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## **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.

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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.

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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.

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# Call for Papers

## 2004 ACSANZ Conference

The Association for Canadian Studies in Australia and New Zealand (ACSANZ) is hosting its bi-ennial conference in

Sydney, 23-26 September , 2004.

The Conference Theme is “Learning From Each Other” which we will do in public dialogues on social issues of particular importance to Australians, Canadians, and New Zealanders; panel presentations; and research paper presentations. Conference details will soon be published on ACSANZ’s website at <http://homepage.powerup.com.au/~acsanz/>

ACSANZ is a multidisciplinary association and so encourages paper submissions across the humanities and the social sciences. Comparative research enabling Australians, Canadians and New Zealanders to learn from each other’s experiences is particularly welcomed. Specific fields of interest include – but are not limited to – recent developments in legal politics, the changing role of the military, non-territorial indigenous governance, theorising cultural heritage/museum studies, the problems of modern cities, social health, trade, economics, and management.

Researchers wishing to present their work at the conference should send a one page abstract of their paper by email or fax before 30 June 2004 to:

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## Editorial

The range of topics covered in this issue reflects the dynamic multidisciplinary of Canadian studies as a field. However, this issue of *Australian Canadian Studies* reflects more: the dynamic nature of our Australasian Canadian studies community. The interaction and exchange of people and ideas has always marked our field, and the current issue of ACS shows regional Canadian studies in operation: active, potent and energetic. We feature three papers that were first presented at the ACSANZ conference in Canberra in 2002, while calling for papers for our forthcoming meeting to be held in Sydney in September 2004. Work by visitors to Australia, Geoffrey Simpson and David Staines, thus stands alongside that of Australian-based researchers Don Ross and John Mundy. Collectively these papers address questions of politics, culture and economics integral in the understanding of Canada. In March 2003 Linda Duxbury was a guest speaker at The Sydney Institute where she reported on “Balancing work and family,” and now we present the findings of this research with colleague Chris Higgins. Greg Donaghy visited Canberra in September 2003 and one of his speaking engagements was at the Australian War Memorial where he spoke of Canada, the United States and the Vietnam War. We are also pleased to publish the results of comparative research on indigenous heritage by Roy Jones and Christina Birdsall-Jones, supported by a Canadian Studies Faculty Research Program Award. Our book reviews are enjoyable to read as well as informative, and this issue we further broaden our horizons with the inclusion of a creative piece.

Sonia Mycak



## The Canadian Identity: An Idea in Search of a Reality.

**Plenary address to the ACSANZ Conference on *Converging Futures? Australia and Canada in a New Millenium*, September 2002.**

The Canadian identity is the search for it. As the Canadian literary critic Northrop Frye once wrote, in surveying Canadian literature, the persistent theme was not so much, “Where are we?” but, “Where is here?” This is a more prosaic way of asking, “Who are we?” That question runs through many discussions in Canada about the search for the Canadian identity.

The reason for that question, which is posed today in a variety of overt and subtle ways, is obvious. Canada, unlike Australia, is not an island far removed from other countries. It straddles a continent shared with the United States. Just as Australia’s population largely huddles the coast, its forbidding interior making large-scale settlement difficult, so eighty percent of Canada’s population is strung out along the United States’ border. The United States’ border is less than an hour’s drive from Canada’s three largest cities: Vancouver, Toronto and Montreal.

Canada is therefore not a natural geographic construct. Nor is it, again unlike Australia, a linguistic unit because one-quarter – it used to be more like one-third – of Canada’s population speaks French. To the old Protestant– Catholic cleavages, (not unknown in Australia) were then added in Canada the French– English ones.

Nor is Canada a natural ethnic unit. It has accepted immigrants in vast numbers for most of its history; and today on a per capita basis, it accepts more legal immigrants per year than any other country on

earth. To a population of about 31 million is added each year between 200,000 and 250,000 immigrants, the source countries long since having been other than European ones.

Canada is therefore not a natural geographic, linguistic, religious or ethnic unit. It mocks homogeneity, and always has. It has therefore had to make a virtue of diversity and create political institutions to reflect that diversity, notably a federal system of divided jurisdictions between national and provincial governments. Today, multiculturalism and official bilingualism are demographic realities, institutional and policy ones, and national mythologies. Canada has therefore been called “post-modern,” a country with a heavy identifying structure; or as a journalist-author whom I admire subtitled his book about Canada, “the unbearable lightness of being Canadian.”

With such diversity, embedded in the country from its earliest days, has come conflict. But with the exception of some relatively minor military rebellions against British authority in the 1830s, these conflicts, although intense, have never featured military means. Canada did not experience a civil war as did the United States from 1860 to 1865; a conflict, watched in horror by Canadians, that wound up costing that country more casualties than all of the United States’ other wars combined.

Canada has been – and remains – more than anything else a political creation, an act of political faith but not of the absolutist variety, because any time, and there have been some, when a leader of a movement insisted that there was only one way to define “Canadian,” other groups arose to contest that definition. There could never be in Canada a kind of secular constitutional mythology such as permeated the United States, a mythology that worked well in hammering diversity together in that country after the ghastly Civil War. The notion of ‘anti-Canadianism’ in Canada, *a la* ‘anti-Americanism’ in the United States, is almost oxymoronic. There simply could not be anything like a Commons committee on ‘anti-Canadian activities’ such as the one on ‘anti-American activities’ once created by the United States Congress.

When I say therefore that Canada has been more than anything a political creation, two observations flow naturally from the premise. The first is the centrality of government in creating the institutional and infrastructure arrangements that allowed a country to exist and grow in defiance of so many natural geographic and cultural obstructions. The second is the centrality of politics to the definitional debates about the country. By politics, I mean not theoretical and ideological constructs, although there have been many of those in Canadian politics, but arrangements and conventions and adjustments and compromises that have allowed the country, often with difficulty, to navigate around the shoals and rapids of ethnic, religious and linguistic conflict.

Ideology has always been present in Canadian affairs, but it always proved the graveyard for national political success. Movements and parties contested the politics of arrangements, preferring more ideological prescriptions of left and right. These influenced the tenor of national initiatives, but none of these movements or parties ever captured enough national support in such a diverse land to win political power. That is why for a long time, political scientists referred to Canadian politics as ‘brokerage politics,’ and the supreme practitioner of that art has been, and remains, the Liberal Party of Canada, the most successful political party in the democratic world, having governed for 67 years in the last century. It remains in office today, facing fractured, regionally based opposition parties, none of which remotely threaten the Liberals’ grip on power.

By dismissing ideology as a formula for political success in Canada, I do not mean to discard ideas as important. They remain extremely important, but what makes it difficult for foreigners to understand their role in Canadian affairs is that the large, compelling and often divisive ideas are not the traditional ones of left versus right, or labour versus management, or capitalism versus socialism, but rather ones that relate to my opening line that the Canadian identity is the search for it.

Many of these debates have had a kind of dialectical quality about them, in the sense that they revolved around new ways of defining Canada that arose from essentially negative definitions of who we were not. For a very long time – up until the early 1960s probably – the majority of English-speaking Canadians identified strongly with Great Britain. Many of Canada’s great debates – should we have a Canadian navy or add to the British navy? Should we allow in so many immigrants of non-British stock? Should we have free trade with the United States? – were invariably framed by the impact on the British connection. And yet while the British connection remained strong, Canada within the Commonwealth usually far outstripped Australia in seeking greater latitude for member countries. We were shaped by Britain, but not British, a negative definition.

School children were told, as in Australia, that they were lucky to be part of an Empire that stretched around the globe and that they were heirs to the world’s mightiest and most admirable civilisation. But there was always a negative quality to this affection on our part: the British connection prevented us from being pulled more tightly into the orbit of the neighbouring, pulsating and powerful United States. We would not be Americans, and therefore we would look to Britain for protection, inspiration and role models. As an aside, I might note that Newfoundland, which only joined Canada in 1949, clung to the British connection the most fiercely of all because it ostensibly prevented Newfoundlanders from being pulled more tightly into the orbit of the neighbouring and more powerful Canada. Indeed, during the referendum campaign that resulted in Newfoundland joining Canada, the anti-Confederates who attracted about 49 percent of the vote – a near thing it was for Confederation – used the slogan “Beware the Canadian wolf!”

The Canadians who all along pushed hardest for distinctly Canadian institutions, symbols and approaches were the French-speaking ones. They were not Americans, not Britain-loving, English-speaking Canadians, and despite whatever residual affection they had for France as the mother country of their language and culture, the

French largely abandoned all interest in their old colony once it was lost to Britain in the Seven Years War that ended in 1759. The French-speaking population had been forced by being none of the above to develop their own strong sense of identity, which they retain to this day, and to press against attempts by the English-speaking majority within Canada to impose definitional institutions on the country that smacked of imitation of things British. So that, for example, when Canada went to war in 1914 and 1939, the French Canadians insisted that conscription not be introduced to force them to fight for a mother country they did not consider their own.

French Canadians have therefore been central in these definitional debates about Canada, although English-speaking Canadians have often minimised or not understood the French speakers' contributions. In the last 40 years, for example, many of the most searing debates in Canada have been essentially definitional ones about the Canadian identity, in which French-speaking Canadians played prominent roles. It seems hard to believe now, but the country was roiled in the mid-1960s over ditching a flag with the British ensign in the corner – I leave the comparison to Australia aside – in exchange for one that showed only the maple leaf. We had incessant and highly divisive constitutional debates from the mid-1960s until the early 1990s – debates that featured attempts to incorporate, mollify or confront Quebec nationalism and separatism, to define the responsibilities of the two orders of government, to graft a written bill of rights (called the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms) onto existing legislative protections for rights and the traditions of parliamentary supremacy. We had intense, and sometimes nasty, debates about making both French and English official languages for the federal (and some provincial) governments.

We had an election campaign in 1988 on essentially one issue – free-trade or not with the United States. There was a classic economic dimension to that debate involving the role and scale of the free market, but the debate was also about whether free-trade represented a kind of economic determinism that would inexorably force us to

dilute our national character and so eventually become partners in the United States' republic. The Leader of the Opposition put the matter squarely in the leaders' televised debate in that campaign: "Once a country yields its economic levers ... Then the ability of this country to remain as an independent nation – that has gone forever." His party lost the election, free trade became a reality, but echoes of that declaration still resonate in Canada – although, as I shall explain later, those echoes have faded dramatically as Canadians have re-invented some of the standards by which they define their specificity in North America.

The search for a Canadian identity, even when Britain was the preferred standard by which attitudes and policies were judged, was never far removed from the proximity of the United States. Geography, demography and economics always made it so. From the 1840s to the 1930s, when Canada was closely linked to Britain, millions of Canadians left their country, or passed through it from other countries, to settle in the United States. A hundred years ago, the third and fourth largest Canadian cities, after Montreal and Toronto, were Buffalo, New York, and Detroit, Michigan. When people arrived in Australia, there was no other place to go, except presumably back to Europe. But there was, and is, always another place to head from Canada – south to the United States. The English-speaking Canadian elite once read *Punch*, the *London Illustrated News* and month-old copies of *The Times*, but the majority consumed *Saturday Evening Post* and other United States' magazines. As soon as radio appeared, United States' stars became Canadians ones, just as today many more Canadians watch United States' drama and entertainment programmes than they do equivalent Canadian fare. Popular culture in Canada has always been largely American; and economic opportunity has always beckoned Canadians south, just as New Zealanders arrive in large numbers in Australia.

So even when the British connection brooked large in the Canadian psyche, so did the United States; and as that British connection faded, so the American one grew in importance. And both – the British

connection and the American influence – made it inevitable that the question, ‘Who are we?’ would be answered partly in the negative: that we were not British and we are not Americans.

On the first visit I made some years ago to Australia, I encountered the evocative Australian expression ‘cultural cringe.’ I surmise that the expression is less used nowadays, but it speaks to something common in the Australian and Canadian identities: that success, or even recognition, did not really count until it was achieved somewhere else, especially in the larger English-speaking countries of Britain and the United States. Just as some Australian writers and artists felt they had to flee the country for recognition, stimulation, a wider audience and more money, so many Canadians headed to London, Paris, New York or Los Angeles. And they still do, but what has changed – and for the better – is that in some art forms, notably writing in Canada’s case, it is now possible to remain in Canada and to reach a world-wide audience from there. There is still an element of ‘cultural cringe’ in Canadians’ search for approbation in the United States, but it is smaller than before.

At the risk of stretching comparisons, another one strikes me between Australia and Canada – that the definitions of these countries for too long ignored or neglected the aboriginal element of the two countries. Only in the last generation have education systems provided other than potted, superficial and sometimes racist portrayals of the aboriginal fact in Canada. Until recently, Canada’s diversity excluded serious consideration of the aboriginal presence in Canada. They were largely out of sight, out of mind, most of them living on reserves, under treaties signed long ago, governed by the Indian Act and not even allowed the right to vote. Many of them were taken as children from their homes and placed in ‘residential schools’ organised and financed by the government and churches with the stated ambition of ‘civilising’ and ‘educating’ them in mainstream mores, values, traditions and institutions.

It is only recently therefore that debates about the Canadian identity have begun to incorporate the aboriginal reality, or perhaps I should

say realities, because although they (status and non-status aboriginals, Inuit and Metis, or mixed native–white offspring) represent only four percent of the total population, they are divided into a multiplicity of groups, or ‘nations,’ speaking many tongues. How this yet incomplete incorporation came about is a tangled affair involving successful court challenges – Canadian courts have gone well beyond Australia’s in defining aboriginal title and rights – political battles, better educated and media-savvy aboriginal leadership, a burgeoning population (the aboriginal birth rate is two-and-a-half times the non-aboriginal one), and a halting but nonetheless genuine recognition by most governments that the situation of aboriginals was a national shame.

Into the diversity mix of ‘post-modern’ Canada has therefore recently been added in more tangible ways than before the aboriginal realities. I should say that this has been, and remains, an immensely difficult task, because the assimilative assumptions and institutions for so many millions of immigrants do not apply to aboriginals who were the continent’s original inhabitants. A significant tranche of the aboriginal leadership espouses a mythology of self-governing aboriginal nations within Canada, negotiating ‘nation-to-nation’ with the Government of Canada, a position that underpinned a five-volume royal commission on aboriginal affairs but that the vast majority of Canadians do not accept. Some members of the intelligentsia, legal scholars on aboriginal affairs, jurists and, of course, aboriginal leaders accept this paradigm for relations between aboriginals and non-aboriginals; the majority of Canadians does not. For them, the Canadian identity can include more recognition of aboriginals’ contributions, and a limited form of self-government, but it does not include stretching the national identity to include a multiplicity of domestic sovereignties within Canada. Once again, one of the country’s most important debates is about identity politics.

In such a diverse country, with so few traditional totems of national definition found in more homogenous places, it was inevitable that globalisation would produce reflections on how the world’s greater interconnectedness would affect Canada. Communications in such

a vast and diverse land has always challenged Canadians, as has the search for a distinctive Canadian voice in relationships inevitably framed by larger countries such as the United States and Britain. It is therefore not surprising that some of the leading theorists of communications have been Canadians, the most well known being the fascinating (and for those who have ever tried to read him, incomprehensible) Marshall McLuhan, creator of the phrases the “global village” and “the medium is the message.” Canadians were always going to worry about and reflect upon communications, given their geographic challenges of internal distance and proximity to the United States. To the extent that globalisation is about the interconnectedness of communications, Canadians would be at the centre of thinking about globalisation.

Similarly, Canada is the G-8 country most dependent upon foreign trade, so that its expansion and liberalisation would especially reverberate. And finally, the diversity of Canada and the search for counterweights to the United States made Canada one of the world’s great joiners and creators of international organisations. If there is a club of which Canada could claim, however marginally, to merit membership, it will want to join; if no such club exists, Canada will want to create one. Therefore Canada is a member of, to name a few, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, the North American Aerospace Command, the Organization of American States, the Asia-Pacific Forum, the Commonwealth and La Francophonie, which reflect the country’s varying North American, hemispheric, trans-Atlantic, trans-Pacific, British and French vocations.

To the extent that ‘globalisation’ means ‘Americanisation,’ or at least greater exposure to products, services and demands from the world’s only superpower, it is easy to understand why ‘globalisation’ as ‘Americanisation’ might raise more questions in Canada about the impact of ‘globalisation’ on national identity than elsewhere. Let me give you a few figures without burying you under them to illustrate the point. Canada does 85 percent of its foreign trade with the United States. In the weeks and months following September 11, 2001, it was

the abiding purpose of Canadian policy to meet legitimate United States' security concerns along its northern border – thank God for Canada that none of the terrorists had entered the United States via Canada – while keeping the border open to commerce. About two hundred million Canadians and Americans cross the Canada–U.S. border yearly. United States' investment in Canada far outstrips that of any other country. About twenty thousand Canadians per year leave to work in the United States. The defence of Canada, should it ever need defending, would essentially be American. More than 90 percent of movie screen time, more than 80 percent of popular magazines, and half of prime-time television viewing in Canada is United States' material.

For a long time, this overwhelming American presence produced a prickly Canadian defensiveness and a search for distinctly Canadian institutions. The antidote, for example, to the United States' radio and television presence was the creation of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation and later, Canadian content rules for radio and television, (stricter ones than prevail in Australia). Two national railways were constructed in the nineteenth century to tie the country together in the age of steam. High tariffs were maintained to provide a local market for domestic manufacturers. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, Canadian governments adopted screening mechanisms for foreign – read primarily United States' – investment. A preferential national energy policy gave lower prices to Canadian consumers than American ones. In foreign policy, governments of the day sought a 'third option' to diversify Canadian trade, maintained diplomatic relations with Cuba, recognised China, and played up themes of Third World development. It fell, in other words, to the Canadian government and the institutions it created and the policies it espoused to differentiate Canada from the United States; to use political means, in other words, to protect and enhance the Canadian identity.

Not much of this superstructure remains. Some of it proved too economically costly. Some of it was mocked by technological changes. Some of it became illegal under new liberalised world trading

arrangements. And much of what remained became illegal under the Canada–U.S. Free Trade agreement, since expanded to include Mexico. The dismantling of each part of this edifice to protect and support the Canadian identity was greeted with dismay by self-described nationalists who produced books with melancholy titles. Citing a few will give you the flavour of the discourse: *Lament for a Nation*; *Yankee Doodle Dandy*; *Canada and the American Challenge*; *The Betrayal of Canada*; *Close the 49<sup>th</sup> Parallel*; *Silent Surrender*.

And yet, a fascinating new development has occurred. Most of the old totems of Canadian nationalism are broken or destroyed, except for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. The old standards by which one was judged a ‘nationalist’ have vanished. Never has the country been more locked into a continental economic embrace. The same United States’ popular culture permeates the country. One would have thought, therefore, that the sense of being Canadian, of having a separate identity in North America, would have weakened. Yet the reverse has occurred. A psychologist might analyse this unexpected development as nothing more than the narcissism of small differences being exaggerated by a people who know in their bones that they are ersatz Americans, cannot admit the truth of their reality, and so harp on small differences to make themselves feel better, or at least to provide some kind of reassuring answer to the old question ‘Who are we?’

There may be something of this, because Canadians and Americans do share many values and especially in times of crisis find out what they have in common. But there is much more to this surprising development. There is more pride in genuine Canadian accomplishments by writers and artists, sports figures and business people that do not have to be affirmed by recognition overseas, although that is welcome. Canadians have accepted North American free trade, understood that it cannot and should not be reversed, and do not fear a United States’ takeover of their economy. They have made a distinction, perhaps a foolish one in the long term, but a distinction nonetheless, between economic integration and political

and cultural homogeneity. They have rejected, in other words, the arguments of economic determinists that political integration and cultural dilution inexorably follow tighter economic ties. Perhaps, as I said, the determinists will eventually be proven correct, but to this point they have not. And the comparison with the European Union sometimes advanced by those determinists is as yet unconvincing, because whereas in Europe decisions were made to move towards a political union, no such decisions have been made in North America; indeed, the very opposite commitments were made. Very slowly, and sometimes grudgingly, new domestic institutions have taken hold, such as official bilingualism, multiculturalism, the public health-care system, the flag, equalisation payments to poorer provinces and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and have collectively provided new definitional standards by which Canadians identify themselves. Of course, each is argued over domestically, but none of these, and other definitional policies, are in jeopardy of being replaced.

A word should be said about the Charter and the Canadian identity, because its impact has been paradoxical. The Charter has been in one sense the single most 'Americanising' institution in recent Canadian history. It was clearly inspired by the United States' example of a written bill of rights that trumped legislative decisions. It both reflected and abetted a proliferation of 'rights talk,' or rights consciousness in Canada. It has sent to the courts questions that in the pre-Charter age would have been the exclusive prerogative of legislatures. It has elevated the importance and standing of judges, and placed them much more in the public limelight. Americans had lived for a long time with these consequences of a written, constitutionally entrenched bill of rights; Canadians have experienced these consequences only in the last two decades. Most Canadians are not aware of how 'Americanising' this Charter is on the way they frame and debate public issues, and on its impact on the role and operations of government, but the impact has been, in my view, quite dramatic.

But on the other hand, the Charter is now viewed as the country's most important national symbol, more important than the monarchy to be sure, but also bilingualism, multiculturalism, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, the CBC and parliamentary government. For Canadians, it has become an exceedingly important piece of the identity puzzle, despite its American roots and Americanising influence on the country's political culture. That Canadians are now 'rights-bearing' citizens – although they were in a different way before the Charter – strikes them as desirable and affirming of their national identity. They would apparently feel better having their rights protected, or at least defined, by judges they do not know and courts over which they have no influence than by legislatures they elect and politicians they so little respect.

I do not mean to suggest that the search for the Canadian identity is over, that we have somehow settled to everyone's evident satisfaction the answer to the question 'Who are we?' In one sense, given Canada's history and geography, that question will always be asked in one form or another. Perhaps, too, we have been asking it for so long that we can never fully escape from it. And there are worldwide forces that require us to ask it anew as the world moves perhaps towards three or four currencies, as more barriers to trade fall, as more constraints are placed on governments' capacity to constrain market forces, and as technology mocks traditional means of protecting local cultures. Relatively lightly populated countries such as Canada and Australia will always be measuring themselves against larger ones from which arrive so many impulses and pressures. It is far better for such countries to meet those pressures with a measure of confidence in their own worth and accomplishments, and therefore not to withdraw into protective shells or manifest a prickly inadequacy. Canada is groping towards that confidence, defining itself less and less by what it is not, while always asking the question, but now with somewhat greater confidence in knowing part of the answer, 'Who are we?'



## Culture is Our Business.

**Plenary address to the ACSANZ Conference on Converging Futures? Australia and Canada in a New Millenium, September 2002.**

When I was planning what I was going to say this afternoon, I thought about a line Marshall McLuhan used to say to us in class: “Culture Is Our Business.” And I went back to his 1970 book of the same name, and I found nothing there that I could use, except for a brief author’s note: “The book title can be arranged in several ways, beginning with ‘Business Is Our Culture.’ Enunciated with an urbane drawl: ‘Culture Is *Our* Business.’ Various kinds of sneering stress can be used to capture the fact that ‘Culture Is Our Business!’ It can be said straight from the shoulder, with a thud: ‘*Culture* Is *Our* Business’” (McLuhan 1970, 8).

Well, whatever way you say it, McLuhan wanted it to be “Culture Is Our Business.” And his classes, his lectures, his conversations outside class always took as the unwritten rule: Culture Is Our Business — that is, Our Culture, Our Identity, is Our Business, Our Way of Life.

In Canadian fiction, which I shall use as my example, the history is about 100 years old. In the early days of the twentieth century, all our fiction was published south of the border, in the United States, and some copies were shipped up to Canada. Our population has always been about one tenth the size of the United States, and their culture was already fully developed when our own was just being created. Lucy Maud Montgomery’s now classic *Anne of Green Gables* was published by L.C. Page of Boston.

By the 1940s, this was still the case. Hugh MacLennan's first published novel, *Barometer Rising*, came out from an American press in 1941. His two earlier forays into novel writing had both been turned down by presses across the United States. *Barometer Rising* came out to a noticeable daze in the literary market, but it was about the Halifax explosion, and that later meant a disaster movie. MacLennan recalls:

I received a telegram informing me that two Hollywood studios were interested in my first novel. I saw dollar signs all over the Windsor Station the night I boarded that train for New York, and there were still more of them hanging from the skyscrapers when I drove in a taxi to the old Ritz-Carlton to meet the representative of the studio which was the more interested of the two. He was a man exceedingly affable, though somewhat boiled-looking about the eyelids, and before ordering a thirty-dollar lunch he gave me two cocktails. He also told me the deal was off.

'It's like this,' the man explained. 'This book of yours, it's about this town Halifax and who's ever heard of Halifax down here except as a word nicely brought-up kids say when what really they mean is hell? 'Go to Halifax' is what nicely brought up kids down here say. Well, of course, this wouldn't make any difference if this was an ordinary book. We could work a switcheroo. But the trouble is in this book of yours Halifax gets itself blown up in the climax of the story. We fooled around with a switcheroo even on that. We thought of the Johnstown Flood, but that happened so long ago that who cares, so we canned the whole idea.' He looked at me in sincere friendship and said: 'It's tough, but that's how it is. All you've got to do next time is set the scene in the United States and then we'll be really interested.'

Being naïve in those days, I asked what difference the locale of a story makes so long as the story is good.

‘Well, take Paris,’ he said, ‘that’s okay for one kind of story. Take London — that’s okay for another kind. But take Canada — that’s not okay because what do Americans think when they hear that word ‘Canada’ except cold weather and Mounties or maybe when they hear it they don’t know what to think. Now this is not the way it ought to be and it’s tough, but look at it like this. A boy meets a girl in Paris, one thing leads to another and they, well, it’s interesting. But a boy meets a girl in Winnipeg and they swing into the same routine and who cares? I’m not saying it’s not just as good in Winnipeg as it is in Paris. Maybe it’s even better because in Winnipeg what else is there to do? But for the American public you’ve got to see it’s a fact that Winnipeg kind of kills interest in the whole thing.’

