

I *FEEL* CANADIAN: AFFECTIVE PRACTICES OF NATION AND NATIONALISM  
ON CANADIAN TELEVISION

by

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## ABSTRACT

In this dissertation, I examine how ideas about the nation are produced via affect, especially Canadian television's role in this discursive construction. I analyze Canadian television as a surface of emergence for nationalist sentiment. Within this commercial medium, U.S. dominance, Quebec separatism, and the immigrant are set in an oppositional relationship to Canadian nationalism. Working together, certain institutions such as the law and the corporation, exercise authority through what I call 'technologies of affect': speech-acts, music, editing. I argue that the instability of Canadian identity is re-stabilized by a hyperbolic affective mode that is frequently produced through consumerism.

Delimited within a fairly narrow timeframe (1995 –2002), the dissertation's chronological starting point is the Quebec Referendum of October 1995. It concludes at another site of national and international trauma: media coverage of September 11, 2001 and its aftermath. Moving from traumatic point to traumatic point, this dissertation focuses on moments in televised Canadian history that ruptured, or tried to resolve, the imagined community of nation, and the idea of a national self and national others. I examine television as a marker of an affective Canadian national space, one that promises an idea of 'home'. I discuss several overlapping texts: the television programs themselves, their political and cultural contexts, and their convergence with other forms of media. More specifically, I privilege television's speech acts, its generic repetitions and compulsive returns, particularly in the context of recent trauma theory. As part of the larger text of television, I also ponder the *flow*— between television and body, between program and commercial, between TV, telephone and internet, and between television and the spaces of home, the workplace, and the street. Using an interdisciplinary methodology informed by post-structuralist thought, and a writing style inflected by autobiographical modes, I argue that collective affect frequently operates in relation to media representations of nationalism, producing national practices framed by a television screen.

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*In memory of my brother, Roman Hilary Bociurkiw  
1960-2002*



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## INTRODUCTION

*I know this place is where I am  
No other place is better than  
No matter where I go I am  
Proud to be Canadian*

*I am. You know I am.  
I am Canadian.  
I am. You know I am.  
I am Canadian.*

- from a TV ad for Molson's "I AM Canadian" beer <sup>1</sup>

In 1999, just months after the anti-globalization protests at the World Trade Organization meetings in Seattle,<sup>2</sup> Molson brewery developed a new TV ad for its "Canadian" line of beer. Molson dubbed this ad "The Rant." In it, Joe Canadian takes to the stage before an unseen audience and delivers an emotional tirade in which he politely, but proudly, distinguishes Canada from the U.S. via a litany of everyday Canadian artifacts and practices: "I believe in peace keeping, not policing, diversity, not assimilation, and that the beaver is a truly proud and noble animal. A toque is a hat, a chesterfield is a couch, and it is pronounced 'zed' not 'zee', 'zed'!!!!"

Behind Joe Canadian, a rear-screen projection shows flickering images of dog sleds, beavers, and, of course, beer. The pounding music score (Elgar's "Pomp

and Circumstance”) rises in volume as Joe’s voice gets more emotive and the audience begins to cheer.

This ad has spawned dozens of fan sites, countless consumer spin-offs, and is popularly referenced on Canada Day and at hockey games. Aniko Bodghorozy comments on the ad’s widespread appeal:

The ad became a sensation among Canadians. The actor who played Joe became an instant celebrity, mobbed at shopping malls [...] Canadians e-mailed each other the text of Joe’s rant, while Molson set up a website where Canadians could rant their own tirades about being Canuck. Even Heritage Minister Sheila Copps tried to appropriate Joe in her ministerial address (110).

A second edition of the Joe Canadian ad, quoted above, repeats this performative speech act but laminates it to space: “this place is where I am”. Most of the images in this second ad are shot off of a TV screen. Ira Wagman notes that this second ad appeared just months after the World Trade Organization’s meetings in Quebec City, where anti-globalization demonstrations caught the attention of international media (2002). Here, consumerism, television and affect work together to produce a sense of mastery over national space – not to mention the desire for a cold beer.<sup>3</sup>

Television is a marker of an affective Canadian national space, one that promises an idea of ‘home’. Sally Munt writes, “It becomes clear how invested

spaces are with emotion; the stakes are fraught with the intensity of the longing, as though the self can somehow be 'homed', rested and resolved" (164). Like the train to which it is so often compared, Canadian television travels through national space, connecting Canadians to each other. It imagines this national space as unified, perhaps in a similar way that tourists do, as they look out the windows of a train. Kieran Keohane, in writing about the Molson's ad, states:

"What is significant about these advertisements is the way in which 'nation' and the threats typically associated with its survival, becomes the rhetorical surrogate for 'competition' and the threats typically associated with the company's survival" (78-79). As Joe Canadian's rant demonstrates, the fact that Canada is a *contested* space (contested by the apparitional others of US dominance, First Nations claims, Quebec separatism, and 'foreign' immigration) serves only to heighten the necessity and possibilities of affective modes, produced via consumerism.

With this dissertation, I will examine the ways in which affect operates in relation to these factors, producing national practices framed by a television screen. I will analyze how television operates as an organized system of knowledge that is in turn marked *by* the nation, via the filaments of history, politics, technology and economy. As such, it contains apparatus of discipline within it, whether it's the discipline of highly gendered broadcast schedules and flow, or the discipline of festive viewing in which mandatory viewing and collective affect occur.

In *Archaeology of Knowledge*, Michel Foucault posits three criteria for the forming of discourse: surfaces of emergence, authorities of delimitation, and grids of specification (45-47). As an example, he makes use of the discourse of psychopathology from the nineteenth century onwards, and notes that a multiplicity of new objects, or agreed-upon symptoms, of psychopathology appear at this time. In effect, he observes that discourse is unitary, but that its objects change constantly. He argues that it is important to observe the process of discourse formation in order to undercut and question the obviousness of certain discursive statements and their institutional power. The discourse of nationalism, for example, might emerge at widely different surfaces, or sites: sporting events; schools; tourism. These sites make discourse, in Foucault's words, "manifest, nameable, and describable" (46).

In this dissertation I will discuss Canadian television as a surface of emergence for nationalist sentiment. Within this commercial medium, U.S. dominance, Quebec separatism, and the immigrant are highlighted as nationalism's objects. Certain institutions, working together – the law, the corporation – delimit these objects, lending them authority via what I call *technologies* of affect: speech-acts, music, editing. The 'rules' of nationalist discourse prescribe certain ways of talking about these topics, and exclude others. For example, Canada must be spoken of as a peaceful tolerant nation, generally excluding mention of slavery, internment camps, and so on. At different times, different objects are more or less important. Since 9/11, for example, immigration has become an object of

knowledge within the discourse of Canadian nationalism. Before 9/11, U.S. dominance was a primary force in the construction of nationalist discourse. Joe Canadian's declarative statement, then, "I AM Canadian" is a very rich one, embodying in a literal sense the rules of nationalist discourse at a particular moment in Canadian popular culture.

As Flaherty and Manning suggest, "it may be in *popular culture* that Canadian sovereignty finds its most meaningful and potent expression" (xii italics mine). While perhaps not so interested in sovereignty, I would concur with the importance of looking to popular culture as a surface of emergence for discursive national sites of official memory and forgetting, as well as for ethical spaces of resistance and reparation. I have chosen, however, to focus on Canadian television as a primary surface of emergence for Canadian nationalist discourse. As Morley points out, it is television, perhaps more than any other media, that enters into domestic space, "linking the national public into the private lives of its citizens, through the creation of both sacred and quotidian moments of national communion" (106). This domestic space is a highly affective one. This affective homeplace stands in for the nation, becoming both its metaphor and its reason for being. And it is television, I will argue, that is most interested in the maintenance of home as an affective, passionately emotive *place*.

Barker argues that television is heavily invested in "the construction of identity projects" (3). Citing such examples as the South African Broadcasting

Corporation (whose slogan is “We Are One”), and the Latin American telenovela, he insists that television plays a crucial role in constructing national identity “through the circulation of national symbols and myths together with the creation of feelings of solidarity and simultaneous identity” (66). Caughie asserts that television theory has focused on gender to the exclusion of nation, ignoring the fact that the act of television viewing is specifically located within national and local social sites and histories. Within the context of television studies’ current preoccupation with the global, he argues for “the embarrassingly persistent category of the nation” (47).

National television is, of course, inextricably linked to other technologies and to social sites. As part of the larger text of television, I will also examine its *flow* (or what McLuhan might have called “extensions”) between television and body, between program and commercial, between TV, telephone and Internet, and between television and the spaces of home, the workplace, and the street. I concur with Silverstone who writes, in response to McLuhan, “[T]hrough its double articulation, the medium does become the message, though that message is not pre-given by technology. It is worked and reworked through the social circumstances under which it is both produced and received” (83).

## **From Traumatic Point to Traumatic Point: Uses of Trauma and Affect Theory**

I will examine Canadian television with a critical and somewhat anecdotal approach to history, using a genealogical approach that recognizes that there is no essential body or identity with a single origin. As Judith Butler writes, "genealogy investigates the political stakes in designating as an origin and cause those identity categories that are in fact the effects of institutions, practices, discourses with multiple and diffuse points of origin" (vii-ix). Such an approach demands recognition of national television as a discursive practice that moves across institutions, technologies, behaviours, forms of affect, and pedagogies.

While a comprehensive theoretical overview of Canadian television has yet to be written, my project will be delimited within a fairly narrow timeframe: roughly, 1995 -2002. I will argue that the 1995 Quebec referendum on sovereignty was a turning point in Canadian nationalism, a moment when, via affective modes of consumerism (television, advertising, national products), Canada began promoting itself as a unified, albeit multicultural, nation in an intensified manner.

I will begin by outlining certain methodologies to do with theories of nation and affect (Chapter 1). My chronological starting point is the televised lead up to and documentation of the Quebec Referendum of October 1995 (Chapter 2), followed by the launching of two very different but similarly nationalist TV series, "Loving Spoonfuls" (Chapter 3) and "Canada: A People's History" (Chapter 4),



and an examination of other historical moments and particular programs: the state funeral of Pierre Trudeau (Chapter 5), and, finally, Canadian television coverage of the period from September 11, 2001 to the Salt Lake City Olympics in February, 2002 (Chapter 6).

I will be moving from traumatic point to traumatic point; moments in televised Canadian history that ruptured, and then tried to resolve, the imagined community of nation, and the idea of a national self and national others. I will argue, finally, that the Salt Lake City Olympics, held only months after September 11<sup>th</sup>, were a particular moment of unity and false closure in which hybridity disappeared against images of triumphant nationhood. Much like the Joe Canadian phenomenon, this unity was inscribed and delimited in part via a corporate logo: The Roots-designed (and logo'd) uniforms of the Canadian Olympic team.

I begin with the English-language television coverage of the 1995 Quebec referendum debate. This coverage provides an emotive narrative arc that, I will argue, constituted a 'super-text' (Browne). This super text was to endure for several years, and, I believe, served to introduce a new discourse of belonging and national identification on Canadian television. As the "No" (federalist) side won and Quebec lost its bid for sovereignty, Canada lost its other. "Canada is still here tonight – but just barely," announced CBC news anchor Peter Mansbridge

immediately after the referendum vote. *Other* othered bodies then had to be invoked.

### **Official Omissions**

Forgetting and denial are crucial to notions of belonging. In the introduction to *Rude*, a collection of Black cultural criticism, Rinaldo Walcott writes about the exclusions inherent within official representations of Canada, noting that it is not the omission, but the *denial* of these omissions, that remains to be fully theorized:

But this nation of ours does not admit to this exclusion easily; instead it must continually demonstrate its benevolence and tolerance. So both Aboriginals and Others are imagined in the nation in very specific and proscribed ways. (7)

Thus, the question is not so much a matter of listing the omissions, but rather, asking *why* they exist. National meanings are produced via a complex interplay of absence and inclusion. What are the effects of power that result from certain questions not being asked? I would argue that these gaps or fissures of knowledge within the narratives of nations are actually presences with their own epistemic regimes. In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault examines power/knowledge in relation to the prison: the body of the prisoner becomes an object of knowledge, and one of many vehicles of institutional power. Power, in his terms, does not flow from a single source, but rather is a system of relations.

Thus, I am not examining one single source of power, such as a particular broadcasting network, or state regulation. Rather, I am interested in scattered, multiple sites of power, and the ways in which television programs support, or act as conduits between and across, these sites.

Power, in Foucault's lexicon, is productive; it produces institutions, which in turn produce power. Power can even produce ethics. To paraphrase Foucault, racialized representations are not simply about 'negative mechanisms'; the network of television's discursive practices is also linked to positive effects, as well as to pleasure ("The Will to Knowledge"). Progress, like history, is never linear, and certainly not on TV. Eva Mackey describes such contradictory representations, from First Nations stereotypes to defiant expressions of self-determination, as being constitutive of Canada's "heritage of tolerance". Mackey traces this project back to 18<sup>th</sup> Century treaties that allowed for Aboriginal self-government and recognized Quebec's distinct society. She identifies these as management strategies to deploy Quebecois against Indian, and to make Canada distinct from the US (23). She writes:

This dual process of management and representation is a complex and contradictory process of inclusion and exclusion, of positive and negative representations of Canada's internal and external others. [...] Aboriginal people and non-British cultural groups are managed, located, let in, excluded, made visible or invisible, represented positively or negatively, assimilated or appropriated, depending on the changing needs of nation-

building. The 'heritage of tolerance is actually a heritage of contradictions, ambiguity, and flexibility. (25)

These ambiguities also come up in news reportage of migrants and immigrants with their recurring themes of revulsion, fear, and half-hearted tolerance.

As Sara Ahmed has noted, encounters between strangers can involve surprise, a challenge to the familiar: "When we face others we seek to recognize who they are, by reading the signs on their body, or by reading their body as sign...[but]...*we may not be able to read the bodies of others* (*Strange Encounters* 8). The bodies of Fujianese migrants arriving on Canada's shores in August of 1999 were indeed surprising bodies, arriving without warning on "mystery ships". They were young, in contemporary dress; their faces did not assume the deferential expressions of the docile immigrant. Thus it was, in part, television's job to re-organize our encounter with these 'strange' bodies: to constantly frame them in wire fences, and overlay the images with words like "squalor" and "filth". At the same time, it was necessary to deny their suffering, and to celebrate the achievements of a singular Chinese immigrant, Canada's newest Governor General. Ahmed calls this favouring of certain, but not all foreigners, "making friends with aliens":

By allowing some aliens to co-exist 'with us', we might expand our community; we might prove our advancement into or outside the human; we might demonstrate our willingness to accept difference and make it our own. It could even allow us to become alien, to gain access to alien worlds. (*Strange Encounters* 2)

The alien, the immigrant, the Indian, also function as figures of desire. In Chapter 4, an analysis of the representation of the other within the Canadian cooking show genre, I attempt to examine ethnic cooking shows like “Loving Spoonfuls” (W) in the context of Canadian multicultural policy. Here, I focus on multiculturalism, as a disciplinary practice produced within the discursive field of Canadian nationalism. “Loving Spoonfuls” provides a compelling example of multiculturalism’s affective modes. Ahmed notes, “eating with aliens, or even eating one (up) might enable us to transcend the limits and frailties of an all-too-human form” (*Strange Encounters* 2). In this case, this form is the nation: its limits are the U.S. and Quebec, and the trauma of boundary loss.

### **Theory, Memoir and Methodology: Contingent Relations**

To utilize trauma theory and affect theory is also, at times, to remember, or even re-experience certain traumatic emotions or experiences from one’s own personal or cultural history.

While I was writing this dissertation my brother died and, shortly thereafter, my mother endured a reoccurrence of cancer. I was, at the same time, reviewing the literature on trauma theory for the purposes of this project. The boundaries of theory and lived experience began to blur for me in a manner that was both productive and profound. As I have written in a later chapter, following Derrida, “the past, which returns to the future in the figure of the ghost, must inform the

ethical responsibilities of the present” (*Spectres of Marx* 142). The trauma of my brother’s death was indeed brought closer to resolution by a series of ethical actions – one of which involved taking care of my mother, another of which involved ceasing work on my dissertation for a time. When I returned to it, I felt more strongly than ever that my work on affect theory must be accompanied by anecdotal writing. Like so many others, there was, in fact, no way I could write about the traumatic aftermath of 9/11 without musing upon my own losses. The ‘real’ of my own affect broke the skin of my theoretical work and moved it into a wholly different territory, one less stable and more fragmented, and, I think, more aligned with Deleuze and Guattari’s poststructuralist fantasy of what a book (or, for that matter, a dissertation) can and can’t do. In their terms, a book is a multiplicity, a text with multiple roots that will not submit to a single identity (*A Thousand Plateaus* 3-4).

At the same time, I developed more respect for theory, which had played an important role in my own process of grieving. Similarly, Jane Gallop writes about having begun her project of writing about anecdotal theory – theory grounded in “the subjectivity of the theorizing subject” (14) – and then being interrupted by a significant episode in her personal life. She writes, “although I can’t say that I like it, I can see that it is precisely this ability to interrupt and divert a project conceived in theory which makes incident a force to be reckoned with” (15).

While observing the current trend towards affect at academic conferences and in theoretical writing, it has often seemed to me that – certain exceptions notwithstanding – the affect of the academic goes largely unacknowledged. The contribution of feminist literature and analysis to the legitimization of affect within the academy is worth noting, and represents a significant rationale for my own academic writing style.

Memoir emerges out of the autobiographical tradition, and is sometimes used interchangeably with that term. Felicity A. Nussbaum discusses the genre's late 18<sup>th</sup> Century British roots and its provenance as a form popular with women; she describes autobiography as “the assertion of a female identity in public print” and argues for autobiography's importance as a site resistant to dominant gender relations (xi).

Feminist theory's early work in the area of memory has helped to question ways of knowing and memorializing history, applying, as Hirsch and Smith have written, “feminist modes of questioning to the analysis of cultural recall and within the original trauma, but also via the identificatory reception of images and stories, “establishing connections between bodies” (342).

The form of this dissertation acknowledges the contingent relationship between analysis and memory, and thus between theory and memoir. In her semi-

autobiographical work of theory, *Outside Belongings*, Elspeth Probyn draws upon a Deleuzian methodology to explain her use of memoir:

I strive to elaborate a writing practice that is at once theoretical, sociological, experiential and political. It is a practice focused on intervening in the social, an outside that is the condition of possibility for my writing. [...] Taking to heart Deleuze's warning against 'applying' theory, I attempt to work through and with certain philosophical insights as I move forward and out along other surfaces (7).

Rosi Braidotti, following Foucault, uses the term "countermemory" to describe a theoretical mode that resists "dominant ways of representing the self" (25). She insists that transdisciplinarity is essential to this process, and that its strategies include "bricolage", extensive borrowing, and even theft. She calls this "deterritorialization", or the becoming-nomad of ideas" (36-37). Jane Gallop cites precedents for the use of personal anecdote within theory, from Jacques Derrida to Catherine Mackinnon, describing this strategy as "a broader shared project, the project of making knowledge that better opens to the real – a project that can include aspects of both feminism and deconstruction" (9).

Anne E. Goldman, writing about the ethnic women's autobiographical writing, argues that defining a cultural self demands an unconventional writing style, one which attempts to avoid the commodification of 'ethnic' experience that can transpire when writing for Anglo audiences (*Take My Word*). Drawing upon current post-colonial mestizo theories, Chicano performance artist and writer



Guillermo Gomez-Peña discusses the way in which hybrid identities lead to hybrid forms of writing:

I want to articulate the ever-changing parameters of my multiple communities, but always from a multidimensional perspective, the border perspective, the only one I know. I crisscross from the past to the present, from the fictional to the biographical. I fuse prose and poetry, sound and text art and literature, political activism and art experimentation. As a result I find myself working with hybrid genres and interdisciplinary formats. [...] In them, I try to exercise all the freedoms that my two countries have denied me. (16)

For all of these thinkers, the autobiographical becomes a way to move along the different surfaces of the self: inside and outside, theoretical and social, and, more importantly, the ways in which these surfaces overlap, bleed into each other, inform one another, and then *become* something else. This flux, this instability at the heart of identity, may help to make theory more accountable to the site of the social subject, less certain of itself: in Gallop's words, "to make theorizing more aware of its moment, more responsible to its erotics, and at the same time if paradoxically, both more literary and more real" (11).

"Writing itself becomes a matter of becoming" write Deleuze and Guattari; "in this way, the reader is drawn into the implicit and hitherto unimagined community which the text anticipates through its matter of expression" (*Anti-Oedipus* 22). This dissertation, then, in a constant state of becoming – theory, becoming –

memoir; memoir becoming theory. As I write about the televised Trudeau funeral of 2000, I find myself writing against a limit – that of the unimagined community of the immigrant in Canada; a world of postwar trauma, middle class aspiration and hope, multicultural festivals in sports arenas, the quiet, deadly xenophobia of suburban high schools and shopping malls, the bitterness and gratefulness of my elders towards their new 'home'. Deleuze and Guattari see limits as sets of possibilities; there is not an end or a limit towards which lives move; rather, lives and bodies strive internally to maximize possibilities. An ethnic childhood diverges into 'lines of becoming'. Its very proscriptions can produce new ways of thinking and writing about the nation.

Megan Boler writes, "For all of cultural studies' talk about understanding the interrelationship of the subject and power, we haven't yet developed a systematic theory to understand specific historical discourses in relation to power relations and social forces" (158). Boler contends that it has been feminist theory that has been in the forefront of theorizing "emotions as a site of social control and of political resistance" (161). I am hoping that my use of creative non-fiction can be such a site of resistance: an affective check against the historical and affective limits of cultural studies and post-structuralist theory. Memoir as embodied history; theory that ruptures the general or universal and becomes specific – skin, body, flesh and blood.

As a child of immigrants growing up in a tight-knit émigré community, most of what I ate at home (jellied pork hocks, garlic sausage) or did on the weekend (marching around in scout uniforms, trips to the graveyard) was certainly incomprehensible – and probably laughable – to my classmates at school. Thankfully, we were allowed unlimited access to TV in my family, and it was, perhaps, my deep familiarity with Canadian and American prime-time programming that provided me with enough Anglo-Canadian cultural capital to get by. From “The Friendly Giant,” to the opening refrains of the national news, Canadian television evokes a world of nostalgic sensations for its citizens that puts into proximity otherwise distant sites of knowledge.

### **Television Theory: Privileging Content, Defining Text**

Television theory defines itself along a limited number of theoretical binaries: sociology vs. cultural studies, American vs. British, Frankfurt School vs. Birmingham School, text vs. audience, quantitative vs. qualitative, ritualistic vs. ideological. I will argue for a more discursive methodology. I utilize a *transdisciplinary* approach to televised popular cultural forms, one in which it is possible to utilize a wide range of textual and critical strategies to interpret, criticize, and deconstruct cultural artifacts. This approach brings media analysis into a contemporary global context, where pop cultural forms are re-territorialized into investment opportunity and, concomitantly, national identity. The struggle to reclaim public culture must then necessarily include, as Giroux argues, the

theoretical work of analyzing how seemingly innocent pop cultural products engage the ideology of nation using a *variety* of intertextual strategies (*From Mouse to Mermaid*). There are, however, certain sources or strategies I will rely upon more frequently than others.

In *Understanding Media*, Marshall McLuhan elaborates upon his infamous phrase, "the medium is the message." It is the form rather than the content of any particular medium, he claims, that defines the scale and pace of human activity. He writes, "the 'content' of any medium blinds us to the characteristics of the medium" (9). This dissertation, however, will *privilege* this much-maligned content. More specifically, I will examine television's speech acts, its generic repetitions and compulsive returns.

While audience research and spectatorship theory have been crucial to certain branches of communications theory, there now seems to be a crisis of audience in cultural studies. Ethical/political questions surrounding ethnographic research, the complex interpellative strategies of mass media within global capitalism, and fragmentation of audience communities have necessitated, in my mind, a considered return to the text. To this end, I will look at television programs, print media reviews, and related Internet sites, in addition to theoretical texts. The audience enters into discussion in a limited way via chat groups on the Internet, and through anecdote and memoir.

What then, of the active audience, and its alleged ability to resist television's web of corporate and national signifiers? Stuart Hall was instrumental in conceptualizing a multiply situated reader for whom viewing is an active process embedded within social relations. Depending on their social location, readers find different ways of "negotiating" the televisual text ("Encoding/Decoding"). Feminist cultural studies built on these findings, discovering the ways in which female audience members resisted dominant readings (Modleski, Radway). Expanding on this, John Fiske describes how active viewers make use of "cultural competence [which] involves a critical understanding of the text and the conventions by which it is constructed [...] a constant and subtle negotiation and re-negotiation of the relationship between the textual and the social" (19). Negotiation can produce a pleasurable reading; such a reading can be seen as resisting what Fiske calls "the structure of domination" (19). He provides a useful critique of Stuart Hall's encoding/decoding theory, introducing complexities that Hall at the time overlooked: that readers do not so neatly divide themselves into three roughly equal teams (preferred, negotiated, oppositional), but rather engage in "structures of preference in the text that seek to prefer some meanings and close others off" (65). This set of ideas – that neither mass culture nor mass audiences are monolithic, that pleasure, and even power, can be found within commodified cultural products – was a reaction to the enormous influence of the Frankfurt School and its condemnation of mass media as a product of industrial forces buttressing capitalist ideology. At the same time, the idea that power and pleasure are not mutually exclusive echoes Foucault's dictum that "we must

cease once and for all to describe the effects of power in negative terms"

(*Discipline and Punish* 194).

It is not within the scope of this dissertation to pursue the various arguments in favour of, or against, the notion of the active reader. Certainly, resistance can be overstated, as when Meaghan Morris famously writes, "I get the feeling that somewhere in some English publisher's vault there is a master disk from which thousands of versions of the same article about pleasure, resistance, and the politics of consumption are being run off under different names with minor variations"(29). John Caughie is also critical of an inordinate focus on audience, describing it as a kind of displacement: "The privileged objects of much of television studies – the audience, the institutions, the market – are effective ways of displacing the theoretical problems of values, politics, and texts onto empirically testable bodies [...] the question of television's textuality – untestable, uncertain, repressed – will keep returning" (55).

The truth, as usual, lies somewhere in between. This dissertation is aligned with what Douglas Kellner has dubbed a "multiperspectival" approach to cultural studies, in which one can utilize a range of textual and critical strategies to analyze cultural artifacts. Intriguingly, Kellner advocates in favour of both the Frankfurt School *and* the cultural studies approach, arguing that, "certain tendencies of the Frankfurt School can correct some of the limitations of cultural studies [....] [C]ultural studies has over-emphasized reception and textual

analysis while under-emphasizing the production of culture and its political economy" (41).

In examining the phenomenon of woman-centred sitcoms during the course of my Masters research, I found myself less and less interested in the audiences for these products, since the market for them is so polysemic. The late 90's sitcom "Ellen", for example, provided pleasure to a wide variety of audiences: queer, middle class, and straight. In fact, it could be argued that, although the mainstream lesbian/gay media claimed "Ellen" as a cultural icon/product that spoke uniquely to its own concerns, the show's preferred audience was a white straight middle class demographic that wanted to be hip without sacrificing any of its socio-economic privileges. This is certainly not to propose a return to a hypodermic notion of audiences as cultural dopes. However, I have come to the conclusion that a more text-based approach can illuminate how genres like comedy or melodrama regulate, without wholly eliminating, the possibilities of diegetic transgression and audience resistance. Like Kellner, I am calling for adventurous theorizing, which crosses borders "across disciplines from text to context and thus from texts to culture and society" (28).

Rather than engaging in traditional audience analysis, then, I am interested in the affects that proceed from the text. I hope to read the televisual text in terms of capacity, as a line of flight. Or, to borrow from John Hughes, to examine media texts "in terms of becomings, not representations, with what passes between

bodies and transforms them in their multiple kinds of association" (9). Related to this are ideas about proximity and contagion, as in, for example, the ways in which grief concerning the death of Trudeau was passed on via the television, or rather, from machine to body and then to other bodies: "identity effects that are produced by the becomings of body and soul as externally related through their encounters with other bodies and other minds" (Hughes 9-10).

Textuality, with regard to television, is of course different than that of literature or film. Film theory and literary theory are traditionally more reliant on linguistic analysis; television theory, while it may draw from those modes, also overlaps with analyses of political economy, with cultural studies (itself an interdisciplinary field) and with philosophy. The more intimate space of the home as site of reception also places television in a different textual category. In part because of its commercial imperative, television is always intertextual and always interactive, in the sense of allowing for multiple readings and even, via fandom, intervention. Here, one might concur with McLuhan, who described television as a "cool" medium because, carrying less detail than a "hot" medium like print, it allows for more participation (22). In a more insistent way than literature or film, television has always acknowledged this interactivity (via the domestic site of reception), into the form of its texts. Finally, the economic (advertiser-funded) nature of North American television means that its texts are also more determinedly sutured into a commodity-oriented framework, and have embedded within them a flow of attention and distraction, unity and fragmentation. A television program, then, can



never be seen as a discrete unit, but rather as one of a series of texts whose unity is designed to attract an audience for the longest period of time possible (Allen).

Specific to television, I have found Nick Browne's notion of the "super-text" useful. Distinct from the mega-text, which is the sum of what appears on television – its history, logic and organization – the super-text is: "a text that extends beyond the parameters of a single program and includes advertising, the sequencing of programs and the serial character of television programming (cited in Bailey 46). But I hope *not* to isolate television or even technology from other sites of discourse, contingent upon the social and the ideological. Television's convergence with other forms of broadcast and digital transmission – the Internet, the telephone, the VCR, the radio – must be acknowledged in terms of how they resituate the viewer within the home. John Corner, following Williams, discusses this convergence as productive of "a kind of domesticated individualism set within a complex of abstract, public systems [...]radically increasing the privatization of television" (17-18). At the same time, 9/11 provided a vivid and unprecedented example of the blurring of boundaries between the private site of the home (which is where most people first saw the bombing of the Twin Towers), and the public realm (the street, the workplace) where private grief and fear became publicly shared and passed on. The connections that linked these spaces were, more often than not, digital; the Internet and the cell phone became technical apparatuses that connected rather

than isolated people, and allowed for an interactivity and perhaps even a cultural competency that TV was unable to facilitate at that time.

One could argue then that 9/11 constituted a super-text, one that lasted intermittently for a year and will presumably continue to do so for some time. From the actual coverage on the day, to fundraising ads by the American Red Cross, to special dramatic episodes of "West Wing" and "Third Watch", to talk shows featuring victims' families and news casts of the war on terrorism, 9/11 and its aftermath constitute one of the most interesting examples of intertextuality in the history of television.

But there is also a kind of super-text that extends beyond the TV frame, which Bailey describes as:

the simultaneous articulation of a set of highly ideological figures across a variety of discursive formations, centred in some sense in the diegetic content of television programming but permeating discourses seemingly far removed from the mere fictional content of dramatic programming.... this second (super) text [...] might be conceived as vertical in the sense that it slices across a set of varying media and discursive fields (46).

This approach, then, goes beyond form or genre and begins to consider televisual diegesis *and* discourse: the play of power relations that overflow into the social site of the audience. It is a way, argues Bailey, to account for ideology, and to address some of the limitations of British cultural studies' notions of

cultural competence, in which an almost unlimited agency has, at times, been attributed to the active audience.<sup>4</sup>

In this sense, then, I am writing about Canadian television from 1995 to 2002 as a *set* of super-texts, a kind of super-genre distinct (though certainly not unconnected) from both American and British television. This super-genre is distinct by virtue of its 'national' characteristics, however constructed, and its convergence with local spaces, global forces and cultural communities, including my own. A blockbuster historical drama series back-to-back with patriotic ads for a Canadian beer; the funeral of a bisexual Canadian elder statesman juxtaposed against Cuban socialism and my own queer youth. Lines of connection, lines of flight. Perhaps it is at this nexus of global economic interests that regulate the flow of bodies, the infantile desire for the dark, originary continent of the other, and the power of interpellation, that the Canadian imaginary is produced, flickering at the rate of sixty different light patterns per second on a TV screen.

## CHAPTER 1

### Affect Theory: Becoming Nation

No matter how you want to proceed, there is always the archive. You must obtain permission; it will take some time to do this. You will be regarded with mild suspicion or, perhaps, bemusement. Your body will pass, a metallic shadow, through various security devices; you will enter a sterile, windowless room. You are going home as you do this, though you do not know it yet. An *unheimlich* home. You are returning to the place you thought you had left, where you have dwelt so uneasily: the space of the nation.

You have spent days, even years in this archive. You have spent your entire life there. It is an archive of memories, fantasies and spectral presences; a site of regulation, but also of desire.

A newscaster in a skinny tie grimly announces a hostage taking in Montreal, October 1970; Pierre Trudeau in cinematic medium closeup shrugs, mutters, "Just watch me." Switch channels and decades, via a semiotic chain: Fidel Castro watches patiently as Justin Trudeau delivers a maudlin eulogy to his father, October 2000. Look away for a moment, and they're gone. A flurry of white dresses fills the screen. It is August, 1957. "Friends and neighbours, how are ya it's a real pleasure to have ya with us tonight", drawls *Country Hoedown* host Gordie Tapp. Live from a hay bale-strewn set in downtown Toronto, fiddler

King Ganam winks roguishly to the camera. You can hear American folk music sung by Canadian country singers: the Haynes Sisters with their identical dresses and thick harmonies; a very young, tall Tommy Hunter earnestly singing "Teenage Love is a Losing Game." East Europeans sneak in by virtue of their fiddle playing and passing-as-white skin: Eddie Gerky from Woodstock Ontario, with coke bottle glasses, cowboy shirt and cowlick, wins the fiddle playing challenge. Lorraine Foreman sings the melodious words of a square dance caller: "Ladies in the lead, that's Injun style (she puts her hand up, miming a feather behind her head) and swing that gal behind you."

You are at the archives; you have finally gained entry. Nostalgia fills the air. You feel a kind of pride as these ghostly images flicker in front of you. You know that the other side of this pride is shame.

As part of my research for this dissertation, I watched these programs and others at CBC's enormous, panoptical headquarters in Toronto, and at the palatial National Archives set on the banks of Ottawa's Rideau River, metres from Parliament Hill. The placement of these programs in an archive marks them as public documents, and yet it is also here that the nation assumes discursive control. For Foucault, the archive is synonymous with the rules of discourse: "it is that which differentiates discourses in their multiple existence and specifies them in their own duration" (*The Archaeology of Knowledge* 129). The rules of the archive, he claims, govern how we speak.

In this dissertation, I examine archival and contemporary footage from a variety of Canadian networks: CBC, CTV, W, Knowledge Network and Vision TV. Most of the programs I examine, however, are from CBC. There are two reasons for this. Firstly, the CBC offers a discursive site rich with nationalist speech-acts and identity claims due to the fact it is a state-subsidized and heavily regulated corporation. In 2003, CBC advertised itself as "Canada's Own"; historically, it has credited itself with (and been given credit for) nation-building while creating a simultaneous audience from coast to coast. Media critic Wayne Skene writes, for example, "CBC was a cultural church. It was a place to go to feel more Canadian, to learn more about being Canadian, to contribute our little bit to national purpose" (4).

Secondly, the CBC archives is unique in that it offers selective scholarly access to its well-organized holdings. However, I make no claims towards a scholarly analysis of the CBC *as broadcaster*. My object of theory is neither institutions nor apparati, but practices, as they intersect with power. Thus, I have found it more useful to gesture towards the role of archives and archival documents in the production of national discourse.

In *Archive Fever*, Derrida draws upon the etymological roots of 'archive'. Archive originates from the Greek word, *arkheon*, which initially meant house or domicile, an esteemed site of power:

It is thus in this domiciliation, this house of arrest, that archives take place.

The dwelling, this place where they dwell permanently, marks this institutional passage from the private to the public, which does not always mean from the secret to the nonsecret. [...] They inhabit this uncommon place, this place of election where law and singularity intersect in privilege.

