesu* (1996). It also includes *Jin Guo: Voices of Chinese Canadian Women* (1992) - an impressive collection of oral histories compiled by the Women's Book Committee of the Chinese Canadian National Council in Toronto.

### *Reclaiming the Past: Dialogue With Ancestors*

Along with other post-colonial writers, there is a sense of urgency among Asian Canadians to reclaim the past. Much of their literature

is focused on the unrecorded history of early immigrants, with a view to make it a recognised part of Canadian experience (Chao 1997, 186). These writers act as their own archivists: searching for written documents hidden in public archives, and hunting down private collections such as family genealogies, letters, diaries, photographs and artifacts. They often take on the role of historians or social scientists, collecting fragments of memories from elders in the family, close relatives and community leaders, and even making focused trips to their native communities in China or Japan to search for more information (Chao 1997, 26-27, 52-53, 59, 63-64, 106-107, 111-112).

## *Decentering Official History*

The main purpose for Asian Canadian writers' eagerness to uncover the past is to debunk official and public history, in order to force mainstream Canada to come to terms with its racist past, even as the government is projecting Canada's image as a tolerant multicultural country (Goellnicht 1989, 297, 302; Miki 1998, 104, 110).

In their creative work, Asian Canadian authors juxtapose private collections, recollections and lived experiences with accounts found in public and official records. While it is debatable whether these writers claim their version to be closer to reality,[5] one thing is certain. Their literary writing attempts to de-centre the centre - to open up space for formerly marginalised voices to enter centre-stage, be heard, and be recognised as part of Canadian history (Davidson 1993, 11-16, 19-21; Cheung 1993, 15, 135, 138-9, 152-4, 170; Goellnicht 1989, 288-91, 293-4, 299; Kanefsky 1996, 20; Banerjee 1999, 103-4; Chao 1997, 94-95).

Besides Joy Kogawa's two novels *Obasan* and *Itsuka*, Japanese Canadian writing to unearth the past includes Toyo Takata's *Nikkei Legacy* (1983) and Takeo Uji Nakano's *Within the Barbed Wire Fence* (1980).

## Aiming at the Hearts and Minds

Academically trained historians and social scientists, including those of Asian Canadian origin, tend to engage the reader in a rational, 'objective' or 'scientific' discourse. Asian Canadian writers, by contrast, appeal to both the hearts and minds of the reader, with an implicit call to action to correct injustices of the past (Rose 1988, 216-218). Their fiction invites the reader to participate in historical reconstruction by presenting fragments of memory and discovered documents, and by bringing the characters to life, so that the reader can draw his or her own conclusions through a process of sympathetic understanding (Beauregard 1999, 68; Cheung 1993, 128-9, 155, 164-5, 167; Chao 1997, 98, 100, 116). While examples abound, Joy Kogawa's two novels *Obasan* and *Itsuka*,[6] Sky Lee's *Disappearing Moon Cafe* and Kerri Sakamoto's novel *The Electrical Field* (1998) deserve particular mention.

## Breaking Down Stereotypes, Emphasising Internal Complexity

To counter public images and ethnic stereotypes, Asian Canadian writers emphasise the complexity and heterogeneity within their ethnic community. In their novels, they create multiple characters with multiple perspectives and voices (Cheung 1993, 5, 17, 170; Rose 1988, 220; Banerjee 1999, 101-104, 110-111). In addition, they depict Chinese or Japanese Canadians as active agents, not passive victims, by detailing individual acts of labour, stoic endurance, survival, resistance and eventual empowerment (Beauregard 1999, 60, 65-6; Cheung 1993, 149; Deer 1999b, 41; Banerjee 1999, 101, 104-107, 109; Chao 1997, 98-102; 104-5, 112-114).

A significant number of authors also engage in a critical examination of their own ethnic group. In an act to 'wash dirty linen in public,' their novels and memoirs expose internal inequality and injustice, generational conflicts, sexual oppression and gender discrimination, and social ostracism of those engaged in inter-racial marriages or homosexual lifestyles. The Chinese or Japanese community is seen as a community - just like the mainstream society - with victims,

victimisers, heroes/heroines and villains (Ng 1999, 164; Chao 1997, 28-29, 57, 114-5, 188-189).

Novels exposing intra-community conflict and oppression include award-winning work such as Sky Lee's *Disappearing Moon Cafe* (1991), Wayson Choy's *Jade Peony* (1995), and Ying Chen's *Ingratitude* (1995). It also includes Yip Yuen Chung's *The Tears of Chinese Immigrants* (1990) - a little-known collection of stories which have been translated into English by Sheng-Tai Chang.

## *Internationalising and Localising Asian Canadian Experience*

Asian Canadian writers approach issues of identity and roots in two opposing ways. Some question the boundedness of the nation state. They see their community as part of a global diaspora, having multiple connections with their ancestral homes in East Asia and with Asians in other parts of the world (Beauregard 1999, 55). These works focus on the diasporic existence of individuals and families. Examples include Denise Chong's *The Concubine's Children* (1994) and Yuen-fong Woon's *The Excluded Wife* (1998).

Other Asian Canadian writers stress the localisation of identity. They anchor their ancestral roots not in Japan or China, but in Canada's gold or coal mines, railway camps, bachelor boarding houses, Chinatowns or Japantowns. They see themselves as descendants of sojourning fathers, excluded wives, picture brides or mail-order brides. The next section will provide examples of novels using this approach.