I protested (I was very naïve in those days) that my books tended to be serious, what you might call social novels.

‘That’s exactly what I’ve been trying to say,” he explained. “The way you write, if you want a big market down here, you just haven’t got much of a choice.

The way you write you’ve got to make it American.’  
(MacLennan 1960, 116-117)

The effect of all this on a young writer’s mind is incalculable!

In 1941, too, appeared Sinclair Ross’s *As for Me and My House*, now regarded as a major step in our literary development. It, too, came out in the United States and suffered a similar fate. It was resurrected by the New Canadian Library and has enjoyed remarkable sales — but not when it was first published.

In 1947 W.O. Mitchell’s *Who Has Seen the Wind* appeared. It was published in Toronto and in Boston. The Toronto edition was the longer one, the American edition cut 7,000 words, and the American edition lasted through the many paperback editions until three years

ago when the New Canadian Library gave back the 7,000 words to the original text.

This was our culture in those days, dictated to some degree by events south of the border. However, the publication of our writers began to be felt in the 1950s. First of all was the creation in 1957 of the Canada Council, which supported the arts and fostered a naturalised place for fiction, non-fiction, poetry and drama. The same year the New Canadian Library was founded to bring into print cheap paperback editions of our culture of the past and of the present. Then, in 1959, the journal *Canadian Literature* appeared. All three major developments of the later 1950s have grown and flourished.

And in the 1960s we suddenly had the first books published by Margaret Atwood and Alice Munro and Margaret Laurence, Rudy Wiebe and Robert Kroetsch, Timothy Findley and Michael Ondaatje — writers from across the country being published in their own country. As a consequence, in 1972 Margaret Laurence offered this analysis of the literary quality of her country:

...at one time it was extremely difficult to be a Canadian writer. We still had for many, many years a kind of colonial mentality, a great many people felt that a book written by a Canadian couldn't possibly be good. It had to come from either New York or the other side of the Atlantic to be any good. This whole cultural climate has changed incredibly, and particularly in the last decade. My first book was published in 1960, and the change in those twelve years in the whole cultural situation in Canada has been enormous. Canadian writers are probably in a better situation now than they have ever been before. Very few Canadian writers of any seriousness or worth do not find a considerable readership in their own country.

Around this time I kept thinking of Australia, and the delight in not having a border with a grown-up culture

right beside you. And novelists like Patrick White were here, and I was jealous. And movies like *Gallipoli* were being made here, and I knew — and I still know — that a Canadian equivalent would be impossible to make. I thought that Australia had such a defined culture, and we in Canada were struggling. (Gibson 1973, 198)

It was in 1982, when I happened to be lecturing in Sweden, that I realised something very enlightening. Per Gedin, a great publisher there and a great publisher of English fiction in translation, said that he no longer sent his scouts to New York or London; those cultures, he said, offered nothing new or exciting. Where he sent his scouts were to Australia, South Africa and Canada: South Africa because it was apartheid and that brought it much attention, and Australia because it had already won a Nobel Prize and so was now being examined. Then he said that Canada had no attention being paid to it, and perhaps it was the most interesting country because its literature would develop and others would someday pay attention.

And pay attention they have. In the past decade, for example, we have won two Booker Prizes, the Orange Prize, the Pulitzer Prize, the National Critics Award and the Dublin IMPAC Prize, and all these are from outside our own country.

Canada has become a world-class literature, we are fond of stating, but we have done this while world attention was being paid elsewhere. Perhaps that is one of the glories of the so-called colonial mentality and its aftermath: if no one pays strict attention to what you are doing and you can go on doing it, then you can become something of your own while attention is being paid elsewhere.

But in this survey, where do I want to stop? Finally, I want to stop with the fifties, with the momentous changes that occurred with the founding of the Canada Council. This instrument of our public consciousness, this agency of the federal government which is at arm's length from the federal government, this Council effectively fostered and developed the programmes that have led to the explosion of Canadian literature on the public scene. The Council gives

grants to publishers and artists; it fosters the development of literary programmes throughout the country; it empowers funding of the composition, performance, publication and research in the arts; it awards grants on no other basis but quality — it awards grants equally to francophones and anglophones and allophones. Internal policy of the Council is kept free from political interference, and peer review is the measure of judgment. I can say that I have not always agreed with the Council's final decisions, but they have held firm to their policy, protected by juries of the writers' peers.

What came first, the chicken or the egg? What came first, the Canada Council or culture? It is true that the Council fostered, developed, promoted our culture. It is also true that the culture was already there, waiting to be developed, waiting to be distributed throughout the country. The Council and culture work in tandem, protecting and promoting the culture that is uniquely and definitively Canada.

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## “A Terrible Responsibility:”

### Canada, the United States and the Vietnam War.

Lyndon Johnson ignored Mike Pearson. Over lunch, the president talked on the phone and ordered his aides about while Canada's 14th prime minister, Lester B. Pearson, waited for the outburst he knew was coming. Since being summoned to Camp David that April 1965 morning to answer for a speech that dared question American bombing in Vietnam, Pearson had dreaded the encounter. After their meal, the towering Texan took Pearson by the arm and led him into the garden. From a distance, Canadian Ambassador Charles Ritchie watched the pantomime as the two men talked in the sunshine. The president “strode the terrace, he sawed the air with his arms, with upraised fist he drove home the verbal hammer blows ... from time to time, Mike attempted a sentence — only to have it swept away on the tide” (Ritchie 1983, 79-80).<sup>1</sup> Thus did Canada's hapless prime minister discover first hand the perils of meddling in what had become by the mid-1960s “America's war.”

But the war in Vietnam was also Canada's war — Canadians were there long before the Americans and stayed almost as long. Canadian attitudes, objectives and roles were sometimes similar but more often than not, they differed. From Ottawa's perspective, these differences, which grew steadily as the war progressed, increasingly transformed the war into a North American problem — a diplomatic exercise in “bilateral containment.” While Uncle Sam struggled to contain communism in Southeast Asia, Ottawa wondered how to contain the war, and keep it from “infecting” (to use the rhetoric of containment)

bilateral relations in North America.

Canada reluctantly appeared in Southeast Asia in the summer of 1954. Earlier that spring, France, which had controlled Indochina since the nineteenth century, was soundly defeated by Ho Chi Minh's communist-led nationalists at Dien Bien Phu. After several years of colonial as well as civil war, recently overlaid by the cold war, France was finally forced to come to terms. To save French face, Indochina was added to the agenda of the Geneva Conference, an international gathering considering the general problem of Asian security as part of the effort to reach a political settlement for the Korean War. Canada had fought in Korea and was at Geneva. But as the discussion shifted to Indochina, the secretary of state for external affairs, Lester B. (Mike) Pearson, headed home. There he assured the prime minister, Louis St. Laurent, "that it has been made clear to all ... that we have not, and do not expect to have, any special obligation in respect to Indochina."<sup>2</sup> Pearson was not clear enough.

At Geneva, the discussions on Indochina eventually resulted in a truce for each of the three Indochinese states — Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam. In the last, the settlement handed Ho Chi Minh and the communists control of Vietnam north of the 17th parallel, and required them to withdraw from Laos, Cambodia and South Vietnam. Refugees could settle in either half of Vietnam, where a national election was scheduled for 1956 with a view to reuniting the country. An international commission of three powers — one communist, one Western and one neutral — would supervise the cease-fire. To Ottawa's immense surprise, it was nominated as the Western member of a troika that included communist Poland and non-aligned India.<sup>3</sup>

St. Laurent's government had little interest in things Asian, an attitude immeasurably strengthened by the recent and difficult war in Korea. It was haunted by the fear that Asia might divide the Western alliance that defended Europe and North America against the Soviet foe. Ultimately, however, Ottawa knew where its duty lay. Though a firm member of the Western alliance, Canada was untouched by the taint of European colonialism and free of

the hysterical anti-communism that sometimes marked American foreign policy. These were, Canadian policymakers agreed, important qualities to be deployed in pursuit of peace in Southeast Asia. After consulting Washington — which had not signed the Geneva ceasefire agreements — and learning that it was indeed anxious for Canada to serve, Ottawa announced that it would accept membership on the International Commission for Supervision and Control — more commonly, the ICC — in July 1954.

Pearson instructed the Canadian delegation carefully. Although Canada was undoubtedly a Western nation, the delegation should operate with “objectivity, impartiality and fairness.”<sup>4</sup> It should be cautious in its contacts with the French and the Americans, and try to get along with the Indians, who chaired the commission and supplied most of its administrative staff. These were sensible directions, and initially at least, the ICC exceeded expectations. It effectively oversaw such technical aspects of the truce as troop withdrawals, exchanges of civilian internees, and the establishment of “fixed teams” along the border to monitor the flow of arms and munitions. Even the crisis caused when Hanoi tried to halt the exodus of Catholic refugees southward in early 1955 was eventually resolved through negotiations.

While American observers thought that Canada was not acting forcefully enough, the Poles found the Canadians fair and impartial. “In this period of work with my Indian and Canadian colleagues,” recalled one Polish delegate,

I was struck by their loyal cooperation. It was a period when most of the cases were against the Southern authorities; whenever there was justifiable suspicion that [Saigon] was treating [its] citizens in an inhumane manner, the Canadian delegates never hesitated in condemning the crimes (Bothwell 2000-2001, 94).

The Canadians too considered the commission’s early work useful and fruitful. “On balance,” Sherwood Lett, a Vancouver judge and head of the Canadian delegation, wrote in July 1955, “I think it is fair to conclude that a substantial degree of success has so far been achieved

by the Commission ... there has been no renewal of hostilities, and the chances of [their] occurring are a good deal more remote now than when the Commission first arrived.”<sup>5</sup>

Even as Lett scribbled his report to Ottawa, this relatively happy state of affairs was drawing to an end. The new president in Saigon, Ngo Dinh Diem — fiercely nationalist, rabidly anti-communist and devoutly Catholic — declared South Vietnam an independent republic in the fall of 1955, and scotched the idea of joint national elections. He soon turfed the French out, invited the Americans in, and ransacked the ICC. As the ceasefire agreements collapsed into deadlock in 1955–56, Canadian officials were forced to reconsider Canada’s future role. This was no easy task: “The unhappy dilemma in which we are placed,” wrote John Holmes, the assistant under-secretary for Far Eastern affairs, “is that there are abundant reasons for our seeking to get the Commissions out of Indochina ... but on the other hand, it would be a terrible responsibility to break the delicate structure on which the peace in Asia might depend.”<sup>6</sup> Pearson agreed, and in early 1956, he indicated that Canada would remain in Vietnam.

From 1956 to 1960, the uncertain peace held. American military aid for Diem flowed into South Vietnam, while communist countries channelled similar help to Hanoi. Meanwhile, the Commission drifted, launching futile investigations into cease-fire infractions and endlessly debating the finer points of international law. The experience disillusioned many Canadian diplomats, who grew increasingly sceptical about the ICC and the prospects of ever accommodating Ho Chi Minh. Supported by the Polish delegation, Hanoi proved adept at manipulating the truce agreement to pile complaint after complaint onto South Vietnam. In contrast, Saigon’s charges of Northern subversion — increasingly apparent after Hanoi renewed the war in the South in 1959 — were shunted aside and buried in the ICC’s Legal Committee.

The process of disillusionment was hurried along by the harsh and unfamiliar living conditions that Canadian staff faced in Indochina.

The drain on Canadian resources was relentless and exhausting. Between 1954 and 1971, fully one-third of the officers of the Department of External Affairs served in Southeast Asia. Conditions were primitive, and as a result postings lasted only a year, and families were normally left behind. The impact on morale was caught in a 1964 report by the Department's inspection team. "Virtually all members of the staff in Saigon," it wrote, "spend a good deal of their free time in air-conditioned bars and cafés rather than in their hot, bleak hotel rooms. This inevitably gives rise to intimacy with the bar girls and more often than not ends up with one girl sharing the members bed and board" (Bothwell 2000-2001, 98).

As morale plummeted and frustration with the ICC increased, Canada inclined toward the American position. John Diefenbaker's Conservative government, which had replaced St. Laurent's Liberals in the spring of 1957, was anxious to demonstrate that Hanoi's subversive activities were at least partly responsible for the growing violence in Vietnam. At the same time, Ottawa was convinced that the ICC should not condemn the United States for its growing military role in South Vietnam since American help was obviously necessary to deal with Northern subversion. The Canadian delegation was able to win over its Indian colleagues on both issues, and the ICC issued majority reports in 1960 and 1961 that reflected the Canadian — and the Western — position. Briefly, the Indians and the Canadians cooperated again in 1962, to produce a balanced majority report that condemned North Vietnam for "inciting, encouraging and supporting hostile activities." The report also criticised American military assistance as prohibited by the cease-fire agreement — the price of India's cooperation. Ottawa hoped the compromise report might give the ICC some legitimacy as the violence in Vietnam steadily increased. But the ink was barely dry when the commission lapsed into inactivity.

Indochina was not very high on Pearson's list of priorities when he was elected prime minister in May 1963. That soon changed. Washington's inability to persuade Hanoi that it would not permit a

communist victory in South Vietnam drew Ottawa deeper into the crisis in the spring of 1964. In an April meeting with Pearson and his foreign minister, Paul Martin, the American secretary of state, Dean Rusk, asked for Canada's help in ensuring that Hanoi understood the United States' position. Rusk stressed that the United States was not anxious to escalate the war, but wanted Hanoi to know "that it would be wrong for [it] to expect that the United States were getting discouraged and were thinking of pulling out." Rusk asked Blair Seaborn, who was soon to become Canada's representative on the ICC, to act as an intermediary between Washington and Hanoi. The Canadians readily agreed (DFAIT 1964a).<sup>7</sup>

Despite the accommodating position adopted by Pearson and Martin, Rusk suspected that Ottawa would place clearly defined limits on its cooperation. He was right. In late May, Pearson met secretly with president Johnson in New York to review Seaborn's mission. The prime minister backed the president's determination to avoid withdrawing from Vietnam and endorsed the use of conventional bombing, provided the "action could be carefully limited and directed [to] the interdiction of supply lines from North to South." He cautioned Johnson "that any drastic escalation would give great problems both in Canada and internationally."<sup>8</sup>

Seaborn's first trip to North Vietnam calmed Canadian fears. In a meeting with the North Vietnamese prime minister, Pham Van Dong, Seaborn delivered the American message, which underscored the administration's determination to defend South Vietnam, the consequences that would follow continued aggression, and the material benefits that would flow to Hanoi from a peaceful settlement. Although the message resulted in no change in Hanoi's position, Ottawa was pleased that Pham Van Dong was ready to meet Seaborn again and that a channel had been established between Washington and Hanoi (Delworth). For different reasons, Washington was also grimly satisfied with these results. Seaborn's report confirmed the American view of an intransigent North Vietnam and the need to carry the war northward (Herring, 118–19). In August 1964, the

United States was given cause for action when the administration alleged that North Vietnamese torpedo boats had attacked the *U.S.S. Maddox* in international waters off the coast of North Vietnam.

From the Canadian perspective, the American reaction to the Gulf of Tonkin crisis was again reassuring. Rusk, on Johnson's instructions, informed Pearson personally of the attack and promised "that the retaliation was relevant to the provocation and to the attack" (L.B. Pearson 1975, 137–38). Well within the limits established by Pearson and Martin in the spring of that year, United States' bombing strikes in the fall of 1964 had little immediate impact on official Canadian attitudes. If anything, by signalling the American intention to respond militarily to North Vietnamese aggression, the crisis reinforced Ottawa's inclination to lend Washington a helping hand. Nowhere, perhaps, was this more apparent than on the ground in Vietnam, where the Canadian representative on the ICC redoubled his efforts to have the commission "take account of communist infringements of [the] Geneva Agreement, and build up a record of meaningful findings" (DFAIT 1964b).

Even as it brought Canada's public posture more closely into line with Washington's more pugnacious attitude, Ottawa was beginning to worry about the course of American policy. Pearson was especially concerned. His January 1965 meeting with Johnson at the LBJ Ranch in Texas stripped away the veneer of correctness that had defined their first two meetings and exposed their profound differences in outlook and temperament. Dressed in a formal black suit and diplomat's homburg, Pearson was discomfited on arriving to discover the president in a cowboy suit. A barrage of television cameras awaited the two men, whose meeting began poorly when Johnson introduced Pearson as "prime minister Wilson." Dinner was a hurried and informal affair: steak and catfish on the same plate. "General Macarthur would not have approved, nor, I suspect," Pearson observed, "John Kennedy" (L.B. Pearson 1975, 126–27). The visit left him feeling deeply disturbed.

In February 1965, the war entered a new and more dangerous phase

when Washington responded to a communist raid on an American base with a large and intensive bombing campaign. Pearson tried to discuss the crisis with Johnson over the phone but was rebuffed. As rumours concerning the use of napalm and nerve gas made the rounds in early March, the international pressure on Pearson, who was widely assumed to have Washington's ear, grew steadily. During a meeting with the prime minister, U.N. Secretary General U Thant begged Pearson to use his influence "to convince [the] Americans that no lasting settlement in Vietnam could be achieved by [the] use of force alone" (DFAIT 1965). At home, the bombing brought together an increasingly vocal anti-war movement. Disproportionate among their numbers were the intellectuals and younger members of Canadian society whom Pearson wished to attract to the Liberal Party. Gradually, the prime minister moved toward the idea of making public his concern about American bombing.

Still very much undecided on his next step, the prime minister asked Marcel Cadieux, the under-secretary of state for external affairs, to incorporate the idea of using a bombing pause, which would test Hanoi's willingness to talk, into a speech he was scheduled to deliver at Temple University in Philadelphia. Paul Martin first tried to dissuade the prime minister and then cautioned "that a proposal of this kind would be more effective if it were put forward, in the first instance, privately to president Johnson" (Martin 1965). Pearson agreed, and a White House meeting was immediately arranged.

At the end of March 1965, however, Pearson met with Marcus Childs, the chief Washington correspondent of the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, whom he had known since the 1940s. Childs warned Pearson that "Johnson was embarked upon on a course which ... would bring the United States perilously close to war with Communist China and the U.S.S.R." (Hilliker and Barry 1995, 371–72). Isolated and encircled by a small group of like-minded advisors, the president needed to hear a different point of view. Childs reassured Pearson that the general line of his speech "would not be resented" in Washington." The prime minister decided to go ahead. On April 2, Pearson addressed

the graduating class of Temple University. Firmly located within the context of continued Canadian support for American objectives in Vietnam, Pearson's suggestion for a bombing pause was decidedly understated:

After about two months of air strikes, the message should now have been received loud and clear... There are many factors which I am not in a position to weigh or even know. But there does appear to be at least the possibility that a suspension of such air strikes against North Vietnam, at the right time, might provide the Hanoi authorities with an opportunity, if they wish to take it, to inject some flexibility into their policy without appearing to do so as the direct result of military pressure (L.B. Pearson 1975, 138).

The president's reaction was immediate. Pearson had violated one of Johnson's rudimentary but sacrosanct political precepts: "you don't piss on your neighbour's rug" (Hillmer and Granatstein 1991, 231). Moreover, the prime minister's timing could not have been worse. The Canadian's transgression occurred in the midst of an internal debate over the direction of American policy, a discussion in which Johnson perceived himself as the moderate, resisting hard-line demands for a greater American role in Vietnam. The president, worried that his own position had been undercut, invited the prime minister for lunch. After a tense meal, Johnson led Pearson into the garden for a frank talk. "We are confident," an American official observed later with deliberate under-statement, that "Pearson sensed [the] president's displeasure" (LBJ Library).

Pearson — understandably — was now sensitive to the risks associated with meddling in "Johnson's war," and was inclined to wait and take his cue from Washington. Martin was not. Johnson's July 1965 decision to send large numbers of American troops to Vietnam alarmed the foreign minister, who thought the situation warranted extraordinary efforts to get talks underway. Martin was also anxious to respond to growing public doubts about American policy in Vietnam.

Moreover, he sought the kind of personal diplomatic triumph that would secure his position as the front-runner in the undeclared race to succeed Pearson. In early 1966, Martin approached Pearson with a proposal to send Chester Ronning, a retired Canadian diplomat and “old China hand,” to Hanoi. Pearson was sceptical, but allowed Martin his head (Donaghy 1999b, 130–49).

As the prime minister suspected, American officials greeted the projected mission with undisguised hostility. Most American officials viewed Ronning, who was widely known to be critical of American policy in Asia, with unfriendly suspicion. Martin’s sponsorship was also a problem. United States’ officials were uncomfortable with his tendency to “politicise everything” and were inclined to discount him and his diplomacy.<sup>9</sup> Rusk dismissed the Canadian initiative. “Quite frankly,” he assured the American ambassador to Saigon, “I attach no importance to [Ronning’s] trip and expect nothing out of it” (Herring, 176).

The Ronning missions failed to produce much of a breakthrough. Ronning returned from his first visit to Hanoi in March 1966 with an uncertain suggestion from the North Vietnamese prime minister, Pham Van Dong, that a bombing halt might result in direct negotiations. Ronning was delighted with this apparent opening and hurried to Washington to debrief the State Department. There, however, the discussion turned on the question of the relationship between Pham Van Dong’s offer and an earlier North Vietnamese declaration linking a bombing halt to the acceptance of the North Vietnamese position. Confronted by the assistant secretary of state for Far Eastern affairs, William Bundy, Ronning’s certainty wilted and he admitted that “he might be entirely wrong” (Donaghy 2002, 135). Washington reasonably interpreted this to mean that “on balance, [Ronning] frankly did not himself think anything significant had emerged from his visit” (Herring, 179).

Martin was disappointed and angry at Washington’s lack of enthusiasm. He phoned Bundy, and upbraided him for failing to respond in a more forthcoming manner and pressed him to mount a

second mission (DFAIT 1966a).<sup>10</sup> The Americans were anxious to defuse Martin's anger and reluctantly gave in, but made it clear that their position remained unchanged. By the middle of May 1966, this second mission too was fraught with tension. In order to emphasise the Canadian nature of the initiative and preserve Ottawa's local standing in Vietnam, Martin insisted on briefing South Vietnam about the mission (DFAIT 1966c and 1966d). American officials in both Washington and Saigon were "disturbed" by this Canadian effort to insert themselves into a relationship that they regarded with proprietary interest (Herring, 193). In turn, Martin was distressed to learn from published reports in early June that the United States had conveyed the sense of the second Ronning message directly to Chinese officials in Poland. Indeed, American representatives had gone much further and had explained that the United States would stop the bombing in exchange for a halt in the infiltration of North Vietnamese troops and equipment (Herring, 193).<sup>11</sup>

Canada's representative in Saigon observed that Ronning's message now lacked any new elements and that the mission was destined to fail. Washington, he asserted perceptively, had already reached this conclusion and had adjusted its strategy accordingly. "The Americans appear to be putting Hanoi behind the eight-ball again and to be escalating what was allegedly a serious and practical cease-fire overture into a peace offensive reminiscent of their campaign last January" (DFAIT 1966e). Pearson was distraught. "It would be a sad ending to our initiative in this matter," he telegraphed Martin, "if we became merely an instrument of USA propaganda or for putting [North Vietnam] on the spot" (DFAIT 1966f). Martin insisted that the mission proceed but again Ronning discovered no flexibility in Hanoi's position.

The Ronning missions and the unseemly bickering between Bundy and Martin that accompanied them had two important consequences. In Washington, the experience fuelled concerns in the White House and the State Department about the decline in public support in

Canada for American policy in Vietnam and the effect that this might have on bilateral relations. More important, in Ottawa, the missions undermined Pearson's confidence in Martin and he did not try to hide his distress (Gordon 1966). In the fall, he told Walter Gordon that Martin's views on foreign policy no longer mattered (English 1992, 347, 357). A few months later, he remarked to Paul Hellyer, the minister of national defence, that he "wanted to get Paul Martin out of External Affairs ... [he] is getting too involved in the Vietnam thing to the exclusion of our overall relations with the U.S." (Hellyer 1990, 209).

But Martin would not leave, and Pearson could not push him. Increasingly, however, the prime minister assumed control over Canadian policy and forced Martin to moderate his approach to Vietnam. This hardly reconciled Canadian and American differences over Vietnam, but at least it minimised and contained them, largely removing Southeast Asia as a source of bilateral tension. The struggle to sustain this moderate posture, which won few friends on either side of the border, became the central feature of Pearson's approach to the Vietnam War during the final eighteen months of his mandate.

One might have expected the selection of Pierre Trudeau as Pearson's successor in April 1968 to signal a shift in Canadian policy. Trudeau was sceptical of cold war dogma and came to power determined to conduct a searching foreign policy review. He was critical of the American role in Asia and questioned Pearson's attachment to international peacekeeping missions. But Trudeau was a realist, and he was unlikely to risk alienating the U.S. without some compensating *quid pro quo*. Indeed, when president Richard Nixon launched a renewed bombing campaign against North Vietnam in April and May 1972, Trudeau remained silent. When the campaign was broadened to include Hanoi, the prime minister even argued that one could hardly criticise the U.S. when North Vietnam had 12 divisions fighting in the South (Granatstein and Bothwell 1990, 52).

Trudeau's detachment served him well between 1968 and 1972. As Nixon and his national security advisor, Henry Kissinger, struggled in

Paris to negotiate their way out of Vietnam, Trudeau refrained from lecturing the Americans. The subject was not even raised privately during his 1969 and 1971 visits to Washington. However, the prime minister eventually discovered that he too could not remain aloof from the war forever. The October 1972 federal election reduced his government to a minority and exposed him to domestic pressure for a parliamentary resolution condemning the latest round of American bombing. Anticipating an opposition motion, Trudeau moved his own resolution when Parliament assembled in January 1973. Nixon was livid. In Washington, the Canadian Embassy was isolated and word circulated that Canada was now on the president's "shit list." The White House and State Department were suddenly off-limits to Canadian diplomats (Granatstein and Bothwell 1990, 53–54).