(2-3)

The meanings of public and private resonated in my mind as I spent time at the CBC. It had taken me many months to gain entry to an archive that is heavily advertised on the CBC website. While you can view clips of selected archival footage on the Internet, unlimited access is usually provided only to those who pay considerable amounts for archival footage. Thus, footage produced via public funds is made available almost exclusively through private (corporate) money. My relatively free access (I had to pay only for my own airfare and expenses) was contingent upon the goodwill of the archives coordinator, a fastidious, overworked, and essentially good-hearted man who nonetheless made it his business to obtain every program I asked for, *himself*, thereby keeping a close eye on my research. In a sense, Derrida's progression, "from the private to the public", was inverted. In a rather disturbing way, public documents had become privatized. Derrida cautions that *any* public document can remain secret, and I would conjecture that the CBC's secretiveness about its documents contributes towards the significant lack of critical scholarly writing *about* the CBC.<sup>1</sup> In this way, the CBC's archival footage has acquired meaning not just as a document of history, but as *history itself*. In 2002, for example, the CBC

celebrated its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, in part via a series of one-hour programs that packaged archival footage into decades, hosted by TV personality Rick Mercer. Much in keeping with the CBC Archives' website slogan, "Relive our history through CBC Radio and Television," this footage was presented as a snapshot of Canadian history *itself*, heavily mediated by the nostalgic patriotism of Mercer and his "streeter" interviews. In a Foucauldian sense, these documents are monumentalized; history becomes archaeologized, interested only in the description, rather than the analysis, of the document/monument (*Archaeology of Knowledge* 7).

My project became one of de-monumentalizing these documents, and of finding a place for affect and bodies. As I watched this procession of flickering images, I tried to imagine the living rooms and rec rooms where these representations first revealed themselves, and the pride, nostalgia, grief, anger and fear that they may have evoked. Bodies connecting to machine, affects transforming other affects.

Television, with its proximity – its placement in the intimate, emotive space of the home – has always been well suited to both the portrayal and the contagious spreading of collective affect. By way of introduction, this chapter will attempt an overview of the ways in which an idea of the nation is produced via affect, and television's role in this discursive construction.



As I near the final stages of this project, I enter into a territory that is almost uninhabited by such critical writing. While Canadian cultural studies is renowned for its analysis of the technological apparatuses of the nation, there exists almost no critical writing about the nationalist practices of Canadian television.<sup>2</sup> The reader will note, then, that this is a dissertation concerned with Canadian television that does not lean heavily on the canon of Canadian media theory – Innis, McLuhan, Kroker et al. In a sense, these figures appear cameo-like, transitional characters in a different story. Canadian media theory, with its modernist concern for technology and the material products thereof, in the context of the nation-state, constitutes a useful point of departure for questions regarding practices of nation. These questions demand, I would argue, a methodology oriented towards questions of discourse and power, which is also informed by feminist and queer epistemologies.

As I disseminate this methodology in the following pages, I hope to maintain a dialogue between the nationalist canon and my own “postnational” (Appadurai) and interdisciplinary approach.<sup>3</sup>

### **Affect Theory: Becoming Dog**

*“Affects are becomings”*

-Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus* 256.

Affect theory emerges from a nexus of disciplines: psychology, neurobiology, philosophy, deconstructionist and post-structuralist thought. In this sense, it is an avowedly interdisciplinary theory: a crossing of disciplines, a breaking of binaries, and a movement into ontological and epistemological possibilities. Affect is, according to Deleuze, "whatever comes into being when something is affected or affects something else." Deleuze and Guattari write, "We know nothing about a body until we know what it can do, in other words, what its affects are, how they can or cannot enter into composition with other affects, with the affects of another body, either to destroy that body or to be destroyed by it, either to exchange actions and passions with it or to join with it in composing a more powerful body" (*A Thousand Plateaus* 257). Deleuze and Guattari apply ethology, originally the study of animal behaviour, to philosophy. In ethology, the organism under study is never separable from her/his relations to the world. Ethology is interested in intersections, in spaces in-between. In the spirit of endless possibility, Deleuze and Guattari counsel the reader on how to become a dog:

This will involve not imitating a dog, nor an analogy of relations. I must succeed in endowing the parts of my body with relations of speed and slowness that will make it become a dog [...] For I cannot become dog without the dog itself becoming something else (*A Thousand Plateaus* 258).

In these terms, *becoming* is flux. It refers to the post-structuralist, destabilized subject; the self in process, a self that has not submitted to regulation.

"Becomings are minoritarian," write Deleuze and Guattari; a process, a rising up, as opposed to a minority, which is a fixed state (*A Thousand Plateaus* 291).

*Becoming* is an alternative to *being*; becoming is always relational. As Rosi Braidotti writes, "the space of becoming is therefore a space of affinity and symbiosis between adjacent particles" (115). Languages of representation, like those on television – and, therefore, the self-produced through language – are constantly in a state of becoming, as they change and develop over time. Braidotti maintains that this process is liberatory: "the affective as a force capable of freeing us from hegemonic habits of thinking" (14).

Affect is, *not*, according to Deleuze and Guattari, a sentiment or personal feeling. Rather, it is "the encounter between the affected body and a second, affected body" (*A Thousand Plateaus* xvi). The relationship of these two affected bodies can produce institutional power. In other words, affects are social practices, constitutive of power. Certain notions of Canadian nationalism – that we are better than the U.S., that we are a peacekeeping nation, that we value ethnic and racial diversity – have gained the status of truth, making nationalist sentiment an acceptable practice. Affect – extreme emotion at sports events, state funerals, national crises and the like – is a social practice that supports these 'truths', and television helps to relay these emotions, in turn affecting other bodies. Foucault argues that this "will to truth" is a powerful system of exclusion.

Affect theory, with its emphasis on change and relationality, is a useful tool with which to discern how certain people *become* part of a nation. I will argue that television's role in this is neither one of simple mimicry, nor of cause and effect,

but rather, that nationalism emerges out of a complex series of relationships: of the body to disciplinary power; of television to the body; of pleasure to television; of citizenship to pleasure; of citizenship to shame. None of these pairs of terms exist as stable entities, but rather, circulate, exchange meanings, and form new combinations and relationships. In this sense, I write about the nation from where I live: from my living room, with its 16-inch television set next to bookshelves with their weight of theory; from the narrative of my so-called 'ethnic' identity and its necessarily othered relationship to Canadian identity. My own critique of roots, and of the terms of power embedded within the nation, intersects with desire: for roots, for citizenship, for power, for home. In this way, I too, become national.<sup>4</sup>

### **The 'Ethics Lag': Theoretical Overlaps and Becomings**

Affect theory, interested as it is in intensity, overlaps with trauma theory. Both produce ethical possibilities, actions, and passions that can join with other bodies. Both are anti-memory, in the sense of memory as repetition, a compulsive response to trauma. For Deleuze and Guattari, memory represents a desire for a lost origin. If interested in memory at all, Deleuzian thought invokes short-term memory, a kind of collective, historical memory, which I see as not unlike the ethical 'working through' of recent trauma theory.

Trauma theory's interest in remembering about the nation that which has *not* been remembered, represents an ethical turn in deconstructionist theory.<sup>5</sup> For

Derrida, *hauntology* takes the place of memory: spectral presences that will return to the future, destabilizing ontologies, rather than staying in the past. This is in opposition to the archive, which is a site of “memorization, of repetition, of reproduction, of reimpression [...] which incites forgetfulness, amnesia, the annihilation of memory [...] the archive takes place at the place of originary and structural breakdown of the said memory” (*Archive Fever* 11). This turn to ethical remembering can also be heard in LaCapra’s notion of the intellectual as opposed to the scholar: “The intellectual goes beyond an area of professional expertise to address problems that are of broader social and cultural interest, and in that sense he or she does not simply mind their own business” (*Writing History* 218).

Moving into the site of the social can create fissures, or instabilities, within theory, and provides further rationale for the use of autobiography, memoir and anecdote. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, in her critique of what she calls “paranoid theory”, is one of those who takes theory to task:

it is possible that the very productive critical habits embodied in what Paul Ricoeur memorably called the ‘hermeneutics of suspicion’ – widespread critical habits indeed, perhaps by now nearly synonymous with criticism itself – may have had an unintentional side-effect: they may have made it less rather than more possible to unpack the local, contingent relations between any given piece of knowledge and its

narrative/epistemological entailments for the seeker, knower, or teller.

(*Touching Feeling* 124)

"Paranoia knows some things well and others poorly," she says (130). While allowing for paranoid theory's agency, she argues that paranoia's alertness to danger, its resistance to surprise, its very tautology, may prevent positive affect and hinder ethical strategies. Both affect theory *and* memoir, then, in their commitment to speaking from and to the intersections of distant and proximate, global and local, become a way to intervene into theoretical modes that may have outlived their critical and ethical efficacy.

Parallel to this is Arthur Kroker's notion of the "ethical lag". Here, he addresses not theory, but technology. He argues that "outmoded" public and private moralities have not kept pace with technological change, and the effects of technology on bodies, minds and communities. He writes:

Just like the 'jet lag' in which the psychological consequences of life in the mainstream of technology are experienced only after the event is finished, 'ethics lag' means that we are blindsided on the real effects of technology until it is too late [...] [T]echnology without a sustaining and coherent ethical purpose, and ethics, public and private, without a language by which to rethink technology. (127)

There was, for example, an 'ethical gap' on 9/11, but one that was, I would argue, productive. Bodies are falling from towers; the screen is a horizon in

excess of what we can fully know. What is one to feel, or do, as the television conveys live satellite feed from New York on September 11, 2001? Compassion, anger, despair, grief, and even love emerged via a digital storm of emails, to and from colleagues in New York and around the world, and emotive phone calls to and from friends and fellow activists. As I will further analyze in Chapter 6, this was, briefly, a moment where, in the collision of ethics and technology, affect was dissociated from object; a moment where, to paraphrase Deleuze and Guattari, *we did not know what a body could do*.

### **Emotion vs. Affect: Locating an Interdisciplinary Methodology**

Brian Massumi makes an important distinction between emotion and affect:

“Affect is most often used loosely as a synonym for emotion. But one of the clearest lessons of this first story is that emotion and affect – if affect is intensity – follow different logics and pertain to different orders” (221).

Emotions, he says, are subjective and personal: “qualified intensity” (221).

Affect on the other hand is “unqualified [...] not ownable or recognizable and is thus resistant to critique” (222). Massumi also makes the point that one of the things that distinguishes affect from emotion is the former's relation to ethics, and to the body, marking it as a field distinct from sociology, but also from psychoanalysis.

Perhaps the distinction between emotion and affect can be mapped upon the subtle differences between autobiography and memoir. If emotion is singular and individual, then the same can be said of autobiography, which Nussbaum has described as "a technology of the middle-class self" (xi). Memoir, on the other hand, with its intersections with history, culture, and identity, occurs more vividly as a system of affects, of interlocking sites of passion and intensity. Jane Gallop's comments on the use of the personal, or what she calls "anecdote," as a legitimate theoretical practice are significant here. She locates anecdotal theory firmly within a deconstructionist tradition: "Although deconstruction was often held to be in opposition to the sort of personal discourse favoured by seventies feminism, by the nineties it became possible to recognize a deconstructionist personal and speak a personalized deconstruction" (5). To Gallop, anecdotal theory is productively and explicitly affective: "romantic, unreasonable, perverse and queer" (7). She argues that, in a Derridean fashion, it concerns itself with the marginal, the exorbitant, and cites Derrida's justification of *Of Grammatology*: "We are preparing to privilege, in a manner that some will not fail to judge exorbitant, certain texts" (7). As I have argued earlier, memoir, operating as it does *ex orbit*, outside of theory's "metaphysical closure" (Gallop 8), can have the potential to cut through theory's density and highlight its contradictions, like wine that both unifies and simplifies the flavours of a complex sauce. Gallop writes:

'Anecdote' and 'theory' carry diametrically opposed connotations:  
humor vs. serious, short vs. grand, trivial vs. overarching, specific vs.  
general. Anecdotal theory would cut through these oppositions in order



to produce theory with a better sense of humor, theorizing which honors the uncanny detail of lived experience. (2)

If deconstruction involves decentring the text, then memoir's function in this dissertation can be seen as deconstructionist in that it decentres theory. The anxieties generated therein (my own, those of the academic readers of this text) follow from this destabilizing moment, that of inverting the binaries of reason and madness, truth and falsehood, theory and memoir. Julian Wolfrey, following Derrida, writes about that which reading cannot master: "there is always that which remains, which is the remains of reading, the excess or supplement beyond the act of reading" (17). Those traces, concealed by the theoretical text, mark sites of difference-from, (difference-from-theory), which might otherwise not have been revealed.

Affect theory, then, like the strategic use of memoir, is concerned with the interconnectedness of body, culture and emotion; the ways in which this assemblage moves across and transforms surfaces of skin, of identity, of nation. Affect theory is positioned by Deleuze and Guattari as a way to move out of drive theory (*Anti-Oedipus*). In this formulation, affect theory is in process rather than fixed, it notes *positions* rather than types.

Sedgwick and Frank, in reviving the work of post-war psychologist Sylvan Tomkins, have done much to create a critical space for affect in theory. Tomkins, an American psychologist-philosopher is the author of *Affect, Imagery, Consciousness*, first published in 1962. He is credited with the discovery of the

mechanisms responsible for human emotion. His affect theory outlined the relation between thought, feeling, and motivation. He defined nine basic brain mechanisms: interest-excitement, enjoyment-joy, surprise-startle, fear-terror, distress-anguish, anger-rage, disgust, and shame-humiliation.

Sedgwick elaborates some distinctions between drive and affect theory:

'It is enjoyable to enjoy. It is exciting to be excited. It is terrorizing to be terrorized and angering to be angered. Affect is self-validating with or without any further referent' (3: 404). It is these specifications that make affect theory such a useful site for resistance to the teleological presumptions of the many sorts historically embedded in the disciplines of psychology. (*Touching Feeling* 99-100)

While being careful to attend to these differences, I will sometimes use the word 'emotion' to describe more individualized self-expression. I would argue that the different terms mark disciplinary boundaries. Affect theory derives from deconstruction, cultural studies, and post-structuralism, while emotionology is more aligned with the social sciences. Since this is an interdisciplinary project, I will be drawing from both fields while privileging affect theory.

### **Affect and the Nation**

Affect (or, in Ernest Gellner's terms, "sentiment") seems to be crucial to mobilizing a nation to patriotism, to war, and to unity. Gellner writes:

Nationalism is primarily a political principle which holds that the political and the national unit should be congruent. [...] Nationalist sentiment is the feeling of anger aroused by the violation of the principle, or the feeling of satisfaction aroused by its fulfillment. A nationalist movement is one activated by a sentiment of this kind. (52)

This idea of the *constructedness* of the modern nation (Renan, Gellner, Anderson, McClintock) prioritizes culture and the everyday symbols and practices of citizenship in the nation, which would include sites of affect. Here, nationalism *becomes* nation (Eley & Suny). Chris Barker, however, makes a distinction between the nation-state as a political apparatus concerned with the administration of space or territory and, following Anderson, nationalism as the *imaginary* identification with that space: "The nation-state as a political apparatus and symbolic form has a temporal dimension in that political structures endure and change, while the symbolic and discursive dimensions of national identity often narrates and creates the idea of origins, continuity and tradition" (64-65). In a similar vein, Kaja Silverman writes that a material relation to the nation-state (citizenship rights, healthcare, geographical relation) is invested in an imaginary relation, or what I would call nationalism. This relation is, she argues, underpinned by affect: it is a *hope*, or a *nostalgia*, rather than a reality (22). Going further, Ghassan Hage argues that nationalism is the imagining of an *ideal* nation, and that that imaginary assumes mastery of national space. In effect, he equates nationalist practices with racism: "practices which assume, first, an image of a national space; secondly, an image of the nationalist himself or

herself as master of this national space, and, thirdly, an image of the ethnic/racial 'other' as a mere object within this space" (*White Nation* 28). As such, he also argues that the everyday practices of nation include such commonsense affects as anxiety about walking through your neighbourhood at night, or joy that your country won at an Olympic sport.

Many scholars have noted the relationship between sentiment and national identity, and the state's role in managing emotion to create nationalism. Using the founding of the American nation as a case study, Evan Carton traces the ways in which the notion of what he calls "natural self-expression" arose out of an 18<sup>th</sup> century condition of "ontological instability". This gave rise to what Carton describes as "the massive and multifaceted effort of 18<sup>th</sup> Century writers and thinkers to anchor the self in the ostensible immediacy and inalienability of feeling" (24). The nation, in a sense, had to function as an affective space, where family and marketplace could not – a compensation for the "loosening of the Puritan bond" (Carton: fn 41). Carton argues that the American nation is founded not only on national, but also emotional self-determination:

The Declaration of Independence is just such a reciprocal linguistic operation in which a represented state of feeling and a represented state of the self authorize and naturalize one another [...] Thus, ingeniously, the feeling and fact of Americanness declare one another here and affirm one another to be united, natural, evident – ingeniously, because outside

the constitutive circuit of this declaration, neither the affective nor the political state of the US fits any of these descriptions. (23-24)

Similarly, both Brooks and Stearns have discussed self-expression as a marker of a new individualism, post-Enlightenment. In his study of the history of emotions, Stearns discusses the notion of emotional management that emerged in the postwar era. He notes that "control over fear and anger protected a sense of individuality and also served to lubricate group relations" (190). Kaja Silverman has noted the ways in which alarm over post-traumatic stress disorder among soldiers returning from WW2 was reproduced via melodrama films like *The Best Years of Our Lives* and *It's A Wonderful Life* that individualized the trauma as crises of masculinity within heterosexual relationships (*Male Subjectivity at the Margins*).

This gendering of national sentiment is, as Ann McClintock has pointed out, insufficiently theorized within canonical theories of the nation (*Imperial Leather*). Television coverage of the Quebec referendum provided ample opportunity to observe this gendering, as when the female pronoun was used repeatedly in reference to Quebec, or the language of heterosexual romance used to conceptualize the relationship between English and French Canada. Kim Sawchuk's overview of bodily metaphors in the debates surrounding the Quebec referendum does much to clarify the ways in which debates about Quebec's secession became highly gendered and embodied within discourses of pain, trauma, and sexual relations:

Sovereignty is renamed separation and aligned with the idea of a painful amputation in corporeal terms, or divorce and given familial associations. Quebec, like a patient who is suicidal, must be stopped before it harms itself. Within federalist discourses, the body politic emerges as a fully formed adult about to be dismembered by political change. (103)

This gendering, leading as it inevitably does, to romantic allusions, provides a highly affective field of representation. The intersection of sentiment, nationalism, and gendered embodiment, provides representational space for familial metaphors. McLintock describes this as "an indispensable metaphoric figure by which national difference could be shaped into a single historical genesis narrative" (357). In this construct, national time becomes familial time, with indigenous peoples constructed as infantile against the parental figures of nationalizing colonists (358).

The televisual representation of queer or queered bodies, politics and historical moments are posited, in this dissertation, as well as by other theorists (Dyer, Silverman, Wray) as an ethical practice with the potential to destabilize nationalism. I intend queer to mean a progressive politics or ethical practice rather than an umbrella term of identification. In this sense, queer becomes a challenge to the normal; a practice rather than a stable position. If queer *is* a questioning of normative behaviours and practices, then nationalism as a way of belonging is altered by direct queer interventions into the everyday structures of nationalism, especially its most gendered and heterosexualized practices. (Wray)

Butler argues that that normalcy is a continual production, sutured through repetition, and that queer bodies can make this production happen differently (*Gender Trouble*). Queer or queered representations, therefore, have the potential to make visible the normalizing structures of nationalism - but perhaps not the possibility to dismantle it. For it must also be said that “queer” and “nation” are two very unequal terms, and, that, generally, queer becomes subsumed by the nation.<sup>6</sup>

### **The Role of Media**

Benedict Anderson famously wrote that print capitalism was one of the primary ways of drawing individuals, or small communities of individuals, into the imaginary community of nation. In a useful critical take on Anderson's *Imagined Communities*, Prasenjit Duara implies a kind of essentialism in Anderson's grand narrative of nation. Duara writes: “Nationalism is rarely the nationalism of the nation but rather represents the site where very different views of the nation contest and negotiate with each other”. (152) He argues that Anderson's emphasis on print ignores the significance of oral cultural practices. Such a critique also opens up space for expanding the notion of print capitalism into other media: radio, television, the Internet. Arjun Appadurai describes this as “electronic capitalism”. He writes: “Part of what the mass media make possible, because of the conditions of collective reading, criticism and pleasure, is what I have elsewhere called a ‘community of sentiment’” (8). He argues that these

communities are more often transnational in their flow, and sometimes even “postnational,” “creating the possibility of convergences in translocal social action that would otherwise be hard to imagine” (8).

Anderson’s notion of national time is similarly applicable to theories of simultaneity in regard to television. Television, as a time-based medium with daily, weekly, and yearly programming schedules, is particularly suited to the creation of national time, providing an awareness of people across a geographical space witnessing an event together via television. The faraway is made proximate, but this does not necessarily mean that we care more for this faraway world. Instead, the faraway is associated with anxiety, trouble, and disaster, and television works to reinforce their distance (and ‘our’ proximity within the nation) even as it brings them into the home. In Canadian television history, the chronological narrative of the nation unfolds via costume drama like “Dateline” (CBC: 1955-56), which dramatized episodes based on the Battle of the Plains of Abraham and the Riel Rebellion, and the more recent “Canada: A People’s History” (CBC: 2001-2), in which gaps in historical accuracy were sutured together via the affective technology of music, voice-over and special effects. The use of the generic conventions of drama (as opposed to documentary) allows for the prioritization of sentiment and nostalgia.

In the Canadian context, the nation is negotiated at the level of everyday practices – from canoeing to beer drinking – which work to naturalize the



workings of state power, and are crucial to the production of a cohesive national "thing". Passions that may no longer properly attend the basic practices of patriotism – veneration of the national totems like flags, monuments, or heads of state – are overlaid onto consumption and the enjoyment of national *pastimes* (Keohane). Just as Dana Frank has determined that buying nationally produced commodities can be an expression of citizenship (cited in Wagman 78), so too does the consumption of Canadian television shows and advertising, no matter how lacking in sophistication, help the viewer to construct themselves as citizens. Indeed, that very lack of sophistication, echoing other consumer items, like maple syrup or Molson's beer, is yet another national commodity.

Wagman makes the point that the Molson's "I am" ad series appeared at a time when Canadian dominance of its domestic beer market was being challenged by the U.S. via new global trade agreements (GATT, WTO). He writes, "What is significant about these advertisements is the way in which 'nation' and the threats typically associated with its survival, becomes the rhetorical surrogate for 'competition' and the threats typically associated with the company's survival" (78-79). These trade challenges succeeded, allowing American beer companies greater access to Canadian markets. An ersatz nationalism became the means by which Molson defended its corporate might. I would add that these ads are also significant as being part of an increase in patriotic meaning, post-1995.<sup>7</sup> Audiences made use of a consumer item (Molson's beer) to create their own defensive, emotive forms of nationalism.

Duara makes an interesting distinction between *feeling* and *meaning* in regard to the nation. He notes that there are moments when everyone is drawn into the affective economy of nationhood, especially in relational situations. But Duara claims that there are *degrees* to the intensity and endurance of this feeling (165). The strength of Canadian *feeling* derives from a network of discursive and symbolic meanings that can often lead to national *meaning*, or what I would call patriotism. That these everyday practices are often truth-claims for white Anglo-Saxon identity provide further weight to the argument that nationalist practices lead to racism. Put another way, everyday national practices are inseparable from the linguistic narrativizing mechanisms of racialized national discourse.

Television, the ultimate commercial vehicle, is crucial to the everyday narrativizing of the nation. So much so, that in recent national struggles, satellite communication, television stations and so on are the first to be targeted by invading armies. The insertion of the colonizer's programming into national channels signals their victory even more than the raising of a new flag. The 2003 invasion of Iraq by the U.S. followed this trajectory, from the bombing of the Arab Al-Jazeera network, to the subsequent installation of the Washington-based, Arabic language radio Radio Sawa<sup>8</sup>, and the anticipation of a parallel television channel, The Middle-East Television Network. While audiences can prove resistant to these practices, media coverage itself encourages the notion of media as formative to nation-building. A *Globe and Mail* feature article included a

half-page photo-montage of the famous image of soldiers at Iwo-Jima raising the American flag. Replacing the flag, however, is a satellite dish. (August 2 2003: R1).

### **The Affective Economy of the TV Nation**

As Silverstone points out, television is a way for families to access certain emotions (*Television and Everyday Life*). Television's polysemy provides representation of carefully controlled excessive affect (soaps, state funerals, national catastrophes, state weddings and funerals) *and* of a complete lack of affect. Stearns notes that early television supported ideas of emotional control in the workplace at a time when post war trauma was at its height. It also provided images of docility and service, crucial to the postwar economy: "by the 1950's television...helped to translate the ever-smiling models of service success into daily viewing" (219). By the 1980's the bland faces of newscasters and the made-for-TV smiles of politicians, even in the face of protests or catastrophes marked contemporary standards for emotional control.

It is television commercials that become a primary site of affect, filling in the lack in regular programming. Since the postwar era, emotional control has been balanced by the encouragement of passion for consumer items and what Stearns calls the expression of "great joy over often modest accomplishments" (288) – clean clothes, a good dental checkup, the right shampoo. Representations of

leisure activities on TV – sports, or the extreme activities of contemporary reality TV shows – provide expressions and symbols of joy that may be mimicked in daily life. Television's super-text becomes a desiring machine, an assemblage of interlocking sites of power.

Television's need to produce national sentiments and emotions can also be seen as a defensive reaction to demands of globalization of industry (Hall "Culture, Community, Nation"). Canadian media is, in fact, a leader in mergers and convergence, with one of the world's most consolidated media networks.<sup>9</sup> Canada's two major private TV networks (BCE/CTV and Canwest Global) own most of the major and minor newspapers in the country. The federal government began promoting convergence in 1996, which signaled, according to Winseck, "a greater tolerance of ownership concentration and a new hierarchy of values that privileged the expansion of information and media markets over concerns about freedom of expression" (796-798). Indeed, as Winseck also points out, freedom of the press in regard to this unprecedented convergence has never been studied by the CRTC, Canada's main regulatory body of media.

Convergence always produces a loss of the local: layoffs in local centres, and centralization of editorial control.<sup>10</sup> The transnationalist forces of globalization, while working to break down national distinction, also somehow manage to *reinforce* nationalism. Stuart Hall has noted that efforts to restore these lost national characteristics have set the stage for the return of nationalism as a

major historical force ("Culture, Community, Nation"). Nationalism then becomes a way to maintain a fantasy of bounded national space to which one maintains a strong affective tie.

### **Longing, Belonging and Shame**

"A nation is a soul, a spiritual principle [composed of 2 elements]. One is the possession in common of a rich legacy of memories, the other is present-day consent, the *desire* to live together, the will to perpetuate, the value of the heritage that one has received in undivided form".

(Renan cited in Wagman 76, italics mine)

From Renan's late 19<sup>th</sup> century meditation on the nation to the present day, scholars have reflected on reasons for the desire to be part of the nation. In her exploration of modes of belonging, *Outside Belonging*, Probyn explores geographical sites in relation to their sexualized, nationalized classed and gendered desires. She sees belonging as a highly affective state that is always relational, and always performative: "I want to figure the desire that individuals have to belong, a tenacious and fragile desire that is, I think, increasingly performed in the knowledge of the impossibility of ever really and truly belonging, along with the fear that the stability of belonging and the sanctity of belonging are forever past" (8).

It is often immigrants who are seen as performing that longing for citizenship of the nation. Television coverage of every Canada Day I can remember includes celebratory footage of immigrants acquiring citizenship and singing the national anthem. 'Their' longing for 'our' nation provides evidence of 'our' tolerance and moral superiority. However, this is always a representation with strict discursive limits. As calls for deportation of undesirable others increase in the post-9/11 era, non-immigrants express their longing for the nation *through* the abjection of these alien bodies (Hage *White Nation*).

In *The Dark Side of the Nation*, Himani Bannerji has done much to take apart the imagined Canadian nation and expose what she calls its 'dark side'. "What," she asks, "are the terms and conditions of our 'belonging' to this state of a nation?" (91). She, too, equates nationalism with racism, arguing that national characteristics are rooted in a whiteness with moral qualities of "masculinity, possessive individualism and an ideology of capital and market" (107). She notes certain affects that accrue to Canadian nationalism – an anxiety about aboriginals, and the hate and aggression of 'official nationalism', and the love and sacrifice of 'popular nationalism'. Bannerji contends that the Canadian state is founded in the former, and that popular nationalism, if it exists, "contains legal/coercive strategies and the means of containment and suppression of all 'others' " (106). Visual regimes play a crucial role here. The specularity of the visible minority encodes skin as "some sort of social zone or prison (*Returning the Gaze* 149). The repetitive display of new Canadians on Canada Day

reinscribes them within a specular system of tutelage, in which immigrants performatively become the well-behaved children of a parental state.

I do not recall my refugee father ever once expressing a desire to belong to Canada. The walls of our home were covered with images of Cossacks, beribboned maidens against blue Carpathian mountains, villages amid the green steppes of Ukraine. To be nationalist in our émigré community meant to be in support of an independent Ukraine. But my father's fierce diasporic nationalism, forged in trauma and grief, sutured him into a fantasy of a multicultural Canada. As one of those elite 'ethnics' who pushed the government into the development of official multiculturalism, my father's desire was always for inclusion rather than belonging. A subtle difference, really, but one that allowed for dissociation and the maintaining of an outsider identity. My father knew well "the impossibility of ever really and truly belonging" (*Outside Belongings* 8 ). Becoming national was an assemblage, connected to, and transformative of other positions and affects: the trauma of war; the sentimentality of Ukrainian folksongs sung while shaving; framed degrees and academic gowns. And, also, the ethnic shame that these accomplishments could never quite erase.

How then, is shame belonging's other? Thomas Scheff writes, "The urge to belong, and the intense emotions of shame and pride associated with it, may be the most powerful forces in the human world" (277). Probyn makes the point that sport, which is tied into shame, emerged at the same time that ideas about the

homosexual and the nation were being formed. Sport, as I will argue in chapter 6, plays a large role in consolidating the nation. As such, writes Probyn, sporting bodies bring to mind “the visceral dynamics of pride, shame and bodily affect in ways that have been notably missing within much feminist and cultural analysis” (“Sporting Bodies” 14). Shame, which places the body in conflict with its own self, creates of the body a multiplicity. Like Sedgwick, Probyn sees shame as productive: “a force that refigures the connections between bodies, subjectivities, politics and what, for want of a simpler phrase, I’ll call the ethics of existence” (“Sporting Bodies” 24).

As at state funerals and national disasters, the 2002 Salt Lake City Olympics was situated on a shame-pride axis. (Nathanson). Pat Quinn, the Canadian hockey team’s head coach said, in a TV interview at the Salt Lake City Olympics, “emotion is our biggest enemy and our biggest friend” – emotion was something that could mobilize the nation but also, perhaps, interrupt the masculinity necessary to win and, therefore, shame the nation. Emotions, as Sara Ahmed argues, are not merely internalized drives, but operate on and across surfaces, asserting national boundaries and becoming invested in power. She reminds us that: “we need to reflect on the work that emotions do in aligning subjects with some others and against other others, and hence in securing the surfaces or boundaries of collectives” ([webct.ubc.ca/SCRIPT/Transculturalisms/scripts/serve](http://webct.ubc.ca/SCRIPT/Transculturalisms/scripts/serve): 2002). In that sense, then, shame works hard to produce the boundaries of the nation, and the longing to belong.



Following Tomkins, Sedgwick and Frank write about the relationship between shame and interest: "the pulsations of cathexis around shame [...] are what either enable or disenable so basic a function as the ability to be interested in the world" (114). Shame, then, is an attitude in part, of reading – "reading maps, magazines, novels" (114) as Sedgwick and Frank put it – but also, one might assume, reading TV. Indeed, as a scholar of television I constantly encounter the degree of shame (especially among academics) that is attached to television watching (as opposed to print media), which often co-exists with a detailed knowledge of its doings. Sedgwick and Frank maintain that shame, in its productivity, co-exists with pleasure:

Without positive affect there can be no shame: only a scene that offers you enjoyment or engages your interest can make you blush. Similarly, only something you thought might delight or satisfy can disgust. Both these affects produce bodily knowledges: disgust as when spitting out bad tasting food, recognizes the difference between inside and outside the body and what should and should not be let in. (116)

Sedgwick writes about how, after 9/11, she, along with other New Yorkers, kept looking, reflexively, for the Twin Towers: "But of course the towers were always still gone. Turning away, shame was what I would feel" (*Touching Feeling* 35). This was, for her (following Tomkins), the shame of the *unheimlich*, of looking at something that was meant to be familiar but had gone strange: "I was ashamed

for the estranged and denuded skyline; such feelings interlined, of course, the pride, solidarity and grief that also bound me to the city." (36)

Perhaps there was also shame in the *entertainment* that 9/11 provided. Sitting in front of the television for three solid days, I felt pleasure at something that should not have been pleasurable. I was enjoying the excessive, paranoid moment: televisual images and conspiracy theories that overlapped with one another. An inside and an outside to what, in activist circles, we used to call 'the dominant culture', that seemed to have merged. The bombing of the Pentagon! Rumours of attempts to bomb the White House! How many activists secretly admitted their fantasies of just such destruction, and how many felt a sudden, transient shame?

Sedgwick is critical of strategies that try to undo shame (examples: memory work in Germany, or pride movements), arguing that shame is constitutive; it is associative, connected to zones of the body, behaviours, identities, other affects. She writes, "The forms taken by shame are not distinct 'toxic' parts of a group or individual identity that can be excised; they are instead integral to and residual in the process by which identity itself is formed" (*Touching Feeling* 63).

Other scholars are interested in the connections between shame, guilt, humiliation, and embarrassment. Here, trauma and affect theory converge once again, at the site of the nation. Nathanson writes that shame is umbrella term for multitude of emotions ranging from embarrassment to mortification (19).

However, he differentiates between shame and guilt, in a distinction that parallels LaCapra's notion of acting out vs. working through:

Whereas shame is about the quality of our person or self, guilt is the painful emotion triggered when we become aware that we have acted in a way to bring harm to another person or to violate some important code. Guilt is about action and laws. Whenever we feel guilty, we can pay for the damage inflicted. The confessional system is a system of release from guilt, for it allows us to do penance. [...] No such easy system exists to facilitate our return from shame. (19)

This distinction points to notions of reparation, a notion Sedgwick asserts is missing from post-structuralist theory. Canadian television programs like "Canada: A People's History" reveal a steadfast lack of acknowledgement, let alone atonement, for racist acts. Bannerji asks, "What discursive magic can vanish a continuously proliferating process of domination and thus of marginalization and oppression?" (*The Dark Side of the Nation* 106). Does the lack of acknowledgment and punishment of wrong-doing, then, lead to shame? And is this shame, (potentially a site of transformation), also one of repetition, of representations that return again and again to trauma without the ability to move forward into present-time?

According to Stearns, these days it is embarrassment that stands in for shame. Embarrassment, which emerged in the post-Victorian era, allowed emotion to be replaced by reason, embarrassment being the affect that controlled potentially

debilitating emotions like shame or guilt (147). Embarrassment would seem to be one of the defining emotions of Canada's foreign policy, legitimizing increases in defence funding.<sup>11</sup> "Canada's Chrétien has proved to be a national embarrassment," wrote Bob MacDonald in the *Toronto Sun* (Sept 26, 2001). Comparing Bush's and Chrétien's responses to 9/11, MacDonald found Chrétien to be lacking in moral authority or military initiative, and declared him to be pandering to the 'ethnic vote'. Here, ethnicity produces embarrassment, which signals a need for power and regulation, at the borders of otherness. In the Canadian context, embarrassment can be seen as a way for Canadian identity to bypass any actual working through of shameful actions, and also marks its subordination and relationality to the U.S.

### **Pleasure**

*See Jane walk. See Mother cook. See Spot run.* Grade one was an unsettling mix of familiar Catholic ritual and exotic, Anglo-Canadian custom for me. Such a crowded, hybrid universe: the national anthem, portraits of Queen Elizabeth and Pope Paul, the Act of Contrition, Jesus on a cross. But the grade one reader resolved all contradictions. With its drawings of white English people living in an amazingly ordered and cohesive universe, it both comforted and dazzled. It was my job not only to *look* at Jane, Mother, and Spot, but to *see* them, to let them enter and fill, my visual field. As Bannerji writes, "[I]nvisibility [...] depends on the state's view of [some] as normal. [...] They are true Canadians" (*Returning the*

Gaze 148). This was a visual economy that promised its readers a kind of transparency via its spectacular pleasures, and a mode of belonging.