## *Celebrating Hybridity in Culture and Language*

Many third generation Asian Canadians, particularly those of mixed parentage, have at one point in their life felt marginalised not only by mainstream society as not quite Canadian, but also by new immigrants or people in their ancestral country as not quite Chinese or Japanese (Chan 1984, 60-62, 67; Chao 1997, 97, 117-119). While some of them dwell on this personal identity crisis, other writers celebrate cultural hybridity in their work, finding pride in being an authentic

Asian Canadian (Chan 1984, 67-68; Lee 1999, 24, 31-2; Sugars 2001, 27-45; Editorial 1994, 6; Cheung 1993, 1, 18, 170-1). They use both literary tradition and cultural allusions of "East" and "West." They create Gold Mountain myths or Japanese relocation camp ghost stories - myths and legends that are uniquely Asian Canadian (Chao 1997, 52-55, 91). Examples of this approach include Paul Yee's *Tales from Gold Mountain* (1989); Judy Fong Bate's *China Dog and Other Tales from a Chinese Laundry* (1997); Fred Wah's *Diamond Grill* (1996); Terry Watada's *Daruma Days* (1997); Hiromi Goto's *Chorus of Mushrooms*; and Roy Kiyooka's *Mothertalk: Life Stories of Mary Kiyooka* (1997).

Similar to other post-colonial writers, local-born Asian Canadian authors lament their linguistic dispossession - the lost mother tongue which they are eager to recover. They understand that writing in the official languages (English or French) is the only effective linguistic means to fight prejudice and stereotyping by mainstream society (Chao 1997, 30, 34, 47-8). However, using mainstream language as a medium of expression does have its dangers. It could contaminate immigrant minority experience, leading to distortion and misrepresentation. To resolve this dilemma, many Asian Canadian writers resist using all English or French in their work. They introduce their own heritage linguistic expressions, even at the risk of unreadability, indifference or outright rejection (Chao 1997, 102-103; Miki 1998, 54-55, 57-8, 68, 70, 117-8).

## Asian Canadian Literature: Institutionalisation and Commodification

Given that Asian Canadian writers tend to develop the rather insidious themes and approaches outlined above, how well is their work received by mainstream society? In this final section, I shall focus on the reception of Asian Canadian literature by mainstream cultural establishments and the general reading public.

To backtrack, CanLit (Canadian Literature) was born in the mid 1960s out of a post-colonial urge to be culturally liberated from British and American literary domination (Atwood 1972; Northrop 1971; Jones 1970). It is an Anglo-Canadian nation-building activity that seeks to create a distinct cultural space for their adopted country. At the same time, however, CanLit ignores the equally strong post-colonial urge among non-white and aboriginal peoples in Canada to be liberated from Anglo-Canadian cultural and political domination (Miki 1998, 101, 132-5, 170-171).

By the 1970s, the growing disaffection of the Francophones, the increasing ethnic diversity of Canada's population base and the economic strength of East and Southeast Asia could no longer be ignored by politicians. Out of expediency, the federal government initiated the policy of bilingualism and multiculturalism in 1971. This policy, which was further enshrined by the Canadian Multiculturalism Act of 1988, was the government's attempt to manage ethnic differences in a contained fashion and to project Canada's public image as a country built on tolerance and inclusiveness (Kamboureli 2000, 112; Beauregard 2001, 16, 20; Kallen 1882, 167-168; Miki 1998, 105-7, 211)[7]. The Multiculturalism Ministry was created with a mandate to celebrate diversity, and would do so as long as the power of the dominant group was not challenged (Cheung 1993, 2; Miki 1998, 149-150, 154).[8]

In the first six years of its existence, the Ministry sponsored cultural performances and events by offering grants to ethnic groups and voluntary associations. In 1978, it established the Writing and Publishing Program to assist writers who have a specific cultural experience to convey. Individuals or publishing houses could apply for the grant, but the final decision was based on the nature of the project rather than the ethnicity of the author. This Program was set up as a parallel funding structure to the Canada Council which only supported mainstream cultural projects. During the twenty-one years of its existence, the Writing and Publishing Program provided financial assistance for a significant number of Asian Canadian

publications (Young 2001, 97, 112). Unfortunately, it was cancelled in 1998-9, and Asian Canadian writers had to apply for financial assistance through the Canada Council with its much more restrictive interpretation of Canadian literature (Miki 1998, 152; Young 2001, 95-6, 98, 105).

With Joy Kogawa's *Obasan* (1981) leading the way, selected Asian Canadian writing entered the mainstream literary scene in the 1990s. Some have even been nominated for or received prestigious awards, including the Giller Prize, Governor General's Award, The City of Vancouver Book Prize, Canada First Novel Award and Canadian Authors Association Book of the Year Award.[9] The 1997 edition of the *Oxford Companion to Canadian Literature* includes such Asian Canadian entries as Joy Kogawa, Sky Lee, Wayson Choy and Hiromi Goto (Young 2001, 102).

In a parallel development, *Obasan* has been studied in survey courses on English Canadian fiction in universities across Canada since the early 1980s. Sky Lee's *Disappearing Moon Cafe* was added to the list a decade later. This was soon followed by the adoption of other newly-recognised Asian Canadian texts (Chao, 92-93, 121). By the mid 1990s, the emergent field of Asian Canadian literature became a topic of critical investigation in academic conferences, and in special issues of leading literary journals such as *Canadian Literature* and *Essays on Canadian Writing* (Young 2001, 103; Beauregard 1999, 54-55; Beauregard 2001, 5-6; Miki 1998, 114, 172-174).

Laudable as this gradual acceptance of Asian Canadian writing by the university circle may have been, critics have pointed out that it is a defence mechanism among established mainstream professors. As instructors, they have to come to terms with the proliferation of cultural production by writers of colour for the past two decades. They also have to meet increasing pressure by the non-white community for inclusiveness in universities, and for minority voices to be heard in Canadian literature (Miki 1998, 162).[10]

In this post-colonial age, Canada is trying to reinvent itself by addressing its racist past with a multicultural present. Liberal

humanists, particularly those in universities, do not aim to suppress the truth, but to use strategies of remembrance to revisit and incorporate the past. The inclusion of Asian Canadian literary texts in university courses and literary discussions is to alleviate the 'guilt' of privilege, and to situate Canada as an already fallen yet redeemable nation (Miki 1998, 53, 172-774, 176-178; Beauregard 2001, 6, 15-16).[11]

Just like the top-down approach of multiculturalism, Canadian universities are now opening up space for non-white writers in the 1990s and politely tolerating discussions of racism, sexism and cultural chauvinism in classrooms and public forums on campus. However, Asian Canadian writings, just like any other non-white texts, are still ghettoised under Special Topics courses in CanLit or English Departments, as 'enrichments' to an otherwise all white curriculum. Cultural Studies and Post-colonial Studies also confine critiques of neo-colonialism and ethnocentricity to curriculum concerns. The few token non-white professors in the field are neutralised by mainstream criteria for publication, tenure and promotion. Graduate students specialising in CanLit Studies are assigned reading lists which form the basis for qualifying examinations on dominant literary values. Explorations into more radical theories or minority literature are not encouraged.[12] All these moves are examples of institutional management of diversity, while avoiding actual commitment to changes on a systematic level. Sidelined by the university structure, Asian Canadian writers only figure prominently during the occasional heritage festival in Canada's major cities (Miki 1998, 167-169, 176-178; Beauregard 1999, 54-60, 67-69).

