Joseph Yvon Thériault

Trudeau Fellow 2007,
Université du Québec à Montréal

BIOGRAPHY

Since 2008, Joseph Yvon Thériault has been a full Professor of Sociology at the Université du Québec à Montréal, where he holds the Canada Research Chair in Globalization, Citizenship and Democracy. He was full Professor in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at the University of Ottawa (1978-2008), where he held the Research Chair in Identity and Francophonie (2004-2008) and was the Founding Director of the Centre for Interdisciplinary Research on Citizenship and Minorities (CIRCEM, 2000-2007).
His research centres on the relationship between collective identities and democracy or citizenship. It is conducted from the perspective of the history of ideas and comparative analysis of small societies and national minorities, with particular emphasis on the context of Quebec, Acadian and Canadian francophone minority societies. He has published widely on these issues, most notably *La société civile ou la chimère insaisissable* (1985); *L'identité à l'épreuve de la modernité*, a book for which he received the Prix France-Acadie (1996); *Critique de l'américanité, mémoire et démocratie au Québec*, which won the Prix Richard Arès and the Prix de la présidence de l'assemblée nationale du Québec 2003; and *Faire société, société civile et espaces francophones* (2007). He has directed several research groups, collective publications and specialized journals related to the issues at the focus of his research: citizenship, democracy, the welfare state, memory, the French-speaking world and collective identity.

Joseph Yvon Thériault is a respected academic involved in both the university community and society at large. Over the years at the University of Ottawa he has served as director of the Department of

Sociology, Associate Dean of Research, interim Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences, Director of the University of Ottawa Press, and Chair of the Commission on Graduate Studies in the Humanities of the Graduate Faculty. He has played a key role in creating research networks to study both the Canadian and international French-speaking societies, as well as organizing research networks on small societies for the Association internationale des sociologies de langue française (AISLF). He chaired the Association canadienne des sociologues de langue française (ACSALF) and was vice-president (Americas) of the Biennale de la langue française and chair of the Biennale Amérique de la langue française. His many public addresses attract varied audiences, from international colloquia and universities to public policy planners and civil society activists. He regularly presents a feature on the program "Ouvert le samedi" on the Radio-Canada national radio network.

He received his Ph.D. from the École des hautes études en sciences sociales (Paris) in 1981 and his M.A. from the University of Ottawa in 1973. He was elected a member of the Royal Society of Canada in 2004 and was nominated a Trudeau Fellow in 2007.

ABSTRACT

Over 40 years ago, in *Lament for a Nation*, Georges P. Grant pronounced the theoretical impossibility of Canada in the face of continental integration and the advent of the technological age. Since this pessimistic statement was penned, Canada has evolved in the exact directions that Grant perceived as the root of its impossibility as a nation: free-trade agreement, abandoning its reference to two founding peoples, non-British immigration, multiculturalism, and constitutionalization of a Human Rights Charter that rules Parliament. Paradoxically, a number of contemporary analysts of Canadian and even Quebec society see these transformations as ingredients in a new Canadian identity that set it apart even from the United States. Through multiculturalism, ecumenicalism, Chartism, and a civic definition of nationhood, Canada has become the world's leading post-modern, or perhaps cosmopolitan, society. This is its true national identity. "The world needs more Canada," as international rock star Bono proclaimed at the Liberal leadership convention in 2003.

But is Canada really a cosmopolitan society? To answer this question, we need to turn back to a question already suggested in Grant's argument: isn't cosmopolitanism incompatible with the idea of nationhood, and perhaps even with the idea of society?

LECTURE

Is Canada a Truly Cosmopolitan Society?

Carleton University (Ontario)

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I was hesitant about using Canada and its cosmopolitan nature as a subject for this conference. After all, I told myself this type of awards conference is a chance to talk about all the work I have done so far, to provide a kind of brief retrospective of my area of study and how it is progressing.

Honestly speaking, Canada was not my area of study, so am I perhaps venturing into unknown territory here?

