

The Quieter Revolution: Evolving Representations of National Identity in English Canada 1941-1960^a

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José E. Igartua

Département d'histoire

Université du Québec à Montréal

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1. Introduction

A common view¹ of Canadian² nationalism in the twentieth century depicts a slow and gradual evolution: first, an identification with British tradition and culture, then an affirmation of a 'new nationality' in the interwar period, a moment of glory during World War II, a slow succumbing to American influence in the 1950s, a self-questioning in the 1960s, and finally a deliberate reconstruction of national identity in the 1970s. Yet there are two difficulties with this common view. The first is that the historical processes by which the transformation of Canadian identity have occurred remain somewhat elusive. Second, the common view suggests that each of the phases it describes was marked by a dominant definition of Canadian identity. My purpose is to call into question the common view by drawing attention to the polymorphism of the views of Canada that were current in English-speaking Canada and by proposing a more complex sequence for their evolution.

Recent scholarship has been scarce on the issue of English-Canadian representations of Canadian identity. Attention has mainly been drawn to attempts made by some elements in the federal government in the 1940s and 1950s to reshape Canadian identity. W.R. Young has shown how, during the early years of the Second World War, the Wartime Information Board defined as its mandate the edification of a new national sentiment based on a social-democratic ethics.³ Bourque, Duchastel and Harmony⁴ have argued that during the post-war period the

¹ See Berger, *The Sense of Power* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970); Mary Vipond, "National Consciousness in English-Speaking Canada in the 1920's: seven essays," Ph.D. thesis, University of Toronto, 1974; Raymond Breton, «From Ethnic to Civic Nationalism: English Canada and Quebec», *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, vol. 11, n° 1, (January 1988): 85-102; Philip Resnick, "English Canada: The Nation that Dares Not Speak Its Name", in Kenneth McRoberts, ed., *Beyond Quebec: Taking Stock of Canada* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1995), 84.

² The term "Canadian" refers to the English-language Canadian communicational community. See definitions below.

³ William R. Young, "Making the Truth Graphic: The Canadian Government's Home Front Information Structure and Programmes during World War II" (Ph.D. thesis, University of British Columbia, 1978).

⁴ *L'identité fragmentée* (Montreal: Fides, 1996).

federal government appealed to a communal sense of citizenship to fashion a value system founded on egalitarian principles as a justification for introducing welfare programs. Litt has examined the efforts of the Massey Commission to develop a Canadian high culture as a resistance to the invasion of American-dominated popular culture.⁵ But few investigations have gone beyond the view from Ottawa.

This paper argues that the common view as well as the recent research neglect to take into account the persistent affirmations of ethnic-based representations of Canadian identity that can be observed in the post-war period. Thus they fail to explain why these affirmations vanished from English-Canadian discourse in the 1960s. We have ignored a revolution even more quiet than Quebec's, a fundamental shift in English-Canadian representations of Canadian identity. This shift in turn conditioned the way in which other representations of national identity within Canada were going to be received by the English-speaking majority.

Two ethnic-based definitions of Canadian identity appear to have permeated political discourse. The first was the definition of Canada as a British nation. Its demise left an ethnic void in English-Canadian representations of Canada. The second major representation of Canadian identity based on ethnicity current in the 1950s emphasized the 'bi-racial' nature of Canada. This view became increasingly difficult to sustain in the 1960s, since recognition of the 'equality of the two founding races' implicit in this definition of Canada would have required a substantial rearrangement of power within Canadian society. Thus in the early 1960s, it became impossible for Canadian nationalists to counter the concept of a "Quebec nation" with an ethnic form of "Canadian" nationalism, as this would implicitly admit the legitimacy of other forms of ethnically-based nationalism within the Canadian state. The only avenue open

⁵ Paul Litt, *The Muses, the Masses, and the Massey Commission* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992).

to Canadian nationalists was to reject ethnically-based definitions of national identity. Since there was no other form of national identity acceptable to them, they had to define Canadian identity as a lack of identity. This constituted a discursive strategy that rejected self-recognition as a legitimate form of political discourse.⁶ I would call this the *my name is nobody* posture, in which the concept of 'limited identities' became a defining characteristic of English-Canadian representations of the Canadian nation. A 'civic' form of nationalism was then proposed in the early 1970s. The very roots of civic nationalism lay firmly in British tradition,⁷ which made it easier to represent as a 'superior' form of nationalism to counter the 'tribalism' of ethnic-based Quebec nationalism. However this representation of the nation implicitly contained the same kind of ethical claim to superiority that representations based on the British character of the nation had once explicitly staked,⁸ and we may find in this claim some explanation of its lack of appeal in Quebec society.

This paper is in the style of an exploratory essay rather than a research report. What I have just outlined is the general hypothesis with which I want to inquire into the evolution of representations of the Canadian nation in English Canada. I cannot offer a systematic demonstration of the hypothesis in this paper. All I can do at this stage is to indicate the set of questions which are shaping my inquiry, to explain the meaning I give to some key concepts, to indicate where I intend to look, and to offer an introductory exposition of the argument as it relates to the fifteen years between World War II and 1960.

⁶ See Charles Taylor, "Shared and Divergent Values," in *Reconciling the Solitudes: Essays on Canadian Federalism and Nationalism* (Montreal/Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1995), 168-169; Margaret Atwood, *Survival: A Thematic Guide to Canadian Literature* (Toronto: Anansi, 1972).

⁷ See T.H. Marshall, *Citizenship and Social Class, and Other Essays* (Cambridge: University Press, 1950); Liah Greenfeld, *Five Roads to Modernity* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992).

⁸ See Sylvie Lacombe, "Race et liberté : l'individualisme politique au Canada, 1896-1920," (Ph.D. thesis, Université de Paris V, 1993).

2. The framework of the inquiry

A. *Concepts and definitions*

The questions which are shaping my inquiry concern the representations of national identity in English Canada and how these representations have evolved. I phrase the questions thus because I am not after a single, albeit elusive, English-Canadian identity. I don't believe national identities derive their meaning from some essential character of the nation. The literature on nationalism over the last twenty years has drawn attention to the historically constructed nature of nations and national identities. National identity is a form of collective identification, as are region, gender and class⁹. As such it possesses a number of attributes which have been codified by Charles Tilly as characteristic of public identities. The first is the *relational* nature of such identities. By this Tilly means that identities are located in "connections among individuals and groups rather than in the minds of particular persons or whole populations." Tilly summarizes what he calls the emerging view of public identities as "... not only relational but *cultural* in insisting that social identities rest on shared understandings and their representations. It is *historical* in calling attention to the path-dependent accretion of memories, understandings, and means of action within particular identities. The emerging view, finally, is *contingent* in that it regards each assertion of identity as a strategic interaction liable to failure or misfiring rather than a straightforward expression of an actor's attributes."¹⁰

Applying Tilly's characterization of public identities to national identity has a number of implications. First, it shows why it is futile to search for the essence of a national identity.

⁹ It would be fascinating to speculate as to why there has been such interest among Canadian historians for these other forms of collective identification while national identity remains practically unexplored territory as a field of research.

¹⁰ Charles Tilly, "Citizenship, Identity and Social History," *International Review of Social History* 40, Supplement 3 (1995), 5-6.

Collective identities are not fixed attributes of groups, but are historical constructs liable to evolve as does the nature of the relations within and between groups which give rise to enunciations of identity. Secondly, Tilly's model suggests that identities are enunciated for specific reasons at specific times and for specific purposes. From this it follows that enunciations of national identity will not necessarily be coherent, either internally or over time. Thus it is important to understand the circumstances of such enunciations in order to assess their meaning. Finally, collective identities exist only at the cultural level, that is, as shared representations.