While institutional ghettoisation of Asian Canadian literature in the 1990s serves to muffle its voice and agency in universities, the popularisation and commodification of the 'East Asian mystique' in North America's non-academic world in recent decades is adversely affecting the very content of Asian Canadian fiction. Like all minority authors, Asian Canadians cannot escape the basic question about the writing act: for whom do you write?

Currently, stereotypes about Chinese and Japanese peoples continue to saturate mainstream media, cultural institutions and popular presses in North America. Asian Canadian writers themselves must constantly fight their internal battle to overcome the temptation of catering to white taste with its elaborate system of awards, media privileges and film rights.

Indeed, recent literary critics have detected evidence of "self-orientalisation" in some Asian Canadian texts, in which the authors buy into the stereotypical images and Western attitudes towards "orientals," while glossing over many of the confrontational and violent episodes in the historical encounters between whites and Asians (Miki 1998, 107-8, 113-117, 119-122; Ng 1998, 174-178; Ng 1999, 158, 164-7, 172-3; Cheung 1993, 16).[13]

We need to be reminded, however, that not all "self-orientalisation" is a conscious attempt by authors to be rewarded by gatekeepers of popular culture. Local-born Asian Canadian writers are inevitably products of mainstream culture and the public school system. By not being able to understand the original language, their links with the culture and history of their ancestral homes could be tenuous. Growing up in the suburbs, their images of Chinatowns or Japantowns tend to be filtered through mainstream publications and mainstream media. The characters in their work of fiction may unconsciously resemble Fu Manchu, Charlie Chan, Mr. Moto, Suzy Wong, Geisha Girls and Madam Butterfly - exotic or sinister figures formerly created by mainstream writers.

While not all Asian Canadian writers are conscious participants, self-orientalisation is an inherently dangerous trend. It tends to convey a distorted picture of the Chinese or Japanese Canadian community. Despite the scepticism of postmodernists, the general reading public continues to believe that minority writers have the 'insiders' knowledge' and are presumably presenting 'authentic pictures' of their own culture and community.

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## Notes

[1.] The scope of this paper does not allow me to include Southeast Asian or South Asian Canadian literature. While Southeast Asian Canadian literature is an emerging field developed in the wake of East Asian Canadian literature (Young 2001, 102), creative work by writers of South Asian origin has had a long and illustrious history. It warrants an entirely separate academic paper. For starters, see Sugunasiri 1985; Vassanji 1985.

[2.] Separate legislations governed Chinese and Japanese immigration levels in pre-War Canada. In an era of social Darwinism, any non-white immigrant to Canada was viewed as undesirable or a necessary evil. Apart from labour needs, quotas for Chinese and Japanese immigration in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century were a reflection of their home country's international status. Japan was an emergent Asian power ever since it defeated China in the late 1890s. It had a formal alliance with Britain, Canada's mother country. As a result, legislations governing Japanese immigration to Canada were less restrictive than those governing Chinese immigration. The Japanese, for example, were not subjected to headtax legislations (1885, 1900, 1903) or the Immigration Act of 1923, both of which were used to deter and eventually exclude Chinese labour migration to Canada in the pre-War days. As a result of not being totally excluded by Canada's immigration legislations, the entry of Japanese women as picture brides in the first two decades of the twentieth century gave rise to a large number of second generation Japanese Canadians (nisei) who were educated in Canada's public school system. For a comprehensive history of the Chinese in Canada, see Wickberg 1982. For a comprehensive history of the Japanese in Canada, see Adachi 1991.

[3.] The term "FLQ" stands for Le Front de Liberation du Quebec (Quebec Liberation Front) which in the late 1960s tried to achieve Quebec separation from Canada by terrorist means, including the kidnapping of British diplomat James Cross.

4. The establishment of a "collective agency" like the Chinese Canadian Writers Workshop and the Asian Canadian Writers Workshop is an essential step for the revival of cultural confidence among Asian Canadian writers whose work has been excluded by mainstream evaluators and editors. Struggling to find a literary voice, they need to band together for mutual support (Chao 1997, 49-50; Young 2001, 109). The production of an anthology by a collective agency is an empowering process. An anthology is a marketable container to present a variety of writers in an ethnic or cultural enclave. It can be easily adopted as general reading matter or an education text in a university literature course (Miki 1998, 119; Chao 1997, 24-5, 38, 44). A similar strategy has been used by emergent Canadian writers of South Asian ancestry in their struggle for acceptance by mainstream literary circles. See Young 2001, 108-9, 113.

5. *Obasan* (and later *Itsuka*) addressed questions of history and historiography at a moment when the literary circle in mainstream Canada was trying to grapple with the post-modernists' challenge. See Hutcheon 1988; Beauregard 2001. Kogawa's representation of events in the 1940s thus became part of larger debates on the reconstruction of history, the knowability of the past and the connections between historical and literary narratives. For details of this debate over *Obasan*, see Goellnicht 1989, 287-292; Cheung 1993, 12-15, 126-7, 164-6; Banerjee 1999, 101-2, 110-111, 117-8; Kanefsky 1996, 11-36; Davidson 1993, 19; Chao 1997, 106-8.