The break was more apparent than real. Most American diplomats realised that Trudeau's hand was forced and bilateral business went on as usual, discreetly in restaurants and bars across Washington. Nixon too needed Canada to help conclude the shaky truce that he and Kissinger were finalising with the North Vietnamese in late 1972. The provisions of the agreement called for another international commission to monitor the truce, and oversee the withdrawal of military forces and the repatriation of POWs. Nixon wanted Canada to serve, with Poland, Hungary and Indonesia. Canadian officials were sceptical and leery of a role that might bog them down supervising a fictitious peace in Vietnam. However, the Department of External Affairs did not see how Canada could reject the American invitation without dangerously jeopardising bilateral relations. Moreover, the diplomats argued, the international climate would surely benefit from scaling down the war and ending American involvement (Hilliker and Barry 1998, 184–85).

What was needed, argued Ed Ritchie, the deputy minister of external affairs, was an exit strategy that would allow Canada to get out quickly if and when the Commission ceased to function. Cabinet agreed, and on January 27, Ottawa announced that Canada would join the new commission for 60 days, during which time it would decide if

the new body was working as it should. To ensure that its policy was fully understood both abroad and at home, Ottawa shed its traditional “quiet diplomacy” in favour of the “open-mouth” variety. In taking on this new role, explained the foreign minister, Mitchell Sharp, Canada considered itself free to publicise its findings and the commission’s activity. To implement the policy, he appointed Michel Gauvin as head of the Canadian delegation. Gauvin, who joined the foreign service out of the army after the Second World War, enjoyed a well-deserved reputation for being tough and forthright. He proved ideal.

The commission met in Hanoi at the end of January, and soon issued its first, Canadian-drafted, press release outlining its administrative problems. As it turned out, however, the commission worked reasonably well, at least as far as the Americans were concerned. In February and March, it managed to oversee the repatriation of American POWs, accompanied by a blaze of media publicity. While Gauvin complained often and loudly about the commission’s shortcomings, no one could deny that it was accomplishing useful things. As Canada’s first 60 day period drew to a close, it was clearly too soon to beat a retreat, and at the end of March, Sharp announced that Canada would stay for another 90 days.

By now, it was pretty clear that Canada was on its way out of Vietnam. In April and May, conditions on the commission worsened, and agreement on anything — except resolutions condemning South Vietnam — was impossible. As Canada prepared to leave, Washington urged it to stay. Kissinger himself phoned Ottawa to plead for an extension. Canadians were reminded of the recent improvement in bilateral relations. Canada’s withdrawal, argued the Americans, would undermine the prospects for peace in Asia. But conditions had changed. In the United States’ capital, where Nixon’s position weakened daily under the burden of the Watergate crisis, it was increasingly apparent that the president’s diplomacy had not produced “peace with honor” but a hollow charade. The besieged and weakened White House might be “inconvenienced” by Canada’s withdrawal, but its reaction would be “manageable.” Indeed it was. “We regret it, but

we understand it,” commented Kissinger when Canada announced its decision to finally quit Vietnam at the end of July 1973 (Hilliker and Barry 1998, 188). At long last, Canada was finally free of its “terrible responsibility” — an Asian albatross that had accomplished little in Vietnam and spelt mostly trouble for relations with Washington.

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## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> For the context of the speech, see Donaghy 2002, 128–30.
- <sup>2</sup> Secretary of State for External Affairs [SSEA] to the Prime Minister, 6 May 1954, reprinted in Donaghy 1997, 1668.
- <sup>3</sup> Ottawa learned of its nomination from a *New York Times* report. See Geoffrey Pearson, 116.
- <sup>4</sup> SSEA to the Commissioner, International Supervisory Commission for Vietnam [Commissioner], 24 August 1954, reprinted in Donaghy 1997, 1716–24.
- <sup>5</sup> Commissioner to the SSEA, 4 July 1955, reprinted in Donaghy 1999a, 1334.
- <sup>6</sup> Assistant Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs to the SSEA, 30 November 1955 reprinted in Donaghy, 1999a, 1398.
- <sup>7</sup> See also “Telegram from the Department of State to the Embassy in Vietnam, 1 May 1964,” in *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1964–68, Volume I: Vietnam 1964 [FRUS]*, 281–82.
- <sup>8</sup> “Memorandum for the Record of a Conversation Between President Johnson and Prime Minister Pearson, Hilton Hotel, New York, May 28, 1964, 6:15–6:45 p.m.,” in *FRUS*, 395.
- <sup>9</sup> Author interview with Alexis Johnson, 8 June 1992.
- <sup>10</sup> The American record is reproduced in Herring, p.187. Martin also raised the matter of a second Ronning mission with Averell Harriman on 20 April 1966.
- <sup>11</sup> See also DFAIT 1966d.

**Linda Duxbury and Chris Higgins**

## **Work–Life Conflict in Canada in the New Millennium: A Status Report.**

**Presented at The Sydney Institute on March 10, 2003.**

The issues associated with balancing work and family are of paramount importance to individuals, the organisations that employ them, the families that care for them, the unions that represent them and governments concerned with global competitiveness, citizen well-being and national health. Although much has been written about the topic, only a handful of “high impact” studies have been conducted on this subject in Canada.<sup>1</sup> Despite the fixation of the popular press on the topic (reflecting reader interest) there is, at this time, little sound empirical data available to inform the debate. This is unfortunate as credible research in this area has the power to change how governments and employers think about the issue and how they formulate and implement human resource, social and labour policy.

Just over a decade ago (that is, 1991) we, along with our colleagues Lee and Mills, conducted a national study of work–life conflict in Canada to “explore how the changing relationship between family and work affects organisations, families and employers.”<sup>2</sup> In total, 14,549 employees from 37 medium and large private sector of employment organisations and 5,921 employees from seven federal public service departments participated in this research.<sup>3</sup>

A lot has happened in the ten years since we conducted our first study on work-family balance. Nationally the 1990s was a decade of

turbulence for working Canadians as companies downsized, right-sized, restructured and globalised. The recession of the early 90s was followed by the “jobless recovery” of the mid 90s and job security was the issue that absorbed many working Canadians and their families. Organisations, faced with a glut of competent employees from which to choose, often paid little attention to becoming “best practice” with respect to human resource management. Paradoxically, as we enter the new millennium there has been a complete about-face with respect to this issue as employers, faced with impending labour shortages, have become preoccupied with recruiting and retaining “knowledge workers.”<sup>4</sup> Such employers have recognised that a focus on “human capital” is one key to increased productivity for the workforce of 2001 and beyond.

Throughout the 90s technological change and the need to be globally competitive increased the pressures on organisations and employees alike. Time in employment increased for many, as did the use of non-standard types of employment. Non-work demands also increased over the decade as family structures continued to change and the percentage of working Canadians with childcare, eldercare or both (the “sandwich generation”<sup>5</sup>) continued to rise.

Taken together, these changes suggested that it was time for another rigorous empirical look at the issue of work–life conflict. The 2001 Balancing Work, Family and Lifestyle National Study was undertaken to address this issue and to provide business and labour leaders, policy makers and academics with an objective “big picture” view on what has happened in this area in Canada in the last decade and what is the current situation. Funding for this project was provided by Health Canada.

This study conceptualises work<sup>6</sup>– life conflict broadly to include role overload, work interferes with family, family interferes with work, spillover from work to family, and caregiver strain.<sup>7</sup> This paper outlines key findings from this research with respect to the following:

- How prevalent are the various forms of work–life conflict in

Canada at this time (reference year of 2001)?

- Has the prevalence of the various forms of work–life conflict changed over the past decade?
- What is the impact of the various forms of work–life conflict on:
  - Canadian organisations?
  - Canadian families?
  - Canadian employees?
- How does gender, job type, sector of employment and dependent care status affect these issues?

### **Demographic profile of respondents**

In total, 31,571 Canadian employees responded to the 2001 Balancing Work, Family and Lifestyle survey. These employees worked for 100 medium to large (that is, 500 or more employees) organisations.<sup>8</sup> The sample is distributed as follows:

- 46% of the respondents work in the public sector; 33% work in the NFP sector; 21% are employed by a private sector company;
- 55% of the respondents are women;
- 46% of the respondents work in managerial and professional positions while 54% work in “other” positions (e.g. clerical, administrative, retail, production, technical); and
- Just over half (56%) of the respondents have dependent care responsibilities (that is, spend an hour or more a week in either childcare or eldercare). The rest (44%) do not.

The 2001 survey sample is well distributed with respect to age, region, community size, job type, education, personal income, family income and family’s financial well-being. In many ways, the demographic characteristics of the sample correspond to Canadian census data

suggesting that the results from this research can be generalised beyond this research. Approximately half of the respondents to the survey are highly educated (that is, at least one university degree) male and female knowledge workers. The majority of respondents are part of a dual income family and indicate that they are able to “live comfortably” (but not luxuriously) on two full-time incomes.

The sample includes a substantial number of employees who may be at risk with respect to work–life conflict. The mean age of the respondents to this survey was 42.8 years old which puts them in the mid career/fast track stage of the career cycle, the “full-nest” stage of the life cycle and the 40s transition stage of adult development. Each of these stages is associated with increased stress and greater work and family demands.<sup>9</sup> Three-quarters of the respondents are presently married or living with a significant other and 69% are part of a dual-income family. Eleven percent are single parents. Twelve percent live in rural areas. One in three is a clerical or administrative employee with a lower level of formal education (that is, reduced job mobility) and lower personal and family income. One quarter of the respondents indicated that their family money was tight; 29% of respondents earned less than \$40,000 per year and just over one quarter lived in families with total family incomes that were less than the Canadian average (for comparison purposes it should be noted that the Canadian average yearly family income in 1996 was \$54,583<sup>10</sup>). One in three of the respondents had a high school education or less.

The majority of respondents have responsibilities outside of work. Seventy percent are parents (average number of children for parents in the sample is 2.1); 60% have eldercare responsibilities (average number of elderly dependents is 2.3); 13% have responsibility for the care of a disabled relative; 13% have both childcare and eldercare demands (that is, are part of the “sandwich generation”). The fact that these data on non-work demands correspond closely to census data provided by Statistics Canada suggests that the findings from this study can be generalised to all Canadians working for firms employing more than 500 individuals.

## **What do we know about the prevalence of role overload from this study?**

**R**ole overload is having too much to do in a given amount of time. This form of work–life conflict occurs when the total demands on time and energy associated with the prescribed activities of multiple roles are too great to perform the roles adequately or comfortably. The following key observations can be drawn regarding role overload from the data reviewed in this paper.

*High levels of role overload have become systemic within the population of employees working for Canada's largest employers.* The majority of employees in our sample (58%) are currently experiencing high levels of role overload. Another 30% reported moderate levels of role overload. Only 12% of the respondents in this sample reported low levels of overload.

*The percent of the workforce with high role overload has increased over the past decade.* Almost sixty percent (58%) of the respondents to the 2001 survey reported high levels of role overload — an increase of 11 percentage points over what was observed in the 1991 sample. This increase in role overload is consistent with the fact that employees in the 2001 sample spent more time in work and family activities than their counterparts in the 1991 sample. Other data from the 2001 survey would suggest that much of this increase in role overload can be linked to new information and communication technology (e.g. laptops, e-mail, cell phones), organisational norms that still reward long hours at the office rather than performance, and organisational anorexia (downsizing has meant there are too few employees to do the work). While a full discussion of workload issues can be found in Report One (see Appendix A), it is worthwhile to note the following:

Comparisons done using the 1991 and 2001 samples suggest that time in work has increased over the course of the decade. Whereas one in ten respondents in 1991

worked 50 or more hours per week, one in four do so now; during this same time period the proportion of employees working between 35 and 39 hours per week declined from 48% of the sample to 27%. This increase in time in work was observed for all job groups and all sectors.

### **What do we know about the prevalence of work interferes with family from this study?**

**W**ork interferes with family occurs when work demands and responsibilities make it more difficult for an employee to fulfil family role responsibilities. The data reviewed in this paper support the following deductions regarding work interferes with family.

*Work interferes with family is a real problem for one in four Canadians working for larger employees.* One in four Canadians report that their work responsibilities interfere with their ability to fulfil their responsibilities at home. Almost 40% of Canadians report moderate levels of interference. The proportion of the Canadian workforce with high levels of work to family interference has not changed over the past decade.

### **What do we know about the prevalence of family interferes with work from this study?**

**F**amily interferes with work occurs when family demands and responsibilities make it more difficult for an employee to fulfil work role responsibilities. The following key observations can be drawn regarding family interferes with work from the data reviewed in this report.

*Family interferes with work is not common in Canada at this time. Only 10% of the Canadians in this sample reported high levels of family interferes with work. Another third reported moderate levels of family interferes with work.*

*Very few Canadians allow their family demands to interfere with the fulfilment of responsibilities at work. Family interferes with work has a very different distribution than was observed with role overload and work interferes with family. While role overload is positively skewed and work interferes with family has a normal distribution, family interferes with work is negatively skewed. Three times as many Canadians give priority to work at the expense of their family as do the reverse (that is, give priority to their family).*

*The percentage of working Canadians who give priority to family rather than work has doubled over the past decade. This increase can be largely attributed to the fact that the number of employees with eldercare responsibilities has increased over the past decade.*

### **What do we know about the prevalence of caregiver strain from this research?**

The term “caregiver” refers to anyone who provides assistance to a disabled or elderly dependent. Caregiver strain is a multi-dimensional construct which is defined in terms of “burdens” or changes in the caregivers’ day-to-day lives which can be attributed to the need to provide care for this dependent. Four types of caregiver strains resulting from stress have been identified:<sup>11</sup> emotional (e.g. depression, anxiety, emotional exhaustion), physical, financial and family strain. The data reviewed in this report with respect to caregiver strain support the following assertions.

*Approximately one in four working Canadians experience what can be considered to be high levels of caregiver strain. While the majority of the respondents to this survey (74%) rarely experience caregiver strain, 9% find eldercare to be a strain (physically, financially or mentally)*

several times a week or daily. Another 17% experience such feelings approximately once a week.

## **What do we know about the prevalence of work to family spillover from this study?**

**S**pillover from work to family arises when work experiences impact an employee's ability to perform non-work roles. Traditionally, researchers have assumed that work will have a negative impact on family (that is, negative spillover between domains).<sup>12</sup> The concept of spillover included in this study is more comprehensive in that it allows for the possibility that conditions at work might have a positive, a negative, or no impact on the family. The following observations arise from the data on work to family spillover reviewed in this study.

*Almost half of the Canadians working for larger firms (44% of this sample) experience negative spillover from work to family. Very few Canadians working for larger firms (only 9% of this sample) perceive that their experiences at work have a positive impact on their family life.*

*Almost half of the Canadians working for larger firms (47%) are able to compartmentalise — such employees feel that work and family are quite separate domains and that work does not affect their family life. Employees with fewer demands either at work (that is, those in “other” jobs) and/or at home (that is, those without dependent care, men) are more likely to report that work and family are separate domains.*

## **So... what can we conclude about the prevalence of work–life conflict in Canada at this time?**

**T**he conclusions one reaches with respect to the prevalence of work–life conflict in Canada depends on what measure of work–life conflict is used and the characteristics of the group being

studied. Looking at the data optimistically (that is, taking prevalence of work to family interference and caregiver strain as our measure of work–life conflict), we estimate that one in four Canadians working for medium and large organisations experience high levels of conflict between work and family. This is the best case scenario. The worst case scenario (that is, estimates calculated using role overload data) is that almost 60% of Canadians who are employed outside the home cannot balance their work and family demands.

Who has more problems balancing work and family responsibilities? The evidence is quite clear — employed Canadians with dependent care responsibilities. Employees who have child and/or eldercare responsibilities reported higher levels of work–life conflict than those without such responsibilities regardless of how work–life conflict was assessed (that is, reported higher levels of role overload, work interferes with family, family interferes with work and caregiver strain, and were more likely to report negative spillover). None of the other factors examined in this study were associated with all five work–life conflict measures. Employees without dependent care responsibilities are more able to separate work and family. This greater ability to balance can be attributed to two factors: fewer demands outside of work and more degrees of freedom to deal with work issues (that is, more control over their time).

Job type was associated with all but one of the measures of work–life conflict. Employees with higher demands at work (that is, managers and professionals) were more likely than those in “other” jobs to experience high levels of overload, work interferes with family and negative spillover (women managers in particular reported higher levels of negative spillover). Those in “other” jobs, on the other hand, were more likely to report higher levels of caregiver strain due to the financial stresses associated with eldercare.

Gender was associated with two out of five of the measures of work–life conflict. Women were more likely than men to report high levels of role overload and high caregiver strain, devoted more hours per week than men to non-work activities such as childcare and eldercare,

and are more likely to have primary responsibility for non-work tasks.<sup>13</sup>

It is interesting to note that when job type is taken into account and when work–life conflict is broken into its component parts, many of the gender differences in work–life conflict referred to in the research literature disappear. This suggests that many of the gender differences in work–life conflict may be attributed to the fact that women are typically compressed into a different set of jobs than men.

Sector of employment was associated with three out of five of the measures of work–life conflict. Respondents working in the NFP sector were more likely than their counterparts in the public and private sectors to report high role overload, high work interferes with family and negative spillover. The elevated levels of work–life conflict in this sector can be attributed to higher work demands (respondents in this sector spend more hours per week in employment related activities and are more likely to have to spend week nights and weekend nights away from home on job related travel) and how work is arranged (shift arrangements, rigid work schedules). It should be noted that the women in the NFP sector sample had the most difficulties balancing work and family. The data indicate that the women in this sector have three challenges to meet — heavier demands at home, heavier demands at work, and work arrangements that give them little ability to combine work and non-work demands.

## **Why should organisations care about work–life conflict?**

*The majority of Canada's largest employers cannot be considered to be best practice employers.* The data reviewed in this report paint a disturbing picture for Canada's larger employers. Only about half of the employees who participated in this study were highly committed to their employer, satisfied with their job and viewed their organisation as “an above average place to work.” One in three reported high levels of job stress and one in four were thinking of

leaving their current organisation once a week or more. Absenteeism (especially absenteeism due to physical and mental health issues) also appears to be a substantial problem for Canadian employers with half of the respondents reporting high levels of absenteeism (defined as 3 or more days of absence in the six months prior to the study being conducted).<sup>14</sup> One in four respondents missed three or more days of work in a six-month period due to physical health problems, while one in ten missed a similar amount of time due to mental or emotional fatigue.

*Conditions within Canadian organisations have declined over time.* High job stress and absenteeism due to ill health have become more problematic over the past decade. Almost three times as many respondents reported high job stress in 2001 (35%) than in 1991 (13%). More than half (56%) of those in the 1991 sample did not miss work due to ill health in the six months prior to the study being conducted, while just under one in four (24%) missed three or more days. In 2001, the number of respondents missing 3 or more days of work due to ill health had increased to 28% of the sample while the proportion reporting zero days absence due to ill health had declined to 44%.

During the same time period, job satisfaction and organisational commitment have also appeared to decline. Whereas almost two-thirds of employees in 1991 were highly satisfied with their jobs (62%) and committed to their organisation (66%), approximately half reported high satisfaction (46%) or high organisational commitment (53%) in 2001. Such findings are not surprising given the fact that workloads and work-life conflict also increased over the same time period. Taken as a whole, these findings suggest that many of the management practices instituted by Canada's larger organisations over the past decade (that is, downsizing, re-engineering, focus on hours not output, pay freezes, restructuring)<sup>15</sup> have had a negative impact on how Canadian employees perceive their job and their employer.

*How an employee feels about their organisation (that is, commitment, view of the organisation as a place to work, intent to turnover) and their job*

(that is, job satisfaction, job stress) has more to do with the type of work being done and the work environment (that is, job type and sector) than demands outside of work (that is, gender, dependent care status). The data reviewed in this section of the report indicates that an employee's view of both their organisation and their job as well as the amount of job stress they experience and their intent to turnover<sup>16</sup> can be linked to the type of work being done and the work environment (that is, job type and sector of employment) rather than gender or dependent care status. In other words, it is what you do within the work setting and how you are treated at work rather than responsibilities outside of work or gender (that is, men and women react in similar fashions to the same work stimuli) that influence key organisational outcomes. Taken as a whole, the data indicate that managers and professionals are more committed to their organisations and satisfied with their jobs than their non-professional counterparts, despite the fact that their jobs are associated with higher levels of stress. The data also indicate that, generally speaking, employees in the private sector feel more positively about their employer and their jobs than their counterparts in the public and NFP sectors.

*Absenteeism due to childcare and eldercare problems is associated<sup>17</sup> with the number of demands an employee has outside of work (that is, gender, dependent care status) while absenteeism due to physical and mental health problems is associated with sector of employment.* The link between absenteeism and the context variables under examination in this study (that is, gender, job type, sector of employment, dependent care status) is more complex. Absenteeism due to childcare and eldercare (and total absenteeism because it is made up of these two kinds of absenteeism) is strongly associated with demands outside of work (women and employees with dependent care responsibilities are more likely to report high levels of these types of absenteeism and higher family demands). Absenteeism due to poor emotional and mental health, on the other hand, is associated primarily with sector of employment (that is, work environment) with Canadian public servants reporting the highest levels and private sector employees reporting the lowest levels of absenteeism due to these causes.

*High work–life conflict is associated with increased absenteeism and substandard organisational performance.* The data reviewed in this study leave little doubt that high work–life conflict is associated with a number of indicators of substandard organisational performance and increased absenteeism costs. In other words, high work–life conflict negatively impacts upon an organisation’s bottom line. The data reviewed in this report indicate that the four<sup>18</sup> components of work–life conflict examined in this phase of the study have different impacts on the organisation. These differences are worthy of note in that they provide quite different motivations for addressing this issue as well as different prescriptions with respect to change.

*Role overload is positively associated with physical and mental health problems.* Employees who have high role overload are less committed to their organisation, report higher work stress, are less satisfied with their jobs (due largely to dissatisfaction with workloads, hours worked and work schedules), are more likely to be absent from work (due largely to physical and mental health problems) are more likely to be thinking of leaving the organisation (to escape frustrating and non-supportive work environments and to get more time for themselves and more recognition for their efforts), and have a less favourable view of their employer. In other words, organisations who have a higher proportion of their work force with high levels of this form of work–life conflict are likely to have difficulties recruiting and retaining employees and increased costs associated with poor physical and mental health (that is, greater absenteeism, higher prescription drug costs, greater Employee Assistance Program use). The dimensions of the problem can be assessed by considering the following data. Compared to their counterparts with low levels of role overload, employees with high role overload are:

- 5.5 times more likely to report high levels of job stress,
- 3.5 times more likely to have high levels of absenteeism due to physical, mental or emotional fatigue,
- 2.3 times more likely to report high intent to turnover,

- 1.6 times more likely to have high levels of absenteeism all factors considered, and to miss three or more days of work in a six month period work due to ill health,
- 1.8 times more likely to miss work due to childcare problems,
- half as likely to report high levels of job satisfaction, and
- half as likely to have a positive view of their employer.

In addition, employees who report low levels of role overload are 1.3 times as likely as those with high role overload to be highly committed to their employer.

*Work interferes with family* is negatively associated with recruitment and retention. From the data reviewed in this paper it would appear that the impact of work interferes with family on the organisation is very similar to that observed with respect to role overload. This is not surprising given the high correlation between these two constructs. It should be noted, however, that the respondents with high levels of work interferes with family reported the lowest levels of commitment (only 44% with high commitment), the lowest levels of job satisfaction (only 24% were highly satisfied with their jobs), the highest levels of job stress (66% reported high job stress), and the highest intent to turnover (44% are thinking of leaving weekly or more, with 24% thinking of leaving several times a week or daily!) of any of the respondents in the study. Organisational commitment, intent to turnover and view of the employer have all been found to be strongly associated with recruitment and retention issues.

The data indicate that work interferes with family affects how people feel about their employer. Taken as a whole, these findings suggest that employees who perceive that they have to put work ahead of family (e.g. feel that they have to make a choice between career advancement and family or between job security and family) are not as loyal and committed as employees who do not perceive that such a choice is necessary.

*Family interferes with work* is positively associated with absenteeism due

*to childcare problems.* From the organisation's perspective, the main consequence of high family interferes with work is higher absenteeism due to childcare problems. Respondents with high levels of family interferes with work were seven times more likely to miss three or more days of work in a six month period due to childcare than those with low levels of this form of work–life conflict. These findings indicate that the organisation can reduce this form of absenteeism by making it easier for employees with dependent care responsibilities to vary when and where they work.

*Caregiver strain is positively associated with absenteeism due to eldercare problems and physical, mental or emotional fatigue.* Employees with high caregiver strain were 13 times more likely than those with low caregiver strain to miss three or more days of work in a six month period due to eldercare problems and 1.8 times more likely to miss work because they were mentally, emotionally or physically fatigued.

*Employers could substantially decrease absenteeism in their organisations if they reduced work–life conflict.* Our calculations indicate that employers could reduce absenteeism in their organisation by:

- 23% if they eliminated high levels of role overload,
- 6.3% if they eliminated high levels of work interferes with family,
- 3.6% if they eliminated high levels of family interferes with work, and
- 8.6% if they could eliminate high levels of caregiver strain.

The direct costs of absenteeism due to high work–life conflict are approximately 3 to 5 billion dollars per year. The data collected in this study provides us with the opportunity to estimate the potential financial cost of work–life conflict to Canadian organisations. Our estimates suggested that, in 2001, the direct costs of absenteeism due to work–life conflict was roughly 3 to 5 billion dollars. When both direct and indirect costs are included in the calculations, work–life conflict costs Canadians approximately 6 to 10 billion dollars per year.

