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Canadian Content





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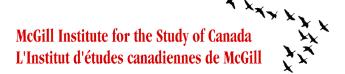






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Notes on Contributors

Nicholas Milum is a U2 International Development student with a passion for sustainable urban design. He was born in Vancouver, BC and worked as a kayak guide, leading international tourists around the waters surrounding Vancouver Island. It was during these trips that he experienced pride in being Canadian and taught international guests about what that means – his land-scape photography reflects that pride.

Radhika Raturi is a U2 undergraduate student majoring in Cognitive Science with a minor in Social Studies of Medicine. Her interests include neuroscience, medicine, human-tech interface, and the betterment of the healthcare system through technology. She likes to go on hikes, take photos, nap, and tag friends in memes. Her future goals include working in healthcare as either a doctor or administrative authority

David Diao is a third-year undergraduate student in the McGill Faculty of Arts & Science. He is completing a major in Cognitive Science and a minor in Economics. He works as a photographer for the Bull & Bear, a student-run news magazine. His photography has been published and exhibited in AUS Nuit Blanche, Fridge Door Gallery, The McGill Daily, and The Grassroots Journal.

Aimée Tian is a fourth year student pursuing her B.A. in Art History, Communications Studies and Economics. Her interests lie in all realms of arts and culture, but she is particularly fascinated by urban/public art, the de-commodification of art, racial politics and identity, and streetwear fashion. During her undergrad, she has written on various topics including textile art, camgirling, the language of light, and Cardi B (not all at once, that would be a bit of a stretch).

Quinn Barrie-Watts is a U2 Honours Political Science student with a minor in East Asian Languages and Literature. She has focused her studies on Canadian Politics and International Relations. She ultimately enjoys blending the two topics together, focusing on Canada's role on the international stage. In

her spare time, she loves watching films, playing boardgames, and going out for food with friends.

Jacob Webster is a U3 Honours Political Science student with minors in History and World Religions. His academic interests broadly include the intersection of law and politics and the ways in which Western societies grapple with de-industrialization and distribute the costs and benefits of globalization.

Garima Karia is in her third year at McGill University, pursuing a Joint Honours degree in Political Science and History with a minor in Gender, Sexuality, Feminist, and Social Justice studies. Garima strives to bring equity to the forefront of academia, and her passion for women's rights and the Canadian judicial system influenced her to investigate the relationship between female indigeneity and Canada's legal system. She would like to thank Dr. Mary Bunch and Ms. Pascale Graham for encouraging her to pursue this topic, and empowering her to engage in equity-based research both during her undergraduate degree and beyond.

Eliza McCullum is a U2 student majoring in Political Science with minors in History and Canadian Studies. Her primary academic interests lie in Canadian constitutional law and its intersection with (and effect on) marginalized communities; myths of national identity – where they come from, why they earn mainstream acceptance, and who stands to benefit from them; and the impact of gender in politics and the media. She hails from a small island community and loves early morning hikes, patting every dog she comes across, and live comedy. She will be graduating in 2019 and welcomes suggestions as to where to take her life after that.

Cassandra Ryan is in her final semester at McGill completing a Joint Honours in History and Political Science. Throughout her degree, Cassandra has focused her research and studies on Canadian history as well as Canadian governance and policy. Having lived in Montréal her whole life, she is fascinated by Canadian history, specifically Montreal's past. Cassandra is also constantly amazed by the surprises and new things that she finds out about Canada, every day.

Ophélie Savard-Gratton est candidate à la maîtrise ès lettres au Département de langue et littérature françaises de l'Université McGill sous la direction de Dr Michel Biron. Dans le cadre de son mémoire, elle étudie les références aux lieux communs à travers deux procédés : la métonymie et l'ironie, dans trois recueils d'essais de Serge Bouchard, soit *Le moineau domestique* (1991), *L'homme descend de l'ourse* (1998) et *Les corneilles ne sont pas les épouses des corbeaux* (2005).

Sierra Picard is a third year undergraduate Psychology student with minors in Indigenous Studies and Behavioral Science. Her personal interests include literature of the Romantic Era, camping, and modern art. As a Canadian born resident, she has found great interest in the rich histories of Indigenous Nations in Canada and the nature of their enduring relationship(s) with the settler state. Following the completion of her undergrad, Sierra plans to continue her inquiry into these relationships in both academic and non-academic settings. Sierra would like to acknowledge that McGill University was built on unceded Anishinaabeg and Kanien'keha:ka territory, which has long served as a gathering place and trading location for many Indigenous nations.

Letter from the Editors

The Editorial Board welcomes readers to a volume — our tenth! — which is both celebratory and critical. Celebratory, in that the purpose of this journal is to showcase the quality undergraduate research being done at McGill on topics related to Canada; critical, in that the authors published this year, though no particular subject or theme was imposed upon them, all participate in a process by which lesser-told stories of Canada are given a place in the spotlight.

Of our eight contributors, three, in line with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's aim to *re-story* Indigenous history in Canada, take closer looks at various representations of indigeneity, as well as historical phenomena that are often left out of school curricula. First, Aimée Tian explores how Indigenous artists have challenged the "drunken Indian" stereotype through the visual arts. Next, Garima Karia deconstructs the myth of indigenous inclusivity in Canadian sexual assault law. Finally, Sierra Picard argues that the Sixties Scoop, wherein Indigenous children were adopted out to settler families, was never as good-intentioned as it was promoted to be.

We were also happy to note the important place afforded to the Maritimes in this volume, since this region can often be left out of our more generalist Canadian histories. Jacob Webster's economically-informed historical analysis of de-industrialisation in small-town Nova Scotia surveys how anticentral Canadian identities are constituted, while Eliza McCullum's overview of the establishment of manhood suffrage in Nova Scotia and PEI elevates a side of the suffrage story that is not often shared.

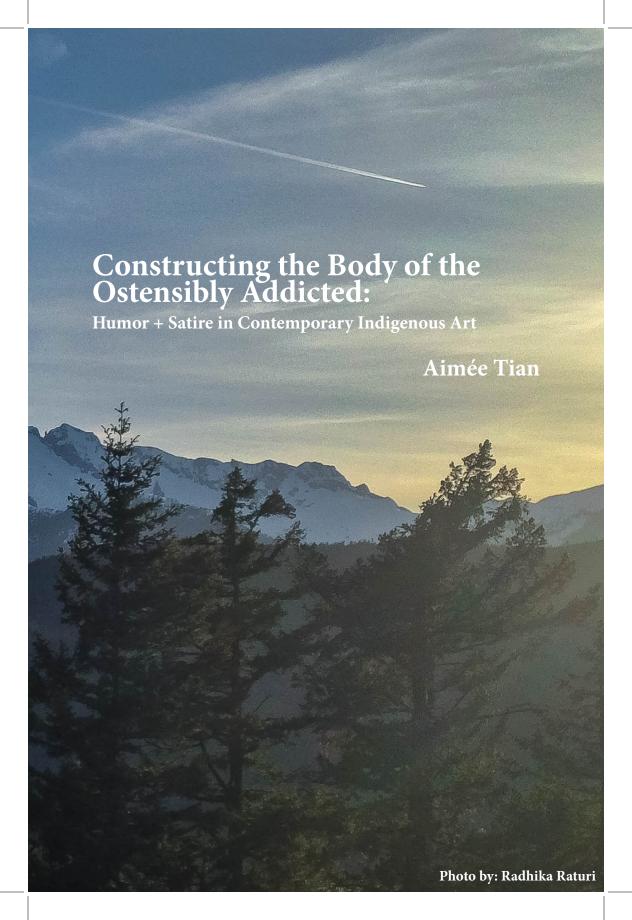
Each in their own way, the remaining authors also propose new angles by which to approach the 'great Canadian story.' Be it Quinn Barrie-Watts' criticism of Canada's claim of plausible deniability with regards to the Rwandan genocide, Cassandra Ryan's survey of working-class culture and discourses around poverty in late-nineteenth-century Montreal, or Ophélie Savard-Gratton's reading of Jacques Brault's poetry in light of the *décentrement* of Quebec literature, these authors contribute essential, often marginalised pieces of the Canadian puzzle.

It has been a pleasure to work with these students to prepare their works for publication, and to play our own part in the promotion of these perspectives which combat any notion of a single story of Canada.

Sincerely,

Michelle, Mackenzie, Aidan, Amritha, Emily, Xiaoxiao, and Olivier





mages of the 'drunken, immoral Indian' have had a longstanding tradition of appearing throughout discourses of addiction. The very conflation of the terms 'drunken' and 'Indian' is highly problematic: it suggests that matters of excess and addiction are a distinctly 'Indian problem'. Considering this issue within the contemporary Canadian context, it can be argued that "in Canada, addiction is most frequently linked with, discussed, and represented in relation to the bodies of Indigenous peoples". This difficult dialogue is one that has been continuously met with contempt, further relegating these bodies to the margins. This essay will examine the ways in which contemporary Indigenous artists working in Canada approach issues of addiction by directly engaging with the popularized image of the 'drunken, immoral Indian'. Artists such as Ron Noganosh, Manasie Akpaliapik, and KC Adams have strategically employed humour, satire, and irony as a means to subvert the disparaging stigmas associated with Indigenous communities at large.

Alcohol use (and abuse) among Indigenous peoples is a byproduct of Western colonialism, which has continuously inflicted both physical and discursive violence on their communities². As Julia Skelly writes, "addiction in Indigenous communities in Canada is the result of colonialism and colonial violence", and the reactionary "legacy of trauma has inevitably had a terrible impact on survivors"³. Under this framework, the use of humour within addiction discourses can be approached as a coping mechanism for dealing with difficult emotions, and has been measured against alcohol consumption as a survival strategy for Indigenous peoples⁴.

It is also important to note that the trope of images depicting the inebriated Indigenous body throughout mass media has resulted in a hyper-visibility that has also rendered these people *invisible* in a greater context⁵. The sustained distinction of Indigenous bodies as inherently *Indigenous* continues

¹ Julia Skelly. "Alternative Paths: Mapping Addiction in Contemporary Art by Landon Mackenzie, Rebecca Belmore, Manasie Akpaliapik, and Ron Noganosh." Journal of Canadian Studies/Revue d'études canadiennes, 49.2 (2015): 272.

² Richard Thatcher. Fighting Firewater Fictions: Moving Beyond the Disease Model of Alcoholism in First Nations. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), 134.

³ Skelly, 270.

⁴ Skelly, 273.

⁵ Skelly, 281.

to frame them as the 'other' to the Western ideal. These bodies are seen as transient, disposable, and indeed, unaffiliated to the rest of Canada. Through employing strategies of humour and satire, contemporary Indigenous artists are seeking to invert notions of the "stolid, stoic, never smiling or laughing brave Indian" that are still withheld under colonial perspectives today⁶.

The use of humour within conventions of contemporary Indigenous art has been read as a form of active resistance against colonial desires to construct a unitary image of the 'authentic, Imaginary Indian'. This practice allows Indigenous artists to "question the structures of power" and remediate the presupposed notions of intemperance that have long been associated with their bodies. In a way, this new vernacular of 'talking back' substantiates a mode of progressive decolonization. Through a methodology of counter-appropriation, artists such as Ron Noganosh, Manasie Akpaliapik, and KC Adams seek to reframe the vilified site of the ostensibly addicted individual. By engaging with humour and satire as discursive modes of interrogating the Western canon, these artists question both their own (pre)contrived roles as 'authentically Indian', and "the established lexicon of ideologies shaping those roles".

In 1983, the Ojibway artist Ron Noganosh created *Shield for a Modern Warrior* (or, *Concessions to Beads and Feathers in Indian Art*) (fig. 1), a mixed-media work that reveals the loaded terms attributed with the idea of 'authenticity' within Indigenous art. By working with feathers, beads, and animal skins, Noganosh employs the very materials that have long been attributed to 'Indian art', as stereotyped by colonial forces. With these materials, he constructs the image of a dreamcatcher, a spiritual emblem originating from Ojibway communities that has been repeatedly poached by the West through processes of cultural appropriation and hyper-commercialization. As the title suggests, Noganosh's 'concession' to demands for a stereotypical Indigenous artwork is a work of satire. Moreover, Noganosh goes so far as to include a number of flattened beer cans, woven into the wheel of the dreamcatcher. This

⁶ Morin, Peter, Martine J. Reid, and Mike Robinson. *Carrying on "Irregardless": Humour in Contemporary Northwest Coast Ar.* (Vancouver: Bill Reid Gallery of Northwest Coast Art, 2012), 12.

⁷ Skelly, 287.

⁸ Morin, 12.

⁹ Morin, 12.

act is justified as a blatant intervention in the lineage of 'traditionally Indigenous' artifacts, intertwining alcohol consumption with Indigenous identities.

When speaking on his motivations for producing the work, Noganosh comments (in an interview with the author Allan J. Ryan) that:

[And then] there was the beer cans. I woke up one morning, I was in a parking lot in Hull. Where am I? I don't know. Too drunk to drive home, I guess. Slept in the car, right? Wake up, rubbing the dirt out of my eyes and I looked down and there's a flattened-out beer can. Hmmm (*laughs*). So I got thinkin' about it, put it in the car, took it home and I started lookin' for more of them ... and that's where that s tarted to come from 10.

The title *Shield for a Modern Warrior* also alludes to the fact that this piece can be seen as one of resistance, pointing to an elision between alcohol consumption and humour as interchangeable strategies for coping. In this regard, "the ironic play between flattened beer cans and ersatz warrior's shield" provides a dialogue of intersectionality that codes the body as quite inevitably *drunk*. This work criticizes the stereotypes of "noble warrior" and "hopeless drunk", aligning the two tropes under one vision. Through his engagement with discourses of addiction, Noganosh has chosen to employ humour as his artistic strategy, "rather than critical cartography". For Noganosh, the modern *'shield'* is alcohol, and the modern *'warrior'* is battling the very blatant and highly derogatory stereotypes written onto his (or her) own body.

Another work produced by Noganosh, entitled *Anon Among Us* (1999) (fig. 2), exposes fears of addiction on a much more personal level. Here, Noganosh erects a wooden sculpture in the shape of a cross, fixed in soil that has been shaped into a burial mound, somewhat resembling the form of a simulated grave. Above the structure, there is a video screen that projects the names of 63 of his relatives that died from (primarily) alcohol-related causes, all before his fiftieth birthday¹⁴. In this multimedia installation, the artist is

¹⁰ Skelly, 287.

¹¹ Skelly, 289.

¹² Skelly, 289.

¹³ Skelly, 287.

¹⁴ Meg Walker. "The Left Atrium - Irony and the Art of Ron Noganosh." CMAJ:

addressing the "health disparities between Natives and non-Natives", by identifying alcohol as the "major culprit"¹⁵. The participatory act of reading each individual's name off the screen allows viewers to reconsider their roles in a society where Indigenous deaths are often left unreported by the media, repeatedly erasing their bodies from the greater narrative.

In Anon Among Us, Noganosh is reinforcing the agency and identities of his relatives, as a demonstrative tactic for commenting on the social injustice of their inflicted invisibility. When compared to Shield for a Modern Warrior, the installation Anon Among Us also demonstrates semblances of irony. By emphasizing the issue of Indigenous consumption (particularly in relation to alcoholism), Noganosh is unconventionally categorizing his own relatives under the standardized image of the 'drunken Indian', but he does so in a critical way. Instead of listing their names by way of passive tribute, Noganosh encourages active engagement among his viewers, asking the audience to question the systems of oppression that mark Indigenous peoples as 'drunken' and 'immoral'. In the same manner that settler-colonialism has been substantiated as a form of cultural genocide, laughter and satire have been employed as modes of resilience and remediation in order to open up the dialogue for decolonization.

Turning to the oeuvre of Inuit artist Manasie Akpaliapik, the 1991 sculpture *Untitled* (fig. 3) is another artwork that engages with issues of addiction. In this piece, Akpaliapik employs a number of natural materials in his repertoire (namely, whalebone, Brazilian soapstone, antler, ivory, musk-ox horn, and shell). Carving out of these 'materials from the land'¹⁶, the artist depicts the bust of a man, head in hand, donning a wistful and slightly sleepy expression on his face. There appears to be a bottle of sorts protruding from his head, alluding to alcohol consumption. When read in this context, the man's expression, one of a sheepish regret, evokes the very sentiments one experiences from a head-splitting hangover. By ascribing personal experiences to the work, the artist demonstrates a 'wry sense of humour'¹⁷, which he uses as a vehicle to deal with matters of excess and consumption. Furthermore, Akpaliapik transforms the imperfections and discolourations of the stone into *Canadian Medical Association Journal*. 167.8 (2002): 903.

¹⁵ Walker, 903.

¹⁶ Skelly, 268.

¹⁷ Skelly, 273.

distinctive traits of the man's visage. The spongy surface of the rock mimics an unkempt and hollowed appearance. Small cavities dot the edge of his jawline, evoking a five-o'clock shadow, while the darkened surface beneath his eyes alludes to his presumed lack of sleep. Although the work is left unnamed, the man is not completely deprived of his identity - certain distinguishable factors, found in his facial features and countenance, work to establish a sense of agency within his figure.

Born in 1955 in Ikpiarjuk (formerly Arctic Bay), Nunavut, on North Baffin Island, Manasie Akpaliapik tells stories through his sculptures that are "both traditional and contemporary, about Inuit life and experience" In much of his work, Akapaliapik is interested in exploring the contemporary social problems of the North - specifically in terms of drug and alcohol consumption In regards to the 1991 sculpture *Untitled*, Akpaliapik has said that "[this] particular piece is a hangover kind of thing; you're fed up; you have this bottle in your head; it's controlling you. I felt it's not just for me, but for a lot of Inuit who are caught in that situation" His engagement with Inuit struggles of alcohol abuse is inextricably linked to consequences stemming from the desecration of Indigenous cultures (and their bodies) by colonial forces. For Akpaliapik, "carving has the ability to heal" This active artistic practice grants Indigenous peoples the resilience necessary to work towards recovery.

Finally, a selection of works from the *Cyborg Hybrids* series by the Winnipeg-based artist KC Adams is examined. For this project, the Oji-Cree photographer travelled to different cities across North America, asking Indigenous artists of mixed-race backgrounds to pose for her, subverting the archetype of the 'pure and authentic Indian'. This collection of works was incited by the artist's recognition of the inevitable blending of ethnicities within the colonial landscape. KC Adams has identified the main focus of her work as "an investigation of the dynamic relationship between nature (the living) and technology (progress)". By associating the Indigenous body with technological progress, Adams is striving to project a continuation of Indigenous culture

¹⁸ Skelly, 284.

¹⁹ Skelly, 284

²⁰ National Gallery of Canada. 2015. "Collections: *Untitled*, 1991." National Gallery of Canada.

²¹ National Gallery of Canada

into the future, regardless of their repeated relegation to the past by colonial forces.

In this photographic series, there are a number of images produced that have been associated with the ostensibly addicted Indigenous body. They include - but are not limited to - the works SNIFFER, ALCOHOLIC, and DRUNKEN INDIAN. Specifically, KC Adams' 2006 digital print of DRUNKEN INDIAN, or 'Cyborg Hybrid Jason' (fig. 4), from the Brandon, Manitoba series, exemplifies the Indigenous body as inebriated, and thus addicted. Here, the artist poses her subject in a very specific manner, photographing him as 'stoic' and unsmiling. This decision to portray her model as straight-faced and 'stoic' aligns him with the typified Indian of the past, as represented by early nineteenth and twentieth-century ethnographic photographs. However, just as the 'Cyborg Hybrid Jason' has exemplified in DRUNKEN INDIAN, the remaining subjects of the Cyborg Hybrids series also aim to challenge their debased positioning. They wear a proud expression of defiance on their faces, directly confronting the gaze of the viewer, challenging the audience to locate them in a greater cultural context beyond their illogical existence as cyborg hybrids.

In the same way that the 'cyborg' represents a melding of human and machine, the 'hybrid' here is symbolic of the mixed-race bodies of the Indigenous peoples. For KC Adams, this series "follow[s] the doctrine of Donna Harroway's Cyborg Manifesto, which states that a cyborg is a creature in a technological, post-gender world free of traditional western stereotypes towards race and gender". In this sense, the digital prints that make up the *Cyborg Hybrids* "challenge[s] our views towards mixed race classifications by using humorous text and imagery from two cultures"²².

The models in *Cyborg Hybrids* are made up of a collection of Euro-Aboriginal artists, all wearing choker necklaces and dressed in identical white T-shirts. Their shirts are adorned with beaded texts and slogans (often crude) that have been attributed to Indigenous bodies, illustrating a common racial stereotyping²³. Although this implementation of uniformity aims to 22 KC Adams. *Cyborg Hybrids – Cyborg Hibrida Genitalis Humanitas [techno-savy, Creative, Human; Kindness; Humour, Education, Culture].* KC Adams. Dec. 2016. 23 Thomas, Suzanne. "Art as 'Connective Aesthetic': Creating Sites for Community Collaboration." *Education and the Arts: Blurring Boundaries and Creating Spaces* (2008): 76.

portray these figures as the bio-cultural ideal, they are ultimately still branded by their race, and by extension, confined to the systemic racism that has always been present in the colonial territory. KC Adams' inclusion of these blatant stereotypes is a methodology grounded in irony that allows her to incorporate themes of addiction into her own oeuvre.

Contemporary Indigenous artists such as Ron Noganosh, Manasie Akpaliapik and KC Adams have employed techniques of irony and humour as a means of dislodging the negative stigmas imposed on the ostracized body. These strategies offer up a counternarrative against the synonymous reading of the 'ostensibly addicted', 'Indigenous body' as one, codependent term. They also resist the popularized perception of the alcoholic and/or drug addict as "lazy, dangerous, self-indulgent, monstrous, and unwilling to recover" Through a methodology of counter-appropriation, contemporary Indigenous artists work to open up a dialogue of 'talking back' within discourses of artistic production, lending a hand to the ongoing process of decolonization in Canada.

²⁴ Skelly, 274.

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 CMAJ: Canadian Medical Association Journal. 167.8 (2002): 902.

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Appendix (List of Figures)

Fig. 1. Ron Noganosh, *Shield for a Modern Warrior*, or *Concessions to Beads and Feathers in Indian Art*, 1984. Mixed media on leather, 120 x 65 x 15 cm. Collection of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada.

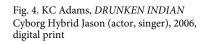


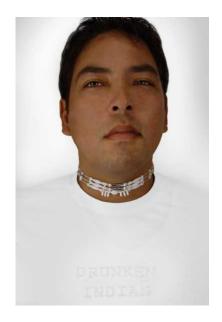


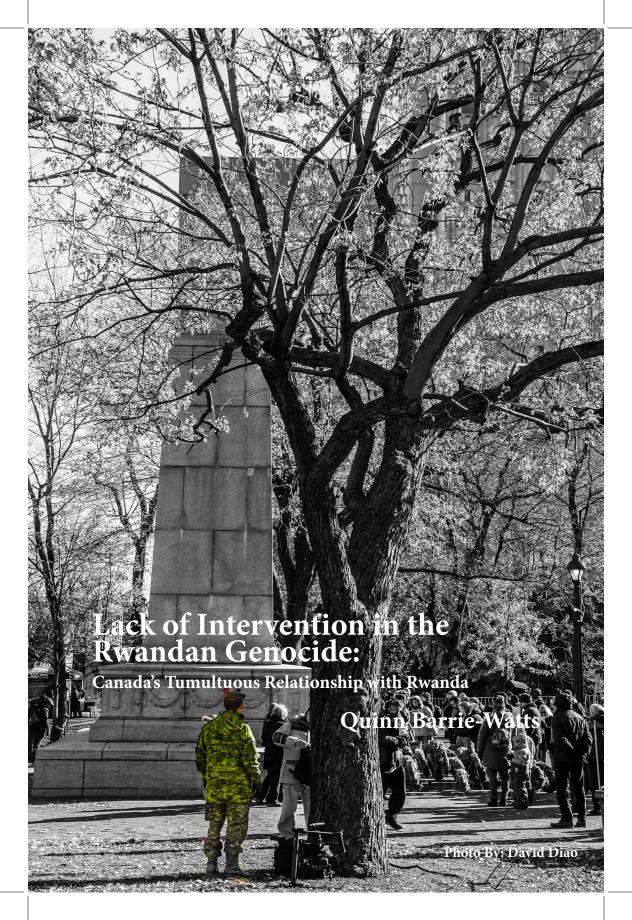
Fig. 2. Ron Noganosh, *Anon Among Us*, 1999. Multimedia installation. Dimensions variable. MacKenzie Art Gallery, Regina, SK



Fig. 3. Manasie Akpaliapik, *Untitled*, 1991. Whalebone, Brazilian soapstone, antler, ivor musk-ox horn, and shell, 41.5 x 24.2 x 25.8 ci Copyright National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa.







he Rwandan genocide plays a dichotomous role in shaping Canada's international relations. On one hand, the conflict instills pride because of Lieutenant-General Roméo Dallaire's leadership role in the United Nations peacekeeping mission. However, the genocide also generates shame because of the Canadian government's failure to effectuate a timely intervention. This paper will argue that the Canadian government's policy decision to use plausible deniability during the Rwandan genocide was misguided, in light of the government's evident involvement in Rwanda's affairs. The association between the two countries is demonstrated through their cultural and political relations prior to the genocide's commencement, Lt. General Roméo Dallaire's experience as the leader of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR) and the legacies of the genocide.