6. The depiction in Kogawa's *Obasan* of the quiet sufferings of the Japanese Canadians has won the hearts and minds of readers. The novel immediately provided a powerful lever for Japanese Canadians attempting to gain an official apology and some redress for the harsh treatment during the 1940s. Kogawa's work was also instrumental in influencing the Canadian government's decision. When the federal government finally passed the measure of redress on September 22, 1988, parts of *Obasan* were read in the Canadian House of Commons (Miki 1998, 197; Davidson 1993, 9-11; Cheung 1993, 129-130, 153; Goellnicht 1989, 300).

7. According to many critics, the policy of multiculturalism promotes a racialised vision of life and therefore exacerbates rather than diminishes ethnic and racial divisiveness. Instead of promoting inclusiveness, this policy tends to further marginalise and ghettoise non-whites (Bissoondath 1994). Nothing much seems to have changed since the heyday of white supremacy. The Asian Canadian population which was regarded by the federal government as a monstrous "asiatic" to be excluded or removed in the pre-War period, and a deviancy to be assimilated in the 1960s, is now looked upon as one of the "multiethnics" to be managed (Miki 1998, 127, 208).

8. In February - May 1994, the Writers Union of Canada organised a conference entitled "Writing Thru' Race." The Multiculturalism Ministry first offered $22,500 to fund the event, but withdrew after a racist backlash. The reason was that this event challenged the exclusive power of white Canada to define literature in this country. It was organised with the specific purpose of mobilisation and coalition-building in a common struggle against racism. This professed aim triggered white panic, sounding the alarm of the country's cultural disintegration, pointing fingers at non-white writers and the multiculturalism policy as the cause (Miki 1998, 144-152, 157-9; Young 2001, 106).

9. These include Hiromi Goto's *Chorus of Mushrooms*; Kerri Sakamoto's *The Electrical Field*; Ying Chen's *Ingratitude*; Sky Lee's *Disappearing Moon Cafe*; Wayson Choy's *The Jade Peony*, Paul Yee's *Tales from Gold Mountain*; and Denise Chong's *The Concubine's Children*.

10. From the early 1980s, there was increasing dissatisfaction among non-white groups in Canada with the token representation offered by the policy of multiculturalism. They began to confront racism directly. By the time the Japanese Canadians received their redress settlement (1988), there was increasing struggle among writers of colour and community-based activists for empowerment and liberation from imposed signs of race (Miki 1998, 106-7).

11. For a critical analysis of the favourable reception of *Obasan* by mainstream literary circles and the general public in Canada, see Miki (1998, 181-204, 135-144).

**Peter F. Alexander**

# John S. Moir. *Christianity In Canada*. Edited by Paul Laverdure.

**Yorkton SK: Redeemer's Voice Press, 2002.**

# Paul Laverdure. *Brother Reginald: A Poet In Moose Jaw*
**Yorkton SK: Redeemer's Voice Press, 2002.**

When James Cook came upon the east coast of Australia in April 1770, he claimed it for Britain by raising a Union Jack. When Jacques Cartier landed in what is now Quebec in 1535, by contrast, he erected a Cross. Cartier's Cross comes to serve as a symbol to John Moir of the Christian roots of modern Canada. "No one can fully understand Canadians and Canada's history if they do not include, examine and take account of the role of religion in our past and present," he writes. This book elaborates his argument, and amply proves his point.

Moir is the doyen of church historians in Canada: not only was he a pioneer in the field, but in his years of teaching at Carleton University and the University of Toronto (where he is now Professor Emeritus) he trained and influenced many of the current generation of Canadian Church historians. This volume, a selection made and edited by Paul Laverdure of the most important essays Moir produced over a long research career, stands as a monument to Moir's work, and a summary of Canadian church historiography.

As Cartier's Cross suggests, the settlement of Canada, unlike that of Australia, had from the start a strong missionary impulse. The French

King Francis I noted, at the start of Cartier's third voyage in 1541, that Cartier had already brought Indians to France to instruct them in Christianity and send them back as missionaries to their people. Now, Francis added, a colony was being planned "so that we may better fulfil our intention and to do actions agreeable to God." Cynical twenty-first century readers might point out that Francis's 'intention' included enriching his kingdom with the wealth of the Americas, and that fur was as important as faith in building New France: but it is striking that a third of all Frenchmen in Canada by 1634 were missionaries.

John Moir's huge output of publications (listed in a thorough bibliography at the back of this volume) includes fourteen monographs and hundreds of chapters and articles on Canadian church history. The selection of articles here does no more than suggest the outlines of his argument, but it is a strong and compelling one. He makes the case that Canadians from the start viewed Canada through a Christian lens. No matter how flawed the embodiment of their beliefs, Moir argues, they continued to give Christianity a central role in the formation of the new country. Indeed, this centrality is the first of five 'religious determinants' in Canadian history which he identifies in the important articles collected here.

The second is the missionary impulse which helped found Canada, drove its exploration and expansion, and caused Canadians to send out thousands of missionaries to places as remote as China, Japan, Formosa and India, a missionary effort which has no direct parallel in Australian history, and which continued unabated until the Second World War.

The third determinant is what Moir terms 'indigenisation,' by which he means the legal, organisational and psychological adaptation of European forms of Christian worship and practice to the new Canadian reality. This indigenisation he sees as a vital part of the forces that combined to make Canadians Canadian, to give them a national character and make it possible for them to adapt to the

realities of the new country. Indigenisation of religion set the pattern for other forms of indigenisation.

The fourth is the historical determinant which in Moir's view most clearly differentiates Canadian spiritual development from that of the United States: what he calls 'churchliness.' By this term he means to draw attention to the fact that the great majority of the population (85% at the last census) belongs nominally to just six Christian churches, and 75% of the population to just three denominations: Roman Catholic, Anglican and United Church. "To talk of religious pluralism in Canada is misleading," Moir points out, and he argues that in many ways denominational allegiances unite Canadians as almost nothing else does. In particular, he argues, this is one of the ways in which Canada stands in stark contrast to the United States: "Divisiveness and sectarianism are thought of as un-Canadian."