Specifically:

- the direct costs of absenteeism due to high role overload was estimated to be approximately \$3 billion per year. Direct and indirect costs of absenteeism due to role overload were estimated to be between \$4.5 (conservative estimate) to \$6 billion dollars per year;
- the direct costs of absenteeism due to high levels of work interferes with family was estimated to be one billion dollars per year in direct costs alone (costs increase to \$1.5 to \$2 billion if one also includes the indirect costs of this absenteeism);
- the direct costs of absenteeism due to high levels of family interferes with work was estimated to be just under half a billion dollars a year in direct costs (approximately \$1 billion per year when indirect costs are also included in the total); and
- the direct costs of absenteeism due to high levels of caregiver strain was calculated to be just over one billion dollars per year (indirect costs are estimated at another one to two billion dollars).

### **Why should families care about work-life conflict?**

*The data in this report paint a mixed picture with respect to the “health” of the families in which Canadian employees live. On a positive note, the majority of respondents are satisfied with their families and their performance as a parent and engage in behaviours associated with positive parenting several times a week or more. On a more cautionary note, only 38% of respondents are completely satisfied with their families’ well-being and only one in four frequently engages in activities which have been linked to family stability.*

*Women are less satisfied than men with their performance as a parent.*

Men were more likely than women to indicate that they were satisfied with their abilities as a parent. This gender difference is particularly interesting given the fact that women spend more time in childcare than men. These findings suggest that many women judge their performance as a parent using dated and perhaps unrealistic standards (e.g. compare themselves to their own mothers).<sup>19</sup>

*Family outcomes decline as family responsibilities increase.* In other words, family well-being and stability decline as family responsibilities increase. Neither job type nor sector are associated with any of the family outcomes examined in this study.

*High work–life conflict is associated with diminished levels of family and parental satisfaction and impaired family functioning.* The data reviewed in this study leave little doubt that high work–life conflict is associated with a number of indicators of impaired family functioning (that is, lower levels of family well-being and stability, poorer performance of parenting roles) and reduced satisfaction with the family domain (lower levels of family and parental satisfaction). In other words, high work–life conflict negatively impacts employees' abilities to enjoy and nurture their families.

*Role overload and work interferes with family have the most negative impact on the family.* In both forms of work–life conflict, employees with high levels of conflict are less satisfied with their family life and their ability to parent, less likely to feel that their families are well (that is, report lower family adaptation) and less likely to feel that their families are stable and work well together.

*Family interferes with work is negatively associated with family life satisfaction, parental satisfaction and family well-being.* Surprisingly, employees who put family ahead of work are also less likely than those with low levels of family interferes with work to be satisfied with their families and their abilities as a parent. They are also less likely to be happy with their family's well-being. In fact, this group reports the lowest levels of family life satisfaction, parental satisfaction and family well-being in the study. The fact that family interferes with work is

not associated with family integration suggests that either people who put family ahead of work are doing so to keep their family units intact, or the strategy of putting family first maintains family integrity. The costs of this strategy are clear however — lower levels of satisfaction with the family domain.

*Caregiver strain is negatively associated with positive parenting behaviours.* Employees with high caregiver strain are less likely to engage in positive parenting behaviour. This suggests that the time and energy devoted to eldercare activities are interfering with the time available for one's children.

### **Why should employees care about work–life conflict?**

*Many Canadians working for Canada's largest employers are in poor mental health.* Over half of the employed Canadians who responded to our survey reported high levels of perceived stress; one in three reported high levels of burnout and depressed mood. Only 41% were satisfied with their lives and one in five were dissatisfied. Almost one in five perceived that their physical health was fair to poor. These data are disturbing as they can be considered to be a “best case scenario” as these data reflect the mental health status of employed Canadians, many (if not virtually all) of whom can be considered to have a “good” jobs, in one of the “best countries to live in the world!”<sup>20</sup> This begs the following question: If a substantial number of employed Canadians can be considered to be in poor mental health, what is the prevalence of mental health problems in those groups who are considered to be at risk with respect to stress, depression and poor physical health (that is, contingent workers, the unemployed, those on social assistance)?

*The physical and mental health of Canadian employees has deteriorated over time.* Overall, the 1990s appears to have been a tough decade for Canadians working for medium and large organisations. Comparison of the 1991 and 2001 samples indicate that the prevalence of high

levels of perceived stress and depression in the Canadian labour force has increased in the past decade. In 1991, 44% of the respondents to our survey reported high levels of perceived stress; this had increased to 55% with high levels of perceived stress in 2001. In 1991, 24% of the respondents to our survey reported high levels of depressed mood compared to 36% in the 2001 sample. This decline in mental health over the past decade is not surprising given the increase in work demands noted in Report One (see Appendix A)! Taken as a whole, these data suggest that the increase in work demands over the past decade as well as the proliferation of work–life conflict are having a negative impact on the mental health of employees.

*Women report higher levels of stress, burnout and depressed mood than men.* The data presented in this paper are unequivocal — women are more likely than men to report high levels of perceived stress, burnout and depressed mood. The fact that these gender differences in perceived stress, depressed mood and burnout were observed when job type, dependent care status and sector of employment were taken into account suggest that such differences have more to do with gender differences in socialisation than in either work or non-work demands. These findings may, for example, be due to the fact that women are more likely to self-examine their emotional feelings and acknowledge problems with respect to their mental health. Alternatively, it may be that women are less able to cope effectively with multiple stressors within their environment. Finally, these gender differences in mental health may be due to the fact that women who work for pay outside of the home have added stressors associated with paid employment to their lives with little concomitant decrease in the stressors associated with their family roles.

*Managers and professionals are in better mental and physical health than are employees working in clerical, administrative, technical and production positions within the organisation.* Managers and professionals can be considered to be in better overall mental health (that is, less likely to be depressed, more likely to be satisfied with their lives) and physical health (that is, more likely to describe their health as very

good to excellent) than employees who occupy blue and pink collar (that is, clerical, administrative, production positions) jobs. This finding is particularly striking given the fact that the managers and professionals in our sample were more likely than the blue and pink collar employees to work long hours, take work home with them and report high role overload, high work interferes with family, negative spillover from work to family and high job stress — conditions which are generally a recipe for poorer mental health. Taken in concert, these findings suggest that managerial and professional employees are more able than their non-professional counterparts to cope with these higher work demands. These findings are consistent with the research done by Karasek and his colleagues<sup>21</sup> which suggests that employees in professional positions have a greater perception of control than non-professionals and that it is these higher levels of control that helps them cope with heavier work demands. Unfortunately we still do not know what contributes to this increased sense of control. Possible explanations include better working conditions, more interesting work, higher levels of flexibility, higher job security, increased job mobility (linked to their higher levels of education), and higher socioeconomic status (that is, more formal education, higher incomes). These data also suggest that the physical and mental health issues we observed in the other group may be more a function of their work environment, the types of jobs they do and their working conditions rather than the time spent in work itself.

*Female managers and professionals are more likely than females in “other” positions to report high levels of burnout.* The data from this study suggest that managerial and professional positions and motherhood are not compatible in that they both impose heavy demands. Females who work in managerial and professional positions are more likely to experience symptoms of burnout than any other group of employees. These higher levels of burnout can be attributed to the fact that this group of women appears to be in a “no win” situation with respect to work and family — they have heavier work demands than other women and heavier family demands than men. In other words, female managers and professionals are more likely than workers in any other

group to try to “burn the candle at both ends” — succeed at a high level job while not sacrificing standards at home. Such a strategy appears to be unsustainable over time.

*Employees who have no dependent care responsibilities are in better physical and mental health than are employed Canadians who spend time each week in child and/or eldercare.* The data are also unequivocal with respect to the impact of parenthood and/or eldercare on employee physical and mental health. The greater the number of non-work demands assumed by an employee, the more likely they are to report that they are stressed, burnt out and that their health is fair to poor. In other words, the job of parent/eldercare-giver can be considered to be a high demand, low control position — one which we know challenges an individual’s ability to cope. Individuals or couples without children or eldercare responsibilities can act relatively independently, as they do not have the constraints or the demands of caring for children or elderly dependents. The addition of the parent/eldercare-giver role complicates an employee’s life situation as it places greater demands on them at the same time as it adds constraints. These data suggest that efforts to more pro-actively manage a more diverse workforce and implement policies and programmes to help working mothers and fathers and those with eldercare issues have had no appreciable impact on this group of employees.

*Motherhood presents more mental health challenges than fatherhood.* Parenthood appears to have a different impact on the life satisfaction of mothers than fathers. Fatherhood is not associated with life satisfaction for men. Mothers, on the other hand, are less satisfied with their lives than women without children. Similar findings were observed with respect to depressed mood. Mothers were more likely to report high depressed mood than women without children/eldercare. Having either childcare or eldercare responsibilities was not, however, associated with depressed mood for men.

These findings support the research literature in the area<sup>22</sup> which suggests that the role of working mother is qualitatively different from the role of working father and that the “quality” motherhood as a role

is not as fatherhood (that is, fathers do the “fun” family tasks while mothers do the “hard stuff”). Further research is needed to determine if these differences are due to social, workplace or family factors (or some combination) so that targeted policies are developed and supports implemented. More equitable sharing of child-rearing within the family may lead to better mental health outcomes for working mothers.

*Men who work in the public sector report poorer mental health.* Men in the public sector sample appear to be exposed to a fairly unique set of stressors. They are more likely than any other group of men to report high stress and depressed mood and less likely to report they are satisfied with their lives. Further research is needed to determine what conditions within the public sector work environment are impairing the mental health of these men.

*High work–life conflict is associated with declines in employee physical and mental health.* The data from this study leave little doubt that high work–life conflict is associated with a number of indicators of physical and mental health problems at the employee level. Employees who are stressed, depressed and burnt out are not as productive as those in good mental health. Stress, depression and burnout are also linked to increased absenteeism, greater use of prescription medicine and Employee Assistance Programs, and lower levels of creativity, innovation and risk taking, which, in turn, can all be expected to negatively impact an organisation’s bottom line.

*The four components of work–life conflict have differential impacts on the physical and mental health of employees.* These differences are worthy of note in that they provide quite different motivations for addressing this issue as well as different prescriptions with respect to change.

- *Employees with low levels of role overload are in better mental health.* Respondents with low role overload appear to be in the best mental and physical health of any of the respondents in the survey. Only 20% of those with low role overload report high stress, only 4% are burnt out and only 14% report high levels of depressed mood. Furthermore, 60% of

the respondents with low role overload indicated that they are very satisfied with their lives. These data suggest that the mental health of employed Canadians would be significantly improved if organisations ensured that work demands were more manageable (e.g. hire more staff, reduce travel demands, put limits on the use of technology to support after-hours work).

- *Employees with high levels of role overload are more likely to report high levels of burnout.* Role overload is positively associated with high stress, high burnout, and high depressed mood and negatively associated with life satisfaction and perceived physical health. Examination of the data indicates that employees with high role overload were 12 times more likely than those with low role overload to report high levels of burnout. These findings indicate that the long hours that employers expect from their workforce are not sustainable over time.
- *Work interferes with family is associated with higher levels of perceived stress, depressed mood and burnout.* The respondents with high work interferes with family can be considered to be “at risk” with respect to burnout and perceived stress (62% of the respondents with high work interferes with family report high levels of burnout and 77% report high levels of perceived stress). Employees with high work interferes with family were 5.5 times more likely than those with low levels of work interferes with family to report high levels of burnout, 2.4 times more likely to report high levels of depressed mood and twice as likely to report high levels of perceived stress. These findings suggest that the strategy of “trying to do it all” and “meeting heavy demands at work at the expense of ones personal life” impairs ones mental health.
- *Family interferes with work less problematic for employees than other forms of work–life conflict.* The alternative strategy — putting family ahead of work — does not appear to be

as harmful to one's mental health as putting work ahead of family. It is, however, still cause for concern.

- *Employees with high caregiver strain are most likely to be depressed.* Respondents with high levels of caregiver strain appear to be at the highest risk with respect to perceived stress (80% with high caregiver strain report high stress), depressed mood (60% with high caregiver strain report high depressed mood) and impaired physical health (28% with high caregiver strain report that their health as fair/poor). They are also the least likely to be satisfied with their lives.

## Recommendations

There is “no one size fits all” solution to the issue of work–life conflict. The data from the 2001 National Work, Family and Lifestyle study show quite clearly that different policies, practices and strategies will be needed to reduce each of the five components of work–life conflict: role overload, work interferes with family, family interferes with work, caregiver strain and negative spillover from work to family. That being said, the data would indicate that there are a number of strategies and approaches that the various stakeholders in this issue (that is, employers, employees, families, unions and governments) can use to reduce of work–life conflict. These recommendations are summarised below.

### What can employers do?

Employers who wish to address work–life balance need to:

1. identify ways of reducing employee workloads. Special attention needs to be given to reducing the workloads of managers and professionals in all sectors;
2. recognise that unrealistic work demands are not sustainable

over time and come at a cost to the organisation which is often not recognised or tracked. Accordingly, we recommend that the employer start recording the costs of understaffing and overwork;

3. identify ways to reduce the amount of time employees spend in job related travel;
4. hire more people in those areas where the organisation is overly reliant on unpaid overtime;
5. collect data which reflect the total costs of delivering high quality work on time (that is, paid and unpaid overtime, subsequent turnover, Employee Assistance Program use, absenteeism);
6. change their accountability frameworks and reward structures;
7. tangibly reward and recognise overtime work;
8. develop an etiquette around the use of office technologies (that is, e-mail, laptops, cell phones);
9. reduce their reliance on both paid and unpaid overtime;
10. give employees the opportunity to say “no” when asked to work overtime. Saying “no” should not be a career limiting move;
11. make alternative work arrangements more widely available within their organisation;
12. implement time off in lieu of overtime pay arrangements;
13. provide a limited number of days of paid leave per year for childcare, eldercare or personal problems;
14. provide appropriate support for their employees who work rotating shifts;
15. measure the use of the different supportive policies and reward those sections of the organisation that demonstrate best practices in these areas. Investigate those areas where use is

low;

16. implement cafeteria benefits packages which allow employees to select those benefits which are most appropriate to their personal situation on a yearly basis; and
17. offer childcare and eldercare referral services.

### **What can employees do?**

**E**mployees should:

1. say “no” to overtime hours if work expectations are unreasonable;
2. try and limit the amount of work they take home to complete in the evenings. If they do bring work home, they should make every effort to separate time spent in work from family time (that is, do work after the children go to bed, have a home office);
3. try and reduce the amount of time they spend in job-related travel; and
4. take advantage of the flexible work arrangements available in their organisation.

### **What can governments do?**

**T**o reduce work–life conflict within their constituencies governments (federal, provincial and municipal) need to:

1. implement legislation:
  - which stipulates that an employer’s management rights do not include an implied right to require an employee to work overtime except in the case of an emergency,
  - that gives employees the right to time off in lieu of

- overtime pay,
  - that entitles employees to up to five days of paid personal leave per year, and
  - that includes specific language around long-term unpaid leave for the care of an elderly dependent;
2. take the lead with respect to the issue of childcare by determining how to best help employed Canadians deal with childcare issues (that is, develop appropriate policies for parents of children of various ages, identify and implement relevant supports);
  3. take the lead with respect to the issue of eldercare by determining how to best help employed Canadians deal with eldercare issues (that is, develop appropriate policies, identify and implement relevant supports);
  4. “lead by example” with respect to the availability and accessibility of flexible work arrangements and supportive policies;
  5. investigate ways to increase Canadians’ awareness of how social roles and responsibilities have changed over the past several decades, what changes still need to happen, and why (that is, social marketing campaign, education programmes in schools, advertisements); and
  6. examine how they can reduce the “financial penalties” associated with parenthood (that is, determine how to concretely recognise that this group of employees have higher costs).

## **What can unions do?**

**U**nions need to:

1. become advocates of employee work–life balance by undertaking public campaigns to raise awareness of work–

life issues and suggest ways in which the situation can be improved. This advocacy should be done outside the collective bargaining process;

2. include work–life provisions (that is, flexible work arrangements, family friendly benefits) in negotiations during the collective bargaining process with the objective of gaining new accommodations in collective agreements; and
3. set up educational campaigns to:
  - increase individual worker’s knowledge of work–life balance issues, and
  - give employees the tools they need to effectively deal with situations as they arise.

## **Appendix A: Reports Published Using Data from the 2001 Balancing Work, Family and Lifestyle National Study**

Work-Life Balance in the New Millennium: Where Are We? Where Do We Need to Go? CPRN Discussion Paper No. W/12  
October 2001.

Web site: <http://www.cprn.org/cprn.html>

*The 2001 National Work-Life Conflict Study: Report One* (2002).

Web site: <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/pphb-dgspsp/publicat/work-travail/index.html>

*Voices of Canadians* (2003).

Web site: <http://labour-travail.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/worklife>

Work-life Conflict in the New Millennium: A Status Report (2003).

Web site: <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/pphb-dgspsp/publicat/work-travail/report2/index.html>

*Where to Work in Canada? An Examination of Regional Differences in Work-Life Practices* (2003).

Web site: <http://www.worklifesummit.com>

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup>See for example Duxbury and others. 1991; Higgins and others. 1992; Duxbury & Higgins 1998; Duxbury and others. 1999; MacBride-King & Paris 1989; MacBride-King & Bachman 1999.

<sup>2</sup>Duxbury and others 1991: 16.

<sup>3</sup>This research is summarised in Duxbury and others. 1991 and Higgins and others. 1992.

<sup>4</sup>Peter Drucker coined the term “knowledge worker” to describe highly skilled employees whose work is complex, cyclical in nature, and involves processing and using information to make decisions.

<sup>5</sup> See Scott 2000 for a discussion of the “sandwich generation.”

<sup>6</sup>Throughout this paper the term “work” refers to paid employment.

<sup>7</sup>There is a vast academic literature dealing with the issue of work–life conflict. A complete review of this literature is beyond the purview of this paper. That being said, readers who are interested in the theoretical underpinnings of this research or the key findings to date are referred to Figure 1 or the research reports outlined in Appendix A.

<sup>8</sup>Forty from the private sector, 22 from the public sector (federal, provincial and municipal governments) and 38 from the not-for-profit (NFP) sector (defined in this study to include organisations in the health care and educational sectors).

<sup>9</sup>See Duxbury and Higgins 2001.

<sup>10</sup>This was the average family income in 1996 — the last year for which Census data is currently available. Statistics Canada (1998), The 1996 Census, Nation Tables, Catalogue No. 930022XDB96005.

<sup>11</sup>See Robinson 1983, for a discussion of the various forms of caregiver strain.

<sup>12</sup>For examples of this type of argument see Frone and others. 1997, or Bowen and Pittman 1995.

<sup>13</sup>Data to back these assertions can be found in the reports listed in Appendix A.

<sup>14</sup>Absenteeism was measured in this study by asking respondents to indicate the number of days they had missed work due to the following reasons in the past six months: physical health problems,

childcare issues, issues with respect to eldercare and emotional or mental fatigue.

<sup>15</sup>See Duxbury and Higgins 2001.

<sup>16</sup>Intent to turnover was measured by asking respondents how often, in the past three months, they had considered leaving their current employer: never, monthly, weekly, several times a week or daily.

<sup>17</sup>A negative association means that as the levels of work–life conflict increase, the levels of the outcome decrease (that is, as overload increases, commitment decreases). A positive association, on the other hand, means that as the levels of work–life conflict increase, so do the levels of the organisational outcomes (that is, as overload increases, so does job stress).

<sup>18</sup>The spillover measure is not used in this report to calculate the costs of imbalance. The way this variable was quantified (negative spillover, no spillover, positive spillover) makes it inappropriate for these kinds of data analysis.

<sup>19</sup>See Hochsfield 1989.

<sup>20</sup>Canada was rated the number one country in the world in which to live in 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999 and 2000 by the United Nations according to its Quality of Life Index (see [www.geocities.com](http://www.geocities.com))

<sup>21</sup>See Karasek and others. 1987.

<sup>22</sup>The following references present arguments or data illustrating the difference impacts of motherhood and fatherhood: Vanier Institute 2000; Statistics Canada 2000; Hochschild 1989; O’Neil and Greenberg 1995; Bowen and Pittman 1995.

## Native or Manufactured? A Comparison of Indigenous–Industrial Heritage Conflicts in Perth and Ottawa.

### Introduction

On Australia Day 2003, the celebrations at the Old Swan Brewery in Perth were somewhat mixed. On the river side of this restored and recycled building, Australian flags decorated the indoor-outdoor restaurants and the balconies of the luxury apartments while customers and residents, respectively, enjoyed their summertime public holiday. Given the Bali bombings in October 2002, this nationalistic symbolism may have been greater than in previous years. Meanwhile, on the road side of the complex, a group of the Nyungar (local Indigenous) people set up Aboriginal flags and observed “Invasion Day” at what is, for them, a Waugil Site, a location of considerable spiritual significance. Since the Indigenous importance of the site has not been acknowledged in the brewery’s redevelopment (*The Builder* 2002), this division of both activity and sentiment on Australia Day 2003 was a reflection of the failure of all concerned to achieve a mutually acceptable outcome to what has been a protracted and occasionally violent conflict over this area and these buildings. This still unresolved dispute has taken place over a small piece of inner city land on which an industrial building of architecturally acknowledged heritage importance had been constructed on (or close to) what a number of the region’s Indigenous inhabitants regarded as a sacred site.

As an Indigenous–settler heritage contest, the Swan Brewery conflict is notable in several ways. It took place over a site in the middle of a

major city. It concerned a landmark building in a particularly visible riverside location and it included the protracted occupation of a formerly industrial site by Indigenous people and their supporters. These three features also characterise a dispute over the Carbide Mill on Victoria Island in the Ottawa River, but the outcome there, thus far, has been very different. In this central Ottawa location, a Native American owned and managed “Aboriginal Experiences” tourism development now operates adjacent to the heritage listed old mill building and plans are being drawn up for the construction of an “Aboriginal Centre” (National Capital Commission 2000) in the Carbide Mill precinct.

In both cases, the disputes centred on “dissonant” (Tunbridge and Ashworth 1996) or “contested” (Shaw and Jones 1997) heritage. As Tunbridge (1997, xvi) observes, “power conflicts among different social groups translate all too readily into contests over the legitimacy of the(ir) heritage.” Certainly such contests have occurred in both the Australian and the Canadian cases to be discussed below, but it is only in the latter instance that the cohabitation of industrial/settler and Indigenous heritage has been deemed legitimate.

Contemporary land use conflicts between Indigenous and settler groups in both countries have been both more common and more commonly studied in rural and remote regions. Therefore, most Australian–Canadian comparative research in this area has had a non-urban focus (for example Richardson, Craig and Boer 1994; Young 1999; Robinson 2001). However, there is a growing body of work on the attachment of urban Indigenous populations to place, both in Australia (Anderson 1998; Shaw 2000) and in Canada (Peters 2002; Peters and Wilson 2002), and the similarities and the differences between the Swan Brewery and the Carbide Mill conflicts invite a comparative treatment.

In this article, the histories of both sites will be summarised in three sections. We will focus first on their Indigenous and then their settler uses and significance before moving on to the chronologies and outcomes of the two heritage disputes. Following this, the influence of

the urban activities surrounding the two sites, the distinctive political and planning regimes under which the disputes were conducted and the differing organisational structures of the Indigenous participants will be considered as factors underlying the apparently more successful resolution of the Carbide Mill conflict.

## **The Swan Brewery Site/Goonininup**

### *The Indigenous history*

The use of both names for this site is, in itself, a reflection of the continuing disagreements over its nature and use. Goonininup is the Nyungar term for the area and, according to Vinnicombe (1989), it has significance for the local Aboriginal population in two ways. In spiritual terms, the Waugil, a major creator being particularly associated with watercourses, either emerged from underground and entered the Swan River or emerged from the river and went underground at or near Goonininup. As a resting place on a Waugil track, the site is therefore sacred.

Goonininup was also a location of economic and social significance for the area's traditional inhabitants. Although this is an estuarine site and the Swan River is saline at this point, the local presence of an embayment in the slope of the riverbank and of a freshwater spring made it a suitable camping and hunting and gathering site. The food resources of the adjoining Swan River and Mount Eliza were such that it became an important seasonal base. Given the area's spiritual and material significance, it also became a site for teaching and initiation purposes. However, precise locations are difficult to discern. While the major camping site was presumably close to the spring and the river, as are the present (ex)brewery buildings, the ceremonial site(s) may well have been further up the slopes and the tributary valleys in what is now the bushland and recreational area of Kings Park.

The first near contact between the Nyungar people of this area

and Europeans occurred in 1697 when a Dutch exploration party led by Vlamingh saw a crowd of men at the foot of Mount Eliza. On landing, they found only footprints and a pit of water in which herbs were soaking. Neither the Dutch nor, in the early nineteenth century, the French considered that the area was suitable for colonisation, so European–Indigenous contact was minimal until the British colonisation/expropriation of Western Australia in 1829. Since Lieutenant Governor James Stirling chose a site adjacent to Goonininup as his colonial capital of Perth, dispossession was almost immediate. When soldiers of the 63<sup>rd</sup> Regiment landed and set up camp at or near Goonininup, “Yellagonga (the Mooro chief) is reputed to have gestured with his hand to his camp and his spring, and then to have retreated to another of his camps” (Vinnicombe 1989, 21).

A final phase of Aboriginal occupation of Goonininup occurred in the 1830s. The European settlers had appropriated Nyungar hunting lands for farming and violence between the two groups was escalating. An Aboriginal deputation asked Stirling for a place where they could camp in peace (*Perth Gazette*, September 7, 1833). A month later, it was announced that it was “considered expedient by the local government to appropriate that part of the reserves, situate (*sic*) immediately under Mount Eliza... to the service of the native tribes, several families of whom are now establishing themselves on the spot.” (*Perth Gazette*, October 5, 1833). In the early and mid-1830s the Mount Eliza Native Institution accommodated and provided supplies to about 50 Nyungars. By 1838, however, most of the local Nyungar population had either died or moved away from the area and the Institution was closed. For a short while, former inmates visited Francis Armstrong, the ex Government Interpreter of the Institution, at his house in Perth. But, following complaints from his neighbours, “increasingly stringent measures were introduced... culminating in legislation which forbade Aboriginal people to enter the City of Perth without written permission” (Vinnicombe 1989, 25). This legislation was not repealed until 1954, thus restricting Aboriginal access to Goonininup for over a century.