Pleasure, as Raymond Williams reminds us, is constitutive of belonging to the nation. Williams writes about the childhood “pleasure” of learning, and a sense of friendship and community, being “attached to the song of a monarch or a flag. [...] The powerful feelings of wanting to belong to a society are then in a majority of cases bonded to these large definitions” (*The Year 2000* 182).

Grossberg writes about affect as a hegemonic force, “operating through systems of identification and belonging” (259). He argues that within popular culture, affect often stands in for content, becoming an expressive force for right wing politics. He cites optimism as an example of how affect is put to the service of politics: The new conservatism does not replace a lost source of optimism but rather speaks directly to a desire for optimism [...] The new conservative alliance does not need to deploy specific commitments or beliefs, but it has to foreground the need to believe in belief, to make a commitment to commitment” (271).

In a post 9/11 CTV news report entitled “The Optimism of Canadians,” a national television network took upon itself the task of characterizing the affect of an entire nation. It was, in the anchor’s words, “a snapshot of how people are feeling about themselves and their futures in the wake of September eleventh.”

According to CTV, a poll revealed that, despite rising unemployment and a sluggish economy, Canadians were experiencing “the highest level of optimism

in two decades." After interviewing 'ordinary' Canadians at a drive-through Chicken Burger outlet in Bedford Nova Scotia, the report ended with a call to unity: "collectively, Canadians will be able to overcome the challenges posed by this new world" (CTV News, November 8, 2001).

It is no accident that these optimistic Canadians are situated at a site of consumption and of nostalgia: an old-fashioned burger joint. Keohane writes about the political economy of pleasure. In his view, the Canadian nation is defined by "national enjoyment," in which nationalism becomes consumption, and nation becomes commodity. The famous ambiguity of Canadian identity is, he writes, "a void around which enjoyment is structured and organized" (32).<sup>12</sup>

The enjoyment of a historical identity – that is, the innumerable social practices, languages, signs, codes that animate a particular identity – is constantly under threat of being stolen away by the necessary coexistence of otherness, because the Other's enjoyment, or rather, the infinitude of the difference apparent in the Other's enjoyment, an infinitude that appears as the Other's excess enjoyment, exposes the arbitrariness and contingency...of the enjoyment of the One. (23)

Several theorists (Duara, Hall, McClintock) have touched upon just such relational nature of national identification. Hall writes: "[The English] have to know who they are not in order to know who they are. [...] There is no identity that is not without the dialogic relationship to the Other" ("Culture, Community, Nation" 345). Similarly, Duara writes:

As a relationship among constituents, the national 'self' is defined at any point in time by the Other. Depending on the nature and scale of the oppositional term, the national self contains various smaller 'Others' – historical Others that have effected an often uneasy reconciliation among themselves, and potential Others that are beginning to form their differences. And it is these potential Others that are most deserving of our attention. (163)

Several scholars (such as Manning, Mackey) have described Canadian identity as relational, heavily dependent on its difference from the U.S. or Quebec. Aniko Bodroghkozy follows that trajectory: "The (I AM Canadian ads) were so pleasurable because of the effective ways in which they mined that lode of contrasting [U.S./Canadian] stereotypes but also the parodic ways in which the stereotyped Canuck ends up on top" (117). Keohane argues a Canadian identity that is relational to the immigrant. The immigrants' "excessive" enjoyment of their own customs shows up the lack of Canadian identity:

[T]he 'successful' immigrant and the 'lazy' immigrant are rendered equivalent in the racist discourse, as both are marked by some obscene excess enjoyment [...]. But it is this very excess, pertaining to the Other's enjoyment, that constitutes the object field of desire. The same qualities that we hate in the Other are those qualities that we envy, that we desire. (24)

## Pain

"The traumatic moment becomes encoded in an abnormal form of memory" – Judith Herman, *Trauma and Recovery* 36.

In recent trauma theory, national memory is constituted at the site of forgetting. Painful affect – grief, sorrow, a sense of loss – becomes that which defines national memory, as when Cathy Caruth asks, "What does it mean, precisely, for history to be the history of a trauma?" (15). For how else to explain the ways in which a nation has not fully narrativized its past? "What returns to haunt the victim, these stories tell us, is not only the reality of the violent event but also the reality of the way that its violence has not yet been fully known" (6).

According to Kaja Silverman, trauma produces a certain kind of history, which she calls 'the dominant fiction'. Moving away from an individualistic, clinical model that dominates much of trauma theory, Silverman theorizes the symbolic order *and* ideology: "When a modified Althusserian paradigm is brought into intimate connection with psychoanalysis and anthropology, it provides the basis for elaborating the relation between a society's mode of production and its symbolic order" (41). The dominant fiction not only helps form a subject's identity, but also helps form a nation's reality.

"The language of pain materializes the nation," writes Sawchuk. She claims that traumatic narratives materialize the nation, but that official national narratives



strive to represent a nation without pain: a unifying gesture “that will resolve all contradictions and heal all wounds” (112). As I note in Chapter 3, even those who suffered internment and near-death at the hands of a racist nation-state, are recuperated back into a healing narrative. Sawchuk hints at ruptures in this text: “the frequency and intensity of the pain-filled language and historical persistence of conflicts [...] indicate that the wounds are spread throughout the body politic, that they cannot be zipped shut” (112).

Renan, too, asserts that it is suffering, more than joy, that unites the nation: “Where national memories are concerned, griefs are of more value than triumphs, for they impose duties, and require a common effort” (53). But he argues that a nation’s trauma obscures memory. “The essence of a nation,” writes Renan, “is that all individuals have many things in common and also that they have forgotten many things” (45). He cites forgetting as crucial to nation-formation. The nation is then reconstituted in historical error.

You have been in the CBC archives for weeks. Somehow, summer has dissolved into autumn, and wind whips your face as you leave the building each evening. You are chilled, but not by the weather. You have been watching the news, years and years of Peter Mansbridge, Alison Smith, Hanna Gartner. You even watch the ellipses, the spaces between: the way that Alison always fixes a strand of her hair before going to air; Peter’s nervous half-smile as he straightens his tie. You

feel some affection for them, parental figures, objects of desire. But more than anything you feel chilled: by the absences, the spaces of forgetting, the long historical silences.

Can national television ever be otherwise?

According to Caruth, listening, or bearing witness, is a crucial component to the healing or integration of the wound: "the story of the way in which one's own trauma is tied up with the trauma of another, the way in which the trauma may lead, therefore, to the encounter with another, through the very possibility and surprise of listening to another's wound" (8).

Certainly, Canadian television is not monolithic, nor is impervious to resistant readings. At certain points in this dissertation I will suggest that even the televisual act of representation has the possibility of being such a witnessing. Certain moments, be they comedic ruptures of "This Hour Has 22 Minutes," or the uncanny historical flashbacks in "North of 60," provide a site for audiences to listen to a voice "it cannot fully know" (Caruth 9). Resistance and reparation are also machinic entities, which occur both within and outside of, but always in connection to, the media text.

In his introduction to *Anti-Oedipus*, Foucault writes: "Develop action, thought and desires by proliferation, juxtaposition and disjunction, and not by subdivision and

pyramidal hierarchization. [...] Prefer what is positive and multiple difference over uniformity, flows over unities, mobile arrangements over systems (xiii). This dissertation, moving back and forth as it does between historical moments and televisual genres, will attempt to rearrange these traumatic moments into a system of affective practices which can be seen as positive and multiple, as ethical becomings. Canadian television is the normative site where these multiplicities in Canadian nationalist discourse are organized.

## CHAPTER TWO

### Whose Child Am I? The Quebec Referendum and Languages of Affect and the Body

*"You cut the umbilical cord of a baby, it's a kind of separation, but one that brings new life."*

Quebec sovereigntist, interviewed on *The National*, October 23 1995

*"It's like taking a part a piece of your heart – it's a piece of my country. I don't want to see it hurt."*

Canadian nationalist, interviewed on *The National*, October 27 1995

*"Separation will be painless"*

Jacques Parizeau, *The National*, September 26, 1995

As early as the 1960's, McLuhan claimed that the electronic age would lead to the separation of Quebec. He argued that technology,

would permit Quebec to leave the Canadian union in a way quite inconceivable under the regime of railways. The railways require a uniform political and economic space. On the other hand, airplane and radio permit the utmost discontinuity and diversity in spatial organization. (33)

McLuhan also argued that electronic media has a more intimate connection with the body than print media and is in some ways an extension of our bodies. He described television as "the most recent and spectacular electric extension of our central nervous system" (317). While Quebec never did quite separate, the

televisual coverage of the 1995 referendum and the technologies, bodily metaphors, and affective practices that attended it bore out many of these earlier findings.

On October 30, 1995, residents of Quebec went to the polls to decide whether their province should begin the process of separating from Canada to become a sovereign country.<sup>1</sup> My examination of two years of CBC news programming about the referendum (news coverage, news documentaries and special programs) reveals a recurring language of affect, punctuated with words and phrases like “vulnerability”, “tragedy”, “anger”, “hurt”, “pain”, and “healing”. Generally, it is not just people who are described as having these feelings, but also the country itself, the nation becoming corporeal. “Canada,” proclaimed then Fisheries Minister Brian Tobin (about an imminent rally against Quebec independence), “is going to bare its heart and its soul to its fellow citizens in Quebec” (“The National”, CBC, October 25 1995).

If, as Foucault contends, all systems of discipline and punishment are tied up in a “political economy of the body,” one might also extend this to the narrative of rebellion and consequence that was the referendum debate: “It is always the body that is at issue – the body and its forces, their utility and docility, their distribution and submission” (*Discipline and Punish* 25). Indeed, it was at the moment of this so-called “unity rally,” five days before the referendum, that English Canada reasserted its colonial fantasy of managing a docile province of

Quebec, via the language of the body. Here, too, Quebec separatism emerged as a crucial object of Canadian nationalist discourse.

While a variety of bodily metaphors – from birth, to death by cancer – were discursively utilized, it was the heterosexual couple that became the overriding metaphor of Quebec's relationship to Canada. Kim Sawchuk writes, "The language of pain was deployed to establish the reality of the potential hurt and the right solution. It not only humanized the [national] body, but it gave it an age, a gender, and a life in a traditional heterosexual family structure" (98).

I will argue in this chapter that CBC news coverage of the referendum debate constituted an affective super-text that, with its narrative of heterosexual romance, operated in a fashion reminiscent of the emotion-laden dramatic serial.<sup>3</sup> Here it is important to note that I am not, in this chapter, discussing the history and politics of Quebec separatism itself, nor even of Canada's relation to it. In discussing the formation of the discourse of psychopathology, Foucault wrote, "These relations are established between institutions, economic and social processes, behavioural patterns, systems of norms, techniques, types of classification, modes of characterization; and these relations are not present in the object" (*Archaeology of Knowledge* 49-50). In this case, the discursive relation of Canadian media representation to Quebec sovereignty is part of a larger relational network in which the referendum debate emerged as but one of nationalism's objects. Thus, the history of the struggle for Quebec sovereignty

and Canada's relation to it is neither more nor less important than other objects of Canadian nationalism relational to Quebec.<sup>4</sup> Following Foucault, it is the discourse, rather than the surfaces of emergence themselves, that might provide the answer to my over-arching question: why has Canadian nationalism increasingly become an object of Canadian television, particularly in the past decade? What is affect's role in this? Canada's media-ted relation to the 1996 sovereignty debate, and in particular, the CBC's use of dramatic seriality, may provide some clues.

### **News as Drama**

There are many precedents that argue for news reportage as a dramatic, and even melodramatic, form. In arguing his notion of the media as anti-democratic, Derrida, for example, writes that news media becomes a kind of drama, with politicians playing characters: "mere silhouettes, if not marionettes, on the stage of televisual rhetoric. They were thought to be actors of politics, they now often risk, as everyone knows, being no more than TV actors" (*Spectres of Marx* 80).

Nick Browne argues that the dramatic form of sequencing - which he calls *television seriality* - is television's "paradigmatic form." He writes that it "orders and regulates television programming - from daily news and talk shows through the typical weekly sequencing of primetime entertainment programs" (72-73). Importantly, Browne emphasizes the commercial viability of the serial. Historically, the serial was a way of doing away with sponsor-financed drama

anthologies like CBC's "General Motors Presents" (1954-1961). These were replaced with the more profitable system of selling advertising spots, which also gave networks more institutional and creative autonomy (Browne 73). Browne's point is that the text of the serial is a result of negotiation between advertiser, network and audience. Indeed, as Creeber notes, seriality is so prevalent that television advertising now frequently mimics the serial form (441).

North American television (even, I would argue, a public network like CBC) is primarily a commercial undertaking. Writes Browne, "it is one of the traditional commitments of network programming to try and secure a loyal flow of audience attention through the prime-time hours, warding off potential defections through strategies of continuity" (77). Thomas L. Dumm concurs with Browne, arguing that what he calls TV's "serial-episode mode of composition" is its defining mode. Thus, he concludes that meaningful analysis of television "involves a study not of its particulars but of its more general ground, which constitutes its ontological frame of reference." Further, "the serial episode format [...] proceeds by processes of repetition. In series, narratives come to a conclusion with each episode, but in such a way as to call into question completion or ending" (308-309).

I would add that the serial nature of CBC's coverage of the Quebec referendum also served to narrativize national sentiment in the form of the romance genre, via a heavily coded language of body and emotion. As I have noted earlier,



romanticism is constitutive of nationalism.<sup>5</sup> Peter Brook points out that romanticism and melodrama were, historically, closely linked, both being evidence of a post-Enlightenment rise in the notion of individualism:

Melodrama represents both the urge toward resacralization and the impossibility of conceiving sacralization other than in personal terms.

Melodramatic good and evil are highly personalized: they are assigned to, they inhabit persons who indeed have no psychological complexity but who are strongly characterized. (16)

In the case of the Quebec referendum, I will argue that affect became a way of organizing bodies and minds at an extremely unstable moment in Canadian history. Thus, national sentiment, embodied on English television in a kind of melodramatic battle between the good of federation and the evil of separation, (the good of Chrétien, the evil of Parizeau) then became *narratively* mobilized as a means of managing Quebec.

### **Early Days**

The coverage of the referendum debate began in earnest in February 1995, nine months before the actual referendum itself, mimicking another bodily process, pregnancy. The gestation of the televisual debate began with the equilibrium (and whiteness) of "Carnevale" in Quebec City. Over footage of snow and dancing ice skaters, a voice-over said that the rumblings of the upcoming debate, seemed, at this point, "somewhat faint" ("Sunday Report", February 1995).

Subsequent interviews with the usual suspects: donut shop denizens, seniors, and the inhabitants of Main Street, Quebec, confirmed that while people's identification with or against sovereignty is "from the heart [...] it's still too early to get excited" ("CBC News", Feb 5 1995). Certainly, this was a narrative arc in the making.

The referendum discourse also created a parallel, intersubjective discourse: patriotism. This was to change the tone and syntax of representations of Canadian nationalism for the decade to come. The nine-month lead-up to the referendum was punctuated with flashbacks to an older, more patriotic past. On February 5<sup>th</sup>, 1995, the "birthday" of the current Canadian flag, CBC News co-anchor Pamela Wallin hosted a special episode of "The National". Images of flag-waving children, a flag cake, and the designer of the flag (conveniently, a *Quebecois* by birth) were intercut with sovereigntist billboards in Montreal. "Ironically," said Wallin (with no sense of irony at all), "the Canadian flag has emerged as the principle symbol of the campaign to keep Quebec in the country" ("The Magazine", February 15 1995). Paul Henderson, the hockey player who scored the winning goal at the Canada-Russia hockey finals, was brought in to say: "We need to become flag wavers. I think it would bring us together."

Questions of race and gender produced disequilibrium within this narrative early on, and ghosted much of its representation. Eva Mackey, following on the heels of British race theory, has discussed how the Canadian national project differs

from that of Britain by disguising racism not as homogenous (read: white) nationalism, but as *multicultural* nationalism (*The House of Difference*). The Quebec referendum debate, however, leaned heavily on what British intellectuals have dubbed the 'new racism', in which national culture and its enactments of patriotism are *implicitly* white. Keohane has described the project of Quebec separatism as being similar to that of right wing, racist projects like the Reform party and the Heritage Front: "These projects seek to solve the problem of the diversity and multiplicity of Canadian identities by categorically identifying and demarcating a singular center and systematically excluding elements that do not fit that category" (7).

In a foreshadowing of the race scandal that was to become the PQ's downfall, Bouchard, the Quebec premier and leader of the referendum campaign, was quoted on CBC as saying, "Do you think it makes sense to have so few children in Quebec? We are one of the white races that has the fewest children." ("CBC Special Report", October 17, 1995). Interestingly, the CBC completely ignored the racial implications of this remark, allowing critiques of sexism, but not racism, to surface. Bouchard was later shown on television reconciling with a feminist leader of the "Yes" (sovereigntist) campaign, but not with any people of colour. As often happens when race relations become an issue on Canadian television, it was women (and "women's issues") that became the bearers of discourse regarding inequality, obscuring the race issue yet again.<sup>6</sup>

Race came up again on CBC television, if briefly, when the Cree of Quebec held their own referendum, one week before the official one. That referendum resulted in an overwhelming “No” vote. This news was buried in larger stories about the economic uncertainties of separation, making literal Prasenjit Duara’s notion of the ‘hidden other’ which works productively to destabilize the nation, at the same time that its otherness is crucial to the *relational* identity of nationalism (“Historicizing National Identity”).

### **Seriality, Soaps and Melodrama**

The titles of CBC ‘special reports’, magazine shows and mini-documentaries, as well as the music and lead-ins that went with them, encouraged notions of seriality. Creeber’s description of seriality could also describe CBC’s referendum coverage:

Like the soap opera, the series reoccurs regularly throughout the schedule, weaving in and out of the domestic space. [...] Simply in terms of hours alone the series can produce a breadth of vision, a narrative scope and can capture the audience’s involvement in a way equaled by few contemporary media. (441)

This particular narrative serial also utilized many of the codes of melodrama. If the etymology of the genre is the Latin *melos* (music) and drama, a genre in which music marks moments of excessive affect, (Elsaesser), then the violin strains accompanying the introductory programs about the referendum, overlaid with sound bytes of different political actors in the debate (intercut with a

Parliamentary Peace Tower splitting in two) presented the emotional terms of the family romance that was about to unfold.<sup>7</sup> In Freudian terms, the 'family romance' is an imaginary scenario played out by a child regarding her paternity, in which she asks, 'whose child am I?' ("Mourning and Melancholia"). Questions of paternity are prevalent in the plots of western melodrama, and most especially within soap opera. This sets the stage for the enactment of bourgeois familial concerns: property, inheritance, lineage, and crises of masculinity. Within melodrama, the family is a kind of fortress constantly prone to infidelity, alcoholism, and other social tragedies. Separation – of husband from wife, child from father – is the great evil of melodrama, wellspring of all tragedy, and the antithesis of community and family, which is always melodrama's unfulfilled desire.

Making good use of the terms of melodrama, federalist politicians repeatedly used the spectre of family dissolution as an emotive hook. In an eleventh hour address to the nation, Prime Minister Jean Chrétien was pictured in his office between two sets of photos: that of his wife on left, and a grouping of family photos on right. In the middle, visually holding the two ends of the family together, was Chrétien. In a low, intimate voice, leaning forward slightly, he asked: "Do you really think that you and your family will have a quality of life and a better future in a separate Quebec?" New Brunswick premier Frank McKenna was reported as saying, "It's a time for all Canadians...to show their affection for their brother's and sisters in Quebec." ("The National" October 25 1995).

Subsequent television coverage isolated, echoed, and amplified this trope, as when CBC reporter Hanna Gartner blurted out, on referendum night, "Clearly, we are a dysfunctional family."

A spring, 1995 poll conducted by the CBC presented a 60/40 split between those who opposed, and those who supported, Quebec's separation. (This unsatisfactory split, this doubling, seemed to evoke the first of many flashbacks to footage of former Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau, warning against the evils of separation). Subsequent polls determined that the women of Quebec formed the largest number of undecided voters. Suddenly, it was clear that the province of Quebec had a gender: female. As CBC's Mark Kelley reported: "The province is ready to decide – but she can't. She's not alone. 10% of Quebec women – twice that of men – can't decide either" ("The National Special Report", CBC, September 16 1995). It was at this point that the gendered corporeality of the campaign began in earnest.

### **Gendered and Racialized Corporeality**

Eight months into CBC coverage of the referendum debate, anxiety was at its height – to be expected, presumably, in the month preceding birth. News coverage began to acquire the look and feel of dramatic narrative. A special report on the female vote was titled, "The Women," as though it were a play. The first of many Anglo-Franco romances was featured in a round table of women voters, hosted by Hanna Gartner. One woman said, "I fell in love with a

Quebecker and then with Quebec," while another wife, a francophone married to an Anglophone, declared her intention to vote "No." <sup>8</sup>

Not long after this feature, Gartner introduced an even more pointedly narrativized news documentary called "All in the Family," an intertextual reference to the 1970's TV series of the same name, about a bigoted blue collar worker, Archie Bunker, and his dysfunctional family. The documentary, about a bi-racial (white and South Asian) family on different sides of the debate, and running over three evenings, began with Gartner's voice-over: "All in the family: the father's voting yes the mother's voting no and the daughter has to make up her mind. [...] The story of one woman caught between the two solitudes at home." <sup>9</sup> The 70's TV series "All in the Family" repeatedly expressed anxieties concerning miscegenation via the marriage of Archie's blonde daughter Gloria to Polish American Mike, whom Archie referred to alternately as "Polak" or "meathead." Similarly, the CBC TV documentary serial evoked not the two solitudes of French and English, but that of French and allophone, and fears – expressed earlier by Bouchard – about the declining numbers of white Quebeckers.

Francine Pelletier hosted the 2-episode program. With her mention of the long-running Quebecois TV series, "La Famille Plouffe", she made yet another intertextual reference to television seriality. In the clip that followed, M. Plouffe was shown as saying, "I'm beginning to get tired of Canada". Running from 1954

to 1959, that hugely popular (in Quebec) program attempted to bridge the English-French cultural divide by, as Levin writes, “providing English-speaking audiences with a French-Canadian family they could care about, in a limited sort of way” (136).<sup>10</sup>

In the CBC documentary, M. Gauthier, a sovereigntist, stood in for M Plouffe, while, according to Pelletier, “Mama Gauthier is a new Canadian and just as fervent a federalist”. Cut to Madame Gauthier, who says, “When I see all the problems all over the world I think Canada is the best country in the world”. Such a testimonial is standard for CBC immigrant narratives: as Sedef Arat-Koc has pointed out, gratefulness is usually the only legitimate stance for immigrants. (2002). Archie to Mme Gauthier’s Edith, M. Gauthier said, (in French) “We want complete control of our economy, of our culture [...] we want to be sovereign master in our own home.”

The Gauthier’s daughter, 24 year old mixed-race Natasha, is, like Gloria Bunker, caught in between: between races and thus between genders. She is, as Pelletier reports with pointedly affective language, “neither in love with Canada nor with a sovereign Quebec.” Pelletier painfully extends the narrative of heterosexual romance; the Gauthier couple, in their racial and political difference, provide a convenient, if racially and emotively over-determined, metaphor for Quebec:



PELLETIER (to Madame Gauthier): *But you're not about to divorce are you?*

MME. GAUTHIER: *No, we've been married 26 years.*

PELLETIER: *...You'll still be sleeping with your husband after the referendum.*

GAUTHIER: *Yes!*

Natasha the daughter is confident, hip, politicized. Her strong sense of herself as a Quebecoise represents both excess and lack. As a woman of colour she lacks the ability to reproduce the white race in Quebec; as a self-determined allophone Quebecoise she exceeds the sovereigntist expectations of allophones in Quebec.

While people of colour and immigrants were presented, on English-language television as tangential to the referendum's outcome (sitcoms to the referendum's drama), their significance was enormous, both in the form of votes and in the ways in which Quebec politicians' fear of otherness became vocalized. In the final weeks of the referendum debate, racism was to become visible in Quebec as never before –in Duara's terms, *productively destabilizing* the sovereigntist agenda ("Historicizing National Identity", italics mine).

### ***"Quebec on t'aime": The Final Week***

A kind of hysteria pervaded the last week of the referendum. The word, 'danger,' was used repeatedly by reporters and anchors; the danger of economic consequences being paramount. Descriptions of panic and hysteria also figured in news reports. And, the language of romance was only to increase in the days leading up to the referendum.

In an extended CBC newscast on September 27, 1995, the word 'emotion' is used a dozen times in one hour, and an improbable lexicon of intimate words like hurt, desperation, and love, comes up repeatedly. CBC reporter Paul Adams leads into a story about a "No" rally in Montreal with the following words: "For many of the thousands who came here from outside Quebec it was an *emotional* journey." ("The National" September 27 1995). Cut to a middle-aged white woman attending the rally, flanked by federalists of all ages, including a girl just behind her with a maple leaf painted on her cheek. The woman says, for all the world like a spurned lover, "It's like taking a part a piece of your heart – it's a piece of my country. I don't want to see it hurt." Cut again, to an enormous Canadian flag floating on a sea of people chanting "Canada! Canada! (in French, no less, with the accent on the last syllable); cut to some young men with a home-made sign saying "*Quebec on t'aime* – BC (Quebec, we love you - BC). Never has patriotism been taken up so ardently by this post-war, post-70's

generation of white Anglos: nationalism is suddenly a corporeal matter of life, death and breath. As Marvin & Ingle write,

Ritual elements are expressed in bodily terms. [...] As the referendum for Quebec independence approached, a newspaper headline proclaimed, 'Canada holds its breath as Quebec votes.' [...] Ritual is creative; it seeks the unity of form and substance, which is embodiment. Thus, media are ritually driven to offer the illusion of bodily presence restored.

(142-43)

As the language of the body increased to almost comedic heights, PQ leader Lucien Bouchard's body became more visually prominent. Bouchard, who lost a leg in an attack of flesh-eating disease a few years earlier, now walks with a cane and a slight limp. His disability, usually tactfully ignored, was mentioned repeatedly in the last days of the referendum campaign. One CBC report described him thus: "Because of his charisma, because of his brush with death last year, Lucien Bouchard has been elevated into the status of a living martyr." Accompanying this voice-over was a waist-down shot of Bouchard's limping legs, and his cane ("The National" September 27). But it was on September 29 and 30, Referendum Eve and Night, respectively, that metaphors of ill bodies took over the speech acts of sovereigntists and federalists alike.

### **Referendum Night**

KEN DRYDEN, Lawyer: *I haven't been feeling very good this week, it's like I have a hole in my stomach and it won't go away....I want one*

*Canada for me because I hate the hole I feel. Maybe you feel that hole too.*

MANSBRIDGE: (As "Yes" vote edges up to 58.9%) *There are a lot of stomachs nervous in a lot of different parts of the country and a lot of different parts of this province.* ("The National" October 30)

Candlelight vigils. "No" rallies across the country. Another squabbling couple ("She's for 'No', he's for 'Oui'" !). And, a divorced couple, Peter Mansbridge and Wendy Mesley, anchoring the special October 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> coverage of the referendum.

The lead-in to CBC's October 30 special news program looked quite a bit like a low-budget film trailer. As the hands of a clock appeared over a Canadian flag, sound bytes and quick visual edits were montaged together, dramatic music throughout. Mansbridge's voice introduced the lead-in: "30 minutes before the ballot counting begins. We know the stakes. We've heard the voices of the politicians." Over a shot of Quebec flags, Parizeau's voice: "I think we'll have a country pretty soon." A man waving Canadian flag, then a *fleur de lis* in the top half of a split screen, a "No" rally in the bottom half. Chrétien: "We have every reason to be extremely proud to be Canadian." More voices and images, and then the sequence ends with the clock superimposed against a Canadian and Quebec flag, and Mansbridge's voice: "In thirty minutes we hear the voice of the people. Will it be yes or no?"

(Let me say at this point that, when reviewing archival footage of referendum night, I was no detached observer, even eight years after the fact. Like the audience for a melodrama whose genre I knew well, my heart was in my throat – to use another bodily metaphor. I knew how the story would end but, nonetheless, wiped away a tear when the vote reached 50/50, and then again when the “No” side won by the slimmest of margins: 50.6%. Like anyone returning to the site of trauma, I wasn’t crying for the lost object, I was crying for myself, for the memory of the emotions felt at the original scene).

As voting began in Northern Quebec, a vertical line appeared on the bottom half of the screen: blue for yes on one side, red for no on the other. The first poll to vote was Ungava, where the split was 50.5% “Yes”; 49.5% “No”. That almost equally divided red/blue line was hardly to change all night.

MANSBRIDGE: *“Nervous? A little bit edgy? Well you are not alone. The yes side, the no side, all Quebecers and all Canadians are nervous...”*

As the evening wore on, newscasters worked hard to fill the airwaves and conversation, allowing for plenty of slippage and performative speech acts. According to J.L. Austin, language is as much a mode of action as it is a mode of information. The meaning of the word is less important than the production of the word. Certain performative utterances, including those of newscasters, do not so much state a fact as perform an action, one that sutures them into normalcy. So that one might ask of these newscasters and reporters: what do they mean by

their *speech*, rather than asking, what does *this or that word* mean? The repetition of certain words or gestures generates performativity: the meeting of certain social conventions, the reproduction of normalcy.

HANNA GARTNER: *I'm watching your blood pressure go up, Brian Tobin!...*

TOBIN: *I'm feeling not cocky but confident...*

GARTNER: *Earlier, you were about to lose your dinner!*" (CBC round-table discussion, October 30 1995)

According to Foucault, the body is a capillary of power; power flows into individual bodies affecting gesture, posture, utterance. Institutions and discourses produce certain kinds of bodies (*Discipline and Punish*). I am saying that the reverse is also true: certain kinds of bodies produce certain kinds of discourses. The language of the demasculinized, romantic, pathological body (Quebec) flows back into the economic power relations of Canadian nationalism. "English Canada has had their heart gripped," says Ken Dryden on referendum night. This heterosexualized and feminized (and occasionally disabled) subaltern body is the one which the discourse of nationalism serves to preserve – but in a benevolent colonial fashion.

Massumi, cited in Sawchuk, speaks of "a complex flow of collective desire," in which certain bodies stand in for certain images" (103). These are something different from unknowing, Cartesian bodies.<sup>11</sup> These bodies know, to paraphrase

Bannerji, the dark side of the nation. Some of them know it intimately; others know it from afar.

That night, Parizeau said, famously and bitterly to a reporter, "We were beaten by money and the ethnic vote." ("The National" September 30 1995).

## **The Racialized Other**

MANSBRIDGE: *Good evening. Canada is still here tonight – but just barely.* ("The National" October 30 1995)

After the referendum and its aftermath disappeared from the television screen, I resigned myself becoming a resident of English Canada, in that most Anglo of Canadian provinces: *British* Columbia. I had moved to Vancouver from Montreal mere months before the referendum. I traded the decadent *patisseries* of Boulevard St Denis for the prosaic coffee bars of Commercial Drive; I went from being allophone to 'ethnic'. Nonetheless, I still used French expressions in my speech; the message on my voice mail was still dutifully *bilingue*. I still had a vote (which I never made use of); as the vote reached the 50-50 mark on referendum night, I joked, in yet another corporeal metaphor, that the future of the country rested on my shoulders. I was, however, relieved that Quebec hadn't separated – not because I supported federalism, but because, five years after Oka, I did not support the racism that seemed to be constitutive of the sovereigntist project.

Using the 1991 Mohawk standoff at Oka as a vivid example of Quebec's racism, Himani Bannerji describes First Nations as "the absent signifiers within Canadian national politics" (*The Dark Side of the Nation* 92). She argues that these racist moments, like Parizeau's awkward utterances, are then used by English Canada to obscure its own racist project. The discursive legacy of the Quebec referendum debate was not, then, a more critical approach to the ideology of nationhood. It was, I would argue, quite the opposite: an increase in racially overdetermined ideas of the nation, underpinned by emotive calls to patriotic excess.

CBC news was quick to adopt this trope. Reporter Tom Kennedy had this to say about Parizeau's comment, over footage of Parizeau chanting "*Vive le Quebec*," followed by a shot of a young woman of colour looking dismayed:

If anyone expected healing words after such a divisive campaign they didn't get it. Jacques Parizeau took aim right away at Quebec's minorities, who voted massively to stay in Canada. 'We were beaten, he said, 'by money and the ethnic vote.' ("The National" October 30 1995)

Over reportage of Parizeau's comment and the fallout that ensued, there was frequent and curious repetition of a particular image from Referendum Night: a recurring shot of South Asian man with a "No" sticker on his forehead, embracing a Canadian flag. People of colour, formerly bit players in the televised referendum serial, were recuperated back into the drama. According to Foucault, normalizing regimes like federalism encourage conformity but also individualize



each member by enabling precise classifications – in this case, measurable degrees of racial deviation from the norm (*The History of Sexuality*).

And remember the Gauthier family, those present-day Plouffes? Natasha, the “No”-voting mixed-race Gauthier daughter was pulled into the CBC studios and asked her opinion of Parizeau’s comment. “It made my hair stand on end,” she said, “I think it was a very unastute thing for him to say. It appeared to be a very spontaneous sort of thing, which is even more frightening.” (“The National”, October 31, 1995). Certain televisual moments, like this one, travel across discourses, forming their own polysemic lines of connection. In one of the most insightful commentaries I’d heard in weeks, *fille* Gauthier went on to say: “We’ll have to see what the backlash does to the Allophone and the Anglophone communities, especially since Parizeau has singled them out.” She recounted a conversation at a “Yes” party where someone said that if the “No” side won, there should be a law passed like one in Belgium where immigrants can’t vote until the third generation. Said Gauthier: “He actually said that. People were going, ‘Yeah, yeah, that’s a good idea’. So you can’t say that what Parizeau said was out of the blue and that it didn’t reflect what Quebeckers feel!”

In the days after referendum night, pain diminished to hurt – hurt being, as Sawchuk has pointed out, an indication that someone is responsible for the pain (104). On October 31<sup>st</sup>, CBC National News reported that Parizeau had resigned. Commented Mansbridge: “In defeat he had said words that *hurt*.” On November

13, 1995, when it became clear that Parizeau would not apologize, Mansbridge reported: "The Parti Quebecois tried to reach out to the people the premier may have hurt." Interestingly, this somewhat less painful affect referred to racism, rather than separation.

### **National Time**

We are 'national' when we vote, watch the six o'clock news, follow the national sport, observe (while barely noticing) the repeated iconographies of landscape and history in TV commercials.

- Eley and Suny, *Becoming National* 29

According to implicit assumptions of CBC coverage of the referendum debate, Quebecers and Canadians did have one thing very much in common: a shared belief in the viability of nationhood. That this is a contested notion, both academically and historically, was never once broached in CBC coverage. Not once did I see anyone questioning the *idea* of sovereignty, be it that of Quebec, or of Canada. Indeed, it seemed that affect was utilized in almost identical ways on both sides, as a way of naturalizing the imagined community of nation, and providing it with unquestionable stature. Sawchuk also argues that federalists and sovereigntists had much in common:

Both sides understood their own position as real, but temporarily delegitimated, and the position of the other as inherently false or

'manifestly fictitious'. Both deploy the image of the human body 'to substantiate' or to lend an air of 'reality' to a shaky ideology (99).

This ideological doubling brought these national bodies back together in a paradoxical manner. Lutz, following Neale, posits that melodrama insists upon both the imagined powerlessness and the imagined agency of the viewer: "the resolution of melodrama is always in important ways 'too late' for the characters. [...] our mourning for lost possibility and our demand for continued possibility combine to elicit tears" (200-201).