Next, it is important to clarify how I understand the concepts of 'nation,' 'national identity,' and 'English Canada.' A common usage of the word 'nation' in English-language Canadian historiography equates 'nation' with 'country' or 'state.'¹¹ Thus for instance Granatstein's et al., *Nation: Canada Since Confederation* seems to favour this usage, though its use of the term is occasionally ambiguous.¹² Other historians also give a political connotation to 'nation,' defining it as the locus of conflicts and power struggles among various segments of Canadian society or as a sham designed to hide these struggles.¹³ I think neither of these definitions are appropriate to the historical understanding of 'nation.' The first usage seems to view the concept of nation as unproblematic, while the second appears to deny its historical significance. I prefer to follow Benedict Anderson's definition of 'nation' as an 'imagined community,' founded in a belief in

¹¹ See Joseph Levitt, "Race and Nation in Canadian Anglophone Historiography," *Canadian Review of Studies in Nationalism*, VIII, 1 (Spring 1981): 1-16, for an examination of the writings of some major Canadian historians of the first half of this century.

¹² See the third edition, Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1990. The use of 'nation' in the sense of 'state' occurs on p.4: "The new state created by the British North America Act was born on July 1, 1867.... Not all inhabitants of the new nation supported its creation." (Formally, the first statement is erroneous: what was created in 1867 was a new arrangement for the governance of Britain's North American colonies, not a new state.) Different meanings occur on p. 7: "In 1838, following the rebellions of the previous year, Lord Durham wrote that he had found two nations warring in the bosom of a single state. Sixty years later, that situation had changed little.... If the nation still remained undefined in 1896, the state had come to fulfill the function planned for it in 1964."

¹³ See for instance Veronica Strong-Boag, "Contested Space: The Politics of Canadian Memory," *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association*, new series, 5 (1994): 5-6. It is revealing that a historian who defines herself as "both a feminist and a nationalist" does not include the question of national identity as part of the 'contested space' she defines as worthy of investigation. She seems to equate the issue of nationalism with old-style political history.

shared characteristics, a shared past and the hope of a shared future. There are no tangible characteristics of nationhood that are shared by all nations. Instead, nations exist when communities believe in their existence. It follows that they have a historical, rather than an essential, existence: they can be born and they can die, when communities no longer believe in them.

Likewise, national identity, or the definitions which a community gives of itself as a national entity, are historically constructed and thus are liable to evolve over time. The historical question therefore is to discover why certain forms of national identity are born and why certain forms fade away. In the present case, for instance, I am particularly interested in the withering of the definition of Canada as a British nation and in the appearance of the definition of Canada as composed of 'limited identities.' I want to look at these questions not in a polemical manner, but from an ethnographic perspective.

But how can one apprehend 'national identity?' The only handle is to be found in *representations* of identity, that is, statements about what national identity is. These representations are inevitably going to be numerous and their contents will fluctuate according to the purpose for which the statements are made. The important point here, to recall Tilly, is that national identity is a cultural reality defined by shared representations and does not exist outside of these representations. Thus the obvious multifaceted, and *contingent* character of representations of national identity.

I must also explain what I mean by 'English Canada.' It is currently fashionable to state that there is no such thing, that it no longer exists. The argument against the existence of 'English Canada' is a relatively new one: it implies that the *ethnic* or the *cultural* definition of English-Canadian identity no longer has any meaning. This argument is part of current representations

of national identity in Canada, which affirm that national identity is (or should be) based on 'civic' rather than 'ethnic' values. Whether ethnic or cultural definitions of Canadian identity still have currency is, of course, a matter for investigation. Yet one cannot deny that these definitions have existed.¹⁴ One aim of my inquiry is to determine for how long and to what extent these definitions were imbedded in definitions of Canadian national identity. So I do not postulate the existence of an unchanging, essential 'English Canada.' For the purposes of my inquiry, I simply use the phrase 'English Canada' to refer to the communicational community, within the Canadian state, whose shared language was and is English. I would argue, following Benedict Anderson again, that that this communicational community has existed since newspapers, the telegraph, and the railway ("print capitalism," in his phrase) have defined this communicational space. The focus is on language, rather than on ethnic or cultural origins, though a language of communication rests on the supposed sharing of cultural referents.

Finally, one may well ask, how widely *shared* are the representations which we may be able to identify through various sources? It is a difficult question to answer. One indication is repetition within the communicational community. Another may be occasionally found in opinion surveys, but these seldom phrase explicit questions about the definition of the nation.¹⁵ We are therefore left to rely on the postulate that widespread repetition of certain representations of national identity indicates some form of acceptance of these representations in the population.

¹⁴ See Phillip Buckner, "Whatever happened to the British Empire?" *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association*, new series, 4 (1993): 21-23, 31, on this point.

¹⁵An examination of questions asked by the Canadian Institute for Public Opinion (Gallup) and other polling organizations reveals that questions are usually concretely linked to current issues and are seldom phrased in a general way.

B. *Sources*

Representations of national identity can be generated for many reasons, and through various media. In order to focus the inquiry, I propose to draw a distinction grounded in the purpose of enunciation. There are first of all *explicit statements* designed to convince the audience as to the nature of national identity. These statements are often polemical and arise mainly in political debate. In the post-war period, a number of political issues have given rise to statements about national identity. The political debates of 1946 about citizenship, the flag, the national anthem, or the name to be given to the July 1st holiday (Dominion Day, Confederation Day, or Canada Day) are a good starting point. Among other occasions for explicit debate one may point to the work of the Massey Commission, the debate over the Diefenbaker Bill of Rights, the Bilingualism & Biculturalism Commission, and the debates over the Official Languages Act and over the Multiculturalism Act.

But there are also occasions where statements about Canadian identity are produced in an incidental manner, in arguments about other issues. These *incidental statements* about Canadian identity are intended to be non-polemical.¹⁶ They are often adduced with the expectation that they are shared by the audience, that they reflect common opinion. For example, newspaper editorials about Empire Day, Victoria Day, Dominion Day, or even New Year's Day occasionally offer such statements about the nature of Canada. Other contexts for the enunciation of non-polemical statements about Canadian identity may include political events such as the retirement of a major political figure, the nomination of a new Governor-General, international crises in which Canada played a prominent role, major celebrations of Canadian achievements, etc. Incidental statements about Canadian identity may also appear, for instance, in ped-

¹⁶ They are always, of course, rhetorical.

agogical objectives for the teaching of Canadian history and geography and in the textbooks approved for such purposes.

Representations of national identity may of course appear in other types of discourse than the political discourse cited in the examples mentioned above. Scholarly discourse (e.g., history, political science, geography), as well as literature, art, and sport,¹⁷ can serve as vehicles for the dissemination of representations of national identity. It would be a gigantic task to hunt down systematically all of these representations. I have decided to focus for the moment on political discourse since it appears to offer the most frequent and perhaps the most widely disseminated enunciations of national identity. Schools provide another important channel of dissemination, and scholarly investigations of curricula and textbooks indicate that this will be another fruitful area of inquiry.¹⁸

Political discourse is by itself a large universe. It is a discourse about politics, not simply the discourse of politicians. Within it one can include, besides the statements of politicians as reported in *Hansard* or in the press, editorials and other expressions of opinion in the press. There is no obvious way to gauge the prevalence of various representations of national identity within the population. We can only hope to be able to identify the more common expressions of national identity and focus our analysis on these. Some indication of the resonance which political discourse finds in the population at large can be provided by an examination of the results of public opinion polls, particularly those which can be submitted to secondary data analysis.¹⁹

¹⁷ Gerald Friesen has examined the various representations of collective identity to be found around the sport of hockey in a paper given at McGill University in the Fall of 1996.

¹⁸ Richard Douglas Wilson, "An inquiry into the interpretation of Canadian history in the elementary and secondary schools textbooks of English and French Canada" (M.A. thesis, McGill University, 1967); Edison Quick, "The Development of Geography and History Curricula in the Elementary Schools of Ontario 1846-1966" (Ph.D. thesis, University of Toronto, 1967); Penney Irene Clark, "'Take It Away, Youth!': Visions of Canadian Identity in British Columbia Social History Textbooks, 1925-1989" (Ph.D. thesis, University of British Columbia, 1995).

¹⁹ The Canadian Institute of Public Opinion [Gallup] polls available for this purpose date from the mid 1950s.

3. The evolution of representations of national identity in English Canada, 1941-1960

Let me now turn to a preliminary foray into post-war representations of national identity within the English-speaking communicational community of Canada. My aim is to propose a number of themes from the period's political history as worthy of attention.