### ***The industrial history***

Goonininup possessed a riverside location and a freshwater spring, and the Swan River remained the main routeway for heavy traffic between the colonial capital at Perth and the port at Fremantle until a railway was constructed in the 1880s. It was therefore the site for a variety of industrial and public enterprises throughout the nineteenth century: as a shipyard from 1831–1833; and, following its period as the Native Institution, as a saw mill, flour mill, convict hiring depot and old men’s home before the first brewery was constructed in 1879. The Swan Brewery Company took over the site and the original brewery buildings in 1888, immediately prior to the Western Australian gold rush. Western Australia’s and Perth’s populations increased tenfold between 1890 and 1910 and the immigrants were predominantly young and male. The colony’s per capita beer consumption was thirty per cent above the Australian average in 1888 and the Swan Brewery’s sales increased sixfold between 1892 and 1896 (Welborn 1987, 67).

In these circumstances, the company was ideally placed to expand and upgrade its brewing facilities. It commissioned both the leading local architect, John Joseph Talbot Hobbes and a specialist English “Maltster’s Architect and Engineer” to design a new brewery for the site. The building was completed in 1897 and was featured in the *London Brewers Journal* of 1902 as a state of the art facility. Hobbes also designed a major extension in 1920 and, as occurred in most industrial buildings, numerous other modifications were made during the brewery’s working life. However, because the brewery was located on a small embayment under the steep slopes of Mount Eliza, space for expansion was limited. As road replaced river transport, its problems of access increased. Furthermore, the area surrounding the brewery had remained largely under bushland or was made into botanic gardens. As ‘Kings Park,’ it became the city’s major recreational area and, as the location for the state’s major war memorials, almost a settler sacred site.

Industry, and particularly an industry such as brewing, was increasingly

seen as out of place in a riverside parkland setting in an otherwise exclusive part of the city. A newspaper campaign in the 1960s called for the demolition of “that unsightly collection of dilapidated buildings scattered all over Mounts Bay Road” (Welborn 1987, 206). Against this, the brewery’s landmark significance was increased by the construction of an illuminated outline of a ship on its river side for the 1962 Perth Empire (now Commonwealth) Games. Similar illumination displays of Cook’s *Endeavour*, for the 1970 bicentenary of his first voyage, and of the State’s sesquicentenary logo in 1979 followed. But by then, the Company had rationalised its operations, moved its production to a new suburban location and announced its intention of selling the land and buildings at its original site.

### ***Heritage conflict***

This phase of the site’s history has been eventful, sporadically violent and complex. As such it has commanded considerable media interest and it became, for much of the late 1980s and the 1990s, a major party political issue at state level. Accordingly, it has also attracted considerable academic attention from specialists in indigenous studies (Ansara 1989), media studies (Mickler 1991), cultural geography (Jacobs 1996; Jones 1997) and political science (Watkins 1997).

Following the initial declaration of the Brewery Company’s intention to sell the buildings in 1978, Ken Colbung, a Nyungar member of the local Aboriginal Lands Trust, called for the state acquisition of the land for the Nyungar people and the redevelopment of the buildings as an Aboriginal Cultural Centre. With hindsight, and with knowledge of the development of and around the Carbide Mill in Ottawa, this might now be seen as a notable compromise proposal. However, this land is extremely valuable and commercial options for its use have always figured strongly in the debate. A local developer bought the site and buildings from the Swan Brewery Company in 1980. His redevelopment proposals met with strong resistance

from a coalition of “establishment” interests, including the Royal Automobile Club, the National Trust, the City of Perth and a local community group, the Foreshores and Waterways Protection Council.

Proposals for, generally commercial, redevelopments of the site/buildings, including several for a boutique brewery/restaurant/theatre complex, were repeatedly opposed by this coalition in the early and mid-1980s, many of whom advocated the brewery’s demolition and the area’s resumption into Kings Park. Following three refusals of redevelopment proposals by the City of Perth Planning Committee, the state government placed the site under the direct control of the State Planning Commission. In 1985, the state government purchased the land from the developer for “public use.” In 1988, having failed to interest any businesses in a public–private partnership development for the site, the state government announced its own building redevelopment plan to include “a small tavern, theatre and the usual food and retail outlets” (*The West Australian*, June 20, 1988).

Aboriginal involvement in this dispute commenced in 1986 when elements of the local Indigenous community made informal appeals to state ministers requesting the demolition of the brewery and the preservation of the site as open space. These appeals were formalised in an unsuccessful submission from the Aboriginal Legal Service to the Town Planning Appeals Tribunal in 1987. Following several further failed attempts by sections of the Aboriginal community to gain injunctions stopping the redevelopment work, an occupation of the construction site by some Aboriginal groups commenced during the 1988–9 Christmas–New Year holiday break.

This action received support from several sections of the wider Perth community, including some church groups and trade unions, and opinion polls indicated that the majority of the white population favoured the buildings’ demolition. A Supreme Court injunction on further building work was obtained and numbers at the occupation site were swelled by scores of non-Indigenous sympathisers, some of whom participated in the occupation for several months. Finally, in a major and sometimes violent operation involving over one hundred

police, the protestors, a group which included children and elderly people, were physically removed from the site in October 1989.

A protracted stalemate then extended over the next decade. Following claims and appeals in several courts, the legal position was resolved in October 1991 when the Full Court ruled that redevelopment of the building could proceed. Politically, the opposite result was almost obtained in 1992 when a private member's bill requiring demolition of the building failed to gain state parliamentary approval by a single vote. In the same year, the government also gave the buildings formal protection when the Heritage Council placed the brewery precinct on the State Register of Historic Places. However, given the magnitude of the political controversy, the state government now also wished to distance itself from the brewery issue. It therefore granted a major construction company a 65-year lease on the site at a nominal rate in return for the buildings' redevelopment as a commercial complex by 1996.

This did not occur for a mixture of legal and economic reasons. Legal injunctions and union bans delayed construction on several occasions, and an economic downturn and a temporary glut of office space in central Perth in the 1990s caused changes to both the timing and the nature of the redevelopment. It was finally completed and occupied in 2001–2 as a mixture of offices, luxury apartments and restaurants — including a microbrewery. Ironically, the final, or at least the latest, legal challenge occurred in the Licensing Court, when the apartment residents contested the opening hours of the restaurant and tavern in the complex.

As noted in the *Builder* of April–May 2002, the developer has been punctilious in adhering to the architectural guidelines set down by the Heritage Council. There is also considerable acknowledgment of the building's industrial heritage, both throughout the redeveloped complex, in the form of machinery and old photographs, and in its nomenclature and marketing. The Old Swan Brewery Restaurant's logo is a black swan perched on a floating beer barrel and advertisements on local bus shelters invite potential consumers to

“imagine afternoon tea in a brewery.”

However, the Heritage Council of Western Australia, in its 1992 Notice of Entry of a Place in the Register of Historic Places, listed the Precinct as “a place of cultural heritage significance because of its aesthetic, historic, scientific and social values. These can be ascribed to the site as well as to the buildings and are attributable to groups within the Aboriginal community as well as to the broader community.” In spite of this, there is no current, visible acknowledgment of the site’s Indigenous significance and Indigenous protests outside the complex, which took place on a weekly basis immediately following the occupation and continued for much of the 1990s, still occur on such occasions as Australia/Invasion Days.

## **The Carbide Mill on Victoria Island, Asticou Island Group**

### ***Indigenous history***

The first historical record of the Indigenous presence on these islands appears in the exploration diaries of Samuel de Champlain. In 1613, he was told by his (unidentified) “Indian companions” that the adjacent waterfalls were called *Asticou*, which he records as meaning boiling pot, or kettle, in the language of the local Algonquin people. He seems to have translated this directly into the French, since *Chaudiere*, the current name of the falls, is the French word for cauldron, or kettle (Bond 1968). The Asticou Falls were the home of a spirit to which the Algonquin would occasionally address prayers and make offerings of tobacco.

After having carried their canoes to the foot of the falls, they assembled at one place, where one of them with a wooden plate takes up a collection, and each one of them places in this plate a piece of tobacco. The plate is placed in the middle of the group, and all dance about it singing in their fashion; then one of the chiefs makes

a speech, pointing out that for a long time they have been accustomed to making this offering, and that by this means they are protected from their enemies...the speaker takes the plate and throws the tobacco into the middle of *la Chaudiere*, and they make a great cry all together (Champlain, 1613, quoted in Kennedy 1970, 9).

While it is generally agreed that the Algonquin are the aboriginal inhabitants of the Ottawa River valley, evidence supporting the habitation of the islands and the immediately surrounding area is limited, though the archaeological remains of a small Indigenous settlement were discovered on the Ontario bank opposite Victoria Island in the nineteenth century (Jamieson 1999).

For several centuries, following first contact, however, Indigenous settlement and territorial patterns in this area were severely disrupted by the partial cooption of the local tribes, firstly into the lucrative fur trade and secondly into the competition by the British and French colonial powers for control of Canada. For a time, between 1610 and 1650, the Algonquin had control of the river valley and were able to exact a toll from trading parties travelling along the Ottawa River. In 1648 and 1649, however, the Iroquois gained the ascendancy. They seem not to have achieved total control over the region, but they were a strong enough presence to conduct raiding parties from several of the islands and rapids in the river including Calumet Falls, Portage du Fort, Chats Falls and Asticou, or Chaudiere, Falls (Kennedy 1970, 88–90).

However, the objective of the fur traders was not land acquisition, and the effect of the trade on the aboriginal people was limited. This changed in 1763, when control of the “Indian Territories” was transferred from the French to the British. It was the British policy to claim the land for the British Crown and to subject it to colonisation and development. The aboriginals responded to the British incursions into their land with armed warfare against the colonisers. Britain had obtained control over the land by treaty with the French (Huitema 2000, 19). This meant that, with the signing of the treaty, the

aboriginal inhabitants of the land became British subjects. Therefore, what the aboriginal people understood as warfare, the colonisers understood as rebellion.

For the remainder of the eighteenth century, and up until the end of the War of 1812, the colonial government continued to do what it could to keep relations between the aboriginal groups and the incoming colonists under control. The government needed aboriginal support at this time in order to counter hostilities from the United States (Huitema 2000, 21). The fur trade continued as it had for some two hundred years, through cooperation between aboriginal groups and the French and English fur traders (Kennedy 1970, 70–91). These two factors, the threat of hostilities with the Americans and the economic value of the fur trade, appear to have maintained an attitude of appeasement in the colonial government's policy on the aboriginal people. In 1814, a major change occurred.

The culmination of hostilities with the Americans coincided with the demise of the fur trade. With these developments, the aboriginal people lost their value to the colonial government both as military allies and as economic contributors to the growth of the colony. From this point, government economic policy emphasised growth in the timber and farming industries. The aboriginal people were not involved in these industries. Furthermore, both timber cutting and farming made huge ingress on the aboriginal lands. No longer interested in maintaining good relations with the aboriginal people, the government moved to protect the incoming settler population, and the key industries which they were establishing, against the interests of the aboriginals. Over the period of the nineteenth century, the Algonquin people were gradually divested of their lands and forced onto reserves at some distance from Victoria Island and from Ottawa (Huitema 2000, 21).

## *Industrial history*

The first European settlement in the region of the Asticou group of islands occurred in 1800. An American named Philemon Wright, with his family and some others, established a community on the northern, Quebec, shore of the river at the Chaudiere Falls. In the 1820s, development began on the Ontario shore when Captain John LeBreton acquired the land that controlled access to the Chaudiere Falls from the south (NCC 1988, 12). It is because of the energy potential of the Chaudiere Falls that these islands have been used by various industries for so much of their colonial and post-colonial history.

From the 1820s until the early twentieth century, the timber industry dominated the islands. In 1828 the Union Suspension Bridge was built over the river at the Chaudiere Falls. In 1829 the first timber slides were constructed to navigate the rapids (NCC 1977, 10). In 1847 the colonial government built its own timber slide, replacing the privately owned timber slides. This was “twenty-six feet” (ca. eight metres) wide and built to accommodate the passage of large rafts of logs comprised of some sixteen to twenty logs which were steered down the slide by two men with long sweeps. It remained in use until 1910 (Bond 1965, 99).

By 1842, the falls were dammed in order to harness their water power. Also in that year, John Perkins and Philip Thomas constructed a sawmill on Chaudiere Island. This was the start of the development that established the Asticou island group as the “industrial heartland of Ottawa” (Darcy 2000, 1). By 1850, every available site suitable for the purpose was taken up with saw mills, and the islands took on the character of a huge lumber yard (NCC 1977, 10). By this time, the islands were so completely covered with lumberyards and saw mills that they were perceived as one landmass and together were commonly referred to as Victoria Island.

In the late nineteenth century, Thomas L. “Carbide” Wilson, inventor of the manufacturing process of crystalline calcium carbide, built a carbide mill on the eastern end of Victoria Island (Bond 1965, 99).

This was one of the few buildings on the Asticou island group to survive the “great fire” of 1900. The 1900 fire was not the only fire on the islands, but it was the most destructive. It consumed large portions of Ottawa and Gatineau, and destroyed buildings on the adjacent LeBreton flats and a large area to the south (NCC 1988,12). On the Asticou island group, it destroyed all the buildings on the islands with the exception of the carbide mill and a warehouse. By 1908, the timber industry had re-established itself as the dominant industrial presence on the islands. However, this activity began to decline in the early 1900s, and by 1945 the dominant industrial presence on the Asticou Island group was a collection of increasingly shabby warehouses (Darcy 2000, 3).

From 1910, the National Capital Commission’s predecessor, the Federal District Planning Commission, began purchasing properties on Victoria Island which it used mostly as storage facilities (Darcy 2000, 3). During the 1960s, it would appear that the industrial heritage of the island was given little consideration. According to one of our informants, this was a reflection of the concept of heritage conservation of the times. The emphasis seems to have been on “landscaped greenspace” (Darcy 2000, 5). Among the few remaining original structures on the island is the carbide mill. This mill, now a ruin, forms part of the Canadian National Estate, both as an example of industrial heritage and as the site of notable technological advances.

### ***Heritage conflict***

While Victoria Island has experienced three indigenous occupations to the Swan Brewery’s one, these were generally reported in the middle pages and later sections of even the local press, and they seem to have engendered lower levels of both political controversy and academic interest than was the case in Perth. The material presented below is therefore based on a combination of archival research and semi-structured interviews with a range of informants, who are identified in the acknowledgments.

In 1975 the first aboriginal protest occupation of the island occurred. This was the Native People's Caravan, which originated in Vancouver, gathering participants as it made its way across the country. They held a demonstration on Parliament Hill on September 1975 and moved over to Victoria Island for the winter. They remained there until February 1976. Then a combination of measures taken by the police and the City, which included harassment and the withdrawal of water and electricity, forced them off the island (Darcy 2000, 7). It is significant that, within a year of the Native People's Caravan protest, the NCC published a planning document which called for the "indigenous native peoples and those minorities not now adequately represented" to be provided with a forum for cultural activities on the Island (NCC 1977, 57).

Since 1975 Victoria Island has been the site of two further political protests by aboriginal people aimed at the Federal Government of Canada; one, in 1990, related to the Oka protest near Montreal, and a 1995–1999 occupation of the mill which was at least initially related to a national protest over land claims. Three reasons have been given for this use of the site. First, it is situated in the Ottawa River below Parliament Hill and good views of the Island are available from the vicinity of the Hill and the surrounding shoreline on both sides of the river. It is therefore a suitably visible location from which to mount political protest. Parliament Hill is the better location, however, and the Hill would be the first choice as a site for protest. When the Government felt that a protest had gone on for long enough within its parliamentary precincts, and that the protesters should be moved along, it would facilitate this process by offering Victoria Island to the protestors as an alternative to the Hill.

The second reason given for aboriginal people occupying the Island is that in pre-colonial times, it was a meeting place and that the Chaudiere Falls are sacred to the Algonquin people. This rationale was repeated to us by all our informants. This included aboriginal people, and staff of the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs, the NCC, the RCMP and the National Archives. A search of the

available literature concerning the pre-colonial spiritual use and significance of Victoria Island revealed that all this literature refers to this same primary historical data source in support of the contention that Victoria and its associated Islands are sacred and a traditional meeting place. This is the entry in the diary of Samuel de Champlain referred to above. Finally, a feature of some indigenous claims is a belief that, while the land on both banks of the river had been ceded by various treaties to colonial powers, the islands had never been signed away and thus remained indigenous land.

The 1995–1999 occupation of Victoria Island, which bears most comparison with the Swan Brewery occupation, began in October with a demonstration on Parliament Hill. It was organised by a group called the Assembly of First Nations and appears to have been made up of aboriginal people from a variety of tribes, who had come to protest about land claims. They demonstrated within the grounds of the parliament for the next fortnight. At that point they were evicted from the Hill and offered Victoria Island as an alternative occupation site. In late October, southern Canada is becoming too cold, wet and windy to live out of doors comfortably. In search of some degree of shelter, therefore, the protesters broke into the Mill which was, at that time, boarded up.

As the owner of and the authority responsible for the property, the NCC was entitled to evict the protesters. However, previous experience had demonstrated the potential for damaging political fallout from such action, making them reluctant to take this approach. Instead, the NCC began discussions with the First Nation group generally agreed to be the people most likely to be the traditional owners of the Ottawa region. This was an Algonquin group known as the Manawakee band, most of whom now live on the Manawakee reserve some three hundred kilometres north of the city.

Elders of the band set up the Circle of All Nations as a management group for the occupation. As a longer term aim, they sought to establish the Island as a place for culture, and a source of help for young aboriginal people who had left the reserves and become street

children. The situation inside the mill deteriorated rapidly, since the building was in a semi-ruinous state and heavily infested with toxic pigeon dung. Members of the Circle tried to go in and clean it up periodically, but to no avail. Over the years, the protest group appears to have undergone several changes of composition and a steady decline in numbers until only two aboriginal protestors, an Ojibwe man and a Miqmaq man, and a handful of their non-aboriginal supporters remained.

The dissolution of the protest began when the protestors called in a reporter hoping to publicise their cause. Her strongest reaction, however, was in response to the conditions existing there with regard to the pigeon dung and the general lack of hygiene. She called the Ontario Department of Health, requesting them to deal with the situation. However, the Ontario Department had no authority to take action because Victoria Island is under Federal jurisdiction. The Ontario Department of Health called Health Canada who then took action.

While this was going on, the RCMP liaison officer received a request from one of the Manawakee elders living in Ottawa asking him to come to a meeting of 35 elders. Essentially, they wanted the NCC and the RCMP to know that, in the opinion of the elders, they had allowed the protest to continue when they ought to have stopped it, and they wanted to know what these bodies proposed to do about it. It was decided that a council would be set up to deal with the protest and to plan for the Island in the longer term. This council was to include three 'grandmothers,' that is, women elders, and the RCMP liaison officer. The Health Canada health inspector contacted the council and invited the grandmothers to inspect the Mill. They appear to have been horrified by the conditions they found there and consulted with other elders in order to decide what action to take. The decision taken by the elders was to endorse Health Canada's evaluation of the situation and that the Mill should be evacuated. The protestors' response to the impending notice of eviction was to erect a barricade.

The RCMP liaison officer was instructed to manage the evacuation of the Mill. He contacted the grandmothers who made up the rest of the council responsible for the Mill situation and, together, they all went down to the Mill. It is unclear exactly how matters proceeded at this point, but in the presence of journalists, at the request of the grandmothers and with no police presence other than the RCMP liaison officer, the protesters left the Mill and the Island, finally ending the protest three and half years after it had begun.

During the three and a half years over which the protest on Victoria Island had been ongoing, an aboriginal organisation was developing its own programmes and initiatives for the Ottawa aboriginal community. This was the Odawa Native Friendship Centre (the Odawa Centre), the local branch of the National Association of Friendship Centres, which are non-profit, non-political organisations aimed at providing services to all aboriginal people regardless of tribal affiliation.

One aim of the membership of the Odawa Centre was to raise the general community's awareness of aboriginal culture. In order to accomplish this, in 1998 the Centre established the Turtle Island Tourism company, owned partly by the Odawa Centre and partly by the manager of TIT, an Ojibwe woman named Trina Mather. This ownership structure enabled the Odawa Centre to retain its status as a charitable organisation. The "mission statement" of the company was "to take aboriginal culture to the people." TIT produced educational and dramatic performances for schools, and craft and oral history displays at local community events, as well as displays of song and dance and associated stories for tourist groups. These were highly successful. It appeared that there was a demand in the tourist industry for aboriginal tourism experiences.

TIT had been seeking a suitable location for some time when the Victoria Island occupation ended. For TIT, the end of the protest on Victoria Island meant that the politicisation of the Island was also at an end and TIT began negotiations with the NCC for the use of the Island. These negotiations were successful and the Aboriginal

Experiences Village was developed, as a temporary structure on a leasehold site adjacent to the Carbide Mill. It has been operating at a profit since 1999 and has been the recipient of regional tourism awards. One of the reasons why TIT has been successful was that the Algonquin elders, with whom the NCC had been working to bring an end to the occupation of the mill, approved of TIT's proposal. The other was the fact that such a development coincided with the NCC's own planning proposals for the Island.

It will be remembered that Victoria Island appears in NCC planning documents as the site of an eventual "aboriginal statement." That is, an appropriate place for the acknowledgment of aboriginal people within the national capital and, in the words of our NCC informant, it is "mandated" for this purpose. When, in 1999, TIT approached the NCC with its proposals, the NCC saw this as a strategic means of resolving any further political activity on Victoria Island which, while not part of the long term planning for the Island, they could justify objectively as being in line with their own plans.

## **The Wider Contexts**

A simple comparison of the two disputes would indicate that the Canadian example has been far more successful, in terms of both process and outcome. There was far less violence involved during, and particularly at the end of, the final site occupation, and the conflict became neither frequent front page news, nor a high profile party political issue, nor (to use the Australian vernacular) a lawyers' picnic. Finally, the likely outcome for the site appears to be one in which the valorisation of the heritage of more than one group is not merely accepted, but is actively promoted. However, it would be simplistic to assume from this that the Victoria Island dispute necessarily provides an exemplar for replication by those involved in similar disputes elsewhere. There are three significant differences between the contexts of the two disputes that contributed significantly to the more

successful conduct and outcome of the Canadian case.

***The history and geography of the sites and their immediate surroundings***

Both buildings have central city locations and riverside sites and both had industrial functions for much of their respective cities' histories. Perth and Ottawa (-Gatineau) are now both cities of slightly over one million inhabitants and European settlement in both cases dates from the 1820s. Nevertheless the spatial and temporal contexts of the cities and of these buildings diverge considerably.

Although the Swan Brewery site housed industrial buildings/activities for much of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Perth has never been a city dominated by industry. It has largely functioned as the administrative and commercial capital of a primary producing state, which tended to export, rather than to process, its agricultural, pastoral and mineral and outputs. Furthermore, such industry as was developed in Perth in the colonial era (that is before 1901) was largely concentrated upstream of the city, to its east. Indeed, both in his exploratory voyages in 1827 and in his initial years as Lieutenant Governor of the colony, James Stirling was concerned to select and to maintain a site for his colonial capital that was imposing and which conformed to contemporary Romantic notions of landscape aesthetics (Cameron 1981). As such, the preservation of a relatively unsullied waterfront prospect at Perth's centre has been accorded a high priority throughout its history (Seddon 1986). The early planning decision to preserve the wooded slopes of Mount Eliza as the recreational area of Kings Park ensured that the Swan Brewery site has always been surrounded by parkland and bush.

As the city expanded and suburban sprawl commenced following the 1890s gold rush, proximity to Kings Park and to the undeveloped riverfront conveyed status and prestige. The suburbs, such as West Perth and Nedlands, which developed in relative proximity to the river, the park and the brewery, therefore attracted well-to-do inhabitants. The residents of these suburbs had an interest in

preserving the amenity value of the northern riverbank of the Swan downstream from the city centre, since this enhanced both their local quality of life and their property values. More broadly, as the twentieth century progressed, the whole of the river between Perth and Fremantle became the city's playground, with Kings Park as one of its most important focal points. In these circumstances, it was not surprising that, for many, the brewery buildings increasingly seemed to be an 'unsightly' anomaly in a generally loved and generally undeveloped riparian landscape. Equally, following the cessation of the brewery's operations, this was a commercially valuable development site.

By contrast, industry, and specifically timber milling, was Ottawa's initial *raison d'être* and it was only after several decades and several changes of the governmental mind that the city was finally chosen as Canada's federal capital. The Chaudiere Falls provided an industrial power source and the presence of the falls and of Chaudiere and Victoria Islands facilitated the control, collection and, thus, the processing of timber being floated down the Ottawa River, which became a nineteenth century industrial thoroughfare and from the mid-nineteenth century, virtually to the First World War, Victoria Island was at the centre of Ottawa's industrial heartland. The Carbide Mill was but one factory among many, albeit one with a distinctive industrial function and a notable technological history. Also, at the sub-regional level, the residential suburbs surrounding Victoria Island and the Carbide Mill were traditionally the homes of working class factory employees and their families (Darcy 2000).

From the First World War onwards, Victoria Island has been gradually and partially de-industrialised, and has shifted from private towards public ownership as the federal government, in particular, acquired properties for storage and warehousing. Even though a restaurant opened in a converted mill building as long ago as the 1970s and the NCC has been creating parks and landscaping around the Carbide Mill at the eastern end of Victoria Island in recent decades, major manufacturing industries, most still predominantly lumber-related,

still operate elsewhere on the islands and on the adjoining river banks. As the next sub-section will document, plans now exist to integrate the Carbide Mill precinct, and indeed much of Victoria Island, into an integrated, tourist-historic, tourist-recreational and national symbolic riverside capital core. But, for much of the relatively recent past, this part of the Ottawa waterfront has been not a favoured and valued playground or a site of commercial opportunity, but an area of urban blight.