A serial approach to the dilemma of a divided country continued well into the 1996 season. A March 1996 serial entitled "Remaking Canada" aired over several weeks, and utilized some of the strategies of reality TV: "25 Canadians have 72 hrs to remake Canada... Tomorrow at 10." CBC responded to melodrama's 'demand for continued possibility' for as long as it possibly could. But by the end of 1996, the referendum debate had more or less faded from view in national media, thus fulfilling the imperative of serial melodrama. This fading away can also be seen as a kind of legitimization. As Silverstone argues, "the gradual withdrawal of the reporting of the event into the regular news programmes is, once again, evidence of its incorporation into the familiar and hopeful, distancing and denying structures of the daily schedule" (17). The event of the Quebec referendum, integrated back into the TV routine, changed in meaning, then, from a traumatic rupture in the fabric of nationhood, to historic proof of the nation's cohesiveness, and its ability to weather dissent. Neil

Bissoondath, a federalist South Asian Canadian writer who frequently appears as a commentator on CBC, said:

I got for the first time for a long time the idea that Canadians were beginning to discover the possibilities of their own power. For the first time in my memory there was a huge and massive gathering of what we like to call ordinary Canadians all coming together to save their country for the first time taking the agenda away from the politicians [...]so there's hope. ("The National" November 2 1995)

Here, Bissoondath is referring to September's "No" Rally, held in Montreal. What Bissoondath fails to mention is that this rally was funded, produced and staged by the federal Liberal party. While Bissoondath here perpetuates a kind of fantasy narrative of a unifying nationalist community, Keohane asserts that it is, rather, antagonism - in this case, the antagonism of competing political parties - that continually reconstitutes the notion of Canadian unity (8).

According to Silverstone, television also creates a deep need for continuity via its own internal *rupturing* of its continuity (constitutive, according to Deleuze and Guattari, to the structure of such a desiring machine). Silverstone calls this "the dialectical articulation of anxiety and security" and says the news is master of this process (16).

Institutions, television among them, attempt to insert us into what Cathy Caruth calls “national time”: the ebb and flow of commercialized festivals, and national holidays and festivals (Olympics, Canada Day, Thanksgiving, the Queen’s Birthday). But this marking actually performs an erasure: “The arrival into national history [...] erases not only her past but other nations as well” (33). We leave trauma, argues Caruth, or shut it out, by being placed within an ordered experience of time (61). The serial nature of CBC’s referendum coverage ensured that this was, indeed, an event which could be ordered into 30-minute documentary ‘magazine’ segments, some of which – the sequence on the Gauthier family in particular – ran as a mini-series. Like audiences watching other mini-series’, whether it be “Survivor,” or “Canada: A People’s History,” the intimacy and continuity of the format allowed it to become embedded in the daily conversations, gestures, and habits of its viewers.

As Foucault has pointed out, the body, too, is temporal. Normalization is rooted in the concept of a temporal body. This body – one that rises, works, and rests at certain hours – is therefore more naturally suited to institutional regimes and, as such, to national time (*Discipline & Punish*). The respectively male and female bodies of Canada and Quebec became a machinic entity, connected to, and becoming, part of a national television schedule, and thus of a national imaginary.

The racialized body becomes the way in which English and French Canada become conjoined – it's one thing they have in common. No longer so othered, a feminized sovereign Quebec body has gradually fallen from view. Canada was at risk of disappearing ("barely there") without its other: Quebec. As I will discuss in succeeding chapters, this racialized body recurs in the visual field of Canadian television in order to maintain the visibility of the nation.

## CHAPTER THREE

### **Haunted Absences: Reading “Canada: A People’s History”**

All formations of memory carry implicit and/or explicit assumptions about what is to be remembered, how, by whom, for whom, and with what potential effects. In this sense, remembrance/pedagogies are political, pragmatic, and performative attempts to prompt and engage people in the development of particular forms of historical consciousness.

-Roger Simon, Sharon Rosenberg, Claudia Eppert, *Between Hope and Despair 2*

Recently, I showed students an excerpt from a 1996 CBC special, "Who is a Real Canadian?", a televised 'town hall' debate about official multicultural policy in Canada programmed in the wake of the Quebec referendum of October 1995.<sup>1</sup> The debate had the predictably 'balanced' mix of brown and white faces on a panel, with a carefully arranged wallpaper of TV audience faces behind them - white faces behind a brown face, and vice versa.

I played the commercials for the students, too. The commercials were hysterical, where the CBC program was, perhaps, merely biased (I particularly wanted them to notice an "Air Canada" ad featuring rows of Japanese women in kimonos waving to the camera). But it was a bland Home Hardware ad that provoked the

most interesting comment of the day. The ad featured two white people – a salesperson and a customer – engaged in happy banter about the paint selection at Home Hardware: "a rainbow of colours!", the lady salesperson shrilly exclaimed. As one student (Sargie Kaler) pointed out, it was in this ad that ideas about home – and, by extension, nation – were spelt out in a manner for more explicit than the complex ideological tennis match going on in the CBC town hall debate. "Home" was awash with white faces, and coloured walls. The rainbow of colours would be applied by the white people – and just as easily removed.

As Nick Browne writes, "the [TV] ad, in its role as agent of symbolic restitution for lack in the narrative proper, constructs a kind of narrative pleasure that assures formal resolution" (77). Goods and services advertised in commercials circulate on a symbolic level throughout the super-text of the television schedule.

In this way, flow between ad and program is maintained, so that the ad becomes something more than an interruption. The Home Hardware ad addresses the 'lack' in the question, "Who is a real Canadian?"; a question which can never really fulfill its desire to define the 'real' of Canadian identity. Following Lacan, the real is a psychic space in which there is no distinction between self and other.

The real is a place of original unity. Because the infantile stage of the real precedes language, that state is unrepresentable. In this case, home renovation is a symbolic answer to the 'lack' of racism and its threat to original (national) unity.



In this chapter, via an examination of episode one of the serial "Canada: A People's History", and other Canadian television series, I will note the ways in which Canadian television continues, post-referendum, to practice these forms of narrative rupture and closure, exclusion and inclusion. I will attempt to analyze the workings of historical memory in its performative intersection with a Canadian national imaginary. Performativity – the repetition of certain gestures to produce normalcy – is constitutive of the speech act. Rather than looking at what certain words mean within nationalist narratives I am looking at the repetitive production, or performance of certain utterances and tropes. I am also exploring analogies between certain theories: performativity, melancholia, and acting out. These modes have an inverse relationship to ethics, for, as LaCapra writes, "to the extent that someone is possessed by the past and acting out a repetition compulsion, he or she may be incapable of ethically responsible behavior" (70).

### **Ghosts in the Narrative**

Benedict Anderson's formulation of nation as an "enacted space" comprised of roles and relationships of "belonging and foreignness" is now an academic truism (*Imagined Communities*). But his reference to space is worth pondering. In the past decade, the borders between Canada and Quebec, and between Canada and the US, have become increasingly porous: national space in this new world order is, then, perhaps not only enacted, but also *acted out*, in the sense of a

compulsive response to trauma and lack. This national space is always marked by absence: an absence haunted by the ghosts of history.

For Derrida, ethics and responsibility begin with the ghost. In spectral presences – traces, fleeting images – Derrida sees something that will always return. The ghost “begins by coming back” (*Spectres of Marx* 11). The past, which returns to the future in the figure of the ghost, must inform the ethical responsibilities of the present. This ghost is not just history but also otherness – the other within ourselves, but also, I would argue, the other within the nation. Ghosts haunt the self and the nation, and they must be acknowledged.

National memory is always selective, as much about forgetting as remembering; memory as performance, memory as interpretation. As Marianne Hirsch has written, “the representational media that function as technologies of memory perform important cultural work in constituting and consolidating group identities” (8). Here, I will look at several ‘technologies of memory’ including Canadian television programs that have appeared on Canadian television in the past seven years: an episode of the documentary serial “A Scattering of Seeds” (Knowledge Network 1997), the introductory episode of “Canada: A People's History” (CBC 2000-2001), and episodes of “This Hour Has 22 Minutes” (CBC 1996- ), and “North of Sixty” (CBC 1991-98). In doing so, I will draw upon Freud (“Mourning and Melancholia”), as well as Kaja Silverman and Dominic LaCapra to examine trauma, genre, and repetition as it relates to the media representation of these issues. The genre of melodrama, for example,

participates in the compulsion to repeat, but then also tries to close over the wound of pain that these traumatic events represent. As Stephen Neale writes: "Genres [...] provide a means of regulating memory and expectations, a means of containing the possibilities of reading. Overall, they offer the industry a means of controlling demand, and the institution a means of containing coherently the effects that its products produce" (55).

In a similar way, there is a certain genre of immigrant narrative that repeats itself on Canadian television, which seems to follow a religious format: confession followed by absolution; a cataloguing of shameful historical episodes in which the "victim" of these episodes is made to confess, followed by a redemptive ending in which the victim realizes that they are actually better off than they ever were. "A Scattering of Seeds" was a 52-part, independently produced made-for-television series that, according to its website, "celebrates the contribution of immigrants to Canada." The series description on the website itself is particularly instructive: "By personalizing the stories of immigrants, "A Scattering of Seeds" makes *the stranger immediately familiar* and the beginnings of this country, a shared experience" (<http://www.whitepinepictures.com/seeds/>) (italics mine). According to Ahmed, the stranger can *never* be made familiar, and instead must always function as a marker of boundary maintenance. The "shared experience" of nation relies on the fact of the stranger: "the enforcement of boundaries requires that some-body – here locatable in the dirty figure of the stranger – has already

crossed the line, has already come too close." The stranger is always "that which must be expelled" (22).

I will briefly address one episode of "A Scattering of Seeds" in particular, "The Fullness of Time: Ukrainian Stories from Alberta," directed by Ukrainian-Canadian TV/film director Halja Kuchmij. Each episode of "A Scattering of Seeds" begins with a superimposition of a silhouetted (immigrant?) farmer sowing seeds, against a black and white photograph of immigrants in ethnic costume. An accented voice recites the pledge of Canadian citizenship, immediately situating the immigrant, as I have argued earlier, in an infantilizing system of tutelage.

This episode focuses on Harvey Spak as he recounts the life of his Ukrainian immigrant grandfather, Alexander, who was run over by a train while taking a load of grain into town on a horse-drawn cart. The moral impact of the story hinges on the fact that Alexander died because, heroically, he wanted to save his horses. As Harvey has noted earlier in the episode, "life was tough...food was scarce...winter clothing was hard to come by." The stranger, less valued than livestock, has been expelled via a naturalized social context in which the lack of farm aid, relief, and decent medical services for poor and isolated immigrants are not addressed. This tale of immigrant hardship and several grisly deaths concludes with the following monologue, overlain with slow mandolin music, and

spoken over montaged shots of a graveyard, a Ukrainian community dinner, and a prairie summer landscape:

Despite hardship and tragedy, Canada was the promised land to the Ukrainian immigrants of my grandfather's generation. Its new frontier and freedom offered more than the uncertainty they had left behind in Ukraine. Their descendants flourished in a new land and became passionate Canadians, offering their spirit and vision to Canada, contributing to its greatness (Fade out).

The tragic expulsion of the immigrant, whether by death, internment, or deportation, somehow becomes justification of Canada's greatness, because, as Ahmed has pointed out, that expulsion constitutes the nation, and must therefore always be represented in particular and specific ways.<sup>2</sup> The image of an unnecessary immigrant death is not cause for atonement but, instead, juxtaposed against a patriotic voice-over, is constitutive of nationalist sentiment. One could also argue that, here, individual trauma (death by train collision) stands in for historical trauma; nowhere in Harvey Spak's story is mention of the Canadian internment camps that imprisoned thousands of Ukrainians of his grandfather's generation.

This particular genre of immigrant narrative draws from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century novel with its racialized subtexts that ultimately provide proof of the superiority of the West (and, in this case, the North as well). Here, American domination became an early object of Canadian nationalism, as it did again in the 1990's.

Mackey traces this notion back to the ideas of the Canada First Movement, a 19<sup>th</sup> century nationalist movement that sought to prevent Canada's assimilation with the US by promoting ideas of northern superiority and masculinity, in contrast to a South (the US) that was seen as "inferior, weaker, and also essentially female. [...] equated with decay and effeminacy" (30). This narrative may also bear the marks of such narrative tropes as the Horatio Alger story.<sup>3</sup> As such, this genre of immigrant narrative contains a strict knowledge/power relation. Following Foucault, every description also regulates what it describes. It is not only that every description is somewhat "biased," but also that the very terms used to describe something reflect power relations. The subject, by confessing his individual hardships, becomes implicated within a state power that both individualizes and homogenizes. At the moment of this subject's confession, he becomes implicated in the larger project of Canadian state-regulated multiculturalism. Himani Bannerji is critical of such cultural attempts at presenting an authentic, naturalized history, which she calls "the use of history as a mask of politics." She writes, "The representational politics which claim to give us history or tradition 'as it really was', free of changes brought on by its own movement as history, free of a content changed by its context, needs to be contrasted to a liberatory or emancipatory use of culture as a base for political identities and agencies" (*The Dark Side of the Nation* 2).

These narratives seek to reaffirm, as Mackey has pointed out, an idea that Canada has about itself: its "long history of benevolent forms of justice and

tolerance" (77). This notion has been used to differentiate Canada from the U.S. Tolerance is also central to the ways in which the media resolves crises of racism. As Sadeef Arat-Koc has pointed out, tolerance is not the same thing as acceptance. And those who are tolerated are those who display gratefulness (2002). Hage concurs: "Tolerance also delineates national practices grounded and guided by a White nation fantasy" (*White Nation* 23). Hage uses spatial terms to describe this process, in which the tolerant nationalist sees themselves as masters of national space, with the immigrant or racial other a kind of moveable object within this space (*White Nation* 28). An inability to master national space is experienced by the nationalist as trauma, or loss.

LaCapra defines loss as that which "is situated on a historical level and is the consequence of particular events" (*Writing History* 65). In the case of Canadian history, I am speaking of a double-sided loss: the loss of a cohesive national imaginary juxtaposed against the actual loss of dignity, hope, and life for those who have suffered from the racism and xenophobia embedded in Canadian culture. Hage describes the former loss as "the sense of trauma resulting from the fear of losing one's fantasy, and one's anchorage in the nation and the crisis of Whiteness that ensues" (*White Nation* 24). Both ideas of loss are connected. Deborah Britzman writes about "the importance of working through both kinds of loss: the loss of the idea of the social bond *and* the loss of actual individuals. These losses must be considered as intimately intertwined" (33). What happens when neither loss is explicitly acknowledged?

## **A People's History: Acting Out vs Working Through**

"Canada: A People's History" ("CPH"), is a big-budget, 16-part historical series produced by the CBC in both French and English, that premiered in October 2000, and continued on into the 2001-2 season. It has been very expensively promoted as the "real thing": an unflinchingly direct telling of Canadian history that claims to include the long-ignored ontology of the Other. It offers, supposedly, a uniquely unbiased approach, written after highly-touted consultations with scholars, activists and historians of every stripe; indeed, its very title invokes a popular, collective Truth. Unlike the afore-mentioned episode of "A Scattering of Seeds", more recent productions like "CPH" don't, any more, exclude mention of traumatic historical events (as opposed to individual traumas). As Eva Mackey writes,

[A]lthough the official stories misrepresent the messy and controversial reality of history, they do not, at least overtly, erase the presence of Aboriginal people or deny the existence of cultural differences. [...]

Aboriginal people are necessary players in nationalist myths: they are the colourful recipients of benevolence, the necessary 'others' who reflect back white Canada's self-image of tolerance. (2)



However, I will argue that, following Freud, the shame, regret or guilt these passing mentions represent are more constitutive of a collective melancholia, like the ego's idealization of the lost object, rather than actual mourning, where loss is actually integrated into the ego's – or the nation's – sense of self. Freud wrote that: "Mourning is regularly the reaction to the loss of a loved person, or to the loss of some abstraction which has taken the place of one, such as one's country, liberty, an ideal, and so on" (243). Mourning, then, is conscious, while within melancholia, "one cannot see clearly what it is that has been lost" (245). Here, loss becomes conflated with absence, like the absent presence of Ukrainian internment camps within narratives like "The Fullness of Time."

LaCapra builds upon Freud's essay by extending his notions of mourning and melancholia to the collective process of nation. He creates a useful and pragmatic distinction by redefining melancholia as a form of "acting out" and mourning as "working through" (*Writing History* 65). Echoing Silverman, he describes how the 'acting out' process involves a repetitive performativity, wherein, "the past is performatively regenerated or relived as if it were fully present rather than represented in memory and inscription, and it hauntingly returns as the repressed" (*Writing History* 70).

"Canada: A People's History" is a historical costume drama, albeit heavily influenced by the tropes of both melodrama and documentary. Melodrama's primary characteristics – heightened dramatization, binaries of good and evil,

explicit use of music and voice to mark moments of affect, and its repetitious form – make it well-suited to the excesses of the melancholic, acting-out mode. Peter Brooks writes: “melodrama at heart represents the theatrical impulse itself: the impulse toward dramatization, heightening expression, *acting out*” (xi, italics mine). Indeed, as seen in such national traumas as the Quebec referendum debate, the overflow of media information that seems to accompany national traumas seems to correlate with what Brooks has described as melodrama’s “desire to express all. [...] Nothing is spared because nothing is left unsaid” (4).

“CPH” clearly makes use of dramatic elements – actors, costumes, sets – but its creators speak repeatedly of having created a documentary. This gesturing to the documentary genre is significant because it attempts to recuperate the peculiar mix of reason and emotion that documentary claims to represent. Peter Hamilton quotes various 1930’s and 40’s documentary photographers who attested to this dual function. He cites Edward Steichen: “a feeling of a living experience you won’t forget”; and Roy Stryker: “it must...tell the audience what it would feel like to be an actual witness” (83). Hamilton argues that this reflective notion of photography was also, historically, a means of integrating art and industry. I would further argue that the creators of “CPH”, in drawing upon this tradition, are attempting to naturalize the workings of authorities of delimitation.

“CPH”, with its wall-to-wall voiceover, draws from a particular documentary tradition, what Bill Nichols describes as “the direct-address style of the

Griersonian tradition [employing] a supposedly authoritative yet often presumptuous off-screen narration" (258). Also known as 'voice of god' documentary, this tradition has as Nichols points out, largely been discredited within contemporary cinema – but not on television (258). This may be a way of enacting documentary's initial impulse (the integrating of art and industry) within an avowedly industrial, commercial medium. It is significant that the narrator is female (voice-of-goddess narration?), which could be seen as an attempt to diminish, but not eliminate, the voice-over's authoritative, didactic tone.

"CPH" is usually described in terms of its success, and high, perhaps even excessive budgetary expenditures (rumoured to be about \$25 million). Again and again, audience numbers are used to demonstrate this success (although these numbers are rarely substantiated in any empirical sense). But perhaps more important than launching into a debate of the program's success or failure, what is significant here is the mode of excess evident even within the discourse surrounding the program, a project in which, according to CBC and its official historians, *nothing has been spared and nothing has been left unsaid*.

The official website of "CPH", in describing the show, tries to reverse the traditional sorts of power relations that a costume drama might be seen to reproduce; here, it is the Europeans, rather than Natives, who are described as 'strange':

The opening episode of this 16-part documentary ranges across the continent, looking back more than 15,000 years to recount the varied history of the first occupants of the territory that would become Canada. From the rich resource of Native oral history and archeology come the stories of the land's first people – how dozens of distinct societies took shape, and how they encountered a strange new people, the Europeans.

(<http://www.history.cbc.ca/>)

It is not within the scope of this dissertation to examine the entire span of “CPH”. With the aim of doing a close reading that could reveal the technologies of affect encoding the nationalist statements that “CPH” produces, I will focus on “CPH”'s opening episode. The violin strains, haunting Irish and Japanese flute sequences, Native drumming and chanting, and synthesized crescendos of this episode provide us with an excess of emotive high points. Using mostly dissolve edits (there are very few straight cuts), lush landscape footage, a slow, soothing female voice-over, maps and dramatic re-enactment, the opening episode goes to great pains to assert the presence of the First Nations before European contact. But that presence is heavily mediated by special digital effects that produce a ghostly, shadowy, apparitional representation.

The episode begins in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. William Cormack, a Newfoundland-based merchant and naturalist, has an interest in the disappearing race of Beothuks, the now-extinct indigenous peoples of Newfoundland. He summons Shawnadithit, considered to be among the last remaining Beothuk, to his home in

St John's – she had been working as a maid in Exploits Bay. Cormack has Shawnadithit draw pictures for him of the Beothuk. Cormack tries to track down more Beothuks but has no luck. To eerie Japanese flute music and the sounds of lapping water, he says, "It was as if Shawnadithit had stumbled out of a land of ghosts."

At this point, the music changes to a mix of European strings and Native drumming, and the story segues back thousands of years to 'the beginning of time'. The line, "they were the first people" is spoken twice in the voice-over narration. Past tense is significant here, as is the frequent linking of aboriginal peoples with death. Such phrases as "creation legends spoke of survival and *death*," "a people always balanced between life and *death*," "the cycle of war and *death* seemed endless," create an image of what Daniel Francis and others have called "the imaginary Indian," the product of a white imperial imaginary:

The Indian is the invention of the European. [...] The Indian began as a White man's mistake and became a White man's fantasy. Through the prism of White hopes, fears and prejudices, indigenous Americans would be seen to have lost contact with reality and to have become 'Indians'; that is, anything non-Natives wanted them to be. (4-5)

The Imaginary Indian emerged within representation in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century, just as Canada was beginning to establish itself as a nation. White Europeans in this northern territory had to create a new national identity for themselves, so the image of the Indian became crucial. As Francis writes: "The image of the Other,

the Indian, was integral to this process of self-identification. The Other came to stand for everything the Euro-Canadian was not" (8). Canadian artists like Paul Kane and Emily Carr, and the American photographer Edward Curtis created an enduring image of a supposedly disappearing race. This was, I would argue, a kind of compulsive return on the part of the Canadian national imaginary: a ghost who constantly returns within representation. Aboriginal peoples at the time were, certainly, dying from alcohol poisoning and disease, but they were also assimilating and attempting to become part of Canadian society, or, they were thriving in their own self-sufficient communities. The Romantic idea of a dying breed of Indians that would not last to see the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was attractive to artists like Kane, Carr, and Curtis, not to mention those that viewed and bought these popular works of art.

"CPH" revives this durable tradition. The Indians in the program are mostly nameless and faceless, often presented in silhouette, in long shots or long dissolves, in shadows or mist, or with long hair obscuring their faces. Two scenes in particular represent the ways in which representations of the other become the bearers of discourse, allowing for (contained) challenges to dominant fictions. As Mackey writes, these representations, while indicating a certain recognition of First peoples, are a matter of expediency. They draw from a discursive tradition of building alliances with and promoting inclusion of First Nations that are part of economic self-interest and national identity, or what Mackey describes as "a push

to construct a [Canadian] settler national identity perceived as innocent of racism" (25).

From genocide and disease to residential schools and the inner city, the history of the mistreatment of First Nations people represents an ongoing traumatic episode that ruptures the Canadian imaginary. In an interview with *National Post* reporter Elizabeth Nickson, First Nations activist David Dennis uses the terms of trauma and affect to describe his relationship to the Canadian nation:

NATIONAL POST: *Are all white people racist?*

DANIEL DENNIS: *In any abusive relationship whether it's abuse between a man and a woman, a parent and a child, there's an incredible amount of shame, and I don't think that Canadians in general have dealt with shame on a large scale towards our people. You look at some of the headlines that occur after, in our eyes, landmark decisions that advance our rights, and you hear ignorant rhetoric, fear-mongering and hate.*

(2002 B2)

In this sense, there is, perhaps, a contingent relationship between national shame and national pride: one informs the other. Nathanson writes about what he calls the shame/pride axis, a balance between "the sort of hoped-for personal best that hovers as an unreachable image within most of us and the terribly feared personal worst that, when revealed, will trigger an avalanche of deadly shame" (20). He continues, "Shame – our reaction to it and our avoidance of it – becomes the emotion of politics and conformity. [...] its influence in human

civilization is paramount" (16). Within Canadian culture, this shame has been responded to through melancholia, or acting out, rather than the working-through process of mourning, constructing what might be seen as narratives that attempt to conform to dominant modes.

In Episode 1 of "CPH", aboriginal actor Tantoo Cardinal plays a nameless storyteller recounting a creation legend in which women and men, initially separated, are brought together by the Creator so that they can procreate: "when they worked together they prospered [...] there would be families here for a long time to come." The widely documented presence and importance of two-spirited, or queer peoples in aboriginal cultures is never mentioned, but it is not long before anxieties about race enter the representational field via sexuality. As Gilman, Hart, and others have argued, the primitive body is often, within representation, conflated with the non-reproductive queer body to allay fears of the fecundity of the other (*"families for a long time to come"*) and the demise of the white race.

Later in Episode 1, we see the warring activities of Indian tribes before first contact. According to the program, Indian nations fought endlessly with one another (before they were, presumably, civilized by contact with Europeans). One scene depicts the capture and torture of one Indian warrior by another. The voiceover describes the arcane rituals that would surround such a capture, over a scene with homoerotic overtones. In a tight two-shot, the two warriors face



each other in profile. The captor offers a last drink of water to his prisoner while slowly, tenderly, stroking the other man's face. Following Silverman, historical trauma can result in interruptions to performativity, challenging the symbolic order, however briefly. Francis writes, "the Indian became the standard of virtue and manliness against which Europeans measured themselves and often found themselves wanting" (8). Here, queerness interrupts that masculinity but in a manner that is contained by our revulsion at torture and murder.

The larger containment to any sort of challenge to the dominant fiction (queer or otherwise) occurs in the series' inordinate and lengthy focus on war between French and English settlers. The white settler wars depicted throughout the subsequent seven episodes of the first season substitute the trauma of racism with a kind of fetishization of masculinity: the white soldier fighting for his country – an excess of masculinity that enacts the trauma of the centre, of whiteness striving for supremacy. In other words, using the terms of cine-psychoanalysis, a male or dominant gaze substitutes for feminized, or subaltern lack. LaCapra describes this sort of trope as yet another symptom of acting out: "the dubious appropriation of the status of victim through vicarious or surrogate victimage" (*Writing History* 71).

An examination of the text of fandom as represented in the chat site on the official website bears out this reading. "Turk", a contributor to the site had this to say:

The TV series has given us a different viewpoint and allowed us to see the world as the people who lived then saw it. It has allowed us to see that no group was blameless when it came to cruel and unusual treatment of others. At various times during the documentary, I was angry at the French, the English, the Americans, the Natives, etc., etc. This indicates to me that this is a very balanced and thorough treatment of the subject. (<http://www.cbc.ca/history>)

Alvin Ying, on the other hand, writes to the same chat site:

I mourn of not able to learn about the diverse cultures that once were, such as the Hurons before decimation [...] I mourn of all the wisdom that is forever lost in the ebbs of time. I mourn of those whose stories will never be heard. (<http://www.cbc.ca/history/>)

Yet another opinion comes from *Globe and Mail* columnist Russell Smith, who, in the only critical writing I have ever seen in mainstream media regarding "CPH", describes the program as official art, meeting the demands of socialist realism of the Stalinist era: "*ideynost* (ideological expression), *narodnost* (national character) and *partynost* (party spirit) (D1)." Smith writes further:

A great deal of government money, from various agencies and the CBC, went into the massive 'A People's History' documentary series [...] This was seen to be worthy art with both an educational and a national character. It was broadcast on our own national, publicly owned network. It is official art. (D1)

If we are to believe media reports, especially that reported by the CBC itself, "CPH" was an unqualified success. How to explain this popularity? Kaja Silverman writes, following Althusser: "Ideological belief [...] occurs at the moment when an image which the subject knows to be culturally fabricated nevertheless succeeds in being recognized or acknowledged as a 'pure, naked, perception of reality' (17). She tries to explain how memory and ideology cohere: "events which never literally happened can assume the status of highly significant memories, while occurrences which might seem of first importance to a biographer may not even figure within the subject's psyche, since it is fantasy rather than history which determines what is reality for the unconscious" (18).

This reverse discourse can be seen again and again in "CPH". One glaring example is the history of Black slavery in Canada that goes unmentioned in the serial. Instead, this absence is filled in with the story of the Underground Railroad in which African American slaves found freedom in Canada. As Maureen Moynagh has written (about "CPH"), "the myth of the nation that represents Canada as a place of refuge, tolerance and equality is dependant on the careful erasure of that earlier history" (104-5). Canadian popular culture is the site at which this erasure, or forgetting, is constantly reinscribed. Thus, I will further ask, under what circumstances can popular culture actually be used to remember, or to talk back?

## **Empathetic Unsettlement**

Actual mourning can bring what LaCapra calls "empathetic unsettlement" (*Writing History* 78). With this concept, LaCapra distinguishes appropriation of the traumatic experience of the other from empathetic unsettlement, which denies closure or transcendence. This position constitutes a will to truth rather than a will to knowledge, which could result in unsettling emotions and possibly secondary trauma. This response would be ethical, responsible, and open to challenge.

At the level of representation, the comedic form may be particularly suited to this function. Indeed, LaCapra argues that the problem of representation (the reinscription of trauma) requires a consideration of the carnivalesque, "whereby impasses are somehow played out and existing norms or structures are periodically transgressed" (*Representing the Holocaust* 222).

Mikhail Bakhtin describes comedy as dialogic: it invites a multiplicity of voices, and is opposed to closure and completion. He writes that, "it is precisely laughter that destroys the epic and in general destroys any hierarchical distance. [...] Laughter demolishes fear and piety before an object, before the world, making it an object of familiar contact and thus clearing the ground for an absolutely free investigation of it" (23).

In comedy, then, there is space for the grotesque: a sense of otherness that is liberatory rather than oppressive. Central to Bakhtin's theory is the notion of carnivalesque reversal; the clown celebrates the "lower" functions of the body (eating, drinking, defecation, giving birth) and thus defies the "higher" regions of authority. Queerness is frequently sutured into the repetitive structure of the comedic, providing fertile ground for the return of the repressed. "This Hour Has 22 Minutes", a satirical news magazine program which premiered on CBC in 1993, has always had several ongoing and one-off queer characters and situations: lesbian-feminist academic Genoa Halberstam (a play on Camille Paglia), and working class dude Dakey Dunn, to name a few. "22 Minutes" may then represent the space of interruption within repetition that trauma (and, not coincidentally the genre of comedy) provides, allowing space for challenges to the normal. The title, "This Hour Has 22 Minutes", echoes the 1960's Canadian current affairs program "This Hour Has Seven Days", and has a similar, if more pronounced, critical edge. Geoff Pevere describes it as a show with "a clear affinity for the Canadian powerless over the powerful" (32). I would argue that its overtly queer content also functions as a site of ethics.

As I skimmed through various tapes of "22 Minutes" spanning the years between 1996 and 2001, I found only brief references to First Nations or immigrant histories. One recurring Native character, "Joe," played by Cathy Jones, appears irregularly to deliver irreverent, ironic monologues full of common sense wisdom. He is always depicted walking through a forest, or sitting beside an artificial-

looking fire. He seems to be an intertextual commentary (and a bit of an in-joke) on Joe Two Rivers, the Metis character in the 70's Canadian series, "The Forest Rangers", (played by Ukrainian actor Micheal Zenon) and, by extension, on the Indian as a white fantasy.

Generally, it is the image of the queer that becomes the bearer of discourse in "22 Minutes". As Silverman points out, breakdowns in the symbolic order signal ruptures in national imaginaries. She writes that, "history sometimes manages to interrupt or even deconstitute what a society assumes to be its master narratives [...] to undo our imaginary relation to the symbolic order" (55). In the character of Dakey Dunn, "male correspondent," Mary Walsh cross-dresses to play a male hustler-like character whose masculinity is in question at the literal level of the diegesis, as well as at the subtextual level. Walsh's performing of Dakey Dunn is an ironic theatricalization of masculinity that makes use of a repetition of overtly masculine gestures; thus, to a lesbian audience-in-the-know, it also becomes a drag king performance. This is no clean-cut, normalized made-for-TV gay neighbour. With her/his hairiness, largesse, and gestures to the crotch, this is a grotesque, carnivalesque inversion of femininity. Dakey Dunn is often seen lamenting the demise of masculinity; but her/his character also delivers trenchant political commentary and economic analysis in Newfoundland working class vernacular. Here, he/she comments upon transnational globalization, economic flow, and debt:

I admit I'm a weirdo. I don't live, dream, and eat the cash....Boy there's plenty a bucks out there, 1 trillion buckeens whizzin' around the globe every nighta the week bein' traded back and forth, and the high rollers are havin' a ball.... Every country in the world is up to its arse in debt. *To who?* Who do we owe this debt *to*? Do they have a debt they owes to someone else? Or do they owe a debt to us? Call a meetin' boy! Call the whole shaggin' thing off! Sure it's only a buncha numbers on a big computer terminal! Brazil don't pay us, we don't pay Japan. Japan don't pay-well, if they don't owe any money, maybe they don't, I dunno, maybe we can promise not to drop anymore nuclear bombs in 'em or something, I don't know, I don't have my grade 11 ("This Hour Has 22 Minutes" February 12 2000).

"22 Minutes" 'most radical commentaries frequently occur via lesbian affect; if, as Sarah Schulman has argued, lesbians represent one of the few cultures still too underground to be commodified, then the lesbian body holds a deeply subversive charge (1998). Like the lesbian, the drag king exists within the mainstream only in the most apparitional sense, and always signifies lack: a white masculinity put in crisis by economic downturn, not to mention feminism and transgendered politics. Definitely unsettling and implicitly empathetic, Dakey Dunn (who also spoke out against the war on Iraq during the 2003 season) resists moral closure via the instability of his/her gender and class position.

However, "This Hour Has 22 Minutes" straddles both sides of the fence, managing both to unsettle and to affirm the nationalist project. Since the Quebec Referendum of 1995, which created a crisis for Canadian nationalism, patriotism has been on the rise everywhere on Canadian television, including a renegade show like "22 Minutes". A recent spin-off serial, "Talking to Americans," which uses hilarious street interviews by Rick Mercer to demonstrate Americans' deep ignorance about Canada, situates me as Canadian and nationalist at the very moment that I recognize America as Canada's imaginary other. Characters like Dakey Dunn, or lesbian "macho slut" Genoa Halberstein (also played by Walsh), merely stand in for an explicit recognition of traumatic histories.

As LaCapra emphasizes, acting out and working through are not discrete entities; each requires the other. Following Freud, he describes melancholia as both a "precondition" and a "necessary aspect" of mourning (*Representing the Holocaust* 213).

Failing that, are certain moments in Canadian history simply 'unrepresentable' within the dominant fiction of Canadian cinema and television? Following Caruth, can the most direct seeing of a violent event occur as an absolute inability to know it? She defines trauma as a response to an overwhelming event that, not fully known as it occurs, returns later in the form of flashbacks, nightmares, etc. This not knowing, she argues, is trauma's epistemology: "the most direct seeing of a violent event may occur as an absolute inability to know it," and points to



what she calls “the problem of seeing” (92). For how else to explain the ways in which a nation has not fully narrativized its past? Caruth continues: “What returns to haunt the victim, these stories tell us, is not only the reality of the violent event but also the reality of the way that its violence has not yet been fully known” (6).

LaCapra asks if the social conditions for a ritualized passage through the necessary state of melancholia exist, and argues for specificity in naming the object of mourning (*Representing the Holocaust* 213-214). Who or what is being mourned in such a generalized field of representation as “CPH”? LaCapra writes, “the difficult problem for public education and practice would be to reorient both emotion and value in the direction of victims who are indeed deserving objects of mourning” (*Representing the Holocaust* 214).

### **“North of Sixty”: Working Through**

A now defunct dramatic series, “North of Sixty”, provides a sense of possibility both for specificity, as well as for an intersubjective notion of ‘working through’. It follows the daily life of Michelle Kenedi, a First Nations (Dene) RCMP officer in the isolated town of Lynx River, Northwest Territories. The script, written in consultation with a team of First Nations elders, has a rough, immediate feel.<sup>4</sup> The primarily First Nations cast was a mix of Native professionals (including many of those who later appear as nameless Indians on “Canada: A People’s History”). Linda Warley notes that this extraordinary program attracted a weekly

audience of a million and a half viewers and was nominated for 5 Gemini awards. She writes: "this program has brought images of Native peoples into Canadian homes in a way that is unprecedented [and] [...] makes space for non-Native viewers by incorporating white characters into its narratives and by portraying relations among white and Native characters which, though fraught with the legacy of settler colonialism, are not necessarily limited by it" (173-74).