In the first section of this paper, I will provide an overview of Canadian-Rwandan relations prior to the genocide's commencement in 1994.¹ The Canadian government's heavy involvement in Rwanda during these preceding years clashes with the Canadian government's eagerness to claim they were unaware of early signs of any major conflicts. The second section will include an account of the genocide, focusing on the Canadian government's reactions, Lt. General Dallaire's experience in Rwanda, and an account of the reasons put forth by Canadian officials in support of plausible deniability.² These reasons include the exhaustion of resources after the Canadian government's intervention in Yugoslavia, and the failure of the media to report the genocide accurately. To conclude this section, I will discuss the legacies of the genocide by listing the efforts made by the Canadian government to prevent similar atrocities from happening, and how the news media and general public have interpreted the government's relationship to the Rwandan genocide.

Cultural Relations with Rwanda

Before the commencement of the Rwandan Genocide in 1994, Canada had well-established diplomatic and cultural relations with Rwanda.

¹ Chalk, Frank, Roméo Dallaire, Kyle Matthews, Carla Barqueiro, and Simon Doyle, "Canada's Decision Making," in *Mobilizing the Will to Intervene*, (McGill-Queen's University Press, 2010), 48-70.

² Roméo Dallaire, *Shake Hands with the Devil: The Failure of Humanity in Rwanda* (New York: Carroll & Grad Publishers, 2005).

These relations were founded in common linguistic, religious and cultural ties "among French-speaking Rwandans and French Canadians, Quebec nationalists, and the Catholic clergy in the province of Quebec." The Canadian Catholic clergy arrived in Rwanda in the 1960s, replacing the Belgian clergy who left during decolonization. 4 This change in the nationality of the Catholic missionaries demonstrated an effort on behalf of the Canadian government to promote French Canada in Rwanda, and to continue Western influence in Africa. When the Belgians left, the Canadian Catholic church saw this as an opportunity to continue with evangelization through mentorship. In addition to the spread of religion, Canadians also facilitated the development of educational institutions in Rwanda. The National University of Rwanda was created in 1962 with the help of Father Georges-Henri Lévesque, the founder and first dean of the faculty of social sciences at Université Laval in Quebec City.⁵ The university was also funded by Canadian development aid.⁶ In brief, Canadians' involvement in Rwanda was prominent and largely positive. Twelve years prior to the genocide, "Canada initiated a number of bilateral projects beyond the previous aid provided to the National University of Rwanda." As a result, the Canadian government's overseas development budget expanded. In turn, Rwanda was "rewarded for its perceived commitment to the rule of law and for delivering results in its partnership with Canada in aid projects by becoming the highest recipient of aid per capita than any other country."8 The fact that Rwanda was receiving a tremendous amount of aid from Canada further exposes the deep ties between the two countries. In 2017, The Globe and Mail published an article penned by contributor Gerald Caplan claiming "Canada had few interests in [Rwanda]"9. Since the historical ties between the

³ Chalk et al., "Canada's Decision," 48.0

⁴ Chalk et al., "Canada's Decision," 48.

⁵ Ibid, 48-49.

⁶ Robin S. Gendron, "A Compelling Need: Canada and French Africa," in *Towards a Francophone Community: Canada's Relations with France and French Africa, 1945-1968*, Foreign Policy, Security and Strategic Studies (n.p.: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2006), 86. http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt80jdp.9.

⁷ Howard Adelman, "The Right of Repatriation-Canadian Refugee Policy: The Case of Rwanda," *The International Migration Review* 30, no. 1 (Spring 1996): 303. doi:10.2307/2547471.

⁸ Adelman, "The Right," 303.

⁹ Gerald Caplan, "Canada Was a Bystander in Rwanda. Will History Repeat Itself?," *The Globe and Mail*, January 4, 2016, accessed November 17, 2017, https://

two countries prior to the genocide suggests quite the contrary, this article further showcases Canada's continuing use of plausible deniability in order to alleviate guilt.

Rwanda and Canada in the 1990s: Political Relations

In the early 1990s, the Canadian government decided to focus on three new policy development areas in Rwanda: preventive diplomacy, human rights, and, in 1993, peacekeeping. Canadian-Rwandan relations shifted from a relationship built around the promotion of linguistic alliances and imperialism to one built around development and humanitarianism. Canadian development officials believed Rwanda's president, Juvénal Habyarimana, lead a regime that was "more democratic than other African nations." In fact, President Habyarimana instituted multi-party democracy and constitutional reforms in 1990 because Canada and other countries had "tied their aid to democratization and human rights." The Canadian government's support for democratic policies promoted the spread of Western ideology.

In October of 1990, the Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF), a rebel group lead by the Tutsis in Uganda, invaded Rwanda.¹³ The violence and chaos that ensued in Rwanda resulted in a civil war that prompted the Canadian social-democrat Ed Broadbent, head of the International Centre for Human Rights and Democratic Development (ICHRDD), to visit the country in November of 1992. His encounters with hate speech prompted him to initiate "the International Commission of Inquiry into Human Rights Abuses in Rwanda" upon his return to Canada. In addition, Prime Minister Brian Mulroney wrote letters to President Habyarimana to pressure "the Rwandan president to respect human rights and pursue peace negotiations between Uganda, Rwanda and the RPF" in the Arusha Accords to end the civil war.¹⁵

www.theglobeandmail.com/news/politics/canada-was-a-bystander-in-rwanda-will-history-repeat-itself/article27997386/.

¹⁰ Howard Adelman, "Canadian Policy in Rwanda," in *The Path of a Genocide: The Rwanda Crisis from Uganda to Zaire*, ed. Howard Adelman and Astri Suhrke (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1999),190.

¹¹ Chalk et al., "Canada's Decision," 49.

¹² Ibid, 49.

¹³ Ibid, 49.

¹⁴ Ibid, 49.

¹⁵ Ibid, 49.

Prime Minister Mulroney was the only Western leader to directly communicate with the Rwandan president, proving the long-standing relationship between Canada and Rwanda. Mulroney's letters to Habyarimana demonstrated a type of communication that "shifted Canadian policy 90 degrees away from its former emphasis only on development to an active role in the 1990s in pressuring the government."16 The International Commission visited Rwanda in 1993 to speak with Rwandan NGOs to investigate the situation, and they alerted Western nations of Rwanda's dire circumstances. 17 The day before leaving Rwanda, the commission labeled the atrocities in Rwanda "genocide". This recognition on behalf of Canadian officials was declared before the official historical date. Therefore, Canadian government cannot use plausible deniability for its lack of involvement in the Rwandan genocide. Upon the commission's return to Canada, some of its members hosted a press conference in Montreal to gain the media's attention, but the media showed little interest.¹⁹ The Canadian government seemed to use the media's lack of interest and the public's resulting ignorance towards the situation as cues to not inquire about possible intervention in Rwanda. However, given the government's historical relations and knowledge of early massacres in 1993, officials' decision to perpetuate plausible deniability remains unacceptable.

Despite the deteriorating circumstances in Rwanda, the country ceased to be considered a top priority and was outside Canada's traditional zone of interest.²⁰ The Canadian government had already attempted to influence the Rwandan government from Canadian soil (when Mulroney wrote letters to Habyarimana), but demonstrated no enthusiasm for direct intervention. However, in 1993, after the initial uprising in 1990, Lt. General Roméo Dallaire was delegated to head up the UN observer force which eventually became the UNAMIR mission.²¹ Nevertheless, the Canadian government's decision was not unanimous. There seemed to be a "fear that Canadians would be dragged into 'something awful and ugly," without the support from the

¹⁶ Adelman, "The Right," 304.

¹⁷ Chalk et al., "Canada's Decision," 49.

¹⁸ Chalk et al., "Canada's Decision," 49.

¹⁹ Ibid, 50.

²⁰ Ibid, 52.

²¹ Ibid, 50.

Americans.²² Canada's position as a middle power created government insecurity due to the absence of its neighbouring superpower's support. In addition, Lt. General Dallaire visited Ottawa prior to his deployment in Rwanda and learned that "Canada's defense department was unconvinced that the Great Lakes Region of central Africa was a priority."²³ There was even frustration displayed within the Canadian government towards "little Rwanda" and Canada's "Franco-African program," causing "quite a bit of teeth-gnashing" among officials ²⁴ Robert Fowler, the former deputy minister in the Department of National Defence is quoted as saying that Rwanda "sucked up a lot of the funds available."²⁵ As an international peacekeeper and middle power, Canada seemed to be annoyed that their 'altruistic' initiatives had not produced any true democratic results in Rwanda.

DURING THE GENOCIDE

Historical Overview: The Rwandan Genocide

Since its commencement in 1994, the Rwandan genocide engendered the slaughter of almost one million people within three months. The genocide was perpetrated by the ethnic majority in Rwanda, the Hutus, against the ethnic minority, the Tutsis. Once the Tutsi rebel group, the RPF, gained power at the end of the genocide, a four-year civil war ensued.²⁶

The international community played a huge role in manipulating the power struggle between the Hutus and Tutsis. While the Canadian government maintained relatively peaceful engagements in Rwanda prior to the genocide, Belgium and France fueled its ethnic tensions and instability. Originally colonized by the Germans, Belgium acquired Rwanda as a colony following World War II. Belgium orchestrated ethnic superiority by giving power to the Tutsis. The Belgians presumed the Tutsis were superior to the Hutus, with higher intellectual and political capacities.²⁷ However, the Belgians later transferred power to the Hutus in 1959, and encouraged the mas-22 *Ibid*, 50.

- 23 Dallaire, ""Check out Rwanda and you're in charge,"" 53.
- 24 Chalk et al., "Canada's Decision," 50.
- 25 Ibid, 50.
- 26 Peter Uvin, «Reading the Rwandan Genocide,» *International Studies Review* 3, no. 3 (Fall 2001): 75. http://www.jstor.org/stable/3186243.
- 27 Catharine Newbury, "Ethnicity and the Politics of History in Rwanda," *Africa Today* 45, no. 1 (1998): 10. http://www.jstor.org/stable/4187200.

sacre of Tutsis. This turnaround resulted in the fleeing of the Tutsis to Uganda and Tanzania, where they would form the basis for the RPF.²⁸ France, on the other hand, was heavily involved in the 1990s, during the years leading up to the genocide. France considered Rwanda an ally and maintained President Habyarimana's regime by providing political and military support.²⁹ The French government ultimately aggravated Rwanda's inter-ethnic tension by supporting the elites, displaying a "hypocritical attitude towards the democratic opposition," and campaigning against the RPF.³⁰ France wanted to help Rwanda defend itself against external aggression while maintaining the regime in place. In consequence, France supported the genocidal tendencies of the Habyarimana regime. Although Canada did not foster ethnic tensions or interfere militarily and politically like Belgium and France did before the genocide, the Canadian government ignored and avoided early intervention as massacres occurred.

Canada's (Lack of) Response: The Impact of Yugoslavia

Often, the primary reason given for Canada's ignoring the genocide is its involvement in Yugoslavia. In addition to dispensing money to Rwanda over the years, Canada's resources had been over-extended due to peacekeeping missions in Yugoslavia. In fact, upon arrival in Rwanda, Lt. General Roméo Dallaire met with some men in Rwanda who "would become génocidaires,"-Rwandans who were responsible for committing the genocide. These men were well-versed in Western foreign policy and predicted members of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) "would not have the resources or the means to deploy forces to Rwanda." In addition, the men revealed to Lt. General Roméo Dallaire that the West was too heavily involved with the former Yugoslavia to bother with Central Africa. From these observations, the Hutu Rwandan officials were confident in perpetrating the genocide, knowing that the international community would be unable and 28 Newbury, "Ethnicity and the Politics," 7.

- 29 Daniela Kroslak, "The Chapitre Noir of French African Policy," in *The French Betrayal of Rwanda* (n.p.: Indiana University Press, 2008), 98.
- 30 Kroslak, "The Chapitre," 152.
- 31 Chalk et al., "Canada's Decision," 51.
- 32 Dallaire, "Enemies Holding Hands," 79.
- 33 Dallaire, "Enemies Holding Hands," 79.
- 34 Ibid, 79.

unwilling to intervene. They guessed correctly, because, prior to his departure, Lt. General Dallaire had asked the Department of National Defence for "a movement-control platoon of thirty troops to load, unload and dispatch personnel and material from aircraft"35, but the department had rejected his request on the grounds that the "Canadian military was overcommitted in the Balkans."36 Individuals within the Department of National Defence, like Robert Fowler, had wanted to send Canadian troops to support the UN and Lt. General Dallaire. However, he faced opposition from the Canadian Forces. The government believed Rwanda warranted *more* troops than the Canadian government could provide. In addition, foreign affairs opposed supplying more troops "because it was in the process of reorienting Canada's diplomatic attentions towards eastern Europe and the Balkans and away from Africa."37 In his memoir, Lt. General Dallaire claims that Foreign Affairs wanted the prestige of having a Canadian head up the UN Peacekeeping mission, but without the cost of troops.³⁸ This claim damages Canada's humanitarian character, portraying the country as partaking in peacekeeping missions with the sole purpose of gaining recognition on the international stage.

January-April 1994: Canada Presents Mixed Messages

In early 1994, Lt. General Dallaire informed the United Nations of the emergence of a Hutu extremist group, the location of a weapons cache, and a plot by Rwandan officials to commit mass slaughter of the Tutsis. However, the UN replied to Lt. General Dallaire that his role "should be limited to a monitoring function," restricting Lt. General Dallaire's options in what he could do. His report to the UN was distributed in Ottawa as well, but it is unknown how widely disseminated it was. However, one Foreign Affairs official claims he did not have enough evidence to suspect genocide at the time. Further, senior officials in Ottawa asserted and denied knowledge of the genocide. Former Minister of National Defence David Collenette says he 35 Dallaire, "The Clock is Ticking," 85.

³⁶ Dallaire, "The Clock is Ticking," 85.

³⁷ Ibid," 85.

³⁸ Ibid," 85.

³⁹ Dallaire, "The Shadow Force," 167.

⁴⁰ Dallaire, "The Shadow Force, 167.

⁴¹ Chalk et al., "Canada's Decision," 52.

⁴² Ibid, 52.

had no awareness of the genocide until the spread of "horrific press reports." In contrast, Secretary of State for External Affairs André Ouellet claims nothing was accurately reported in the media, and thus no politicians considered the 'supposed' genocide a priority. Ultimately, the Canadian government resorted to plausible deniability through to avoid having to intervene. Nonetheless, the fact that the leader of the UN forces was a *Canadian* Lt. General meant that the Canadian government had to know to a certain extent what was happening in Rwanda.

April-August 1994: Late Interventions and Aftermath

Throughout the genocide, individuals like Robert Fowler, Keith Martin (a Reform Party MP), and Lucien Bouchard (the leader of the Bloc Québécois), urged the Canadian government to intervene without success. Even with escalating atrocities in Rwanda, Canada provided limited assistance. However, Lt. General Dallaire notes that while other countries abandoned Rwanda towards the end of the genocide, Canada "had taken the unique decision to reinforce the mission." Canada stepped in to 'save the day' as the peacekeeper, while the rest of the international community was bowing out. Canada became heavily involved in the UN's second peacekeeping mission, UNAMIR II, supplying troops, officers and military equipment. However, by the time these three aspects were deployed, the mass killings had come to an end46. The Canadian intervention arrived too late.

In the aftermath of the genocide, the Canadian government became more proactive. In the international report on the genocide, the Canadian government vowed to improve its relations with the Great Lakes Region of Africa.⁴⁷ Since, the government has taken great care in ensuring "better coordination in Canadian policy in the region involving not only various different sectors of government but the NGO and academic communities as well."⁴⁸ However, Le Point, a French-Canadian television news series criticized the Canadian government for "ignoring the alarm signal of the impending geno-

⁴³ Ibid, 55.

⁴⁴ Ibid, 55.

⁴⁵ Dallaire, "To Go or to Stay?" 297.

⁴⁶ Adelman, "Canadian Policy in Rwanda," 199.

⁴⁷ Ibid, 201.

⁴⁸ Ibid," 201-202.

cide."⁴⁹ Further, the show controversially accused Canadian officials of encouraging "genocide through both its actions and inactions," calling Canada "an accomplice" for it had "witnessed and experienced all stages of crisis" and "all the preparations"⁵⁰ but failed to intervene until the final stages of the atrocity. Canada's lack of action resulted in millions of lives lost. The Canadian government's decision to withhold intervention and subsequently claim plausible deniability both dishonest and shameful.

CONCLUSION

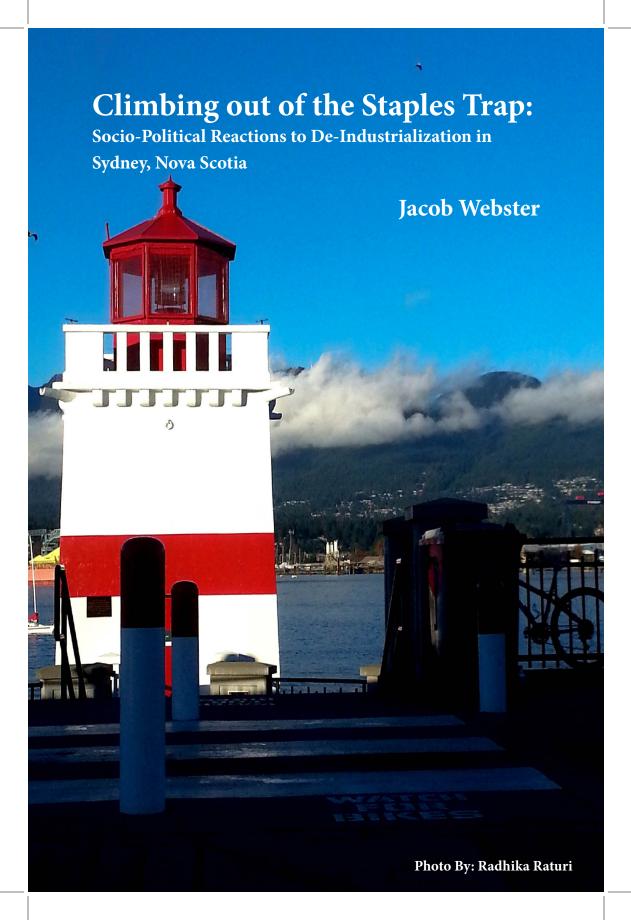
In conclusion, the Canadian government's use of plausible deniability to explain their lack of initial response in the Rwandan genocide is invalid because of the government's intense involvement in Rwanda prior to the genocide. Through missionary work, support for education and development, and eventual political involvement, Canada had cultivated a strong relationshipwith Rwanda by the start of the genocide. However, once genocide became reality, the Canadian government began to withdraw its support and even became frustrated with the amount of money devoted to the country. Despite this, the leadership of Lt. General Roméo Dallaire helped Canada retain its humanitarian image. The Canadian government's use of plausible deniability as a ploy is therefore invalidated due to their heavy involvement and awareness of the tensions in Rwanda prior to the genocide.

⁴⁹ Ibid, 186.

⁵⁰ Adelman, "Canadian Policy in Rwanda," 186.

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e-industrialization has shaped space and experience throughout the twentieth century as nations and their citizens reckon with changing economic paradigms and conditions. While de-industrialization has affected regions throughout Canada, its effect is especially pronounced in Cape Breton, Nova Scotia. Once dominated by coal and steel production, Cape Breton experienced de-industrialization throughout the 20th century. While de-industrialization is seemingly omnipresent, the specificity of Cape Breton evokes the important uniqueness of Maritime identity and Canadian economics. This is especially true for the closure of the Dominion Steel and Coal Corporation (DOSCO) in Sydney, Nova Scotia in 1967 and the subsequent reaction of the City's residents. In this paper, I argue that the closure of DOSCO and subsequent reaction of Sydney's residents is shaped by Harold Innis' staples thesis and displays a unique regional identity in response to de-industrialization. This regionalism, which emerges through de-industrialization, adds nuance to Steven High's description of de-industrialization in central Canada. I will begin with an overview of the staples thesis and then proceed with an analysis of the closure of DOSCO in Sydney, Nova Scotia and the reaction of Sydney's residents in order to show how economic forces shape regional identity in the Maritimes in important ways.

The staples thesis, sometimes known as the 'staples trap', is a theory first postulated by University of Toronto economist Harold Innis. The theory describes the economic condition of Canada, and states that Canada's economy is defined by the extraction and trade of raw materials known as 'staples'. This resource-based economy results in a core-periphery relationship between metropolitan areas at the centre of the system and smaller raw-material-extraction-oriented communities at the periphery. This relationship creates tension and manifests itself in competing interests between the two regions, frequently dubbed the 'staples trap'. Innis' original framework has been updated and applied in recent years to provincial contexts, notably in British Columbia.² The staples trap is especially relevant to a historical understanding of de-industrialization in the Atlantic provinces.

¹ Steven C. High, *Industrial Sunset: The Making of North America's Rust Belt, 1969-1984* (Toronto; Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 2003). 2 Ibid.

The staples thesis provides a useful theoretical framework to understand how de-industrialization occurs in Eastern Canada. The reality of Innis' staples trap led companies to consolidate their holdings closest to central locations in an attempt to maximize profits and reduce shipping costs. This rationale helped justify the closure of Sydney steel in what Lachlan MacKinnon calls, "the culmination of a decades-long staples trap." Additionally, the theory also increases understandings of the regionalism which emerges as a result of DOSCO's closure. The staples thesis pits resource-based communities in Atlantic Canada like Sydney, Nova Scotia against metropolitan centers like Montreal and London. This adversarial relationship cultivates a clear sense of exclusion. Furthermore, because the interests of the core and peripheral regions are in conflict, actions which are seen to benefit the core at the expense of the periphery are fertile ground for regional grievance. In this way, the staples trap helps explain the closure of Sydney Steel and the regionalism which emerges as a result. It is through the lens of this adversarial core-periphery relationship that we can understand the way Sydney's interaction with de-industrialization helped crystallize a particular form of regional identity.

The history of DOSCO throughout the twentieth century shows how the staples trap shaped Cape Breton's economy. While Sydney Steel's closure is indicative of a broad trend of de-industrialization which manifested itself across the world in the late 20th Century, the speed and manner in which de-industrialization takes in Cape Breton is fundamentally informed by the staples strap. DOSCO rose to prominence in Sydney during the 1920s as it took control of Cape Breton's coal and steel industries from the British Empire Steel Corporation (BESCO).⁴ DOSCO operated its holdings in Cape Breton with an emphasis on short-term profit and a tacit acknowledgement of the planned obsolescence of its facilities in Eastern Canada.⁵ This rationale justified a lack of maintenance and improvement to facilities in order to increase profits while focusing on plants in central Canada. Private capital and corporate focus shifted from Sydney and Cape Breton incrementally throughout

³ Lachlan MacKinnon, "Deindustrialization on the Periphery: An Oral History of Sydney Steel, 1945-2001" (Concordia University, 2016).