After thinking about it, I assured myself such was not the case. In some way, I have always worked on Canada. I have grown up, completed my studies, with the exception of a stay in Europe for my doctorate, and been a professor, until very recently at least, in Canada. What I mean here is Canada outside Quebec—the ROC (Rest of Canada). So it is a society I know from the inside out. The book that taught me the history of Canada was based on English Canadian historiography (Brown *et al.*, 1950). As Marcel Trudel noted in a report submitted to the Commission on Bilingualism and Multiculturalism, it cheered the conquest of 1760: "New France had fallen at last!" The French translator thought it wise to narrow the scope, for us young Acadians, by toning it down somewhat: "La

Nouvelle-France était tombée!" [New France had fallen] (Trudel & Jain, 1969, p. 16).

This brief anecdote reminds me, however, that I always perceived my Canada through the prism of the national duality. Even in the New Brunswick Acadia of my childhood, Canada was a derived reality; my first identity, my strong identity, was that of Acadia. This conception became even more marked during my adolescence and my university studies which, though pursued outside Quebec, but in French, were necessarily submerged in the world of the Quiet Revolution happening in Quebec. I viewed Canada, at that time, from the logic of two nations, as Henri Bourassa had formulated it in the early 19th century and as André Laurendeau still dreamed about when he co-chaired the Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism. I learned to become French Canadian, me, who, as an Acadian, was no such person, at the time when the idea of French Canada was collapsing.

My university work, at least that concerning a specific social reality, focused on identity and politics in Acadia, in the French-speaking minority, and in Quebec. It was a continuation of my perception of Canada as a political society formed of two separate national communities—today we would add the First Nations. A political society where, as Charles Taylor put it, "a plurality of ways of belonging" can be recognized and accepted (Taylor, 1993, p. 183). Our perception of the country is not—does not have to be—the same, whether one comes from Quebec, from an ethnic community in English Canada, or from a First Nation. I am not speaking here about two or three "solitudes" that do not understand each other and that would have to be reconciled, brought together beyond their divisions, as Governor-General Michaëlle Jean said in her acceptance speech. Rather it involves different conceptions of belonging to the world that are to be valued, made to coexist, and whose differences are to be recognized.

It is from this perspective, that of multinationalism, at least analytically, because I have no specific political agenda in mind here, that I will be talking today about Canada. So I will be talking from the inside, but from an inside that never assimilates into the whole. Besides I will be referring to English Canada—not Canada as a whole. Thus a reading of English Canada as seen through thick French-Quebec or French-Canadian glasses.

I will have a chance to get back to this, but this conception of a multinational Canada has few fans today in the political and cultural circles (in either Quebec or the Rest of Canada). It was replaced in Quebec by separatism or sovereignty, conceptions in which Canada is mostly missing, and in English Canada by the idea of multiculturalism and its political extension, cosmopolitanism, conceptions in which, if Quebec is present—as in the expression *My Canada includes Quebec*, an expression made popular by "Canadians" during the last Quebec referendum on separation, to remind Quebec of their love—in this expression then, if Quebec is present, it is absorbed by the great universal leveller of differences.

Although this idea of a multinational Canada may seem politically moribund today, it remains a powerful analytical tool that still guides the reading of Canadian intellectuals as important as Charles Taylor, Will Kymlicka, Kenneth McRoberts, Philip Resnick and James Tully.[1] In Quebec, this idea appears in the works of Guy Laforest and Alain G. Gagnon, and it may actually have a political future, given that the separatist project is failing while the population remains strongly driven by a nationalist intent to form a separate society, in French, in North America.

1. As Kenneth McRoberts fittingly recalls "Multinationalism has become no less than an important and influential Canadian school of political thought. Yet, contemporary political life in Canada shows little trace of these ideas" (2001, p. 694).

Grant: The Impossibility of Canada

Reading today's reality from the lens of a politically moribund idea is a good introduction to George Grant and his text *Lament for a Nation*, which I would like to use as a springboard to talk about the Canadian identity. Grant actually wrote this small text in 1965, immediately following the defeat of the Diefenbaker government, a defeat largely due to dickering concerning the issue of integrating Canadian defence with that of the United States. For Grant, Diefenbaker's failure is far from being that of an indecisive leader, as the press put it then, but rather the result of the uncomfortable, impossible position in which he had placed himself by wanting to defend both a conservative idea of Canada—its affiliation with the British Commonwealth—and a modern idea—the modernization of Canada embodied in its continental integration. Diefenbaker's failure was, for Grant, Canada's failure, the very impossibility of Canada. That is why his text was a lament: he was lamenting the loss of a valuable asset that could never be brought back, only cherished, as one does the final remains of a loved one who has passed on.