An article in the *Toronto Sun* quotes the reaction of American First Nations actor Micheal Horse to the program:

I showed this show to a couple of Hopi elders that were staying at my house this weekend and they loved it. What happens on this reservation happens on any rural reservation everywhere," he [Horse] says.

Although "North of Sixty" doesn't air in the U.S., Horse says it has a big Native following in border communities and among satellite dish owners. "What's interesting about this show is it doesn't play the cheap shot. A lot of the things that are written in the States have to do with the medicine man and the vision quest. This isn't. You can see these people, you don't have to talk about it, you can see they have a centre, a balance. (Claire Bickley, *Toronto Sun* November 8 1995,

(<http://www.canoe.ca/TelevisionShowsN/north.html> November 3 2002).

The plots of "North of Sixty" centred on conflicts between Kenedi and the somewhat anarchic, tragi-comic Native-centred concerns of the town. Two things distinguished "North of Sixty" from other productions about Natives on Canadian

TV. Firstly, the memory of the residential schools continually haunted several of the town's residents: this traumatic memory was a constant presence in the chronotope of the show. Traumatic abuse memory was also, however, part of the characterization of a primary white character, who experienced his own recovered memories of abuse at the hands of Catholic priests. If, as several trauma theorists (Herman, LaCapra) have implied, solidarity and wider notions of community are necessary for working through, this acknowledgement of abuse trauma inflicted upon both white and First Nations subjects would seem to create a larger discursive space for resolution. LaCapra writes:

Melancholia is an isolating experience [...] that validates the self in its desperate isolation. In the best cases it may allow for insights that bear witness to questionable conditions and have broader critical potential. To be effective, mourning apparently requires a supportive or even solidaristic social context (*Representing the Holocaust* 214).

Secondly, alcoholism (diegetically positioned as a result of post traumatic stress disorder from residential schools) was something that could be and was overcome, through traditional healing practices and community support. Death was often present in the episodes, but it was not a dominant characteristic of the people's lives. By representing traditional mourning practices the show made literal the mourning, or working through, that was occurring in its storyline.

One episode in particular demonstrates this. In this segment ("Fair Trade," December 1992), a temporary white resident of Lynx River, and a long term

Native resident (also the town bootlegger), each need to bury their dead. In the latter's case (Albert Golo, played by Gordon Tootoosis), these remains have been in the possession of a museum in the south, a commentary on the "salvage paradigm" that museums of anthropology represent. In the story, a CBC camera crew flies up to video the reclamation of the remains, and interviews Golo and the chief, Peter Kennedy (played by Tom Jackson)

*GOLO: It's enough for me that the remains of my ancestors are in their rightful place and that their spirits are free. Politics is unimportant.*

*KENNEDI: It really is just the tip of the iceberg, though. I mean, the whole question of the inherent cultural rights of the Dene, or, for that matter, all aboriginal people, has not been addressed.*

The episode succeeds in pulling off an extraordinary intertextuality of the discourses of anthropology, race, and televisual spectacle. At the same time, in keeping with the polysemy of television (and particularly that of a state run network), the episode takes pains to depict the good intentions of white people. As Kennedy delivers this ideological message, a white museum curator in a funky African hat looks on, from a porch physically positioned above the two men. Cut from a long shot of the men to a medium close up of her. "Times change," she says, and then adds, sounding appropriately folksy: "You have to go with the flow." Warley notes certain First Nations critiques of this program, that could be applied to this episode: that the program avoids "really tough legal and

constitutional issues, specifically the Native issue of sovereignty, thereby effacing the threat to Canadian unity that Native political subjectivity represents” (Harrison, cited in Warley179).

But the actual depiction of traditional mourning practices adapted to contemporary Native existence also provides a means of 'working through' for both white and First Nations audiences. In one scene, Golo explains Dene mourning traditions to the younger Teevee (Dakota House). Mourning, it seems, is open-ended; there is no recourse, here, to an idealized 'lost' Canadian self. The final shot, overlain with drumming and chanting, is circular, but the circle does not close. Here, specific individuals are being mourned; but the realization of other losses is ongoing, and constitutes a powerful presence, rather than a melancholic, structural absence. LaCapra writes about the benefits of actual mourning or working through, in which explicit naming occurs:

Specific phantoms that possess the self or the community can be laid to rest through mourning only when they are specified and named as historically lost others. And particular, at times interacting, forms of prejudice (such as anti-Semitism, racism or homophobia) can be engaged ethically and politically only when they are specified in terms of their precise, historically differentiated incidence (*Writing History* 65).

Perhaps this was all too much for the funders in the deeply conservative province of Alberta. Despite 90 successful episodes, many awards and a loyal following, "North of Sixty" was cancelled in 1997 for lack of funding.<sup>5</sup>

### **Ghostly Return**

Perhaps the circle can never be closed; perhaps televisual representations preclude an actual working through. Are there phantoms that refuse to be laid to rest?

According to Derrida, ghosts are productive: they destabilize the binaries of past and present, self and other – perhaps, even, of east and west. This, argues Derrida, is crucial to survival: allowing the past to live on in the future. But this a disquieting position, analogous, perhaps, to LaCapra's empathetic unsettlement, for as Derrida writes, "Here we come closest to ourselves but also to the most terrifying thing. It is of the essence of the ghost in general to be frightening. [...] The most familiar becomes the most disquieting" (*Spectres of Marx* 142-146).

That ghostly invisibility, then, so crucial to the boundaries of the nation-state, always holds within it the potential to become present; Derrida's "imperative of a speaking that will awaken others" (*Spectres of Marx* 108). Television, as a marker of a contested Canadian national space, exists at the boundary of inside and outside space, protecting national subjects from outside forces at the same time that it seems to laminate them to these very forces. Cultural products like

"Canada: A People's History" performatively reinscribe a melodramatic acting out mode for the nation-state, while the unrepresentable "real" of First Nations genocide ghosts the edges of its representation.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### **An Otherness Barely Touched Upon: A Cooking Show, A Foreigner, A Turnip and a Fish's Eye**

The meeting often begins with a food feast: bread, salt, and wine...The one confesses he is a famished baby, the other welcomes the greedy child; for an instant they merge within the hospitality ritual.

- Julia Kristeva, "Toccata and Fugue for the Foreigner," 11

In the heady, early days of official Canadian multiculturalism, my mother, like many of her generation of Ukrainian immigrants, became a kind of unofficial publicist for all things Ukrainian. So it came to be that, one Christmas, she decided to call up her media contacts to inform them that January 6 was the 'real' Christmas for East Europeans all over the world and, therefore, a news item.

In point of fact, we celebrated both Christmases in a desultory fashion, each by half. The two halves never made up a whole, and it was perhaps these unsuccessful *faux* celebrations that made my mother want to produce and direct her own. Fair enough. But I hadn't anticipated that my mother would have a stand-in daughter for the media version: Lucy, a girl from our church, and second-generation Ukrainian, blissfully free of the sullen resentment and ethnic shame that we children of immigrants possessed. Lucy *loved* being Ukrainian; she was earnestly and smugly proud of it. She appeared at our door at the appointed time in full ethnic regalia, immaculately made up and coiffed. My



mother promptly seated her at the front window along with my little sister Lydia who'd reluctantly agreed to be similarly displayed. I was relegated to the kitchen to chop cabbage and beets. The camera crews were ordered outside for a better shot, and the next day on the local news there was Lucy with an annoyed five-year-old Lydia on her lap, solemnly looking out of the window of our suburban house for the first star, after which, according to my mother's apocryphal telling, the family would sit down to eat. Of course, it was a complete construction; after that overly lighted tableau was dismantled, my father bellowed his disgust, I went and sulked in my room, and the "sacred meal" got cold.

Media images, of course, are never "real", and my mother understood this well. Whatever it was she was selling required a double, a stand-in, someone less foreign and more hyper-real, who could soften the grotesque edges of the immigrant's existence, and yet, ironically, satisfy the audience's desire for the authenticity of the Native. One might assume that the picture in the paper was not for us but for a white Anglo reader immersed in nostalgia for lost ethnic ontologies.

In this chapter I will examine the televisual representation of multiculturalism via the ethnic cooking show. In order to explore the function of the immigrant, or the stranger, within media representation, I will have a popular cultural text – an ethnic cooking show – and Julia Kristeva's work on the foreigner interrogate each other. While I will gesture to the several critiques of official multiculturalism and

its representations that now exist (Ahmed, Bannerji, Hage, Mackey), I am also interested in the slippages and unintended effects that occur in the representation of the foreigner. It may well be that the curious position that Kristeva proposes, both for the woman and the foreigner – “to male manifest her solidarity with other forms of strangeness and marginality” (*Strangers to Ourselves* 38) - is in excess to what the televisual narrative seeks. But it is perhaps these excesses, and *not* the appeals to unity through an identification with the other, that provide a way *out* of the normalizing regime of the host culture.

Official multiculturalism has existed in Canada since 1971, emerging out of the “Bilingualism and Biculturalism Commission” of the Pearson administration. Multiculturalism is popularly described as having been a response to “ethnic” groups who also wanted official recognition, and is seen as one of the major achievements of the Trudeau era. Eva Mackey notes:” The policy identified some eighty different ethnic or cultural groups which could apply for financial support from various ministries, particularly the newly formed Ministry of Multiculturalism, to support programmes for maintaining cultural and linguistic identity” (64). But its adoption exactly one year after the October Crisis of 1970 also points to its implicit aim of pitting ethnic against Quebecois, or, as Mackey puts it, “a means to undercut Quebec’s demands for special recognition by bestowing recognition on other cultural groups” (64).

Multicultural policy also performs other functions in a Canadian context. Bannerji claims that Canada leans heavily upon its multicultural policy to maintain appearances as a democracy. She is also critical of its use as a management strategy, arguing that, "multiculturalism serves as a collection of cultural categories for ruling or administering, claiming their representational status as direct emanations of social ontologies" (*The Dark Side of the Nation* 6). Following Jameson, Keohane describes official Canadian multiculturalism as a product of postmodernity; the production of 'private languages' via "the proliferation of antagonisms based upon the particularity of identities" (3). Writing about Australia, which has in common with Canada an official policy of multiculturalism, Ahmed argues that, "The 'acceptance' of difference actually serves to conceal those differences which cannot be reduced to 'cultural diversity'. In such a story of 'multicultural Australia', the differences and antagonisms between white settler groups, Asian immigrants and indigenous peoples are hidden from sight" (*Strange Encounters* 95). Certainly, as I have argued in previous chapters, official multiculturalism (and its imbrication in funding requirements) can lead to a plethora of problematic representations, from the absurdities of a character named Olga Perogy in the CTV variety show "Circus" (1977-1984), to the more subtle but no less pernicious harnessing of the immigrant as advertisement for Canadian tolerance, as in "A Scattering of Seeds".

But I wish also to argue that the boundaries of multiculturalist representation are also horizons of possibility. For example, Razack states in an on-line interview with Zoë Druick:

Multiculturalism complies with the national story that the original citizens are Europeans and everyone else is an afterthought to be welcomed as additions to an already existing structure. Having said that, I will say that those slotted into the multicultural category have taken the small space afforded them to do wonderful things. We use this space to resist, to make claims, to convince ourselves that we have not disappeared

*([http://www.btlbooks.com/Links/razack\\_\\_interview.htm](http://www.btlbooks.com/Links/razack__interview.htm))*

Following current cultural studies theory, Appadurai, in writing about the intersections of media and migration, describes electronic media as “resources for experiments in self-making” (3). Migrant representations, he argues, produce images and viewers not “easily bound within local, national or regional spaces” (4). Such representations – alongside their evident limitations – may occasionally allow us opportunities to, as Appadurai puts it, “think ourselves beyond the nation” (158). For nationalism, as Appadurai points out, “is now itself diasporic” (160). Can certain ‘ethnic’ representations, like those on the Canadian cooking show “Loving Spoonfuls”, provide occasional insights into the transnational diasporic subject?<sup>1</sup>

## **Ethnicity, Sex & Cooking Shows**

“Loving Spoonfuls” (2000-2003) was a weekly cooking show on W, the Women's Television Network. According to the promotional website:

It all started in north-end Winnipeg. The concept behind the new docu-comedy “Loving Spoonfuls” came to creator Allan Novak as he sat in a tiny kitchen watching his favorite aunt cook her specialties while cracking jokes and telling tales. With an extensive career in directing and editing comedy and satire, Novak was searching for a novel idea. Struck by the explosion of cooking shows, he conceived of a series that combined cooking, comedy, and quirky characters. [...] authentic ethnic cooking, poignant real-life stories, and unscripted, spontaneous fun from a real grandmother.

*([www.lovingspoonfuls.com](http://www.lovingspoonfuls.com))*

“Loving Spoonfuls” is shot in the actual kitchens of immigrant women of a certain age, who demonstrate favourite recipes from their country of origin. Each episode is narrated and in a sense mediated by David Gale, a middle-aged, somewhat effeminate B-grade Canadian actor, of Jewish heritage (though this is rarely mentioned in the show).<sup>2</sup> Because the program is meant to be comedic, Gale attempts to provide witty commentary throughout, while at the same time translating the grandmothers' vague directions into actual measurements, and asking nosey questions about traditions and history of the women's country of origin. Intertitles underline the “humour” of mispronunciation or mangled syntax.

At certain points, a lurking husband or daughter is asked to contribute arcane culinary tips or bits of ethnic lore. Gale's persona is rather uneasy and sometimes even slightly hysterical, as he tries, mostly unsuccessfully, to create comedy out of the daily routine of an older immigrant woman.

"Loving Spoonfuls" is part of an intersecting discourse on food that is specific to late 20th/early 21<sup>st</sup> century food journalism, but that can also be traced back to the history of domestic advice manuals that go back to the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century (Leavitt). The Food Channel, an increase in food writing and the rise of the Martha Stewart empire signal an unprecedented interest in representations of food and its preparation. The televisual roots of this phenomenon go back to the 1970's. The bringing of the chef to the home cook, and of the aesthetics of public restaurant space to the private realm of the home, can be said to have begun with Julia Child's "The French Chef". Less white than Julia, with her peek-a-boo Polish heritage, Martha Stewart can be seen as a transitional figure in this continuum.

Canadian cooking shows like "Gallopington Gourmet" and "Loving Spoonfuls" would seem to invert Child's legacy via a carnivalesque descent into sex and bawdy ethnicity. One has only to glance at the on-screen antics of *The "Gallopington Gourmet"* (1968-1972) to see how far we've come. Featuring a boozy, leering host (Graham Kerr), this program set the scene for the associative connection between food and sex on TV, upon whose legacy the food shows "Nigella Bites"

and "Loving Spoonfuls" are built. Levin writes: "Kerr was engaged in a bizarre sort of lovemaking – with his audience, his food, his cooking utensils, and even himself" (64). Indeed, Kerr flirted continually with audience members while employing language that had, until then, not been used to describe food:

Look at that lovely hunk of lobster, that lovely succulent beautiful portion, and brandy over that, and the whole thing runs over your mouth [...] it should be tender and melting, soft and sensuous.

("Gallopig Gourmet" December 24 1970).

As Diane Negra has pointed out, food representations resonate with affect: "a channel for sincerity and emotional expressivity" (62). But they also speak to the body, and to desire: "Food, with its intimate connections to the body, is in many ways an ideal fetish object, taking up the place of sexual desire and hinting at the character of the experience of unified identification" (69).

A subset of this phenomenon is ethnic food fiction. Negra notes an increase in media representations of ethnic identity," giving the example of films such as *Like Water for Chocolate* (1993), *Eat Drink Man Woman* (1995), and recent advertising campaigns like that for the Italian restaurant chain, Olive Garden. French chefs are recuperating folk culinary styles, and the 1997 edition of *Joy of Cooking* includes recipes for what co-author Marion Rombauer Becker describes as "such national culinary enthusiasms such as couscous [...] strudel, zabaglione, rijsttafel and gazpacho" ("Foreword" unnumbered page).

On television, cooking show hosts Emeril Lagasse, Christine Cushing, and John Folse are forthright about their ethnicity, occasionally producing dishes inspired by their backgrounds. Even the all-American Martha Stewart will, on occasion, display her mother, Mrs Kostyra, cooking Polish dishes like borscht and buckwheat. Negra argues that these ethnic tropes are ambivalent, substituting for real fears regarding questions of ethnicity that conflict with national identity. She writes: "The fetishistic depictions of food and food preparation work to recover the ethnic family, which is endowed with an emotional expressivity lost in late-twentieth-century white U.S. culture (62). Thus, as Keohane, Probyn, and Stearns have also pointed out, such representations are motivated in part by a sense of longing and desire, or what Negra calls "exhausted whiteness" (62).<sup>3</sup>

### **Unofficial Multicultural Discourses**

"Loving Spoonfuls" is also part of the repertoire of representations produced, in a sense, by a national multicultural discourse. While official multicultural policies have evolved from an ethnic food and dance focus to policies that encourage anti-racism education, I would argue that *unofficial* discourses maintain the circulation of such troubled terms as diversity and tolerance. Ghassan Hage describes this premise as "enrichment." Referring to an Australian multicultural festival, he writes:

For the White Australian articulating it, the discourse of enrichment still positions him or her in the center of the Australian cultural map. Far from putting 'migrant cultures' even in their 'soft' sense (i.e. through food and



dance etc.) on an equal footing with the dominant culture, the theme conjures the images of a multicultural fair where the various stalls of neatly positioned migrant cultures are exhibited and where the real Australians, bearers of the White nation and positioned in the central role of the touring subjects, walk around and enrich themselves" (*White Nation* 118).

Hage posits a viewing relation in which immigrant cultures exist for the enrichment of Anglo-Celtic cultures. Importantly, he maintains that his relation is built upon a fantasy in which immigrant viewers of ethnic spectacles are erased: the spectacle exists only for the consumption of the Anglo audience, which goes some way towards helping to explain the tropes of these narratives.

Keohane offers some similar observations about Canada. Keohane argues, following Hegel, that the Other provides affirmation of our enjoyment, and also allows us to hide the lack of national identity from ourselves. In this formulation, Canadians derive enjoyment – have their enjoyment affirmed, certified, and approved as authentic, as it were – by seeing immigrants become more like themselves, but, note, not indistinguishable, not the same as themselves. The difference must persist in order that the reflection is from Other (25).

In "Loving Spoonfuls", Gale's mediating presence is, then, essential to the genre; he filters the white gaze. He functions both literally and symbolically as the one who makes sure all the ingredients are measured and in the right proportions.

GALE: *How much rice do you have there?*

ZORKA (Yugoslavian grandmother): *Three cups.*

GALE: (looks closely) *It doesn't look like three cups! Looks more like two cups!*

ZORKA: *Two cups....*

GALE: *And how much beef do you use?*

ZORKA: *Oh, use one pound, two pound, that depends, yeh.*

GALE: *Yeah, but that's not one or two pounds...*

In this episode, Gale finds it almost impossible to get exact measurements for the making of Yugoslavian cabbage rolls. But he keeps trying. As Hage points out: "Left to themselves, these cultures are bound not to mix, or at least not to mix properly without leading to ethnic tensions and wars. For the mix to work it has to be guided by a White essence, the most valuable of all ingredients" (*White Nation* 123).

The role of the grandmother forms a parallel function. Negra notes that food films often depend upon a central older character whose role is pedagogical, demonstrating the importance of tradition. The food and its preparation then become "a powerful form of 'emotional capital' for women. [...] We imagine the

food we eat is the transparent reflection of the emotional commitment of a caregiver" (63-64).

The grandmother also reminds us of our own good fortune. Each episode of "Loving Spoonfuls" makes mention of immigrant hardship. In the Yugoslavian grandmother episode, we see a cheerily coloured intertitle that says, "Zorka survived a forced labour camp in World War II. Most of her family was killed." Questions from Gale reveal that Zorka worked in a German munitions factory and never got more than a grade four education. Later, in the supermarket, she says to Gale:

*ZORKA: In Yugoslavia, we no have nothing, no shows, no clothes, bare feet. But today I have everything. I never dreamt I have house, little bit money. Today what I have, I'm millionaire.*

*GALE: Compared to what you had, you're a millionaire. That's beautiful.*

Here, Canadians can see an immigrant become "more like themselves" (Keohane) – more affluent, clothed and shod – but still with the accent that requires Gale's syntactical and ideological translation. Ahmed takes Keohane's Hegelian notion of self and other a step further:

The very act through which the subject differentiates between others is the moment that the subject comes to inhabit or dwell in the world. The subject is not, then, simply differentiated from the (its) other but comes into being by learning how to differentiate between others. This

representation operates as a visual economy: it involves ways of seeing the difference between familiar and strange others.

*(Strange Encounters 24)*

Thus, Zorka's otherness could be seen not only as providing the pleasure of self (national) identity, but as constituting that very identity in an Althusserian sense of calling it into being. Everything about her, then, is essential to this process: her accent, her cheap clothes, her memory of the camps, her chaotic, utensil-filled drawers, her grimy pots and pans.

### **Queers and Cannibals**

Gale doesn't seem to be making a great effort to hide his queerness on the show; effeminate gestures abound, and he occasionally utters coded asides. The grandmother's foreignness, Gale's gayness and comedy are intertwined. The queer body joins the racialized and gendered body as a border subject, a processual being whose essence lies in the act of becoming rather than being. Comedy, in turn, plays an important role in articulating such liminal positions, mapped onto the body. Within comedy's carnivalesque reversals, the clown (the foreigner or the queer) celebrates the "lower" functions of the body (eating, drinking, defecation, giving birth) and thus defies the "higher" regions of authority. In other words, Gale is a kind of foreigner too – but only at certain comedic moments. At these moments, the possibilities of queer's alliance with race become apparent. But when tragedy, in the form of a grisly war story, emerges, Gale takes on a more classical, less grotesque mien: he becomes an insider, or,

at the very least, an ethnic informant. This underlines, as I have mentioned earlier, the fluidity of the radical meanings of queer, and the ways in which queer can, as a subaltern term, become subsumed by normalcy.

At the end of every program, Gale sits down to eat the meal with the grandmother and her children and grandchildren. Only Gale and the grandparents are individually miked, however, and the camera, having gone wide at the opening of the sequence, mostly stays fixed on a 2-shot of Gale and his new "mammi" or "baba" or "oma" throughout the meal. The relationship is in a sense consummated as Gale eats the grandmother's food. Certainly, there are elements of symbolic cannibalism at play here. As Freud has written in "Mourning and Melancholia," "the ego wants to incorporate this object into itself, and, in accordance with the oral or cannibalistic phase of libidinal development in which it is, it wants to do so by devouring it" (249). In other words, difference here is not only embraced, but devoured: it is the foreigner's absence, rather than their presence, which is being celebrated and fetishized here.

The website happily concludes: "Thanks to 'Loving Spoonfuls', Gale has collected 13 new grandmothers who have extended a standing invitation for Sunday dinner and are expecting a call once a week"(*Lovingspoonfuls.com*). As I watch the program, I have the uncanny feeling that some ideal, appreciative, happy son, unmarked by his parents' wartime trauma and consequent displacement from their homeland, has displaced *me*.

But perhaps this displacement is productive. Zorka's foreignness is uncannily doubled by Gale's queerness, producing an excess of signifiers of strangeness. This, following Deleuze and Guattari, constitutes a a deterritorialization. This concept stems from Deleuze and Guattari's idea of the machine, in which production occurs for the sake of itself, without subjectivity or organizing center; it is, therefore, nothing more than connections (*Anti-Oedipus*). In this instance, the overdetermined (multicultural) production of self and other become deterritorialized, freed of origin. During certain unscripted moments both the immigrant and the queer become, in their connection to each other, something else. Also active here are modes of visibility and invisibility, which have been primarily theorized in a lesbian context, as when Amy Villarejo writes of "the slippery movement that lesbian appearance reveals and conceals between sexual difference and social relations" (27). Gale's momentary "appearances" as queer, then, have the potential to reveal the particularly vexed nature of an immigrant's, or a queer's relation national belonging. Perhaps, at those moments, to paraphrase Appadurai, the program begins to think itself outside the nation. (158).

### **The Figure of the Foreigner**

Julia Kristeva has done much to trouble the figure of the foreigner.

In her chapter from *Strangers to Ourselves*, "Toccata and Fugue for the Foreigner," Kristeva outlines certain categories which the foreigner, to avoid

annihilation, must fit into: "the wise," "the just," or "the Native." Drawing upon the experience of her clients in psychoanalytic practice, as well as psychoanalytic theories of the other, Kristeva's figure of the foreigner becomes a way to mediate between the demise of religion and the rise of the nation state: "Between the man and the citizen there is a scar: the foreigner" (*Strangers to Ourselves* 97-98). In a 1989 interview published online, Kristeva states: "I consider psychoanalysis as the means of approaching the other because the Freudian message, to simplify things, consists in saying that the other is in me. It is my unconscious. And instead of searching for a scapegoat in the foreigner, I must try to tame the demons which are in me" ([www.uoregon.edu/~sclark/eng61/kristeva.html](http://www.uoregon.edu/~sclark/eng61/kristeva.html)). It can also be surmised that there is an autobiographical strain to this essay. Kristeva was exiled from her native Bulgaria for almost 25 years, and has, more recently, written about her sense of foreignness in France, both as a woman and as an immigrant. In a 1994 interview she said:

I am in a good position to know what 'foreignness' is all about. France is a very xenophobic country and the French see me as someone with a touch of the tar brush trying to make it in their patch. Also the fact that I am a woman putting out unconventional ideas is something that upsets people in itself. [...] So I feel uncomfortable here and whenever I can, I take off to other countries. And this is where the paradox lies: in other countries, I find myself considered the quintessence of Frenchness.

(cited in Smith, *Julia Kristeva* 115)

One could see Kristeva's foreigner, then, as being somehow in between the semiotic realm of the maternal, which can also be seen as mother tongue and motherland and, on the other hand, the fixed identities and laws of the symbolic, which can be equated with masculinity and fatherland, the country of exile.

What Kristeva ultimately proposes is the thin possibility of all people recognizing foreignness within themselves: "Living with the other, the foreigner, confronts us with the possibility of not of being an other. It is not simply – humanistically – a matter of our being able to accept the other, but of being in his place, and this means to imagine and make oneself other for oneself" (*Strangers to Ourselves* 13). A program like "Loving Spoonfuls" is also built upon this premise: that there is a certain virtue in audiences being exposed to different cultures, and that through the ministrations of the ethnically (and sexually) indeterminate host, we, the audience, might also feel part of the grandmother's family, and, by extension, the larger human (Canadian) family.

This furthers, to borrow Kristeva's musical metaphor, the notion that different voices would create a harmonious, if polyphonic, composition. For the purposes of this chapter, this could in turn be seen as analogous to Canada's policy of official multiculturalism, which attempts to recognize ethnic diversity within the boundaries of the nation-state. This policy has been described as a mosaic, a decorative pattern created from small, usually coloured pieces, perhaps a kind of visual parallel to the fugue. It is no coincidence that the mosaic is a metaphor



drawn from the realm of the aesthetic. As Lisa Lowe writes, "multiculturalism [...] aestheticizes ethnic histories as if they could be separated from history" (9).

Does Kristeva herself participate in this aestheticization? Her thesis in *Strangers to Ourselves* has been criticized by some as being focused on the individual within psychoanalysis and, thus, less relevant within the field of social relations, let alone the politics of race and racism. As Ewa Ziarek writes: "Kristeva's thesis is bound to disappoint as an answer to the political violence of nationalism and xenophobia. The idea of welcoming others to our own uncanny strangeness not only appears individualistic, it also risks psychologizing or aestheticizing the problem of political violence" (4). While I find this critique useful in placing a certain discursive limit on Kristeva's expansiveness, I find Kristeva's own excesses within the text to be the excesses of the foreigner, which productively rupture the harmonizing logic of her thesis, as when she writes:

Melancholy lover of a vanished space, he cannot, in fact, get over his having abandoned a period of time. The lost paradise is a mirage of the past that he will never be able to recover. He knows it with a distressed knowledge that turns his rage involving others (for there is always an other, miserable cause of my exile) against himself. (*Strangers to Ourselves* 9-10)

How can these excesses possibly be harmonized? The foreigner is enraged against others, against herself. The foreigner's friends include *paternalists*, *paranoid persons*, and *perverse people*. In an episode of "Loving Spoonfuls"

featuring a Greek couple, a horrifying story of wartime displacement is told, almost casually, by the grandfather as he's basting a rack of lamb. Gale winces, and then doggedly continues trying to be funny: "An otherness, barely touched upon, and that already moves away" (Kristeva, *Strangers to Ourselves* 13). The foreigner's story is in excess to what the televisual narrative seeks. But it is perhaps these excesses, and *not* the appeals to unity through an identification with the other, that provide a way *out* of the normalizing regime of the host culture. The slippages, the falling-between-the-cracks of fatherland and mother tongue, provide spaces where even an immigrant audience can find pleasure.

### **Pleasure, and the Anticipation of Failure**

"The exile is a stranger to his mother. He does not call her, he asks nothing of her. Arrogant, he proudly holds onto what he lacks, to absence [...] the foreigner, thus, has lost his mother."

– Kristeva, *Strangers to Ourselves* 5.

The first generation in the new country must reject its mother tongue, and perhaps even its mother's food. Gale, outside of the symbolic order and therefore a kind of failed phallus, stands in for that lack, obscuring, but not quite erasing it. The actual child of the featured ethnic woman could not be present to narrate the mother's story – for shame, as Sedgwick has asserted, is about self-effacement – so Gale becomes the child, but a child who must also erase the mother by eating her (her food), and by moving onto a different mother each week. ("They

welcome me, but that does not matter [...] Next [...] It was only an expenditure that guarantees a clear conscience" (Kristeva, *Strangers to Ourselves* 11)).

We know Gale won't be coming to the family meal each Sunday, even though he has a standing invitation, for it is part of the generic structure of television comedy to forget the previous week's failures and try something new.<sup>4</sup> Genre provides a means of regulating audience memory and expectation and, in terms of representation, of making use of, but also containing, the potentially grotesque aspects of the comedic. The laughter of comedy, as Neale points out, turns on an anticipation of failure (for example: the failure of the fall guy to resist the danger of the banana peel). The women profiled on "Loving Spoonfuls" ultimately fail at the seamless representation that the genre of the cooking show demands. The turnip for the Finnish meal is ridiculously huge and requires an axe; the fish is laid onto the platter with its eyes intact; and, what's worse, when dared to do so by Gale, the grandmother actually *eats* one of the eyes. Wartime stories are told casually, too casually, in the kitchen or on the way to the deli. We recognize this genre by what it is not: it is *not* Julia Child, much less Martha Stewart, and this inevitable failure is meant to produce laughter.

The laughter is a kind of rejection. We know, also, that these women are not really Gale's grandmothers, and that in order to *not* be seen as a foreigner, he must embrace them with exaggerated endearments and wildly affectionate

gestures. The true son or daughter would be more restrained; would be shamed by the turnip and the fish's eye.

### **Ambivalence: Double Vision**

At the end of each program, there is always too much food: Negra notes that this excess marks a hunger "that is not merely physical but emotional as well" (68). As Gale swallows the food that has been painstakingly prepared with an excess of ridiculous gestures and actions, including acrobatics (the Finnish grandfather showed David his knowledge of circus tricks), singing, and folk dancing, Gale incorporates the otherness of the family into himself, just as we will if we try the recipes available on the website. There is, certainly, a utopian potential in this. Bakhtin, for example, argues for the importance of the act of eating as a way of representing the unfinished body and its interface with the world: "The body transgresses here its own limits. [...] Here man tastes the world, introduces it into his body, makes it part of himself" (281). There are few instances of actual eating on television; while the "Gallopig Gourmet" of the 60's regularly sat down for a boozy meal with a pretty female audience member at the end of each episode, today's cooking shows usually satisfy themselves with a meager nibble. But David's thin, classical (if effeminate) body belies this promise, and the focus on his own appropriated blood relationship with the mother at the expense of the blood family's inclusion, denies a possibility of an image of community which would truly recognize difference. That difference would necessarily include the

ways in which shame and abjection are also part of the immigrant family's experience.

I would argue that a program like "Loving Spoonfuls", or indeed, any number of Canadian TV programs that claim a sensitive representation of the foreigner, the ethnic, or the immigrant, are still very much engaged in the production of a normative power that allows for a diversity of individuals, but keeps watch over those who are excessive and exceptional. In this sense, their representations are ambivalent, in the way that Stuart Hall describes as "the double vision of the white eye" ("The Whites of Their Eyes" 22). That ambivalence produces a kind of shameful fascination for me even as I watch these programs for the third or fourth time. I worry that the grandmother is being made to look foolish, with her grimy bowls and her crude measurements. I decide that, from seeing that long-ago newspaper photo of Lucy and Lydia, this spectacle is not for me, but for the non-ethnic, for whom pleasure arises out of nostalgia for culinary ways that are part of my ontology but not theirs.

I know that these recipes are like secret spells, and won't be reproduced successfully by anyone else – how many times have I tried, and failed, to reproduce my own Baba's *perohy*? Even Gale finally admits this:

GALE: *So there's no official recipe. You just throw in what you think you need.*

ZORKA: *Yeh.*

Anne E. Goldman, in analyzing the autobiographical writing of ethnic cookbook authors, uses the term “masked resistance” to describe this deterritorialization. While the narratives usually begin with what she calls “a characteristically feminine humility,” a closer look reveals “a critical awareness that is often at odds with the status quo” (xix). The cookbook author and the ethnic grandmother may indeed be putting themselves on display for epicurean tourists. But Goldman argues for the agency embedded in complicated old world recipes: “the series of imperatives the exchange of any recipe requires – the ‘cut’ and soak’, ‘simmer’ and ‘season’ [...] gesture toward a sense of authority. These directives – orders, really – bespeak a kind of command” (8).

Indeed, as Sneja Gunew points out, the precise and often incomprehensible rules of ethnic cooking are meant to maintain boundaries:

Once we enter the modern period of diasporas we are indeed haunted both by the structures and strictures of the paradigmatic Jewish diaspora, which often lead diasporan groups to retain rules and the maintenance of social regulation because of the overwhelming fear of being, precisely, overwhelmed and assimilated. However, diaspora is intrinsically as much about breaching and blurring boundaries as about their maintenance, and cultural purity, like Lacanian desire, can actually never be attained (228).

Like the Ukrainian children looking for the first star in an urban sky polluted by streetlights and satellites, that purity is ever-elusive. It is imagined at the site of whiteness, as one of its pleasures – but it is imagined by the foreigner, too.

### **Subversive Pleasures**

Still, there are subversive pleasures to be had for the ethnic spectator. The dirty stained bowls and pots are history, says my mother: “That’s her life story. She’s been *using* those bowls!” Zorka’s similarity to my own Baba pleases me; I enjoy that tough bitterness overlaid against a willful and charismatic hospitality. Here, I would disagree with Hage in his argument that these images exist *solely* for the white spectator. These immigrant stories are campy performances, and they provide fantastical pleasure for the immigrant viewer, too. My mother actually claims that “Loving Spoonfuls” is more “relevant” to an ethnic audience; she can’t imagine why English people would be interested. While she’s dismissive of Gale, she says the grandmothers “aren’t stereotypical...you really get a sense of the individual.”

As I discuss the program with my mother, over my tea and her pastries, I envy her lack of ethnic shame. But it is also that shame that fuels my critical work, and burns at the very roots of my creative practice. For shame, like power, is also productive. For shame to be *creatively* productive however, is another matter (Sedgwick, “Queer Performativity”)<sup>5</sup>. The shame – like Kristeva’s foreigner, perhaps – must be acknowledged and folded into the creative act, thus nullifying

or reversing its effacing power. And this, perhaps, is the moment where multiculturalism could be overlaid onto transculturalism. At this moment the borders between self and other, between local and global, and perhaps even between shame and creativity, become more porous.