The last of his religious determinants is activism. "Am I my brother's keeper?" Cain asked, and Canadians, Moir argues, resoundingly answer "Yes." Canadian Christianity has from the start been marked by a strong desire to carry Christian ideals into practice: at first through mission work, but increasingly in the second half of the twentieth century through social activism and foreign aid. The Protestant Social Gospel movement in Canada, and its Catholic equivalent, Catholic Action, have moved in the twentieth century from trying to save individual souls to trying to save whole societies. Their program of worthy causes has ranged from campaigning for safe working conditions and shorter working hours, to demanding protection of women and children from abuse, to agitating for pure food and water. In the process they have teamed up with groups ranging from unionists to feminists to Green parties, a coalition which runs right through Canadian society as virtually nothing else does.

Moir knows well enough that only a substantial minority of Canadians are regular church-goers. But contemporary Canadians, he argues, even if they are non-Christians, are so permeated with the society's Judeo-Christian values that they give powerful and personal support to Christian-inspired organisations ranging from the Red Cross to

Amnesty International, Oxfam and the rest. This support is neither new, nor declining: it is a consistent strand running through Canadian history like a gold thread through a tapestry. In the decades before the American Civil War, Canadians focussed their efforts to help runaway slaves find refuge in Canada through their churches; in the twenty-first century, the churches are in the forefront of work for the integration of New Canadian migrants (including many thousands of non-Christians) into Canadian society.

The central argument which I have summarised, perhaps too crudely, has structured Moir's research through a long working life, and it is elaborated and detailed in this volume. Perhaps the key essay of this collection is the long piece entitled "The Search for a Christian Canada," in which Moir sets out, with impressive authority, his view of the Christian foundations of Canadian society, and surefootedly analyses such varied and complex issues as the Canadianisation of the Protestant Churches - and, by contrast, the Americanisation of Canadian religion. He examines the historical relationship between the churches and Loyalism, details the history of individual churches (including the Baptists and Presbyterians), probes contentious issues such as the setting up of church schools (much more fiercely fought out in Canada than in Australia), the development and achievements of the Social Gospel movement, and much else. This single essay sums up much of the rest of the volume, which includes individual essays on each of the topics I have mentioned. These seem heavy and perhaps rebarbative matters to those who are not specialists, but Moir's energetic, crisp writing, his lightness of touch, his learning and his delicate judiciousness make for easy and attractive reading. He is the kind of scholar (rare in my experience) whose writing makes you wish to meet him.

Paul Laverdure's editing here plays across the very wide field of Moir's scholarly output to select a combination of those essays that have been most influential and widely-cited, and those which, more minor in their impact, show the range of Moir's interests. One such is "The Problems of a Double Minority," on the difficulties of being

an Anglophone Catholic in Canada. It is characteristic of Moir's suppleness that though he is a Protestant himself, he writes with real sensitivity about the ambiguous position of English-speaking Roman Catholics in Canada.

This Catholic reference might serve us as a bridge-passage to the other volume under review here. For Paul Laverdure, best known for *Redemption and Renewal*, his history of the Redemptorists in English Canada, has produced a literary curiosity, a slim edition of the poems of one member of that Double Minority, *Brother Reginald: A Poet in Moose Jaw*.

Brother Reginald was the religious name of Charles Reginald Greenall, and he was the youngest son of an Anglican priest in England. The Greenalls had connections both wealthy and powerful, but Charles Greenall proved to be the black sheep of the family, in spite of a privileged education at private schools followed by Oxford. He left Oxford without a degree to try his luck in South Africa, and followed that by migrating to Canada. After four years of knocking about mainly in Manitoba, he abruptly converted to Catholicism, and almost at once joined the Redemptorist order, spending the rest of his life as a brother, and taking the name Brother Reginald.

From 1927 to 1933 he lived at St Joseph's rectory in Moose Jaw, and while there he wrote a number of poems, which form the heart of this little book, interspersed with Paul Laverdure's comments on them. As poems they are formal, impersonal, derivative, archaic in diction, and lacking in wide appeal. But they also manage to make plain the constant struggle of the religious life, the internal wrestling with the angel that Hopkins's Terrible Sonnets exemplify. Brother Reginald is not in Hopkins's class, needless to say, but at his best he speaks of what is central to Christianity, the struggle to live by a higher morality, and the fear of having failed to do so:

I do not love Thee as I ought,
Ungrateful day by day -
Yet Thou my erring soul has bought -
Oh! turn me not away!

When thou shalt call the human race
On that great Judgment Day,
Grant me, Dear Lord, to see Thy Face!
And turn me not away!

If John Moir is right, this is one of the authentic voices of modern
Canada: struggling, pluralistic, inelegant, self-doubting, self-
deprecating, but also fundamentally decent, and never giving up the
effort to make the world a better place.

<div align="right">**Dominique Clément**</div>

# Tom Warner. *Never Going Back: A History of Queer Activism in Canada*.

## Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002.

The gay rights movement has been one of the most radical social movements to sweep the western world in the twentieth century. It has challenged our fundamental social values about sexuality, attacked institutions such as the family and marriage, created new forms of expression in the arts, demanded recognition in law and politics, and helped radicalise aspects of the women's movement. Tom Warner's *A History of Queer Activism* provides an indepth and broad analysis of the gay rights movement, from the rise of advocacy groups to the development of a unique cultural force symbolised by the gay pride parades.

With meticulous detail, Warner charts the rise of advocacy groups in every province and territory in Canada from 1970 to the present day, offering the most comprehensive listing of such organisations available yet in the literature. The institutionalisation of the gay rights movement begins in the wake of the 1969 Stonewall riot in New York city with groups arising in Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver, including the Gay Alliance Towards Equality and a national journal, *The Body Politic*. Dozens of other groups soon emerged across the nation throughout the 1970s. Warner explores their efforts to amend human rights statutes and the criminal code, the establishment of physical spaces to interact with other gay people, and the formation of lesbian-specific groups. Their efforts were consistently opposed by conservative elements in Canadian society, particularly Christian fundamentalists, protecting their own perception of the family, child rearing and sexuality. Among the

many issues dealt with by the gay rights movement were the age of consent laws, censorship of gay expression in literature and the arts, pornography, same sex marriages, child custody, A.I.D.S. and police harassment. The movement also had to deal internally with lesbians' frustrations over male dominance in advocacy groups, the limited options for gays and lesbians in rural areas, the needs of racial and disabled minorities, and the failure to form a national gay rights coalition in the late 1970s.