What was this society that Grant felt had died? "A society," he said, "only articulates itself as a nation through some common intention among its people" (2007, p. 67). Canada, he felt, was created around a conservative intent, that of building, north of America, a society where, contrary to democratic American individualism, a "greater sense of order and restraint" (p. 69) would reign, drawn from the English Protestant roots of its British populace. These roots hearkened back to the times "before the age of progress" (p. 64). In describing this society, he was in effect, describing English Canada; French Canada, like Quebec in the sixties, would never have accepted having its identity embodied in such a tribute to British civilization. Grant was aware of that and even attributed part of Canada's failure to its inability to cement a pact with the other people, the other tradition, which, for completely different reasons, also had a

conservative intent. In the words of Seymour Martin Lipset (1991), Canada might thus have been founded on an imaginary double "counterrevolution," that of the defeat on the Plains of Abraham and that of the defeat of the American Loyalists.

Grant felt that such a pact could have delayed the demise of Canada, but would not have been enough to ensure its survival. Because more profound reasons were militating in favour of the impossibility of Canada. On one hand, there was the gravitational pull of the continent. Americanization was, so to speak, built into the country's geography. And the United States was, for Grant, "the only society on earth that has no traditions from before the age of progress" (2007, p. 64) and, as a consequence, a society resistant to the intent of filiation that guided the idea of Canada.

The US America was more than America, however. It incarnated a praxis and a representation of modernity that made America the centre of an empire devoted to propagating the liberal ideas and technical progressivism of the modern world.[2] But, both in its ideological version—liberalism—and technical version—progressivism—modernity rejected any conservative idea, even any national intent. The modern world's political horizon is "the universal and homogeneous State" (p. 53), a world where individual rights take precedence over tradition and the conceptions of the good that were associated with them, and where the social universe becomes subject to the dictatorship of the technical. Sharing the continent with the

2. One will note here the similarity of Grant's concept of the United States as a foreshadowing of an original form of society with that recently proposed by the neo-Marxist thinkers Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, in *Empire* (2000). A similar description, but one that is critical of post-modernity, has also been developed by Michel Freitag in "La métamorphose: Genèse et développement d'une société postmoderne en Amérique" (1994). For Grant, America, like the American Empire, is not a dialectical extension of modernity (Hardt & Negri), or a post-modern aporia (Freitag) but more simply the full realization of the antipolitical potential of modernity.

beast, it is no surprise the Canadian intent fizzled out and that both its economic elites and the Canadian population in general came to broadly share the American worldview: technical and continental. Thus the impossibility of Canada.

Grant's thinking is that it is not only the Canadian national intent that is the impossibility, the loss of which is to be lamented. "Modern civilization makes all local cultures anachronistic" (p. 53), as it does for all national intents, even all vague political desires. The "dominant nations" (p. 68) can still delude themselves, the capitalists are still loyal to them, and their interests still correspond to those of the empire. But for the little nation, like Canada, history is over.

The Grantian Paradigm

We will not pass judgment, for now at least, on Grant's pessimism about either Canada or the end of politics in the modern world. We will have to distance ourselves from such a position later. On the contrary, for the moment, I would prefer to pursue his reasoning by applying it to Canada's events and identity transformations since he wrote *Lament for a Nation* almost forty years ago. In other words, I will use the Grantian paradigm to interpret contemporary development, to pursue the reading he had undertaken of the unavoidable dissolution of Canada.

Certainly, the most significant event in the past forty years for the Grantian paradigm is the signing of the North American Free Trade Agreement. It is a confirmation of the inescapable continentalization of the Canadian economy and the abdication of the economic and political elites from maintaining a national economy north of the 45th parallel. Without a safeguard, Canada would thus be subject to the dictates of American progressist and technicist liberalism. Grant's apprehensions would again be reinforced by the fact that this agreement was negotiated by a Conservative government in Ottawa and widely supported by the driving forces of Quebec society—even the sovereignist elites backed it. These two places, I

would like to stress—the great Canadian Conservative party and the French-Canadian resistance—recalled the Canadian intent. Even those two were seduced by the call of the continent.