History and geography have thus combined to locate the Swan Brewery in an area where planners and politicians would expect community values to favour the retention and expansion of open space. Political and community expectations for the Carbide Mill precinct would be far more likely to encompass a more diverse rehabilitation and reclamation agenda.

### ***The political and planning contexts***

Perth, like most large Australian cities, is a dominant state capital. It houses most of Western Australia's population. Local government within the Perth metropolitan region is therefore deliberately fragmented so that the state government faces no significant political counterweight (Jones 1979) over (*inter alia*) significant urban planning decisions. The Swan Brewery is located in the City of Perth, but one of over twenty local government authorities in the metropolitan region. The City Council has recently been broken up and now controls little more than the Central Business District. Ottawa, or more correctly the Ottawa–Hull (or –Gatineau) metropolitan area, straddles the peripheries of Ontario and Quebec. It is distant from the capitals and the demographic centres of gravity of both these provinces. The local government structure has recently been consolidated and, particularly in the formally designated National Capital Core Area, where the Carbide Mill is located, the federal government, rather than the provincial governments, has

considerable power and influence over urban planning decisions through the National Capital Commission.

In both cases, therefore, a single tier of government, state in Perth and federal in Ottawa, has exercised considerable control over these heritage-planning conflicts. But, while this control has been very much hands on by leading state politicians in Perth, it has been at arm's length, through the National Capital Commission, in Ottawa.

In the case of Perth, state governments from both sides of politics have consistently seen waterfront development in the central city area as a high profile and an electorally sensitive issue. The negative side effect of this has been that it has become party political, producing policy vacillations with each change of government. Furthermore, in recent decades both political parties have also vacillated over the extent to which they have involved either local government or the private sector in their urban development initiatives. For most of the recent conflict, the Liberal–National (ideologically conservative) coalition favoured the brewery's demolition, while the Labor Party favoured its redevelopment, thus rendering the building's future uncertain at every election. The Labor Party, when in office, first transferred planning powers over the brewery site from the local council to the state, then purchased the building, and, shortly before losing office, leased it back to the private sector. (This, ironically, ensured that its redevelopment occurred during the incumbency of the party which had sought its demolition.) In these circumstances, the various interest groups had every incentive to lobby, to protest, to litigate and, in general, to delay proceedings until the next state election.

More generally, the strong public interest in and concern for central area riverside development paradoxically resulted in a lack of coherent planning policy in this area. While groups with commercial interests, including "City Vision," a pressure group made up of design professionals, developers and journalists, have agitated for more development and more 'life' for the waterfront, more traditional bodies, such as the Foreshores and Waterways Protection Council and

the National Trust, have sought to prevent this. Successive premiers have pushed through pet waterfront projects, such as a casino, a bell tower, and a convention centre, all of which, like the brewery redevelopment, have been highly controversial. In many cases, also like the brewery, these developments have been tainted with scandal and corruption. Even when a foreshore design competition (City of Perth 1991) produced some interesting and coherent regional proposals, these have merely remained on the shelf for over a decade.

There has therefore been no detailed plan for the area in which the brewery is situated and, more seriously, no coherent strategy upon which such a plan could be based. Debate, which is frequently acrimonious, rages around the issues of specific developments and of political corruption with little regard for overall planning and heritage issues and less still for the nuances of questions concerning the complex interplay of Indigenous, settler and natural heritage.

By contrast, the central, or Core, area of Ottawa, which includes Victoria Island and the Carbide Mill, has been the focus of concerted planning initiatives from at least the 1970s (NCC 1977) and clear and consistent strategies have underpinned its development from then to the present day (NCC 2000). Notwithstanding, the development of plans for the “Cities of Ottawa and Hull” (1915) and “the National Capital” (1950), the National Capital Commission’s (1977) report on Victoria Island contended that “(u)ntil comparatively recently federal development of the Capital has virtually ignored both Hull and the River” (NCC 1977,2) perhaps reflecting this area’s traditional landscape character prior to its (partial) deindustrialisation from the mid twentieth century onwards.

The 1977 report noted that The Mill restaurant was already in operation, indicating a prescient private realisation of the area’s site and heritage values. However, “approximately 50% of the area is industrial/warehousing with related activities and the remainder is open or vacant space”(NCC 1977, 25). Most significantly, however, and with regard to Island’s future, the 1977 report articulated two development principles which have survived impressively intact to

the 2000 “Synthesis” document which outlines the current planning guidelines for the Capital’s core area.

In relation to the issue of activities, it was thought that, since this was an area to which people/recreationists needed to be enticed:

In order to make the islands a stimulating and attractive place to visit, the functions to be located there must not be restricted to passive exhibits and open space. Rather a variety of active areas should be encouraged to stimulate participation by the public (NCC 1977, 50).

With regard to the issue of cultural diversity, the report contends that, at the eastern end of Victoria Island:

the ethnic and cultural diversity which typifies Canadians should be portrayed. The indigenous native peoples and those minorities not now adequately represented should be adequately featured, as should their relationship to regional and geographical areas. This passive image of Canada past, present and future may complement an active form where individuals may discuss and/or debate National issues. The above activities may be developed inside or in the vicinity of the Carbide building. Small ancillary commercial functions may also be encouraged in the area, such as cafes, craft shops etc (NCC 1977, 57 2).

These commitments to functional and cultural diversity in this area may well relate to the immediate and the broader historical and political and contexts. In 1977, this ex-industrial area had been the recent site of the first indigenous occupation following the Native Caravan protest. Furthermore, the stresses on the federation resulting from the growth of the Quebec separatist movement were already becoming apparent. To “ignore Hull and the river” at such a time would have been ill-advised. Conversely, the development of a vital, beautiful and culturally inclusive national/national capital core area which physically and symbolically linked and integrated both banks

of (and the islands within) the Ottawa River and, thus, the two provinces of Ontario and Quebec is an extremely powerful political statement by a federal government seeking to emphasise Canada's unity in diversity.

Planning and development of the Carbide Mill precinct and of the National Capital Core Area have therefore proceeded without the 'ad hocery,' the policy reversals and the scandals which have accompanied the same processes at the Brewery precinct and along the Perth foreshore. And much has been achieved, notably the construction of a landmark building, the Museum of Civilisation, in 1986. Given its location on the Quebec bank of the river, opposite the parliament buildings, and its distinctive design by an Indigenous architect, this is both physically and symbolically significant in defining the Core Area.

But it must also be admitted that progress in other areas, and notably on Victoria Island itself, has been slow. The 1977 report had recommended that the government should "begin development on the Eastern portion of Victoria Island as soon as possible" (NCC 1977, 55). Twenty-seven years later, the Carbide Mill is still unrestored, the Aboriginal tourist exhibit is a temporary and mobile construction and the Proposed Aboriginal Centre (NCC 2000, 15) exists only as an architect's drawing. The subtext, quite literally, of this "Synthesis" document is "from vision to action." The former is admirable and the concerns for dissonant heritage therein are impeccable, but the latter has yet to be fully realised.

The brewery conflict may have been protracted as a result of legal delays and policy reversals, but both its political centrality and the commercial imperative ensured that it was difficult to place this issue on a back burner. For Victoria Island and the Carbide Mill, it would appear that the challenge stems from its relative lack of political centrality. The plans have been consistent and the principles upon which they have been based appear to be both widely accepted and generally commendable. What is needed is the political will, and, perhaps even more so, the government funding to ensure their

completion. Since federal governments are perennially subject to provincial (in both senses of the word) charges of favouring federal capitals, such funding is often hard to justify.

### ***The nature of the Indigenous involvement***

What the NCC has achieved in cultural terms on Victoria Island is both admirable and enviable. One could wish for so congenial a resolution for the Swan Brewery dispute. How likely is it that such a result could be achieved in Perth? Just as there are many points of similarity between the Perth and the Ottawa settings, there are significant contrasts between them. The third of these is the nature of the Indigenous communities.

The Nyungar people of the south west of Western Australia are made up of around eighty distinct kin groups who share a common culture. Each of these groups has a traditional attachment to some territory within the larger Nyungar region, which extends 400 kilometres north and 800 kilometres south-east of Perth. The system of authority relationships goes no further than the level of these kin groups, which may number as few as 50 or as many as 800 people (Birdsall 1990; Birdsall-Jones 2002). The authoritative individuals in these groups are sets of siblings and sometimes cousins who are both in the oldest generation of the kin group, and of high moral standing. Within the kin group, these people collectively are termed “our old people,” or “our elders.” Within Nyungar society, no Nyungar person recognises the authority of anyone excepting his or her kin group elders. This is not a democracy. This is a gerontocracy modified by the element of merit. Rights and obligations accruing to the various relationships in Nyungar society tend to be jealously guarded and strictly enforced. These rights and obligations extend to relationships between kinfolk and between kinfolk and the land that the group regards as its own.

The various programmes and organisations that have been set up for the Nyungar people by the state and federal governments do not recognise these existing authority structures of Nyungar society. Rather, any group that receives public funding must operate according

to democratic principles, decision making procedures and structure. This makes it very difficult for the Nyungar people to participate equitably and amicably in these organisations. Their view is that anyone who wishes to may run these organisations and 'it doesn't matter who they are.' This means that any person who gets enough of their own kinfolk along to vote on the day of the elections can win office without regard to their personal worth or to their regard in the wider Nyungar community. The result is that Nyungar administrative bodies are fraught with argument and conflict both within and between the organisations. This has been the situation since the early 1970s when some of the first Aboriginal bureaucratic bodies were established (Howard 1981). In the case of the brewery dispute, there were vocal disagreements between Nyungar individuals and groups as to the precise degree and location of the sacred sites at Goonininup and, therefore, further disagreements as to whether or not the brewery buildings violated this sacredness.

Intra-indigenous conflict was therefore something that we made a regular topic in our interviews and in our archival research in Ottawa. Archival research was not fruitful. Library searches in Ottawa revealed no research on the topic of present day Algonquin social and political organisation. Inquiries with anthropologists working in the field of Canadian aboriginal studies confirmed that little if any such research had been carried out (Jean-Phillipe Chartrand and Gwen Reimer, personal communication, 2002). Our statements on the Algonquin are therefore limited to what we could glean from interviews, both formal and informal.

According to our informants, the kind of conflict common to Nyungar organisations is unknown in comparable Algonquin bodies. No one was able to enlighten us on the nature of authority structures or the rights and obligations accruing to various kin relationships, and we are therefore unable to make any firm statement in explanation of this apparent equanimity. There are indications, however, that the Algonquin authority structures are centralised to a far greater degree than is possible in the Nyungar setting.

The manager of the TIT enterprise is not Algonquin but Ojibwe. Several of those who work at the “Aboriginal Experiences” on Victoria Island are not Algonquin and the Indigenous protestors in the various Carbide Mill occupations came from all over the country. Those Nyungar organisations which are run by non-Nyungar Aboriginal persons and have non-Nyungar Aboriginal employees experience regular accusations that, because they are not Nyungar, these persons have no place in a Nyungar organisation and, moreover, that they should ‘get back to their own country.’ As far as we could tell neither the TIT manager nor her employees had ever experienced this. Part of the reason for this may have been the fact that Ms Mather had taken the trouble to obtain the agreement of the Algonquin elders before establishing Aboriginal Experiences on the island. This speaks to a system of social organisation which in some way allows the Algonquin, individually, to conceive of themselves as members of the Algonquin people as whole, rather than as the member of an autonomous kin based group merely sharing a common culture, but not any other commonality, with other such kin-based groups.

As a preliminary statement, we may say that one of the reasons that TIT has succeeded is the nature of community and authority among the Algonquin people. Even if the Nyungar people had had the opportunity to establish such an enterprise on the Swan Brewery site, the nature of Nyungar community and authority would be a significant threat to the stability of the enterprise. This is not to say that no Nyungar tourist enterprise will ever succeed. There are some small-scale ventures which focus on the authority and knowledge of the elders who are the widely acknowledged custodians of the land on which the ventures are situated. However, these are unlikely to occur in large cities where long term disruption of kin groups has occurred. This is quite different from the TIT enterprise, which not only involves non-Algonquin aboriginal people in its operation, but also seeks to speak for all Algonquin and for other Canadian aboriginal groups.

## Conclusion

In the previous section, we have indicated several historical, geographical, political and cultural reasons for the more successful outcome of the Victoria Island dispute. It is from this contextual consideration of the conflicts, rather than from their histories, that we would seek to draw some conclusions and suggestions for the successful management of such heritage conflicts.

While the history and geography of any contested site is, inevitably, a given, the material presented above on the political and planning contexts of the two disputes clearly indicates the value of temporal consistency and spatial coherence in the incorporation of contested heritage sites into local land use strategies. Planning for the brewery site was subject to constant reversals and ongoing uncertainty. Moreover, in the course of this dispute, it was seldom considered in a context wider than that of this single plot of (valuable) land. Indeed, by transferring planning responsibility for this site (and for several others in central Perth), but not for the whole waterfront area, from the city to the state government level, the prospects for achieving the integrated development of the city's foreshore have been severely constrained. By contrast, the NCC's vision for the core area of Ottawa has remained broadly the same for decades and certainly for the duration of this heritage dispute. Their planning has also encompassed a clearly defined sub-region (the national capital core) and gives due consideration to the relation and integration of this core to and with the wider metropolitan area.

Particularly, but not solely, from our consideration of the indigenous involvement in these disputes, we would also contend that inclusiveness and transparency are vital components in the achievement of successful outcomes to contested heritage disputes. From a purely indigenous perspective, both the clear and, apparently, generally accepted authority structure of the Algonquin group involved in the Victoria Island dispute and their preparedness to

work with other indigenous and settler groups contrast markedly with the Nyungar–Swan brewery experience. The Nyungar leaders of the brewery occupation were not generally acknowledged in the local indigenous community as the most appropriate people to “speak for” that piece of land (Watkins 1997). Indeed, the dispute was marked by settler pressure groups seeking Indigenous allies, and vice versa, to the extent where it was often difficult to discern who became the pawn of whom (Jones 1997). This was the antithesis of inclusivity, but rather a case of ‘my enemy’s enemy is my friend’ in the complex indigenous–settler alliances that developed during the conflict. For example, the Liberal–National party, which had vehemently opposed Indigenous land rights on a state-wide basis, supported the call from some Nyungar groups for the brewery’s demolition.

The nature of Nyungar spirituality is also relevant to any consideration of transparency in the resolution of disputes of this kind. The precise location, nature and importance of Nyungar sacred sites is not public knowledge, even within kin groups, rather it is dependent on information gained through education and initiation and may well be gender or sub-group specific. The co-location of the brewery buildings and the Waugil site was therefore both disputed and — if it be the case — arguably, should remain secret, a situation which seriously compromised negotiations between the parties. However, this was not simply an Indigenous characteristic of the brewery dispute. Architectural heritage as well as Indigenous heritage surveys were only conducted when the dispute was well advanced. Inevitably, this led to suggestions of bias and inauthenticity, given the subjectivity of decisions on architectural merit and the difficulty of establishing the ages of parts of a frequently adapted industrial building. Furthermore the various deals, sales and leases involving the brewery were normally conducted in private and only announced, with much of the detail remaining commercial in confidence, after the event.

Conversely, comprehensive (and university-based) heritage surveys of the buildings on Victoria Island were carried out soon after the

1977 NCC report in accordance with the long-established dictum of “survey before plan.” Even before then, the mill and the land around it was in and has remained in public ownership. And ever since then the plans for its development have been public documents. Transparency with regard to issues of indigenous (spiritual) heritage on Victoria Island did feature as an issue in our discussions and researches. But, as stated above, all our informants merely referred us (back) to Champlain’s comments from 1613 and did not see transparency in this context as a topic of importance.

Clearly, therefore, consistency, coherence, inclusivity and transparency are desirable in the successful resolution of disputes of this type. All were more readily apparent in Ottawa than in Perth. Nevertheless, we must conclude that, in these two cases, the Canadian participants have managed their, relatively easier, conflict situation well, while those involved in the Australian dispute have managed a more difficult task poorly.

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## Enabling Australian–Canadian Business Alliances: A Research Agenda.<sup>1</sup>

### Introduction

The 1894 Order in Council appointing John Short Larke as Commercial Agent to Australia<sup>2</sup> so that he could “assist in further extending the already growing trade between the two countries” provides a very early explanation for this work into Australian–Canadian business alliances. We too are seeking to enhance Australian–Canadian business partnerships so that they can prosper and grow.

In this paper we consider the literature relevant to international cooperative alliances (ICAs) between Australian and Canadian businesses. ICAs, according to Johnson and others (1996), “involve agreements to cooperate in joint activities such as co-development of a new product or technology, or marketing a new product, or existing product to a new market” and “offer an important means of doing business in the global economy.”<sup>3</sup> Our goal is to uncover aspects of partner cultural similarity, cooperation and trust that could help Australian–Canadian ICAs secure competitive advantage<sup>4</sup> in their various endeavours.

What lies behind successful Australian–Canadian ICAs? Alliance success has been linked to management flexibility, partner trust building, regular information exchange, constructive management of conflict, key personnel continuity and partner expectations (Gulati 1998). Our premise is that cultural similarities and shared values between Australians and Canadians can support many of these key success factors. In particular, we opine that Australian–Canadian

partner commonality could foster increased cooperative and trusting relationships that, in turn, could enhance competitive advantage through lower communication and transaction costs. We further opine, first, that increased partner commonality and communication abilities will be especially valuable for those Australian–Canadian ICAs that rely on tacit knowledge as a key dimension of competitiveness; and second, that increased partner commonality could assist in the formation of strong trust relationships that lower transaction costs for high asset specificity projects where transaction costs normally limit cooperative behaviour.

This paper will set out selected literature in the areas of cultural similarity, tacit knowledge, transaction costs, asset specificity and trust to support new inquiries into the nature of successful Australian–Canadian ICAs.<sup>5</sup> In particular, three key dimensions will be explored:

1. Whether cultural similarity could provide the basis for shared values and ICA performance. As such, the paper will explore notions of culture and values, the factors that give rise to cultural similarity between Australia and Canada — especially in terms of managerial perspectives and value sets, and the relationship between cultural similarity, shared values and ICA performance;
2. Partner commonality and improved communication as sources of competitive advantage. This includes looking at how partner commonality has been associated with improved alliance performance, particularly through improved communication flows that are able to facilitate the transfer of tacit knowledge; and
3. Trust as an enabling quality or competitive advantage. This exploration will first look at the role of transaction costs and asset specificity in competitive advantage, then at trust in its weak, semi-strong and strong forms and the impact of each on international transacting costs. Then the exploration looks at how trust can enhance competitive advantage in ICAs.

The paper concludes with a summary of key points and the identification of key research questions, which provide a path forward for new research into the competitiveness of Australian–Canadian business alliances.

### **Cultural Similarity and Shared Values as a Basis for Enhanced Australian–Canadian ICA Performance**

Culture and shared values appear to be interwoven concepts. Hofstede (1980) defines culture as “the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one human group from another” (25) and values as “a broad tendency to prefer certain states of affairs over others” (19). He then goes on to say, “[c]ulture, in this sense, includes systems of values; and values are among the building blocks of culture.” Hofstede further theorises (27) that cultural patterns stem from the society’s origins (ecological factors such as geographic, economic, demographic, genetic/hygienic, historical, technological and urbanisation), which in turn produce societal norms (value systems of major groups of the population) and societal consequences (structure and functioning of institutions, family patterns, role differentiation, social stratification, socialisation emphases, education, religion, political structure, legislation, architecture and theory development).

Canada and Australia certainly share many common ecological factors, societal norms and societal consequences. In terms of ecological factors, both Canada and Australia are immigrant-based, self-governing federal democracies following the Westminster system of government. Each country has a free market economy with remarkable similarities in terms of the natural resource, agricultural and financial sectors. Both began their modern existence as British colonies. Each country is highly advanced in technological terms and both countries could be characterised as highly urbanised with vast expanses of sparsely populated territory. Social norms are also very similar in both countries — it is hard to imagine typical Canadian social behaviour being viewed as abnormal in Australia, or vice

versa. Finally, both Canada and Australia have borne the same social consequences with similar religious, educational and judicial institutions, similar family patterns, similar expectations for men and women within their society, similar electoral representation with their federal systems and similar legislation — even to the point where legislative frameworks are sometimes heavily influenced by each other in areas such as taxation and competition policies.

Not surprisingly, the high degree of cultural similarity described above has led to remarkably similar social performance and business value scores. Both Canada and Australia have scored remarkably consistently (and highly) on the United Nations Development Index.<sup>6</sup> In business value scores, Hofstede's study comparing managers of a large multinational operating in 66 countries found that Australian and Canadian managers were remarkable close in value sets. Hofstede used four dimensions of culture, namely, uncertainty avoidance, power distance, individualism and masculinity, to locate the relative cultural differences of the managers he studied. Of these four dimensions, he noted (314) that his Uncertainty Avoidance Index (UAI) score<sup>7</sup> "functions as a kind of summary index [where] comparative studies which are limited to wealthy countries will easily distinguish only one dimension, uncertainty avoidance, which subsumes also power distance, masculinity and the inverse of individualism." Remarkably, on Hofstede's UAI Index Canada and Australia are closely located with scores of 48 and 51 respectively, within a range of scores from 8 to 112, indicating very similar values between the Canadian and Australian business managers surveyed (Figure 4.1, 165). These very close UAI scores for Australia and Canada are especially important for ICAs as work by Barkema and Vermeulen (1997) show that divergent UAI scores are especially disruptive for international partnerships.

A theoretical link between cultural similarity, shared values and ICA performance is supported by similarity-attraction theory. According to Pornpitakpan (1999), "[t]he majority of research in psychology, sociolinguistics, communications, business and related fields has

supported the positive similarity-attraction relationship, which postulates that the greater the degree of similarity between two parties, the greater the attraction will be.” Citing extensive literature, Pornpitakpan goes on to state that similarity-induced attraction leads to more favourable outcomes and more cooperation, including improved negotiation outcomes and future contracts between the parties, as well as increased partner satisfaction.

### **Partner Commonality, Improved Communication and Competitive Advantage**

Cultural similarity and alliance performance have been linked by Pothukuchi and others (2001) who note that “scholars have generally argued that alliances between culturally similar partners are more likely to be successful than alliances between culturally dissimilar partners.” They go on to state that “cultural incompatibility may cost more than strategic incompatibility in organisational alliances” as the different cultures cause different psychological environments and different practices that negatively influence performance. Partners’ value and behaviour differences can cause communication, cooperation, commitment and conflict resolution problems and “adversely influence interpretation and response to strategic and managerial issues, compounding transactional difficulties.... Overall, the underlying uncertainty due to cultural differences makes it costly to negotiate and transfer management practices and firm-specific technologies” (Pothukuchi and others, 2001). On the positive side, the benefits offered by partner commonality are substantial, as Steensma and others note “[p]artner commonality in terms of behavioural patterns and objectives promotes effective communication, which leads to lower costs of coordination and a reduced need for formal governance safeguards.”

This commonality is likely to be especially valuable to ICAs which depend on the sharing of partner knowledge for competitive advantage. Simonin (1999) notes that “[k]nowledge transfer depends on how easily that knowledge can be transported, interpreted, and

absorbed...” and points “to the need to consider the subtle aspects of knowledge — ...its ambiguity, its resistance to clear communication, its embeddedness in context, and its idiosyncrasy.” In this latter regard, “[a]mbiguity encapsulates the degree of transferability of information, know-how, competence, knowledge, or skills [and] ultimately affects the transfer outcomes.” It also tends to “go beyond the attributes of the information or knowledge itself...[to] depend on the characteristics and choices of both the information seeker and provider.” Of particular interest are “the experience of the knowledge-seeker with the competence, the knowledge-providing partner’s protectiveness, and both cultural and organisational distance between the partners” (Simonin).

Knowledge can be either objective or tacit in nature (Ambronsini and Bowman 2001). Objective knowledge — also known as articulated, declarative or explicit knowledge — can be communicated relatively easily by writing it down or explaining it to someone. Because it can be so easily shared, it does not lead to sustained competitive advantage. On the other hand, tacit knowledge — alternatively, subtle or ambiguous knowledge — is difficult to write down or explain to others, personal (embedded in the individual), practical and describes a process (know-how) and context specific. These attributes make tacit knowledge unique, imperfectly mobile, imperfectly imitable and non-substitutable — and so potentially, a source of sustained competitive advantage (Ambronsini and Bowman).

Australian – Canadian ICAs may be especially well-positioned to gain from the competitive advantage offered by tacit knowledge. Both Canadian and Australian firms can draw on their home country and regional familiarity for tacit knowledge-related, competitive advantages in market access, cultural understanding and contextual nous. At the same time, high partner commonality within Australian and Canadian ICAs could permit them to share their home and regional market tacit knowledge more completely than other, more culturally distant partners.

## Transaction Costs, Trust and ICA Competitive Advantage

Cultural similarity might also provide the basis for lower transaction costs, and potentially, higher level trust and so yield cost and enhanced opportunity competitive advantages to Australian–Canadian ICAs.

Dyer (1997) notes that “[e]conomists have long recognised that ‘resource owners increase productivity through cooperative specialisation’” with “the value chain in modern economies ... characterised by interfirm specialisation such that individual firms engage in a narrow range of activities that are embedded in a complex chain of input-output relations with other firms.” They go on to state “[p]roductivity gains in the value chain are possible when firms are willing to make transaction or relation-specific investments,” noting that “[r]ecent empirical work confirms that investments in relation-specific assets are often correlated with superior performance.”