Within such a moment we could begin to ask: how is it that the child of the foreigner becomes foreign to her parents in such an uncanny way that multiculturalism's simulacra becomes the only possible replacement? It wasn't possible for my mother, as an immigrant subject, to ask that question, and I can't say it's been easy, or uncomplicated for me, either. Still, it remains the task of the second and third generations to pose these inquiries, perhaps at a remove. Perhaps we are still ashamed of our mothers, but maybe we can begin to talk about our grandmothers and their crafty strategies for exilic ontologies. It would be a much more complicated, interesting, and impossible exercise, to create a comedy out of *that*.



## CHAPTER FIVE

### National Mania, Collective Melancholia: the Trudeau Funeral

*If you ask anyone they will tell you that I do not cry easily but by the end of the yulagy [sic] I was very near tears.*  
Chloe Donahue (Victoria, BC)

*.... when Justin stopped at his father's casket and wept, I joined the country in its sorrow and wept too.*  
Veronica Dignard (Halifax, NS)

*When Justin Trudeau said his amazing speech that really moved me and I burst into tears.*  
Liz Daniele (Toronto, ON)

*I have been moved. We all have.*  
Peter Mansbridge (Toronto, ON)

*Canada weeps.*  
Mr. & Mrs. Ed & Norma Ryder, and Tim (Lethbridge, AB)

– From the books of condolences, posted on a Government of Canada website

As a child in the 70's, I was too young for Trudeaumania; my mother, in her late thirties was, perhaps, a tad too old. Nonetheless, it was from her mouth and through my ears that I experienced this particular affect that was sweeping the nation.

Trudeaumania is the name popularly given to the extraordinary public appeal of Pierre Elliott Trudeau, Canada's 15th prime minister, and is thought to have lasted from approximately 1968 to 1972. George Radwanski writes, in a biography about Trudeau:

In [an election] campaign that often seemed like a joyous coronation, crowds gathered by the tens of thousands, not to hail his past accomplishments [...] but simply to see the man - and preferably to touch him. Wherever he met he was mobbed like a pop star; fingers grasped toward him for a handshake, a touch, or a snatched souvenir; at one stop his watch was ripped from his wrist, and late in the campaign pubescent girls took to trying to pluck hairs from his balding head. (96)

As such, Trudeaumania was a phenomenon in which the body, affect, and ideas about the nation intersected.

Tomkins would perhaps classify Trudeaumania interest-excitement, but to me it sounded like pure delight, a strangely thrilling mix of glamour and patriotism; the distant and the proximate, flashing across the surface of my mother's white teeth and Max Factor red lips. My Ukrainian immigrant Mama always looked and sounded beautiful when she spoke French, and so it was when she repeated what Pierre Elliott Trudeau had said to her at a Parliamentary reception: "*J'suis enchantée de faire votre connaissance.*"

My mother learnt French from the nuns at her convent school in a small Franco-Albertan town; *that convent*, she always said, *was like heaven to me*. But my mother's piety was transformed into a bubbly patriotism the day she met Trudeau. That Mama could shake hands with a Prime Minister, that mother tongue could become so enchanted, was enough of Trudeaumania for me. Then and there I resolved to speak French some day, and the word "Trudeau" became one of pleasure, promise and opportunity.

Deleuze and Guattari write: "There is no mother tongue but a seizure of power by a dominant language within a political multiplicity" (*Anti-Oedipus* 13). If I couldn't have mother tongue in a country that no longer had practical use for its East European settlers, if Slavic mother tongue had become so shamed that it couldn't fully inhabit Anglo mouth, then another tongue, more enchanted and only slightly less strange, would inhabit it instead.

### **National Figures, Collective Affect**

This chapter will attempt to grapple with the ways in which power operates to produce national figures and collective affect towards them, particularly on television. What is the process by which Trudeau's face and body – both in life and in death – became emptied of actual historic meaning and overly coded with excess? What affective processes of longing, excitement, or shame create the process of belonging to the nation? How does such a queer-looking, queer-acting body like Trudeau's become reterritorialized as a heterosexual national body?

In October 2000, Canada mourned the passing of one of its former leaders, Pierre Elliott Trudeau. Prime Minister from 1969 to 1986, Trudeau was, perhaps, Canada's first (and last) small-l liberal government leader, and a figure of nostalgia for Canada's baby-boom population, including myself. One of Trudeau's first actions as Minister of Justice was to modernize divorce laws and eliminate anti-sodomy laws. "The state," he famously pronounced, "has no business in the bedrooms of the nation." Son of a wealthy industrialist, aristocratic yet frugal, Trudeau managed to embody a diverse array of despotic and counter-cultural signs, produced via print and electronic media. Sexuality played a large role in managing these contradictions. Trudeau's bisexuality was a well-known secret, but it was his infamous marriage to the impetuous Margaret (née Sinclair), nearly thirty years his junior, that captured media attention around the world. That troubled, flamboyant union, the libidinal imperative of Trudeaumania, and Trudeau's own predilection for gay icons like Barbra Streisand, further served to queer his image and expand his celebrity status.

Zoe Sofoulis has written about the ways in which people map their lives onto celebrities; thus, the loss of a celebrity becomes a loss of part of themselves. Celebrity funerals, she writes, become "a collective attempt to re-make the world, and to reconstitute it, both through shared media consumption of the event (people making dates to watch the funeral together) as well as public, physical and emotional acts [...] (waiting to sign condolence books, queuing to put down

flowers, lighting candles etc.)" (17). The virtual community of the Canadian nation was unified and embodied via its simultaneous consumption of the televised Trudeau funeral. The funeral, then, became a desiring-machine, in which an insatiable desire for images and memories of Trudeau produced other desires: for an imaginary historical moment of democracy and justice; for an alterity that predated the hegemony of globalization; for the innocence of the 60's with their summers of love. That the funeral occurred just weeks before a federal election also meant that, for a time, the current (Liberal) Prime Minister running for re-election could, despite a history of conservative legislation regarding immigration, free trade and healthcare, feed on and embody these desires, without even gesturing to their fulfillment.

Trudeau's funeral was heavily covered for five days by both of Canada's major English-language television networks. His body lay in state in the Parliament Buildings of Ottawa, Canada's capital city, for several days. Large numbers of Canadians lined up to view the Trudeau casket, or to write comments in government-organized "books of condolences" across Canada (later reproduced on a government website). The casket then traveled by special train to Montreal, accompanied by Trudeau's two sons, Justin and Sascha – recalling the posthumous train ride of another liberal counter-cultural figure, Bobby Kennedy. At the funeral, the all-star cast of mourners included England's Prince Andrew and former US president Jimmy Carter, as well as honorary pallbearers Leonard Cohen and Cuban president Fidel Castro.<sup>1</sup> The highlight of the funeral was a

melodramatically declaimed eulogy by his son, Justin Trudeau, which presented a sentimental, child's-eye view of a prime minister's life, and produced tears and applause inside and outside the church (eerily echoing the applause at Diana's funeral).

Certain collective performances of mourning – like the Trudeau funeral – are conflicted sites where the nation in a partial and unsatisfactory way, tries to integrate loss through the process of melancholia or, in Dominic LaCapra's terms, "acting out" (*Writing History* 1). However, within Canadian television, this consciousness is constantly deferred or displaced. Ien Ang, analyzing the soap opera, has written about its "tragic structure of feeling", expressive of the unnameable sorrows and griefs of Western culture (*Watching Dallas*). Much has been written in this vein about Princess Diana's funeral in 1997, including Mandy Merck's compilation of "irreverent elegies," *After Diana*. The Trudeau funeral had many uncanny similarities with that of Diana's, from flower-strewn public grounds to applauding crowds. Aerial views of mourners on Parliament Hill recalled even grander aerial views of mourners at Kensington Palace, a kind of colonial Overlay.<sup>2</sup> British newspapers noted with pride the multi-ethnic composition of Diana's mourners; here in Canada, the presence of a multicultural society (supposedly Trudeau's invention) at his funeral was much remarked upon. The process of mourning Trudeau was mapped over the surface of those feminized black, brown, yellow, and even queer faces – this was even more proof of

forgetting, since very few of those othered bodies were actually *inside* the church.

Deleuze and Guattari distinguish between two kinds of memory: "Short-term memory understands forgetting as a process; it does not merge with the instant, but with the collective rhizome. [...] Long-term memory (family, race, society, civilization), traces and translates, but what it translates continues to act within it" (*Anti-Oedipus* 35). Long-term memories (those connected to the national imaginary) captured Trudeau's statesmanlike movements, like a film still, or a trace. Short-term memories were more like the space *between* film frames, sliding past our eyes: tanks on city streets; refugees in jail cells; societies of control. In the act of national mourning, the two kinds of memories merged: we did not know sometimes, why we were weeping. As Francois Gaillard writes (about Diana's funeral): "Since it is easier to weep together than to live together, emotion of this sort may come increasingly to stand in for the social bond" (1998: 167).

Also like Diana's funeral, there was a subtle queerness to this event, in the generic sense of queer as outlaw, or non-normal. Trudeau's bisexuality was never mentioned in the mainstream print or television media, except, briefly and ambivalently, on CBC's satirical newsmagazine "This Hour Has 22 Minutes", by two recurring old lady characters played by Mary Walsh and Cathy Jones.

JONES: *I heard it said he was fruity as pink ink!*

WALSH: *Yes, as gay as 18 balloons they said.*

JONES: *But I don't believe it!*

WALSH: *No, no me neither!*

JONES: *He was a goer! Sure, he went out with that Kim Cattrall.*

WALSH: *Who's that?*

JONES: *She's the one who plays the slutty one on that there "Sex and the City".*

WALSH: *Sure, how can ya tell with a crowd of hinged heeled harlots!*

JONES: *Yes, a good time was had by all kind of girls.*

(*"This Hour Has Twenty-Two Minutes"* October 2000)

The newspapers played along: endless photos of Trudeau in capes and femmey hats were printed and reprinted. Seated in the front row of Montreal's Notre Dame Cathedral during the funeral service, was a less-than-normal family: Trudeau's two unmarried sons, his ex-wife from 20 years ago (former Rolling Stones groupie Margaret), his onetime mistress, and his illegitimate daughter, whom Trudeau sired in his seventies.<sup>3</sup> This was a kind of double-funeral; also present was the ghost of Michel, Trudeau's youngest son, from whose tragic



death a year earlier Trudeau had never recovered – more like a mother than a father, really, in his inconsolable grief.

If nationhood is a masculine construction, then Canada has always existed outside of that symbolic order. From comedic references on “The Simpsons” and “The West Wing”, to George W. Bush’s significant omissions, Canada’s subservient relationship to the US is mythical. As Arthur Kroker writes, “The essence of the Canadian intellectual condition is this: it is our fate to be forever marginal to the ‘present-mindedness’ of American culture”(8). This marginality, then, can also be seen as un-masculine, as effeminate, perhaps even as queer. BJ Wray writes about the Canadian nation’s uncanny structural similarity with homosexuality: “English Canadian national identity and homosexual identity share the structuration of incoherence, and activist identity-making strategies in each of these areas have frequently aimed to contain this incoherence by stabilizing, unifying, and rendering intelligible (therefore legitimate) a singular, monolithic paradigm of existence” (166).

One is tempted to surmise that Canada’s infamous absence and lack within global discourse, (except for Canadarms in space and hockey games with Russians and Americans) and Canadians’ almost mythical self-deprecation, is a result of melancholia or acting out: an inability to resolve its historical trauma. Freud notes that while melancholia results in, among other things, “utterance in self-reproaches and self-revilings, and culminates in a delusional expectation of

punishment," mourning significantly avoids this "disturbance in self regard" (244). As Tomkins states, in a phrase that anticipates LaCapra's notion of acting out, "If negative affect is too punishing, biologically or psychologically, it may be worse than the alarming situation itself, and it may hinder rather than expedite dealing with it" (Sedgwick & Frank 111).

But this acting out can be occasionally recuperated. Thus, the televised funeral of a queer elder statesman with all of its pauses, funny unmentionables, and melancholic idealization of a lost part of the national "self", also represented a limit, and a line of flight.

### **Proximity, Contagion, and Affect**

The theories of Deleuze and Guattari provide some exciting possibilities for the somewhat bogged-down project of television criticism, mired in an impossible intersection of cultural studies, sociology, and cine-psychoanalytic theory. While critiques of psychoanalytic theory vis-a-vis film theory are, these days, innumerable, Steven Shaviro's use of Deleuze and Guattari's terms to carry out this critique is useful for the purposes of this chapter.

As a lecturer on film and cultural studies in a women's studies department, I have always found that the pessimism of feminist cine-psychoanalysis folds too neatly into female masochism: the camera lens an evil eye; the female body on the

screen a bad object of desire. Shaviro pinpoints distance as a primary problem: filmic images that are theoretically "isolated, like dangerous germs" (16). He argues that "lack" stands in for fear; that what the sacred film theory lineage of Metz through Mulvey is afraid of, "is not the emptiness of the image but its weird fullness" (16). In short, he makes a case for proximity: "the image is not a symptom of lack but of an uncanny excessive residue of being that subsists when all *should* be lacking [...] the insistence of something that refuses to disappear" (17).

Perhaps television, even more than cinema, is peculiarly suited to notions of proximity and of the excessive affect that proximity can encourage and give flight to. More than a schema of behavioural cause and effect (for example, crime shows cause violence in children), this proximity is one of body and machine, skin to skin.<sup>4</sup> *I was glued to the set*, I said to people during the five-day coverage of Trudeau's death and funeral. I spoke of not being able to take my eyes off the screen, or my hand off the remote. I, too, cried when Justin Trudeau gave his eulogy, and I got a lump in my throat when I recently replayed the tapes. My neighbour and I congregated on her deck or in my living room to laugh together about Margaret's drama queen *hauteur*, and compare notes about different stations we'd been watching. Radio Canada (CBC's French channel) was excited, almost giddy about Castro's presence, as opposed to the American networks, which demonstrated veiled contempt. My students and I chatted about our Trudeau memories, while photos of people standing together in public areas

to watch TV coverage or to burst into spontaneous renditions of the national anthem appeared in the papers. Mourning Trudeau was a machinic exercise with molecular components: a pre-election Liberal government, state-owned media, bodies longing to be part of a nation next to bodies (like my own) that had long since abandoned the project of nation; the hyper-reality of a famous family conveying its private emotions and gestures to the public; a body without organs (Trudeau's televised image).

Another affect-related notion pertinent to television is that of contagion. As Shaviro writes: "Mimesis and contagion tend to efface fixed identities, and to blur the boundaries between inside and outside. The viewer is transfixed and transmogrified in the consequence of the infectious, visceral contact of images" (53). Shaviro goes on to speak more specifically of the horror film, but one could as easily think about, as Robert Stam does, television tropes like reality TV that construct an impression of intimacy and viewing power across all TV formats – even state funerals (24). Thus, in our proximity, rather than identifying with the image, we are *touched* by it.

Marshall McLuhan has described television as, "above all, an extension of the sense of touch" (333). Using the Kennedy assassination and funeral as an example, he writes convincingly of the power of this new medium to touch and implicate the body:

No national event except in sports has ever had such coverage or such an audience. It revealed the unrivaled power of TV to achieve the involvement of the audience in a complex process. The funeral as a *corporate* process caused even the image of sport to pale. [...] The Kennedy funeral, in short, manifested the ability of TV to involve and entire population in a ritual process. (337, italics mine)

Indeed, the Kennedy funeral has become synonymous with televised spectacle, in that it was the first such event covered by television in real time. It has also contributed to the idea that an event on television *could and should* touch and move bodies to painful affect.

"I was moved. We all were," wrote CBC news anchor Peter Mansbridge, in a book of condolences. This is another example of the doubled, uncanny affect of the hyper-real. Mansbridge, a paid employee inside TV, is there to move us; outside of it, he is there to be moved. His job is to infect us with grief and, therefore, an insatiable desire for images of the departed; our job is to pass this on to others with our conversations in classrooms and offices, and living rooms, our hugs and tears and gestures. "Desire is a machine," write Deleuze and Guattari, "and the object of desire is another machine connected to it" (*Anti-Oedipus* 26). In this case, it is the media that becomes a desiring-machine: it is not the need for images of Trudeau that produce desire for them, but, rather, desire that produces need. This desire is productive. As Deleuze and Guattari

write: "In group fantasy the libido may invest all of an existing social field, including the latter's most repressive forms" (30). On the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the (FLQ) separatist uprising in Quebec – which coincided with Trudeau's death – the traumatic memory of Trudeau's invocation of the War Measures Act became reterritorialized, incorporated into the national body of Trudeau, of the nation, and transformed from shame into pride.

"Desire produces reality," write Deleuze and Guattari (30). Bodies pressed against bodies lining up in an autumn chill, hands pressed against pen, writing in books of condolences, tearful eye catching tearful eye. These contagious affects give us a sense of belonging – if not to the nation, then to the virtual community of television watchers and newspaper readers. According to some theorists, the root of this desire is shame. Following Benedict Anderson's central question – *why is an imagined community chosen over an actual one?* –

Scheff expands upon Anderson's canonical text by developing the notion of a 'shame-pride balance'. Citizens of a nation, he argues, "seek to increase their pride-shame balance, their moment-by-moment social status," and he provides us with the chilling example of the Third Reich. Hitler's "otherwise inexplicable appeal [provided] the promise of expanding Germany's shame after the Treaty of Versailles, and raising its pride formed the core of virtually all his speeches and writings" (286).

The War Measures Act, with its sweeping powers, gave rise to many episodes in Canadian history that are now conventionally considered to be shameful. This legislation (now known as the Emergency Measures Act) is Canada's most notorious and long-standing anti-terrorist legislation. Initiated in 1914 as a means of rounding up and interning itinerant East European immigrants during wartime, it was later used to intern Japanese Canadians during World War II, and more recently, to quell Quebec separatism in October, 1970. When invoked, it gives the government extra-legal powers of surveillance, arrest and detention, as well as the ability to call in military forces. The War Measures Act functions as a site of traumatic memory for several generations of Canadians. That this despotic term could have been transformed into a site of national pride at the moment of Trudeau's death provides an interesting example of a nation seeking to increase its own shame-pride balance.

"Just watch me," said Trudeau in a television interview on the eve of invoking the War Measures Act in response to a separatist uprising in Quebec. Trudeau, ever-conscious of the camera, used the FLQ Crisis of October, 1970 to the benefit of his (and Canada's) international image; overnight, Canada and Trudeau were masculinized via the panoptical all-seeing camera eye. With those words, Trudeau affirmed and amplified his scopophilic appeal: his body becoming-TV, becoming-military, becoming-machine. The shame of a weakened federation giving in to terrorist threat was averted.

Years later, Trudeau cited his friend Eugene Forsey in his memoir: "In my judgment [Trudeau] saved us from Baader-Meinhof gangs and Red Brigades" (148). Adds Trudeau on the next page: "It should also be noted that in the quarter-century that has followed the October Crisis, the country has seen no resurgence of terrorism" (149). One wonders where Trudeau was the summer of the Oka uprising in 1991 and the enormous military action that followed, or what he would have done with the anti-globalization protests in Quebec City in the spring of 2001. The spectre of a dark, Germanic insurrection, coupled with the image of Trudeau as saviour, is monumental. Monuments mark spaces of remembrance and forgetting, and perhaps also of shame. A leader so monumentalized can only be the product of arborescent histories, what Deleuze and Guattari have called "organized memories" (*Anti-Oedipus* 36). I am arguing instead for a rhizomatic notion of the "semiotic chain" of "diverse acts" (*Anti-Oedipus* 12). This speaks to the flow between the different meanings of the Trudeau legacy; rather than being contradictions, Trudeau's effeminacy and his assertion of masculinity during October, 1970 are offshoots of each other. For, according to Deleuze and Guattari, any point of a rhizome can be connected to anything else. From Trudeau's rebellious, faggy pirouette at Buckingham Palace, to his militaristic quashing of dissidents, it is this non-linear sequence of diverse acts that would seem to form the Trudeau legacy.



## **The Driveways of the Nation**

There was a strange proximity to the October Crisis of 1970 in our modestly middle class Ottawa neighbourhood. First, there was the television, sputtering earnestly in black and white: mug shots of FLQ (*Front de Liberation du Québec*) cell members with their flowery names (Rose and Cossette), and Trudeau in gunslinger mode, playing to the camera. And second, there was my neighbourhood, and the presence of army tanks on our very own street, with its own flowery name, Featherston Drive.

I was in grade seven, and seriously working on my popularity. I had never felt more self-conscious, more watched: by my eagle-eyed mom, by mirrors and reflections in store windows, by girls, and by boys. I had just started to be courted by a group of bad girls, who invited me to allegedly "girls only" sleepovers, where boys were daringly smuggled in after the moms and dads had gone to bed. Spin the Bottle and long boring bouts of 'necking' now occupied the site where girl-talk, Ouija Boards and makeup sessions had once deliciously reigned. Those kisses felt interminable to me: unpracticed, boyish lips like wet wash cloths, skin that smelt like running shoes. Mouths again, but without language this time; or perhaps it was a completely new language that I could never inhabit, but which, for many years, I would try desperately to speak.

It was at one of these awkward basement parties that we heard about Quebec Labour Minister (or 'minister of unemployment', as the FLQ'ers dubbed him in French) Pierre Laporte's assassination on someone's pink transistor radio. Was it before or after that tanks rolled into our neighbourhood to protect some low-level diplomat living in one of the "colonial-style" prefabs that lined the treeless street? As I wrote later in a film narration:

In our suburban Ottawa neighbourhood, everything seemed so calm.

Army tanks were parked in front of some of the better homes, and the Moms brought the soldiers coffee or tea. When the Dads came home, family snapshots were taken in front of the tanks, which had very quickly become status symbols. Clearly, we were protected, with or without the tanks: by our whiteness and innocence, by our willingness to speak

English, by the size of our very green lawns (*Unspoken Territory*).

Perhaps we also felt protected by Trudeau, whose masculinity and paternalism were suddenly no longer in question. On some level, I could relate: I, too, had just left behind an innocent same-sex milieu. The state had been banished from the bedrooms of the nation, only to reappear on its driveways. The world would never be quite the same again.

### **Affect and Trudeau**

"I feel that the Canadian people and I did dream together for such loves in challenging times - love for ourselves, love for our country, love for

more peace and justice in the world.”

- Trudeau, *Memoirs* 368)

In the minds of most Canadians, it would seem to be affect that most defined Trudeau. References to him after in his death – in popular media and in the books of condolences – make frequent use of such words and phrases as: *exuberance; passion; love; excitement; charisma*. It was, perhaps, the exoticization of English Canada's other – Quebec – that allowed this image to develop so durably. Perhaps Trudeau stood in for Quebec, or at least for Montreal, a place Anglo Canadians can go and be all the things they are not in Moose Jaw, or Winnipeg, or St John: passionate, excited, exuberant, in love. Quebec's exoticism represented by: the wide, acrobatic motions of the tongue and mouth and hands and arms; the drinking of French wine in smoke-filled (*smoke!*) bars until three in the morning; the poetic cadences of the French language.

And it was affect that most defined Trudeau's funeral: the slightly deranged grimaces of Margaret; Fidel behind her, providing a Latin beat; the tear-filled eyes of those not generally seen as emotive – former prime ministers John Turner, Joe Clark, former cabinet minister Marc Lalonde. And finally, there was Justin Trudeau's eulogy to his father, which *The Vancouver Sun* described in theatrical terms: "It was Justin Trudeau who brought the entire church to their feet with applause and tears in their eyes" (Baxter, O'Neill, Jaimet: October 4

2000). Television cameras and editing helped frame Justin Trudeau's affect-laden and perhaps affected performance with slow dissolves to the coffin, weeping statesmen, and the somber-looking crowds outside:

My father's fundamental belief never came from a textbook. It stemmed from his deep love and faith in all Canadians and over the past few days, with every card, every rose, every tear, every wave, and every pirouette, you returned his love. [...] He left politics in '84. He came back for Meech. He came back for Charlottetown. He came back to remind us of who we are and what we're all capable of. But he won't be coming back anymore. It's all up to us, all of us, now. 'The woods are lovely, dark and deep. He has kept his promises and earned his sleep'. *Je t'aime Papa*.

(October 4, 2000) <sup>5</sup>

Upon completing his eulogy, Justin Trudeau descended from the podium at Notre Dame Cathedral, walked over to his father's flag-draped casket and bent to kiss it, his shoulders suddenly wracked with sobs. With his babyish words – *Je t'aime Papa* (I love you Daddy) and his tears, Justin became a child in relation to the ritual gestures of the nation (reminiscent, again, of Diana's flag-draped casket, crowned with an envelope with the word "Mommy" scrawled on it in child's handwriting). As Marvin and Ingle write, "The flag that wraps the casket transforms shed blood into the community seed ritually planted at the fertile center [...] ritual gestures and language represent [the flag-covered coffin] as an infant with regenerative power" (149). Indeed, as rumours immediately began to circulate about the possibility of Justin entering political life, his body – with its

own potential for regeneration – stood in (via his father's body) for flag and nation.

Television footage of this eulogy invariably produces tears, goose bumps, lumps in throats, chills down spines. The effect is not unlike that of melodrama; even though one is deeply familiar with the genre (and perhaps even ironically detached from it) its performative repetitions cannot help but produce a response at least partially rooted in normalcy. According to Silverman, "social formations depend upon their dominant fictions for their sense of unity and identity" (54).

Following Freud, she argues that groups of people, perhaps even entire nations, can protect themselves from trauma by, in a sense, repressing the memory of the traumatic event and participating in collective identifications that attempt to create closure and fixity of meaning. The trauma in this case would entail not merely the death of an elderly former Prime Minister, but personal as well as collective or national traumas. These identifications, which Silverman calls 'dominant fictions', usually involve the repeating of the forms and gestures of a particular genre. The genre of melodrama, for example, participates in the compulsion to repeat, but then also tries to close over the wound of pain that these traumatic events represent.

Jostein Gripsrud has traced the historical roots of melodrama in relation to television, and its many uses. She insists upon melodrama's "moral urgency [...] and its ambition to speak of what was actually unspeakable" (246). Its repetition,

she claims, is pleasurable, providing audiences with moral lessons that they want repeated again and again. Citing Peter Brooks, she posits melodrama as a secular way of explaining the world to peasants and nobility alike, "a textual machine designed to cope with the threatening black hole God left after him when he returned to his heaven" (244). The excessive affect inherent in melodrama stands in, she claims, not only for religion, but for politics as well: "a popular resistance to abstract, theoretical ways of understanding society or history" (245). Perhaps this is one way of understanding the enormous effectiveness and contagiousness of a eulogy so visibly produced, and so melodramatically declaimed. Justin's words superseded those of the priests and the politicians who spoke; his face loomed larger and more beautifully than the majestic gothic arches of Notre Dame Cathedral. The lessons in the eulogy were ones of morality, not ethics; of acting out, rather than working through.<sup>6</sup>

But affect is also about the need to see oneself as fully human and of this world and, therefore, affected. Sofoulis writes (about Princess Diana's funeral):

[B]y participating in a global mourning, individual people make the claim of belonging to another world, a world of affects and performances that are interlinked with but also exceed icons and narratives. Some participants in the flower-laying or funeral were not particularly emotional about Diana; they just wanted to be part of this major historical event. (18)

Since 9/11, amid the circulation of images and ideas about mourning those who died in the World Trade Center, this interrelationship – of celebrity death, affect,

and citizenship – has never, it seems, been more active. The ability to mourn these celebrity deaths – Diana, Trudeau, the dead of New York – became a mark of normalcy. In *Planet Diana*, Rosanne Kennedy writes:

[I]n producing a false sense of familiarity, the media create the illusion that grieving for someone we don't know, except as a media image, is a simple process. Anyone can do it. But at the same time, identifications generated through dominant media images are so exclusionary that we are prevented from grieving for some of the people in our local communities. How many of us, for instance, have grieved over the ruined lives of stolen children [in Australia (52)?

And what of those bodies *not* invested in the nation that shed tears neither for Diana, nor for Trudeau, nor for the victims of the World Trade Center? The shame of not mourning was, perhaps, obscured by the middle-class shame of participating in television's low-culture bathos. I was lucky to have the excuse of academic research, but was I too being interpellated by the nation? For a member of the 70's generation, conventional markers of citizenship would seem to hold no cultural capital. However, as Carol Watts notes, celebrity death "renders producible [...] the affective community of the nation state [via] the pedagogies of consumer culture" (36). The act of watching TV was where consumption became citizenship; in Kroker's words, "the profound paradox of a modern technology as simultaneously a prison-house and a pleasure palace" (125). That pleasurable grief, so thinly satisfying, was then compounded by a

deeper sadness, an encounter with the limits of consumer culture and the spectacle of celebrity.

### **The National Body**

*Dear Justin, Sacha and Sarah: Every day in my work as a Co-Operative Housing Manager, I see the faces of people who are here largely due to the vision of your father. People like Alvaro, who fled death threats in Colombia and the families from Afghanistan who fled the violence there. Today they are Canadians, helping to contribute to the country your father loved so much, due to his efforts to embrace the peoples of the world to help this country grow.*

Linda Phillips Kelm (Newmarket, ON)

*Hi, I am 10 years old. I might not have seen him before. I do know that he was a great man. My parent's are from India. If it wasn't for him, I would not be here in Beautiful British Columbia.*

Annu Grewal (Terrace, BC)

- From the books of condolences

As the funeral week continued on TV, the screen became like the face of a corpse, drained of colour. Black and white images of the "Trudeau years" – the late 60's to early 80's – flickered in my living room day and night, organizing my own, and the nation's, memory. These are the images that pierced through the self-absorbed miasma of my teenage years; ersatz images of hope amid soulful depression and the writing of much bad poetry. The TV documentaries about Trudeau's life, and the special memorial sections in the Saturday papers were pleasurable, nostalgic, drawing me in to the phantasm of an arboreal community,



a tree with a single set of roots, a intact family with a normal mom and dad who didn't have heavy accents, addictions or false teeth. *Je t'aime Papa*.

In the week of homage, Trudeau was credited for an astonishing number of achievements, from (supposedly) an open immigration policy to widespread Canadian facility in the French language. And yet there certainly can not have been any single author of bilingualism and multiculturalism. They are multiplicities, another chain of diverse events and acts: demonstrations on the streets of Montreal and Quebec City; the playing of ethnic against Quebecois; the Plains of Abraham; my grandmother's long, thirsty trip across the country to settle in Alberta; the long list of interned nationals and attendant affects of shame-humiliation; the children and grandchildren of those interned Ukrainians, Japanese, Romanians, Germans, French Canadians, commies, pinkos, Wobblies, Jews, and Fujianese refugees; the empty holes in the archives, full of their voices; the handful of Canadian writers and artists who have testified to that shame and reinscribed it into creativity.<sup>7</sup>

In the nation's need to fix authorship, Trudeau's body became overly coded, bearing excessive signification. His body thus became a national body but, as Deleuze and Guattari write, "each of these becomings [assures] the deterritorialization of one of the terms" (*Anti-Oedipus* 20). The becoming-queer of the national body; the becoming-national of the queer. In the week's coverage of Trudeau's death, sexuality was, of necessity, in constant play with nationalism.

Remy Chauvin, cited by Deleuze and Guattari writes about: "the a-parallel evolution of two beings having absolutely nothing to do with each other" (20). Sexuality and nation: "two becomings intertwining and relaying each other in a circulation of intensities" (19).

"He could have danced all night," reads the headline of a *Globe and Mail* photo spread, September 30, 2000. Trudeau is all waving hands and swaying butt here: "1989: Trudeau does the bump in Montreal"; "1981: a jive dance threatens to turn into a prouette"; "1982: fancy footwork with a Macedonian dancer." And more proximity. Playwright and actor Linda Griffiths (known, incidentally, for playing a lesbian in the 70's film *Lianna*, and for playing both Margaret *and* Pierre in a one-woman play in the late 80's) snuck into a Governor-General's ball for the purposes of doing research. She managed a dance with Trudeau, describes "his slightly tense shoulders, the angle of his head, the touch of his *small hand* on my back" (*italics mine*) (2000:R8). Small hands, skin to skin, a body constantly in contact, a body that is a contact zone. This is a body that could dance with anyone, "an individual varying in an infinite number of ways" (Deleuze and Guattari, "Ethology" 625), a body of diverse gestures, a limit text. Writes Griffiths:

I realized the entire country had danced with Trudeau. And some felt dropped like old high school flames, and some still felt beloved. It doesn't matter how it went. What we felt for Trudeau was true love, and true love never goes away; it stays in the heart and mind forever (R8).

Two years after Trudeau's death, CBC produced a mini-series, entitled "Trudeau". Here, the former prime minister is portrayed in a florid, populist manner: Trudeau as sexy philosopher-king; Trudeau as pop star. But even more importantly, the program itself was portrayed, by both CBC executives and dominant media as something akin to statesmanship. In a *Vancouver Sun* article entitled "Trudeau mini-series 'nation-building'", CBC network programming head Slavko Klymkiw described Trudeau as "nation-building, larger-than-life" television (A4). Trudeau's body had indeed become national., and those invested in its monumentalization had become heroicized.

How do we constitute a map of this national body? Two bodies, perhaps, French and English, passion and reason, queer and straight, bi and univocal, with one white face, with a grin that reveals nothing, that was never so expressive than at his son's death. A face deterritorialized from a body, from orifice, from the grotesque. The national body is unsettled, made grotesque, by folding into an image of the queer. Branches, movements and flows. A friend sends me a newspaper article tracing the origins of Trudeau's pirouette – ballet lessons in the 60's. Margaret's face at the funeral, head bobbing, smiling at no one, an excess of affect in danger of spilling over, a horizon, about to explode. Justin delivering his eulogy: Margaret's face mapped onto Pierre's. The tragic face of Trudeau's lover, Jacques Hebert, back in the seventh row, deterritorialized. Nostalgia. For my youth, and that of my mother's. A displaced mourning for my own father, the toothless rags-to-riches refugee. All of this on a single page.

"Dead ends should always be restructured on the map, write Deleuze and Guattari, and in that way opened up to possible lines of flight" (*Anti-Oedipus* 31). In the year after the Trudeau funeral, there is only one other TV event that draws me in again so obsessively. The images are beautiful, really: the billowing pale grey smoke of tear gas, the sinewy bodies of anarchists dressed in black, throwing stones and tear gas canisters in wide graceful swoops, the phalanx of cops like the advance of blue-black insects with hard, shining carapaces.

"There is no universal capitalism; no capitalism in itself" capitalism is at a crossroads of all kinds of formations" (Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 20). Friends of ours are in Quebec City, the screen disappears, we enter into it, we are immanent. We are becoming light itself, a rearrangement of pixels on a digital plateau, visual persistence breaking down the hastily erected concrete wall, the TV screen. In the space between frames there are trace-memories of other moments of resistance; among them, the black and white flicker of Trudeau on TV, in a trade union march against the Algoma Steel Corporation, circa 1949.<sup>8</sup> "I think trade union people across this province should rise up in arms," says the young Trudeau in a TV interview, before correcting himself. Cut to images of young men throwing rocks at Quebec Provincial Police more than fifty years ago, charging at police cars and factory walls.

The desiring machine, write Deleuze and Guattari, "may launch a counter-investment, whereby revolutionary desire is plugged into the existing social field as a source of energy" (*Anti-Oedipus* 30). If desire produces reality, then these desiring bodies, struggling at the concrete border of public and private, of the corporate and the democratic, are also bodies belonging to the nation.<sup>9</sup> This nation, then, becoming these bodies.

## CHAPTER SIX

### **Homeland (In) Security: Roots and Displacement, from New York, to Toronto, to Salt Lake City**

*"impossible citizens, / repositories of the city's panic "*

- Dionne Brand, *thirsty* 40

On September 11, 2001, broadcast and print media around the world narrated the destruction of New York City's World Trade Center, and the deaths of thousands of its occupants. This chapter will examine the ways in which Canadian television and its appendages (the telephone, the internet, the newspaper) operated to organize the discursive meanings of this traumatic event. I will propose that between September 11<sup>th</sup> and the February 2002 Winter Olympics in Salt Lake City, Utah, ideas about home, roots and rootedness (and their Others: foreignness, homelessness, nomadicism) operated as a discursive mapping of that which could otherwise not be mapped, or fully grasped. From the demonization of those nomads, migrants and others moving across borders, to the triumphant "Roots" logos on the uniforms of British, American and Canadian Olympic athletes, roots, in a sense, became the unrepresentable "real". How did television, then, in its liminal position on the borders of the home, narratively organize the spatial boundaries of inside and outside, local and global? More specifically, I want to examine how Canadian television worked to mediate the trauma of boundary dissolution in both a literal and a representational sense. Following along recent trauma theory, I want to ask: how does a nation itself

experience common symptoms of trauma? And can these fears become unrepresentable in and of themselves, so that the metaphor of home and roots stand in their place?