The ethno-demographic transformation and its political consequences would be another manifestation of the impossibility of Canada. Canada has of course always been a society of immigration. But until the sixties, that immigration, mostly European, was assimilated to the British roots of the population (even in Quebec, let us recall) to create a Canadian political culture that boldly vaunted its British parentage. After all, Diefenbaker, the last Canadian prime minister, in Grant's opinion, to defend such a posture, actually came from a recently immigrated non-British family. Since then, Canadian immigration has diversified considerably, welcoming populations from Asian, Latin American and African sources, thus diluting the British base of the host society. Faced with such facts, English Canada, for many, and especially for the individuals using that language, no longer existed. It would only be a communication space where people with different identities, cultures and religions could talk to each other. For Grant, who associated the Canadian intent with the existence of an English Canada and its possibility of forming an alliance with French Canadians (and today, he would most likely add, with First Nations), such a disappearance of English Canada would truly confirm the impossibility of Canada.

But there is more. It is one thing to note the new ethno-cultural diversity of the Canadian population and another to make of it a political and cultural base for the new Canadian identity, a new story substituting those of the founding peoples. After all, as the Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism recommended, Canada could well have made the founding peoples of Canada politico-cultural host communities that welcomed and invited immigrants to integrate at one of those two cultures of convergence—in other words, associate bilingualism with multinationalism. Most European societies have opted for a variation of such a formula—

making diversity part of a national or multinational base. Quebec is stumbling awkwardly down this path with its interculturalism.[3] No, Canada chose to make multiculturalism a policy and preferred maintaining cultural diversity (it has even become a champion of the virtues of multiculturalism: such would be "our [the Canadian] way", Kymlicka, 2003).

In the Grantian paradigm, multiculturalism, before being a policy, was an American virtue, specific to societies where freedom —from which arises the claim to respect its authenticity—takes precedence over any idea of the common good. By opting for multiculturalism, Canada made sure to dissolve culturally into the American culture, to join this exceptional culture, the only one, at the time, in Grant's opinion, where no tradition limited the unavoidable march of progress.

The Charter of Rights appeared from then on as the political counterpart of the economic impossibility of Canada—the free trade agreement—and of the cultural impossibility of Canada—multiculturalism. The political primacy of Parliament was at the heart of Canadian political culture, a legacy of its relationship with the old English parliament. The Charter gave precedence to the Constitution and its interpretation by the courts. That provoked a double political transformation. A parliamentary regime changed, on one hand, to constitutionalism and government by judges. The Charter created, on the other hand, Charter citizens (see Cairns, 1992), thereby bestowing new powers on individualized and fragmented citizens (see Bourque & Duchastel, 1996). In this double transformation, the authorities of political mediations and, above

3. I say "awkwardly" because Quebec's interculturalist propositions, though claiming a common culture, as opposed to Canadian multiculturalism, also avoid, beyond language, defining a political tradition to which that tradition would belong. An example of this problem can be found in the recent Bouchard-Taylor report (2008). See Joseph Yvon Thériault (in press).

all, the organs of political representation, including Parliament, are the ones which had to face the consequences.

Constitutionalism is an American invention born of the Founding Fathers' fear of the political expression of the people.[4] It is also how global governance, which relies on the deployment of international law, not on the political powers of nations, is expressed today. Constitutionalism is the political régime that replaces the deliquescent political intents of the old national democracies.

I want to include a final phenomenon in the Grantian paradigm of the impossible Canada. *Lament for a Nation*, remember, was written in reaction to the 1962 missile crisis, which Grant saw as Canada's final attempt at having an independent military policy, the ultimate act of sovereignty. The submission of military policy to NATO, a policy directed by the United States, thus made Canadian sovereignty a brief parenthesis between its status as a British colony and its new status as a colony of the American techno-capitalist empire. Canada became a branch that could be managed by technocrats, not politicians. Grant had already noted that Diefenbaker's successor, the Liberal Pearson, was a career public servant who had claimed his political legitimacy, not in reference to Canadian political life but by his international action during the Suez Canal crisis.

