L'Acadie perdue;
Or, Maritime History's Other

I ATTENDED THE ATLANTIC CANADA Studies Conference in order to hear the "Back to the Future" presentations made by a number of senior historians — scholars who had been instrumental in "shaping Atlantic Canada Studies". Surely, I thought, the time had come for a critical examination of the *Acadiensis* generation, which thus far has been the object of little investigation. The engaging, autobiographical (with all that this implies), somewhat whimsical nature of their interventions confirmed in my mind the essentialist, pragmatic and now orthodox consensus that has marked the historiography of that generation. Paradoxically, it was dissension — indeed the sole manifestation of factionalism (at least in the plenary sessions) that I observed at the conference — that convinced me of the exactitude of my presumption. In a context where back-slapping and nostalgia were the order of the day, the contrast was sharp. I refer here to the exclusion of *Acadianité*.[1] The point was raised by Naomi Griffiths, who protested the absence of reference to Acadian historiography. In fact, she alluded to the general absence of Acadia, a sentiment later echoed by Jacques Paul Couturier — the only French-language speaker at the conference and whose paper was one of only two related to Acadia (out of 45) — who only half-jokingly referred to himself as the "token Acadian". That these figures spoke out is not without import. The first is a member of the feted generation and widely regarded as English Canada's chief interpreter of the Acadian humour; and the second is a member of the new guard and the only historian who has thus far attempted to quantify recent Acadian historiographical production and to set it in the larger context of Canadian historiography.[2]

The Unsaid says much about contemporary Maritime historiography. Indeed, the predominant mode of today's historical discipline, social history, is posited on voicing (or outing) the Unsaid. And current intellectual history takes this even further by concentrating on the "impensable" and the "indisible". And of course there is no end to the Unsaid (as there is no end to history), as the growth of new subjectivities and therefore new objects of historical inquiry (regionalism, feminism, social activism, genderism, etc.) continues at an unprecedented pace, more so in Canadian social

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1 The title of this essay is drawn from Michel Roy's provocative essay, *L'Acadie perdue* (Montréal, 1978), in which he assails the clerical and bourgeois carpetbaggery of Acadianité and proposes union with Québec, as the only way to recover Acadian identity. I am grateful for David Frank's invitation to present a paper on my impressions of the proceedings of the conference and for his invaluable editorial advice. Thanks, too, to Wendy Johnston for help in reconstituting the events of the conference.

2 See Naomi E.S. Griffiths, *The Contexts of Acadian History, 1686-1784* (Montréal and Kingston, 1992) and Jacques Paul Couturier, "Tendances actuelles dans l'historiographie acadienne (1970-1985)", *Communications historiques/Historical Papers* (1987), pp. 230-50; "La production de mémoires et de thèses en histoire acadienne, 1960-1994: Analyse et conjectures", in Jacques Paul Couturier et Phyllis E. LeBlanc, dirs., *Économie et société en Acadie, 1850-1950: Nouvelles études d'histoire acadienne* (Moncton, 1996), pp. 187-94; "'L'Acadie, c'est un détail': Les représentations de l'Acadie dans le récit national canadien", *Acadiensis*, XXIX, 2 (printemps 2000), pp. 102-19.

discourse and in the Canadian historical discipline than elsewhere. All these are the progeny of the post-modern dissolution of shared references and of the fragmentation of traditional social structure — a reality, in Canada, exacerbated by a growing "rights culture" and the ever-present ethnic and spatial rivalries.[3] The conference reserved a prominent place for the expression of a wide array of contemporary claims-groups (although some traditional ones such as class and labour were clearly on the wane), and a respectable place was given over to new subject matter and approaches (communications theory, technology, representations, etc.). But one "subject-position" was conspicuously absent, or nearly so: Acadia and the Acadians.

The goal herein is not to quantify the presence of Acadian-related material in contemporary Maritime historical production; even less is it to moralize about yet another neglected "minority". Rather, it is to explore Acadianité for the light it sheds on issues related not just to inclusion/exclusion but to the practice of Maritime historiography and more generally the evolution of public memory in the Maritimes. I approach this subject from two angles: Maritime historiography in its quality as historical inquiry —historians, their shared presuppositions, methods and philosophy; and Maritime historiography in its posture as historical discourse — its role in the construction of social subjectivities and in the development of regional identity-making, notably as regards the evolving dialectic between lived and invented cultures. I will conclude by sketching the contours of a possible rapprochement between the "two solitudes". In this essay, I call upon concepts derived from the new intellectual history, cultural studies, textual/discourse analysis and the sociology of knowledge.[4] In keeping with the notion of reference group, my remarks deal primarily with the *Acadiensis* generation and only secondarily with its successors to whom my general observations apply only partially. Because of the format of this paper, my remarks will perforce be schematic, directed less at drawing firm conclusions than at provoking a rethinking of the relationship between Maritime historians and *Acadie*.[5]

Clearly, Maritime historiography can be described as a community of discourse, which is based upon the sharing of a complex set of assumptions that shape the collective judgement of what constitute significant topics and pertinent modes of inquiry. Seen in its totality, it is a discrete meta-narrative, distinguished by a number of generic elements such as themes and modes of argument — a group-specific compound of common considerations invigorated by contestation from without. Thus the matter of inclusion/exclusion is germane not just to the formal and logical aspects

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3 For the importance of the "tu" in historical inquiry, see the classic appreciation by Marc Bloch, *Apologie pour l'histoire ou Métier d'historien* ([1949] Paris, 1993). And for Canadian social and historical discourse in the context of post-modernity, see Ian Angus, *A Border Within: National identity, Cultural Plurality, and Wilderness* (Montréal and Kingston, 1997) and Daniel Francis, *National Dreams: Myth, Memory and Canadian History* (Vancouver, 1997).

4 For the theoretical underpinnings of the present analysis, see Bruce Robbins, ed., *Intellectuals: Aesthetics, Politics, Academics* (Minneapolis, Minn., 1990) and Tony Becher, *Academic Tribes and Territories: Intellectual Enquiry and the Cultures of Disciplines* (London and Philadelphia, 1989).