Not all aspects of the gay rights movement required formal groups concerned with political and legal reform. The author does not exclude from his analysis non-institutionalised forms of the gay rights movement from bookstores to clubs, art, theatre, music and gay pride parades. Gay pride and culture celebrating sex-positive and gender-bending diversity in the form of drag, leather dress, nudity or sex in queer places emerged from major metropolitan areas, especially Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver, but soon flowed beyond the city. The evolution of a unique identity politics has been central to the challenge raised by the gay rights movement since the 1970s.

The core theme of this book is that gay activism has been divided between two ideological groups: liberationists and assimilationists. The former posit a systemic challenge to Canadian society, arguing that the roots of inequality lie in heterosexual conceptions of sexuality, and direct their radical activism to creating a counter-culture and physical spaces celebrating more tolerant approaches to sexuality grounded in a homosexual lifestyle. The latter sought instead to establish equality through legislative change and political lobby, mainly in amending human rights codes and Charter cases. Liberationists reject assimilationist tactics and believe changes in public policy and law are unlikely to affect the lives of most gay people, while claiming assimilationist ideology conforms to heterosexual conceptions of the family and sexual relations. The author acknowledges the weakness of assimilationist tactics, but charges that equal rights advocacy has undermined structural obstacles

to liberationism which is still alive and well in the Canadian gay rights movement.

Unfortunately, the author fails to fully deal with his central argument. Warner is clearly aware of the relevant literature on the subject, quoting works from Miriam Smith, Becki Ross, Gary Kinsman and Bruce MacDougall among others. But he does not consider some of the most important concerns raised by these authors, particularly the implications of diverting scarce resources to costly and often unsuccessful legal battles, and the way in which a legal system deals with complex social issues by reconstructing them to fit a conservative and institutional framework. Warner twice dismisses arguments attacking the equality-seeking approach as too academic and argues that his own experience as an activist suggests it was the only avenue available for effective advocacy in the 1980s. In doing so he conflates the interests of groups such as CLGRO (Coalition for Lesbian and Gay Rights in Ontario) with the entire gay rights movement and fails to consider the argument that the successes enjoyed by middle class urban activists could have been gained at the expense of others. He further avoids delving into the wider literature of social movements that deal with radical versus institutionalised movements. Thirty years of activism in public policy on areas such as pension benefits, child custody or anti-discrimination in employment often only benefit middle or upper class homosexuals who can access these programmes or have the education and resources to defend themselves before a human rights commission. Through these achievements, the CLGRO and others provide the conservative press and political culture with claims to be legitimately dealing with the concerns of homosexuals while avoiding the fundamental basis of sexual inequality. Only a small portion of the book is dedicated to the evolution of a gay sub-culture outside advocacy groups and, in limiting himself predominantly to political activism, the author does not fully relate the true power of the liberationists' approach. The creation of queer spaces and a unique lifestyle are in themselves a powerful political statement with the potential to force society to acknowledge their

legitimate existence outside the manipulative forces of mainstream social and political institutions.

To the author's credit, he accepts the failure of groups like the CLGRO to deal effectively with many of the basic obstacles to gay equality rooted in heterosexual hegemony over sexuality. He concludes by arguing that equality-seeking activism has achieved most of its potential and that a liberationist approach, symbolised in the continued success of the gay pride parades, is the course for future gay rights advocacy. Warner also considers the activities of minorities within the gay movement, including racial minorities and people with disabilities, as practising a form of liberationist activism. In providing examples of how liberationism continues to pervade the gay rights movement, Warner makes a significant addition to a literature he justifiably criticises for being blind to these developments in its focus on the law and equal rights initiatives.

There is no bibliography and the author only skims the literature on the subject. Instead, the book is a compilation of interviews with over a hundred activists and research in the Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives in Toronto. The book is a unique piece of research presented in meticulous detail, and an essential contribution to our understanding of one of the most important movements in twentieth-century Canada.

**Brian Edwards**

## Tracking Disgust

## Robert Rawdon Wilson. *The Hydra's Tale: Imagining Disgust.*

### Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 2002.

Imagine the many-headed Hydra, the mythical swamp-monster of Herakles' second "Labour" whose heads grow redoubled each time one is severed. Outrageously fecund, huge, lethally poisonous and stinking, she is a nightmarish vision that exceeds time, reaching out of classical mythology to the SF horror of *Aliens*. As Robert Wilson demonstrates, she is an apt figure indeed to head a cross-disciplinary exploration of disgust, a tale that he pursues across time and cultures with the vigor and persistence of a Herakles all too aware that the next challenge is not the last. The pursuit is fascinating if, at times, designedly gut-wrenching. Interested always in theory, in explanatory models and their limitations, and claiming tales from personal experience that are interspersed with a vast array of references to psychology, philosophy, anthropology, art and aesthetics, and, above all, to literature, he presents a study that is decidedly scholarly in its attention to ideas and to sources and anecdotal in its mixing of modes.

Why "disgust"? Why devote this amount of research to such a thoroughly unpleasant subject? In one form or another, disgust seems as common a human affect as delight. In one of its registers, the other (or an other) side of desire, it sits close in experience and in the imagination, working as a negative in association with slime, shit, putrescence and death, all of which have their parts in this investigation, and serving, as well, and paradoxically, to sharpen

delight and desire. If it is a learned response that often involves transgression (of the supposedly normal and acceptable), it may be spontaneous (as in our common nose-twisting reaction to stench), or moral or psychosexual in its formation. Certainly, as Wilson demonstrates voluminously, disgust provokes the imagination, throughout history and in ways that are not only important to the definition of experience but that serve, as well, to indicate motivations, preferences and patterns in constructions of behaviour, acceptability and the social fabric. The short answer, then, to the complex question of "why disgust?" is that this is a study of matters elemental to the definition of human action and social formations.