A. The war-time effort to construct a Canadian identity: a change of ethics?

As far as I know, the first deliberate attempts to reshape the definition of Canadian identity occurred during World War II. In 1939, the federal government created the Bureau of Public Information, with the mandate to foster among Canadians (at least among English-speaking Canadians) a common sense of purpose. The Bureau was concerned with uniting the country in the fight against an enemy portrayed as "the antithesis of the real Canadian." To this end it focused on the country's role in the war and attempted to distinguish Canada's interests in the war from those of its allies. Finally, it stressed the need to integrate ethnic communities into the English-speaking majority and called upon the majority to accept members of these communities into a wider sense of 'Canadianism.' Radio as well as print were used to communicate this message of integration.²⁰

But these efforts, concludes the student of Canadian war-time propaganda, William R. Young, were not very successful. The public was split in its attitude towards Great Britain: some considered that the British were sacrificing Canadian troops, while others defended the mother country. In 1940, Anti-Nazi sentiment threatened to turn into anti-German sentiment and to put German Canadians at risk of witch hunts. Canadians on the West Coast were agitated by the presence of Canadians of Japanese ancestry, and these were forcibly relocated in-

²⁰ William R. Young, "Building Citizenship: English Canada and Propaganda during the Second War," *Journal of Canadian Studies*, 16, 3-4 (Fall-Winter 1981): 121-132. Quotation is from p.122.

land. All in all, government propaganda efforts were not able to overcome an ethnically-based view of Canada and 'Canadianism' among the English-speaking population. Young cites a 1945 opinion poll in which "English Canadians continued to express dislike of all 'foreigners' and did not believe that citizens of an ethnically 'different' origin could indeed become 'good Canadians'."²¹

The federal government decided in 1942 to intensify its propaganda efforts and created the Wartime Information Board which absorbed the Bureau of Public Information. The new board was composed of leading civil servants such as Lester Pearson, Robert Bryce and Arnold Heeney. In 1943 it was put under the management of John Grierson, who had immigrated from Britain to Canada in 1938 to set up the National Film Board.²² Before coming to Canada, Grierson had already reflected on the power of his medium of choice, film, to shape society and to inculcate social values.²³ For Grierson, the fight for democracy could only be a fight for a more equitable society, where social justice would entail economic security for the whole population. To him, this was the compelling argument in favour of the war effort. This message could be disseminated among the Canadian population by education, in particular by adult education through radio and discussion groups, and its reception gauged by the scientific method of public opinion polling.²⁴ The Wartime Information Board used public opinion polls to argue before the government that the population could only be motivated for the war effort

²¹ Ibid., 124. See also Leslie A. Pal, "Identity, citizenship, and mobilization: The Nationalities Branch and World War Two," *Canadian Public Administration*, 32, 3 (Fall 1989): 407-426.

²² W.R. Young, "Making the Truth Graphic: The Canadian Government's Home Front Information Structure and Programmes during World War II" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of British Columbia, 1978), ch. 2.

²³ Kathryn Dodd and Philip Dodd, "Engendering the Nation: British Documentary Film, 1930-1939," in Andrew Higson, ed., *Dissolving Views: Key Writings on British Cinema* (London: Cassell, 1996), 39. I am grateful to Gerald Friesen for this reference.

²⁴ Young, "Making the Truth Graphic." For links with the kindred spirits in the adult education movement, see Gordon Selman, *Citizenship and the Adult Education Movement in Canada* (Vancouver/Toronto: Center for Continuing Education, University of British Columbia/International Council for Adult Education, 1991), ch. 3; Michael R. Welton, "'An Authentic Instrument of the Democratic Process': the intellectual origins of the Canadian Citizens' Forum", *Studies in the Education of Adults*, 18, 1 (1986): 35-49, especially 42-43.

by the promise of a better peacetime world, a 'people's world.'²⁵ One of its main defenders within the government was Brooke Claxton, Parliamentary Assistant to the Prime Minister, who easily equated this new 'people's world' with a Liberal view of the world.

Yet this 'social' view of what being a Canadian stood for did not receive an enthusiastic welcome within the federal Cabinet. Grierson's advocacy of 'central planning' was too much for some members of the Cabinet and in 1944 he was led to resign as manager of operations for the Wartime Information Board. Thereafter the Board's activities were scaled down and its influence in shaping a new definition of Canadian identity lessened. Though "Building a New Social Order for Canada" became the Liberal slogan in the 1945 federal election campaign, it appears to have been more an effort to steal the thunder from the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (CCF) than to provide a well-defined social blueprint for the post-war period. The definition of Canadian identity promoted by the Wartime Information Board was founded upon the rights of citizens of all categories, but such a definition did not carry the day within the government or throughout the country. The Wartime Information Board, according to Young, "failed in the longer term to accomplish its original purpose of defining a non-political and popular sense of citizenship."²⁶

B. *The ambiguous nature of the new Canadian citizenship, 1946*

The political debate about the nature of Canadian identity continued in the year following the war. During the 1945 election campaign, Mackenzie King, at the urging of the new Secretary of State, Paul Martin, had promised Canadians to give the country the symbols of nationhood that were still missing, namely its own flag and its own citizenship status. A bill creat-

²⁵ Young, "Building Citizenship," 125. Paul Martin entitled his account of the origins of Canada's first Citizenship Act, in 1946, "Citizenship and the People's World." It appeared in William Kaplan, ed., *Belonging: The Meaning and Future of Canadian Citizenship* (Montreal/Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1993), 64-78.

²⁶ Young, *ibid.*, 130.

ing a Canadian citizenship was put before the House of Commons in the Fall 1945 session but died on the order paper. It was reintroduced the following Spring and was debated along with other symbolic measures, such as the design for a Canadian flag and the renaming of 'Confederation Day' into 'Canada Day.' Only the citizenship bill made it into law, after a long debate in Parliament and in the press at the heart of which were definitions of Canadian identity. The major feature of the Citizenship bill was to create the legal concept of Canadian citizenship; most of the other clauses of the bill simply codified existing legislation. Most importantly, the bill declared that 'a Canadian citizen is a British subject.'

Basically, two tendencies appeared during the debate about Canadian citizenship in Parliament and in the press. The most vocal tendency defined Canadians as British subjects. The upholding of this 'British' definition of Canadian identity was at the centre of the arguments invoked by the Progressive-Conservative Opposition in the House of Commons as well as by some newspapers in the country.²⁷ The sponsor of the bill, Secretary of State Paul Martin, was at pains to stress that Canadians would remain British subjects and that the bill did not change the nature of the relationship between Canada and Great Britain.²⁸

Proponents of this definition of Canadian identity insisted upon the British tradition of freedom²⁹ and upon the ability of British immigrants to meld within Canadian society, being familiar with the language and political institutions of the country.³⁰ British subjects therefore should continue to be given preferential treatment in the process of obtaining Canadian cit-

²⁷ They were exercised by a clause in the bill which required five years' residency in Canada for British subjects from other parts of the Commonwealth to become Canadian citizens, though existing legislation gave British subjects, no matter where they were born, the right to vote in Canadian elections after one year's residency in the country.

²⁸ Martin indicated in 1993 that he personally would have favoured not including the statement that Canadians were British subjects, as "it left Canada with a mark of inferiority" (Martin, *ibid.*, 74).

²⁹ John G. Diefenbaker, *Debates of the House of Commons*, 1946, 2 April 1946, 514; C.C.I. Merritt, *ibid.*, 11 April 1946, 795.

³⁰ G.R. Pearkes, *ibid.*, 9 April 1946, 702; D. M. Fleming, *ibid.*, 30 April 1946, 1061.

izenship and any clause in the legislation which would deny them this preferential treatment would be taken as an insult.³¹ The British heritage of Canada would be threatened if obstacles were put to the influx of British subjects.