5 Granted, Canadian historiography as a whole has not been less exclusionary of things Acadian (see Couturier,"'L'Acadie, c'est un détail'") but one would expect more from Maritime historiography, not only because of geographical affinity but because of its own revolt against exclusion. Much of the theoretical and empirical support for my structuring assumptions and numerous pronouncements derive from ongoing research on contemporary Maritime historiography.

of narrative/discourse but to the objectives, dialectical and political, of every historical tradition. While on the surface the exclusion of Acadianité may appear incongruous, it is consistent with the fundamental ontological and epistemological orientations of Maritime historiography. The principal axiologies, motifs and explanatory strategies of Maritime historical writing constitute real obstacles to the inclusion of Acadie in the regional historical discourse.

The advent of social history in the Maritimes has been widely described as a politically active history giving voice to the inarticulate and the downtrodden. The new Maritime historiography, as its practitioners have repeatedly claimed, has sought to extend the limits of the relevant in Canadian historiography to include a new set of significant historical actors — in this case, "Maritimers". Maritime historical writing must be seen in the light of the rise to predominance of a cadre of scholars for whom academic pursuits were explicitly linked to political ends. But engagement — a powerful motor in inducing coherence and synthesis — carries with it its own set of contradictions, not the least of which, as the recent controversy over the purported "killing" of Canadian history has shown, is that every one of Canada's "limited identities" points to its own incommensurability with respect to the social dimensions of historical experience.[6] It is not surprising, therefore, that Acadie — inasmuch as it is framed by a distinct historical tradition — should be viewed as a competing vision. More important here are the consequences of a programmatic approach to the Maritimes' past, which, because it implies compliance to the criteria of progressivism and enlightenment, greatly limits the taxonomy of objects judged to be worthy of consideration. To the extent that Acadie is perceived as backward, monolithic, Catholic and corporatist (and not just historically), it holds no greater attraction for Maritime historians than does the traditional Maritime order they wish to deconstruct. If the latter can hardly be ignored — it is the necessary foil to a counter-discourse directed at generating conditions for the rise of the "New Maritimes" — there is no need to evoke yet another example of a reality that does not conform to Maritime historians' "progressive" approach.

The rise of the new Maritime historiography has been widely imputed by its adherents to be part of the general movement away from "consensus". Indeed, the analytical construct that had been the "national character" collapsed, but what took place, in epistemological terms, was a return to materialism. In Maritime historiography, as in other scholarly traditions, this resulted in the predominance not just of social history but of its economistic prejudices. By favouring structure over culture in their analyses of the past, Maritime historians have necessarily cultivated a deterministic view of the evolution of Maritime society.[7] Concern with the socio-economic runs contrary to the conventional appreciation of politico-constitutional

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6 As Bryan D. Palmer has pointed out in "Of Silences and Trenches: A Dissident View of Granatstein's Meaning", *Canadian Historical Review*, LXXX, 4 (December 1999), pp. 676-86, plurality in Canadian historiography has taken on the form of a "ritualized assertion of differentiation"; this new orthodoxy, albeit a reversal of the old consensus, is no less refractory to dissidence, for it "bypasses significant difference, papers over the problematic, and . . . assimilates all to a forced synthesis".

7 This tendency is best indicated by a number of collections, including Ernest R. Forbes, *Challenging the Regional Stereotype: Essays on the 20th Century Maritimes* (Fredericton, 1989), Phillip A. Buckner and David Frank, eds., *Atlantic Canada Before Confederation: The Acadiensis Reader,*

matters, whose ideal manifestation is the wide narrative synthesis which emphasizes relations between the two founding "races". But, in more general terms, the result has been the diminishing of the import of meaning and of regimes of signification in Maritime historical inquiry. Structuro-functionalism can give but a very partial picture of Maritime political and intellectual culture, less even of the Maritime socio-cultural "sense of region", and no idea whatsoever of the nature of the signifying systems at work in Acadie, by definition a society structured by a differentiated culture.[8] Thus it is that this new history, however much a reversal of the assumptions that animated the traditional Maritime political narrative, is in reality only the negative of the same processes of reduction and exclusion that it was designed to overcome. For all its assault on the master-narrative to which it was proposed as a necessary alternative, it is itself no less *culturally* situated.

The principal orientation of Maritime historiography is its preoccupation with the processes of modernity, as shown by its attentiveness to the post-Confederation period and the subsumption of most of its endeavours under the rubric of regional disparity. And first among these is the posited destruction of the regional economy and the subsequent domination of the industrializing Centre. This accounts for the prominence of studies devoted to (de)industrialization, labour, out-migration, etc. and debate regarding entrepreneurial deficiency, resource specificity, locational disadvantage and the like. It accounts, as well, for the attendant relative neglect of rural history, not to mention intellectual and cultural history. But whatever the accuracy of Maritime historians' analyses, the accent placed on the development of industrial capitalism and the exchange economy and even on their spatial and social ramifications entails the exclusion of Acadie, a society large sections of which remained anchored in rurality and "traditionality" until the 1970s. By concentrating on the processes of modernization, it was only natural for Maritime historians either to overlook Acadie or to dismiss it as anachronistic or idiosyncratic. In order to properly apprehend Acadie, these historians would have to focus on its structuring dynamic — not so much progress (or lack thereof) as the preponderance of localized strategies of perpetuation and autonomy: the persistence of traditional modes of appropriation and production (notably petty commodity and domestic production and their contemporary offshoots, especially occupational plurality and economic versatility), of traditional social organization and regulation, cultural practices and regimes of signification.

Maritime historians have directed attention to political concerns, bringing into focus the effects of constitutional, policy and administrative factors in the development of regional disparity. Indeed, these historians have taken pains to outline the political (or ideological) and more broadly social correlates of Maritime dystrophy. This accounts for the peculiar direction imparted to political history,

Volume One (Fredericton, 1990) and *Atlantic Canada After Confederation: The Acadiensis Reader, Volume Two* (Fredericton, 1988), Ged Martin ed., *The Causes of Canadian Confederation* (Fredericton, 1990), David Frank and Gregory S. Kealey, eds., *Labour and Working-Class History in Atlantic Canada: A Reader* (St. John's, 1995).