As one would expect, there are seminal figures here: for theories of disgust, Freud, Bakhtin, Bataille, Sartre, Deleuze (and Guattari) and a range of others, and for literary references, Spenser, Dante, Shakespeare, de Sade, Joyce, Lessing, Gibson, Pynchon, Ballard, Rushdie, Ellis and Wallace. But this is a very short list; the study is notable for its extraordinary range of references, many of them developed in finely detailed footnotes. Emphasising the difference between actuality and representation, between first-hand experience of disgust and its representation in art or writing, Wilson proposes five models for its investigation: moral-legal, social constructionist, psychoanalytic, slime-viscosity-dissolution, and transgression. No single model, he suggests, can explain disgust fully and, thereby, there is an appropriate flexibility in his attention to models, writers and ideas. The study is investigatory; it proceeds by a process of informed and eclectic accumulation that serves, simultaneously, to explain and to complicate the field. If disgust involves transgression of boundaries, then, clearly, it involves not only consideration of the composition and status of those boundaries with respect to private-public spheres (and all of the moral, legal, sexual, social factors that might be involved) but also issues of kind, circumstance and degree. If in some primary sense, disgust is physical, and bodily, it also may be manifest as disapproval, outrage, or contempt (which moves response from spontaneous physical revulsion to psycho-intellectual categories - not that these are so simply separable). The link that Wilson emphasises

is the imagination and, particularly given his range and modes, this book may be read as a study of the imagination at work.

There are many confessional, cards-on-the-table, moves:

> For a book such as this one, the subject is everywhere and in everyone. And, although this book is not intended to be an exercise in gonzo cultural theory, the subject is both within and close to the author himself. I have long been interested in disgusting things. Sometimes I strike others as having a genuine enthusiasm, almost teen-age in its spontaneity, for slimy, deliquescent rot. More certainly, I take a writer's pleasure in metaphors, the imaginative constructions that actual disgusting things can make possible. And I have also, I believe, a scholar's interest in the what (or who), why, when and how of disgust (xii).

The scholar's interest is everywhere evident in the multitudinous frames of reference and the investigatory method. His claims to first-hand experience are presented in the narratives with which each chapter begins: of worms in an apple and remembrance of flies, maggots, food and revulsion; childhood, peaches and their metaphoric associations; his experience as a young merchant seaman in San Francisco of a golden shower; riding a motorcycle in total darkness down the Wasatch mountains into Salt Lake City; meeting with a "Sports Bore" on a Toronto-Ottawa train trip; an encounter in a tough bar, the Calico Cat in South Chicago; meetings in Chicago with a brilliant student of philosophy whose horrific self-torment is linked to childhood sexual abuse; and bus travel in Paris where a young female passenger becomes a figure for speculation of the trace. As these anecdotes lead into consideration of literary-aesthetic representations and studies, they not only provide formal variation in this multi-layered text. In addition, they serve to illustrate the claim that disgust, in one form or another, is "everywhere" in human experience, if not directly manifest then lurking ambiguously (like a many-headed Hydra) in our appetites, training, perceptions and responses and

limbering up, vigorous and athletic, for metaphoric displacements in the mazy processes of the imagination at work, which is to say, at play.

Play is an important part of this study - play as slippage, association, invention, duplicity and high-spirited invitation. By turns, cajoled, affronted and entertained, the reader is invited to participate in an exploration that is likely to seem both familiar and strange, a labyrinthine journey into the stuff of nightmare as waking reality together with a reminder about responses and attitudes that lurk, variously, at the surface of consciousness. As a challenging *magister ludi*, the author speaks in the many tongues of a densely-referenced discourse. It is what we might expect of one whose books include an erudite study of play (*In Palamedes' Shadow: Explorations in Play, Game, and Narrative Theory*, 1990) and another of narrative modes in Shakespeare (*Shakespearean Narrative*, 1995). Alongside his considerations of Freud, Bataille, Sartre and co, Wilson's attention to Menippean satire, Bakhtin and the carnivalesque, possible worlds theory, and notions of play and game results in a very lively text that favours diversity over reduction, enquiry over finality.

There are differences between actual experiences of disgust (such as those the author claims in his autobiographical narratives), disgust performances (he refers to Shock Art, the Jim Rose Circus and scumrock theatre) and the multifarious forms, range and registers of its representation. While making these and other distinctions, and while analysing each, Wilson is most attentive to representations of disgust. One of his leading references, *Hamlet* becomes, for example, a multiple resource file for the rhetoric of filth and disease, Menippean satire, deception, psychosexual revulsion, death and dissolution, and fictional world theory. Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses* (with the infamous *fatwa*) is taken to present interwoven operations of hate, disgust, offence, belief systems and threats of repression and violence. Lessing's *The Golden Notebook*, on the other hand, offers a literary example of self-disgust and abjection, details held to be particular but also emblematic and analysed with reference to writings on the body, gender, aversion and the abject. Literary examples predominate but

Wilson's extensive attention to film includes references to the work of such directors as Luis Bunuel, David Cronenberg, David Lynch, Ridley Scott and Martin Scorsese.

The study is presented in seven main chapters that take aspects of the Hydra as headings: The Hydra's Spoor (Loathsomeness), Its Stench (Conceiving Disgust), Its Lair (The Representation of Filth), Its Body (Parts and Machines), Its Many Eyes (Imagining Disgust), Its Heads (Perverse Geometries) and Its Venom (Feeling Abject). The procedure involves interplay - an interweaving of definition and example with the complications of cross-disciplinary frames of reference, and interspersed with such reading guides as the following:

> I am arguing first, that disgust can be simulated, both in actual life and in literature as representation; it can be imitated on the face (as contempt or personal theatre) and it can be transformed, as representation, into high art; second, that the boundaries that locate disgusting objects and acts, that constitute 'dirt out of place,' can be crossed repeatedly, both learned and unlearned; third, that disgust engages the imagination to envision small, often quite minimal, fictional worlds ('disgust-worlds' in which loathsomeness dominates); and finally, that the operations of disgust, though open to analysis from several directions and to several kinds of disciplinary taxonomy, cannot be fully accounted for without reference to the experience of art, and in particular literature (127-8).