The use of the words "homeland" and "homeland security" erupted in the US almost immediately after September 11<sup>th</sup>, and the meanings of the word home became delimited by unspoken racialized binaries <sup>1</sup>. Paul Gilroy notes that race crises often operate without reference to race. Speaking from a British context he writes, of the term 'race': "in its postwar retreat from racism the term has once again acquired an explicitly cultural rather than a biological inflection" (354). Thus, *Heimat* and home can stand in for a desire for whiteness. The terminology of *Heimat* also served to reiterate earlier racialized utterances, as well as to produce new ideas about self and other. The U.S., as an imperial power, has long projected its borders across space. But as Hannah Neveh writes, colonizing notions of distance and proximity acquired new meanings after 9/11:

September 11 has violated and shattered the confidence of the United States in the total security of its territorial body. The sense of being violated has permeated U.S. domestic space by and large – every 'place' as well as every 'in-between' has become suspect of infection: the work space, the leisure space, the home space [...] Yet the ultimate and illuminating transformation, which conceptualizes America's new sensitivity, is the creation of a federal agency for 'Homeland Security' (451).

In Canada, 9/11 produced a new proximity to the U.S. Canada, its identity historically defined as being *unlike* the U.S., now had to redefine otherness. Wray writes, "Canadian nationalist sentiment remains inextricably and completely bound to a 'not-American' status. Marking and remarking upon differences (even, perhaps especially, where they do not exist) ensures the articulation of an English Canadian imaginary in the face of an otherwise invisible 'otherness' (165-66). Essential to this imaginary is the notion of tolerance. As Mackey has written, Canada's belief in itself as tolerant "was one key feature of an emerging national identity believed to differentiate Canada from the USA" (1999: 23). Thus, Canada's new *intolerance* for refugees and foreigners, post-911 created even more ideological synergy with the U.S. <sup>2</sup>

9/11 provided useful insights into how television networks operate within a knowledge/power relationship. 9/11's excessive flow of information, back and forth, from television to phone to Internet to street produced, in Foucauldian terms, "an uninterrupted play of calculated gazes" (*Discipline and Punish* 177). At that moment, discipline operated relationally: hegemonic discourse passed from ear to ear, digital to analog, and back again: "a whole play of spaces, lines, screens, beams, degrees, and without recourse, in principle, at least, to excess, force, or violence" (*Discipline and Punish* 177). In this sense, television did not operate alone; it had never been more part of a discursive network. Every person who ventured an opinion about the terrorist attacks was part of this network – either 'for' or 'against' the US call to war – but those who proclaimed 'our'



innocence and 'their' infamy made it to air, and in turn influenced those who hadn't made it to air, becoming part of a multiplication of small scale judgment and disciplinary authority. In Canadian media, an increased emphasis on notions of home occurred via news stories about (Canadians) *staying* home more on the one hand, and those (foreigners, immigrants) being told to *go* home on the other. Immediately after the bombings, the following headline ran in the *Vancouver Sun*: "Tighten immigration laws and plug our porous borders." The article called for the deportation of "people who have committed crimes in this country [...] so that they don't disappear into the fabric of Canadian life" (September 13, 2002). This monolithic 'fabric' demanded stability. News and advertising during Thanksgiving and Christmas 2001 took advantage of people's fear of flying and the travel industry's downturn to champion the merits of "at home" celebrations. "Holiday Heritage" in the December 2001 issue of *Canadian Living Magazine*, for example, described "Christmas with all the trimmings" at the home of Canadian Heritage minister Sheila Copps: "Ask the average Canadian to share what makes the holidays special and chances are you'll hear some version of 'spending time with my family.' Sheila Copps, the minister of Canadian heritage, is no exception" (195).

Since 9/11, several news reports of Canadian and American-born people being "sent back" to homelands they'd never been to, have circulated in the media. Morley writes, "the nation is idealized as a kind of hometown writ large, a sociogeographical environment into whose comforting security we may sink. [...]"

The over-valuation of home and roots has as its necessary correlative the suspicion of mobility" (33). This fantasy of hometown roots rewrites the actual narratives of peoples displaced by globalization not once, but many times in their lives. Hage writes of the desire to send undesirable others home as being constitutive of nationalism. By doing so, national subjects express their own desire for roots and home (*White Nation* 40).

### **Home and Heimat**

An overt national focus on notions of home and homeland carries with it the disturbing echo of the German concept of *Heimat* (Morley). Celia Applegate defines *Heimat*, which originated in the 19th Century as an expression of the "feeling of belonging together" (x), in which sentiment stemming from shared roots become part of an essential identity. German Jew Jean Amery writes scathingly about the ways in which the meanings of *Heimat* permeate the meanings of home:

One would like to dispel the embarrassingly sweet tones that are associated with the word home and that call forth a rather disturbing series of concepts: regional arts and crafts, regional literature, regional foolery of all kinds. But they are stubborn, keep close to our heels, demand their effect (48).

Indeed, by the 1930's, the idea of Heimat had been appropriated by Nazism.

Writes Applegate: "The integrity of local culture and identity that lay at the heart of the Heimat movement was an early and in some sense willing victim of the National Socialist revolution; its forms persisted, but now infused with the rhetoric of racial superiority and the rituals of German power" (198).

As Applegate points out, German fascism capitalized on the idea of roots by integrating "Heimat associations" – traditional expressions of German communalism such as youth groups, hiking fellowships, and singing clubs – into Nazi culture. She writes, "In the specific context of club activities, the apparent lack of change could and did legitimate the Nazi regime by giving it an appearance of *rootedness* in the structure of everyday life" (203, italics mine). At the same time, however, the Nazis were centralizing all operations, negating the Heimat idea of local organization and fellowship (205). Heimat became nothing more than a symbolic notion, which, via the Nazi practice of encouraging folk customs, was a means of imagining cultural roots that were racially pure (217).

But power operates across all surfaces, and is always productive. Deleuze and Guattari argue that fascism (or, for the purposes of this chapter, global capitalism), does collapse in on itself, managing to produce ruptures, or trauma, to the root system. In *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari ponder post-modernity's vexed relationship with roots, which they dub the "fascicular

system” (3). They imply that the root system has its origins (roots?) in the classical era – “noble, signifying” (5), and perhaps even despotic:

It is odd how the tree has dominated Western reality and all of Western thought, from botany to biology and anatomy, but also gnosiology, theology, ontology, all of philosophy [...] the root foundation, *Grund*, *racine*, *fondement*. The West has a special relation to the forest, and deforestation (18).

Deleuze and Guattari map a symbolic connection to fascism via the notion of the fascicle – “a bundle-like cluster” according to the *American Heritage Dictionary*, but also the etymological root of the word fascism – which, in a sense, “bundles together” state, corporate, and nationalist interests. This coming together of local and global forms of capitalism is vividly evident in the ways in which television operated within domestic space, during and after 9/11.

### **Festive Viewing**

“Home is where the heart is,” goes the expression; home is at the heart of post-9/11’s excessive nationalisms, on TV and outside of it. Television schedules are one of the things that help create a sense of home; thus, home is not only space but also time (Morley). Thomas Dumm, taking this idea further, argues that the prime time viewing schedule is an instrument of discipline: “I have known for some time how much hinges on regularity, how the creation of the modern soul, to borrow from Foucault, now depends as much upon television as it does on a

prison schedule" (315). Indeed, several feminist television theorists (Modleski, Probyn) have discussed the ways in which television regulates, and in some sense oversees, women's housework schedules. In this sense, the home is a space of discipline, and the television a kind of panopticon. In describing a panoptical gaze, informed by looking relations and technologies of light, Foucault almost seems to be describing the televisual apparatus:

The perfect disciplinary apparatus would make it possible for a single gaze to see everything constantly. A central point would be both the source of light illuminating everything and a locus of convergence for everything that must be known: a perfect eye that nothing would escape and a center toward which all gazes would be turned (*The History of Sexuality* 173).

According to Foucault, disciplinary apparatus like the panopticon – or, in this case, the apparatus of television – work upon the body as a locus of power, producing the repetition of bodily movements and gestures. Silverman refers to this as a “performative model, whereby meaningful practices and rituals are understood to produce the assent of the individual who engages in them” (17). The body's movements from telephone to television and back again; the entry onto the street and then back into home can all be seen as instances of performativity producing a kind of docility to ideology. As Silverman contends, even if the subject knows that much of what she is seeing on the screen is fabricated, belief is produced as a result of what she calls “orchestrated corporeality” (17).

The call to turn on the television, even in final phone calls between hijacking victims and their wives, even by those who were watching the event first hand, is one of the things that marks 9/11 as a particularly televisual moment, located in the home. I heard about a young man who watched the towers start to go down from his Manhattan rooftop. As they were in mid-collapse, he left the rooftop to go inside to turn on his TV, hoping it would make him “understand.” Television’s ability to suture together one’s own fragmented observations, and then to repeat them over and over again can undercut local and personal experience (Morley). While this has been true of many national and international events, 9/11 is generally considered to be unique in that the entire event was covered live and in real time by TV <sup>4</sup>. As such, television took on a totemic importance, organizing people’s emotions via ritualized utterances and generic forms.

When prime time broadcast scheduling collapsed during and just after 9/11, I felt a sense of disorientation, and a kind of relief – the relief one gets, perhaps, while being temporarily away from home. Perhaps it was the same feeling one gets on a holiday: Monday no longer means work; a weekend may no longer mean certain social pressures. But it was also that there was now a seamless, seemingly undisciplined, flow of television, which one could watch endlessly, without the irritating interruption of commercials or TV shows one disliked. This was, of course, only a different sort of disciplinary apparatus. Daniel Dayan and Elihu Katz, writing about televised historic events (state funerals, inaugurations

and the like), use the term “festive viewing” to mark a broadcasting genre that is, in their minds, by definition:

[...] not routine. In fact, they are interruptions of routine; they intervene in the normal flow of broadcasting and out lives. Like the holidays that halt everyday routines, television events propose exceptional things to think about, to witness, and to do. Regular broadcasting is suspended and preempted as we are guided by a series of special announcements and preludes that transform daily life back into something special, and, upon conclusion of the event, are guided back again. (334-335)

Dayan/Katz’s typology, which lists such things as “reverence and ceremony,” “the almost priestly role played by journalists,” and “a norm of viewing in which people tell each other that it is mandatory to view, that they must put all else aside” (336-337), recalls televisions playing in every store and workplace I entered that day, or New York firefighters (the secular saints of the occasion) standing at attention as stretchers were carried out of the rubble. Religious invocation permeated the earliest breaking news of the event, as in this morning broadcast by CBC Newsworld as the second of the Twin Towers collapsed:

CBC newscaster Mark Kelley: *Oh my God...(silence) Oh my God (silence)...if you can imagine the situation get any worse it just got worse, that was the second tower of the World Trade Center collapsing before our eyes...Unspeakable horror in Manhattan.* <sup>5</sup>

Processes of decoding also shifted (Hall, "Encoding/Decoding"). There was, for the first few hours of 9/11, very little need to prefer one thing over another; no need to engage in a decoding process, to negotiate the text beyond its preferred readings; all of the wall-to-wall coverage was, in a sense preferred.<sup>6</sup> Since all stations were broadcasting the same images, there were few choices to be made. TV became less like home – with all of its banal routines – and more like a trip, a being-away-from-home, but one, ironically, that one had to stay home for (grounded flights notwithstanding).

Flow is one of the foundational ideas of television scholarship: the idea that television programming, rather than being comprised of bounded narratives, flows within itself (for example, the flow between news segments), from program to program, and from program to commercial. Further, television programs are structured narratively so as to hold the viewer's attention (and maintain flow) between commercial breaks.<sup>7</sup> In more recent television writing, this idea has expanded to include the routines of everyday life, so that one may theorize, for example, a flow between the soap opera, the home, the freeway, and the shopping mall, in the sense of these being narrative and physical spaces dominated – in the daytime at least – by women and by forms of female address.

Flow operated in an almost hyperreal sense on September 11 and the weeks that followed. There was an *overflow* of information and imagery; there was an endless, constantly churning *flow between* and across the spaces of the home,



television narratives, the Internet, the telephone, and the street. You couldn't, sometimes, distinguish what was on television from the what you saw on the street, as in John Updike's description in the New Yorker: "From the viewpoint of a tenth-floor apartment in Brooklyn heights [...] the destruction of the World Trade Center Twin Towers had the false intimacy of television, on a day of perfect reception" (28). *Tears flowed*, on TV and off, in the privacy of the home and in public. Zizek described the spectacle as reality TV: "even if the show is 'for real', people still act in them – they simply play themselves."

(<http://web.mit.edu/cms/reconstructions>).

There was also considerable *flow between* television and cinema. Television's form of address is generally seen to differ from that of the cinema in that film is more spectacular and television is more fragmented and generically mixed (Houston). Where movie-goers are fixed in a single gaze towards a narrative, television-watchers, watching from home, are constantly distracted, getting up during commercials, talking on the phone, dealing with a flow of advertising, news, drama, etc. Cinema is said to produce the "gaze," television "the glance." But on September 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> television became something else, and its set of cultural competencies, theorized amid a control group of 1/2 hour programs, schoolchildren on a normal day with normal amounts of homework and housewives with feeding and laundry schedules (Modleski), was nowhere to be seen. It seemed as though everyone was channelling CNN, as monolithically positioned as Laura Mulvey's visually transfixed cinema-goers. For a time,

resistant readings had little or no currency; everyone was locked into the American gaze.

Indeed, cinematic metaphors were constantly evoked by television hosts at a loss for words – the phrase, “it’s like a movie,” was repeated many times. CBC anchor Peter Mansbridge groped for words: “It just...it’s just...almost too hard to comprehend. If you’d watched a movie like this in a theatre you’d say this could never happen.” *New Yorker* writer Anthony Lane pointed out that the duration of events – the bombings and the towers’ collapse – lasted about two hours, the approximate length of a Hollywood action movie (79). But this was a made-for-TV movie, a movie seen in the home. Its cinematic qualities – which included the lack of commercial breaks on September 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> – were what helped to produce a gaze that sutured spectators more precisely into a national narrative.<sup>8</sup> That *unheimlich* gaze, so unlike home TV-viewing and the theories that attend to it, produced a series of cinematic looks. The look of the camera, searching through rubble for surviving friends, fellow cameramen and reporters; the voyeuristic gaze of the audience that scanned the screen for falling bodies, that fetishized body parts, that hungered for images of suffering to substitute for a lost national self.

Global media operates via the resignification of products and images: the transforming of the Hollywood action film *Independence Day* into an actual event; the recycling of the actual event into an episode of the TV drama series “Third Watch”.<sup>9</sup> McLuhan was, perhaps, one of the first to acknowledge this process,

as when he wrote: "The content of any medium is always another medium. The content of writing is speech, just as the written word is the content of print, and print is the content of the telegraph" (8).

In the days following 9/11, one could say that the content of TV was, indeed, film. I would liken this to Guattari's notion of "semiotic pillage," a system in which capitalism "manages to articulate, within one and the same general system of inscription and equivalence, entities which at first sight would seem radically heterogenous: of material and economic *goods*, of individual and collective human *activities*, and of technical, industrial and scientific *processes*" ("Capitalist Systems, Structures and Processes" 235). The media then, becomes the desiring-machine of capitalism, "deliberately organizing wants and needs amid an abundance of productions" (Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus* 28). The Twin Towers reproduced themselves in movie metaphors, in war preparations, in the pledging of Canada's loyalty to the US, in TV images that repeated the bombing sequences over and over again. The insatiable need and hunger for news and images about the bombings was produced in large part by the media; a neediness that became, literally and metaphorically contagious, as anthrax spores appeared at major news sites.

### **Watching 9/11, One Year Later: The Traumatic Dream**

One year after 9/11, I reviewed CBC's coverage of the first eight hours of September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001. I experienced some guilty pleasures. There was raw

beauty in those images, in the novelty of erratic camerawork, of dirty lenses and unedited footage on TV. Cameras became as expressive as bodies: tilting quizzically, jerking in painful surprise, dilating or tearing up like human eyes. I enjoyed seeing what should have been edited out: the ellipses, the space between the frames. I was moved by the chiaroscuro of billowing clouds as the towers collapsed, by cameramen thinking they'd died and then coming back to life, frail pinpoints of light convincing us (and them) of a second chance to live, to set things right with their wives, their kids, their lives. But more than anything else, I was struck by the repetitiousness of the footage, and the stunning lack of empirical information both the pictures and the announcers' and interviewees' commentary provided.<sup>10</sup> I was, of course, watching this footage in a controlled setting (CBC archives), without the overlapping texts of phone calls, emails, channel-flipping, newspaper and radio. This was a radically different viewing situation from the one most of us experienced on the day. I wasn't at home; I couldn't walk away (I had brief and limited access to this footage); I couldn't *look* away. I was in a good position to notice one couldn't possibly have picked up on the day it happened: the stutters, utterances and speech acts, the return of a repressed abject national self. Indeed, the representations and utterances I watched seemed to me to resemble the early stages of trauma as delineated by Judith Herman's classic medical accounting of the characteristics of post traumatic stress disorder, *Trauma and Recovery*. Following Van der Kolk, she argues that trauma can place humans into a pre-linguistic stage. She writes: "in states of highly sympathetic nervous system arousal, the linguistic coding of

memory is inactivated and the central nervous system reverts to the sensory and iconic forms of memory that predominate in early life" (39). Furthermore, the subsequent replaying of the Twin Towers' collapse (every few minutes on the first day; every few hours for months afterwards; and then every six months) seemed to enact the compulsion to repeat that characterizes post traumatic stress. The compulsive return speaks to an unconscious desire to return to the state of trauma. By repeating or returning to unpleasurable experiences, the traumatized subject unconsciously hopes to achieve mastery, and thus to return to pleasure. In the case of Canadian media (and perhaps, most notably, television), mastery of a national self is almost always unrealizable; national and global crises bring this problem to the fore.

The repetitious, compulsive televisual representation of 9/11 on Canadian television provides some interesting insights into the relationship of Canadian and American national identity, the porousness of Canada's representational borders, its abjection in moments of crisis and its concomitant desire for (national) boundary maintenance. Flow functioned as both a connection to a national home, and a departure from it. At the outset of CBC's 9/11 coverage, American and Canadian images and voices were almost indistinguishable, an almost seamless weaving together of national narratives. In an eerie parallel, Trueman writes about CBC's use of American Viet Nam war footage, in which it failed to identify footage that was actually being fed from US stations. He implies that this technical merging led to ideological synergy: "the CBC, tempted by

dramatic American battle footage, found itself parroting the line taken by most American correspondents about the morality and progress of war [...] the message was American, its outlines dictated too often by the Pentagon" (17).

On September 11<sup>th</sup>, CBC received a news "feed" from an American affiliate, WABC, and the voice of Mark Kelley, a CBC journalist who happened to be on air that morning, flowed in and out of the voices of journalists in New York City. This provided an unique opportunity to compare American and Canadian reactions to the event. By 9 a.m., WABC's announcers had named the event as a terrorist attack; it would be hours before Canadian broadcasters even attempted to draw such a conclusion:

UNNAMED AMERICAN ANNOUNCER: *Now it's obvious I think that there's a second plane just crashed into the WTC. I think we have a terrorist act of proportions that we cannot begin to imagine at this juncture. [...] My goodness. A second plane now has crashed into the other tower of the World Trade Center (sigh) Obviously a suicide terrorist attack on the World Trade Center – what we have been fearing for the longest time here apparently has come to pass (WABC).*

MARK KELLEY: *"This is live coverage coming out of Manhattan, the scene of horrific, horrific – well, some people are calling it an act of terror, we're not sure. (CBC).*

Attempts at national boundary maintenance functioned at the level of delay, an echo, or a trace. Later that morning, George Bush delivered his speech to the nation, in which he declared, in ultra-colloquial terms, "we will hunt down and find the folks that did this." In a kind of unconscious, traumatized repetition, the Bugs Bunny-ish word 'folks' began recurring in Kelley's speech: "This tragedy just continues to get worse, folks"; "I may add, folks, that 1000's of people work in these two buildings"; "Clearly, folks, things are not under control." Thus, a Canadian TV announcer's repetitious utterance of the word 'folks' on 9/11, post Bush's speech, performatively sutures him back into American normalcy and recalls earlier utterances of the phrase: the nostalgia of Warner Brothers ("That's all, folks!"); the unified subjectivity of the German Volk; the down-home comforts of folk music and folklore.

By 11 a.m., Kelley had caught up with America, and described the bombings as "a terrorist attack beyond belief." By 11:30, John Thompson, director of the right-wing Canadian think tank The McKenzie Institute was on air, saying, "This is not terrorism anymore, it's war." And, "It's too soon to point fingers [...] but I think you might follow the strings all the way to Afghanistan." At about noon, the CBC graphic changed to "Attack on the USA" with a star-spangled blue background. Peter Mansbridge, the CBC's chief news anchor, had taken the reins with gusto, and his unscripted comments fell in with those of the American President:

*MANSBRIDGE: As we heard from someone else today, it's almost wrong to be discussing this as terrorism, this is war. (cut to shot of collapsing tower). We have a country under siege, a city in devastation just south of us in the United States. These are not pictures from some far-off and distant land. This is our neighbour, and this is New York City, today, September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001 ("CBC News").*

As the language of war entered into the day's repetitious vocabulary, new associations were conjured. Gilroy writes about the use of war as analogy, and its associations with immigration, crime, political protest, and alien invasion ("One Nation Under A Groove"). In a similar vein, Mary Pat Brody notes that the War on Terrorism's "narratives of emergency" recall earlier utterances of terminology used in the War on Drugs, suturing the notion of an attenuated, masculinist, and institutionalized war into normalcy ("Quotidian Warfare").

Mansbridge's responses are also correlative with dissociation, what Judith Herman has described as an inability to integrate memory. In this dissociative state, the replaying of the Twin Towers' collapse takes on the form of the "traumatic dream":

They often include fragments of the traumatic event in exact form, with little or no imaginative elaboration. Identical dreams often occur repeatedly. They are often experienced with terrifying immediacy, as if occurring in the present. (39)

The phrase, "We are all Americans now," erupted days afterwards in the media. Canada's border with the U.S. – long touted as the longest undefended border in



the world – became porous and blurry, almost overnight. “In Canada, pain has no borders,” read a *Globe and Mail* headline on September 15<sup>th</sup>, 2001 (A14). In that article, US Ambassador to Canada, Paul Celucci was quoted as saying to Canadians: “You truly are our best friends” (A14). The sense of US as other, so integral to Canadian identity, was significantly diminished, as Canada and the US became embodied as friends with shared affective capacities. Shame, frequently harnessed at times of national crisis, was an integral part of this equation, producing what Nathanson has termed “the emotion of politics and conformity” (16).

As the US became less and less Canada’s other, foreigners and migrants became more othered. As home became more important, *homelessness* became evidence of questionable morality. Canadian television worked hard to bring grainy, criminalized images of Muslims and Arabs into the familiar surroundings of the home, drawing and building upon a nation’s xenophobia. As Morley writes,

The common location of the television set, in the very center of the home, profoundly integrates televisual experience into the time of everyday life. As a result of this, via television’s transmission into the home, the coevalness of alterity is more strongly established than ever before, as that which is far away is made to feel both very much ‘here’ – right in our sitting rooms – and precisely ‘now’. (182)

The longing for a Canadian connection to terrorism was a vicarious traumatization . As in a horror film, the impulse to imagine a Canadian

connection was the trauma of *unheimlich*; the temporary loss of the maternal realm of belonging and incorporation, of home becoming not-home. On October 10<sup>th</sup> 2001, Peter Mansbridge announced the first of several supposedly *Canadian* terrorists, in a trial by media that was to damage lives and livelihoods: "Another possible Canadian connection to tell you about tonight. This man's name is Ahmad Sa'id Khadr. He's a Canadian, a former aid worker, and the FBI is hunting for someone with the very same name, listing him as a suspect in the attacks of September 11th" ("CBC News", October 10 2001).

When Canadian media wanted to present the "other" side of the story, i.e., stories of racist attacks on Muslims, they would go to the US to do so. On December 16<sup>th</sup> 2001, CTV news anchor Sandie Rinaldo announced this story:

*RINALDO: This week, Americans watched in horror and anger as Osama Bin Laden boasted about the attacks on the World Trade Center. But for Muslim-Americans, there is fear the videotape will spark another round of hate crimes. Since September eleventh, many Muslims have been harassed and victimized. CTV's Allison Vuchnich met with one family trying to cope with the hostility.*

*ALLISON VUCHNICH (Reporter): Watching the Heshmat's prepare dinner, you would never know that this American family is living a nightmare.*

*YASSER HESHMAT: No one should accept this situation.*

VUCHNICH: *The Heshmat's are Muslim and since the September eleventh attacks, they have been harassed and victimized in their own home. ...*

ALIAA HESHMAT: *I don't think it's fair because we are American. We are American citizens and as I told you, we don't know where else to go. This is our home.*

Only an immigrant would have to say such a thing: "this is our home." As Hage writes: "In the daily life of the nation, there are nationals who, on the basis of their class or gender or ethnicity, for example, practically feel and are made to feel to be more or less national than others [...] people strive to accumulate nationality" (*White Nation* 52). If you have to strive for a sense of home, you can be fairly certain that home will always be denied to you in its entirety. Ahmed concurs: "the narrative of leaving home produces too many homes and hence no home" (*Strange Encounters* 78). These Muslims are "bodies out of place" (78); they are not really expected to have a safe home. For Canadian viewers, the Muslim experience of "hostility" is at several removes, safely placed away from home, and framed in the idea that these Muslims will have to keep moving. "In such a narrative journey, then, the space that is most like home, which is most comfortable and familiar, is not the space of inhabitation – I am here – but the very space in which one is almost, but not quite at home" (Ahmed, *Strange Encounters* 78). Or, as Amery puts it, "One must have a home in order not to need it" (46).

Anthrax and anti-terrorism were discursively linked in the media, the anthrax standing in for foreign elements, which in turn stood in for terrorism. As Henrik Herzberg wrote in *The New Yorker*: "They [the terrorists] rode the flow of the world's aerial circulatory system like lethal viruses" (27). Canadian television, in its desire to be part of this larger world of contagion, was quick to provide a national anthrax story which conveniently appeared the same day that new anti-terrorist legislation was announced:

*A contamination scare spread fear on Parliament Hill today. Bio-hazard crews rushed to the scene, after opened mail was found to contain a suspicious powder. The scare came as the Chrétien government launched its sweeping legislative assault in the war on terrorism. The controversial security bill would rewrite the law to give authorities new powers to hunt down suspected terrorists. It would allow for arrests without warrants in certain cases, expands police access to wiretaps, and imposes stiff new sentences, up to life in prison, for those convicted of terrorist activities (Lloyd Robertson, "CTV News" 15 October 2001).*

Canadian and American news became a kind of phantom limb of the Twin Towers, endlessly acting out its melancholia. News of the arbitrary imprisonment and deportation of over a thousand Muslims and other "foreigners" began to leak out, via television's appendages: the internet, the alterNative press, and occasional op ed pieces in newspapers. A March 9<sup>th</sup> 2002 American Press article ran with the headline, "Hundreds of September 11 Detainees Still in N.J. Jails," reporting on the mass detentions had left many Middle Eastern men behind bars

on immigration charges, with no evidence linking them to terrorist actions. Many hundreds more had already been deported.

The fantasy of roots, of a home that is fixed in time and place, has been noted as early as 1882 by Ernest Renan, who cited the French, who claiming themselves as national, have no memory of earlier migrations or displacements ("What is a Nation"). More recently, Liisa Malkki has also written of the invention of homelands in the face of globalization's routine displacements ("National Geographic" 434). This fantasy of nativism also became a fantasy of first, second, and third generation immigrants who are made to go home, to a mythical place that is not *here*: "the condition of being a stranger is determined by the event of leaving home" (Ahmed, *Strange Encounters* 78). The border had opened up only for those who felt at home, and were intent on staying there.

These were not new, nor entirely American positions. Canada has a long history of racial profiling and anti-terrorist legislation through its repeated uses of its War Measures Act to forcibly imprison and deport immigrants, dissenters, and others, for most of the twentieth century. In fact, as Roy Miki and others have pointed out, the constant invocation of 9/11 as a repressive moment risks reinforcing the idea that anti-terrorist initiatives are entirely new (unpublished conference discussion, February 2002). In a similar vein, Žižek points out that such oppressive moments recur as the unrepresentable real, a 'return' of "the same traumatic kernel in all social systems" (50).

## **The Olympics: Triumph of the “Will to Totality”**

The Salt Lake City Olympics, in February of 2002, provided false closure for the national traumas of 9/11. According to Silverman, a person's or a nation's normalcy can be constituted through the repetitious work of particular genres, producing national narratives that are simultaneously known to be false and believed to be 'real'. The genre of the sports spectacle is particularly effective in producing such narratives. Indeed, sports programming and coverage of national crises have certain generic similarities, not the least of which is the production of collective affect. Hage writes: "The national 'we' magically enables the 'I' of the national to do things it can never hope of being able to do as an individual 'I'. [...] Through this magical quality, all collective national identities work as a mechanism for the distribution of hope" ([webct.ubc.ca/SCRIPT/Transculturalisms/scripts/serve](http://webct.ubc.ca/SCRIPT/Transculturalisms/scripts/serve): 2002).

*Village Voice* journalist Richard Goldstein wrote recently about similarities between sports coverage and the war in Iraq:

Only one event drove Iraq off the front page last week: the grand-slam homer by Yankee slugger Hideki Matsui, a/k/a Godzilla. When I first read the *Daily News* headline "Godzilla Roars!" I thought it referred to the marines. My confusion was understandable. The Fox-inspired style of war coverage owes a lot to ESPN. Data streams, tech talk, retired pros calling the plays, and the battle equivalent of helmet cams all create a confluence between sports and combat. ("War Horny Victory is the Ultimate Viagra")

At the Salt Lake City Olympics, the reassertion of hope via national boundaries was also an admission of a limit to hybridity. As the flags of nations were triumphantly carried into the stadium by athletes, the discrete borders of the nation-state were reasserted, if only for seventeen days. "Another Ice Age Begins" ran a headline in the February 9th issue of the *Globe and Mail*, over a photograph of white Canadian athletes in their Roots uniforms, a Canadian flag filling almost half of the frame. As Dyer (1997) and others have pointed out, ice plays an iconic role in a Canadian national imaginary that foregrounds white settler values of agency and survival, which become rationales for colonization. In such constructs as that provided by the *Globe and Mail* article it is as though, as George Eliot Clarke writes, "the primeval frontier and the white body become one" (107). In a kind of televisual postscript to this trope, Wayne Gretzky, coach of the Canadian Olympic men's hockey team, appeared in an ad for General Motors that ran in December 2002. Against shots of neighborhood kids playing hockey, cars, Christmas trees and finally, an off-the-TV shot of Team Canada's winning game, Gretzky says: "*What's there to celebrate about life in Canada? Celebrate ice. Trees. Determination. Celebrate hard work that pays off*" Hage writes about the "simplistically stereotyped national moral characters that the Olympics produces, and the "infantile triumphalism" of victory ([webct.ubc.ca/SCRIPT/Transculturalisms/scripts/serve\\_home](http://webct.ubc.ca/SCRIPT/Transculturalisms/scripts/serve_home)).

The signifiers of a traumatized American nation took center stage at the Olympics. Canadian sports commentator Terri Libel said, "We arrived in Salt Lake City and discovered a nation still in mourning." (CBC Olympic Coverage February 12 2002). (Incessantly patriotic throughout the 17-day broadcast, she mused upon who would carry the "red and white" at the opening ceremony, another unconscious echo of an American speech act). The tattered flag from the World Trade Center was displayed by New York City firefighters. A young American gold medallist skater performed a memorial dance for the victims of 9/11, complete with voice-over: "My name is Sarah Hughes. I am sixteen years old. This dance is in memory of those innocent people who lost their lives on September 11th." (CBC Olympic Coverage February 13 2002). The much-touted childlike innocence of those "victims" stood in for US victimhood and innocence, as when American folksinger Willie Nelson sang the words to "Bridge Over Troubled Waters" : *"I'm on your side/when times get rough/and friends just can't be found"*. (CBC Olympic Coverage February 8 2002). Nelson's ordinariness, his disheveled hair and informal clothing, became a poignant signifier of Middle America and its peculiar notion of victimhood. As Ahmed writes, these kinds of representations are far from benign:

[They signify] the ordinary as in crisis and the ordinary person as the *real victim*. The ordinary becomes that which is *already* under threat by the imagined others whose proximity becomes a crime against person as well as place. Hate is *distributed* in such narratives across various figures [...] all of which come to embody the danger of impurity, or the



mixing and taking of blood ([webct.ubc.ca/SCRIPT/Transculturalisms/scripts/serve](http://webct.ubc.ca/SCRIPT/Transculturalisms/scripts/serve)).

The huge costly spectacles of the opening and closing ceremonies reinscribed this fantasy of pure family and pure nation again and again: Donny and Marie Osmond sang "We are Family"; giant dinosaurs emoted: "We all share the same planet, and after five billion years we're still one family". Silverman (following Laclau) has called this kind of statement a "will to totality": a societal mechanism which serves to forget and obscure cultural difference (54). The figure of the family is central here, combining, as Silverman argues, both sexual and economic normalizing regimes: family as node of symbolic order and mode of production (33).

With the mythology of nation-as-family stronger than ever in the US, the Roots logo, visible on the chests and foreheads of the US, British and Canadian athletes, became subtextually resonant. This was a corporate branding not only of athletics, but also of normalcy, with its demonization of rootlessness. The Roots-designed red Canada jackets (available to athletes and consumers alike) had a vintage feel, reminiscent of my brother's Pee Wee hockey jacket from the 1960's. There was a big maple leaf on the chest, with "Canada" scrawled underneath in retro script, hearkening back to a time before Quebec separatism, before Bill C-36, Canada's brand-new anti-terrorist legislation. In Canadian media, much was made of the fact that it was a Canadian-based, (albeit American owned) company, Roots, that designed the uniforms for athletes for

Canadian, American, and British athletes. During the Olympics, Rebecca Eckler of the *National Post* entered a Roots store and purchased full Team Canada regalia. She wrote: "I looked like I belonged on a podium. Or in a mental institute. Who, in their right mind, would advertise their country to this extent?" ("They Just Can't Get Enough" B6). Ecker interviewed Micheal Budman, co-founder of Roots, quoting him as saying, "This is the greatest moment in Roots history [...] We're just ecstatic how well Americans are receiving our products, all of which are made out of Toronto" (B6). According to Eckler, Budman credited Roots with making Canada "the star of the games" (B6). This was an interesting reversal of the actual situation. In fact, it was Canada that had made Roots the star of the games: corporate branding had (once again) been reterritorialized as patriotism.

The enactment of nationalism, be it specifically Canadian, or a brand of western, uber-Americanism, is comprised of a host of details. Hage, following Bourdieu, stresses the importance of cultural capital in the production of a "practical nationality [which] can be understood analytically as the sum of accumulated nationally sanctioned and valued social and physical cultural styles and dispositions (national culture)" (*White Nation* 53). The accruing of these styles and positions produces, argues Hage, a sense of national belonging. On a weekend trip to Seattle in January 2002, my friends and I delight in noticing the peculiarities of American behaviour and ritual. The almost aggressive friendliness of the waiter (he sits down with us, to chat, before taking our orders) reminds us of our own mythical Canadian *politesse*; the hundreds of flags we notice

everywhere become proof of an overly determined patriotism that is not our own. But it is the similarities, the common symptoms of this nationalist hysteria that are more difficult to notice and pin down. While much of 9/11's collective affect echoes earlier episodes like (in the US) presidential assassinations or (in Canada) the Quebec referendum, there is a different quality to the signifiers of Canadian national belonging post 9/11.