8 Ian McKay, "A Note on 'Region' in Writing the History of Atlantic Canada", *Acadiensis*, XXIX, 2 (Spring 2000), pp. 89-101, has recently directed some much-needed attention to the epistemological (and more generally moral) problem of "region" in Atlantic Canadian historiography.

largely made over as a systematic inquiry into the causes of regional disparity and political marginalization. By over-coding the political, that is by making it causal to the economic, Maritime historians have further back-grounded Acadie. It must be recalled that Acadie had long evolved on the margins of Maritime juridico-administrative competencies and was slow to be swallowed up by the growth of state-formation. In addition, its integration into instituted politics came in two waves, first with the Acadian Renaissance — which may be characterized as the institution of Acadian national identity — and later, in the 1960s, with the development of Acadian "affirmationisme" — the political expression of neo-nationalism. In both cases, accelerated integration into the global society and the imposition of statism coincided with the emergence of a new form of social regulation marked by the preponderance of ethnicity. Nothing in the study of Acadian politics — save possibly the repercussions of the New Brunswick Common Schools Act (1871) — is especially applicable to illustrating the Maritimes' struggle with the Centre. Rather, it serves to demonstrate the still unresolved problem of ethnic relations, seen against the backdrop of centuries of sustained majority efforts at acculturation and the concomitant and opposing Acadian "march" towards national awakening.[9]

The obsessive preoccupation with the regional industrial revolution is in large part due to a will to proclaim the region's progressivism as an antidote to the widespread presumption of backwardness and autarchy. The stereotype of "conservatism" (figured as the absence of modernity or progressive thought) is perceived as a heavy burden imposed upon the Maritimes. The need to counter it is manifest in the attention accorded labour radicalism and populism and in the repudiation of the "conservative" stereotype in any number of spheres — suffragettism, literature, business, politics, etc. Collective angst has been directed against conservatism by historians whose calling is to prod the Maritimes towards "historical" respectability by invoking the region's "radical" past. In every instance, the goal is to give meaning to a meta-narrative aimed at creating the substance of a new Maritime subjectivity. In the nascent narrative of the new Maritimes, "the Acadian", figured as pre-modern, has no place save as a counter-type in the antinomy of modern and archaic.[10] Acadie can do nothing to help refute what is viewed as the generalized misrepresentation of the Maritimes in Canadian historiography (not to mention public discourse), manifest in the form of allegations of inherent anti-progressivism figured as the cause for the regional economic debacle, aversion for modern intellectual currents and social movements,

9 For the development of Acadian nationalism and its effect on ethnic relations, see Louis F. Cimino, "Ethnic Nationalism Among the Acadians of New Brunswick: An Analysis of Ethnic Political Development", Ph.D. thesis, Duke University, 1977 and J. Yvon Thériault, "Naissance, déploiement et crise de l'idéologie nationale acadienne", in Simon Langlois, dir., *Identité et cultures nationales: L'Amérique française en mutation* (Québec, 1995), pp. 67-84.

10 For the relationship between scientific writing and social discourse, see Marc Angenot, *1889: un état du discours social* (Longueuil, 1989). For an example of this type of analysis, applied to Québec, see Jocelyn Létourneau, "Le 'Québec moderne': un chapitre du grand récit collectif des Québécois", *Discours social*, IV, 1-2 (1992), pp. 63-88. The concept of "Québécois moderne" (the "figure identitaire d'un nouvel être collectif') — which the author imputes to the social discourse of the "techno-bureaucratie" — has impregnated the common-sense comprehension of society, thereby refiguring the "être d'ensemble" through a textualized break with the past, rendered by the opposition of antinomic archetypes (modern versus archaic).

and widespread venality.

The prominent place given over to regional disparity in Maritime historiography must not obscure the importance accorded plurality and diversity — those discrete subjectivities given to exist by the Maritime meta-narrative itself (Natives, Blacks, Planters, women, etc.). Of course, Maritime historians should not be reproached for making earnest efforts at ensuring inclusiveness. But this, in the end, like all unproblematized relations, is a contrived union — not so much because all these new Maritime subjectivities are *sui generis*, but because "the Maritimes" is a typology under construction, one which is designed to subsume the entire population. Celebrating diversity in this instance does not mean questioning the existing order. Indeed, the raison d'être of Canadian official multiculturalism (and of "rights culture" more generally) is that it negates duality, and Québec nationalism specifically.[11] In the case of Maritime historiography, therefore, the posited existence of a diversity of experiences and representations has served to provide an ersatz sense of coherence, unity and totality — in short, a narrative/discourse with which to efface *Maritime* duality. Indeed, in Maritime historical writing, Acadians are conceived of as just another ethnic group or as one of the many "peoples" of Canada. Maritime historiography threatens to ethnicize and folklorize Acadie, for it is a negation of the specificity of Acadians' struggle, however this be characterized — as a quest for national liberation or merely a ritualized assertion of distinctiveness. Plurality amounts to the levelling of all subjectivities and their subsumption under a (anglo-American) political culture closely identified with the cultural logic of late capitalism, marked by social fragmentation and the pre-eminence of the subject — the very antithesis of the (liberal-democratic) collectivism favoured by national minorities be they Acadian, Québécois or even Native. Unlike other limited identities, Acadian subjectivity is differentiated by culture and language, a delineated territory, an accredited history (and myths)[12] and a political culture the ultimate logic of which is not equality but autonomy.

Closely allied to this diversity is the practice of a radical critique of the existing order: feminism, labourism, environmentalism and so on, all figured as activist adjuncts to the over-arching Maritime fight against the Canadian status quo. This is a phenomenon related to Maritime historians' penchant for utopianism, a universe in which society is united around a meta-narrative articulated on the liberation of the weak. The important point here is the teleology of this "movement", which posits and predicts an integrated yet diverse society. There is a belief that the plurality of Maritimers' realities can be subsumed under a single "ideogram". Maritime historiography, like feminist studies, is patently modernist in its promise of an idyllic

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11 For a sweeping consideration of the question of nation, identity and plurality in the political culture of Canada, see Gilles Bourque et Jules Duchastel, *L'identité fragmentée: Nation et citoyenneté dans les débats constitutionnels canadiens, 1941-1992* (Montréal, 1996), and for the impact of same in Canadian historiography, see Jocelyn Létourneau, "L'avenir du Canada: par rapport à quelle histoire?", *Canadian Historical Review*, LXXXI, 2 (juin 2000), pp. 230-59.