Inversely, some immigrants were judged to be incompatible with Canadian society, for their allegiance to Canada would forever remain doubtful. This was the case of Japanese immigrants or Canadians of Japanese ancestry. The distinction between those who were born here and thus were British subjects and those who came as immigrants mattered little to some Conservative M.P.s from British Columbia. They used the occasion of the debate on the citizenship bill to press the government to deport Canadians of Japanese ancestry or at least to prevent them from returning to the West Coast; one M.P. invoked the 'high Christian point of view' and called upon the Japanese to return to Japan.³²

There existed, for these Members of Parliament, a definite ethnic hierarchy among Canadian citizens: British subjects (more specifically, British subjects of British ancestry) were at the top of this hierarchy, while Orientals were obviously at the bottom. Where French Canadians ranked within this hierarchy was not always clear: some Conservative M.P.s defined Canada as composed of two major ethnic groups, while others chose to recall what they considered the dubious loyalty of French Canadians during the two World Wars.³³ The 'two founding peoples' were not seen as equal in their devotion to Canada; one was clearly more 'Canadian' than the other.

It was impolitic for the Opposition and for newspapers which supported it to come out against the Citizenship Act. Who after all could refuse to call himself a Canadian citizen?

³¹ Fleming, *ibid.*, 9 April 1946, 691.

³² Pearkes, *ibid.*, 9 April 1946, 704.

³³ Fleming; *ibid.*, 9 April 1946, 687, 692; Cockeram, *ibid.*, 9 April 1946, 695-6.

Only the Conservative Member for Broadview, T.L. Church, did so openly.³⁴ For him there was no need for citizenship legislation. "I am a Canadian, but I also am a British subject. They are both the same and always have been." Church considered the bill the doing of republican elements within Canada. Kindred editorial writers with *The Globe and Mail* and the *Ottawa Citizen*³⁵ saw the Citizenship Act as part of a concerted assault by 'ultra-nationalists' (i.e., French Canadians) against the symbols and the traditions of the British heritage in Canada; this assault was also aimed at the flag and at Dominion Day. "Taken singly, wrote the *Citizen*, or even collectively, these nationalist bills are of small consequence; contain little about which any adult mind needs to grow excited. What we dislike about them is what they show of the unseemly haste of certain people in this country, many of them very close to the Government, to rid Canada of anything suggesting the British connection."³⁶ Thus the lines were drawn. On one side were those who upheld the noblest ideals of British civilization. On the other were narrow-minded busybodies who were anti-British. At stake was the very definition of the country.

A second, very different view of Canadian identity was put forward during the debate concerning the citizenship bill. This second view was voiced mainly by western members of the House of Commons who belonged to the CCF.³⁷ Theirs was a definition of Canadian identity which included every citizen regardless of color, race, or religion. This 'civic' definition of Canadian identity was stated in their party platform.³⁸ All Canadians should enjoy the same rights regardless of how they became citizens. CCF Members denounced their Conservative colleagues who demanded the expulsion of the Japanese; they drew attention to the contradic-

³⁴ Ibid., 21 March 1946, 131; 5 April 1946, 598.

³⁵ "What's In a Name?", *Globe and Mail*, 8 April 1946, 6. All *Globe* editorials cited hereafter appeared on p. 6.

³⁶ "Young Men in a Hurry," *Ottawa Citizen*, 16 April 1946, 8.

³⁷ Some French-Canadian members of the Liberal party also put forward such a view. See Édouard Rinfret, *House of Commons*, 5 April 1946, 596.

³⁸ G.H. Castleden, *ibid.*, 8 April 1946, 720-1.

tions between their racist views of the Japanese and the universalist principles put forth by John G. Diefenbaker in proposing a Canadian Bill of Rights. The CCF Member for Saskatoon accused the Conservatives of racial pride and of wanting to enjoy a privileged status within Canadian society.³⁹ This viewpoint was supported by the *Winnipeg Free Press*, which accused Howard Green, the Conservative M.P. for North-Vancouver, of racism and fascism.⁴⁰

These two competing views of what Canada was and of what it should be, the ethnic and the civic views, were skillfully used to defend the Citizenship Act. The government spokesman for the bill, Secretary of State Paul Martin, argued that the bill combined both views of Canadian identity. According to Martin, the Citizenship Act was designed to foster national sentiment, particularly through the clauses which prescribed for new citizens to be cognizant of the rights and duties of citizens and required them to swear allegiance to the Crown and to Canada. "The bill is designed to create a feeling of unity and of solidarity," argued Martin.⁴¹ Yet the bill essentially reaffirmed an 'ethnic' view of Canadian citizenship by maintaining – and even increasing, under Opposition pressure – the privileges of British subjects in obtaining Canadian citizenship. "A Canadian citizen is a British subject" was the key phrase of the bill.

Even so, the citizenship bill revealed divisions within the Cabinet over the issue of Canadian identity.⁴² The civil servant mandated to prepare the bill, Gordon Robertson, had underlined that the draft legislation made "as little change as possible" to the existing legal situation. "There is much to be said, he wrote his minister, for retaining many of the traditional

³⁹ R.R. Knight, *ibid.*, 20 April 1946, 1003.

⁴⁰ 13 April 1946, 17.

⁴¹ Martin, *House of Commons*, 29 April 1946, 1015.

⁴² This division was also evident in the civil service. Paul Martin had to request the services of Gordon Robertson, then attached to the Prime Minister's office, because his own deputy minister, "who belonged to the old school of empire," was opposed to the idea of a Canadian citizenship (Martin, "Citizenship," 68).

symbols of association that do not conflict or interfere in any way with the essentials of a separate personality and status for members of the Commonwealth."⁴³ Yet the Cabinet was unenthusiastic and required the reaffirmation of the status of British subjects for Canadians, without which it feared the bill would be defeated in the House of Commons.⁴⁴ This indicates the degree to which the 'ethnic' definition of Canadian identity was still shared within the two major Canadian political parties in the aftermath of World War II.

C. *Twin strands, 1945-1960: one or two races?*

I would like now to turn to an exploration of the manner in which Canadian identity was represented from 1945 to 1960 in non-polemical discourse. This exploration rests on only two publications and is thus very much tentative in nature even though the publications claimed to have a national audience. Nevertheless, it points to the persistence of ethnic-based representations of national identity: the 'British' view of Canada on the one hand, and the 'bi-racial' view of Canadian identity on the other. These views were more common than the 'civic' view put forth by the CCF. The latter view did not gain much currency in English-speaking Canada before the 1960s.⁴⁵

These two ethnic-based representations of Canadian identity shared a common element, however. This common element was that Canada remained an uncompleted nation. This theme foreshadowed the 'limited identities' of the 1960s, but contained a teleological implication absent in the latter phrase.

⁴³ National Archives of Canada, MG 31 E87, vol. 2, File 2-7, Gordon Robertson, 'Canadian Citizenship Act Notes on Sections,' 14 November 1945, 38; *ibid.*, 20 April 1945, R.G.R./L.F., Memorandum for Paul Martin re: the meaning of British subject.

⁴⁴ Martin, "Citizenship," 74.

⁴⁵ A broader examination of newspaper opinion about the Citizenship Act of 1946 revealed that only the *Winnipeg Free Press* adhered to a 'civic' definition of citizenship, but its writers took pain to explain that British subjects would continue to be favoured by the Act. See the series of articles by Grant Dexter, 22-27 March 1946, which seem to have been inspired by Paul Martin.

I have taken the *Toronto Globe and Mail*, "Canada's national newspaper," as the first source in my exploration. I have scoured its New Year, Empire Day, Victoria Day, and Dominion Day editorial pages to see what representations of Canadian identity were called forth on these symbolic occasions where "...a few carefully chosen platitudes..." to quote the paper on one such instance, were the order of the day⁴⁶ The *Globe's* view of Canadian identity was perhaps best expressed in an editorial on 1 July 1950, entitled "Still a Land of Promise." It defined three major components of Canadian identity: the 'biracial' nature of the country, its belonging to the North American continent, and its British heritage.

[Canada] has evolved a method whereby biracialism has survived by permitting its two major groups to retain the bases of their culture and yet to co-operate in the management of the country. It has succeeded in being North American without losing its identity in that of its larger and more powerful neighbor; and it has retained its British—and hence its European connection even while developing an autonomy of its own. It has thus been influential in shaping the growth of the old Empire into the pattern of the new Commonwealth.