⁴ Ibid.15.

⁵ Ibid 65.

the 20th Century, replicating the flight of capital from the American Midwest.⁶ This decades-long neglect of Sydney Steel justified the decision of Hawker Siddeley, DOSCO's parent company, to close the plant in 1967. Its rationale was issued in a press release issued in 1967 which states, "If the money was available to completely modernize the mill, its geographical location relative to markets and the resulting freight charges on its products would still prevent Sydney from being truly competitive." Hawker Siddeley's response must be understood in the context of the staples thesis. To maximize profit and reduce transportation costs, corporations will prioritize their holdings closer to the core at the expense of those at the periphery. This economic theory helps explain DOSCO's decades long neglect of Sydney Steel.

While the closure of Sydney Steel was largely pre-determined by the forces of de-industrialization and the staples trap, the working class in Sydney was unaware of this fact. The postwar period was marked by progressivism and a tremendous optimism for the future.⁸ This attitude runs against the predominant anti-modernism described in Ian MacKay's *Quest of the* Folk.⁹ When the tragedy of the staples trap became apparent to Sydney's workers, there was an intense popular reaction against the forces which had perpetuated the staples trap. This reaction manifests itself in a particular form of nationalism which will be discussed in more detail later. While the staples thesis was very much on the forefront of the minds of DOSCO executives, the Nova Scotia Steel industry, "had done its dying in privacy."¹⁰

The staples thesis is tremendously informative in understanding the nationalist reaction of Sydney residents to DOSCO's closure. The core-periphery relationship that Innis describes, was an important factor in cultivat-

⁶ Ibid 66.

⁷ J.N. Kelley - Hawker Siddeley Canada Press Release, 13 October 1967, Premier's Correspondence, Volume 39, File 11, Office of the Premier Fonds, NSARM; cited in MacKinnon. 97.

⁸ Ibid.86.

⁹ I. McKay, "Quest of the Folk : Antimodernism and Cultural Selection in Twentieth-Century Nova Scotia," (2014).

^{10 &}quot;Comment," *Cape Breton Highlander*, October 25, 1967 cited in Parnaby, Andrew. "Growing Up Even More Uncertain: Children and Youth Confront Industrial Ruin in Sydney, Nova Scotia, 1967/87". 93.

ing the regionalism espoused by Sydney's residents in their reaction to de-industrialization. The staples trap perpetuates a sense of regional grievance within Nova Scotia because it creates an adversarial relationship between centers of industrial and political power (embodied by Ottawa, Montreal, and London) and regions like Sydney at the periphery. This relationship creates a fundamental tension which supports a sense of regional identity prevalent in Sydney's reaction to de-industrialization.

Steven High's chronicling of de-industrialization in central Canada informs understandings of de-industrialization in Sydney. High formulated what has become known as the "High thesis" which argues that Canadian workers in central Canada relied on a combination of unionism and a unique sense of nationalism to combat de-industrialization.¹¹ Their nationalism helped cultivate the unity necessary to organize against plant closures. While nationalism and anti-Americanism informed de-industrialization in central Canada, the staples trap informed and mitigated Sydney's response to de-industrialization in Cape Breton. The core-periphery relationship that the staples theory manufactures made nationalism in Sydney problematic. Since the grievances of workers in Cape Breton were manifested against figures in central Canada as well as foreign forces, nationalism as such was inhibited by the staples thesis. Whereas the nationalism espoused by workers in central Canada emphasized Canadian identity against the foil of American influence, Nova Scotian 'nationalism' emphasized the interests of the periphery against those of the core. This particular form of nationalism is present in the elite and folk led reactions to de-industrialization in Nova Scotia.¹²

Economic development policy in Nova Scotia in the 1960s represents an elite-led response to de-industrialization. This top-down response to de-industrialization was motivated by the immediate necessity of saving Cape Breton's economy in the short term and Conservative Premier G.I. Smith recognized this reality. While the de-industrialization policy was influenced 11 Steven High, Dominique Marshall, and Kerry Abel, "Ill Wrap the F*** Canadian Flag around Me: A Nationalist Response to Plant Shutdowns, 1969-1984," *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association* 12, no. 1 (2001). 225.

12 MacKinnon, 102.

¹³ Andrew William Thiesen, "G.I. Smith and Economic Development in Nova

by pragmatism it was deeply bound up in the language of regionalism. This is evident in the rhetoric and actions of G.I. Smith and other politicians at the time. The rhetoric Smith used in rallying against Hawker Siddeley and DOSCO emphasized the outsider status of these companies and their wanton disregard for the economies of Cape Breton and Nova Scotia.¹⁴ Smith explicitly cited the "lack of responsibility... [Hawker Siddeley had] to the communities in which it operated." 15 Smith's rhetoric draws a clear division between in and out groups, reflecting his own regional identity. Furthermore, Smith used the "language of region" to stir up popular support for his policies and rally Nova Scotians against the federal government. ¹⁶ This rhetoric of regional solidarity entrenches an insider-outsider dichotomy which supports notions that Nova Scotians must safeguard their interests against the foreign ownership of industry and the federal government. This 'regionalist' policy response was applauded by Nova Scotians and was cited as his 'crowning achievement' when he received an honorary degree from St. Francis Xavier University in 1969.¹⁷ The nationalization of Sydney Steel was also lauded by his constituents as he easily won re-election at the 1967 Tory Leadership convention. 18 Smith's actions were indelibly shaped by the staples thesis and the way it situates regions at the periphery against regions at the core. The rhetoric he espoused in rallying against de-industrialization echoes this core-periphery relationship and displays a clear sense of pride and regional grievance.

Folk-led action against de-industrialization also emphasized regional identity. However, it is important to note who this imagined community included and excluded. While Nova Scotian regionalism is necessarily predicated on the exclusion of business elites in Montreal and London, it also excluded marginalized communities within Sydney itself. Responses to de-industrialization emphasized white masculine identities. Additionally, references to women's involvement in the parade comprised only gendered Scotia, (1995). 110.

14 Ibid.109.

15 Ibid 109.

16 Parnaby, Andrew. "Growing Up Even More Uncertain: Children and Youth Confront Industrial Ruin in Sydney, Nova Scotia, 1967/87". 89.

17 Thiesen. 111.

18 Ibid 111.

19 MacKinnon, 125.

references to the home, and Mi'kmaw involvement is almost entirely ignored. Even though indigenous communities were deeply interconnected with industry in Cape Breton their presence in collective action initiatives and the rhetoric of regionalism, especially the Parade of Concern, is frequently overlooked. While the nation that manifests itself in the nationalism reflected in the Parade of Concern doesn't accurately represent the demography of Sydney or Nova Scotia more generally, it was nonetheless important in catalyzing support against de-industrialization.

The Parade of Concern, a 1967 march organized by prominent figures in Sydney, is an especially demonstrative example of folk regionalism.²¹ The nationalist sentiment expressed by workers protesting de-industrialization is echoed in a column which ran on the front page of the November 18, 1967 edition of *The Halifax Chronicle Herald*.²² The column posed the question "Are We Canadians." It details the economic disadvantage of the Maritimes vis-à-vis central Canada explicitly invoking the Sydney plant closure, closing with the question, "Is Canada for all Canadians." This editorial is indicative of the core-periphery relationship of the staples thesis and informs manifestations of Nova Scotian regional identity. Furthermore, it identifies two of the dominant strains in this de-industrialization regionalism; anti 'core' sentiment and island pride.

Andrew Parnaby argues that the Parade of Concern shows the "unity, resistance, and island pride" of Sydney and neighbouring communities.²⁴ This unity, resistance, and island pride manifested itself in a distinct form of anti-central Canadian sentiment. Expressions of economic struggles frequently argued that the cause of these issues resulted in large part from the 'rotten deal' Nova Scotia received at Confederation.²⁵ This sentiment that the federal government privileges core constituencies over the more peripheral is evoked

²⁰ Ibid 125.

²¹ Parnaby. 89.

^{22 &}quot;Are We Canadians?" Halifax Chronicle Herald (Halifax, NS), November 18,

¹⁹⁶⁷

²³ Ibid

²⁴ Parnaby. 89.

²⁵ Ibid 100.

by Charlie Mackinnon's protest anthem, *Let's Save Our Industry* which was printed on the front page of the November 20th issue of *The Halifax Chronicle Herald*. It reads:

"We need the help of Ottawa We are also part of Canada They can subsidize Ontario Expo and the seaway, too!"²⁶

This sentiment was ubiquitous with posters in the March of Concern mockingly calling Cape Breton's centennial gift from the federal government, "Closure and unemployment."27 In a speech delivered at the March, Rev. William Roach cited government programs elsewhere in Canada such as the Canadian Pacific Railroad and the government's shouldering of Expo '67 debt in making an argument of regional disadvantage.²⁸ This sentiment was also prevalent in the letters sent by Sydney school children lobbying Prime Minister Lester B. Pearson to intervene to save the plant. Children argued that outsiders, including the foreign-owned Hawker-Siddeley, had 'Bled Cape Breton Dry'.²⁹ These children also argued that media and "Upper Canadians" were only exacerbating the problems of de-industrialization because they didn't understand the particularities of Nova Scotian society.³⁰ This broad-based anti-central-Canadian sentiment crystallized into a cogent narrative that, "the exodus of DOSCO was ... just another step in a history of exploitation by off-island capital."31 This narrative, and the distinction made between groups at the core and groups at the periphery was instrumental in the formation of Nova Scotian regionalism in response to de-industrialization.

The regional nationalism evoked in the response to de-industrialization in Sydney also evoked a sense of a unique Nova Scotian identity which drew linkages to other Atlantic provinces creating a sense of regional solidarity. Charlie MacKinnon's Let's Save Our Industry invokes this regional pride: 26 "Let's Save Our Industry" *Halifax Chronicle Herald* (Halifax, NS), November 20, 1967

27 "All Age Groups in Attendance" *Halifax Chronicle Herald* (Halifax, NS), November 20, 1967

28 Ibid

29 Connie Young to Lester B. Pearson, November 7, 1967 cited in Parnaby. 99.

30 Parnaby. 99.

31 MacKinnon, 119.

"We stand united one and all The Maritimes must never fall So let's all get behind the wheel And save our coal and save our steel"32

Andrew Parnaby further testifies to this regional pride in stating that, "a community wide effort emerged in Sydney to oppose DOSCO's decision – its message of unity, resistance, and island pride later extending outside the steel city to neighbouring industrial towns and many rural communities."33 Protestors at the March of Concern formally linked their struggle with de-industrialization to other communities on the periphery. Marchers held placards reading "Remember Wabana" referencing the shuttering of a DOSCO plant on Bell Island.³⁴ While different people attributed blame to different actors; whether they be DOSCO, the Canadian government, or Upper Canadians there was a sense that central Canada was abusing Atlantic Canada. While the causes of the problem were with the democratic system and actors at the core, Nova Scotians often expressed sentiments of regional pride. A speaker at the March of Concern invoked this regional pride in stating that "no finer human resources exist anywhere in Canada than on Cape Breton island."35 Comments like these embody the island pride that made up a crucial part of the nationalism which was catalyzed in response to de-industrialization in Sydney.

As Parnaby argues, "an assertive, collective identity based on a shared sense of regional history, geography, and grievance was critical to the community's political response [to de-industrialization]." This shared sense of regional identity and solidarity was informed and motivated by the coreperiphery dichotomy described in the staples thesis. The collective identity that was catalyzed by de-industrialization in Sydney echoes the economic nationalism Steven High describes in his assessment of de-industrialization in central Canada with one important difference. Atlantic Canadian nation-

^{32 &}quot;Let's Save Our Industry" *Halifax Chronicle Herald* (Halifax, NS), November 20, 1967

³³ Parnaby. 89.

^{34 &}quot;All Age Groups in Attendance" *Halifax Chronicle Herald* (Halifax, NS), November 20, 1967

³⁵ Ibid.

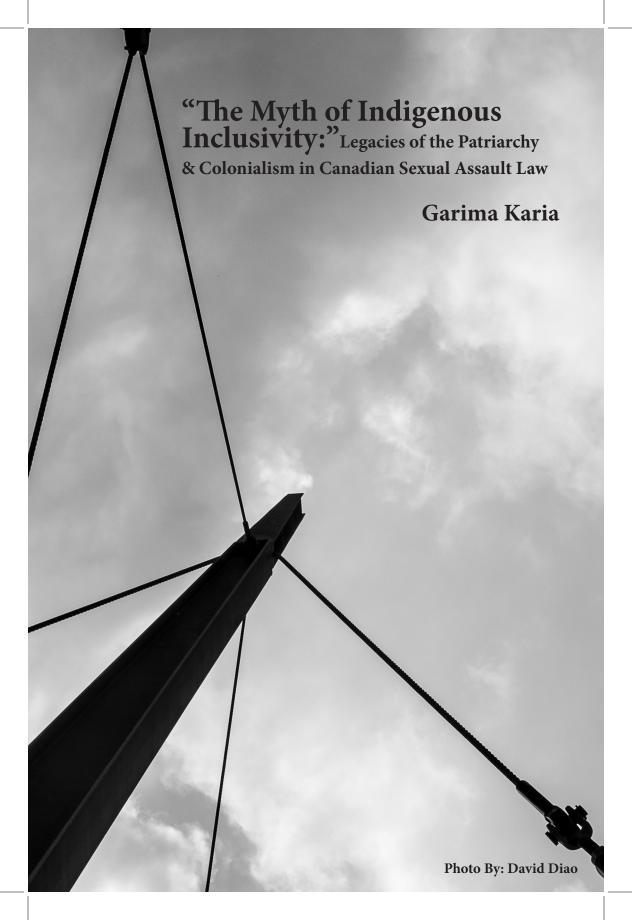
³⁶ Parnaby. 91

alism manifested in a specific regional identity that pitted Atlantic Canadians and their own regional interests against central Canada. This is an important distinction. The anti-central Canadian identity that was crystallized and supported by de-industrialization in Eastern Canada, "settled into [a] collective, generational consciousness," which continues to inform identity in present-day Nova Scotia.³⁷ This regional identity, which informs identity in the present, is shaped by the staples thesis in a significant way. This understanding of how the staples thesis impacted de-industrialization throughout the 20th Century illustrates the way in which economic reality influences the creation and entrenchment of regional identity.

³⁷ Ibid 104.

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Trigger Warning: sexual assault, sexual violence, racism.

anada is internationally perceived and celebrated as both an exemplary progressive state and legal "safe haven" for women and minority-identifying individuals alike. However, a closer look at Canada's legal framework, judicial institutions, and political legacies calls this Canadian "exceptionalism" into question. In this paper, I seek to explore how Canadian legal norms and practices reinforce the power dynamic that exists between those who benefit from modern patriarchal and colonialist systems, and those who are marginalized by their legacies.

The analysis that follows will illustrate the nuances of this inequitable reality through the lens of sexual assault law in Canada, and in doing so, expose the ways in which Canadian sexual assault law has been inconsistently interpreted and manipulated by legal actors in order to marginalize indigenous, female-identifying complainants and perpetuate a problematic culture of decontextualization, victim-blaming, and de-gendering of the issue. Through the cases of R v. A.J.S. and Cindy Gladue, this paper engages with the intersections of gender and indigeneity in order to argue that the Canadian judicial system propagates the systemic subordination of indigenous female bodies through a rhetoric of liberal individualism, effectively demonstrating the patriarchal and colonial legacies embedded in Canada's sexual assault policy.

The crux of my case against the Canadian legal system lies in problematizing Section 15 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which states that "every individual is equal before or under the law, and has the right to the equal protection and equal benefit of the law without discrimination." This seemingly universal truth is, in fact, an indicator of the "myth of liberal individualism." In this case, the myth of liberal individualism manifests itself as the equal opportunity for all Canadians to receive fair treatment and justice at the hands of the legal system. In reality, not all Canadian citizens are

¹ Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, s 15, Part I of the Constitution Act, 1982, being Schedule B to the Canada Act 1982 (UK), 1982, c 11.

² Boler, Megan & Zembylas, Michalinos. (2010). "Discomforting Truths: The Emotional Terrain of Understanding Difference." *Pedagogies of Difference: Rethinking Education for Social Change, 12.*

seen or treated as "equals" under Canadian law. Just as marginalized minority groups cannot "reap the [same] benefits of the American dream" as those who occupy positions of privilege, they also cannot be privy to dependably fair trials and judicial assessments, despite the prevalence of the denial/sameness model professed by the Canadian government in the context of legal accessibility.⁴

This reality is especially pertinent to indigenous women, who are among the most marginalized and vulnerable individuals in the country.⁵ The inequitable reality lived by indigenous women is one that is upheld by a hegemonic neoliberalism, one that deems our colonially-based judicial system "fit" to assess the legal grievances of all Canadians with limited regards to individualized contexts or lived experiences. In an attempt to modernize Canada's legal protocol for cases of sexual assault, 1992 saw affirmative consent standard provisions embedded within the Criminal Code. It is here that one encounters the phenomenon of "law as legislation vs. law as practice." This dichotomy seeks to explain the judicial irregularities in interpreting the new Criminal Code, and the disproportionate effects of this inconsistency on indigenous survivors of sexual assault in the Court of Law. Thus, an investigation into the details and nuances of both R. v. A.J.S and the Gladue cases allows for the critical exposition of power relations, stereotyping, and White male privilege as they relate to indigeneity and the myth of liberal individuality in the context of sexual assault law.

Neoliberal Marginalization: The case of *R v. A.J.S.*

Through a neoliberal framework, *R. v. A.J.S.* serves as the first of two legal case studies that will expose the marginalizing framework of the Canadian judicial system as governed by the myth of liberal individualism. In *R. v. A.J.S.*, the Manitoba Court of Appeal explicitly considered the "abnormal behaviours" of the indigenous female complainant, which comprised of being alone with the accused and borrowing his lawnmower, as undermining of her

³ Boler & Zembylas, 12.

⁴ Boler & Zembylas, 15.

⁵ Gotell, Lise. (2008). "Canadian Sexual Assault Law: Neoliberalism and the Erosion of Feminist-Inspired Law Reform." In Vanessa E. Munro, Clare Mcglynn (Ed.), *Rethinking Rape Law: International and Comparative Perspectives*, 250. 6 Smart, C. (1995) *Law, Crime and Sexuality*, 154.

credibility.⁷ The highly subjective classification of this complainant's actions as "abnormal enough" to raise concerns about her credibility demonstrates the Court's unjust, decontextualized, and neoliberal stance on "risk management." The Court's position both fails to recognize the power dynamic existing between the complainant and her abuser (her sister's husband), as well as the "constraints on action arising out of situations of social marginalization." Hence, the inconsistency with which Canada's progressive affirmative consent standard is properly applied by the judiciary is directly influenced by colonially-rooted falsehoods and stereotypes that prevent legal recognition of sexual violence.

The realities of this licit inconsistency disproportionately affect indigenous women because the current legal discourse of affirmative consent erases the intricate relationship between discrete events and the power relations that construct the vulnerabilities associated with them. While the state sees everyone as equally able to behave as "responsible risk managers," it effectively silences the realities of those whose lived experiences and realities are both heavily dictated by power relations, creating a "fiction of sexual autonomy." Thus, *R. v. A.J.S.* illustrates the Court's decontextualizing neoliberal tendency to view all complainants as equally capable of giving unhindered affirmative consent, and fails to acknowledge and accommodate for marginalized individuals whose agency may be constrained in situations of disadvantage and dependency, as is evident in this case.

Entrenching Discrimination: The Case of Cindy Gladue

The legal case of Cindy Gladue exhibits the extent to which Canada's legal system functions to discriminate against indigenous female complainants by privileging White male pleasure, and reinforcing the discriminatory rhetoric of "high risk lifestyles," particularly in the context of sex work. In 2011, Cindy Gladue, a Cree woman and sex worker, was found dead in the bathtub of her client's hotel room. Despite her death being the product of a

⁷ Gotell, 249.

⁸ Gotell, 250.

⁹ Gotell, 250.

¹⁰ Gotell, 252.

¹¹ Lavell-Harvard, D. M., & Brant, J. (2016). Forever loved: Exposing the Hidden Crisis of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls in Canada, 111.

four-inch wound in her vagina caused by a sharp object, her client, Bradley Barton, was acquitted for her murder. An analysis of the Barton trial brings to light the many ways in which the abuser was granted the benefit of the doubt by the Court, despite his many contradictions and dubious assertions.

Despite substantive evidence of Barton's "mendacity and perturbing proclivity for sadistic pornography,"13 as well as the fact that he lied about his connection to Gladue and maintained that her fatal wound was a product of "rough consensual sex,"14 the Court treated him with more respect and dignity than the indigenous woman he murdered. The Court's discriminatory bias is further revealed when Gladue's preserved vaginal tissue was physically brought into the courtroom; the first time in Canadian history that a human body part was submitted as a legal exhibit.¹⁵ In doing so, the Canadian legal system effectively normalized the dehumanization of Indigenous survivors, and reinforced the "right of the White man to rough sex," 16 even when that sex came at the cost of the life of an indigenous woman, thus serving to subordinate the mere existence of marginalized female populations through an agenda of patriarchal, colonial dominance. As Razack sums up so effectively, "sexual violence against indigenous women is an ongoing repetition of the colonial encounter that is sanctioned by law."17 Gladue's case, like so many others, is telling of this problematic legal reality.

Gladue's occupation as an indigenous sex worker also served to skew the legal case in Barton's favour. The Court used her profession as an excuse for Barton's criminal behaviour, under the pretence that sex workers have "consented to whatever violence is visited upon them." In conflating sex work with "belonging to a [chosen] space of violence and criminality, the demeaning rhetoric professed by the Canadian Court depicted Gladue as a willing participant in the sexual violence that lead to her death, and thus legitimized settler male violence. To that end, a disproportionate emphasis

¹² Lavell-Harvard & Brant, 111.

¹³ Lavell-Harvard & Brant, 117.

¹⁴ Lavell-Harvard & Brant, 117.

¹⁵ Lavell-Harvard & Brant, 120.

¹⁶ Lavell-Harvard & Brant, 118.

¹⁷ Razack, S. H. (2000). Gendered Racial Violence and Spatialized Justice: The Murder of Pamela George. *Canadian Journal of Law and Society, 15,* 126.

¹⁸ Razack, 126.

¹⁹ Lavell-Harvard & Brant, 120.

was placed on the "consensual" sexual suffering that lead to Gladue's death, while records showed that her blood alcohol level would have made it impossible for her to consent in the first place.²⁰ In refutation, Barton's lawyer pointed to the fact that Gladue was a "heavy drinker," suggesting that she was responsible for the fatal violence that was inflicted upon her by Barton. This dialogue of indigenous women adopting a "high risk lifestyle" locates survivors of gendered sexual violence in a space of risk, and paints them as self-chosen victims forced into "dirty spaces of transactional, unclean, and unsafe sex work,"²¹ as opposed to marginalized individuals subjugated by the a patriarchal and colonially-administered social structure.²²

Ultimately, Gladue's case operates as a microcosm for the systemic silencing of gender, indigeneity, and class in judicial discourses of affirmative consent, thus constructing the bodies of indigenous women as "violable." High profile sexual assault cases to the likes of Gladue's continue to demonstrate the degree to which "the culpability of white men enacting sexual violence against aboriginal women is often minimized," while indigenous complainants and survivors are held unjustly accountable for the trauma and violation they've experienced because they chose to engage in "risky" and "irresponsible" activities, such as sex work and the consumption of alcohol. This attitude on behalf of the Canadian judiciary speaks to the victim-blaming culture that exists within our legal institutions, as well as its role in upholding the oppressive foundation of the system itself.

The ability to discern which information is central to a legal case and which is not is "a power that contains both the potential of recognition and critical inclusion and of [both] stereotyping and erasure." This essay proves that the Canadian Court deliberately manipulates this power of discernment, particularly in cases involving Indigenous women and sexual assault. In unpacking the nuances of *R. v. A.J.S* and the Gladue case, one is able to recognize and understand the extent to which Canada's legal system disproportionately

²⁰ Lavell-Harvard & Brant, 119.