12 For these life-worlds, geographic and cultural, see Cécyle Trépanier, "Le mythe de 'l'Acadie des Maritimes'", *Géographie et cultures*, 17 (1996), pp. 55-74 and Jean-Claude Vernex, "Espace et appartenance: l'exemple des Acadiens du Nouveau-Brunswick", *Cahiers de géographie du Québec*, XXIII, 58 (1979), pp. 125-42.

future and in its Marxian ideological stance of positing region as the locus of Canadian revolution. This radical orientation is inhospitable to (bi)nationalism, for it requires a binary opposition between worker and capitalist, region and centre, and so on, but not between anglophone and francophone — for that would imply an irretrievably divided Maritimes rather than the cohesive unity postulated to follow on the ruin of "false consciousness". English-Canadian historians overall like to emphasize the cultural mosaic of Canada (in contrast to the American melting pot); and Acadie has been popular as a symbol for the purported success of official bilingualism and an illustration of the importance of a strong federal state (for its supposed role as protector of minority rights). But because it is only with difficulty that they can bring themselves to recognize the legitimacy of the political and territorial logic of Acadian nationalism, Maritime historians have made a mockery of their radical leanings. If, as Ian McKay surmises, the very existence of the Atlantic Region signifies popular, territorially based resistance to the new liberal order, then the survival of Acadie and the persistence of its "projet de société" must be accepted by historians for what it is — not merely a semantically defined reality but a genealogical construction.[13]

The concept of region is the *sine qua non* of "Maritime" historiography. Naturally, "the Maritimes" is a useful category for generating significant and intelligible data. But more important is the question of polity of scale: the possibility of gaining greater credibility for the results of "regional" research by claiming to represent a larger, more relevant social reality. This is posited on the empire of the same stereotype that would have "national" history better than "local", *histoire globale* better than micro-studies, and so on. Thus, because Maritime historians are preoccupied by the insertion of the Maritimes into "Atlantic Canada" but have expressed no urgency for showcasing the vital yet undervalued lessons of Acadie, it must be assumed that they are prompted by considerations of enhanced visibility. While the inclusion of Newfoundland would presumably shore up the fragile edifice of "the Maritimes", few obvious benefits would accrue from the accreditation of the national character of Acadie. Likewise, region may be characterized as a bulwark against ethnicity and other social cleavages[14] — a narrative of consensus and sameness within but otherness without, a distinct (Canadian) region but no ethnicity (as opposed to "ethnics") and no "foreign" tongues. Also, the predilection for regional aggregates has resulted in a focus on only such elements as provide illustration to this effect. Acadie is excluded precisely because it undermines the cogency of the "regional" concept. Finally, and most egregious, in their haste to impose order upon what is in fact a messy reality, Maritimists play the centralist game, demanding the differentiation of Canadian space but beating a hasty retreat from the potential for trouble from an alienated Acadie,

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13 See McKay, "A Note on 'Region'", and for the Acadian "project", J. Yvon Thériault, *L'identité à l'épreuve de la modernité: Écrits politiques sur l'Acadie et les francophonies canadiennes minoritaires* (Moncton, 1995).

14 Carman Miller's "The Atlantic Provinces and the Problem of 'Regionalism'", *Acadiensis*, XI, 2 (Spring 1982), pp. 130-4, is a perceptive résumé of the political motivations of Atlantic Canada region-building, contrasted to the socio-cultural reality, and should be compulsory reading for Maritime regionalists.

objectively defined by a coincidence of ethnicity, space and class.

The concept of region leads us to its ideological correlate, regionalism. This points to a shared political objective, that of erecting a wall against real and perceived centralist assaults through the united efforts of the Maritime Provinces. Maritime historians' interpretation of the Maritime political economy is based on the belief that there exists a discrete and cohesive politico-cultural unity in the region[15] — a supposition that the presence of Acadie shows to be demonstrably false. (It is noteworthy that Québécois historians routinely draw a distinction between francophone and anglophone Québec, in recognition of the objective existence of the two "communities" and of the importance of these categories in historical analysis). The imbroglio resulting from the "regional" characterization of the Maritimes is best illustrated by the forced link between the objective physical, cultural and other characteristics of regional geography and the concept of a distinct socio-spatial entity. This explains the popularity of the heartland-hinterland paradigm, a framework given as accounting for the direction of both regional development and regionalism. Yet a Maritime region defined by a set of characteristics uniformly distributed across space or by group consciousness expressed in political or other collective actions can be construed as plausible only if Acadie is removed from the equation. Maritime historians have failed to acknowledge that it is Acadie — more so than any other entity — that demonstrates that the distinguishing feature of the Maritime whole is fragmentation. Moreover, they have failed to conceive of Acadie as the Maritimes' own hinterland, characterized not just by rurality and socio-economic criteria but by ethno-cultural factors — cultural obstacles to integration into the Maritime mainstream.[16]

Maritime historians stand out in relation to their willingness to question the Canadian imaginary insofar as it is posited on the negation of diversity. Likewise, their preoccupation with "region" implies that they do not share the "national" concern with the consequences of highlighting social and imaginary processes that indicate struggle over meaning and rights. There are, however, exceptions. For all their deference to plurality, Maritime historians seem surprisingly unsure of how to tackle "foreign" subjects. All is well providing that these fall within the imagined cultural praxis of the Maritimes. But when faced with a nation living within the putative borders of their region and differentiated by language, religion and traditions and expressing itself in a politically directed group consciousness, they are less articulate. Thus, although Maritime historians seem not totally indisposed to Acadie, they have shown little proclivity for identifying themselves with the bicultural model of Canada.[17] In this respect, they hold close to the concerns of the Canadian historical

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15 Ian Stewart, *Roasting Chestnuts: The Mythology of Maritime Political Culture* (Vancouver, 1994) provides the needed scientific analysis, which goes a long way to debunking Maritime unity

16 For the centre-periphery thesis, see L.D. McCann, ed., *Heartland and Hinterland: A Geography of Canada* ([1982] Toronto, 1986) and, for the culturalist perspective on dependency and development in Acadie, Alain Even, "Domination et développement au Nouveau-Brunswick", *Recherches sociographiques*, XII, 3 (sept.-déc. 1971), pp. 271-318.