Of these three themes, it was the British tradition which most preoccupied the editorial writers on civic holidays. The importance of the British tradition, and the fear of its waning, were frequent topics of Victoria Day editorials. Almost every year, the *Globe and Mail* would re-iterate the point. On the occasion of the visit of the Governor General, Viscount Alexander, to Toronto on 24 May 1946, the paper wrote:

There is more than a little significance in the fact that the visit of Viscount and Lady Alexander coincides with the popular holiday of Victoria Day. No day in calendar recalls more clearly the Imperial association which time has not weakened, but made increasingly valuable... the holiday Friday will ... to some extent make keener their [the people's] understanding of the meaning of the Crown as the bond between the nations of the Commonwealth.⁴⁷

⁴⁶"The Stream Flows Swiftly," 1 July 1947.

⁴⁷ "Welcome!," 23 May 1946.

Already, however, according to the paper, Victoria Day was undergoing a transformation which was not wholly welcomed. "There has been a tendency in recent years to convert the day into a holiday to celebrate the Empire," the paper wrote on Victoria Day, 1946, but this tended to obscure the achievements of Canadian and British Victorians, to which the attention of schoolchildren should be directed.⁴⁸ It came back to this theme of the transformation of the holiday three years later, but with less reservation, since the Commonwealth embodied the virtues of British tradition: "By popular demand, it [Victoria Day] has become an occasion for celebrating the values and achievements of the British Commonwealth.... The active, guiding principle in the Commonwealth has been the spread of liberty and happiness."⁴⁹

But the paper was riled by the federal government's bill to turn the Twenty-Fourth of May into a fixed holiday to be celebrated on the Monday before 25 May.

Now a generation weak in historic feeling has decided to alter this established custom, and make Victoria Day merely a Monday holiday in the latter part of May.... Victoria Day means something which should be cherished, not expunged from public recollection. Even if some do not think of what it means, or do not care, there is value in the keeping of tradition. A nation without a past is a mere collection of people.... How shallow we have become, if the past which made us has ceased to matter! How disloyal to our country is this urge to destroy the memory of its roots and traditions!⁵⁰

The villain of the piece was the Liberal government in Ottawa, and particularly Prime Minister St. Laurent, who had just added insult to injury by proclaiming 23 May, which in Ontario was celebrated by schoolchildren as Empire Day, as 'Canadian Citizenship Day.'

Empire Day ... has been devoted to appropriate ceremonies celebrating Canada's membership in the greatest association of peoples in the history of the world. To Mr. St. Laurent, the miracle of the British Commonwealth and Empire is an embarrassment. It is a thing we should avoid and, if possible, forget. And so in a crass and clumsy move, he is attempting to transform a noble ex-

⁴⁸ "Victoria Day," 24 May 1946.

⁴⁹ "A Commonwealth Day," 24 May 1946.

⁵⁰ "A Canadian Tradition," 24 May 1952.

pression of human brotherhood into a narrow and parochial self-aggrandizement.... People do not forget their history. It has made them what they are. For any transient politician to attempt to kill a nation's past, to wipe out a people's origins, is an idiotic futility. Mr. St. Laurent might as well give up trying. Our British tie is a great deal stronger than he is. He should remember, too, that if a course is persisted in beyond reason, it produces a reaction which could be very bad because extreme.⁵¹

The following year, when Victoria Day was for the first time celebrated on the prescribed Monday, the paper's position was expressed in the editorial cartoon, which showed a pioneer in the forefront, labelled 'Our Heritage,' and a Canadian family turning its back to him, facing rather an urban landscape labelled 'Our Country'. The cartoon bore the inscription "In Memory of May 24th 1847-1952."

The complaint about the loss of patriotic fervour and the attacks upon British tradition continued in the latter part of the 1950s. On 23 May 1955, the paper complained that "the word Empire has become taboo," that "most of the fun has been squeezed out of the holiday." "And with the fun, the significance also has tended to disappear. The old songs ... created a consciousness of unity within Canada, and of Canada's unity within an imperial Commonwealth. Victoria and Empire Day has lost that savor.... It is not good for a nation so to slight the truth of its historical beginnings."⁵² It continued in the same vein the following year, reflecting that "disrespect for Canada's past (especially that part of it which relates in any way to Britain) is endemic in Ottawa.... Forgetting their British past, the people of Canada are forgetting also their Canadian past." This was having a deleterious effect on the nation: "Rub out some of a nation's history, and you might as well rub out all of it."⁵³ By 1958, the paper seems to have finally accepted the demise of the Twenty-Fourth of May, but it proposed that the

⁵¹ "Futile and Stupid," 23 May 1952.

⁵² "Victoria Day," 23 May 1955.

⁵³ "Day Off," 21 May 1956.

civic holiday should honour the new Queen, Elizabeth II. "It would be a fine and gracious thing to make it Elizabeth Day, in fact or in practice or in both."⁵⁴

The *Globe and Mail* also complained occasionally about another attack upon British tradition which gripped Parliament in the Spring of 1946, at the same time as the new citizenship bill was being debated. This was the replacement of the phrase 'Dominion Day' by 'Canada Day,' which had been the object of Bill 8, introduced in March and adopted by the House of Commons in early April. The bill was amended by the Senate and never came back for discussion by the House. But the *Globe and Mail* saw in it another indication that members of the governing party in Ottawa were bent on eliminating all symbols of the British tradition in Canada.

This newspaper has frequently declared that it favors a strong Canadian consciousness. It would favor the abandonment of all hyphenated distinctions between Canadians of different national origins. It favors a recognized Canadian citizenship. It fails to see, however, how any of these things is hindered by the fact that this country is known as 'The Dominion of Canada.' How ridiculous to think of that honorable and historic phrase as an 'outmoded connotation of colonialism!'

A nation without a past is an anomaly. It is as imperfect an entity as a person who has lost his memory. To attempt a deliberate erasure of historical fact is to injure, not augment, national consciousness.... There is more than a thread of connection between this strange bill and the clause in the Canadian Citizenship Bill, which would force British subjects from other parts of the world to go through the same form of naturalization which people of non-British nationality are required to accept. The philosophy behind the two is the same. It will be a sorry day for Canadians when legitimate and worthy national pride turns into a species of racial arrogance, which lays about it with hatred or contempt, for all outside our borders. Whether July 1 is called Dominion Day, or Canada Day, is in itself of no great moment. What is significant is the spirit which demands the change.⁵⁵

A few days later, it reprinted a virulent front-page editorial from *Saturday Night*:

⁵⁴ "Elizabeth Day?," 19 May 1958.

⁵⁵ "What's in a Name?," 8 April 1946.

Have the members of Parliament no sense at all of the instinctive clinging to the old and traditional which is the essence of the common man's feelings about holidays? Do they think that 11,000,000 inhabitants of Canada are willing to hand over to Mr. Phileas Côté of Matapedia-Matane [the sponsor of the bill in the House of Commons] the right to rename all the cherished days of observance that their ancestors established and they themselves have marked from childhood up?

There is no sense to the proposal to call July the First Canada Day instead of Dominion Day. That date in 1867 was not the beginning of Canada, which existed on June 30 of the same year and had existed for centuries before that.... The holiday is the celebration of an event. The event was the establishing of the Dominion. The holiday is and must remain Dominion Day.⁵⁶

The *Globe and Mail* repeated its defense of 'Dominion Day' on 1 July 1948 and again on 1 July 1954:

Fewer than twenty years ago, Canada's leaders were going through all sorts of contortions to minimize our British connection. They felt—why, one cannot guess—that there was something vaguely shameful about it. The war, and events since the war, brought much of that silliness to an end. But wide streaks of it remain; for example, official Ottawa's fear and hatred of the fine word "Dominion".

Canadians, to their credit, do not share that fear and hatred. To the vast majority of them, this is the Dominion of Canada, and today is Dominion Day; and neither of them will ever be anything else. To the vast majority of them, as well, there is reason for quiet satisfaction in their unique relationship with the two great English-speaking nations—bridge, link, interpreter, whatever one may call it.