Canadian military policy would later become characterized by its humanitarian action under the auspices of the United Nations, which would confirm that Canada had militarily ceded its sovereignty to globalized technocracy. In that regard, even the act of not participating in the second Iraq war was justified, not in the name of a sovereign power, but because such a military action was not authorized by the United Nations.

4. Pierre Rosanvallon (2008, p. 24) claims this tradition of "*government by constitution*" as opposed to "*government by will*" goes back to 1773 in the writings of the English philosopher and man of politics Henry St. John Bolingbroke.

The Optimistic Reversal of the Grantian paradigm

But an optimistic version of the Grantian paradigm exists—that of Canada as a post-modern, cosmopolitan society, the world's first cosmopolitan society. Referring to Canada's international role, the rock singer Bono, one of those globalized stars who defend humanitarian aid on a global scale against the cupidity of rich Northern states, invited to the Liberal Party Convention held to appoint Paul Martin party leader, said: "The Canadian voice is hard-wired in my heart. I am a fan because a certain kind of idealism lives and still seems to be alive in this country. You are not an insular place. You have always looked outside yourself, beyond the line of the horizon, you are not so self-obsessed [...] I believe the world needs more Canada" (Bono, 2003).

The idea Bono expressed here of a Canada open to the world, a true post-national reality, has gained widespread credence both abroad and in Canada. The eminent English sociologist who conceived Tony Blair's third way, Anthony Giddens, had, in 1993, already defined Canada as "the first post-modern state," which repeated the affirmation of the German-American specialist on the globalized economy, Peter Katzenstein, for whom Canada is "arguably the first post-modem state par excellence" (cited in McRoberts, 2001, p. 700). This idea is also making the rounds in both Canadian literary and journalistic circles. Richard Gwyn commented on Canada's post-modern nature, taking up Margaret Atwood's idea whereby Canada, as a symbol of survival, represented the feminine principle in North America. It is a way, he said, of restoring Canadian nationalism in contemporary cosmopolitan and emancipatory vocabulary. In the early 1990s, journalist Robert Fulford and literary critic Linda Hutcheon also popularized, this vision of Canada as the "world's first post-modern nation"(see Potter, 2007).

What does all this mean? That Canada has moved beyond the classical idea of a nation-state to become a post-nation, even a non-

nation. We are witnessing the "excentration"[5] of identity, a process whereby everything is now measured against the yardstick of exogenous, so called universal, criteria. Its interiority would no longer refer to certain substantial elements—common language, shared ethnicity, historical stories—but the Canadian idea would rather be defined by diversity, social mixing, mixed origins, impermanence, mutability, plasticity, fragility. The director of Environics Research, Michael Adams, wanted to confirm this orientation empirically. (Adams, 2003) While the Americans would support a more classical, more modern "nationalist"—even Hobbesian—dimension of the world, Canadians would commit to immaterial post-modern values, tolerance, creativity, a cosmopolitanism coloured with idealism and self-realization, where the national idea is barely present.

I prefer the word cosmopolitan to post-modern to express this reality. While post-modernity refers to a state arising from modernity that has yet to attain firm consistency, cosmopolitanism proclaims the nature of the regime that thus replaces modernity.[6] A governance model specific to societies with more individualized or globalized identities—diasporas—than recorded in national stories, to cultures that shift from local to global—glocalization[7]—disregarding national mediations, to a networked global economy that renders the old idea of national economy obsolete. Such societies would require organizations and international law increasingly defining State policies outside of national sovereignties (Held, 2000).

Canada would thus be the outpost of this new political and societal form.

5. In French: "désaxement." The expression is borrowed from Hubert Aquin (1977), who at the same time as Grant, lamented the impossibility of French Canada in these terms.

6. I use cosmopolitanism in its political and programmatic sense that will be found especially in Beck (2004).

7. Expression largely used in the context of globalization research to signify the co-presence of the global and the local.

This is an optimistic account of the Grantian paradigm because what Grant saw as a problem, what signaled the very impossibility of Canada—rejection of historical stories, fragility of identity, excentration of feeling and national sovereignty towards England, the United States, the World—now becomes the very intent of Canada. Grant criticized the lack of awareness among Canadian leaders of the impossibility of their society, so the intellectual elites decided from then on to make this impossibility a virtue.