17 For English-Canadian historians' difficult relationship with francophone Canada, see Laurence Cros, "Panorama de l'attitude des historiens anglophones canadiens vis-à-vis du bilinguisme", *Études canadiennes*, 45 (1998), pp. 15-28 and Brian Young, "Les anglophones et l'historiographie Québec/Canada", in Marie-Andrée Beaudet, dir., *Échanges culturels entre les "Deux solitudes"* (Québec, 1999), pp. 41-51.

establishment, although less for fear of Québec secession than because of their own "separatist" fears. Maritime historians' predilection for the concept of multiculturalism betrays their insecurity about a Canada in which lived cultures (and nations) would flourish. Griffiths is the case in point and an important one because of the effect she has had upon English-Canadian perceptions of Acadie. Her narrative of Acadian society, while structured about differentiation, is in fact an extolment of a posited disconnection between the social and the political, that is, between the nation and its logical extension, the state. The goal is patent: to show how Acadians, for all their distinctiveness, are — unlike Québécois — happily part of the Canadian family.[18]

A further difficulty for Maritime historiography is the "language barrier" — an objective obstacle to understanding, a problem not of hermeneutics but of culture. This can easily be ascertained by the lack of cross-fertilization between Maritime historians (English-Canadian, too) and their French-language colleagues. This is especially damaging in that much of the important modelization relevant to the study of the Maritimes' past has been written in French,[19] and that Acadie, which allows for isolation for the effects of culture, is incommensurable as an aggregate (control group) for comparative studies and as validation for the many generalizations regarding Maritime regional economic development, political traditions and the like. And it may explain why Maritime historians — regardless of significant differences between Acadie and the Maritimes — feel no need to employ the Maritime equivalent of the common "national" artifice of "English Canada", a cultural category designed as much to compensate for inadequate knowledge of French as to avoid dealing with the complexities of synthesis and comparison.[20] While Maritime historians are wont to identify their region's endeavours with those of "the West", struggling to free itself from Central Canada, surely they do so not just because of their mutual predilection for regionalism, but because of the English language and the assumption of shared political objectives. Yet the political culture of "the West" has little in common with that of the Maritimes save alienation from the Centre.[21] A better comparison is with Québec which, like the Maritimes, labours under a feeling of alienation derived from

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18 For Griffiths's political bent, see Roy, *L'Acadie perdue*, chap. 5; although polemical, his remarks are penetrating. The systematic critique of Griffiths's work remains to be done, but Damien Rouet and others have begun this process. See his review of Griffiths, *The Contexts of Acadian History*, in *Égalité: Revue acadienne d'analyse politique*, 42 (automne 1997), pp. 197-200. He points to Griffiths's uncritical reproduction of the "discours traditionaliste", "qui en oublie tout principe de vérification scientifique".

19 See, for example, works from the Institut interuniversitaire de recherches sur les populations, the Centre interuniversitaire d'études québécoises and the Centre interuniversitaire d'études sur les lettres, les arts et les traditions des francophones en Amérique du Nord, to mention but three among the many.

20 Among the many examples of this construct: Veronica Strong-Boag, *The New Day Recalled: Lives of Girls and Women in English Canada, 1919-1939* (Toronto, 1988) and Carl Berger, *The Writing of Canadian History: Aspects of English-Canadian Historical Writing Since 1900* ([1976] Toronto, 1986).

21 The proceedings of the joint Western Canadian Studies and Atlantic Canada Studies Conference demonstrate the degree to which the two regions are at opposite ends of the ideological spectrum: David Jay Bercuson and Phillip A. Buckner, eds., *Eastern and Western Perspectives: Papers from the Joint Atlantic/Western Canadian Studies Conference* (Toronto, 1981). See also James N. McCrorie and Martha L. MacDonald, eds., *The Constitutional Future of the Prairie and Atlantic Regions of Canada* (Regina, 1992).

a sentiment of lost grandeur. Better yet is Acadie, whose precarious position vis-à-vis the Maritimes could provide a better understanding of the region's place in Confederation. Both, after all, suffer from an inferiority complex.

Maritime historians' greatest burden is undoubtedly the unenviable place reserved Maritime history in "national" historiography. They seek to integrate the Maritime narrative into Canadian history, and they chafe under the weight of remoteness from the Centre. This derives from their concern with the impact of national policies and with the manner in which regional issues have been dealt with at the federal level. The focus, therefore, has been on inclusion, on the problems encountered in attempting to insert the story of a marginalized group into the general account of Canada. It is a logical perversion that Maritime historiography should have a blind spot for Acadie, considering that this field was founded on the premise of giving the region (and its history) its rightful place in the Canadian firmament.[22] Although Maritime historians point to Central Canadian malice and ignorance, is their relationship with Acadie so radically different? They were quick to complain about the consensual approach that had long dominated Canadian historiography, but in the end did no less, creating a "new and improved" version of the past, one which attempted to impose a new common-sense comprehension of the region's history. Maritime historiography is basically the expression of an associational phenomenon rather than that of a properly collective movement. And it has a programmatic ontology: its purpose will be achieved when, finally, "national" scholarship is reformed and Canada "studied in all its complexity". It is as though Maritime historical writing were an historically fixed design, in which all real differences will melt away in a discourse of post-modern Sameness. How, then, could Maritime historians be expected to endorse Acadian distinctiveness, the expression of a full-fledged life-world, in every respect the opposite of the post-national?