²¹ Lavell-Harvard & Brant, 118.

²² Gotell, 251.

²³ Gotell, 250.

²⁴ Gotell, 251.

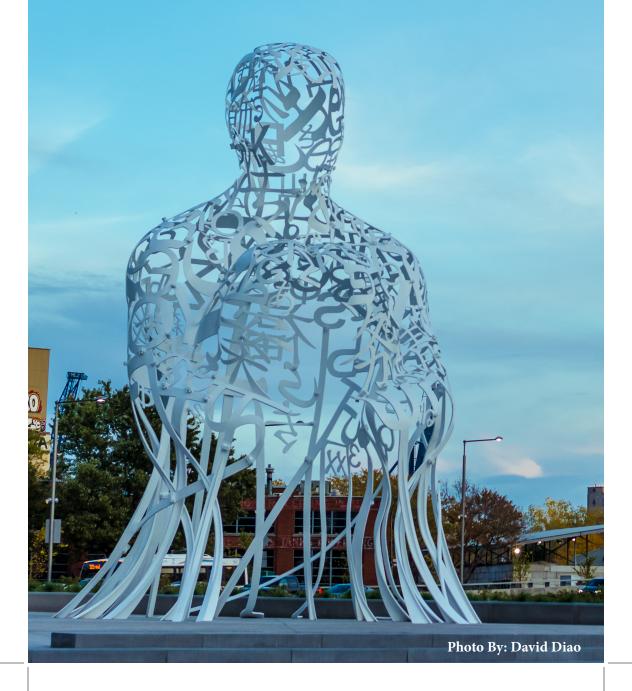
²⁵ Sheehy, E. A. (2012). Sexual assault in Canada: Law, legal practice, and women's activism, 108.

oppresses indigenous female survivors of sexual assault. Under the guise of progressive affirmative consent provisions, Canada's sexual assault laws, and judicial structure more broadly, is a modern-day expression of the continued patriarchal and colonial legacies embedded within our institutions.

"Testing the Claims of Names:"

A Historical Overview of the Development of Manhood Suffrage in Victorian Prince Edward Island and Nova Scotia

Eliza McCullum



he process by which the franchise was developed in Victorian British North America was asymmetrical, each colony having its own unique set of historical, geographical, political, and social factors influencing its definition of full citizenship. Certain definitions lead to the adoption, in some areas, of "manhood suffrage." Sometimes defined as "one man, one vote," "manhood suffrage" is the enfranchisement of all adult men in a political system. Both during that particular time and also in contemporary scholarship, "manhood suffrage" was and is sometimes used interchangeably with "universal suffrage," though the term is problematic in our modern context, as women did not gain the vote in Nova Scotia until 1918, nor in Prince Edward Island (PEI) until 1922. Furthermore, Inuit people were not enfranchised until 1950, and Status Indians were unable to vote without losing their Indian status until 1960. While other people of colour were not formally excluded from the franchise acts which were in effect in these colonies between 1851 and 1863, it must be noted that they were often vehemently discouraged from voting. Keeping these contradictions in mind, this essay will use the terms "manhood suffrage" and "universal suffrage" according to the custom in Victorian Nova Scotia and PEI, despite the franchise at the time being far from universal.

While the power of hindsight allows us to trace the evolution of this far-from-universal franchise backwards and create explanatory theories, in Victorian British North America it was not at all clear how prevalent universal suffrage would become. Many individuals who were influential in Canada's formative years were against manhood suffrage and made their opinions clear. In 1855, the Attorney General of New Brunswick, Charles Fisher, agreed with Lord John Russell when he quoted his statement that:

"universal suffrage [was] calculated to produce and nourish violent opinions and servile dependence; to give in times of quiet a great preponderance to wealth, and in times of disturbance, additional power to ambitious demagogues. It [was] the grave of all temperate liberty and the

parent of tyranny and license."1

In addition, future first prime minister of Canada John A. Macdonald stated while attorney general that he was "not in favour of universal suffrage but completely opposed to it," while fellow Fathers of Confederation Alexander T. Galt and George Brown objected to the policy on the grounds of a belief that the franchise should be based in legitimate interest in the soil, and a lack of sympathy towards universal suffrage,³ respectively. These powerful men voiced the strong public opinion against universal suffrage which posed a significant barrier to its advocates.

And yet, despite the strong voices against it, manhood suffrage was adopted; first in PEI in 1853, though it had many limitations, as it was attached to the colony's statute labour laws, shortly followed by Nova Scotia, which passed a more radical version of manhood suffrage in 1854, opening its franchise to all men who had lived in the colony for more than a year. While Nova Scotia's manhood suffrage and PEI's statute labour franchise did not stand the test of time, the fact that they were adopted at all speaks volumes about the social and political climate of the Maritimes at the time. Focusing on this narrow period of Maritime history, this paper will examine the paths that Nova Scotia and PEI took to arrive at the implementation of manhood suffrage. Through this analysis, it will be argued that the use of universal suffrage in PEI was a direct result of Premier George Coles' progressive stance on the colony's absentee landlord issue, and that Nova Scotia's adoption of universal suffrage was due to J. W. Johnston's supra-partisan petition to amend franchise laws.

PEI: GEORGE COLES' PUSH FOR LABOUR RIGHTS

In the mid-1760s, the Crown had divided Prince Edward Island into large lots allocated amongst supporters of King George III. These new landowners had had to satisfy certain requirements in order to gain the land title, including paying rent to the Crown and settling at least one third of the land within the first ten years. Despite having been warned that non-

^{1.} John Garner, *The Franchise and Politics in British North America*, 1755-1867, Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press, 1969, 12.

^{2.} ibid., Franchise and Politics, 12.

^{3.} ibid., Franchise and Politics, 12.

fulfillment of these conditions would result in reclamation of the land by the Crown, many landowners (and their descendants) had failed to do so and yet had faced no adverse consequences.⁴ With these landowners having been *de facto* allowed to not settle their land, the majority of land ownership on the Island had been concentrated overseas, barring all but the wealthiest of Islanders from freeholding property. This situation would serve as part of the motivation to change the way in which the franchise was accorded in the colony.

PEI was the first province to adopt "universal" male suffrage, though there were many qualifications attached to it. Like many other colonies within British North America, PEI had statute labour laws which dictated that men between the ages of 21 and 60 had to work a set number of hours per year, performing manual labour to repair and maintain roads. Failure to do so resulted in the requirement to pay a road tax. Expanding upon this existing framework, the Franchise Act of 1853 extended the franchise from land-owning men exclusively to now also include those men who had been residents of the Island for more than a year and who had paid their road tax. It is estimated that this move broadened the electorate by about 8,000 men.⁵ By so doing, PEI became not only the first province to adopt manhood suffrage, but also the first and only one to attach the franchise to statute labour,⁶ as well as to institute a maximum voting age – 60, being the maximum age for which state labour was required – for non-land-owning men.

However, the need for these changes was far from self-evident; the government at the time was run by elites whose mental maps did not foster support for manhood suffrage. George Coles, one such elite, gained office in 1851 when PEI won responsible government, becoming the Island's first premier. His reform government would make sweeping changes, amongst them the Franchise Act. In promoting the Act, and in a move to appeal to the Island's disenfranchised labourers, Coles used the language of the province's

^{4. &}quot;The Absentee Landlord Question - Prince Edward Island," *Library and Archives Canada*, December 14, 2001, https://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/confederation/023001-3010.02-e.html.

^{5. &}quot;House of Assembly: Friday, Feb 25," *Haszard's Gazette* (Charlottetown, PEI), March 2, 1953.

^{6.} Grittner, Privilege at the Polls, 179.

Escheat movement (though he did not support said movement until much later). Escheat leaders had used a class-based rhetoric from the 1830s to early 1840s, arguing that the labourers who populated absentee landowners' property were the ones who made it valuable and that, for this reason, the owners needed the workers more than the workers needed the landowners. The movement also argued that the transformation of the land from rolling hills to prosperous agricultural fields had invested the tenants in the land and that these tenants had, thus, staked a more legitimate claim for ownership than the owners themselves. Though the Escheat movement itself did not ultimately succeed in persuading the Crown to reclaim the land and sell it to the tenants, that which historian Rusty Bittermann calls "the persistence of the ideas, language, and historical claims that Escheat made in the public arena" did shape the land question, as it was picked up by figures like Coles.

The emphasis placed by the Escheat movement on tenants' hard work, which had established their interest in the land, had profound implications on the way franchise was thought about – while the Franchise Act of 1853 is now recognized as being the first employment of manhood suffrage, it was not seen by the government nor by Islanders as *universal* suffrage at the time. Voting, even in Escheat reasoning, was a privilege to be earned rather than a right, and Coles and the Liberal government agreed with that general belief. The Franchise Act, then, was viewed not as an innovative step towards full democracy, but rather as the extension of the vote to a percentage of the population deemed to have earned it. Coles did realize, however, the magnitude of the legislation. During discussion of the bill in the PEI legislature, Coles responded to the opposition's request to delay the vote until a more moderate Nova Scotian bill was tabled by stating, according to the *Haszard's Gazette*, that "the Legislature of [that] little Island [had frequently taken] the lead of the other colonies, in matters of great importance; and [he thought they were]

^{7.} Rusty Bittermann, *Sailors Hope: The Life and Times of William Cooper, Agrarian Radical in an Age of Revolutions*, Montreal, QC: McGill-Queens University Press, 2010, 204. As cited in: Grittner, *Privilege at the Polls*, 187.

^{8.} Rusty Bittermann. Rural Protest on Prince Edward Island: From British Colonization to the Escheat Movement, Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press, 2006, 165. 9. ibid., Rural Protest, 74.

^{10.} ibid., Rural Protest, 273.

^{11.} Grittner, Privilege at the Polls, 184.

quite capable of maturing [such a] measure without any assistance from Nova Scotia." Coles also stated in the same debate that he was prepared to extend the franchise as far as the legislature would allow, and that he was against compulsory voter registration, believing that many people would not bother to register, and so would continue to be disenfranchised. By expressing his disapproval for an opt-in voter registration system, Coles proved that he truly wanted all hard-working men to vote, rather than just including them in the franchise to have them then be discouraged by the hurdle of registration.

Certain members of the legislative assembly were skeptical with regards to Coles' approach, such as opposition member Palmer, who, in the second week of debate, argued that "there could be no sympathy, on the part of the ... unpropertied with the propertied." Palmer insinuated that non landowning men could not be as invested in politics as landowners, an especially privileged stance to take when the acquisition of land was so much more difficult in PEI than in the rest of the colonies. Coles' earlier remark stands out as an effective illustration of his differing view: he "thought there [were] a large number of intelligent young men, the sons of respectable farmers and others, throughout the Island, who [were] disqualified from voting, but who [were] quite as competent to exercise that privilege under existing laws." Echoing Escheat leaders, Coles stood firm in these debates, arguing that land tenants had expended enough time and energy on the land to have a significant interest in the colony's development, a fact which ought to be enacted politically.

Coles' stance was exceptional in that, as the first premier of a new government and a man coming from a wealthy merchant background, he overcame the impediment of hierarchical class structures to advocate for labourer's rights. All the same, it must be underlined that the expansion of the franchise was politically expedient for him, as most of PEI's residents did not own the land they lived and worked on on would be likely to vote for the

^{12. &}quot;House of Assembly: Wednesday, Feb 16," *Haszard's Gazette* (Charlottetown, PEI), February 23, 1853.

^{13.} ibid., "House of Assembly: Wednesday, Feb 16."

^{14. &}quot;House of Assembly: Friday, Feb 25," Haszard's Gazette.

^{15. &}quot;House of Assembly: Wednesday, Feb 16," Haszard's Gazette.

^{16.} R.T. Naylor, "The Politics of Money and Finance in Colonial Prince Edward Island," Montreal, QC: eScholarship@McGill, McGill University, 2006, chapter 9, 1.

man who enfranchised them. However, political expediency was not sufficient to make this stance a popular one amongst the elites in government – Coles had the support of a majority government to vote with him, but few other men would have the ability to overcome their upper-class upbringing to advocate for workers' enfranchisement. Unique to PEI, the absentee landlord problem provided the pressure for democratic innovation, and Coles seized his opportunity.

NOVA SCOTIA: J. W. JOHNSTON'S VISION OF PROGRESS

Nova Scotia's approach to manhood suffrage was considered more radical than PEI's, as it had fewer requirements for voter eligibility. This was not always the case, though - the colony underwent extreme changes to its franchise laws between 1851 and 1863, living through three different systems of enfranchisement. The first province to win responsible government, in 1848, Nova Scotia then became, in 1851, the first province to separate the franchise from a man's property ownership status, implementing a ratepayers' franchise. This franchise accorded voting rights to any man who had paid his annual county and poor rates (or, as historian Colin Grittner calls them, taxes),¹⁷ in addition to all land-owning men. However, this introduction of the ratepayers' franchise raised many issues shortly after its implementation, despite its purpose having been to simplify the franchise for all residents. First, because of the way county and poor rates were designed, the amount each man paid was based on an assessment of his properties. Tying the vote to each man's tax payment implied, then, that each man paid a different amount for his enfranchisement, and that some men would have to pay far more than others. Consequently, different individuals' votes were valued differently. A second issue was that the ratepayers' franchise relied upon men's presentation of their tax receipt, issued by tax assessors and collectors. This instilled the holders of these positions with a lot of power in election years as they had the discretionary authority to strike someone's name from assessment or refuse to issue a receipt. Furthermore, the appointment of these positions could be done on a partisan basis; while tax assessors and collectors were appointed by grand juries and magistrates, magistrates were appointed by the government

^{17.} Grittner, Privilege at the Polls, 113.

in power at the time.¹⁸ In this way, such a system deftly placed control over the electorate in the hands of the government. It was this consequence that pushed Conservative opposition leader James William Johnston, who had previously always defended a property-based franchise, to affirm that "the extension of the franchise to every man in the country would be of infinitely less evil than the basis of assessment."¹⁹

As scholar Brian Cuthbert states, Nova's Scotia's adoption of manhood suffrage would be largely due to the work of J. W. Johnston.²⁰ Johnston was a British lawyer who was deeply involved in the Anglican community of Halifax, in addition to belonging to multiple commercial societies and having co-founded the Bank of Nova Scotia. During the British government's 1837 restructuring of the Nova Scotian colonial government, he was named to multiple councils due to his impressive oratory skills.²¹ Despite being a Conservative, he occasionally supported reform movements in the name of pragmatism. However, against the stance of most of his colleagues, he had broken from his usual approach in order to back the union of British North America.²² He disliked overt partisanship, and initially opposed responsible government for Nova Scotia because he believed that it would signal the end of administrative efficiency and instead result in "party struggling against party" to remain in power.²³ With the establishment of responsible government in 1848, Johnston gained the leadership of the Conservative opposition. In line with his approach to partisanship, he took great issue with the 1851 franchise, believing it to be corrupt, and was willing to pursue any option other than assessment.

Johnston was not the only one who saw the issues with the 1851 Fran-

^{18. &}quot;Provincial Parliament. House of Assembly," *Novascotian* (Halifax, NS), April 21, 1851, 4 (debate of 20 March 1851).

^{19. &}quot;Provincial Parliament. House of Assembly," *Novascotian* (Halifax, NS), April 7, 1851, 6 (debate of 12 March 1851).

^{20.} Brian Cuthbertson, "The Evolution of Parliamentary Democracy in Nova Scotia," *The Nova Scotia Legislature*, Accessed November 21, 2017, http://nslegislature.ca/pdfs/about/timeline/Introduction_EN.pdf.

^{21. &}quot;Biography – Johnston, James William – Volume X (1871-1880)," *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, 1972, http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio.php?id_nbr=5067.

^{22.} ibid., "Biography - Johnston, James William - Volume X (1871-1880)."

^{23.} ibid., "Biography – Johnston, James William – Volume X (1871-1880)."

chise Act - following rampant accusations of electoral fraud,24 an internal committee within the legislature was created in 1852 with the mandate to address the system's glaring oversights. Members included the 1851 Franchise Act's main sponsor Laurence O'Connor Doyle as well as Johnston, who served as chair. The committee concluded in late 1852 by recommending that, far beyond the mere abolition of the ratepayers' tax, universal suffrage should be adopted. Thus, by the time the legislature reopened in January 1853, Johnston emerged the champion of universal suffrage. It was him, and not the government, who introduced a bill based upon the recommendations of the committee. The bill, he said, had two main motivations: to repeal the corrupt ratepayers' franchise, and to introduce universal male suffrage for all men over the age of 21 who had been residents of the colony for more than a year.²⁵ Unlike in PEI, this bill was immediately recognized as a direct call for universal suffrage – though it should be noted that it explicitly denied the franchise to all "paupers and Indians." ²⁶ Ultimately, the bill would die in committee after being overcomplicated with amendments, but Johnston would reintroduce it in 1854.

Upon the bill's reintroduction, the discussion around the franchise led to a general consensus that the only two possible paths were forwards towards universal suffrage or backwards towards a property-based franchise. Joseph Howe's Reform government favoured the property-based franchise, fearing that the types of men who would be enfranchised under universal suffrage were uneducated, and that the colony's future was too great to put in the hands of ill-informed voters. Johnston's Conservatives were divided – Johnston had turned away from the traditional Conservative line, and some Conservatives, such as Martin Isaac Wilkins,²⁷ found themselves allying with the Reforms. Wilkins had such strong feelings against universal suffrage and his party leader that he declared that Johnston had "never in the whole course of

^{24.} Nova Scotia, House of Assembly, *Journal and Proceedings of the House of Assembly: 2nd Session 1851*, Printed by Richard Nugent, Halifax, NS, 1851, 15, 19-20, 27.

^{25. &}quot;Provincial Parliament. House of Assembly," *Novascotian* (Halifax, NS), January 31, 1853, 2 (debate of 21 January 1853). As cited in Grittner, *Privilege at the Polls*, 139.

^{26. &}quot;An Act Concerning the Elective Franchise," *The Statutes of Nova Scotia*, Halifax, NS: Government of Nova Scotia, 1854, 12.

^{27. &}quot;Provincial Parliament. House of Assembly," *British Colonist* (Halifax, NS), February 16, 1854, 1 (debate of 10 February 1854).

his career made a greater mistake than on this particular occasion."28 Despite such harsh criticism from Wilkins, Howe, and the next Reform Premier, William Young, Johnston ultimately won 34 of 46 votes. According to Grittner, the major reason for this was a "constitutional first" argument,²⁹ wherein privileges, once granted, became rights. It was not within the legislature's power to strip residents of their rights, and a move back to a property-based franchise would do just that. Martin Isaac Wilkins' brother and fellow Conservative Lewis Morris Wilkins even noted that members had "been returned by rate payers" and that it would be grossly indecent to "disfranchise those who sent [them there]."30 Johnston himself agreed with this reasoning. He made it clear that his own preference was for the 40-shilling property-based franchise, but that he saw no way for Nova Scotia to regress, while the assessment franchise was too partisan to remain - thus, universal suffrage was the only fair way forward.³¹ Grittner argues that this was an interpretation of Tory principles that few other men could hold at the time. 32 Indeed, Johnston himself realised this, acknowledging in February 1857 that:

When the constitutional history of Nova Scotia comes to be written, it will be enquired, 'Who was this Johnston, the tory [sic], – the man that was held up by the newspapers as the greatest obstructive to liberal principles?' The student of this history will read with wonder that he was the man who advocated Simultaneous Polling, Universal Suffrage, Municipal Corporations, Elective Legislative Councils, Union of the Colonies, and he will turn to some old dictionary to discover what the word 'Tory' meant, and what was the signification of 'Liberal' in the days of their forefathers.

^{28.} *ibid.*, "Provincial Parliament. House of Assembly," *British Colonist*, February 16 1854.

^{29.} James Murray Beck, *The Government of Nova Scotia*, Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press, 2016, 115-118. As cited in Grittner, *Privilege at the Polls*, 143.

^{30. &}quot;Provincial Parliament. House of Assembly," *British Colonist* (Halifax, NS), February 18, 1854, 2 (debate of 13 February 1854). As cited in Grittner, *Privilege at the Polls*, 144.

^{31. &}quot;Provincial Parliament. House of Assembly," *British Colonist* (Halifax, NS), February 9, 1854, 2-3 (debate of 7 February 1854).

^{32.} Grittner, Privilege at the Polls, 145.

We have been testing the claims of names!³³

Johnston's supra-partisan stance on manhood suffrage and his commitment to Nova Scotia's progress stood him apart from other politicians of his time. In arguing, against the voices of the loudest critics in his own party and across the aisle, that the path of good governance was toward universal suffrage, he won over both constitutionally-minded Conservatives and Reform members set on the widest franchise possible.

CONCLUSION

This paper has demonstrated that, while separate colonies with distinct circumstances, PEI's and Nova Scotia's passing of manhood suffrage laws within quick succession of one another were aided by similar forces – political expediency and the firm campaigns of key political leaders. In PEI, Coles' stance was viewed as slightly more moderate than the one taken in Nova Scotia, as it was based in the Escheat movement's rhetoric regarding labourers' interests in the land off of which they lived. The effect of Coles' policy, however, was a major step towards a more democratic franchise system in British North America. Meanwhile, Johnston's approach in Nova Scotia was remarkable in its boldness – in him, an opposition leader made a firm commitment contrary to the beliefs of many of his party members and fundamentally altered voting rights amidst political turmoil. While both provinces would switch to alternative franchise laws in the coming years, their adoption of manhood suffrage signalled an important turning point in traditional classist narratives. No longer was the control of government solely in the hands of the elites, but it was extended to include men of no great means, introducing new liberal concepts that would come to shape the future of democratic principles.

^{33. &}quot;The Legislature. House of Assembly," *British Colonist* (Halifax, NS), March 17, 1857, 2 (debate of 14 February 1857). As cited in Grittner, *Privilege at the Polls*, 145.

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An Analysis of How Different Social Groups Conceptualized Poverty in Early 1879

Cassandra Ryan

Photo By: David Diao

In 1879, Canada was in the later stages of an economic depression, and poverty was rampant in Montreal. As historians, it is tempting to pursue universal explanations that neatly detail historical events or experiences such as "poverty" in a linear, logical manner. However, it is important to remember that no two social groups experience the same phenomenon in the same way; a "universal" explanation fails to address the nuances in lived experience which variation in social standing engenders. In this essay, I will examine how poverty was viewed by different social groups in Montreal during 1879 through an analysis of the manifesto of Joe Beef's tavern, "Joe Beef of Montreal, the Son of the People." Published by Charles "Joe Beef" McKiernan (1835-1889) and released in the summer of 1879, the text served as a working-class response to the treatment of the working class and the poor by wider Montreal society. In the manifesto, McKiernan specifically charges the upper classes, the Catholic Church, and the municipal government with disrespecting and discriminating against working-class people.

On April 5th, 1879, the Montreal Daily Witness reported the death of one of Joe Beef's clients, a Mr. Kerr, and used the event as an opportunity to attack Joe Beef's and other Montreal taverns, and to argue for the revocation of liquor licenses. Like many newspapers, the Witness supported temperance legislation in Montreal, and the death of Kerr was used to support this agenda.1 While the specific publishing date of the manifesto which interests us remains unknown, the text was likely published in the months following this attack, as there is an illustration within the manifesto dated June 15th, 1879. In the manifesto, McKiernan criticizes this middle-class temperance journal, as well as the manner in which Montreal police treat suspects, especially the poor and the homeless, and the perceived greed of the churches in Montreal.² By examining Joe Beef's 1879 response to the Daily Witness, and its criticisms of the treatment of the poor and working classes in Montreal at the time, it is clear that there was a disconnect between the way the Catholic Church, municipal law enforcement, and middle-class news outlets understood poverty and the lower class' own perception of its community. This essay will explore these conflicting paradigms as they manifested themselves in

¹ Daily Witness, April 5, 1879.

² Charles McKiernan, "Joe Beef of Montreal the Son of the People," 1879.

the spring and summer months of 1879 by comparing the manifesto's claims to the reportings of related events in Montreal newspaper articles and government documents, in order to better delineate the conflict between classes.