Canada's intent, or one should say, rather, the intent of English Canada, even though it refuses to call itself that, no longer having endogenous stories. Because, in such a picture, the permanence of Quebec nationalism—which is often described as inward focused, ethnic, and conveying an outdated vision—is embarrassing. And that is despite the fact that, in Quebec, perhaps even more than in English Canada, intellectual circles have done their utmost in the past thirty years to present Quebec, once again, as an open, mixed society with fluid borders and an exclusively civic nationalism, "advanced proof of a post-modern society," as the historian Yvan Lamonde puts it (1996). It is this intellectual tradition that I brought up again in my book, *Critique de l'américanité* (2002). I say "intent of English Canada" because, despite the fact that in Quebec, too, the national intent is propelled into the stratosphere of globalization, cutting off the branch on which it is sitting, it is obvious that such a cosmopolitizing idea of Canada will never be able to reintegrate the story of a French nation that is a co-founder and co-partner of Canada. This last story, which remains, despite everything, a permanent feature of the Quebec political identity, cannot be dissolved into the plasticity of the cosmopolitan identity.

Also embarrassing is the First Nations presence in such a story. After all, like French Quebec, they have a desire to build a society that would not be reduced to the cosmopolitan recognition of identity as an individualized patchwork. Unless of course, as John Saul

recently suggested, First Nations people are made into the world's first post-moderns, those who introduced us to miscegenation, those who would be the depositories of a hidden tradition—that would nevertheless be ours, as if something we do not know could define us all the same—thus a hidden tradition, neither French, nor British, nor European, nor American. A hidden tradition comprising fluidity, anti-rationalism, that ultimately joins the values of alterglobalist cosmopolitan youth. A Métis tradition that the great historical stories were incapable of capturing but that the judges wisely imposed (Saul, 2008; Findlay, 2004). Traditions of peace and dialogue that are confirmed in Canadian international military action for peace and humanitarianism.

Is This Really the End of Politics?

How can we reflect on such analyses, both in Grant's pessimistic paradigm and in its euphoric version of cosmopolitanism? Is Canada really an impossibility given the march of humanity towards what Grant called, according to Hegel, "the universal and homogeneous State" and what post-modern thought calls cosmopolitanism? Is cosmopolitan modernity really a substitute for national political life, for governance without government, that is, with no room for sovereign democratic power?

The thesis is strong, even compelling. The events we brought to light under the Grantian paradigm are true. They illustrate a real trend, both in Canada and globally, toward the etiolation of national solidarities in the name of a republic of universal rights, a kind of global governance managed, for the moment, by the easy-going American Empire, but that eliminates political sovereignty, that is, the ability of specific communities to act on the world by giving it an intent. Such was the modern definition of democratic politics: a sovereign people choosing by itself to act consciously on the world. Whether lamented or celebrated, the impossibility of Canada is described as the impossibility of politics in advanced modernity.

But the problem with this paradigm is not that it is wrong. It is that it acts as if the strong trend of the modern world to its depoliticization were a done deal, not a trend. As was pointed out earlier, however, this depoliticization has as its source the very principles of modernity: individual foundation in freedom, constitutionalism and the primacy of law, the unfettered deployment of technoscientific civilizing forces. These elements are even inherent in modern democracy.

Such a trend towards depoliticization is not new; it is the driving force of the socio-political processes we have been experiencing for the past five centuries. It was what frightened Hobbes in Leviathan: the absence of a body politic in a society thrown back to an almost natural state. That is why such a body politic had to be artificially created. Such a trend is exactly what democracy, in its political form, has conjured up: prevent the end of the political life that would result from a world governed on a global scale by law, the market and the technical.

Where this reading fools us is in its lack of democratic confidence. It is in forgetting that the democratic imagination has managed to counter the depoliticizing forces of modernity for five centuries. Indeed, the more the rationalizing world has strived to make politics impossible, as it makes Canada impossible, the more democracy, by introducing the other face of the modern world, the political subjectivities, has continually renewed politics. Democracy as a process, as an ongoing invention, refuses to make the planet a place without political communities (see Lefort, 1981). Of course, this continual "democratic" return of subjectivities, intents, desire to act on the world, must assume the part of the world in which it lives. It could not remove itself from the world, as Grant implies, by moving back to the world of the ancients. Politics is always, somewhere, the difficult art of taking on the world as it is—compared to the revolutionary or conservative temptation—and nevertheless trying to change it.