Unity is crucial to Maritime historians' aim of a narrative which would emphasize regional purpose but not give further cause for the disintegration of accredited discourses, both national and regional. The degree of homogeneity has been remarkable, despite the many approaches and directions and amendments to the interpretive scheme of the region's past. It is equally significant that Maritime historical writings tend towards a narrative of continuity and coherence, appealing to Maritime boosterism and popular conceptions of history as a story. There has been little acknowledgement of opposing views beyond those of the Central Canadian establishment and the unsatisfactory explanatory schemes of past Maritimists. What especially bothers Maritime historians is the presence of the contrary perspectives of sociology and political economy principally, which, because of their predilection for the processes of capitalist underdevelopment and dependency theory, are especially pertinent to Acadie.[23] Because these historians prize unity, they conceive of Acadian

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22 Among the many writings in this sense, see the article by Maritime historiography's chief "facilitator": Phillip A. Buckner, "'Limited Identities' and Canadian Historical Scholarship: An Atlantic Provinces Perspective", *Journal of Canadian Studies*, XXIII, 1-2 (August 1988), pp. 177-98.

23 An example of this type of analysis is Robert J. Brym and R. James Sacouman, eds., *Underdevelopment and Social Movements in Atlantic Canada* (Toronto, 1979). See Phillip A. Buckner, ed., *Teaching Maritime Studies* (Fredericton, 1986) for historians' reaction to social scientists' theories.

and Maritime history as one and the same thing, in much the same way that they cannot envisage the history of the Maritimes save as an integral part of Canada. To treat Acadie as a discrete and singular phenomenon would, in their mind, give the impression that Maritime history is a patchwork of group histories with no organic relationship. That would give further credence to the claim — repeatedly made by their centralist opponents — that the disintegration of the Canadian national meta-narrative resulted from too great a focus on its constituent and squabbling parts. Their intent differs little in substance from Québécois historians' concomitant "normalizing" designs.[24] Like their "revisionist" colleagues, Maritime historians seek to accent the parallels between the Maritimes and the rest of North America. This explains in no small part their disinclination to study the post-Deportation history of Acadie, which is anything but "modern", pluralist and English.

Institutional factors related to Maritime historiography are not without import. Conformity to the new division of intellectual labour has had perverse effects on the underdeveloped world of Maritime historical writing, exacerbated by the weakness of the region's intelligentsia. Disciplinary fragmentation and the growing consensus regarding the empirical weakness of general studies — materials afforded by the inclusion of Acadie tend to undermine the validity of Maritime generalizations — have led to a drop in the number of traditional syntheses, the genre most likely to contain references to Acadie. In a context where institutional isolation and fragmentation are the norm, and because a critical mass of historians is a prerequisite to the success of any new sub-discipline, there has been little possibility of making Acadie the object of sustained inquiry, despite noteworthy efforts in both research and teaching. Also important are the professional and associational elements of Maritime historical writing, as they impinge upon the construction of objects of inquiry. Maritime academic regionalism reaches out to Canada — the necessary "Other" — and to a wide variety of interlocutors (New England, British Isles, the West), but in the case of Acadie it often does so only as an afterthought. All this and more explains the relative paucity of Maritime historical scholarship on Acadie, and why much of what important research does exist has been neglected.[25]

Acadian historiography itself cannot be overlooked as a factor in the exclusion of Acadianité. Indeed, in both its traditional and more recent manifestations, it has itself been largely responsible for its lack of visibility in mainstream Canadian historiography. Even the neo-nationalist historical writings of the 1970s and 1980s were in fact little more than the modern incarnation of traditional historiography —a narrative of the Acadian experience, measured by the progression of the "génie national". Because of its passéist orientation, its cultivated sense of autonomy and separateness, because, too, of inadequate resources and poor dissemination in major disciplinary fora, Acadian historiography had little chance of making itself felt in

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24 Ronald Rudin, "Revisionism and the Search for a Normal Society: A Critique of Recent Quebec Historical Writing", *Canadian Historical Review*, LXXIII, 1 (March 1992), pp. 30-61.

25 There is no more conspicuous proof of this than the minor attention accorded Raymond Mailhot, "Prise de conscience collective acadienne au Nouveau-Brunswick, 1860-1891, et comportement de la majorité anglophone", thèse de doctorat, Université de Montréal, 1973, without contest the best synthesis of modern Acadian history and the one which best articulates the direction of contemporary post-Confederation Maritime historiography.

Maritime historical writing overall.[26] The Acadian historiography of the 1990s, however, crafted by a new generation of professional historians, has closely followed the example of historical writing everywhere. Most members of this cohort, in reaction against their predecessors and desirous of gaining acceptance in scientific circles, have devoted their efforts to socio-economic history. This is a rational strategy in that it allows for the comprehension of the material reality of Acadie as a preliminary to the study of "superstructure", as well as easing the integration of Acadianists into the Canadian historical profession. However, because these historians have focused so exclusively on socio-economic history and on the integration of their analyses into the larger experience of the Maritimes, they have neglected to create a new interpretive model, which could account for the specificity of Acadie. For this reason, these historians, like their Maritime colleagues, have neglected the immaterial aspects of the past. Thus present-day Acadian historiography reinforces the supposition that the relevance of Acadie is restricted primarily to matters related to the "ethnic" and to contemporary forms of underdevelopment.