The chapter from which this comes ("The Representation of Filth") begins with the young man's meeting with Georgie in San Francisco (the "golden shower" story) and it includes references to Sartre's fiction, de Sade, boundaries and transgression, punk behaviour, Bakhtin and laughter, Kristeva and the abject, Elizabeth Grosz and the body, *Othello*, Joyce's *Ulysses*, Erving Goffman on social encounters, *Antony and Cleopatra*, Bunuel's *The Phantom of Liberty*, *The Winter's Tale*, Baudelaire, Gass, Rilke, *Hamlet*, classical mythology, Faulkner's

*Light in August*, Lessing's *The Golden Notebook*, Spenser, Freud, Dante, Stephen King, Rushdie, Pynchon's *Gravity's Rainbow*, the fiction of Patrick White, and fifteen pages of detailed footnotes.

Robert Wilson is Professor Emeritus from the English Department of the University of Alberta. *The Hydra's Tale* suggests that he is very well-travelled in the world (North America, Europe, Australia and South America in particular) and in the 'worlds' of literature, film, philosophy, psychology, and social analysis. Ambitious and provocative, his study of "disgust" is a huge undertaking, the result of an impressive amount of research and consideration. With a cover that uses Moreau's painting *Hercules and the Lernaean Hydra* and design details that complement the text, the University of Alberta Press has produced a handsome book.

**Tjebbe A. Westendorp**

# Sam Solecki. *The Last Canadian Poet: An Essay on Al Purdy*.

## Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1999.

Writing and publishing a volume of some 300 pages on any poet nowadays, let alone a Canadian poet, is an act of great courage. To expect (or even hope) that enough Canadians, and other readers of poetry, will take the time to concentrate on Al Purdy's texts, and subsequently, to test their reading skills against those of Sam Solecki, is admirable. They will find that Purdy is portrayed, unambiguously, as a prominent member of Canadian society. The reference in the title to the text as an essay will take nothing away from the heroics. It is therefore all the more encouraging to find the study of Al Purdy's poetry as we have it here, an excellent piece of work. Solecki's critical acumen and lively observations, ranging from the classics to contemporary culture, enable the reader to appreciate the depth and the variety of Purdy's poetry. That the writer refers to the collected works as a single poem - he calls it his "Song of Myself" - is appropriate, and instrumental in providing the unity of approach any reader of such a specialised study needs.

Throughout his study Solecki remains close to the text of the poems, though he is not especially acute when it comes to comparing the final text of a poem to earlier drafts. He sometimes promises more than he can deliver, for instance, when his discussion of "Red Fox on Highway 500," in his own words, "helps illuminate how Purdy writes a poem" and "shows the process … by which experience is transformed into lyric" (118). His close analysis of this poem, which incidentally he calls one of his favourites, enriches our appreciation. The references

to earlier drafts are intended to enhance our understanding of Purdy's poetic but they do not contribute to the power of the analysis.

Indeed, he is at his best when he finds Purdy's attitude to life reflected, embodied, or suggested in the poet's technique, placing him squarely in the tradition of William Butler Yeats and Robert Frost. A crucial element in that self-questioning and self-reflexive attitude is the poet's urge to project his personality into all sorts of roles, but both poet and critic take a step backwards when it comes to the final evaluation of the experience. Solecki often finds the self-critical and self-reflexive closure so typical of Robert Penn Warren's later poems.

A reader of *The Last Canadian Poet* who is looking for neat categories or subdivisions of Purdy's collected poems will be disappointed. Solecki is particularly good on the relation of the human to the animal world, many of whose inhabitants haunt the poetry, but he refuses to devote a chapter to "animal poems." His heart is not in such categorisation; witness his attempt to establish a group of "poems in which (Purdy) contrasts his own and his wife's approaches to life," and "poems in which he imagines a representative figure from the past." The tentative phrasing indicates that Solecki is less interested in such divisions than in the associative nature of the poems, in which naturally categories overlap. One might rightly argue that the critical approach is so unified that the reference in the subtitle of the study to "an essay" is perfectly justified.

Let me end on two critical notes, which do not take anything away from my profound enjoyment of the analyses of the poems in this study. In a chapter unhelpfully entitled "Poetry and the Poet" Solecki deals with Purdy's "thinking about poetry." He lists three "constitutive and unresolvable contradictions" (129). First of all, there is a fundamental gap between words and things that prevent the poem from being more than a second-order reality. For holding this belief Purdy is termed "conservative." Seen from this angle the poems are mere narratives, like "a handshake, a letter" and the poet is called "garrulous" and goes in for "casual patter." His frequent use of "et cetera" is a case in point, he argues. All this is not surprising for

a twentieth-century poet. Second, Purdy's poet or artist is always an outsider, who in spite of this epithet "articulates the central concerns and values of his society." Again, we are not surprised. Third, Purdy is highly aware of the difference between himself and Canadian society; as was Victor Hugo to nineteenth-century France or Akhmatova to the Soviet Union. It would take too long to try and set out how these three notions might be seen as underlying Solecki's critical study. I for one can do without such theoretical considerations by a critic who is such a good reader of texts.

The second critical observation is related to this last point. It concerns the opening forty pages in which the very title is a giveaway: "Poetry, Nation, and the Last Canadian Poet." The grand phrases mean very little and the author's elaborate attempt to analyse and discuss all the tortuous language used by others to define what a Canadian is, let alone a Canadian poet, do very little to whet the reader's appetite.

Again, the value of the study is in the confrontation of two minds, a fine poet who is actually Canadian, and an excellent reader, and resides in the fine analyses and corresponding insights. May neither the poet nor the critic be the last of their kind.

# Contributors

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