So what about the present era? Are we not witnessing a kind of return of politics?

Just about everywhere on the planet, the past twenty years have been marked by the phenomena of political, cultural, economic, legal, etc., globalization that have caused some to say that history is over and that our societies are entering into a new form of governance without politics. More recent phenomena have shown us that such is not the case and that politics is not dead. The Iraq and Afghanistan wars, for example, waged following the destruction of the World Trade Center towers in September 2001, were started in the name of political values, if not in national interests. In most Western countries, debates about national history and values in the face of the hegemony of multiculturalism—a multiculturalism, you will remember, that Canada championed—recall the importance for populations of writing a national story, if not an all-inclusive story. We find the same motivation in a certain European disenchantment with the promises of the European Union deemed apolitical, technocratic and too liberal. The recent economic crisis has revived the idea of national regulation and social policies, realities that we believed had long since been buried by the globalization of markets. As happens often in modernity, following a period where its political dimension seems to get carried away, we are witnessing the return of politics. Or so these events lead us to believe. What we will do with them is another thing altogether.

Returning Home

I started preparing this paper, which borrows heavily from George Grant's book *Lament for a Nation,* before Michael Ignatieff published his latest work *True Patriot Love* (2009), or in French *Terre de nos aïeux* (translations always change the author's intent). The work deals with the conception of Canada through three generations of Ignatieff's maternal ancestors, the Grants. Ignatieff is George Grant's

nephew, and a chapter of the book is reserved for him. I cannot finish this paper without referring to it.

At the publication of this work, commentators reminded us that Ignatieff is supposed to have written this book to free himself of the label of "cosmopolitan" that his intellectual globetrotter past has given him. It is true that, in both his writing and his press articles, Ignatieff has, during his English and American stays, developed a sense of belonging to a global community and of adhering to a universal concept of rights that have considerably intensified his uncle's laments. Moreover, Ignatieff strongly objects to his Uncle George's work on the impossible Canada. He recalls that "[i]n the twenty years after *Lament for a Nation* was published, Canada staged Expo 67, the most triumphant affirmation of pride before or since; we had the Quiet Revolution and the resurgent affirmation of Quebec identity in North America; we had the promotion of official bilingualism; the modern Canadian constitution, [...], and the creation of the Charter of Rights and Freedom, incarnating a distinctive national rights culture; and we gave ourselves a national anthem and a flag. And last but not least, we opened our doors to immigration from the four corners of the world, transforming the population and internationalizing our identity as never before" (pp. 148-49).

I am not sure that the assessment that Ignatieff opposes to his uncle's thesis would convince the latter (Expo 67 vs. free trade). What could shake his thesis, however, is Ignatieff's return. Indeed, if one steps back from the enveloping cynicism of journalists for whom Ignatieff is renouncing his cosmopolitan past to adopt a "nationalist" position through pure electoral calculation, and one can ask, rather: Why has he come back? Why does he believe today that national patriotism is a virtue? Why would the Canadian political and cultural elite want to agree to talk patriotism while it has been singing the praises of cosmopolitanism for twenty years?

Because, the answer goes, like many members of his generation who heard the siren call of cosmopolitanism in the 1980s, he has understood that to act politically in the world meant having a place on earth. As he himself says "I've come back home" (p. 39) to his Canada, because it is the only place where he feels he can act and make sense of the world. This is an acknowledgement of the political need felt today by someone who believed it was over. Someone who could still say in 2000 that he felt like a Martian looking down from this commanding height at the evolution of rights in Canadian society (Ignatieff, 2000[8]). From that chest height, if one can use the expression, it is obvious he cannot see his house and where its boundaries lie.

I am not too sure how the old uncle would respond to this constant desire to act politically and, for that, to feel the need to restore meaning to a national intent. George Grant already believed in 1960 that this crazy old dream, to build society, had to be lamented. But this dream seemed too rooted in the democratic imagination to fade away before the siren call of cosmopolitanism.

8. In the 2nd edition (2007), the preface is different.

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