Unfortunately, increased investment in specialised assets is usually accompanied by increased governance costs as firms seek to protect themselves against opportunistic behaviour. According to Dyer, “[t]he standard reasoning is that as asset specificity increases, more complex governance structures (that is, more complex contracts) are required to eliminate or attenuate costly bargaining over profits from specialised assets.... Thus transaction costs are presumed to increase with an increase in asset specificity.” Four separate costs related to transacting have been identified, including: first, search costs — the costs of gathering information to identify and evaluate potential trading partners; second, contracting costs — costs associated with negotiating and writing an agreement; third, monitoring costs — costs associated with monitoring the agreement to ensure that each party fulfils their obligations; and fourth, enforcing costs — costs associated with ex post bargaining and sanctioning trading partners who do live up to their agreement.

Trust can be a key enabling quality for lowering transaction costs within cooperative alliances, and ultimately, competitive advantage.<sup>8</sup> Steensma, Marino and Weaver (2000) note, “successful

cooperation ultimately requires a high level of trust between the alliance partners to alleviate the fear of opportunistic behaviour and enhance the stability of the relationship.” Trust, according to Dyer and Chu (2000), is “an important antecedent to inter-organisational cooperation and economic efficiency” and is thought to be an important source of competitive advantage because it lowers transactions costs, facilitates investments in relation-specific assets and leads to superior information-sharing routines.

If we are to enjoy the benefits of trust we need to understand its dimensions, its nature and how it can be operationalised. Barney and Hansen (1994) define trust as “the mutual confidence that no party to an exchange will exploit another’s vulnerabilities” and consider an exchange partner as trustworthy when it will not exploit the exchange vulnerabilities of others. They also highlight “that while trust is an attribute of a relationship between exchange partners, trustworthiness is an attribute of individual exchange partners.”

Dyer and Chu (2000) note “(trust) would be expected to emerge in situations where the “trustworthy” party in the exchange relationship: first, is known to reliably make good faith efforts to behave in accordance with prior commitments; second, makes adjustments (that is, as market conditions change) in ways perceived as “fair” by the exchange partner; and third, does not take excessive advantage of an exchange partner even when the opportunity is available.”

As such, Dyer and Chu “characterise interfirm trust as a construct based on three components: reliability, fairness, and goodwill.” Steensma, Marino and Weaver (2000) consider trust to be “a complex phenomenon that can result from formal contractual safeguards as well as from informal partner commonalities in objectives and values.” They also hold the premise “that the culture in which the entrepreneur is socialised not only influences cooperative values, but also the basis of trust that he/she favours when pursuing cooperation.”

Operationalising trust involves understanding the vulnerabilities that trust can safeguard as well as the various forms of trust that exist in economic exchanges. Barney and Hansen (1994) list three exchange

vulnerabilities, including: first, adverse selection “when parties to an exchange find it very costly to evaluate accurately the quality of the resources or assets others assert they will bring to an exchange;” second, moral hazard “when parties to an exchange find it very costly to evaluate accurately the quality of the resources or assets others are actually offering in exchange;” and third, hold-up vulnerabilities “when parties to an exchange make large, asymmetric transaction-specific investments in an exchange.”

Barney and Hansen (1994) also identify three forms of trust which can exist in different economic exchanges, namely: weak form trust, semi-strong form trust and strong form trust. The value of trust in the ICA, and potentially the ICA’s competitive advantage, increases as trust moves from weak to strong form.

Weak form trust occurs when the partners have no significant vulnerabilities to exploit in a particular exchange. Steensma, Marino and Weaver (2000) note, “because the potential for opportunism is not an issue, trust between partners is not dependent on contractual safeguards or common values and objectives.” Consequently, it is unlikely that shared values would be a source of competitive advantage within Australian – Canadian ICAs which possess only weak form trust.

Semi-strong trust between partners occurs when contractual safeguards mutually protect the two parties against exchange vulnerabilities. Governance devices are used to ensure that the cost of opportunistic behaviour exceeds the benefits. In this regard, contracts can be structured to impose penalties and reputation losses can cost the cheating partner future projects and risk their social networks (Barney and Hansen). These governance devices are costly — sometimes simply overwhelming the potential benefits of protecting against opportunism — and so firms able to rely only on semi-strong form trust may not be able to profitably engage in activities with higher exchange vulnerabilities. Competitive advantage could potentially accrue to Australian–Canadian ICAs able to rely on effective and cheaper social network governance methods.

Strong form trust occurs when partners maintain a high level of confidence that opportunistic behaviour will be avoided even without the assurance provided by legal and social contractual safeguards. According to Barney and Hansen, “strong form trust emerges in the face of significant exchange vulnerabilities, independent of whether or not elaborate social and economic governance mechanisms exist, because opportunistic behaviour would violate values, principles and standards of behaviour that have been internalised by parties to an exchange.” Strong form trust emanates from “the values, principles, and standards that partners bring to an exchange” and “may reflect an exchange partner’s unique history, its culture, or the personal beliefs and values of critical individuals associated with it.” This strong form trust can exist at both the individual and the firm level — the latter when the firm possesses “a culture and associated control systems that reward strong form trustworthy behaviour, or the specific individuals involved in a particular exchange may, themselves, be strong form trustworthy.” Signals of strong form trustworthiness include having a reputation for being strong form trustworthy, being open to outside auditing of the exchange relationship and making unilateral transaction-specific investments in an exchange before that exchange is actually in place (Barney and Hansen). Competitive advantage could potentially accrue to Australian–Canadian ICAs able to, first, develop and maintain strong form trustworthiness, and second, discover strong form trustworthy exchange partners when other competitors are not able to generate more than (the costly) semi-strong form trust.

### **The Path Forward — New Questions for Research**

The literature reviewed gives us confidence that Australian–Canadian cultural similarity can enhance the success of Australian–Canadian ICAs. Casual observation and cultural similarity tests provide confirming evidence that Australian and Canadian business managers are very similar in their work-related

values. It is likely that this similarity — using similarity attraction theory as an explanatory framework — serves as a social lubricant to improve the operating environment of Australian–Canadian ICAs. Partner commonality has also been linked directly to improved communication and ultimately competitive advantage. Advantages for culturally compatible ICAs are likely to include improved working environments as the partners appropriately interpret strategic and managerial issues as they arise as well as lower coordination and formal safeguard costs. Improved communication is thought to be especially valuable for those Australian–Canadian ICAs that rely on tacit knowledge for their competitive advantage. This difficult to grasp and transfer set of information is potentially an ICA's principal competitive advantage — clearly Australian–Canadian ICAs able to maximise the sharing of this information will optimise their performance. Transactions costs and trust are also linked to ICA competitive advantage as trust is used to maximise the value of the cooperative alliance by allowing high asset specificity expenditures to be reasonably incurred and lowering transaction costs associated with protecting against opportunism.

At the same time, new areas of inquiry have been opened. In the case of cultural similarity, shared values and enhanced performance we need to investigate further 'just what are the shared values that Canadians and Australians working together hold' and 'how are these shared values linked to managerial practices, the development of trust, and competitive advantage.' In the area of partner commonality, improved communication and competitive advantage it is clear that many questions remain unanswered. Australian–Canadian ICAs ought to be examined in terms of their management practices, especially how they handle communication, cooperation, commitment and conflict resolution issues. Knowledge management practices within the ICA ought to be examined to determine just what types of tacit knowledge are being transferred as well as the experiences of the ICA partners regarding the value and transfer of such information. Finally, the substantial transaction costs incurred in the absence of developed (or discovered) trust leads us to inquire

about how Australian and Canadian firms view each other and what can be done to strengthen trust levels within Australian–Canadian ICAs. More specifically, Barney and Hansen’s work can be directly applied in terms of understanding, first, the skills needed to conceive of and implement governance mechanisms, second, how Australian and Canadian firms can discover trustworthy partners, and third, the process through which trustworthiness evolves in an ICA.

Pursuing these new lines of inquiry should yield new findings — not only of interest academically in setting out the perceptions of culturally similar partners in ICAs but also of relevance to professional practice for those existing and new Australian–Canadian ICAs who stand to profit from improved competitive advantage.

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## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> An earlier version of this paper was presented at the 2002 ACSANZ Conference.

<sup>2</sup> Thus becoming Canada's first Trade Commissioner.

<sup>3</sup> ICAs differ from international joint ventures (IJVs) — a more commonly studied form of strategic alliance — in that they do not involve the creation of separate legal entities.

<sup>4</sup> Of course, competitive advantage is gained from more than just similarity attraction and trust. Rindova and Fombrun (1999) argue that competitive advantage is constructed not just from factor endowments but also the firm's systematic interactions with constituents within its environment.

<sup>5</sup> This exploration of the possible links between cultural similarity, shared values and competitive advantage for Australian–Canadian cooperative alliances is relatively unique in the international business literature and could be applicable to other culturally similar partnerships. Overwhelmingly, studies have focused on the problems inherent in managing culturally distant relationships such as those between American and Japanese firms.

<sup>6</sup> The UN Development Index measures human achievement in areas such as health and education.

<sup>7</sup> Uncertainty Avoidance involves the degree of tolerance for uncertainty, and uses rule orientation, employment stability and stress indicators to provide a country's Uncertainty Avoidance Index (UAI) score (153). Hofstede's UAI values range from 8 for Singapore (lowest uncertainty avoidance country) to 112 for Greece (highest uncertainty avoidance country), with a mean of 64 for the 40 countries (164).

<sup>8</sup> To be a source of competitive advantage an attribute must enable a firm "to conceive of and implement valuable strategies that other firms can either not conceive of and/or cannot implement.... In this regard, trust must be available to only a few firms in their exchange relationships and not to all firms if it is to be a source of competitive advantage" (Barney and Hansen 1994).

## To Our Daughter who is on the Move

You write from Toronto, Warner Troyer's country for me,  
Perhaps Ondaatje's country now!

*"I got the message you left last night, I was at ice hockey with my friend.  
The Leafs won 4-0!"*

What to me is ice hockey? Who to me are Leafs?  
For me leaves are for falling, like life; like your fondness for us.

*"I kept trying to call last night, but my phone card isn't working..."*  
You write.

A fine explanation ... you know about reverse charge calls  
if you can't use your card, or don't want to waste your money  
(to which *Amma* keeps adding, like stones into a bottomless pit)  
on such a luxury.

She sends you a good share of the salary she earns  
by putting her fingers into every human orifice —  
a woman GP's daily life in Australia!  
Her dream of pediatrics died.  
It's a difficult task even for a white woman here,  
where everybody talks about a "Fair Go".  
No wonder she wants to sell soap instead!  
You too want to do something else  
more meaningful and creative.  
You used to say you'd be a criminal lawyer.  
What is your plan now? Why don't you let us know?

"I have a play tonight (I'm in it!) So will you try and call me Friday night (i.e. Friday morning here) at 7:30am I have to go to class...  
luv, du"

That's the end of another 'long e-mail'  
that you promise every time  
we talk on the phone.  
I am glad you have drama tonight.  
We have drama everyday —  
no, every second — thinking of you.

I can't write poems about ice hockey players.  
I can't advise you, because I worry too much!  
The 'Sri-Lankanness' in me, you once said.

Yes, I suppose, you were right.  
We all began with Lion's blood, descendants of '*Sinhabahu*'  
who began the myth which divided the country.  
It's the reason why we came here, to protect you  
from the bloody Civil War in Sri Lanka.  
The war that made *Ragu* leave his Sinhalese dream home  
and run to Toronto to start again — my friend alone  
like we were here, without friends or relatives,  
and not knowing even the names of the trees.  
I would like to be the Lion — *Sinhabahu*  
protecting you in my cave in Sri Lanka!  
You would bring me hot ginger tea  
and *Amma* would be the surgeon she couldn't be.

I hope you will call us one day, after the drama is over,  
from the land of Ondaatje and Alice Munro.  
If Warner Troyer were alive all three with their wisdom  
would protect you like *Triple Gem*,

That we recited together at the Temple in Perth, when you were small.

When we came to the most isolated city in the world,  
where we still have no friends or relatives.

\*\*\*

## **Glossary**

*Amma*: The Sinhala word for mother.

*Du*: Sinhala word for daughter.

*Ragu*: Abbreviation for Ragunathan, a Tamil name.

*Sinhabahu*: Mythical lion who is believed to be the ancestor of Sinhalese people, according to Sri Lankan folklore.

*Warner Troyer*: A deceased Canadian /RadioTV television journalist.



Peter F. Alexander

**John S. Moir. *Early Presbyterianism in Canada*.  
Edited by Paul Laverdure.**

**Gravelbourg SK: Gravelbooks, 2003.**

If you were an author trying to find a title which would have eager readers storming the bookstores, wallets in hand, *Early Presbyterianism in Canada* might be the last thing that came to mind. But titles, like other first impressions, are sometimes misleading, and there is more to this book than meets the eye.

John 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, the second of two selections 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 with particular reference to Presbyterianism.

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. He makes the case that Canadians from the start viewed Canada through a Christian lens, and gave 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 Moir identifies in the course of his work.

The others are, second, the missionary impulse which helped found Canada; third, "indigenisation," by which he means the legal,

organisational and psychological adaptation of European forms of Christian worship and practice to the new Canadian reality; fourth, what Moir 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. The last of his religious determinants is activism.

It is “churchliness” or denominational allegiance that is the focus of this volume of Moir’s essays: over the course of a long career Moir has traced the history of Canadian Presbyterianism from its beginnings in the pioneer period until its absorption (in large part) into the United Church of Canada in 1925.

Moir divides the historiography of Canadian Presbyterianism into three broad periods: from pioneer times until the British defeat of French Canada in 1759; the nationalist period, from Confederation in 1867 to the 1960s; and a third stage, from the 1960s onwards. The first two stages were dominated by clerical authors; the third, by academics trained in history or the social sciences. Moir is the leader of this latter group.

It is to his credit that he recognises the limitations of his own kind. “Where earlier authors were educated theologians, usually without the benefit of the broader perspective of a historian,” he remarks, “these lay successors [academics] are generally handicapped by their limited understanding of theological issues.” This balanced and judicious view of his field is among Moir’s greatest strengths, together with his immense application of time and energy, his sharp eye and his lively writing. He also knows his theology.

Nowhere are those strengths more on show than in the seminal essay “Who Pays the Piper,” on church–state relations as a central issue in the Presbyterian story. Presbyterians have been remarkably fissiparous throughout their history, and Moir remarks sardonically that at the heart of every secession, and every reunion, has been the troubled relationship between church and state.

The Presbyterian Church of Scotland had developed as a national, endowed and protected institution, with its equality with the Church of England guaranteed by the Union of 1707: but only in Britain, an oversight which would cause problems in Canada. Even in Scotland the church was divided, after the secession of 1733, over the issue of patronage: did lay patrons (such as wealthy landowners), or did the state itself, have the right to appoint ministers to endowed parishes? The strict Calvinistic evangelicals argued that patrons had the right to pay the piper, but not to call the tune: congregations, they believed, should have the right to call to service the minister they chose, even if a patron were paying the stipend. (Some even stricter Calvinists argued for complete separation of church and state, and would not accept state funding, but they were in the minority.)

Renewal of this central argument brought about the Disruption of 1843, in which 200 members of the General Assembly broke from the Church of Scotland and formed a new Free Presbyterian church which rejected the state's right to control the system of patronage, branding it Erastianism. They were willing (indeed eager) to accept state funds, but not to allow the state to dictate appointments. The church should be supported but not dictated to.

There were thus three distinct traditions in Presbyterianism: endowed church establishment, separation of church and state, and, third, the church independent of but superior to the state.

The situation in Canada complicated this already complex set of traditions still further. The Constitutional Act of 1791 in Canada had established "the protestant religion" (which in practice meant Anglicanism) and richly endowed the Anglican clergy with lands equal to one-seventh of Crown land grants — 3,750 square miles of prime agricultural land, a vast territory which yielded increasing income independent of either state funding or the generosity of congregations. Australian antipathy to church establishment was to limit any such endowment in the Antipodes.

After the War of 1812 there began calls for co-establishment of Presbyterians in Canada; the Anglicans initially resisted division of

the Clergy Reserves, but eventually gave in to a peculiar compromise of 1841 in which the funds were divided between Anglicans, Presbyterians and Roman Catholics. The result was a new rift between Canadian Presbyterians who wished to accept state patronage, and those who did not: a local echo of the Disruption in Scotland.

Only in 1861 did Presbyterians once more begin to come together, and union followed in 1875. The essence of this was a denial of the right of civil government to intrude into church affairs: those Presbyterians saw no reason why the church should not use the power of the state to achieve its own ends through legislation on such matters as Prohibition and Sabbath observance.

Church state relations continued to bedevil the Presbyterians even after the formation of the United Church in 1925: a rump of Presbyterian resisters of unity maintained the existence of Presbyterianism, much as happened in Australia after the formation of the Uniting Church. These holdouts found themselves still struggling to define relations between church and state, and as late as 1955 produced a Declaration of Faith concerning Church and Nation. This tried to take an even-handed approach, affirming that neither church nor state has “domination over the other,” while rejecting the separation of church and state: as Moir puts it, “the state must pay attention and perhaps money to the ecclesiastical piper, but it is forbidden to call the tune.” This sounds like a continued tension between God and Mammon, and it is clear that Presbyterianism in Canada is still struggling with this issue.

The other essays here (there are twelve in total) relieve this materialistic approach to church history somewhat, by focussing on the real business of the church: looking after the poor, living out a social conscience, serving as missionary witnesses, and helping to shape and develop the new national institutions. Yet even in missionary work, the church was keenly focussed on money. Missionary after missionary, sent to minister to poor Scots congregations in the Maritime provinces, reported despairingly that they had never seen such poverty and deprivation. Many of the letters

Moir quotes give vivid insights into conditions that might surprise modern Australian readers:

I never witnessed such utter destitution. In one house was an old man bed-ridden for two years, with but one tattered rug or covering to protect him from the cold, & the snow drifting in between the logs... I have baptised where neither Father, Mother or children could venture out in their tattered rags [whether from cold or modesty is left unclear]. I have seen dwellings where 6 or 8 of a Family lived for 5 weeks on the milk of a cow without any other Food... I have known dozens of Families who lived on unripe potatoes for weeks.

Not surprisingly, perhaps, people in such circumstances flatly refused to pay for a minister. As one missionary in Upper Canada reported, "A great many people here have got hold of the voluntary cant word 'that religion will support itself' & with the view, I suppose, of giving the experiment the fairest trial, refuse to put their hands in their pockets. So much for the voluntary principle." No wonder the idea of turning down state contributions to the church provoked such controversy over so long a time.

This is a specialist text for church historians, and no sexy title would give it a big sale. But it is full of incisive writing, muscular analysis, and vivid insights into conditions in Canadian provincial life seldom mentioned in mainstream histories. It's not a book for everyone, but those readers who admired Laverdure's first volume of Moir's essays, the more general *Christianity in Canada*, might add this to their reading lists.



**Martin L. Friedland. *The University of Toronto: A History.***

**Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002.**

When can a university confidently proclaim its reputation as one of the best in the nation? In Canada, for over a hundred and fifty years state universities have competed with numerous private tertiary institutions (mostly denominational colleges) for the ever-dwindling dollar, and so the question of reputation has been essential in gaining a competitive edge.

Martin Friedland's *The University of Toronto: A History* explores this question in relation to the University of Toronto. From 1826, when the Canadian parliamentarian John Strachan travelled to London to obtain a Royal Charter for King's College, the supporters of what in 1849 became the University of Toronto have had to argue for the importance of proper University funding. Resistance to a generous public endowment has included the usual political apathy of governments fearing a possible backlash for supporting what some felt was an institution for the elites. But the University's supporters have also had to justify their claims against vehement opposition from the denominational colleges. Public endowment for tertiary education, the churches professed, should not go to a secular university, but to denominational colleges that provided not only an education in the classics and mathematics, but also in religious instruction. A state university, the University's supporters responded, should have first and foremost claim on the public purse, so that in the words of an early University President, it might offer "the advantages of an education of

the highest order ... and enable the son of the poorest and humblest man in the land to compete on equal terms with the children of the most affluent and the most influential.” What other revenue base could a state university rely on for its recurrent budget — unlike the denominational colleges that had the financial backing of the churches. These disputes continued down the decades.

Arguments about the public funding of universities weren't, of course, confined to Canada. Nor was the debate about the importance of religious instruction in a university education (echoes here of the foundation of universities in the Australian colonies). The University of Toronto was established at a time of general debate about the “modern” university and a system of reform for the old universities. Friedland provides a fresh perspective on this debate and shows how colonial universities, so easily depicted by historians as provincial backwaters, were often at the forefront of debates about the modern university, where ideas were tested according to local circumstances (again echoes here of the Australian situation). Partly a result of the European (especially British) recruitment drive, in which the first professors arrived with their own notions of the “modern” university, there was also genuine interest in “getting it right.”

The path to a functioning modern university wasn't easy. There were apparently legendary clashes between professors, the university's governing body and interested members of Toronto society about the purpose of a university education. But there were successful compromises, none perhaps more spectacular than in 1887 when new legislation enabled local colleges to federate and become part of the University of Toronto. By the early twentieth century six denominational colleges, those that had fiercely opposed the University as godless, had federated with the secular University College. Only Toronto Baptist College never joined, suspicious of the University's scientific teaching. According to one observer, “the very name Darwin is to most of them like a red rag to a bull.” The Baptists, with the help of a large bequest, established McMaster University.

Friedland also explores, although in less detail than he might have,

the University as a place of intellectual endeavour, with academics both responding to debates within the broader society, and leading the quest for knowledge. By the 1870s, Daniel Wilson, professor of English History and Literature in the 1860s, accepted the likelihood that humans descended from apes, and to incorporate Darwin's evolutionary theory amended the later editions of his influential *Prehistoric Men: Research into the Origin of Civilisation in the Old and New World*.

With quality appointments — the North American psychologist Mark Baldwin and the Australian geographer Griffith Taylor are just a few of those discussed — came an increased intellectual and scientific reputation. Also, a programme of graduate studies was introduced in the hope of an enhanced reputation, despite intense opposition that a PhD programme would be a further drain on overstretched resources. (Criticism of PhDs continued with one academic remarking that the thesis “is a sound piece of research but it is almost formless in respect to literary quality and the text is overburdened by footnotes to an absurd extent.”)

At over 700 pages *University of Toronto* is quite a volume. But the book's structure lends itself to a remarkably compelling read. Each chapter is defined by a year and a topic — “1853: New Professors,” “1880: the Admission of Women,” “1895: the Strike” and so on — and Friedland relates the story of the particular year's event to the past enabling him to explore important developments in the University's history. Many themes re-emerge in later chapters. Once women were admitted to university in 1884 — the focus of Chapter 9, for example — they re-emerge, if briefly, over the next thirty-three chapters to provide some sense of historical development. The admission of women as university students was part of a general debate throughout universities in the English-speaking world — the improvement in girls' education meant they were equipped to sit successfully for university entrance exams, and in Canada many were winning university scholarships and prizes yet not allowed to study for degrees. But should their university entry be segregated, or should they

be taught alongside male students in any subject, especially those as sensitive as, say, anatomy? At the University of Toronto women were admitted, but for decades were segregated from the male students.

Institutional histories are in a category all their own, rarely demanding a huge readership, lucky if even a few people read through to the end. But if sympathetically researched and well written they are immensely important scholarly documents, providing the lay of the land, and useful for those who want to explore further. If archives are the institution's memory, histories such as this one are the creative links that not only bring the memories to life, but more importantly, make sense of them in a meaningful way.

Kristina R. Llewellyn

**Mona Gleason. *Normalizing the Ideal: Psychology, Schooling, and the Family in Postwar Canada.***

**Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999.**

The ideal for the Canadian family in the postwar period included “fathers who ruled at home, worked in the public sphere, and left the duties of parenting largely up to mothers” (51). Mona Gleason details the unattainable quality of this model for ‘ordinary Canadians’ as its ideologues perpetuated the “dominance of Anglo-Celtic, middle-class, heterosexual, and patriarchal values” (4). Working-class, immigrant and Native families were among many who were pathologically ‘abnormal.’ Given the elusiveness of this ideal, how did these familial values gain the power of normalcy? It is this provocative question that Gleason addresses with respect to the role psychological discourses played in creating approved and gendered definitions of mother, father and child in postwar Canada.

Working from a Foucauldian framework, Gleason interrogates the “socially and historically contingent processes whereby some behaviours and attitudes come to be labelled as normal and good while others come to be labelled as deviant and bad” (8). Her central argument is that “when normalising is at work in a social setting, it compares, differentiates, hierarchises, homogenises, and excludes” (9). Gleason demonstrates that the psychology profession effectively applied these ‘technologies of normalcy’ to determine the secure, healthy family during a time when Canadians were anxious of the Second World War’s “disrupting effect on a number of things, ranging from the state of the family to the relationship between men and

women to the nature of growing up” (80).

Gleason first traces the psychology profession’s success in power as respectable knowledge producers and powerful postwar ‘experts.’ Gleason argues that the profession’s authority arose primarily from its assertions of practical relevancy. In the face of the Nazi’s atrocities based on racial purity, the psychology profession disassociated itself from the eugenics movement’s designation of mental hygiene as hereditary and unchangeable. The profession presented itself, instead, as a social agency that could scientifically solve and, more importantly, avert problems caused by maladjusted personalities. Psychologists conducted IQ tests to select the ideal soldier and provided parenting training in schools and child guidance clinics to ensure the mental health of citizens.

Gleason is careful not to obscure the location of the ‘experts’ who brought psychology out of the ivory tower and into the homes, schools and culture of Canadians. She illustrates psychology’s social, rather than scientific, construction by providing a case study of two leading figures whose business it was to disseminate their message of normality through radio, magazines and newspapers. She demonstrates that William Blatz, a child psychologist with the Institute of Child Study at the University of Toronto, and Samuel Laycock, an educational psychologist at the University of Saskatchewan, were not neutral ‘experts’ but value-laden stakeholders for normalising the ideal. As stakeholders, the experts excluded other opinion-makers, such as the ‘normal’ mother whom they depicted as a woman who “listened to the advice of male experts” (51).