A subsidiary theme of the Victoria Day editorials was the role of Canada in the creation of the Commonwealth. The advent of responsible government under Queen Victoria was presented as the harbinger of the Commonwealth. "The Victorian era ... brought forth the most inspired political idea which men have yet evolved; representative self-government under a single Crown, founding the most successful comity of nations in history. For Cana-

⁵⁶"Let's Keep Dominion Day. From the Front Page of Saturday Night," 12 April 1946.

dians that invention has special significance, as it was here that its details were first put into effect."⁵⁷ It reiterated this idea the next year and came back to it in 1957.⁵⁸

Dominion Day editorials were usually concerned with the uncompleted nature of the Canadian nation. The nation was still divided regionally and ethnically ('racially' was the more usual phrase), but the process of unification was under way. "The land itself, working on the character of the people who have settled it," it wrote on 1 July 1946, "has created its own values, making a new people who are distinctly Canadian. The different regions have each contributed their own outlook and emphasis, the whole evolving from generation to generation into the nation that has yet to be."⁵⁹ The tone was slightly less sanguine the following year, when the paper remarked that "[t]rue national unity is not yet ours, however we may try to gloss over the fundamental differences that divide us into provincial and racial camps on domestic issues,"⁶⁰ but in successive years the outlook appeared more positive to the paper's editorial writers. In 1948, they wrote on Dominion Day that "[c]omplete unity is not here yet ... but there are hopeful signs that it is developing." Three years later the paper was hopeful progress was being made: "We have a population drawn from the best of human strains, gradually being woven into a strong, united people. Such a heritage should move our hearts with pride."

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A related argument, which John Diefenbaker would later make his hobby horse, was that hyphenated forms of Canadianism prevented the nation from attaining fullness. This was sometimes aimed at immigrant Canadians who sought to preserve their ethnic identity, but it referred mainly, though rarely explicitly, to French Canadians. Yet the *Globe* did not raise this

⁵⁷ "Victoria Day," 24 May 1946.

⁵⁸ "A Commonwealth Day," 24 May 1947; "Victorian Heritage," 20 May 1957.

⁵⁹ "Two Birthdays," 1 July 1946 [Confederation Day and the centenary of Hamilton].

⁶⁰ "The Stream Flows Swiftly," 1 July 1947.

⁶¹ "Dominion Day," 1 July 1948; "Canada, Our Country," 1 July 1951.

issue directly in its Dominion Day editorials. Besides the condemnation of hyphenated Canadianism already cited in the discussion of the appellation of 'Dominion Day,' the phrase only came up in a commentary upon the coming into force of the new Citizenship Act in January 1947, which was said to "...help to eliminate the hyphenated distinctions which mark off some Canadians from others."

During the fifteen years which followed World War II, the *Globe and Mail* stood for the defense of Canada's British heritage. This was seen as the noblest political and cultural heritage a nation could have. The Commonwealth bond was a bond of allegiance to a common ideal of freedom and high moral standards. "[T]he active, guiding principle in the Commonwealth has been the spread of liberty and happiness," it wrote on 24 May 1949.⁶² This was the true, 'unhyphenated' nature of Canada. Attacks on symbols of Canada's British heritage, such as the transformation of Victoria Day into a 'Day Off,' or the replacement of 'Dominion Day' by 'Canada Day,' were attacks upon the historical nature of the country, and threatened its 'unity.' Within this united country there was some room for 'biracialism,' but this was only once alluded to in Dominion Day editorials. Clearly this aspect of Canadian identity was secondary, or at least it did not seem to require editorial comment. Instead, it was hoped that 'racial' differences would fade away, and it was clearly expected that this process would mean the adoption of British values by the whole of the population.

Macleans, another Canadian publication with a claim of national circulation, provides contrasting views from those of the *Globe and Mail*. I systematically examined its editorial pages and have paid attention to columns, guest editorials, opinion pieces and articles which offered representations of Canadian identity. Overall, the magazine offered views that were more 'Canadian' and less 'British' than those of the *Globe and Mail* or, put another way, more 'Liberal'

⁶² "A Commonwealth Day," 24 May 1949.

and less 'Conservative.' Much more often than the *Globe and Mail*, it affirmed the 'biracial' character of Canada. On 1 October 1948, an editorial entitled "Two Windows on the World" reminded Canadians that the country was fortunate to have two languages. Arthur Irwin, *Maclean's*'s retiring editor, told an American audience in early 1950 that Canada was "... born of compromise between two races, two languages, two cultures. Inevitably he has had to learn that there are always two sides to a case. ... Culturally, his [the Canadian's] has been the task of trying to span the gap between the Latin and the Anglo-Saxon, between medievalism and modern materialism, Catholicism and Protestantism."⁶³

Under Ralph Allen, Irwin's successor, *Maclean's* continued to express similar views on the biracial nature of the country. In March 1950, an editorial suggested that the CBC broadcast French lessons on the English network and English lessons on the French network, since "[b]oth by law and by tradition, Canada is a bilingual country.... More and more of us are coming to recognize the positive aspects of our bilingualism." Yet the lack of second-language skills among Canadians meant that, "[t]o a considerable degree, our two great ethnic groups are physically and intellectually apart."⁶⁴ On Dominion Day, 1950, the magazine reflected on the "miracle" of Confederation: "... four colonies, five regions, two major races, all with a heritage of contempt and hatred for one another, yet all welded into a nation within one long lifetime." Here the 'biracial' character of Canada was joined to its political and regional fragmentation as an original hindrance to unity, but these hindrances had been overcome.⁶⁵ Five years later, on the same occasion, it proposed renaming 'Dominion Day' 'Confederation Day,' since the term 'Dominion' had no French translation. "Indeed, it is not too much to say that the use of 'Dominion Day' is a standing insult, no less offensive for being inadvertent, to more than one

⁶³ Arthur Irwin, "The Canadian," 1 February 1950, 20, 32, 34-35. Quotation is from p. 34, 35.

⁶⁴ "Two Windows on the World," *Maclean's*, 1 October 1948, p.2; "A Lesson for the CBC," 1 March 1950, 2.

⁶⁵ "Look How Far We've Come – And In Just 84 Years," 1 July 1950, 1.

third of all Canadians."⁶⁶ In February 1959, it commented on the Heeney report on the federal civil service,⁶⁷ which had recommended that civil servants who deal with the public be required to be bilingual in those parts of the country where there was a substantial linguistic minority. It recognized that English-speaking minorities had no difficulty obtaining federal services in their own language, " but thousands of French Canadians deal in their own locality with civil servants who speak no French." It did not flinch at the fact that "[i]n practice, a 'bilingual staff' would mean a French-Canadian staff."

The suggested change would give French-speaking Canadians a great and often decisive advantage in getting employment and promotion in many branches of the civil service where the English-speaking now predominate.... it is the fault of our education in English Canada, and the merit of the French, that we can speak only one language and they can speak two. Perhaps they ought to get the benefit of their superiority. Maybe if they did, there would be less neglect of language in English-Canadian schools.⁶⁸

Thus the magazine was ready to accept the implications of the 'biracial' nature of Canada and recognized the *de facto* inequality between the two main language groups. It offered its own contribution to improving understanding between the two language groups by publishing a special issue on Quebec in May 1959. The editorial which introduced the issue confronted the conflicting claims of heritage and harmony between the two language groups:

We do not in fact get on very well with each other, we Canadians. Our parliament has found that it cannot even discuss such matters as a national flag or a national anthem because any debate rouses the sleeping dogs of prejudice.... We need a proper knowledge of and respect for our past but we also need more knowledge of each other as we really are here and now. This knowledge will confront both of us with some facts we find distasteful, others we may find astonishing, but at least it will give us a foundation on which to build a better un-

⁶⁶ "Let's Call it 'Confederation Day'," 9 July 1955, 2.

⁶⁷ *Personnel Administration in the Public Service: A Review of Civil Service Legislation by the Civil Service Commission of Canada* (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1959).