CONTEXT: 1879, JOE BEEF'S, AND THE DAILY WITNESS

The Crown and Scepter, also known as Joe Beef's Canteen, run by Charles McKiernan, was a working-class tavern and boarding house located in Montreal's waterfront district and known for its extravagance. Not only was McKiernan known to keep exotic animals on display (including bears in a pit in the centre of the tavern), but the tavern itself was often frequented by "sailors and longshoremen, unemployed men and petty thieves." As a result, social opinions on the canteen varied: upper-class Montrealers saw the tavern as "a moral hazard to all who entered and a threat to social peace", while the working class saw it as a sanctuary and a "source of aid in times of unemployment, sickness, and hunger." Furthermore, for the working class, Joe Beef's Canteen was a stronghold for their values and culture, which lent protection from harsh economic times through the offer of meals and lodging for the low price of five cents. Furthermore, McKiernan did not turn anyone away if they were unable to pay.

Joe Beef's also played a significant role in Montreal working-class culture and its wide range of recreational, social, and job-related activities which formed collective ideas, institutions, manners and habits.⁷ For many working men, there was often an assumed "active mutual responsibility" amongst themselves, and working-class culture "offered [them] an alternative to the individualist, competitive philosophy of the nineteenth century middle-class." This emphasis on collectivity meant that working-class taverns were one of the most basic forums for public discussion, as well as the first locations to experience social and economic changes within Montreal society. As the working class was often the first to feel the effects of economic prosperity or depression, it would gather, discuss experiences, and organize strikes from 3 Peter DeLottinville, "Joe Beef of Montreal: Working-Class Culture and the Tavern, 1869-1889," *Le Travail*, 8, (1981): 10-14.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ McKiernan, "Joe Beef of Montreal the Son of the People."

⁷ DeLottinville, 11.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

within these local taverns.¹⁰ One such example of the working-class organization is the Lachine Canal Strike of January 1878, during which the Crown and Scepter was used as a rallying point for workers, with McKiernan feeding and lodging over 300 strikers.¹¹ As a result of the strike, McKiernan, with his infamous personality and help for the community, transformed his tavern into "a dynamic force for the working-class [sic] of Montreal."¹² This communitarian aspect of working-class culture demonstrates the strength of taverns in sustaining and defending the working class against the assumptions of the upper classes.

Moreover, 1879 is a particularly rich source of information concerning the status of the poor and working-class because of the economic and political climate of the era – Canada was in the process of recovering from the economic depression that had plagued the 1870s.¹³ Given the prominence of the National Policy and Temperance Act during the period, it is impossible to properly examine the significance of Joe Beef's manifesto and 1879's sociopolitical climate without mentioning both alcohol and temperance. By examining economic assessments from the Montreal Gazette and Daily Witness in early 1879, it is clear that, though improving, the economic landscape was still bleak. 14 In 1878, the Conservative government under John A. Macdonald had been elected, and Macdonald's government implemented the promised National Policy in 1879, which aimed to protect Canadian manufacturers from foreign competition through the levying of high tariffs on imported goods.¹⁵ While the National Policy's intention was to improve the economy, the working class did not immediately reap the promised rewards.¹⁶ What is more, the Conservative government's finance minister, Sir Samuel Leonard Tilley, who had been responsible for the implementation of the National Policy's tariffs, had also been a long-time temperance advocate, and the Temperance

¹⁰ Ibid, p.24.

¹¹ Ibid, p.21.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ian M. Drummond, "Economic History," *Canadian Encyclopedia*, February 7, 2006.

¹⁴ The Montreal Gazette, January 1, 1879.

¹⁵ Robert Craig Brown, "National Policy," *Canadian Encyclopedia*, February 7, 2006.

¹⁶ Carolyn Harris and P.B. Waite, "Sir Samuel Leonard Tilley," *Canadian Encyclopedia*, April 23, 2015.

Act (1878) was in the early months of its implementation.¹⁷ For the upper and middle-classes, drinking was seen as one of the key contributing factors to poverty, which pushed them to seek its elimination, while the working class itself understood taverns, as seen above, as central forums of discussion and community.

The Manifesto was a direct response to the *Witness*' call to have the tavern shut down and contains multiple depictions of a bear drinking a beer, which had been illustrated by one of the tavern's clients as a caricature of and personal attack against the temperance magazine's editor, and originally published in *Le Canard* on April 25th, 1873.¹⁸ Temperance was a popular topic in discussions on poverty by both the government and newspapers such as the *Daily Witness* and the *Irish Canadian*, both of which saw drinking as a major problem in poor communities. While the newspapers identified the problem of drinking, they did not offer solutions beyond prohibition or temperance laws, and ignored the social services which "surrounded the Canteen as a positive contribution to the community." Instead, these outlets "believed that [the taverns] were merely clever ways of entrapping unsuspecting workers into a world of drink and sin." ²⁰ For Dougall, the death of Kerr in April 1879 confirmed his convictions, and thus fueled the more aggressive conflict with Joe Beef's that would follow.

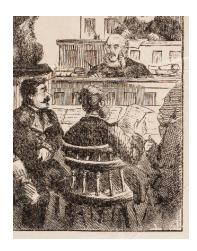


¹⁷ Graeme Decarie, "Temperance Movement in Canada," *Canadian Encyclopedia*, July 23, 2013.

¹⁸ DeLottinville, 31.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.



Dougall transformed into a bear, in "Joe Beef of Montreal, the Son of the People"

UPPER-CLASS PERSPECTIVE: TEMPERANCE TO THE RESCUE

As the illustrations of Dougall confirm, McKiernan expressly targets temperance supporters in his defense of the working class. In 1878, the Canada Temperance Act allowed local governments to enact prohibition legislation, and such action was a common topic of discussion for both federal and provincial governments. It was assumed in the 19th century that poverty was caused by the consumption of alcohol, an assumption which fueled the support of temperance legislation by Tilley in New Brunswick during the 1840s.²¹ Similarly, the Daily Witness supported the Montreal temperance movement, and heavily promoted this view in its pages.²² In analyzing such press, it is possible to amalgamate the perspective of middle- to upper-class temperance magazines and the assumption that if poor people stopped spending their money on alcohol, they would no longer be poor and could instead prosper. However, today it is known that, though poverty and alcoholism are linked, they affect each other mutually in dynamic ways. For example, alcohol is not simply associated with poverty because of the money spent on it; poor circumstances can influence people to spend their already limited resources on alcohol. 23 Nonetheless, there were, at the time, two primary sides to the per-

²¹ *The Irish Canadian*, February 18, 1874.; summary of debate in Ontario legislature about prohibition

²² Daily Witness, April 7, 1879.

²³ Øystein Bakke, "Alcohol and Poverty: Some Connections," *Alcohol, Drugs, and Development,* June 24, 2009.

ception of alcohol in a society or culture: some argued it had the benefit of linking communities and forming bonds (which is central to working-class culture), while others focused on the negative effects of drinking. This created two views of the drinker, the "lusty, uninhibited hedonist versus the downtrodden victim of misery and social dislocation looking for escape."²⁴

Yet, while primary sources about temperance often discuss the social impact of drunkenness, they also serve as propaganda for the temperance agenda, and were not detailed sociological accounts.²⁵ Some scholars suggest that the temperance movement emerged out of upper-class businessmen wanting to have more control over their workers.²⁶ Though this was some people's motivation for supporting temperance, it was not the only one, as others often had moralistic or religious reasons to support temperance.²⁷ In Montreal specifically, the temperance societies were run by leading businessmen early on, while in other parts of British North America

"[upper-class men] rallied to the temperance cause somewhat more slowly, but by the end of the 1840s, had similarly moved to centre stage and managed to give the movement a much more secular, ma terialist cast [...and] paid more attention to productivity, efficiency, work discipline, and 'Progress."²⁸

For rich capitalists, it was believed that "everyone would benefit from [a] culture of self-restraint and self-improvement." Thus, it is clear that temperance was very much a part of bourgeoisie culture, though some members of the lower class supported it as well. In contrast to temperance, there were also ideas of respectable drinking, which could be tolerated in private contexts by rich capitalists. Drinking became "more likely to be out of sight, because new definitions of respectability and an increasing elitist exclusivism were driving people from taverns;" higher echelons of society had issues with the visibility

²⁴ Craig Heron, Booze: A Distilled History, (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2000), 14.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid, p.61.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid, p.71.

of drinking, and concern for an image of respectability.³¹ Working-class taverns – loud, public venues – were thus viewed with suspicion, even by those who accepted drinking.

MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT PERSPECTIVE: THE POLICE FORCE

Moreover, McKiernan's manifesto also attacked the police force in Montreal, criticizing how officers violently handled intoxicated people or loiterers.³² Within his manifesto, there is a satirical list of rules for constables to follow, which include recommendations such as "if any person so inebriated shall refuse to resist the police constable in the execution of his duty, it will be the duty of the constable to knock him down and afterwards charge him with violent conduct."³³ This criticism seems to be in direct dialogue with *The Consolidated Statutes of Lower Canada*, which details the duties of municipal police forces and the wide discretion of officers. Any officer on-duty could

"apprehend all loose, idle and disorderly persons, whom he finds dis turbing the public peace, or whom he has just cause to suspect of any evil designs, and all persons whom he finds lying in any field, high way, yard or other place, or loiterizing therein, and not giving a satis factory account ofthemselves, and deliver any person so apprehended into the custody of the constable in attendance at the nearest watch house..."

The definition of who constituted an "idle or loose person" was broadly open to interpretation and included anyone who should be at work, who was exposing themselves, loitering, worked as a prostitute, anyone coming in or out of a tavern, gambling, or someone having just won money. Mc-Kiernan was critical of this unchecked discretion and refers to the abuse of this legislation on a broad scale, alluding to greater corruption in Montreal law enforcement.³⁵ The municipal government, with its vague accounts of who counted as an idle person, seems to have disproportionately targeted the

³¹ Ibid, p.77.

³² McKiernan, "Joe Beef of Montreal the Son of the People."

³³ Ibid

^{34 &}quot;Administration of Justice: Certain Criminal Courts, Authorities and Proceedings: Chapter *CII*," *The Consolidated Statutes for Lower Canada 903* (1861), 905. 35 Ibid, p. 906-907.

poor or unemployed, who would be likely to fit these criteria. This demonstrates that the government's view on poverty was not that the government had a duty to help solve poverty (i.e. increase employment), but that the poor were a menace to society that had to be regulated. McKiernan observed the disproportionate way in which his peers were affected by the conduct of the police force, and brought awareness to the issue through the manifesto. His tavern, with its offer of room and board, likely acted as a shield from the arbitrary arrests and abuses by police in certain circumstances and helped protect patrons against what he saw to be unchecked power.

Rules for Police Constables by Authority of Joe Beef.

1. The fundamental principle of the Canadian criminal law being that every person charged with an offence shall be deemed guilty until he is enabled to prove his innocence. It is expected that every police constable will refrain from violating this essential portion of the British Constitution on pain of instant dismissal from the force.

2. When a person is arrested for a crime which he has not committed, he should be encouraged in every possible manner to admit his guilt.

This will save much bother and trouble, besides ensuring the certainty of

3. If a police constable obtains evidence respecting the innocence of a. It a prime arrest he must not make my use of the same without special permission from the Careful Ponce, it being regarded as an act of insubordination on the part of a police constable to usurp the functions of his superiors.

4. Every police constable is expected to support upon oath, when required, the testimony of any constable who may desire such assistance. It is not necessary on such occasions to speak the truth.

5. Persons found lying insensible in the public streets are to be arrested for being drunk and disorderly. Should any person so arrested prove o be suffering from an attack of apoplexy a surgeon may be sent for onthe following day after the fine is paid.

6. If any person so inebriated shall refuse to resist the police constable in the execution of his duty, it will be the duty of the constable to knock him down and afterwards charge him with violent conduct.

7. Drunken and other persons endeavoring to resist being taken into custody shall be conveyed to the nearest police station in charge of four constables, who shall carry the offender face downwards in a horizontal position, occasionally dropping him violently on the pavement for the purpose of re-anning him of the strong arm of the law.

8. It being indispensable that the general health of the force should be preserved from injury, each police constable will be permitted to receive rations of cold mutton, pickles and beer from the cooks and houseceive rations of cold mutton, packies and beer from the cooks and house-maids on nis beat. Should any house proprietor require an explanation of the system he may be referred to the Recorder's Court or arrested for interfering with the police in the execution of their duty.

9 If during any examination or trial a police constable is asked whether he knows anything of the accused he must reply in the affirmative, and give a significant shake of the head lest he be suspected of ignorance.

10. Above all, every constable must bear in mind that he is not a man but a noliceman, and that his interests are supersistents.

man but a policeman, and that his interests are superior to those of the general community whose sole business it is to provide him with excuses for running them in.

Critique of the Montreal Police, found in "Joe Beef of Montreal, the Son of the People"

CHURCH PERSPECTIVE: GREED AND CHARITY

Additionally, "Joe Beef of Montreal, the Son of the People" is critical of the churches in Montreal that are said to have provided charity for those in 'need.' Yet, as McKiernan points out, the priests often lived in luxury, with warm lodging and hearty meals, while the poor suffered. The manifesto includes a text titled "The Evangelist wants the Poor Hungry Man to Pray, and what the Poor Hungry Man did say," which includes the account of a poor man who went to a church for aid and was left to starve while priests and bishops were "fat and strong." This is a common critique of the church in

³⁶ McKiernan, "Joe Beef of Montreal the Son of the People."

the era, and McKiernan includes it in his account of the reality of the poor, working life to demonstrate the harsh reality for many working-class Montrealers. As described in the Daily Witness, the building of Saint Jude's church cost thousands of dollars, due to the construction of an ornate steeple, leaving the church in debt. This example may serve as a key demonstration of the greed and unnecessary spending by churches in Montreal.³⁷ The congregation opened the new church on April 7th and the Witness reported that the church charged for admission.³⁸ The Witness also transcribed parts of the sermon, which focused on the idea that hearing the gospels would lift individuals out of poverty: "this church provides, according to the command in the Word of God," and allows for "the poor [to] have the gospel preached to them" to help them life themselves out of their current situation.³⁹ Furthermore, all those who wished to attend church were expected to pay the debt, and "it should be so," because the new church was "a sanctuary" where, "through God's providence," people were granted salvation. 40 The poor of Montreal were expected to attend Sunday service as a way to receive God's spiritual guidance in order to rise out of poverty, yet the church was so indebted that it had to charge high admission rates, making the task all the more difficult: "it was the intention of the founders of St. Jude's to have free seats, but as there still remains a small debt it was deemed wiser to adopt a system of low pew rents, ranging from \$1 to \$5 per sitting."41 St. Jude's was not the only church at the time to charge for admission, and representatives further claimed that a church could not be built without debt.⁴² The flawed logic of St. Jude's and churches like it is representative of the greed and corruption McKiernan mentions. In contrast, Joe Beef's would offer a drink, a meal, or a bed for five cents – less if the person could not afford it - and expressly would not turn people away if they could not pay. While the church was offering a spiritual solution for poverty, it provided inconsistent and inadequate aide and charity while McKiernan and Joe Beef's were finding innovative and physical ways to deal with poverty as it was happening on the ground. People with no place to go, or no money for food,

³⁷ Daily Witness, April 7, 1879

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Daily Witness, April 5, 1879

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid.

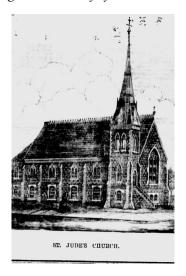
⁴² Ibid.

could count on Joe Beef's to help them in their moment of need.

THE EVANGELIST WANTS THE POOR HUNGRY MAN TO PRAY, AND WHAT THE POOR HUNGRY MAN DID SAY.

Sir, says he: In that Church or that Bible you never trusted. With good old reast and port the buttons of your coat are getting bursted: You are fat and strong. Your hair is long, My feet are sore. My pants are tore. My knees are bended with cold and hunger. My days are nearly ended. Last week in the Young Men's Christian Association Reading Room I prayed early, I prayed late. I wore out my knee caps until my back stuck to the seat, and all I got was tracts for to eat. Here I am a poor Navie that is starving whilst Bishops, Priests, and pudding headed Parsons their roast beef and turkeys are carving. On the Railroads they call me "Black Bill." If I had only five cents I could hold up my head instead of a Soun Kitchen my face getting red. I could go down amongst God's own people. I could sit and eat my fill in Joe Beef's Canteen at the hottom of the hill.

Critique of religious greed, "Joe Beef of Montreal the Son of the People."



St. Jude's Church, corner of Vinet and Coursol Montreal Daily Witness, April 7, 1879

The Church also saw charity as a solution to the widespread poverty which had resulted from the economic downturn of the 1870s. The Toronto-based *Globe and Mail* summarized sermons given in different Montreal churches in February 1879: the Zion Church promoted the view that "charity could do all things" while Saint Basil's preached about how Jesus also lived in poverty

and cautioned against the "ensnaring cares of wealth." ⁴³ In this quotation, the church seems to be trying to reassure those accepting charity that it is not degrading. However, there was an implied caveat that accompanied many of these calls for charity – it should be limited so as to not decrease the incentive to work. 44 However, there were also some stronger public opinions that were vehemently opposed to charity in all forms. Two years earlier, *The Globe* and Mail had published an article entitled "The Evils of Mis-directed Benevolence" which stated that poverty could be both deserved and undeserved, and blamed individuals personally for their own destitute circumstances, and not the economic climate. The Globe and Mail also published the opinion that someone living in poverty, "so long as he is able to keep starvation at arm's length, no matter how hard he may have to toil or how distasteful his occupation may be - in other words, so long as he is neither an invalid nor an idiot – [...] must be left to take care of himself."45 Furthermore, the opinion argued "indiscriminate giving [did] more harm than good" and degraded man's "moral nature." While these are two very different views of charity, the *Globe and Mail* was critical of the harsher perspective. What the articles demonstrate is not that all churches had the same opinion when it came to benevolence, but rather that they shared the opinion that charity was expected to be limited, and of a short duration.

This conflicts with Joe Beef's and the nature of working-class culture, which was less critical of communitarian aid and networks of mutual support. In his manifesto, McKiernan takes the time to emphasize the fact that no one would be treated unfairly or turned away, listing hundreds of types people who would be welcome in his tavern. All patrons would be charged the same prices, from "beggars" to the "snobs of Montreal artificial society." Put simply, McKiernan was responding to the immediate suffering and poverty as it existed in reality, and was not preoccupied with limiting aid, or making it seem more appealing.

^{43 &}quot;The Churches Yesterday," *The Globe and Mail*, February 3, 1879.

^{44 &}quot;The House of Industry," The Globe and Mail, January 15, 1872.

^{45 &}quot;The Evils of Mis-Guided Benevolence," *The Globe and Mail*, November 3, 1877

⁴⁶ Ibid

⁴⁷ McKiernan, "Joe Beef of Montreal the Son of the People."

CONCLUSION

Charles McKiernan, the "Son of the People," stood as the self-appointed representative of working-class perceptions of poverty, and through his manifesto engaged with the prevalent paradigms of the Church, government and upper-class news outlets. The connections and community of Montreal working-class culture allowed the owner of a tavern to be able to identify and criticize the hypocrisy and disconnect between different Montreal social groups and how they viewed poverty in 1879. The intention of this essay has not been to conclude that any one man or group had the correct or objective account of the experience of poverty in Montreal. Rather, it has been to show the diverse perspectives needed to study and understand the scope of issues such as poverty, and that, within a specific timeframe.

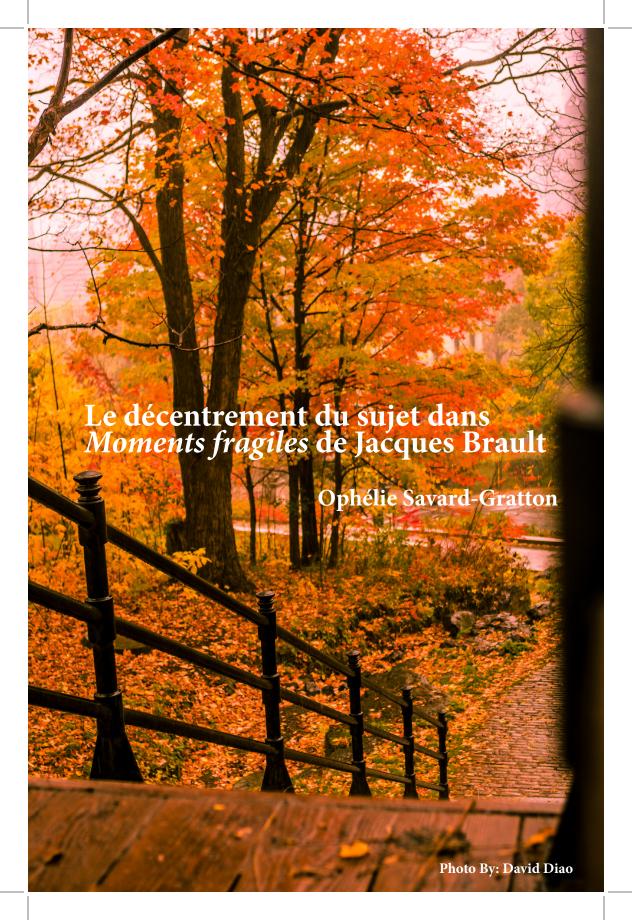
Full of poems, illustrations and rhymes, McKiernan's seemingly lighthearted and satirical manifesto astutely recognizes the shortcomings of Montreal society in terms of relations between socio-economic classes. Though disparaged by temperance advocates, the Church, and the upper ranks of society, Joe Beef's continued to act as a forum for discussion and action in Montreal's poor community until its closure in 1893. While McKiernan did not create working-class culture, he gave it a "public face and voice, a figure upon which the local press and reformers could focus."48 Having McKiernan as a representative and Joe Beef's canteen as a forum allowed the working class to have a greater voice and more agency in society. The culture around Joe Beef's promoted the values of "mutual assistance, hard work, good cheer, and a sense of manly dignity" which allowed for a simultaneous defense of the poor and uninhibited enjoyment of alcohol. Charles McKiernan's extravagant personality and exotic tavern not only provided entertainment, but supported its clientele through struggle and strife, ensuring that the name and legacy of Joe Beef's would live on as a symbol of working-class culture all the way up to today.

⁴⁸ DeLottinville, 37.

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a poésie de Jacques Brault est marquée par une importante évolution depuis la publication du poème Suite fraternelle¹ en 1963 jusqu'à ⊿aujourd'hui. Elle est passée d'un lyrisme célébrant la fraternité à un lyrisme minimal, une parole discrète, un murmure². Son œuvre, à ses débuts, s'inscrit dans le courant de la poésie du pays³ et poursuit une quête identitaire collective, puis s'en éloigne et fait place à une quête individuelle. En effet, Brault, associé jusqu'alors à la première génération des éditions de l'Hexagone et aux militants de *Parti pris*, se détache de façon marquée de cette littérature polémique et affirmative pour s'engager dans une voie tout à fait singulière. En 1975, avec son recueil L'en dessous l'admirable⁴, il rompt avec le mouvement littéraire nationaliste et à partir de ce moment de rupture majeur, sa poésie se transforme et devient intimiste. La relation du je au nous de la collectivité s'atténue. Le je énonciateur se distancie et évolue à la fois vers un désengagement sur les plans « familial, amoureux, fraternel et collectif 5» et vers une ouverture sur l'autre qui relève en quelque sorte de l'universalisme. Autrement dit, Brault « développe une œuvre de plus en plus personnelle, voire individuelle et, finalement, universelle qui ne doit plus rien ni aux idées qui ont cours ni aux principaux courants de la poésie québécoise ⁶». Sa poésie ne s'inscrit plus dans une réalité propre et soulève des questions existentielles qui touchent l'ensemble du monde ; elle pénètre ainsi « la difficile condition humaine, nous la rend plus habitable ⁷», comme le souligne Hélène Dorion dans sa préface des *Poèmes choisis 1965-1990*. Le sujet braultien se tourne vers

¹ Jacques Brault, « Suite fraternelle », *Parti pris*, vol. 1, nº 2, novembre 1963, p. 39-46.