According to psychological discourse, it was imperative that women defer authority to ‘experts’ because their role as wife and mother was, while necessary, very ‘problematic.’ Psychological discourse contained a double-bind message for women. Women caused mental and familial instability through maternal deprivation (caused by working outside the home or having external child-care) and maternal dominance (caused by over-mothering or nagging). Gleason argues: “Normal men, conversely, were presented as stabilising, white-collar guardians

of heterosexuality, powerful correctives to the neuroses of women, and heads of middle-class families” (53). As an example of the differentiated roles of parents, Gleason discusses how psychologists deemed homosexuality as pathology, the direct responsibility of overbearing mothers who blocked masculinity in the home, and absent fathers who did not enforce normal sex roles in children.

Gleason notes that psychologists vaguely defined “the happy family as one in which every member, especially the children, reproduced in miniature the cooperative democratic society necessary in the postwar industrial age” (116). In actuality, psychological discourse of the normal marriage and the normal child “reproduced the values and priorities of the hegemonic social order it served” (91). Psychologists invoked the fear of unstable marriages, despite declining postwar divorce rates, to encourage “democratic marriages in the language of separate spheres” (60). A marriage based on healthy co-operation was discussed in terms of husbands as breadwinners and women as economically-dependent childcare providers. Similarly, far from an actual threat, the changing culture of juveniles, often deemed delinquent, was invoked by psychologists to demonstrate that young people had ‘crippled personalities’ susceptible to fascist ideas. Gleason states: “Normal children were controlled by adults, stereotypically happy, and sexually innocent” (91). Accordingly, normal girls were self-effacing and modest and normal boys were dominant and sexually expressive.

To produce a democratic citizenry that internalised white, middle-class, heterosexual and patriarchal ideals, the school was as thoroughly pathologised as the family. Children, teachers and parents were under great surveillance by psychologists who entered the ‘democratic’ classroom with their technologies of normalcy to designate students’ behaviours, from shyness to fearlessness, as psychologically abnormal. Teachers, like parents, were levelled with the blame for poor adjustment of students, erringly similar to the condemnation of mothers. Determining that children’s behaviours were not the result of an oppressive social order but their own inadequacies, psychologists

introduced IQ testing. IQ tests acted “first, as a numerical symbol of a child’s relationship to normalcy and second, as a means to compare, differentiate, and categorise” (128). Gleason details the example of Native children, who regularly scored below ‘normal’ on IQ tests due to differences in language and concepts, to illustrate how psychological discourse normalised the dominant culture through the typology of the child.

Unfortunately, by leaving Canadians’ everyday contestations of psychological discourse and their relationship to the wider context out of the mainstream of the book, postwar experts are depicted as having greater hegemonic power than Gleason intends. The book does not offer much insight into how Canadians who did not fit the normalised ideal resisted or reacted to psychological pronouncements. Gleason argues that “not all Canadians seemed to be in complete agreement with the psychologists’ advice, nor was it applicable to the conditions of their lives” (118). She provides, however, only scant and sporadic evidence to demonstrate, for example, that new immigrant families, whom psychologists considered ripe with parenting deficiencies by virtue of their class, ethnicity and gender relations, did not “adopt wholesale the parenting advice of outsiders” (93). In defence, Gleason reasons in her introduction that studies of professionalisation inevitably say “more about the producers of knowledge than about the recipients or targets of the advice” (9). She nonetheless assumes that by tracing the discourses and representations of those with interests in the ‘normalised’ ideals, readers will gain an understanding of the material affects of those ideals on ordinary Canadians. She incorrectly asserts that the difference between representation and reality or discourse and materialism collapses “under the mediating influence of culture and the specific conditions within which evidence is created” (9). Gleason is correct that the interests of psychological discourse can be seen as having an affect, and not simply as representative of life. To prove this important connection, however, Gleason needed to provide the ‘abnormal’ voices or cultural conditions to which she refers.

Far from perpetuating the normalised ideal, Gleason's study, as it is focused, interrogates the taken-for-granted assertions of postwar 'experts.' She artfully reveals the social locations, political investments and homogenising tools of psychologists and their pronouncements. Gleason demonstrates the often unexplored ways in which society's opinion-makers package and repackage ideals and their failure as seemingly personal and individual characteristics. Perhaps most powerful, Gleason discusses, in the conclusion to her fine book, the need to study the historical dimensions of 'normal' ideas of social acceptability that continue to codify and oppress people in today's society. *Normalising the Ideal* provides the method and insight for students to challenge current pronouncements that make claims such as: absent fathers are causing a crisis of masculinity; the feminisation of poverty is caused by a lack of work ethic; and a small representative of Aboriginal peoples in universities is caused by their lack of interest. Considering the interdisciplinary nature of such issues, a breadth of students from political science, psychology, the professions and the history of gender, family, education and childhood should read Gleason's study.



**Eric Nicol and Peter Whalley. *Canadian Politics Unplugged.***

**Toronto: Hounslow Books, 2003.**

Canadian politics unplugged? To an Australian ear, it is instantly clear that our two countries are locked apart not only by our common use of English but also by our common political institutions. Unplugged? That's not a word we'd use of Canberra, or not one of the first that might spring to mind. In fact, it's not a word we use much at all. Unplugged is what happens at feeding time in platypus burrows. It's what pipe-smokers used to do, and nobody smokes pipes any more. It is certainly not what you think in terms of politics. It suggests constipation, not politicians — though one might readily lead to the other. Or *au contraire*...

But “unplugged” is a key concept for this book. The first of Peter Whalley's illustrations, at the end of the Introduction by Stuart McLean, is of a plug being pulled; that is, the end of an electrical flex, not the rubber ring that keeps the bathwater from swirling clockwise or anticlockwise depending on your hemispherical persuasion. The subtitle to the little cartoon says “Power input.” I misread the direction, so I didn't take the point. Maybe it is Peter Whalley's revenge on Stuart McLean for having confined all his remarks to Eric Nicol. And the same cartoon is used a second time. I take this as a matter of emphasis, not a running out of inspiration. The second time is at the beginning of a chapter on political power, but isn't what you'd expect because it is about the power structure of government, i.e., the various departments in order of self-importance.

That is, this is a book which shows that cultural translation is not

automatic. The airports are right, we need an adaptor. In Australia you wouldn't say 'unplugged;' you'd talk about being switched off. And given the difference in voltage between the two countries, that's a far safer *modus operandi*, or maybe *modus vivendi*. You don't yank the cord out of the wall plate in this country. This North American custom no doubt gave rise to a certain colloquial designation — the Yanks — but like Yankee beer the kick is overestimated and it's not wise to repeat the practice here in Australia.

In point of fact, while it would be preposterous to take this determinedly amusing little work at all seriously, it does suggest some interesting reflections about how well its humour, and its reference, translates. The other thing it does is remind you of just how much of this you do recognise in your own government, and that is a pretty depressing thought.

Australian political cartoonists have been utterly acid for about a century. Season after season, political commentators and political journalists in Australia have conducted running attacks like the wild dogs up in Kosciusko National Park. If they happen to bring down a hapless victim then, as the TV documentaries say, that's nature's way of ensuring the stronger survive. There's just as many sheep or cattle back next season, and the fly problem is just as bad as ever it was. (Yes, I'm still thinking about politicians.) That suggests perhaps to an outsider that our cartoonists and commentators can't have been very effective, which could be why some of them get shipped overseas to try their dart games elsewhere. In fact, what it suggests is that the outsider doesn't recognise the epidermal density of Australian politicians, the immovability of the political system.

Canada is on the whole kindlier about its politicians. It seems to think of Ottawa as some kind of old folks' home (I can hear Alf Garnett shouting "Geriatric gitts!") where the old dears can do whatever they do to fill in their reclining years until the last long sunset. Ottawa is quite evidently a lot further from Canada than Canberra is from Australia. It's a matter of some regret that there should be any competition about this. In both instances you hear the residents

(given Australia's self-projected ideological idiom, maybe we should say inmates) talk about "the people out there," i.e., us.

Eric Nicol has performed a literary hat trick (McLean's phrase) in winning the Stephen Leacock Award for Humour three times. That was possibly unnecessary, and he should have more confidence in himself. I take it this detail is not meant to hint that he is three times as funny as you first thought. Nicol is not in fact Leacock, nor is he Mark Twain, though McLean gets a passing allusion to him too; in fact, McLean has been a bit of an embarrassment. It's customary to warm up the audience by having a comedian come in just before the main act. But when the main act is the comedian, you can't afford to compete with the boss, and you obviously can't be lame either. So McLean has one helluva job, and I don't suppose he was all that pleased to have been put in that position. But there you are, he's let the cat out of the bag and into the fire. The difference between Leacock and Nicol is I'd guess as much a sign of our times as it is a marker of Leacock's distinction. When Leacock gives us his take on the 1911 elections or whenever it was, in *Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town*, Josh Smith is a persuasive force because he comprehends in himself an understanding of the political system, or more precisely an understanding of how little of it you need to understand and how brutally you can make it work for you. "Get at it boys... Vote and keep on voting till they make you quit." He figures politics as we encounter it. Nicol is trying for something which is to most of us much more abstract, and that makes it difficult to keep the humour readily visible. Too often the joke had to reside in his articulation, rather than in his figuring. The joke is his, not in the figure of fun. It is either abstract or general satire, and it doesn't really disturb anybody. There is no indignation. Why would you get indignant about Ottawa? Whereas Australian political satire is so based in indignation that it has to work hard to avoid lapsing into invective. Where Leacock gives us the human agency attempting to wrestle with the institution (politics, religion, stocks or insurance), Nicol serial one-liners target inherent absurdity.

Temperamentally, I'm with Nicol.

That's not to deny that Nicol has snap, crackle and pop: politics, he observes, is a socially transmitted condition. Canadians are God's frozen people. Americans are prepared to die for their country, but Canadians would prefer to discuss it first (now *that* I like!). The Canadian goose is an embarrassing national emblem ("Honkey"). And I have to concede that he does occasionally approach a Leacockian formulation. His jokes about the Senate, for example, are low voltage, but then the material isn't all that promising. However he does manage a brief illumination: "Membership is not hereditary, and may be curable." That folds into itself a long history and a long debate and a long public attitude. But as a comment on the present state of affairs it isn't much chop.

Given the somewhat numbed representation of Canadian political figures (thoughtfully illustrated by Whalley's cartoons, mostly depicting Canadian parliamentary figures as Bristow-generation look-alikes) I wouldn't have minded a bit more iconoclasm. Pierre Trudeau was an aberration as Prime Minister, being endowed with personality, having a mind that looked as though it would work without a court order. But what about the fuddle-duddle? What about Sir John MacDonald's electioneering style — having dined etc. too well, throwing up mid-speech, and recovering his aplomb with "that's what happens when I think of my opponent." Well, that's the story I heard in Kingston. And it would be an act of foolhardiness to write about the Conservative convention, but one of the best moments of Canadian politics in my experience was Lloyd Robson (remember him? The public profile of Ontario...) calling the action from his little plastic booth at the convention hall: "I can see Joe Clark, he's down on the floor with Flora McDonald..." Who says Canadian politics can't be lively? Nicol's remark that Ontario is shocked by Quebec leaders like René Lévesque dropping cigarette ash all over the Queen's domain is an apt enough pun, and reflects a notion of Ontario as conservative and proper and maybe collectively a fussbudget, but it doesn't get anywhere close to the colour (red?) of Lévesque himself.

Yes, it's probably true that the image of Canadian politics could be rehabilitated; that would be true of a lot of places these days. This little book is light and to my mind too polite fun, reinforcing that such is the case. Yet you can't help wondering whether he and Peter Whalley would want it any different, really.



Michael Robinson

**John Ralston Saul. *On Equilibrium.***

**Camberwell: Penguin Books, 2002.**

This isn't a good book. Its argument is that human beings share a number of qualities, and that it's dangerous to exalt one at the expense of the others. The argument is potentially praiseworthy. We have suffered enough from overly reductive philosophies, whether founded on psychoanalysis, empiricism or economics. But the execution is unfortunately so poor as to spoil the whole enterprise.

The book opens with a programmatic chapter, titled "The Shape Of Human Genius." Here Ralston Saul introduces what he takes to be the central qualities that make us what we are. These are (he lists them in alphabetical order) common sense, ethics, imagination, intuition, memory, reason. It may be objected that these are not qualities but faculties, except for ethics, which is a subject. But let this pass. More disturbing is the way Saul commends his list to the reader by comparing it to past systems of thought.

He has the grace to speak dismissively of lists, having given us one: "a declarative list can produce a false illusion of certainty" (10). (Note that "false illusion", incidentally. Is a false illusion a truth? This redundancy, or muddle, is all too characteristic.) He then proceeds to give us another list, this time of what appear to be intended as key ideas from the history of philosophy. This list contains nine entries: Plato, the Stoics, Marcus Aurelius, Saint Augustine, Descartes, Adam Smith, Tom Paine, German Romanticism, Coleridge. The point of this isn't instantly clear. But in fact what Saul intends is a list of lists: Plato's list, Coleridge's list, and so on. Lists of what? Well, qualities, presumably, since that is the subject of the book. The selection of names seems arbitrary and there is no attempt to justify it. Why these

thinkers and not, for instance, Aristotle, Aquinas, Hume or Nietzsche is not explained.

Coleridge's list consists of one item: Imagination. And it's ironic that he gets an individual name-check and the German Romantics don't, since he is well known to have derived much of his philosophy, sometimes verbatim, from the pages of Schelling, A. W. Schlegel, Fichte and Kant. More importantly, it's manifestly wrong to imply that Coleridge thought imagination the only important quality (or faculty) we possess. There are some writers who are, in Heidegger's phrase, thinkers of one thought only. But Coleridge wasn't one of them. He was dedicated to thinking systematically. Like Augustine (Memory, Reason, Will, according to Saul), he took faith to be essential to understanding. And did not Augustine famously meditate on the weakness of the will, and its need of divine grace?

But Saul's procedure here is even more dubious than his potted version of intellectual history. Having given this partial, arbitrary and misleading list of thinkers and their core concepts, he goes on to discuss it and draw conclusions from it, just as if something had been established. "You can also," he solemnly assures us, "see a confusion in these lists: a confusion between what is a talent, what a characteristic and what a virtue; and then a second confusion between these three and our actual qualities" (11). Well, there is certainly confusion here. Had Plato or Augustine or Coleridge, or anyone else, offered the neat list attributed to them of either talents, characteristics, virtues or qualities, they could indeed be convicted of confusion. And if these putative lists were in fact representative of Western thought, as Saul implies, then Western thought could be convicted of confusion. As it is, of course, the confusion is all in Saul's argument.

Saul is, however, ready with a defence, should someone object to all this misrepresentation. One of the dangers that besets us, in his view, is that of reliance on definitions.

If you try to define these qualities each by themselves (sic), you will end up back in the Manichean world of ethics versus unethical behaviour, reason versus the

irrational. A nonsense world of stand-alone qualities and black-and-white certainties. Isolated in this way, ethics will become unethical, reason irrational. That would be a manifestation of the fear we all carry within us (13).

We can agree that ethics and reason, of their nature, don't operate in a void. But does this mean we can't attempt to define them? You can define "elephant" and "mouse" perfectly clearly without mistaking a mouse for an elephant (and without supposing them to be somehow equal and opposite, as the reference to "Manicheanism" would seem to imply).

The body of the book contains discussions of each of Saul's six qualities. I won't attempt to look at each of these, but will examine a few passages closely in order to show the standard of argument — they are entirely representative.

Many have struggled to say what art is. In his chapter on intuition, despite his expressed distaste for definition, Saul rises to this challenge as follows:

Jung asked what his dreams were, if not art. What then is art, if not intuition — an expression of the inner structure of the universe? The artist seizes the swirling uncertainty of our imaginations in order to express its meaning. And is not art then our continuing expression of the matriarchal synchronicity which underpins our civilization? We deny its existence, insist that it has been fractured, yet our art is there to prove this is not so.

Let me put this yet another way. You can't have great art without the sacred, even if that art is devoted to profaning the sacred (207).

Well, do we deny the existence of matriarchal synchronicity, or do we insist that it has been fractured? And how would you go about fracturing synchronicity? Synchronicity, in Jung's original formulation, meant an acausal connecting principle between events, a sort of learned term for serendipity. Perhaps the thought is that such an

acausal principle must be grounded on an underlying unity within being, with which we are said to be losing touch. In any event, “fractured” doesn’t seem the right metaphor.

It’s possible to doubt whether Jung’s dreams, or anyone else’s, are in fact art. The artist’s task would be much easier if they were. It’s also possible to doubt whether either art or dreams need be anything so grandiose as an expression of the inner structure of the universe. A dream is art, art is intuition, and intuition is an expression of the inner structure of the universe. Poor Coleridge, to have been dragged into this muddle. Among the recurrent motifs in the *Biographia Literaria* is (as he puts it in chapter 22, while discussing Wordsworth) “The moral and intellectual importance of habituating ourselves to a strict accuracy of expression.” There is little of that here.

To see the extent of the imprecision, consider the claim “you can’t have great art without the sacred.” It sounds admirably pious and edifying. But what does it mean? Must the theme of great art necessarily be, or include, the sacred? If so, there is no great art on purely secular themes. This is an implausible claim, if it is in fact Saul’s meaning, and one that would have to be backed up, which it isn’t. Or is it the artist, and not necessarily the work, that needs the sacred to be great? This would be again an implausible claim, and one in many cases impossible to prove or disprove.

At this point, the reader is likely to wonder just what “the sacred” means in this context. And Saul has his answer ready:

What is the sacred? That’s more a question to ask than to answer. Our mythological conundrums have remained pretty stable over the last five millennia. Not much has been solved, straightened out or eliminated. Which suggests that specific answers may not matter (207–208).

Not much has changed over the last five millennia? Isaiah, Jesus and Paul could have saved their labour. This large-scale evasiveness could only appeal to the lazy-minded. If it’s possible to assert so confidently that something has remained stable, it should be possible at least to

have a shot at saying what it is. Otherwise, how would we know it has remained stable? And recent history has reminded us that specific answers can sometimes matter a great deal.

If the sacred is unchanging, we should nevertheless be unsurprised to learn that facts are volatile and unreliable. Here the hounds of relativism are hot on the trail:

It is a fact that the world is flat. It is a fact that Thalidomide stops morning sickness. It is a fact that feeding dead sheep to cows is an efficient method for raising livestock.... That cigarettes do not cause cancer. That men are more rational than women.... That spraying insecticides onto roadsides will reduce government mowing costs. That deregulated airways will encourage competition among airlines.

Amongst all of these, the fact to last the longest as a fact is the one which states that the world is flat. It must, therefore, be the truest of the group. Indeed, the most rational (296).

The implication appears to be that what we take as facts are socially constructed and hence intrinsically changeable. And in support of this, examples are mustered that will appeal to the hasty reader's laudable concern for the environment and for gender equity. But consider Saul's examples of supposedly discredited facts. The agonising connotations of the name Thalidomide are precisely the consequence of a fact that has been discovered — namely that it can cause cruel disabilities. And its use so as to cause these disabilities was due precisely to ignorance of that fact, in combination with another fact, namely that it prevents morning sickness. A disaster caused by the lack of sufficient factual knowledge is poor grounds for deriding facts.

So if Saul's message were that one should be careful not to proceed without having as many of the relevant facts as possible, and that it's often very difficult to be sure of this, we could happily agree. But he is much more ambitious. We are now in the chapter on reason, and here

is part of its conclusion:

Treat [reason] as mere reason — as thought and argument. Cut loose the sucker-fish — the facts, methodology, instrumentalism, utilitarianism. Stop treating it as the source of truth. Stop pretending that thought is virtue.... Remember that life is not a Manichean choice between good and evil. Only a false rationality leads us into that trap. Ethics can deal with the choices of life in a much more complex and interesting way (315).

Sucker-fish? The facts? There is a much stronger case for suggesting that people's ideas about religion and the sacred are often strongly influenced by social factors. But, remember, "our mythological conundrums have remained pretty stable over the last five millennia." Doubtless this is a comfortable thought if you are a woman about to be stoned to death for having sex outside marriage, or a burglar having a hand amputated. These situations may also lead us to reflect that some physical facts, at any rate, remain obstinately present.

Utilitarianism? Saul has just given us a discussion of this, in which the names of Bentham and Mill are conspicuously not mentioned. Introducing his book *Utilitarianism* Mill wrote, "I regard utility as the ultimate appeal on all ethical questions; but it must be utility in the largest sense, grounded on the permanent interests of a man as a progressive being.... If any one does an act hurtful to others, there is a *prima facie* case for punishing him, by law, or, where legal penalties are not safely applicable, by general disapprobation." There are certainly difficulties in the working out of this position. But its aim is clearly the maximising of human well-being, and not narrowly conceived — "utility in the largest sense." Here is Saul on the topic:

If instrumental reason does not exist, what is it? The short answer is jumped-up utilitarianism (308).

It would follow from this that utilitarianism, or at any rate jumped-up utilitarianism, doesn't exist either. But Saul proceeds undaunted:

A toilet functions, is utilitarian, is based on a method and a system, manages waste and is much more efficient than any business-school generated ‘rationalization’ initiative. Does that mean the human quality of reason is encapsulated in the toilet? (308)

It’s a well-worn strategy to travesty a position or school of thought in order to command easy assent. But this degree of travesty could only hope to impress a reader with no prior knowledge of its subject. And, once again, it makes a mockery of the implicit claim to a concern for justice and harmony. (It may be replied that Saul is using the term “utilitarianism” in a special sense of his own. But we are not told this.)

The closing chapter is titled “Normal Behaviour.” While writing this, Saul tells us, he was interrupted by the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 on the United States. Most of the chapter is shaped by his meditations on these dreadful events. He criticises Vico for suggesting that Plato’s ideal of philosophy could only be of value to an elite few, noting the helplessness of “the few” in the face of the attacks. He also, admirably, stresses the courage and humanity shown by so many victims of the attacks. What follows is not as admirable, being nothing less than Saul’s consideration of love.

Is not the willingness to kill yourself for your cause — taking others with you who would see themselves as innocent bystanders — a form of love? I personally might call it fanaticism or hatred. But the terrorist would no doubt see it as love — love for his cause or his own group or people. Love is always a limited vision of who the *other* might be (321).

The wording here — “taking others with you” — implies that the deaths of the victims were a by-product of the perpetrators’ self-immolation. In reality, of course, the death of as many victims as possible was an essential goal of the attacks. And it happens that the word “love” is seldom found in the texts of recent pronouncements attributed to Al Qaeda leaders. A striking instance comes in the statement “Jihad Against Jews And Crusaders,” issued by Osama bin

Laden and others on 23 February 1998. Here we read: "nothing is more sacred than belief except repulsing an enemy who is attacking religion and life." The comparison with Paul is unavoidable: "So faith, hope, love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love" (I Corinthians 13:13). One sees love as most important, the other violent struggle. Here is an important and obvious discrimination to set against Saul's facile conflation of love with psychotic hatred. (To point this out is not, of course, to imply that all Muslims would subscribe to the views quoted, or that all Christians exemplify love in their lives.)

Saul goes on to illuminate what he calls "the love argument" by means of a passage from Edgar Rice Burroughs' *Tarzan of the Apes*. "I am Tarzan of the Apes. I want you. I am yours. You are mine" (321). He quotes *Tristan and Isolde* to show that "love eliminates social responsibility, doubt, imagination and memory" (322). The possibility of selfless love, love that desires the other's good, is barely acknowledged. Saul does grant the existence of the kind of love spoken of by St Francis. But against St Francis, he argues:

He never faced the impossibility for (sic) any society to function at that level. How could everyone differentiate on a stable, ongoing basis between his high pure love, the pure carnal love of others, and the love which is the hatred of others, to take just three examples? (322)

Several comments are in order on this passage. Firstly, we should note the very low view taken of sexual love ("I am Tarzan of the Apes. I want you"). This, ironically, could properly be described as Manichean. Secondly, we have just been told flatly, "Love is always a limited vision of who the *other* might be." But now it appears there are at least three vividly contrasting, and evidently incompatible, forms of love, with the implication of others as well. It would be surprising if this statement were equally true of all these alleged forms of love. (The statement has its provenance — which Saul does not mention — in the writings of Hegel, Marx, Irigaray and others. But this hardly makes it an infallible oracle. And in those contexts the critique is

more specific in its application.) Thirdly, it will be remembered that Saul has, earlier in this chapter, scorned Vico for suggesting that abstract philosophy is not for everyone. Here he himself suggests that most people can't be expected to differentiate between love, desire and hate. Fortunately, a capacity for selfless love is in reality found considerably more often than a gift for philosophical reasoning.

As often in this book, it's not entirely clear what is the point of all this. Here is Saul's summation:

In the Western tradition, love has never belonged to us. It has always been a godly attribute — a force which we cannot shape or control. That is why, when we have it, it overwhelms us for better or worse.

Note: I am not denigrating, minimising, discounting or attacking love. It may well be the essential within us. After all, why wouldn't our characteristics reflect our essential nature? But if we cannot shape such a force we must in some way be passive before it. Taken beyond our personal lives, it can only become an ideology (323).

But we have just heard that, in our personal lives, love is a matter of an unreflective Tarzan of the Apes. Again, we have been presented with at least three sharply contrasting varieties of love. Which of these, we might reasonably ask, "may well be the essential within us"? High, pure love, pure carnal love, or hatred of others? And is speaking of "the love which is the hatred of others" not denigrating love?

It may be felt that I'm judging what is essentially an up-market self-help book by standards that are too high. But self-help books aren't exempt from the requirement to present their arguments intelligibly and coherently. And *On Equilibrium* comes in the trappings of a scholarly work: extensive notes, allusions to Western writers from Plato to Beckett, and numerous allusions to writers from other cultural traditions. Seldom if ever, though, is there any sustained consideration of a predecessor's thought. Rather, isolated references are dropped throughout the text in order to suggest that we are reflecting on

a wide range of thought and culture. There's nothing wrong with eclecticism in itself. But it does — in order to have value — require genuine engagement with the thinkers it draws from. And neither this, nor consistently clear argument, can be found here.

## Contributors

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