⁶⁸ "It's English Canadians' own fault if 'bilingual' means French-Canadian," 14 February 1959, 4.

derstanding. It's the purpose and the hope of this issue of *Maclean's* to contribute to it.⁶⁹

Editorial positions also transpired in *Maclean's* choice of stories. Sometimes the 'biracial' character of Canada was seen as an obstacle to 'national unity.' In 1946 the Honorable Malcolm MacDonald, at the end of his term as British High Commissioner to Canada, considered that there were two major dangers facing Canada: the first one was "... any serious quarrel between the French-speaking and the English-speaking Canadians," while the second was a break between Great Britain and the U.S., which would split Canadians according to their preferred affinities.⁷⁰ Later in the same year, in an article describing how Canadians differed from Americans, Hugh McLennan wrote that "at the present it is hard to see how Canada can become uniform, with the Province of Quebec in its heart." In 1948, historian Arthur Lower complained about the quality of Canadian education, offering as example the way French was being taught. "I hasten to admit that if French were taken seriously and taught as the language of our fellow countrymen, thousands of zealots in English-speaking Canada would rise up and demand the heads of those who were betraying the English-speaking race."⁷¹

More often, however, articles in *Maclean's* presented the 'biracial' or bicultural character of Canada as valuable and in need of promotion. In "A Quebecker Speaks Out," Renée Vautelet argued for common history textbooks to foster mutual understanding. For her, citizenship was "biracial." She was concerned, however, "... over English Canada's still unresolved division of loyalties..." and over Protestant extremists who attacked the Catholic half of the Canadian population.⁷² In a photographic essay on Montreal in 1953, Yosuf Karsh "...

⁶⁹ "Let's stop boasting of national unity and start working on it," 9 May 1959, 9.

⁷⁰ Malcolm Macdonald, "This Nation Called Canada," 15 May 1946, 43.

⁷¹ "Does Our Education Educate?" 15 November 1948, 9, 72-76. Quotation is from p. 72.

⁷² Renée Vautelet, "A Quebecker Speaks Out," 15 January 1948, 18, 37-39.

did not see Montreal as a city split into two racial compartments. He found it an amicable if worldly town where two races dovetail neatly together and where, if the inclinations of the flesh are indulged, the needs of the heart and of the spirit are never neglected." In a story about Louis St. Laurent in 1956, Bruce Hutchison wrote : "... the supreme duty of any prime minister is to unite the two great Canadian races." Later in the same article Hutchison revealed his fascination with French Canadians. "I do not pretend to understand my French-speaking compatriots. But at least I know them to be a people of peculiar greatness, with many qualities that we lack, a people of profound inner strength, a lovable, kindly people and an essential ingredient of the thing we call Canadianism."⁷³

Two years later, in a piece entitled "The Gods Canadians Worship," Arthur Lower hoped that "[i]f those who speak English in Canada and do not find O Canada subversive could link up with those who speak French and join to O Canada the words *Terre de nos aïeux*, there might then be some future for the common country." Lower wished for less bigotry on both sides of the linguistic divide:

...here is a country of two peoples, two ways of life, two cultures. That fact alone gives it any distinction it might happen to possess. The two have lived together for nearly two centuries, never intimately and not often happily, but without flying at each other's throats. That in itself is no mean accomplishment, one to which there are not many parallels elsewhere in the world. They could powerfully reinforce each other—if the more extreme among the French could abandon their touchiness and their lack of interest in everything outside themselves, and if the more extreme among the English their absurd arrogance (what have they to be arrogant about? Second-hand American cars?), their silly notions of racial superiority and their narrow intolerance.⁷⁴

In 1959, Bruce Hutchison visited Quebec to research a piece entitled "The Unconquerable French Canadian." At the beginning of the article he expressed his faith in the 'biracial'

⁷³ Bruce Hutchison, "Political Quebec," 18 February 1956, 22, 37, 39-45. Quotations are from p. 40, 44.

⁷⁴ 25 October 1958, 74.

character of Canada. "No one but the dual nation of the future had won the battle [of the Plains of Abraham]. And in its unconquerable but still imperfect duality the nation must now reassess, from top to bottom, the marriage of the two races." The article was a perceptive account of changes within French-Canadian society which would erupt in the Quiet Revolution the following year. Its conclusion stressed the positive contribution that 'bi-racialism' had been for Canada:

Without them [the French Canadians] Canada would be a duller nation, and perhaps it could not have survived as a nation at all against the continental conformity. At any rate, without them we would have missed our chance of unique achievement, our only great contribution to the world - a workable duality of two distinct peoples, both Canadian, a demonstration of bi-racial living in a race-torn age.

Apart from anything else, that achievement has justified our history since the conquest not of a race, region or nationality but of ourselves jointly. And its product, emerging only in our time, is a new and true nationality.

Hutchison's view of French Canadians was coloured by a concept of 'race' that was a mixture of cultural and physical characteristics. People in Quebec City "...don't look French Canadian any more; they look Canadian and indistinguishable (until you hear their voices) from any others in the nation." Thus a Canadian physical type was emerging. Yet he wondered, "... as I had wondered so often before, [why it was] that the plainest French-Canadian girl always manages to look pretty in spite of nature? Because, I suppose, she has a racial vitality, a feminine instinct, stronger than ours."⁷⁵ 'Vitality' still kept the 'races' different.

Both in its editorial writing and in the articles it published, *Maclean's* offered its readers a representation of Canadian identity founded on a positive assessment of its 'bi-racial' nature. It showed good will towards Quebec, in spite of the despicable politics of its Premier, Maurice Duplessis, and chided those Canadians who put allegiance to British tradition – or to a narrow

⁷⁵ 9 May 1959. Quotations are from 16, 82.

Quebec nationalism – ahead of the need for 'bi-racial' harmony within the country. But the other representations it also offered – the uncompleted nation, the nation steeped in British political tradition – were similar to the nexus of representations offered by the *Globe and Mail*, though with different valences.

Like the *Globe and Mail*, *Maclean's* occasionally took up the theme of the uncompleted nation in Dominion Day editorials. On 1 July 1948, it noted that Canadian patriotism "...has been a plant of slow growth. Even now, after 81 Dominion Days, it is a long way from robust maturity.... As a people we had to be led to accept the idea of nationhood." Yet the editorial ended on a more positive note, reflecting that "... this scattered and divided people has made itself into a nation with its own ideals and its own determinations."⁷⁶ It reiterated the same idea for the next Dominion Day celebration, in 1949, exhorting Canadians to be "...Optimists on Canada's Birthday," since they belong to a nation "... whose new strength and new maturity are only half realized even by her own sons."⁷⁷ In 1950, it saw the work of 'nation-building' as having been achieved in the 84 years since Confederation.⁷⁸

In 1955 new incidents revealed the fragility of national unity. The CPR was called upon to forgo the name 'Royal Canadian' for its new transcontinental train because some considered it an improper, commercial use of the adjective 'Royal.' "To hear some comments you'd think the whole thing as a conspiracy to bring 'creeping republicanism' to Canada - little short of treason, a sinister plot to undermine the Throne." Symbolic issues such as the flag and the national anthem were still unresolved, and still causing difficulty: "A flag is a symbol of national unity, or it is nothing; to us it has become a symbol of disunity.... Maybe the time will come when Canada can have a flag, and a national anthem, and a name that we can all agree upon.

⁷⁶ "The Long Road to Maturity," 1 July 1948, 1.

⁷⁷ "Let's Be Optimists on Canada's Birthday," 1 July 1949, 2.

⁷⁸ "Look How Far We've Come – And In Just 84 Years," 1 July 1950, 1.