The principal feature of contemporary Acadian historiography is its ambition to wrest Acadie from ethnicity and to figure it, within a new narrative, as a living and vibrant society, pluralistic and thoroughly modern. Like their Québécois colleagues, Acadian historians seek to emphasize the "normalcy" of francophone societies in North America, with the attendant result that they have largely occulted the traditional and singular aspects of Acadie. Accordingly, they stress diversity and civism, as opposed to folklorism and ethnic nationalism; geographical concentration and cohesion as opposed to the diaspora; and the institutional structuration of Acadian society as opposed to the image of an inward-looking and unorganized rural proletariat. There exists, therefore, a distinct French-language historiography of the Maritime experience. But this discrete scholarship and its paradigm of Maritime parallelism does little to draw Acadian and Maritime historians closer together. Reluctant to highlight ethnic and cultural differentiation of the kind that would reinforce existing anglophone stereotypes, current Acadian historiography stresses structural similarities (mainly the imposition of modernity), thus, paradoxically, bringing into focus the *growing* gap between Acadie and the Maritimes. For both neo-nationalist and the more recent "revisionist" historians, the primary objective has consisted of nurturing the collective self-confidence needed in order for Acadie to fully embrace (post)modernity. In the end, they seek to ease the passage from a society organized on the basis of ethno-cultural regulation to one structured on the civil contract of contemporary western democracies. However configured, Acadian historiography is posited ontologically, however implicitly, on the specificity of Acadie, on its proximity (genealogical and ideological) to Québec. It remains a national meta-narrative, devised if not to generate at least to negotiate the conditions for the persistence and expansion of an ethno-linguistically defined collectivity.[27]

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26 Couturier, "Tendances actuelles dans l'historiographie acadienne".

27 Compare Léon Thériault, *La question du pouvoir en Acadie: Essai* (Moncton [1982]) and Couturier et LeBlanc, *Économie et société en Acadie*, exemplary in this regard despite the assertion of dissimilar goals. Both are implicitly posited on the cultural congruity of Québec and Acadie and on conflicting references in anglophone and francophone Canada. See Fernand Harvey et Gérard Beaulieu, dirs., *Les*

Today, Acadian historiography — with its distinct discourse derived from a distinct culture — sits uncomfortably straddled between two intellectual traditions. Maritime by virtue of its object, it is no less defined by its insistence on the unique place Acadie occupies within French America. Acadian historical scholarship is no longer an integral part of what was once a shared French-Canadian comprehension of a common past, superseded by the now dominant mode of identity-making posited on political community rather than ethnic, religious and other factors. But neither has it been fully integrated into Maritime historical writing. While it cannot ally itself with the civic and therefore territorial nationalism of contemporary Québec, neither can it fully participate in "the Maritimes" without accepting the legitimacy of its ethnicization. As in the case of other minority national collectivities, the evolution of Acadie is conditioned by two contradictory logics — frustrated nationhood and the rejection of folklorization.[28] It is this balancing act between nation and ethnicity that lies behind Acadian historians' as yet largely inchoate discourse. Acadian historiography is also torn between Maritime and Québécois references, framed of necessity on its own essentialism and autonomy. How, then, can Acadian historians possibly provide Maritime history writ large with a cogent model for studying Acadie as an integral and constituted component of the Maritime experience?

The linkage between historiography and culture leads us to delve into the more "pragmatic" role of historical writing in the construction of "imagined communities" and their collective identities, in the context of contemporary cultural and social practices in the Maritimes and in Canada more generally. What is the relationship between Maritime historiography and Maritime society, that is, between discourse and practice? A sociology of Maritime meaning-construction is what is sought here, one which theorizes the rapport between invented and lived cultures. To make sense of the past, historians must configure data under culturally-generated categories, whether these be beliefs, ideologies or, as in the modern textualist guise, story forms.[29] Identity construction, it is widely posited, remains the primary focus of historiography; indeed this is true of social discourse in general in a post-modern context where the configuration and re-configuration, through discursive and social practices, of ever-fragmenting subjectivities constitute one of the indelible marks of social reality and social imagination. In every case, we are dealing with self-consciousness, which is the core element of all groups having a sense of collective identity. Indeed, the concept of imagined communities,[30] originally applied to demonstrate the contingent, constructed nature of the nation, is applicable to the understanding of the elaboration of all collective identities including those which may

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relations entre le Québec et l'Acadie, 1880-2000: De la tradition à la modernité (Québec et Moncton, 2000) and "Québec et Canada: deux références conflictuelles", *Recherches sociographiques,* XXXIX, 2-3 (mai-déc., 1998) [theme issue].

28 See "Les francophonies nord-américaines", *Sociologie et sociétés,* XXVI, 1 (printemps 1994) [theme issue], especially J. Yvon Thériault, "Entre la nation et l'ethnie: Sociologie, société et communautés minoritaires francophones", pp. 15-32.

29 Maritime historiography, by virtue of its participation in a specific regime of signification, must conform to cultural expectations. See Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method* (New York, 1975) for the conception of understanding as socially and historically situated and linguistically mediated.

30 Benedict R. Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* ([1983] London, 1991).

appear ephemeral or purely associational. Accordingly, a self-defining collectivity is any group which claims autonomy and recognizes as its own a limited number of individuals on the basis of clearly defined criteria. The enunciation of a common past and of the goals which follow thereon is essential to the articulation of all collectivities that reify themselves in lived space, whatever their status and however they define their constituent elements. The role of historical writing as social discourse is the point of these considerations, with regard to its contribution to organizing social subjectivity through the positing of specific subject-positions. This is founded on the assumption that it is primarily scholars — the work-horses of the aesthetic processes of social and representational practices — who determine the sayable and the imaginable of discourse bearing on culture and identity.

In the light of these theoretical reflections, the existence of the imagined community called "the Maritimes" must be conceived of in terms of the generation of appropriate identity. It could be argued that Maritime historiography — in relation to a putative Maritime symbolic order — has played a major role in creating the social imaginary which, conceivably, could inhabit all forms of "regional" sociability and representation.[31] It is especially prominent in contemporary public discourse in the Maritimes, an essential element of which is "naming the name", that is, drawing the contours of the group whose members participate in the reproduction of a given collective identity.[32] This Maritime historians have done on the basis of geo-physical, socio-economic, ethno-cultural and other considerations all combined within a single unified narrative of the "region's" past — the meta-narrative of Maritimicity. The meaning of "the Maritimes" in this regard is clear: it is an appellation designed to represent an historically-rooted, socio-political entity whose demands must be entertained. The cohesion of any community thus constructed is largely dependent on the efficacy of its discourse, principally articulated on the power of its constructed opposition between "Us" and "Other". Thus meaning-producers work to create and maintain communicational communities on the basis of imaginary constructions reflecting the interpretive and social commonalities of the group.[33] The question then is, how might Maritime historiography figure Acadie within an imagined community posited on constructed oppositions which have no meaning for francophones?