On a Sunday afternoon in February 2002, as I emerge from the cocoon of a three-day conference (ironically, a conference on hybridity), I am taken aback by the sight and sound of cars honking, huge Canadian flags being displayed from car windows, worn as capes, or painted on faces. The streets of Vancouver, usually so staid and quiet, so *readable*, are filled by revelers of many races and all ages. A group of young women stand on the sidewalk, holding up flags and homemade signs as cars go by, echoing the posture of New York citizens as they hailed firefighters immediately after September 11th. A man walks by, holding an empty Molson's Canadian carton aloft like a flag. Canada has defeated the US in the Olympic gold medal hockey game. Suddenly, we are no longer Americans: Canada has regained its autonomy and perhaps its virility through sports. As Mansbridge announces on that day's evening news, over shots of people shouting "Ca-na-da!", we were "a country united and feeling good all over" ("CBC National News", February 24 2002).

This feel-good Canada was a more folksy nation than we had seen in some time. This was a Canada that expressed its Heimat, its “feeling of belonging together” (Applegate x), via a valorization of the local (as in TV commercials that took us to the athletes’ hometowns), amid an unprecedented centralization of state and global power in the form of anti-terrorist legislation and new controls on immigration. Such a retro, small-town Canada could only reclaim its origins in what Miki has called “an earlier ‘nation’ formation” [http://www.webct.ubc.ca/SCRIPT/Transculturalisms/scripts/serve\\_home](http://www.webct.ubc.ca/SCRIPT/Transculturalisms/scripts/serve_home)), one with a single set of roots and a burgeoning fascicular system. Indeed, as Silverman has also argued, the signifiers of ‘town’ and ‘nation’ exist in ideological relation to other binary oppositions like male and female, and are integral to the formation of the dominant fiction (35).

### **Impossible Citizens**

Anniversaries recur, with their deep compulsive need to repeat the trauma of loss. In the wake of the various tragedies of 9/11, the telling and re-telling of the story becomes a way to return to an emotional ground zero, to the home-place of grief.

As I attempt to watch a week’s worth of anniversary footage of 9/11, I finally reach a necessary limit. It is not just that the documentaries, the interviews, the reflections, have been harnessed to the service of Bush’s call to war against Iraq.

It is also that it is only two months since a death in my own family. The faces of New Yorkers mourning the loss of their husbands, wives, daughters and brothers are suddenly familiar to me: they look like my face, or the face of my mother. The television has become a mirror-machine, and I have reached a limit, of skin stretched taut to connect their experience and mine, to connect theory and affect, my brother, my father, my grandmother, my own dead, flesh and blood, skin and kin. The unrepresentable Real has folded into the reality of personal grief. Theory for here, affect for there, layers of skin on skin, multiple points of connection: to justice, to power, to sentiment, to a false collectivity, to community, to the repetitive, compulsive home-place of grief.

My brother's body is returned to his birthplace for burial: to a sun-bleached plot of prairie land. His real home-place was in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside. The DES provided for my brother, as for many others, a site of ethics and community, built from the ground of trauma. The grid of eight scarred city blocks amid which he lived is a place of roots shallowly but firmly placed, of memories of origin that rise in dreams and drug-induced hallucinations like hands choking throats, or like something someone else dreamed for you. Like De Certeau's *wandersmanner*, my brother played music on, and walked, the city's streets and alleys daily, obsessively, one of those "whose bodies follow the thicks and thins of an urban text" (93). But this was a text that, despite his daily presence in it, could not include him in its syntax, its organization. Impossible citizen: *vichnaya pamiat*, eternal memory, eternal unbelonging.

As Jill Bennet has pointed out, psychoanalytically-based trauma theory assumes a world in which the context surrounding the trauma is a normal one to which one can eventually return. She cautions, however, that , "for those who live in violent communities, there is no stable backdrop" (347). The Freudian possibilities of mourning, in which trauma is worked through and located in the narratives of present-time, found a limit, in September 2003, in my own mourning process, in that of nations bent towards war.

De Certeau's Twin Towers were rooted, immobile, looking down upon nomadic populations: "the dark space where crowds move back and forth" (92). Panoptic, all-seeing, the World Trade Center represented a will to knowledge rather than a will to truth, an illusion of empiricism and purity. That those differences could and would erupt, in the form of terrorists, aliens and foreigners, was inevitable; for De Certeau, the "clear text of the planned and readable city" was a palimpsest, overlaid with the text of the nomadic city, *heimlich* becoming *unheimlich*.

One of the things that television did on September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2002, was to remind us that , in the face of trauma, the home always has the potential to become unlike itself, to become not home. This was the trauma of the *unheimlich* with its uncanny Twin Towers-ish doubling – reality that could be mistaken for cinema, Canadian TV that could be mistaken for American. Ghosts and doubles everywhere: the memorialized dead of Washington, Pennsylvania and New York,

the unmemorialized of poverty, neglect, genocide. As Miki writes, that ghostly invisibility is crucial in forging "the exclusive boundaries of the colonial nation-state" ([http://www.webct.ubc.ca/SCRIPT/Transculturalisms/scripts/serve\\_home](http://www.webct.ubc.ca/SCRIPT/Transculturalisms/scripts/serve_home)).

Trauma, writes Bennet, "seeks home not just in language but also in the body [...] when one has the realization 'I am in this scene', it affects me, I am a witness" (348). It is at that moment that the possibility of a public, rather than private memory of trauma can unfold. Without that moment of inhabitation, traumatic memory remains privatized, and perhaps even unrealizable. And it is upon such a foundation of forgetting that national citizenship depends.

Television, purveyor of ghost stories across the borders of inside and outside, made of each home a mirrored house of horrors whose only recourse seemed to be escape to the larger home of nation.

## AFTERWORD

### Empty Suitcases

*For what makes nationhood? A sense of heritage.* [Shot of Mountie statue] *That shared past – both of ordeals, and of good times.* [Dissolve to people square dancing, dissolve to man and son tobogganing]. *Common values. And family.* [Dissolve to mountains and geese, dissolve to cityscape]. *A geography one comes to feel.* [Dissolve to prairie, dissolve to ocean/lighthouse]. *That touches mind and heart.* [Front porch, dissolve to man in store window, “European Textiles”]. *Culture at all levels.* [Dissolve to Inuit coming out of igloo, dissolve to Black boy with white boy, dissolve to boys in cowboy hats]. *And a sense of place that finally says home to all.*

- CBC ,13 February 1996

At the Pier 21 Museum in Halifax, suitcases are the first thing you see; a small pile of them, battered, old, and covered with stickers, juxtaposed against a sepia-toned photo-montage of smiling white immigrants and ships. “Pier 21: Remembering Canada’s heritage,” reads the slogan beside these images. When I first laid eyes upon them, the sight of those empty suitcases filled me, a daughter of immigrants, with an odd combination of anger and nostalgia.



Certain television texts like "Canada: A People's History" and "Loving Spoonfuls" are, perhaps, not unlike these exhibits. As Irit Rogoff argues, "they [the suitcases] are on display as part of the signification of a postwar policy of dealing with the past. [...] a display strategy that wants to insist on driving home both its quite natural disapproval of what took place, but also its hope that this act [...] serves as a kind of amend" (44-45). Rogoff further argues that these kinds of memorial acts actually end up negating the very history they claim to preserve (43). Such memorials insist upon the nation as a site of closure, a final return to home. But home is a modernist construct. "The struggle between place and placelessness is a struggle, perhaps, between modernity and post-modernity," writes Silverstone (27). As I have mentioned earlier, the post-911 push to demonize the homelessness of the migrant is also, in its reification of *place*, a retreat from post-modernity.

Following the trajectory of post-modern theorists of diaspora, Caruth muses upon the notion of diaspora as a scattering of peoples who hope to return to their country of origin. She asks instead, "In what way is the history of a culture, and its relation to politics, inextricably bound up with the notion of departure?" (13). A return, she argues, may only be available through trauma.

My father's return was certainly thus.

My father, in a dissociative episode he could not, later, recall, packed a small suitcase early one morning in his 67<sup>th</sup> year, a half-century after the end of the Second World War. In it he placed some random articles of clothing, his passport, and a ziplock baggie of radishes and salt. What did the contents of that small suitcase signify? (My father, usually such a chronic overpacker, with three suitcases when one would do, now so abbreviated and economical). That suitcase was prepared for sudden flight, but this would be a journey *away* from the safety and bounty of this western suburb with its colonial-style homes guarding capacious refrigerators. This was a suitcase and a man prepared for a journey back to Eastern Europe, back to the camps. The suitcase was a gesture and a memory that, for all its pathology, was my father's final attempt to reclaim memory, to fabricate a ghostly return. (Ghostly because, as Amery argues, "there is no return [...] the re-entrance into a place is never also a recovery of lost time" ) (42).

That my father's attempted return seemed to negate the achievements of the West and his own place in that narrative is, I think, what makes the story worth telling. It would be, a "difficult return," as Simon, Rosenberg, and Eppert have termed it: "to live with a return of a memory that inevitably instantiates loss and thus bears no ultimate consolation, a learning to live with disquieting remembrance [and] the limits of a consolatory assurance that the past can be discursively integrated"(4).

For many scholars, including myself, there is an ethical, or reparative impulse at the root of our work, at the end of our day. To re-envision the world, rather than merely (like those empty suitcases) memorialize its losses, to acknowledge (to paraphrase Deleuze (*Ethology*) that *we do not know what theory can do*.

In the introduction to his book, *Symptoms of Canada*, Keohane tries to offer a way out of critical theory's tautologies, gesturing towards reparation:

I want to locate the moments of openness in identities and the ways in which they might be attuned to one another. I am interested in the particular idiom of boundary transgression and reintegration of antagonistic identities in contemporary Canada (12).

For Keohane, there is hope that those othered figures in the archives may enter into Canadian nationalist discourse. But does such an impulse merely point to a longing for closure, for desire for home, for a representational site of identity, no matter how fragmented those identities may be?

Amery asserts that there can be no return (*At the Mind's Limits*). Too much time has been lost. He discovers, in the process of resistance to Nazi oppression, that "my home was enemy country [...] We [...] had not lost our country, but had to realize it had never been ours" (50). Can a televisual representation of a First Nations community struggling with the legacy of residential schools ("North of Sixty") be reparative of all the years of Joe the Indian, and other problematic

representations? Can reparation even be considered within such a commercial undertaking as television?

### **Media, East and West: Remembering Trauma**

My father passed away before the internet could, supposedly, accelerate his contact with those he had left behind in 'the Old Country'. I remember the letters that arrived every week in our mailbox, from his sister, my Aunt Marusia, in Ukraine. Peering over my father's shoulder, I could barely decode the spidery Cyrillic handwriting on parchment-like airmail paper, every inch of space used up. Those pages were full of detail and yearning.

My Kyivan cousin, Roxolana, and I correspond intermittently via email. She works for a private television station in Ukraine, funded, no doubt, by multinationals. Her television work is an intervention, a new, unbounded space of possibility, post-Communism. When I visit Kyiv for the first time, in the summer of 2001, she proudly hands me a video copy of a piece she did on Andy Warhol, on the occasion of a retrospective of his work in Kyiv. I watch it when I get home to Canada: it's early TV, full of hope and representational possibility. As yet unregulated, she says what she wants, enlarging sites of ethnic and sexual identity, within the space of capitalism.

At the beginning of this dissertation, I posed the rhetorical question, “Can national television be otherwise?” The word *otherwise* gestures towards representational possibilities, or what I have also, in a Deleuzian sense, dubbed “ethical becomings.” Using a primarily text-based methodology, I have, in this dissertation, outlined the ways in which Canadian television largely occludes hybrid representations, at the same time that it, confusingly, perhaps, *includes* the foreigner (the immigrant, the person of colour, the queer) in that project. Certainly, the occlusions can provide sites of resistance among audiences. However, I have concluded that Canada’s increasing need to pose as a sovereign body – in obvious contradiction of its current status as a bit player in the project of American globalization – requires an unremitting nationalist stance that is, increasingly, embedded in the affective codes of global consumption. National culture is never, anymore, just national, but is imbricated into the economic and political exigencies of globalization. We are all, claims Grossberg, “coerced into globality” (24).

As the Joe Canadian rant demonstrates, US dominance became an object of Canadian nationalism in the 1990’s.<sup>1</sup> This was as much the result of popular struggles as of Canadian corporate concerns regarding loss of revenue from free trade. Ultimately, consumption frames both our resistance and our compliance. The text of a 1996 television news documentary “Thinking the Unthinkable,” (“The Magazine”, CBC), cited at the beginning of this chapter, reads (and looks) like a TV ad. It’s not advertising a consumer item, but rather, is using the tropes

of consumption to advertise the nation. Browne claims that television utilizes consumption as a solution to the problems of everyday life" ("The Political Economy of the Television Supertext"). Keohane further argues that these pleasures of shared national consumption are amplified by antagonism. Thus it can be surmised that one of the discursive legacies of the televised Quebec referendum debate was an increase in representations of consumer items that stand in for the unrepresentable "real" of Canadian identity.

As corporations acquire more rights than humans, they also acquire more roles. Corporation as producer, corporation as *auteur*.<sup>2</sup> In late twentieth-century Canadian culture, it is Joe Canadian – a young, white, probably heterosexual male – who is the speaking subject of nationalist practice.<sup>3</sup> But Joe, of course, is only a stand-in. Here, a corporation – Molson – becomes the speaking subject who is, in Foucault's terms, "accorded the right" to proffer the truths of nationalist discourse (*The Archaeology of Knowledge* 50). These days, the corporation is accorded not only human rights but also human affect. Television, as a consumer medium, is the ideal 'surface of emergence' for these affected truths.

But corporate space is also the private, individual space of melancholia, of acting out. Jill Bennet has argued for the healing possibilities of a *public* remembering of trauma ("Art, Affect, and the 'Bad Death'"). Is there such a possibility of a public unfolding of the narratives of Canadian history? Derrida's words, cited earlier, are

cautionary: "this institutional passage from the private to the public [...] does not always mean from the secret to the nonsecret" (*Spectres of Marx* 2-3).

Can there be such a thing as an ethics of representation on Canadian television, some fifty years after its birth? Via the prominent placement of certain critical programs like "This Hour Has 22 Minutes", Rick Mercer's "Monday Report", "North of Sixty", and one-off documentaries and dramas, the CBC manages to produce a series of descriptive and seemingly contradictory statements: Canada is unique/ Canada is just like the U.S.; Canada is peaceful, self-effacing and tolerant/ Canada has racist immigration policies. Following Foucault, these contradictions must also be seen as part of Canadian nationalist discourse. Ethical closure seems elusive.

In the deconstructive tradition, ethics must remain non-prescriptive, resisting closure. Peter Baker asks whether it is even possible to meet Derrida's "impossible" ethical demand, but then locates an ethical position in the very act of questioning:

The deconstructive task then is to find [...] an ethics that maintains an openness to the other as truly other, not merely an other who is the 'same'. Deconstruction can never become a set of self-transparent rules for thinking or conduct, but the challenge it poses to thinking and conduct nonetheless maintains the force of an ethical demand. (115-116)

In a 1982 interview with Stephen Riggins, Foucault discourages the impulse to produce ethical closure, or what he calls “a call for prophetism.” A single book, he argues, does not have to provide ethical principles at the same moment that it offers analysis. It is important to allow for readerly agency: “People have to build their own ethics, taking as a point of departure the historical analysis, sociological analysis and so on that one can provide for them” (132).

Fragments of ethical becomings appear, in the public, but still very much underground, and perhaps secretive, realm of the video screen. In a voice aching with sadness and anger, Vancouver-based First Nations artist Dana Claxton invokes a litany of colonial abuse against the women in her family, and asks, again and again “I want to know why” (*I Want to Know Why*, video 1994).

Hawai’ian Canadian artist Ruby Truly reads from a 1950’s manuscript manual for Canadian missionaries teaching English to the Northern Saskatchewan Cree. She starts reading slowly, but then speeds up, to the rhythm of a pulsing backbeat (... *And the Word Was God*, video 1987). As with Claxton, repetition sutures her into a circular trauma narrative. Such negative affect can, following Sedgwick’s formulation regarding shame, be productive; it can radicalize notions of home and Heimat. But these radical images don’t seem to leak onto the TV screen.

A kind of overdetermined sentimentality seems to colour the TV nation these days. A 2003 ad for Canada Post, featuring a lovelorn woman who insists on



communicating with her desired one by snail-mail, repeats a dozen times in an evening. Reportage about a group of twenty-one Muslim-Canadians imprisoned for one month as terrorists and then released for lack of evidence, is described in affective terms: the government is merely red-faced, embarrassed. Once again, embarrassment (laminated onto the grainy image of the ethnic, or the exile) stands in for shame, precluding the possibilities of working through.

### **Movements Between and Across**

I didn't ever feel at home in Kyiv: nothing matched my father's memories or my grandmother's stories; not the architecture, not the language, not even the food. I even stopped referring to myself as Ukrainian, for that only confused people; instead, I learnt to describe myself, in both Ukrainian and English as, simply, "diaspora". As I walked the wide, leafy boulevards of Kyiv, I could feel the proper boundaries of skin and identity eroding. I was becoming a diasporic subject, something between east and west, something that would either never belong in either, or would always long for one or the other.

Sara Ahmed describes the space in between homes as a space of belonging (*Strange Encounters* 77). Origin has become unheimlich, and destination is always unstable: "home becomes the impossibility and necessity of the subject's future (one never gets there but is always getting there), rather than the past that binds the subject to a given place" (78). As I traveled by train and bus through

the scarred social and geographical landscape of Ukraine, I wondered if my elders' recollections of the Old Country had been mere projection. Where were the lush green steppes and hallowed birch groves we had sung about as children? National narratives, argues Ahmed, compensate for the failure of individual memory. The nation, once again, is forged through trauma, and historical error. "It is the act of forgetting that allows the subject to identify with a history" (78).

National narratives become undone in that space in between. I have come to the conclusion (which is, perhaps, a kind of new theoretical beginning), that the ethical becoming of mourning, or working through occurs *across* media. In an age of convergence, television can't, anymore, be spoken of in isolation from other media. Riposte, commentary, humour, scathing critique are available on the internet: *Rabble.ca*, *Znet*, *Frontlines.com*. On a CBC News World program, "Inside Media", a Black campus radio host says his 'ethnic' audiences shun CBC – not necessarily because of racism, but because of what he calls its "polite anglo sound". He considers *Radio 3*, CBC's online presence, to be a much cooler, and culturally diverse location (*Inside Media* February 24, 2004). Such sites collude with the latest in digital consumption: laptop computers, DSL connections, scanners, CD burners, cellphone text-messaging systems, free on-line email and web logging software shimmering with ads.

McLuhan wrote, "the content of any medium is always another medium" (8). He would perhaps insist that the content of the Internet is television. In Deleuzian terms, I would suggest a (at least) two-way flow: Internet becoming TV, and TV becoming Internet. Canadian television's monolith breaks down at the borders of media. The Molson's website bulletin board is an unwitting site of resistance, as when an anonymous writer declaims, in response to Joe Canadian's rants:

*I want my identity back. . .  
Because my country's Identity has sold it's [sic] soul to corporate power  
Because consumerism and beer consumption has become our National  
religion  
Because we have forgotten the true meaning of being Canadian!!!!  
And BECAUSE CANADIAN NOW MEANS A BEER  
I AM not a demographic  
I AM not a consumer  
I AM who I AM and I AM not a beer.  
(June 25 2003, [www.molson.ca](http://www.molson.ca))*

The self is still constituted in fixed notions of purity, still at the site of the nation. But it does talk back to the TV screen. Bhabha argues that the atemporal disjunctiveness of the Internet, "the move from organic temporality to disjunctive, displaced acceleration" (x), is more suited to the exilic mode. Television, so rooted in national time, must be seen as being in dialogue with digital media's non-synchronous time: the fragmented optics of video art, the Internet, mpeg movies passed on via email.

A post-national imaginary (Appadurai 177) may also be an imaginary unbounded by the conventions of particular media. Ethical gestures may occur in the movement *between* television and Internet. Worldwide demonstrations organized by email, whose passion and rage can scarcely be captured by the TV camera. Television reporters performing themselves at a demonstration in support of imprisoned Fujianese refugees, bodies and cameras colonizing the activist space. Later, watching the news, we don't see ourselves. So the story gets told and remembered orally, and photographs are passed on via email, in jpeg files. I download my digital footage of the demonstration to VHS, mail it to a friend. She gets into a cab, the tape is smuggled into the jail.

But that's a different story.

## END NOTES

### Introduction

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<sup>1</sup> This particular ad, entitled “Anthem”, first aired on Canadian television in 2001.

<sup>2</sup> See Wagman.

<sup>3</sup> For more on space in relation to Canadian identity, see Razack.

<sup>4</sup> The notion of cultural competence emerged out of scholarly feminist studies of soap operas in the 1980's, and the notion that soap opera's address to women's domestic concerns produced a particular female competence in reading the genre, allowing female viewers to take an active audience role. For more on cultural competence see Hobson.

### Chapter One: Becoming Nation: Affect Theory

<sup>1</sup> For an exception to this rule, see Peter Trueman's caustic though rather dated *Smoke and Mirrors: The Inside Story of Television News in Canada*, in which the CBC in particular is given a severe dressing-down.

<sup>2</sup> When I tell people I am writing about Canadian television, the most frequent response I get is: “that's going to be a short dissertation...” Frank Manning addresses the ways in which Canadian popular culture is given short shrift by theorists as well as by the general population. Canadian popular culture is seen as contested – not being Canadian – with ethnic and regional cultures seen as being more authentically national. The more urgent task, within the purview of Canadian nationalism, is to protect these cultures via state apparati. Manning writes, “Paradoxically but perhaps predictably, the unassailable determination to champion Canadian culture has inhibited its study and analysis” (6).

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<sup>3</sup> This dissertation attempts to question and denaturalize the workings of Canadian television as a surface of emergence for nationalism. The notion of a postnational, therefore, is important to, though not central, to this dissertation. I discuss Appadurai's notion of the postnational in greater detail in Chapter 4.

<sup>4</sup> A reference to the title of Eley and Suny's book, *Becoming National*.

<sup>5</sup> The ethical *limits* of deconstruction have been critiqued by some as a retreat from the politics of race, gender and identity that entered the academy via student uprisings and social protests of the 60's. Speaking from a feminist perspective, Braidotti writes, "one cannot deconstruct a subjectivity one has never controlled", and makes note of a similar critique by Luce Irigaray (116-117). Others argue that this ethical turn simply recuperates earlier positions.

<sup>6</sup> For more on the relationship between queer and the nation, see Berlant & Freeman.

<sup>7</sup> For analysis of earlier Molson's Canadian ads, see Keohane.

<sup>8</sup> Sawa" is Arabic for 'together'.

<sup>9</sup> Dwayne Winseck notes that convergence has been part of media since mid 19<sup>th</sup> Century (795).

<sup>10</sup> Winseck also notes that these same effects are seen with Canada's public network, CBC, as a result of government cutbacks (799).

<sup>11</sup> Global BS Media, a satirical web project of Vancouver's Guerrilla Media, responds with an article from the "Vancouver Scum", announcing that "the RCMP has formed a new highly-trained and top-secret team called the Anti-Embarrassment Special Service (ASS). Included in their arsenal will be weapons

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of mass embarrassment, including “high-tech embarrassers such as the wireless joy buzzer and the tele-deprompter which can neutralise a politician's tele-prompter and cause painful unscripted silences”. (Paulitico Azzkizzer, <http://www.globalbs.com/story27.htm>).

<sup>12</sup> Similarly, Zoe Sofoulis has argued that celebrity is mode of pleasurable identification that can unify citizens along national lines.

## **Chapter Two: Whose Child Am I? The Quebec Referendum and Languages of Affect and the Body**

<sup>1</sup> The 1995 referendum was the latest step in a history of Quebecois nationalism that dates back to the origins of a Canadian federation in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> Century. An emerging separatist movement in the 1960's led to the formation of the *Parti Quebecois*, a party pledged to separatism, which came to power in 1976. Quebec's first unsuccessful sovereignty referendum was held in 1980. For further analysis of Quebec nationalism, see Keating.

<sup>3</sup> Creeber makes some important distinctions between the series, (for example: “ER”, “Law and Order”), which are designed to run indefinitely, and the serial, which has a limited number of episodes with beginning, middle and end. He argues that it is the *serial*, more than the series, which provides a site for somewhat more complex exploration of race and identity on TV, like the 1970's American serials “Roots” (1977) and “Holocaust”(1978). I would argue that these are nominally less official versions of history, but, like the Quebec referendum, their framing within the genre of the serial allows for rich analytical opportunities.

<sup>4</sup> Some other objects of Canadian nationalism might be: state multiculturalism, television's need for dramatic seriality at a time (the late 1990's onwards) when

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the dramatic serial is in decline; the need for an expression of federal sovereignty in the face of the loss of economic sovereignty due to free trade agreements.

<sup>5</sup> For further theorization of the connection between romanticism and nationalism, see Nairn.

<sup>6</sup> It has been suggested by former NAC president Sunera Thobani (informal discussion) and others, that Francophone feminists actively participated in the obscuring of race issue in Quebec. For further feminist analysis of the racialized nature of Quebec sovereignty, see Bannerji, *Dark Side of the Nation*.

<sup>7</sup> Peter Brooks develops the relation of music and narrative further: "The emotional drama needs the desemanticized language of music, its evocation of the 'ineffable', its tones and registers [...] called upon to invest plot with some of the inexorability and necessity that in pre-modern literature derived from the substratum of myth" (14).

<sup>8</sup> Certainly, these kinds of domestic splits did exist. A Canadian independent film, *Just Watch Me*, depicted a real-life couple, an anglo and a francophone based in Quebec. As the referendum approaches they begin to review their options. They have decided to move if the yes vote wins; they want their children to have easy access to the English side of their family. A heart-wrenching sequence of interviews with each partner, rapidly intercut, reveals the depth of each person's attachment to their part of the country. The yes vote loses, but they end up moving to English Canada anyways, not wanting to live in such a divided environment.

<sup>9</sup> This is another intertextual reference, to Hugh McLennan's 1947 Canadian novel, *Two Solitudes*.



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<sup>10</sup> Levin also notes that an American spin-off of *Les Plouffes*, *Viva Valdez* transformed the working-class, Quebec City-based Plouffes into a Latino family living in a Los Angeles barrio.

<sup>11</sup> For a compelling Foucauldian analysis of the Cartesian subject, see McWhorter.

### **Chapter Three: Haunted Absences: Reading “Canada: A People’s History”**

<sup>1</sup> Described in library holdings as “a report on multiculturalism in contemporary Canada,” this town hall discussion covered such topics as: history of the federal government policy, arguments from supporters and opponents of multiculturalism, and a profile of Sikh community in Surrey, British Columbia.

<sup>2</sup> Recently, I saw television footage of a Canadian internment camp that imprisoned Jews during WW2 (for alleged security reasons). Overlaid onto it was a soundtrack of men singing “Oh Canada.”

<sup>3</sup> Horatio Alger was a 19<sup>th</sup> Century writer of juvenile fiction, with characters who succeeded on the basis of their individual determination to struggle against hardship. His name has become a metaphor for rags-to-riches success, American style.

<sup>4</sup> Warley emphasizes that the “North of Sixty”’s First Nations consultants did not have complete creative control. She interviewed several First Nations people who were critical of certain aspects of the script.

<sup>5</sup> “North of Sixty” has had a lively afterlife, with weekly reruns, first on CBC and now APTN (Aboriginal Peoples’ Television Network). In the past five years there

have also been four "North of Sixty" made-for-TV movies, which revive the town and its residents in thriller-style dramas.

#### **Chapter Four: An Otherness Barely Touched Upon: A Cooking Show, A Foreigner, A Turnip and a Fish's Eye**

<sup>1</sup> I am using the terms 'transcultural' and 'transnational' as distinct but not unrelated terms. Mignolo, cited in the "Transculturalisms" website ([www.transculturalisms.arts.ubc.ca/](http://www.transculturalisms.arts.ubc.ca/), June 27 2004), defines transculturalism thus: "Transculturation subsumes the emphasis placed on borders, migrations, plurilinguaging, and multiculturing and the increasing need to conceptualize transnational and transimperial languages, literacies, and literatures [...] allowing for the celebration of the 'impure' in the social world from the 'pure' perspectives couched in a national language and in 'scientific' epistemology. (220). I am using the term 'transnational' in the sense that it is employed by Appadurai: a world that has been deterritorialized by global capitalism (*Modernity at Large*). Transculturalism, I would offer, is the product of the ethical, creative, and perhaps even imaginary work required in a transnational world.

<sup>2</sup> In the "Loving Spoonfuls" website, Gale's bio includes mention of a major role in a film by gay Canadian director John Greyson. In the intertextual realm of television, this associative connection becomes an integral part of the way the program is received by audiences.

<sup>3</sup> This notion is also visible in a more recent film, *My Big Fat Greek Wedding*, where a nondescript white suitor is absorbed into the grotesque, food-centred doings of his in-laws.

<sup>4</sup> By describing this show as a comedy, the producers of "Loving Spoonfuls" make use of television's inherent ability to, as Jane Feuer notes, "recombine across genre lines" (131).

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<sup>5</sup> In writing about Andy Warhol's shyness, and, in effect, about queerness, Sedgwick develops the notion of a creatively productive shame: "...the dysphoric affect shame functions as a nexus of production: production, that is, of meaning, of personal presence, of politics, of performative and critical efficacy" ("Queer Performativity" 135).

## **Chapter Five: National Mania, Collective Melancholia: the Trudeau Funeral**

<sup>1</sup> Roland Boer has written about the transference between media figures that occurred at Princess Diana's funeral, when Elton John sang "Candle in the Wind", a song he had originally written for Marilyn Monroe (85). Cohen's and Castro's anomalous presence performed a similar function at the Trudeau funeral, transferring their larger-than-life countercultural presence onto the Trudeau legacy.

<sup>2</sup> Peter Trueman writes about colonial tendencies in Canadian television, citing British influences in its early years and American influences thereafter: "the worst features of the BBC plus the weaknesses of the U.S. networks" (16).

<sup>3</sup> One year later, on the anniversary of Trudeau's death, several television programs went to great pains to erase these challenges to the normal via excessive use of marriage metaphors. Trudeau was repeatedly referred to as having had a spousal relationship to Canada. Adrienne Clarkson, Canada's Governor General, said in a CBC interview: "It was an emotional relationship that we had with him. When we wanted to reject him or throw him out of the house it was because we thought he'd misbehaved. But we were always there as long as he was still there." (*Life and Times*, CBC, October 2001).

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<sup>4</sup> For a more extended analysis of the relationship between media, the erotic and the haptic, see Marks.

<sup>5</sup> The quote that ends Justin's eulogy is by Robert Frost, and was also quoted at the funeral of President John F. Kennedy. This marks yet another colonial overlay: for many, including myself, the flag draped coffin resonated with the first major televisual experience of my generation: the Kennedy assassination and funeral. As an interviewee in the film *Just Watch Me: Trudeau and 70's Generation* remarked, "Trudeau was our Kennedy that didn't get shot." (NFB 2000)

<sup>6</sup> In this instance I am building upon LaCapra, who writes, "the 'acting out' of a melancholic nation (acting out of repetition compulsion) may make it impossible for ethical, progressive, responsible actions" (70).

<sup>7</sup> This is another reference to Sedgwick's formulation of "shame-creativity". She writes, "shame functions as the nexus of production; production, that is, of meaning, of personal presence, of politics" (1995).

<sup>8</sup> The Algoma strike is described by Radwanski as "a watershed in Quebec's political history" (64): a struggle between the authoritative, anti-union Duplessis government, and an increasingly urbanized and secularized population. Radwanski writes: "the long bitter dispute had served as a rallying point for all progressive elements in the province, simultaneously underlining both the anti-democratic nature of the Duplessis regime and its vulnerability to concerted resistance" (65).

<sup>9</sup> The notion of belonging has been reconfigured by Probyn as "belonging, not in some deep authentic way, but belonging in constant movement, modes of belonging as surface shifts" (*Outside Belonging* 19).

## **Chapter Six: Homeland (In) Security: Roots and Displacement, from New York, to Toronto, to Salt Lake City**

<sup>1</sup> The notion of homeland later became institutionalized in the U.S. in November 2002 with the formation of the Department of Homeland Security, the largest American federal reorganization in several decades. Immigration would now operate as a security operation, in the same department as the Secret Service and Customs, effectively criminalizing the movement of immigrants. The *National Post* reports that, "All male 'foreign visitors' from a list of 25 mostly Arab and Muslim countries are required to report to authorities for interviews, and be photographed and fingerprinted" (2003: B1).

<sup>2</sup> At time of writing, this synergy is expanding. In spring of 2003, the American INS and Canada Immigration held a Border Security Summit, which resulted in, among other things, a safe third country agreement. Under that agreement, most refugee claimants who arrive at the Canadian border after travelling through the United States will be turned back to make claims for asylum under the stricter U.S. system.

<sup>3</sup> For further analysis of botanical metaphors in regard to the nation, see Malkki.

<sup>4</sup> Many people argue that the Kennedy assassinations were the first such events, but these were recorded on film and later broadcast on television.

<sup>5</sup> News announcer Mark Kelley's emotive outpouring is, according to Dumm, not out of line, for, as he writes, "the anchor is able to present herself or himself as a fellow watcher, but one who is a surrogate for the watcher at home, able to ask questions and guide the agenda" (317).

<sup>6</sup> The term “preferred reading” derives from Stuart Hall’s seminal essay “Encoding/Decoding,” in which he identified three possible ways of decoding media texts: oppositional, negotiated, and preferred (or dominant). Crucial to this formulation is Hall’s insistence that, while polysemy creates the possibility of a variety of readings among audience members, the media text is still “structured in dominance.” Hall wrote: “Polysemy must not be confused with pluralism. [...] Any society/culture tends, with varying degrees, to impose its segmentations. [...] There remains a dominant cultural order, though it is neither univocal nor contested” (134). I find this to be a useful caveat in my own attempts to understand the ways in which mainstream media achieved a kind of monolithic textuality during the events of 9/11.

<sup>7</sup> Raymond Williams defines flow as “the replacement of a programme series of timed, sequential units by a flow series of differently related units in which the timing, though real, is undeclared” (1974: 93). While he used the term to refer specifically to the structure of television programming, I am using it in a much broader sense.

<sup>8</sup> Anthony Lane also points out the extent to which people’s televised responses to 9/11 came from blockbuster movie scripts like *Independence Day*, *Die Hard*, and *Armageddon*. But it is his citing of the 1998 thriller film *The Siege* that most accurately sums up this uncanniness, as when Denzel Washington’s character says, “Make no mistake – we will hunt the enemy, we will find the enemy, we will kill the enemy” (79).

<sup>9</sup> In a critical article rare for the neo-conservative national Canadian paper *The Globe and Mail*, columnist Russell Smith, described the *West Wing* episode as “official art, American-style”, writing that, “The writers of the program may not have to satisfy the demands of a central propaganda committee, but they do

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have to come up with something that a terrified corporation, the network, would air in a time of greatly heightened sensitivity" (2002: D1).

<sup>10</sup> Cavell, however, cited in Dumm ("Telefear: Watching War News"), argues that improvised talk is absolutely characteristic of television, and that "the fact that nothing of consequence is said matters little compared to the fact that something is spoken. [...] Improvisation, no matter how slight, is the sign of life on the television monitor" (311).

### **Afterword: Empty Suitcases**

<sup>1</sup> Ironically, Molson is no longer Canadian-owned. On July 22, 2004, Molson Inc. and the American Adolph Coors Co. announced that they have merged, becoming the Molson Coors Brewing Company.

<sup>2</sup> A new film co-directed by Mark Achbar and Jennifer Abbot, *The Corporation* (2003), examines the corporation's emergence as a legal "person," and the pathological ramifications thereof.

<sup>3</sup> Wagman notes that Molson spent over \$1 million in market research to reveal that its target demographic is young men, aged eighteen to twenty-four. The study also revealed that this sector showed a significant sense of "national pride" (81).

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