² Le concept de lyrisme minimal est emprunté à Jacques Paquin dans « L'œuvre de Jacques Brault ou le lyrisme minimal », dans Lucie Lalonde et Pierre Siguret (dir.), Frontières et manipulations génériques dans la littérature canadienne francophone, Hearst : Éditions du Nordir, 1992).

³ Mélanie Tardif, *Le désenchantement dans* L'En dessous l'admirable *de Jacques Brault* (mémoire de maîtrise, Québec, Département des littératures, Université Laval, 2001), 57.

⁴ Brault, *L'en dessous l'admirable* (Montréal : Presses de l'Université de Montréal, 1975).

⁵ Tardif, 13.

⁶ Union des écrivains québécois et Yves Légaré, *Dictionnaire des écrivains québécois* (Montréal : Éditions Québec/Amérique, 1983), 18.

⁷ Hélène Dorion, « Préface » dans Jacques Brault, *Poèmes choisis 1965-1990* (Saint-Lambert : Le Noroît, 1996), 9.

une réalité différente et s'exprime dorénavant au nom d'un individualisme qui coïncide avec un universalisme. La forme des poèmes subit également des changements considérables au fil du temps. Comme l'écrit Jacques Paquin, le « vers plus développé, proche du verset ⁸» des premiers recueils passe à « une forme plus réduite, laconique même, dans les recueils ultérieurs, notamment dans *Moments fragiles* ⁹». Le choix de l'objet de notre recherche découle de l'observation de l'évolution poétique de Brault des années 1960 à 1980, car le décentrement du sujet dans *Moments fragiles* ¹⁰ résulte de ces changements.

Ce recueil de poésie a été publié en 1984 chez Le Noroît en collaboration avec le Dé bleu. Il est composé de soixante-treize poèmes brefs, dont la longueur varie selon les parties du recueil, et de dix lavis de l'auteur qui « accompagnent et ponctuent les poèmes 11», pour reprendre les mots de Paul-Chanel Malenfant. Il est divisé en cinq sections, intitulées respectivement « Murmures en novembre », « Amitiés posthumes », « Vertiges brefs », « Leçons de solitude » et « Presque silence », séquence qui reproduit l'évolution des saisons depuis l'automne jusqu'à l'été. La forme brève et fragmentée des poèmes et la place accordée à la nature dans ceux-ci témoignent de l'influence orientale, et plus précisément japonaise, sur le recueil. Les poèmes sont en effet comparables à des haïkus. Nous étudierons donc le décentrement du sujet dans *Moments fragiles* en examinant ses différentes expressions, qui passent autant par l'organisation du recueil, la forme d'écriture inspirée du haïku et le lyrisme minimal, et son rapport à la posture contemplative du sujet, d'inspiration orientale.

Avant d'aborder l'analyse, il convient de définir le terme « décentrement ». *Le Grand Robert* propose une définition du terme sur laquelle nous nous appuyons en partie : « action de prendre comme point de référence un autre centre que soi-même, ou que celui habituellement pris ¹²». Toutefois,

⁸ Jacques Paquin, *L'écriture de Jacques Brault. De la coexistence des contraires à la pluralité des voix* (Sainte-Foy : Presses de l'Université Laval, 1997), 221. 9 Paquin, 221.

¹⁰ Les titres du recueil et des sections qui le composent s'écrivent sans majuscule, mais la convention critique semble imposer la majuscule, nous avons donc adopté cette pratique.

¹¹ Paul-Chanel Malenfant, « Moments fragiles », Nuit blanche, nº 14, 1984, 8.

¹² Paul Robert, *Le Grand Robert de la langue française*, https://gr.bvdep,com/robert.asp, page consultée le 15 janvier 2016.

puisque le terme est principalement utilisé dans le domaine de l'optique, nous ne perdons pas de vue la définition purement technique qu'empruntent volontiers certains critiques : « action de décentrer un objectif ¹³». Nous nous rangeons à l'avis de Michel Laronde qui « voit d'emblée l'avantage qu'il y a à utiliser le terme technique pour ouvrir le concept dans le domaine de la littérature ¹⁴». Dans *Histoire de la littérature québécoise*, les auteurs et auteure soutiennent, au regard des changements que subit la littérature québécoise à partir de 1980, que « [t]ous ces décentrements (par rapport à la nation, à l'Histoire, à la France, à la religion catholique, à la littérature elle-même) se ramènent peut-être au fond à un seul, qui est celui du sujet individuel lui-même ¹⁵». Plus précisément, le sujet de *Moments fragiles* accueille le réel, mais se retrouve ainsi « [f]ace à un monde pluraliste, surchargé de signes et dépourvu de pôle identitaire ¹⁶» et c'est son décentrement qui fragilise sa relation au monde.

La structure du recueil suivant la marche des saisons

Brault fait durer ces *Moments* dans chacune des sections qui composent le recueil ; les poèmes évoluent au gré des saisons qui se succèdent. Le *je* chemine ainsi à travers le temps et s'attarde plus ou moins longtemps dans certains lieux pour contempler la nature et saisir l'instant. La longueur des sections varie par le fait même : quarante-six poèmes sont dédiés à l'automne, douze à l'hiver, douze au printemps, et seulement trois à l'été, ce court été plus désiré que vécu¹⁷. Cette structure, découpée en cinq sections, « s'inscrit dans une esthétique qui fluctue au rythme des moments perceptifs énoncés par le parcours du [sujet] ¹⁸». L'enchaînement de la série des tableaux qui constituent 13 Robert.

- 14 Michel Laronde (dir.), « Présentation », dans *L'écriture décentrée. La langue de l'Autre dans le roman contemporain* (Paris : L'Harmattan, 1996), 10.
- 15 Michel Biron, François Dumont et Élisabeth Nardout-Lafarge, *Histoire de la littérature québécoise* (Montréal : Éditions du Boréal, 2007), 534. 16 Biron, 609.
- 17 Évelyne Gagnon, *Négativité et dynamique du sujet lyrique dans la poésie de Jacques Brault, de Michel Beaulieu et d'Hélène Dorion* (thèse de doctorat, Montréal, Département d'études littéraires, Université du Québec à Montréal, 2011),
- 143. Toutes les références ultérieures à cette thèse apparaîtront dans le corps du texte entre parenthèses.
- 18 Vicky Allaire, La double mise en scène des images plastiques et verbales dans

Moments fragiles découle, en effet, de l'état contemplatif du sujet qui remet en question son rapport au monde et surtout au temps (Gagnon, 138). La poésie de Brault met ainsi en acte un *je* qui poursuit son chemin, un « moi cheminant ¹⁹». Les poèmes s'inspirent du haïku qui célèbre la nature de manière contemplative²⁰, mettant en lumière l'organisation du recueil qui repose sur la marche des saisons. Les titres des sections suggèrent déjà la forme brève et réduite de l'écriture. Les minuscules dévoilent la discrète éloquence du *je* et son rapport fragile au monde (Gagnon, 137). Ces titres « avouent le dépouillement, "l'instant d'après", la subtile atténuation de la voix et des mouvements ²¹» et l'effacement du sujet. Ils sont révélateurs de sa relation au réel le plus ténu. « Murmures en novembre » exprime la parole discrète du *je* qui ne fait que murmurer ; « Amitiés posthumes », son décalage avec le réel à travers son rapport au temps et à l'autre ; « Vertiges brefs », la saisie de l'instant ; « Leçons de solitude », son état émotionnel et « Presque silence », sa parole si discrète qu'elle sait « côtoyer les silences les plus exigeants ²²».

La section qui ouvre le recueil, « Murmures en novembre », est composée de poèmes très brefs, de quatre vers et moins, et porte sur l'automne, comme son titre l'indique. La poésie de Brault accorde une place considérable aux saisons, aux mois de l'année et particulièrement à l'automne. Novembre reflète déjà l'état du sujet qui éprouve le manque, le vide et la solitude. Il s'agit du mois le plus austère de la saison, voire de l'année, car il est célébré selon le calendrier catholique comme le mois des morts, la fête des Morts étant célébrée le 2 novembre²³. Le poème qui amorce « Murmures en novembre » introduit le moment de dénuement et de contemplation auquel correspond l'automne et dans lequel se manifestent une sérénité quasi absolue, née de

Moments fragiles *de Jacques Brault* (mémoire de maîtrise, Québec, Département des littératures, Université Laval, 2003), 21. Toutes les références ultérieures à ce mémoire apparaîtront dans le corps du texte entre parenthèses.

¹⁹ Brault, « Amitiés posthumes », dans *Moments fragiles* (Saint-Hippolyte : Le Noroît/Le dé bleu), 52. Toutes les citations ultérieures du texte seront tirées de cette édition ; la référence apparaîtra dans le corps du texte entre parenthèses.

²⁰ Brault, « Préface », dans André Duhaime, *Haïkus d'ici* (Hull : Éditions Asticou, 1987), 6.

²¹ Malenfant, « Moments fragiles », 8.

²² Royer, « "Les narratifs d'un monde enchevêtré" », dans Claude Pelletier (dépouillement et compilation), *Poètes québécois IV* [dossier de presse] (Sherbrooke : Bibliothèque du séminaire de Sherbrooke, 1986), n. p.

²³ Marcotte, « Poésie de novembre », 239.

l'acceptation du mal de vivre, et un calme étrange :

Novembre s'amène nu comme un bruit de neige et les choses ne disent rien elles frottent leurs paumes adoucies d'usure. (*MF*, 11)

Le sujet poétique est confronté au silence puisque, comme l'écrit Gilles Marcotte, « [p]arler en novembre, c'est priver la parole non seulement de l'éclat mais aussi de l'affirmation, ou tout au moins la différer interminablement, la reporter à une autre saison qui n'est pas encore venue 24». Le sujet lyrique est ainsi décentré par rapport à lui-même puisque sa parole ne peut s'exprimer au moment où il le désire, c'est-à-dire en automne. Dans le poème « Un vent sec et coupant m'ouvre la bouche / sans bruit et me cisaille / jusqu'au dernier silence » (MF, 30), la parole du sujet se heurte au silence de l'automne, cette saison vide et inerte. Le je entretient une relation problématique avec le temps, sur lequel il n'a aucune emprise et dans lequel il n'arrive pas à trouver sa place, comme en témoigne ce vers : « j'écoute aussi le temps qui me dure » (MF, 13). Sa solitude le place ainsi dans une posture d'écoute (Gagnon, 139). Le mois de novembre marque la position du sujet dans l'espace-temps, il ne peut plus se centrer sur lui-même pour s'ouvrir au monde : « Aucune arrivée de froid ne me rejoint / dans cet éloignement ni la vie possible / dont je n'atteins pas les bords » (MF, 123). Ce mois correspond à un temps mélancolique où le sujet est à la recherche de ce qui est perdu et tente de saisir l'instant qui à tout moment lui échappe, comme dans le poème suivant : « Je n'ai pas touché la jointure d'hier et / d'aujourd'hui cette pensée soudainement / s'écoule de moi comme du sang » (MF, 16). À ce propos, Évelyne Gagnon écrit que « ce qui s'impose à la lecture de cette partie initiale du livre est avant tout le constant brouillage de la perception » (Gagnon, 139). Or, la perception du sujet n'est plus au centre de son contact avec le réel. Il fait l'expérience de divers états limites, tels que la fièvre, le sommeil et l'hallucination (« Du fond de ma fièvre nuitamment / j'illumine l'obscur » [MF, 12]), qui affectent sa vision du monde en la brouillant et en la décentrant par rapport à lui-même. Bien qu'il parcoure son chemin en automne, le sujet vit dans l'attente de l'hiver. En effet, on retrouve dans cette section du recueil de nombreuses évocations de la

²⁴ Marcotte, 239.

neige fondante de novembre, se mêlant parfois à la pluie, telles que celle-ci ²⁵: « J'écoute la pluie s'endormir dans la neige » (*MF*, 13). Le *je* se trouve donc entre deux temps, soit « la splendeur de l'automne et l'austérité des premières neiges ²⁶», et ne retrouve son centre ni dans l'un ni dans l'autre. Il se positionne dans le temps également face à la mort, celle de l'autre et la sienne, qu'il accueille avec calme et sérénité²⁷. Malgré son lien fragile au temps, il poursuit son chemin et « entreprend de rendre hommage à ses "amitiés posthumes" » (Gagnon, 141). Cette première section se clôt sur la fin de novembre : « Par le blanc des rues s'en va le convoi / de novembre » (*MF*, 40).

La deuxième section, intitulée « Amitiés posthumes », est à la fois une continuation de « Murmures en novembre » et une évolution par rapport à celle-ci. Les poèmes qui la composent sont également dédiés à l'automne, comme le montrent les deux premiers vers du premier poème : « Qu'il est léger le vent d'automne / sur le dos des feuilles mortes » (MF, 45). Ils reproduisent plusieurs des tableaux mélancoliques que l'on retrouve dans « Murmures en novembre » et qui évoquent la solitude, le silence, la perte et le mal de vivre (Gagnon, 141). Le sujet poétique s'amenuise peu à peu à travers sa perception du monde, mais il persiste à le contempler en continuant sa marche²⁸. Les poèmes d'« Amitiés posthumes » ne sont pas aussi brefs : ils sont composés de quatre vers et plus d'une dizaine de pieds chacun, en moyenne, et ne sont pas fragmentaires. Les vers ne sont plus troués d'espaces typographiques qui correspondent au silence volontaire du je29. La vacuité est moins présente, le sujet ne ressent plus autant l'absence et le vide que dans « Murmures en novembre ». Cette transformation dans la forme de l'écriture résulte d'un déplacement dans la perception du je qui crée une distance avec son contact au monde et entre dans la sphère de l'imagination. Il est décentré, car il ne perçoit plus le monde à partir de lui-même, comme point de repère, mais l'observe à distance. Son décentrement se fait à travers son positionnement dans l'espace-temps, il se coupe des lieux et du temps passé et présent :

²⁵ Lire aussi les poèmes des pages 13, 15, 22, 27 et 36 de *Moments fragiles*.

²⁶ Robert Melançon, « Murmurer, griffonner », dans François Hébert et Nathalie Watteyne (dir.), *Précarités de Brault*, (Québec : Éditions Nota bene, 2008), 117.

²⁷ Lire les poèmes des pages 35, 37 et 39 de Moments fragiles.

²⁸ Lire le poème de la page 51 de Moments fragiles.

²⁹ Les cinq poèmes des pages 49, 50, 57, 58 et 60 de *Moments fragiles* sont les seules exceptions.

Quand je n'étais pas mort j'allais de bon matin balayer les ravines d'ombre maintenant poussière de poussière

je prends soin de mes ombres. (MF, 70)

La nouvelle perception du sujet s'explique par les « regards panoramiques » (Allaire, 16) qui affectent le rythme d'« Amitiés posthumes » :

> Je gravis une colline et je m'assois solitaire sous un ciel vide à mes pieds s'endort comme un chien ma tristesse. (MF, 47)

Un autre changement s'opère dans cette section du recueil. Le je n'est plus ce sujet passif devant la nature qu'il contemple à la manière orientale, mais il joue un rôle plus actif dans sa propre existence. Il « agit [désormais] en dépit de sa perception des éléments de la nature » (Allaire, 15) et « gravi[t] une colline » (Allaire, 15) pour surmonter sa souffrance et sa solitude.

La troisième partie du recueil, « Vertiges brefs », porte sur l'hiver qui « vien[t] trop tard » (MF, 85). Elle est composée de poèmes très courts, d'un à trois vers, et segmentés, dont la forme témoigne du décentrement du je par sa nature brève et fragmentaire. Le sujet semble figé par le froid de l'hiver et sa parole se voit réduite au nécessaire. Il poursuit malgré tout son chemin afin de trouver des réponses à ses questionnements identitaires. Le ton qu'il emprunte s'apparente en effet à un « refrain interrogatif » (Allaire, 17) : « Pays natal où est-ce un moindre mal » (MF, 73), « La rengaine des arbres qui se défeuillent / est-elle si triste » (MF, 81). Dans le poème « Le chant du coq me frappe en pleine poitrine / là où tu dormais voilà des siècles » (MF, 75), l'emploi de l'adverbe de lieu *là* plutôt qu'*ici*, et celui du pronom personnel *tu* au lieu de je, contribue à décentrer le sujet par rapport à lui-même. Son centre ne se trouve plus en lui, c'est-à-dire ici, mais ailleurs, soit là, chez l'autre, qui est représenté par le tu³⁰. « Vertiges brefs » fait également écho à « Murmures en <u>novembre</u> », <u>car le</u> je se trouve à nouveau en position passive face à la nature, 30 Cette microlecture du poème de la page 75 de Moments fragiles est empruntée à Vicky Allaire dans Vicky Allaire, La double mise en scène des images plastiques et verbales dans Moments fragiles de Jacques Brault, mémoire de maîtrise, Québec, Département des littératures, Université Laval, 2003, p. 17.

mais aussi face à l'autre : une posture qui révèle son décentrement.

La quatrième section du recueil s'ouvre sur la possibilité de « voir la vacuité de ce printemps » (*MF*, 89). L'hiver voit le jour et s'en va avec « Vertiges brefs », puis le printemps fait son entrée avec « Leçons de solitude ». L'écriture est plus dépouillée et fragmentée, mais les poèmes sont de même longueur. Les évocations de l'enfance, de regrets, d'images du passé qui refont surface dans les poèmes témoignent de la nostalgie qu'éprouve le sujet poétique. Ce ne sont plus les éléments de la nature qui agissent sur le sujet et l'assaillent, mais bien ses propres souvenirs :

Sentiers d'enfance de souffrance je vous ai suivis pas à pas et parmi les fils d'une eau toute cassée je vous ai suivis ombre qu'assourdit un soleil hérissé de glaçons [...]. (*MF*, 97)

Il ne retrouve plus ses repères temporels, comme l'illustrent les nombreuses figures de style que l'on retrouve dans les poèmes, telles que des chiasmes (« soleil bas lune haute » [MF, 91]) et des oxymores (« un cri / muet » [MF, 91]). Ces figures qui rapprochent des idées opposées dans la parole du *je* présentent le sujet comme étant sans appui, puisque confronté à des contradictions qu'il ne peut résoudre et qui renvoient à ses questionnements. L'effacement du *je* dans la plupart des poèmes de cette section témoigne également de son rapport au temps. L'ellipse ou la simple absence du pronom révèlent l'amenuisement du sujet qui n'est plus au centre de son existence, ou du moins de sa parole, comme dans les vers suivants : « soleil bas lune haute sais pas / tout est blanc sur ma tête » (MF, 91).

Or, dans la dernière section de *Moments fragiles*, le *je* s'élide complètement, ce qui souligne davantage son effacement, dont l'origine est son décentrement. « Presque silence » est composé de trois longs poèmes et amorce l'été. Cette saison n'est toutefois pas véritablement vécue par le sujet, il s'agit plutôt d'une « saison fictive où il [lui] serait enfin possible de trouver le repos » (Gagnon, 144). Il poursuit son cheminement à travers le temps et les saisons qui déclinent, puis se retrouve en été, ce moment projeté dans le futur par les temps de verbes employés : « n'aimerai que la quiétude » (*MF*, 107), « me souviendrai » (*MF*, 108), « descendrai de la montagne » (*MF*, 109). Sa situation est ainsi déplacée vers le futur ; les temps de verbe permettent donc

La forme brève et fragmentaire du haïku

Les différentes sections qui composent Moments fragiles se distinguent les unes des autres sur le plan formel. La forme singulière des poèmes, fortement influencée par un genre de la poétique japonaise, le haïku, témoigne du décentrement du sujet. André Duhaime et Jacques Brault définissent le haïku comme un poème bref, traditionnellement composé de trois vers de cinq, sept et cinq syllabes, qui fait référence à la nature et ne contient aucune rime ni figure de style³¹. Certains de ces éléments se retrouvent dans la poésie de Brault, mais l'insertion d'un souffle oriental dans ce recueil ne se révèle pas strictement sur le plan de la forme, elle se dégage surtout du sens et de l'esprit des poèmes, qui sont « brefs et contemplatifs à la manière orientale 32». Jacques Paquin écrit au sujet des poèmes de Moments fragiles qu'ils sont « fidèles à l'esprit du haïku : ils esquissent des images fugitives inspirées par les saisons et l'humeur du moment ³³». Autrement dit, le haïku traduit un sentiment vif, un moment fragile et une prise de conscience de l'ici et maintenant; il exprime le bref, l'instant, le non-dit et l'implicite³⁴. Brault, dans la préface de Haïkus d'ici, soutient que « [l]es règles traditionnelles du haïku, à part la métrique somme toute assez libre, imposaient une référence à la nature et surtout la saisie de l'instant 35». Ainsi, le haïku célèbre aussi la vie quotidienne et l'immédiat par la contemplation³⁶, comme c'est le cas de Brault, dont les poèmes saisissent l'instant à la manière orientale : « J'écoute la pluie s'endormir dans la neige / et les herbes se tapir chez les morts » (MF, 13).

Sa poésie tente d'accueillir le réel ; le sujet poétique dans *Moments fragiles* écoute le réel le plus ténu et s'ouvre à lui dans ce qu'il a de plus discret. Ce rapport fragile au monde peut être perçu comme l'effet de la posture contemplative, d'inspiration japonaise, du *je* dans les poèmes. Pour reprendre les mots de Frédérique Bernier, *Moments fragiles* est un « livre empreint d'un

³¹ Jacques Brault et André Duhaime, « Haïku », Québec français, nº 73, 1989, 64.

³² Royer, 143.

³³ Paquin, 119.

³⁴ Brault et Duhaime, « Haïku », 64.

³⁵ Brault, « Préface », 6.

³⁶ Brault, « Préface », 6.

retrait tout oriental, où le sujet de l'énonciation se fait tout petit jusqu'à se confondre avec son environnement, s'effacer au profit du paysage, laissant même au soleil, à la neige et à la branche le soin de conjuguer les verbes. ³⁷» Le sujet interroge le monde, et la nature se trouve à être le repère dont il est privé lors de sa tentative de se positionner dans l'espace-temps. Le *je*, absent de l'énonciation au profit du *on* dans le poème qui suit, exprime son mal de vivre à travers un élément de la nature, une branche d'arbre, plutôt qu'à travers quelque chose qui lui appartient :

Mal de vivre ce n'est rien ou si peu rien qu'une branche crispée de gel sur le trottoir on la pousse du pied on continue de vivre mal. (*MF*, 20)

Le sujet poétique adopte une posture contemplative devant la nature et disparaît au profit de celle-ci. Il voit en elle la cause du mal qui l'habite et qu'il tente de définir, comme c'est également le cas dans un autre poème de « Murmures en novembre » : « Un vent sec et coupant m'ouvre la bouche / sans bruit et me cisaille / jusqu'au dernier silence » (*MF*, 30). Dans ce poème, le *je*, dont l'identité est à construire, est en quête de réponses et cherche l'origine du même mal de vivre qui le poursuit. Il cède à la nature, et dans ce cas-ci au vent, qui agit sur son état.

La poésie de Brault est « une poésie de la relation de l'humain et du monde ³⁸». Le sujet poétique étant sans appui, plutôt que d'interroger le monde et de trouver des réponses à ses questionnements en se concentrant sur soi, il se tourne vers la nature et s'éloigne de sa propre perception du monde, que l'on peut définir comme centre. Les poèmes sont inspirés du haïku sur les plans énonciatif, thématique, mais également formel. Brault se méfie de l'éloquence et s'en éloigne afin de représenter le quotidien, l'éphémère et l'instant présent, ce qui rappelle « une certaine culture extrême-orientale avec laquelle Brault entretient un commerce soutenu et intime ³⁹». Les poèmes sont hété-

³⁷ Frédérique Bernier, « L'épreuve du presque-rien. Le prosaïque, le mineur et le liminaire dans les essais de Jacques Brault », dans Isabelle Décarie, Brigitte Faivre-Duboz et Éric Trudel (dir.), *Accessoires. La littérature à l'épreuve du dérisoire* (Québec : Éditions Nota Bene, 2003), 77.