When that time comes, we'll know we don't really need any of those things - we shall have grown up, at last, without them." The other national railway, the CNR, was not helping national unity: its president, Donald Gordon, was insisting in naming the CNR's new Montreal hotel the Queen Elizabeth rather than Château Maisonneuve. "The argument for Château Maisonneuve are so compelling that it seems incredible they did not prevail in the beginning."⁷⁹

Maclean's editorial depiction of Canada's links with the Great Britain was more nuanced than the *Globe's*. It offered a positive, but not uncritical view of the Commonwealth. In 1950, it regretted the loss of "the spirit and the substance of a community" within the Commonwealth, because the Commonwealth was the one supra-national community that was working. In 1953, it called the Commonwealth "The World's Greatest Asset," since it had, among other things, "... saved its member nations from defeat in two world wars."⁸⁰ *Maclean's* kept its readers informed on British current events by publishing in each issue Beverley Baxter's "London Letter," which offered the point of view of an expatriate Canadian who had become a Conservative member of the House of Lords. The column ended in July 1960 after 25 years.⁸¹

The editors did not shy away from occasional critiques of Great Britain. They denounced British intervention in Suez in 1956, calling it "... act of callousness and dangerous folly such as Britain has not embarked on in half a century."⁸² The Suez crisis had a wrenching effect internally in Canada as well, commented Bruce Hutchison in April 1957. Some considered that it had destroyed Great Britain's reputation as a great nation. Hutchison believed that "...few things more important than Suez have ever happened to us in more than three

⁷⁹ "It's What's Behind the Symbol that Counts," 2 April 1955, 2; "Donald Gordon and the Château Blunder," 14 May 1955, 2.

⁸⁰ "The Commonwealth is Chasing Its Own Tail," 1 June 1950, 1; "The Free World's Greatest Asset," 1 June 1953, 2.

⁸¹ Beverley Baxter, "Farewell and hail after 25 years," 30 July 1960, 7.

⁸² "We're not really the heroes of Suez," 22 December 1956.

centuries.... The first consequence was to split the nation inwardly, as it has seldom been split, between our practical position as a North American nation and our inherited instincts as a child of Europe."⁸³

The role of the Crown as symbol of allegiance was viewed positively, but again in a nuanced fashion. In 1954, it lamented the misuse of toasts to the Queen and of the singing of 'God Save the Queen' at banquets. "This is a pity because the Crown still means a good deal to most of the people who live within its orbit. Too much, in fact, to be systematically degraded by routine and meaningless gestures. Let's save the Queen's name for occasions when it stirs the blood, not merely rouses an audience to realize that the time has come to go home or to light up a cigarette." It approved of royal tours, and gave them extensive coverage,⁸⁴ but regretted that some champions of the monarchy had no tolerance for people who disagreed with them. On the occasion of the Queen's 1959 visit, it remarked: "There is nothing in Canada's constitution or in our nature as a free assembly of human beings that compels all good Canadians to think alike on any subject, including the monarchy and royal visits. In our view the only really regrettable aspect of the latest visit is that far too many of us forgot momentarily that we are not only a monarchy, but a democracy."⁸⁵

In its articles *Maclean's* could reveal the quizzical aspects of the English-Canadian rapport with the monarchy. A long article on the Imperial Order of the Daughters of the Empire, in 1952, recalled the IODE's virulent attachment to British institutions, as manifested in its opposition to the nomination of a Canadian as Governor General "... on the grounds that this

⁸³ Bruce Hutchison, "For the sake of argument. We're being corrupted by our boom," 13 April 1957, 8, 40-43. Quotation is on p. 40.

⁸⁴ Special issue of Princess Elizabeth's tour of Canada, 1 October 1951; "June Callwood's story of the Queen's visit," 7 December 1957. However, the 1959 tour was only the subject of a humorous article by Charles Spencer, "The day the queen resigned," 29 August 1959, 2, 39.

⁸⁵ "Our Ice-Water Loyalty," 1 March 1954, 2; "Why do royal tours make Canadians so belligerent?," 15 August 1959, 4.

hinted at 'an insidious and determined plan towards the gradual emergence of a republican state.' The IODE vociferously attacked the decision to discard the Privy Council in London as the final court of Canadian appeal ; cried "No!" to the creation of Royal Canadian Corps of Infantry in place of the old regimental order of battle; denounced the Defense Department for discouraging Rule Britannia as the RCN song; howled down the proposal to erase "Royal Mail" from postal trucks, and threw up their hands in horror at the dropping of the word "Dominion" from Canadian statutes."⁸⁶ Yet the following year, Blair Fraser reported that Canada had difficulty in filling its allotted number of seats in Westminster Abbey for the Queen's coronation. "Australia has fewer people than Canada, but more Australians than Canadians wanted to come to the Coronation."⁸⁷

Towards the end of the 1950s, *Maclean's* also drew attention to the ethical component of Canadian identity. Bruce Hutchison grew apprehensive at the growing materialism of the country, and its declining sense of compassion. During the Suez and Hungary crises of 1956, "...the voice of politics drowned out the voice of compassion" in Canada. Fortunately, "...the Canadian people are far more intelligent, more generous and altogether better than they look at present."⁸⁸ The editorial page took up the theme later in 1957 in a piece favouring greater immigration into the country.

Within this century Canada has become one of the world's major economic forces as well as a major political force. We can, if we wish, become something indescribably greater than either of these. We can become a moral force of the first dimension. We can show that good will and decency toward one's neighbors, however naïve and out of fashion they may have come to seem, are still good fields for experiment.⁸⁹

⁸⁶ McKenzie Porter, "The Empire's Dutiful Daughters," 15 August 1952, 10-11, 34-37. Quotation is from p. 34.

⁸⁷ "Backstage at Ottawa. No Social Climbers in the Abbey," 1 June 1953, special issue on the coronation, 5.

⁸⁸ "For the sake of argument. We're being corrupted by our boom," 13 April 1957, 8, 40-43. Quotations are from p. 41, 43.

⁸⁹ "Both parties say 'No' to immigrants but it's not the voice of Canada," 31 August 1957, 4.

The ethical concept of the country in a sense grounded all the other representations of Canada which may be found in the pages of the magazine. The positive attitude towards French Canada, the desire to keep Canada distinct from the United States, the role defined for Canada on the international stage were all based on the virtues of tolerance, justice, and compassion. These were the traits that made Canada a decent nation. *Maclean's* answered in an editorial on 1 July 1952 an inquiry by a German considering emigrating to Canada and wishing to learn what the Canadian character was. "Judge us as Canadians, if you will. But judge us first as human beings, in the clear understanding that we live under no special law which transmits all the virtues and faults in residence here to some monolithic creature of the gods called The Canadian.... for we are so proud and fortunate to be Canadians that there are some among us who need reminding that there is no way of being a good Canadian without being a good human being."⁹⁰

Yet *Maclean's*, like the *Globe and Mail*, offered an ethnic-based representation of Canadian identity. The fundamental difference between the two publications was that *Maclean's* did not claim or imply that one of the two main Canadian 'race' was superior to the other. In neither publication could one find any sustained exposition of the concept of 'civic' nationalism as it is understood today.

4. Conclusion

Ethnicity was at the core of most of the representations of Canadian identity in English-speaking Canada that were examined in this paper. There were of course disagreements within the English-language communicational community on the emphasis to be put on the British character of the country and some strenuous resistance, in some quarters, to erasing the

⁹⁰ "Letter to Heinz Weidner," 1 July 1952, 2.

symbols of the British connection. But this was a matter of degree, not a profound disagreement as to the nature of the country. This makes the virtual abandonment of the British tradition in the 1960s all the more surprising. Some observers saw this coming in the 1950s and squarely blamed the Liberal government in Ottawa for its deliberate renunciation of Canada's British heritage.⁹¹

This conclusion is, of course, tentative. The inquiry needs to be extended in at least two directions. First, work on the 1950s needs to be expanded. A much larger sample of newspaper and magazine opinion has to be collected. The actual role of the Liberal government in removing the British connection from the symbolic universe of the country has to be investigated. Other sources of symbolic identification, such as school textbooks, also require examination. Second, attention needs to be focused on the speed with which national symbols were being refashioned in the 1960s. Inquiries similar to those that will bear on the 1950s will have to be conducted for this crucial decade.

Finally, from the conceptual point of view, we can appreciate the usefulness of Tilly's characterization of public identities. Each statement, each representation of identity needs to be carefully situated in its context, relational, cultural, historical and contingent. We can then move away from arguing about *the* Canadian identity and accept representations of national identity as a legitimate object of historical inquiry.

⁹¹ See for example John Farthing, *Freedom Wears a Crown* (Toronto: Kingsford House, 1957). Again, I owe this reference to Gerald Friesen.