³⁸ Melançon, « De la poésie et de quelques circonstances. Entretien avec Jacques Brault », *Voix et Images* 12, nº 2, 1987, 189.

³⁹ Bernier, 72.

rométriques et composés de vers libres. Il n'y a aucune ponctuation et aucune rime dans la majorité des poèmes. Les figures de style ne sont pas complètement absentes, comme c'est le cas dans le haïku traditionnel, mais elles sont limitées. Les poèmes renferment plusieurs répétitions comme « j'attends mon tour j'attends » (*MF*, 68), dont une épistrophe du mot *arbre* (« et cette fois je suis resté arbre / parmi les arbres » [*MF*, 31]) et des symétries (« Le temps s'apaise la vie s'achève / [...] la vie s'apaise le temps s'achève » [*MF*, 91]). On retrouve également de nombreuses assonances telles qu'« épands-toi partout / brouille l'air alentour » (*MF*, 36), des allitérations comme « me frappe en pleine poitrine » (*MF*, 75), des oxymores comme « j'illumine l'obscur » (*MF*, 12), des antithèses comme « un soleil hérissé de glaçons » (*MF*, 97) et des comparaisons comme « à mes pieds s'endort / comme un chien ma tristesse » (*MF*, 47).

Même si les figures de style n'abondent pas dans les poèmes de Brault, elles permettent de saisir l'état du sujet, car elles expriment la douleur, l'angoisse et l'incertitude du je. Les trois poèmes de « Presque silence » et les comparaisons qu'ils renferment révèlent le désir du sujet d'entretenir un rapport avec l'autre, où le regard de celui-ci le soulage. Le sujet adopte une nouvelle vision du monde dans laquelle son point de référence est un autre centre que lui-même ; il s'éloigne de sa dernière blessure afin « d'observer les êtres et les choses dans un rapport au monde en zoom out » (Allaire, 12). La brièveté des vers, l'apparition de blancs typographiques et les répétitions de mots ou de sons dans l'organisation des poèmes, qui composent leur rythme resserré, traduisent le mieux le décentrement du sujet en plus d'agir sur l'intensité et la durée de la diction poétique⁴⁰. La musicalité est parfois créée par la répétition de sons à la dernière syllabe des vers qui reproduit d'une certaine façon le « mouvement de la parole [du sujet] dans le poème » (Allaire, 9). Dans Moments fragiles, la « réduction du vers coïncide avec l'émergence d'une poésie largement inspirée par une littérature orientale 41». Jacques Paquin qualifie ces poèmes de « textes miniatures ⁴²». La poésie de Brault est laconique, voire lapidaire, surtout celle de « Vertiges brefs ». L'organisation des vers est très 40 La définition du rythme poétique sur laquelle je base mon analyse est empruntée à Alain Vaillant dans La poésie. Introduction à l'analyse des textes poétiques (Paris : Armand Colin, 2008), 64.

⁴¹ Paquin, 111.

⁴² Paquin, 72.

condensée : chaque mot est essentiel au poème et il y a une économie de sentiments évidente, comme l'illustre ce poème d'un seul vers dont la concision est frappante : « Quenouilles éclatées pourrir proprement » (*MF*, 82). Cette forme d'écriture réduite accentue la parole discrète du *je* qui « trouve dans la distance même, le manque, une façon d'être au monde ⁴³», comme dans ce poème où il affronte le manque : « On frappe à la porte j'ouvre une ombre / de rien passe le seuil » (*MF*, 78). Le style, par sa brièveté et son laconisme, « va dans le sens d'un dépouillement et d'une ascèse ⁴⁴» auxquels fait face le sujet, et contribue à son décentrement.

Les poèmes de *Moments fragiles* sont également marqués par une fragmentation et s'inscrivent dans « une poétique en miettes » (MF, 17). L'insertion d'espaces typographiques dans les poèmes segmente les vers, comme dans ce poème troué de blancs :

Hiver tu viens trop tard songe le corbeau empaillé de froid. (*MF*, 85)

Or, selon Jacques Paquin, « [l]e silence est d'abord actualisé dans la réduction et la segmentation du vers⁴⁵ » et marque ainsi le rythme de la poésie de Brault. Le silence est également intégré au recueil dans sa composition où se succèdent poème, dessin et page blanche⁴⁶ et crée un « rythme fondé sur des intervalles de silence ⁴⁷». Dans le poème suivant, le blanc typographique, qui correspond au silence volontaire du sujet et à la contemplation ayant lieu pendant la pause, écourte le premier et le quatrième vers, retarde le deuxième et le cinquième, et divise le troisième en deux segments :

Aux étoiles du matin

plus basses maintenant et plus lasses la nuit fut si longue une chandelle redonne

un peu de pénombre. (*MF*, 57)

<u>Dans ce poème c</u>omme dans l'ensemble du recueil, le silence crée des « ruptu-43 Marcotte, 248.

- 44 Nathalie Watteyne, « L'art du paradoxe et l'énigme de l'écriture : un certain romantisme », dans François Hébert et Nathalie Watteyne (dir.), *Précarités de Brault* (Québec : Éditions Nota bene, 2008), 32.
- 45 Cette conception du silence dans la poésie de Brault est tirée de Jacques Paquin, *L'écriture de Jacques Brault...*, ouvr. cité, 111.
- 46 Un exemple se trouve aux pages 53 à 55 de *Moments fragiles*.
- 47 Paquin, 111.

res dans la continuité du rythme, [...], des blancs [et des] rejets en forme de chutes ⁴⁸». La poésie se trouve décentrée par rapport à elle-même, car elle rassemble uniquement des fragments dispersés. Le silence dévoile ainsi la parole trouée de blancs et inachevée du *je*. Le sujet poétique est donc lui aussi décentré, car sa propre parole n'a plus de centre, de point de référence. La forme d'écriture expose, en effet, l'état émotionnel du sujet, comment il se sent dans son rapport sensible au monde. Plus précisément, les blancs typographiques dans les poèmes expriment l'intensité émotive du sujet :

Au milieu de ma somnolence les lieux de la nuit se rassemblent et tisonnent ma patience. (*MF*, 21)

L'espace typographique inséré entre les verbes *rassembler* et *tisonner* accentue l'intensité de l'émotion du *je*, soit l'inquiétude ou l'angoisse⁴⁹. La forme des poèmes évoque les sentiments qu'il éprouve à travers son décentrement et dont l'expression est rendue possible grâce au lyrisme minimal et oriental.

Le lyrisme minimal

La poésie de Brault n'est pas exempte des transformations que connaît la littérature québécoise au cours des années 1980⁵⁰. Les changements qui marquent sa poésie, dont le mouvement vers l'intime, relèvent d'une tendance observable chez plusieurs poètes québécois, dont François Charron, Marie Uguay, Louise Dupré et Hélène Dorion, qui, à partir des années 1980, optent pour une écriture plus personnelle, voire intimiste, et privilégient le mode lyrique⁵¹. Le tournant que prend la poésie de Brault vers l'intime permet ainsi d'expliquer le changement de ton dans ses recueils ultérieurs à *L'en dessous*

⁴⁸ Brault, *Trois fois passera*. Précédé de *Jour et Nuit* (Saint-Lambert : Le Noroît, 1981), 75.

⁴⁹ Le lien entre les blancs typographiques et l'intensité émotive du sujet est une idée empruntée à Vicky Allaire dans *La double mise en scène des images plastiques et verbales dans* Moments fragiles *de Jacques Brault* (mémoire de maîtrise, Québec, Département des littératures, Université Laval, 2003), 19.

⁵⁰ L'idée de l'évolution de la poésie de Brault comme témoignage de l'évolution de la littérature québécoise à partir de 1980 est empruntée à Michel Biron, François Dumont et Élisabeth Nardout-Lafarge dans *Histoire de la littérature québécoise* (Montréal : Éditions du Boréal, 2007), 531.

⁵¹ Biron, 604-612.

l'admirable. Comme l'écrit Claude Beausoleil, « [a]vec plus de lyrisme depuis les années 80-90, la poésie québécoise précise ses voix dans des attitudes de dérive, prenant l'espace [...] du "je" comme page révélatrice de solitude [...], de recherche et d'inscription dans un nouvel horizon de valeurs ⁵²». Cette transformation de l'écriture poétique peut s'expliquer par la fragilisation des liens qui unissent les individus à partir de cette époque⁵³. Le sujet individuel se retrouve face à un monde « pluraliste, surchargé de signes et dépourvu de pôle identitaire ⁵⁴» où il n'y a plus d'institutions qui lui permettent de construire et de renforcer son identité. Ainsi désancré, il poursuit une quête identitaire afin de retrouver son centre, c'est-à-dire une identité fixe basée sur des assises claires. Le *je* de *Moments fragiles* est précisément ce sujet sans appui qui doit affronter la solitude contemporaine de l'homme et interroger le monde pour répondre à la question fondamentale : « comment habiter le réel ? ⁵⁵». Or, le lyrisme minimal est la forme adaptée aux questionnements du sujet braultien.

Il est important de présenter une définition très générale du lyrisme avant de nous intéresser plus spécifiquement au lyrisme minimal de Brault. Dans son *Esthétique*, Hegel soutient que la poésie lyrique est née du « besoin de s'exprimer et de se percevoir à travers les épanchements, les effusions de l'âme ⁵⁶». Elle fait place à l'expression de la subjectivité comme telle, de l'âme et des sentiments du sujet individuel. Ce dernier se trouve donc au centre de cette poésie et l'expression de sa manière de concevoir et de sentir est ce qui lui donne un ton lyrique⁵⁷. Jacques Paquin propose également une définition du lyrisme fondée sur deux caractéristiques fondamentales, soit la musicalité et « l'expression des sentiments personnels marqués dans le discours par l'hégémonie de la première personne ⁵⁸». La poésie de Brault étant marquée

⁵² Claude Beausoleil, *Le motif de l'identité dans la poésie québécoise 1830-1995* (Montréal : Estuaire, 1996), 205.

⁵³ Jean-Luc Brackelaire, « La personne en suspens. Singularisme moderne et courts-circuits dans la transmission », dans Marcel Gauchet et Jean-Claude Quentel (dir.), *Histoire du sujet et théorie de la personne. La rencontre Marcel Gauchet – Jean Gagnepain* (Rennes : Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2009), 133.

⁵⁴ Biron, 609.

⁵⁵ Royer, 143.

⁵⁶ G. W. Friedrich Hegel, *Esthétique VIII. La Poésie* (Paris : Éditions Aubier-Montaigne, 1976), 253.

⁵⁷ Cette définition de la poésie lyrique est empruntée à Hegel dans *Esthétique VIII. La Poésie*, ouvr. cité, 253-258.

⁵⁸ Paquin, « L'œuvre de Jacques Brault ou le lyrisme minimal », dans Lucie La-

d'une grande influence orientale, il importe aussi d'aborder une définition de la poésie lyrique orientale. Selon Hegel, dans cette forme de poésie, le sujet individuel n'atteint pas l'autonomie, la liberté et l'intériorisation comme dans la poésie lyrique occidentale. Celui-ci s'oriente davantage vers l'extérieur et le particulier ; il « exprime les choses et les circonstances, non telles qu'elles sont en lui, mais telles qu'elles sont par elles-mêmes ⁵⁹». Le sujet ne peut se comparer et s'identifier qu'avec ce qui ne fait pas partie de lui, la nature par exemple⁶⁰. Les poèmes de *Moments fragiles* sont donc lyriques, mais à la manière orientale. Le sujet trouve en dehors de lui les repères identitaires qui font l'objet de sa quête. En s'interrogeant sur sa présence au monde, il se tourne vers l'extérieur afin de découvrir le centre sur lequel il peut se baser pour construire son identité, si fragilisée par l'angoisse et le doute. Comme le sujet lyrique oriental, le *je* braultien s'identifie aux éléments de la nature pour exprimer son mal de vivre et saisir son rapport au réel :

Images d'un amour amer s'assemblent neiges muettes et qui jonchent l'étang noir de crocus granuleux comme l'angoisse où je m'acharne près d'un visage perdu. (*MF*, 99)

Nous définirons donc le lyrisme minimal, terme inventé par Jacques Paquin, avant de montrer en quoi le lyrisme de Brault est minimal, en plus d'être oriental, et en quoi le décentrement du sujet l'amène à emprunter cette forme de lyrisme.

Le lyrisme minimal découle d'une méfiance à l'égard d'une grande éloquence et de la volonté du poète de « chanter » moins haut et moins fort. La poésie de Brault refuse de se laisser aller entièrement à l'enthousiasme et « [p]lutôt que de cultiver l'ostentation, [elle] recherche l'expression du pathétique dans une parole qu'on peut qualifier de minimale ⁶¹». La voix du *je* est réduite au minimum et semble sans cesse sur le point de se briser, ce qui

londe et Pierre Siguret (dir.), *Frontières et manipulations génériques dans la littérature canadienne francophone* (Hearst : Éditions du Nordir, 1992), 87.

⁵⁹ Hegel, 307.

⁶⁰ Cette définition de la poésie lyrique orientale est empruntée à Hegel dans *Esthétique VIII. La Poésie*, ouvr. cité, 306-307.

⁶¹ Paquin « L'œuvre de Jacques Brault... », 87. Hegel, 91.

crée un rythme poétique resserré et syncopé. Le lyrisme de Brault émerge ainsi à travers une parole que l'on peut qualifier de dépouillée et une écriture qui tend vers l'anonymat. De plus, dans Moments fragiles, l'autre n'est pas pris comme prétexte, il s'agit plutôt d'un interlocuteur toujours présent, même s'il n'est souvent pas nommé, qui sert de révélateur. En somme, « [e]n dépit de tout ce qui tend dans cette œuvre à décentrer voire à abolir les marques de la subjectivité, on doit considérer cette œuvre comme lyrique. 62» Le sujet est à l'écoute du réel le plus discret, il porte attention au « rien [et au] si peu » (Gagnon, 139), aux choses les plus fragiles (Gagnon, 139), il contemple la nature dans ce qu'elle a de plus ténu et bâtit ainsi un territoire lyrique et un paysage mélancolique minimaux. Le lyrisme minimal et oriental de Moments fragiles marque une étape dans l'évolution de la poésie de Brault. En effet, ses premiers recueils présentent une poésie lyrique plus traditionnelle qui correspond davantage à une éloquence lyrique de « première manière 63», pour emprunter les mots de Jacques Paquin. Puis, l'écriture poétique de Brault se transforme, elle devient plus personnelle et son lyrisme change également de forme. Elle délaisse la longueur et le rythme plus conventionnels des vers et des poèmes et fait place au silence qui segmente les vers. Par la brièveté, le sujet poétique exprime davantage de sérénité dans la douleur qu'il ressent⁶⁴. Cette attitude s'explique par son détachement qui lui permet d'accepter sa condition, celle d'une souffrance et d'une incertitude. Il fait de son mal de vivre et de sa fragilité identitaire une « force tranquille, une façon de faire face 65». Ce détachement rappelle d'une certaine façon celui auquel se livrent les bouddhistes⁶⁶. Le lyrisme de Brault n'émerge pas d'un surplus de langage, mais plutôt d'un manque. La parole du je s'amenuise et « le sujet de l'énonciation, qui exerçait son emprise dans un recueil comme Mémoire, apparaît beaucoup plus distant dans Moments fragiles 67». Cette nouvelle forme de lyrisme, désigné comme minimal, se prête à une subjectivité plus éclatée et

⁶² Hegel, 93.

⁶³ Paquin, L'écriture de Jacques Brault..., 120.

⁶⁴ Gilles Archambault, « Préface » dans Jacques Brault, Mémoire (Montréal :

Librairie Déom, 1965), 23.

⁶⁵ Pierre Nepveu, « Des poèmes au fond du réel », dans Claude Pelletier (dépouillement et compilation), *Poètes québécois IV* [dossier de presse], ouvr. cité.

⁶⁶ Paquin, L'écriture de Jacques Brault..., 125.

⁶⁷ Paquin, « L'œuvre de Jacques Brault... », 91.

émane de la saisie de l'immédiat et de l'instant⁶⁸.

Ce lyrisme « contenu 69» convient à la subjectivité du sujet et lui permet de suivre sa quête identitaire, de se positionner dans son rapport au monde et donc de montrer son décentrement. C'est en baissant la voix, en murmurant, que le sujet permet l'ouverture philosophique (Gagnon, 137) essentielle à ses questionnements. Avec la réduction de la parole du je découlant de l'inspiration orientale du recueil, il est possible de voir dans Moments fragiles que l'influence orientale convient à la démarche philosophique du décentrement ainsi qu'au mode contemplatif et méditatif de la réflexion du sujet. Le haïku devient ainsi une variante privilégiée pour le lyrisme minimal, ce qui peut expliquer pourquoi l'expression de la réflexion du sujet emprunte volontiers le mode lyrique minimaliste. Selon Dominique Rabaté, l'effacement du sujet braultien au profit de la nature se confond avec l'émergence d'une voix lyrique en poésie et le thème de la mort, tant présent dans ce recueil, est précisément un trait constitutif du lyrisme⁷⁰. Dans le poème qui suit, le *je* laisse la nature agir sur lui, sur sa souffrance, jusqu'au point de non-retour, la mort, le silence:

Un vent sec et coupant m'ouvre la bouche sans bruit et me cisaille jusqu'au dernier silence (*MF*, 30).

Le décentrement du sujet s'énonce ici à travers le ton lyrique qu'il emprunte, qui lui permet de s'effacer, de s'évanouir en faisant l'épreuve de son rapport au monde et au langage. Comme l'écrit Michel Collot, « [i]l y a une passivité fondamentale dans la position lyrique, qui peut être assimilée à un assujettissement ⁷¹». Or, les poèmes du recueil présentent un *je* passif qui, comme le sujet de la poésie lyrique orientale, cède la place aux éléments de la nature et du monde :

Si on me demande par ici

dites que je m'éloigne sur la route

⁶⁸ Cette vision de l'évolution du lyrisme chez Brault est empruntée à Jacques Paquin dans *L'écriture de Jacques Brault...*, ouvr. cité, 120-123.

⁶⁹ Yvon Rivard, « Présentation », dans Jacques Brault, *Poèmes choisis 1965-1990*, ouvr. cité, 15.

⁷⁰ Dominique Rabaté (dir.), « Énonciation poétique, énonciation lyrique », dans *Figures du sujet lyrique* (Paris : Presses Universitaires de France, 1996), 73. 71 Michel Collot, « Le sujet lyrique hors de soi », dans Dominique Rabaté (dir.),

Figures du sujet lyrique, ouvr. cité, 114.

mêlant le sel de la neige au sel de mes larmes dites aussi qu'un grand froid m'accompagne. (*MF*, 65)

Il accueille le réel et est à l'écoute de chaque instant qu'il réussit à saisir, mais son ouverture au monde, et surtout son lien fragile avec celui-ci, fait de lui un étrange « en dedans-en dehors ⁷²». Il se décentre par rapport à lui-même en se détachant de soi pour interroger son existence et réfléchir à son appartenance au monde. C'est seulement hors de soi qu'il peut trouver les réponses à ses questionnements identitaires. Le *je* recourt ainsi à la voix lyrique, car c'est elle qui permet la dépossession essentielle à son ouverture à l'altérité du monde et des mots :

De bon matin j'ai ouvert la porte à mon ombre elle grelottait d'étrangeté (*MF*, 65).

La définition de Michel Collot illustre bien la position du sujet lyrique hors de soi dans les poèmes de Brault qui se rapproche de la poésie lyrique orientale, telle que définie par Hegel. Le sujet de *Moments fragiles* s'éloigne ainsi des conventions. Il poursuit son chemin, se cherche, se perd et se retrouve à travers une quête identitaire qui l'afflige : « Déchiré par l'angoisse, submergé par l'émotion, toujours en procès avec le monde, il tâtonne à l'intérieur de luimême, [...] contraint de rechercher au-dehors la stabilité qui lui fait défaut ⁷³».

Moments fragiles se révèle à la fois comme « un prolongement, une rupture et une réorientation ⁷⁴» de l'œuvre poétique de Brault. La question identitaire, toujours centrale dans sa poésie, se détache de la dimension collective et devient plus personnelle. L'énonciation de cette quête identitaire, désormais menée par le sujet poétique seul, se fait ainsi à travers une nouvelle voie marquée par une forme plus brève des vers et des poèmes. La parole du *je* s'exprime dans l'instant présent et son « identité devient une sorte d'absence et d'effarement devant l'abolition de tout fondement identitaire ⁷⁵». De telle façon que le sujet se décentre par rapport à lui-même, face à cette temporalité instable, dans laquelle il tente de saisir l'instant qui lui échappe sans cesse, et

⁷² Collot, 115. 73 Jean-Michel Maulpoix, *Du lyrisme* (Paris : Éditions José Corti, 2000), 375.

⁷⁴ François Dumont, *Le poème en recueil* (Québec : Éditions Nota bene, 2010), 43.

⁷⁵ Dumont, 43.

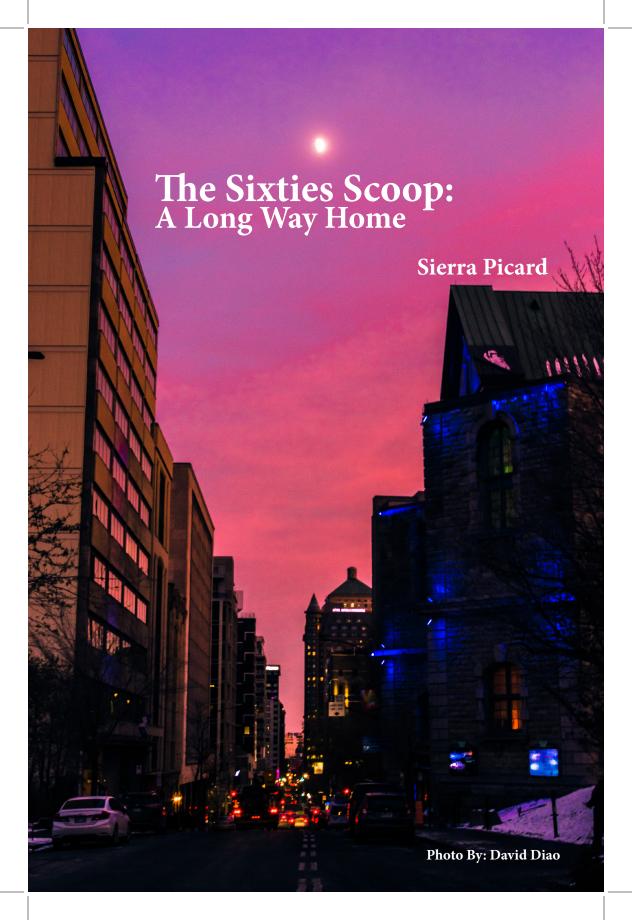
face à ce vide identitaire qui crée le doute et le sentiment d'étrangeté qu'il éprouve. Ce décentrement lui permet toutefois de poursuivre sa quête personnelle et identitaire. Par ailleurs, la structure du recueil, suivant la marche des saisons de l'automne à l'été, dévoile la posture contemplative du sujet qui contribue à problématiser son rapport au temps et à la nature. Tandis que la forme des poèmes, par sa brièveté, sa fragmentation et son laconisme, traduit l'absence et la dépossession auxquelles le sujet fait face et contribue de ce fait à son décentrement. En effet, la brièveté des vers et des poèmes et les blancs typographiques, qui marquent les silences, reflètent le rapport décentré du sujet au monde, dans lequel sa parole est constamment réfrénée et où il est dépourvu de repères. De plus, le lyrisme minimal et oriental permet au je à la fois d'exprimer son mal de vivre grâce à une parole discrète, qui correspond parfaitement à son ouverture au réel, et de sortir de lui-même afin de trouver les réponses à ses questionnements identitaires, en plus de contempler son rapport au monde. Son décentrement et son désir de l'exprimer l'amènent ainsi à adopter un lyrisme minimal d'inspiration orientale. C'est-à-dire que Brault, lecteur « du mineur, des petites littératures et des littératures du petit (dont le haïku est exemplaire) ⁷⁶» et passionné de poésie japonaise, révèle son inspiration orientale dans sa poésie ; et ce, plus particulièrement dans Moments fragiles, dont l'écriture est fortement influencée par cette forme de poésie, par la place centrale qu'elle accorde à la nature, son esprit, sa retenue, sa brièveté, sa fragmentation et son lyrisme. La démarche philosophique du sujet poétique dans *Moments fragiles* s'inscrit effectivement dans la perspective orientale, telle que la conçoit Brault, perspective qui fournit une certaine manière de penser et d'exprimer le décentrement que nous avons étudiée dans le présent travail. Cela dit, dans *L'artisan*⁷⁷, recueil de poèmes écrit par Brault et publié en 2006, le sujet poétique « rétrospectif et contemplatif ⁷⁸» se questionne toujours sur sa présence au monde, ce qui a également pour effet qu'il se décentre par rapport à lui-même. Toutefois, dans Moments fragiles, le décentrement est lié à un sentiment d'étrangeté, qui en est à la fois l'origine et la fin, alors que dans L'artisan, il se produit sous la forme d'un renoncement à un attachement physique et mental au monde. Ainsi, le doute et l'angoisse du sujet de Moments fragiles font place à la solitude et à la quiétude dans L'artisan. Il y a donc une reconduction de la thématique du décentrement, avec les motifs qui y sont associés, mais

⁷⁶ Bernier, Les essais de Jacques Brault..., 50.

⁷⁷ Brault, L'artisan (Montréal : Le Noroît, 2006).

⁷⁸ Thierry Bissonnette, *Dynamiques du recueil de poésie chez trois poètes du Noroît : Alexis Lefrançois, Michel Beaulieu, Jacques Brault* (thèse de doctorat, Québec, Faculté des lettres, Université Laval, 2005), 52.

aussi une évolution d'un recueil à l'autre. Il serait donc intéressant, dans une étude ultérieure, de mettre en lien le décentrement du sujet poétique dans *L'artisan* et dans *Moments fragiles*, une comparaison inédite que la critique n'a pas encore clairement mise en lumière.



ince time immemorial, colonizers have ceaselessly fought to eliminate ■ Indigenous peoples from Canadian society. As a result, each generation of Indigenous children has been presented with a new set of obstacles to overcome, unique to the conditions of the time. These conditions take on new forms, manifesting themselves through government-sponsored religious education and then through transracial adoption practices shortly thereafter.¹ The 'Sixties Scoop', a term coined by Patrick Johnson, denotes a period in Canadian history whereby provincial social service agents removed numerous Indigenous children from their families and placed them in non-Indigenous care. It has been argued that, as an attempt to eliminate Indigenous presence in Canada, the mass apprehensions of Indigenous children in the mid-sixties served as a more rigorous form of cultural genocide than its predecessor, The Residential School System.² Children enrolled in the Residential School System could seek comfort in the company of other Indigenous children and the possibility of returning home afterwards. Children of the Sixties Scoop, however, were removed from the influence of their culture before they could develop an adequate understanding of their Indigenous identity and were isolated in homes with no regard for a culturally relevant upbringing.

It was only after the publication of an extensive review of the child-in-care statistics of British Columbia in 1983 where it was revealed that Indigenous children were incredibly over-represented in the Canadian child welfare system. Patrick Johnson unveiled a 33% increase in Indigenous representation within the child welfare system between 1955 and 1964.³ In 1955, there existed a total of 29 Indigenous children in care (representing less than 1% of the total children in care), which jumped to 1, 446 children by the year 1964.⁴ It was after the publication of *Native Children and the Child Welfare System* and the coining of the term the "Sixties Scoop" that Johnson set the trajectory for an investigation into the mass removal of Indigenous children from their families in the mid-sixties.

¹ Bonita Lawrence, "Real" Indians and Others: Mixed-blood Urban Native Peoples and Indigenous Nationhood (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2004), 105. 2 O'Connor et al. Dark Legacy: Systemic Discrimination (Vancouver, B.C.: Totem

² O'Connor et al. *Dark Legacy: Systemic Discrimination* (Vancouver, B.C.: To Pole Books, 2010), 37.

³ Patrick Johnson, *Native Children and the Child Welfare System* (Toronto: Canadian Council on Social Development in association with J. Lorimer, 1983), 23. 4 Ibid., 23.

A thoughtful inquiry into the events that had enabled the overrepresentation of Indigenous children in the Canadian child welfare system reveals that the Sixties Scoop was indeed yet another assault on Indigenous identity on behalf of the Government of Canada. To understand this further, one must inquire into the systemic barriers put in place by persons of authority during the Sixties Scoop that allowed Indigenous children to undergo such terrible injustice at the hands of those who insisted that it was "in their best interest." I posit that an analysis of the many difficulties faced by Indigenous peoples in their navigation of the child welfare system reveals that the Government of Canada never wanted Indigenous children to find their way back home.

Lack of Funding

After the Second World War, the Government of Canada had shifted its focus toward the amelioration of social services available to Indigenous peoples.⁶ Revisions to the Indian Act in 1951 included an extension of services offered to Indigenous peoples, particularly in the realm of child welfare. Federal and provincial sectors of the Canadian government recognized the inadequacy of the services being provided to Indigenous peoples and thus decided to settle their dispute of funding. Rather than giving resources or monetary assistance to Indigenous communities, the federal government decided to invest in provincial social work agencies. This decision not only worked to solidify the already stark differences in the treatment of White children and Indigenous children within the child welfare system, but also created inequality among Indigenous communities, as the quality of services provided differed significantly between provinces.7 Additionally, by prioritizing the services of provincial social work agencies over the direct need of Indigenous communities, the Government of Canada deprived Indigenous families of any ability to create living conditions deemed suitable by child welfare agencies.

⁵ Allyson Stevenson, "The Adoption of Frances T: Blood, Belonging, and Aboriginal Transracial Adoption in Twentieth-Century Canada," *Canadian Journal of History* 50, no. 3 (2015): 480.

⁶ Johnson, Native Children, 66.

⁷ The Aboriginal Justice Implementation Commission, "Chapter 14: Child Welfare," *Report of the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry of Manitoba*, no. 1, accessed March 8, 2017. http://www.ajic.mb.ca/volumel/toc.html.

Extreme poverty conditions gave provincial social workers a seemingly justifiable excuse to take Indigenous children away from their families. It is important to consider the junction between the criminalization of poverty during this time alongside the conditions of poverty themselves. Indigenous families were not treated equally to non-Indigenous families in so far as they were not provided with comparable funding and resources. A 20-30% disparity in the funding offered to Indigenous peoples reflects a clear obstacle found at the foundation of the Sixties Scoop.⁸ The lack of funding for social services made available to Indigenous peoples before and during the Sixties Scoop significantly lessened the chances of Indigenous parents retaining care of their children.

With a government unwilling to support the needs of Indigenous families to the same degree as their non-Indigenous counterparts, Indigenous peoples never stood a chance against the state's invasive child welfare policies. Ernie Crey, a member of the Stó:lō Nation and Sixties Scoop survivor, reflects on this reality:

I realized the majority of aboriginal children were growing up off reserve, in mother-led families, without supports of any kind. They were the poorest of the poor in Canada and nobody gave a damn about what happened to them, not the federal government, not the province, and certainly not their beleaguered elected chiefs back home.⁹

Thus, it becomes clear that before any physical adoption had taken place, there were structures pre-emptively acting against any opportunity that Indigenous communities would have to keep their children within the community. Conditions of extreme poverty were maintained by lack of action from the Canadian government, making Indigenous peoples especially vulnerable to the invasive practices of the child welfare system.¹⁰

⁸ Peter Mansbridge, "Mansbridge One on One: Cindy Blackstock," *CBC Player*, February 14, 2016. http://www.cbc.ca/player/play/2683617202/.

⁹ Suzanne Fournier and Ernie Crey, Stolen from Our Embrace: The Abduction of First Nations Children and the Restoration of Aboriginal Communities (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1997), 40.

¹⁰ Edwin C. Kimelman, Transcripts and Briefs: Public Hearings, Special Hearings,

Provincial social workers apprehended Indigenous children on the basis that they were being saved from "crushing poverty, unsanitary health conditions, poor housing and malnutrition."11 This morally upright facade successfully concealed the true assimilationist motives of the Canadian government. Framing the mass removal of Indigenous children from their homes as an act serving to better their lives swayed the support of those uninvolved in the adoption process whilst leaving the corrupt conditions of this removal unaddressed. The Government of Canada could avoid addressing the fact that Indigenous peoples have been at a severe, inexcusable, financial disadvantage for decades, and that this disadvantage had played a key role in events of the Sixties Scoop. If Indigenous peoples had been provided with the same services as non-Indigenous peoples, they could have built up their communities and further enabled parents to raise their own children without the need for external interference that led to the destruction of Indigenous families. The fact that the government failed to act upon this opportunity demonstrates that those in positions of power truly had no interest in keeping the children with their families.

Due to the rippling effects of the Indian Act amendment in 1951, to remove Indigenous children from their homes would mean to rid them of their Indigenous status. In "The Adoption of Frances T...", Stevenson exposes the Canadian government's heightened sensitivity in the adoption case of a non-Indigenous child by two 'status Indians.' As a result, through provincial adoption laws, the child would have gained Indigenous 'status.' This adoption was so concerning to government officials that a judge offered to take on the case in order to overturn the adoption and remove the child from the loving care of their new adoptive parents. Stevenson writes: "this case is significant in that it provides an early example of the tensions that emerged when federal attempts to reduce and legally eliminate Indian women and children conflicted with the provincial child welfare prerogative." This adoption case exposed the vulnerability of having two systems of colonization that could not successfully co-exist. In contriving multiple avenues to dispossess Indige-

Briefs (Winnipeg: Manitoba Community Services, 1985), 145.

¹¹Johnson, Native Children, 47.

¹² Stevenson, "The Adoption of Frances T," 477.

¹³ Ibid., 480.

nous peoples of their identity, the Government of Canada had created its own loophole. It is important to consider why such extensive efforts are taken to eliminate the responsibilities of the Canadian government towards Indigenous children, when the United Declaration of the Rights of the Child, states it is the responsibility of the Canadian government to ensure the wellbeing of *all* children. Johnson asserts that a racial divide has created this hostility against Indigenous children.

Disregard of Culture

Provincial social workers entered Indigenous communities with rigid settler colonial understandings of "adequate care" and "proper supervision." ¹⁴ The limitations of these understandings immediately rendered Indigenous practices and understandings of these same concepts unworthy of consideration. It was a conscious decision on behalf of those in positions of authority to overlook how cultural discrepancies could have attributed to differences in child rearing and adoption practices being observed. Social workers were uneducated in the particulars of Indigenous culture and therefore failed to acknowledge the harm being done to Indigenous communities by imposing judgements of child care based on dominant Canadian norms. ¹⁵ It is important to understand that, although Indigenous practices of child rearing and adoption did vary from the settler colonial understandings, these practices were no less safe and able to provide adequate care for Indigenous children. In *No Quiet Place*, Kimelman writes:

Life for a child on a Reserve or in a Native community is described as one of safety, love, adventure, and freedom... A mother is not con cerned if a child does not return home for a meal or even to sleep... A mother who does not immediately report her child as missing is viewed as neglectful by the urban agencies.¹⁶

Indigenous parents had their own methods of child rearing. These methods

¹⁴ Johnson, Native Children, 73.

¹⁵ Lawrence, "Real" Indians and Others," 133.

¹⁶ Edwin C. Kimelman, *No Quiet Place* (Winnipeg: Manitoba Community Services, 1985), 163.

have existed for centuries and were only deemed inadequate once non-Indigenous peoples began to cast their unwanted judgments on Indigenous peoples' ways of life. In the case of the Sixties Scoop, the Government of Canada extended these inherently racist judgements to violent action.

In a public hearing on May 27th, 1982, Eva McKay of the Ojibwe Nation explained: "We do have our own traditional adoption system. We didn't have to sign a paper to say I was going to adopt this child. It was our tradition and way of life to accept others as our own." ¹⁷ Johnson also cited an Indigenous elder, who affirmed that child-rearing was understood as a responsibility of an entire community, or one's "extended family." 18 It thus becomes clear that consultation with Indigenous communities would have made these cultural differences evident, yet representatives of the state never took on the responsibility of understanding the complexity of Indigenous cultures. Instead, the government had decided to simply overlook the possibility of existing child rearing and adoption practices, and replaced them with culturally insensitive services. A consideration of cultural differences could have evoked an understanding by non-Indigenous social workers, whereby Indigenous lifestyles could have been respected, and Indigenous children could have stayed with their families, in their communities, and exposed to their culture. Unfortunately, the Government of Canada knew full well that there was no place for consideration within their assimilative agenda.

Although it was widely understood in the child welfare system that apprehension should be the last resort when trying to save children from harm, these conditions somehow failed to apply to Indigenous peoples.¹⁹ In most cases, an apprehension would occur without the consultation of the child's parents nor the band council of their community.²⁰ In *Stolen from Our Embrace*, Faith Richardson, a First Nations mother, reflects on her experiences with the child welfare system during the Sixties Scoop. Her daughter, Joyce McBryde, was taken from their home while she was absent, and Richardson was never given the opportunity, as any mother should, to say goodbye. Richardson explains, "In those days, when they took [their] kids, they took them

¹⁷ Kimelman, Transcripts and Briefs, 32.

¹⁸ Johnson, Native Children, 68-69.

¹⁹ Lawrence, "Real" Indians and Others," 133.

²⁰ Kimelman, Transcripts and Briefs, 157.

for good. Indians never got to go to court or anything."²¹ Unfortunately, such profound injustice is not an anomaly. Children were routinely apprehended without regard for the inherent right of any mother to not only care for her child, but to say goodbye. Furthermore, multiple reports disclose that it was not uncommon for children to be sent out of the country, to places such as the United States and overseas to Europe.²² In the meantime, Indigenous parents were left constantly wondering where their children were and if they were safe from harm. Unfortunately, that was not often the case.

Overlooking Abuse

The racist underpinnings of the mass apprehensions of Indigenous children in the mid-sixties set a precedent for how Indigenous children would be treated in care. Culturally dislocated, Indigenous children were continuously reminded that they were members of a dying race.²³ Non-Indigenous caretakers, such as foster parents, would take no pains to hide their prejudices against Indigenous peoples nor provide these children with equal living conditions to their White counterparts. Taken from their family on the basis of extreme poverty, an Indigenous child was presented with a dimly lit room in the flooded basement of a foster home and graced with a bed hovering closely above the wet surface.²⁴ Living conditions such as these would have most certainly failed to meet the living standards that Indigenous families were held to at the time of apprehension and would never be tolerated if the child were White.²⁵ Due to the common nature of this situation, the Government of Canada clearly had no regard for the wellbeing of Indigenous children after an apprehension had taken place. If provincial social workers removed Indigenous children from their families with the intention of providing them with better living conditions, then it would naturally be assumed that the conditions of the new facilities would be an improvement from where they came from.

In addition to the inhumane physical living conditions that many Indigenous children were forced to endure, they were also subject to an immense

²¹ Fournier and Crey, Stolen from Our Embrace, 103.

²² O'Connor et al., Dark Legacy, 37.

²³ O'Connor et al., Dark Legacy, 39.

²⁴ Richard Cardinal: Cry from a Diary of a Métis Child, directed by Alanis Obomsawin (1986: National Film Board of Canada), Online.

²⁵ Fournier and Crey, Stolen from Our Embrace, 33.

amount of violence at the hands of their new caretakers. Due to the incredible amount of apprehensions taking place within Indigenous communities, "anyone who was willing to take Indian children was deemed suitable." Additionally, the standards for Indigenous foster placements were not comparable to those of White children, as they were "warehoused in homes that were by no stretch of the imagination suitable for any child, let alone traumatized, culturally dislocated, grieving aboriginal child." Clearly, in contrast to White children, Indigenous children were exposed to substandard conditions.

Without the support of their community and family members, Indigenous children were far more vulnerable to abuse while in care. This vulnerability was a result of decisions made by the Canadian government, which rendered Indigenous children easy victims to physical and sexual violence. Sixties Scoop survivor, Ernie Crey provides insight into the heightened level of violence he and other First Nations children had experienced while in foster care: "Looking back, I am angry and amazed that these two pedophiles could have preyed so openly on children in care in a government financed group home."28 Crey, among many other Sixties Scoop survivors, asserts that the abuse taking place in the placements was known publicly. Why then, did no one interfere when Indigenous children were being abused in plain sight? Throughout the course of Canadian history, the Government of Canada has routinely failed to stop the violence being imposed upon Indigenous children within their colonial structures. The unfortunate reality is that, if individuals in positions of power had truly been concerned with securing the wellbeing of Indigenous children, more would have been done to prevent the perpetuation of abuse following the Residential School Era. Without the support of their community and an adequate understanding of their culture, Indigenous children are left completely vulnerable to the corruption of settler colonial society.

Although the failure of transracial adoptions became increasingly evident, there was no official inquiry into why this may have been the case.²⁹ Rather than allowing Indigenous children to return home, they were left in a vicious cycle of culturally irrelevant childcare that was created by a govern-26 Ibid., 33.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid., 38.

²⁹ Kimelman, No Quiet Place, 247.

ment that never had any intention on prioritizing the needs of Indigenous children. Richard Cardinal, a Métis child, was one of the many Indigenous children lost within the Canadian child welfare system during the Sixties Scoop. Throughout his short 17 years of life, Richard had been transferred to 28 different childcare facilities before he committed suicide at his last placement in 1984.³⁰ Richard kept a very detailed diary, which was found in a foster home shortly after his death. This diary offered profound insight into the many inadequacies of the Canadian child welfare system, exposing a complete lack of action of those involved in his placements. Neither social workers nor foster parents had taken the necessary measures to prevent his suicide nor did they recognize that the source of his distress, quite similar to that of other Indigenous adoptees, was a lack of Indigenous culture and a yearning to return home.³¹

Alanis Obomsawin, member of the Abenaki First Nation and one of Canada's most distinguished documentary filmmakers, created a tribute to the life of Richard Cardinal in 1986. Within the tribute, she interviews his last foster parents. The foster father who found Richard explained that he had taken photos of Richard's body to reduce the chances that he would become "just another dead Indian."32 It was only once these photos started to circulate that the inquiry into his death began and government officials were quick to deny their evident role in his death. Denial as an immediate reaction to the death and telling diary entries of Richard Cardinal reveals that the government understood their failure to act under circumstances of clear injustice. Although suicide was a common outcome for Indigenous adoptees during the Sixties Scoop, it was never overtly discussed as being problematic by those involved in the child welfare system. It could be argued that this lack of coverage was systematic because elevated suicide rates of Indigenous children served the colonial objective to rid Canadian society of Indigenous peoples. Indigenous children had thus been unwillingly absorbed into a colonial system that operated with the objective to eliminate Indigenous identity from Canadian society.

To further the alienation of Indigenous children from their culture,

³⁰ Richard Cardinal, directed by Alanis Obomsawin, 1986.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid.

the sustained efforts by Indigenous children to contact their families and vice versa were made unnecessarily complicated. Indigenous children faced far more difficulty in obtaining information about their families and identity prior to their involvement with the child welfare system. Ernie Crey addresses this blatant inequality in stating that "the social services ministry's ostensible goal to reunite families apparently applied only to white children."33 The systematic withholding of personal information was also addressed in the documentary by Alanis Obomsawin; it was made clear that Richard Cardinal had endured incredible pains in the search for his family and Indigenous identity before he lost his will to live. It was only once his funeral date was set that government officials had rallied their efforts to get in contact with his family members to notify them of the service.³⁴ The act of withholding information from both Indigenous children and their communities can be regarded as a means to keep Indigenous children isolated from the influence of their culture and make it nearly impossible for Indigenous children to return home, or even know where 'home' is.

Sixties Scoop survivors often reflect upon the lasting impacts of a childhood spent in non-Indigenous care. Without any information about their families, communities and tribal affiliations, Indigenous children were left in a perpetual state of confusion about who they were as individuals. Exposure to Indigenous culture is often regarded as being of central importance to an adequate upbringing of an Indigenous child.³⁵ Without the necessary exposure to kinship networks, Indigenous children would never be given the necessary tools to embrace their Indigeneity; to embrace themselves. Instead, Indigenous children in the child welfare system were continuously made to feel like they did not belong, a "perpetual stranger."³⁶

The effects of growing up as an Indigenous child in a society that did not openly accept, nor welcome cultural differences generated an internalized sense of hatred for a culture they never knew. The lasting impact of the Sixties Scoop was a deep-ridden sense of resentment towards their own sense of Indigeneity. The confusion of adopting prejudices against their own culture whilst remaining visibly Indigenous caused a deep-ridden disconnect 33 Fournier and Crey, *Stolen from Our Embrace*, 34-35.

³⁴ Richard Cardinal, directed by Alanis Obomsawin, 1986.

³⁵ Lawrence, "Real" Indians and Others, 144.

³⁶ Fournier and Crey, Stolen from Our Embrace, 19.

between Indigenous children and their identity. "Seeds of Renewal," a poem written by John C. Wesley and published in *Kahtou: The Voice of B.C. First Nations* in March of 1995, addresses the role of the government in this disconnect. Wesley writes: "Stolen in the name of the Government / Lost ghost stares of ancient faces / Magic bodies eviscerated / People and spirit separated / Spirit and soul intertwined / Empty, open to destruction / Destruction of a people." The government took Indigenous children from their homes and in doing so, completely separated Indigenous children from their identity. Without the proper support of the community and other Indigenous peoples during their upbringing, Indigenous children were made particularly vulnerable to the harm of cultural destruction.

Final Remarks

It would be hopeful to believe that the Government of Canada has since rectified the inadequacies of the services made available to Indigenous children following the increased exposure of the Sixties Scoop's realities. During the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal in June 2016, Cindy Blackstock, member of the Gitskan First Nation, Executive Director of the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada and Professor of Social Work at McGill University, asserts that to this day in the child welfare system, Indigenous children are still not afforded with the same financial security as non-Indigenous children.³⁸ In other words, the Government of Canada continues to enact their gradual assault on Indigenous culture and identity by not doing what is necessary to keep Indigenous children in the care of their own families. A report compiled by the Chiefs of Ontario, explicitly asks why there still exist inequities in child welfare "given that there are no barriers to the full and proper implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child in this very wealthy Country."39 There are indeed no barriers obstructing a proper inquiry into the social issues that have affected Indigenous

³⁷ John C. Wesley, "Seeds of Renewal," *Kahtou: The Voice of B.C. First Nations*, March 1995, lines 1-7.

³⁸ Peter Mansbridge, "Mansbridge One on One," 2016.

³⁹ Chiefs of Ontario, *United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination: An Alternate Report*, Accessed March 10, 2017. http://www.chiefs-of-ontario.org/sites/default/files/files/COO%20Alternate%20Report%20to%20UN-CERD%20FINAL%202012.pdf.

children for decades, yet the Canadian government continues to idle. At the same time, Indigenous children continue to be removed from their communities and denied access to proper services.

From the start of provincial adoptions, Indigenous children have never been given an equal opportunity to live a life free of harm. Years of systematic underfunding have made Indigenous children unable to grow up with their families, which has served the settler colonial objective to completely absorb Indigenous peoples into Canadian society. Survivors of the Sixties Scoop represent yet another generation of Indigenous children tasked with the responsibility to find their own way home, back to themselves. In his overview of the happenings of the Sixties Scoop, Kimelman stated that "the road to hell was paved with good intentions, and the child welfare system was the contractor." Through an analysis of the many difficulties faced by Indigenous children in their experiences within the Canadian child welfare system, I would argue that good intentions were simply non-existent during the Sixties Scoop. If they were, greater efforts would have been taken to eliminate the continuous violence imposed upon Indigenous children and ensure that Indigenous children were returned home.

⁴⁰ Peter Mansbridge, "Mansbridge One on One," 2016.

⁴¹ O'Connor et al., Dark Legacy, 34.

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