The dialectic of subversion, transgression and instability is central to identity construction, and thus all social reality, inscribed in discourse, is amenable to

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31 Narrative is the means by which historians contribute to structuring collective identity, a process especially applicable to subjectivities for whom the issue relates to the very existence of significant shared characteristics. It is the "emplotment" of history that endows the subject, thus textualized, with the ability to recognize itself in its dynamic and mutable state. In this fashion, identity is continually refigured by discourse all the while maintaining the cohesive historical unity of the subject. See Paul Ricoeur, *Temps et récit, I: L'intrigue et le récit historique; III: Le temps raconté* (Paris, 1983, 1985).

32 Jane Jenson, "Naming Nations: Making Nationalist Claims in Canadian Public Discourse", *Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology*, XXX, 3 (August 1993), pp. 337-58.

33 The theory of communicational communities is important in this context — groups (cultural life-worlds) demarcated on the basis of discrete structures of meaning (for the production and circulation of signification). Macro-communicative action, like micro-communication (author/reader for example), supposes the existence of an anticipatory relationship between actors. Jurgen Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action, I: Reason and the Rationalization of Society, II: Lifeworld and System: A Critique of Functionalist Reason* (Boston, 1984, 1988).

transformation through narrative. Whereas Maritime historians have assumed the existence of a pre-determined, essentialist, regional identity/culture, post-structuralist theory posits subjectivity as determining and multiple.[34] Maritime social discourse is traversed by numerous sociogrammes, representing various constitutive subjects of Maritime history, many of them figured by historians. Examples include the socialist union organizer, the Central Canadian bully, the Maritime loser, etc. The effect of narrative on social representations consists of a process of transgression, by which hegemonic representations of central subjects are subverted by their "frottement" with counter-subjects. In this manner, both the subject and its opposite are transfigured, as, for instance, in the metamorphosis of the radical socialist through his narrative fusion with the Maritime Rights activist. Maritime historians' hesitancy to recognize Acadie in its singular subjectivity — that is, a subject-position configured in part on the basis of genuine cultural integration and unity — must, therefore, be seen in the light of the inherently unstable and fragmented nature of the new "Maritime"subjectivity. Maritime historians gingerly evoke the counter-type of "the Acadian" for fear, intuitively sensed, that its signifying power could transfigure their own fragile imagined identity.

These remarks are posited on the belief that it is through the social imaginary that new values and norms, figured as social fictions, are created and become activating in social reality. Thus "institutions", rather than reflecting a priori cultural values, provide the conditions which allow these same values, structured around Us and Other, to be fictionalized by social actors.[35] The interest of this theorem is that it provides a comprehensive explication of the primordial Canadian conflict between "national" and "regional" representations, subjectivities and identities — essentially the same process by which Maritime subject-positions are figured and transfigured.[36] The problem is that the Maritimes have no homogeneous lived culture, save that of locale. Friction results from attempts to create a "regional" culture, largely a product of the Maritime studies problematic. This is a process articulated on the promotion of a "fetishized commodity form" of culture, abstractly and officially pan-Maritimist. Similarly, because it defines the official culture of the "region", the imaginary sense of "the Maritimes", promoted by Maritime historiography, necessitates the absorption

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34 Binary oppositions, as deconstruction theory has demonstrated, are the primary linguistic mode through which meaning is structured in social discourse, and thus all subjectivities are derived from identities based on consciousness of opposition/difference. Semiotic difference is unfixed: commonly assumed oppositions are viewed as false dichotomies, and textually generated subject-positions as false ontologies — both entirely ideological and discursive in origin. It is important here to remark that social subjectivity has not yet been divorced from reality, but the recognition of the social effects of discourse does point to the need to accept that subjectivity is unstable and fragmented. For the import of these matters to historical writing, see Mariana Valverde, "As if Subjects Existed: Analysing Social Discourses", *Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology*, XXVIII, 2 (May 1991), pp. 173-87.

35 For the creation of social subjectivities, see Cornelius Castoriadis, *L'institution imaginaire de la société* (Paris, 1975).

36 My remarks on the construction of the Maritime imaginary lean heavily on the thesis articulated in Greg M. Nielsen and John D. Jackson, "Cultural Studies, A Sociological Poetics: Institutions of the Canadian Imaginary", *Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology*, XXVIII, 2 (May 1991), pp. 279-98, whose study applies to Canada as a whole. See also Arthur Kroker, "The Cultural Imagination and the National Questions", *Canadian Journal of Political and Social Theory*, VI (1982), pp. 5-11.

or exclusion of "contradictory life worlds occupying the same space". It is a strategy premised on the need to protect "Maritime" society (purported to be in danger of disintegration or of assimilation by the Centre) and to demonstrate the integration and unity believed to be characteristic of all polities. (This helps explain the appropriation, by "the region", of autonomous lived cultures — that of Acadie above all — and their transformation into commodified forms of anti-modernism). The imaginary sense of "the Maritimes", therefore, derives from two realities: it resides in an anti-centralism and the fact that Acadie defines "the anglo-Maritimes" as a "community", its Other. In consequence, Us and Other figured as "the Maritimes" and "the Canada", defined by their mutual relation to Acadie (the "third"), could be viewed as an inherent, structuring dimension of the social life of the group. Indeed, in its dialogical form, the official regionalism of "the Maritimes" is posited on the negation of Acadie: first, the denial of Acadie as region because it gives the lie to "the Maritimes" posited as a homogeneous, pre-existing cultural life-world — manifestly, Acadie is not a region like any other and does not conceive of itself as such; and secondly, the denial of Acadie as nation, because "the Maritimes" is posited as a "region" within a "nation" — not as Acadie's Other nor, as in the case of Acadie, a nation within a region.[37] Cowed by the Centre and by the menace of reduction occasioned by Acadie's self-assumed existence as a "groupe nationalitaire", Maritime historians, desperate to cultivate unity, quash all but their own "Maritime" subject-position.

Maritime academic regionalism is posited not just on the transcendence of provinces but of all obstacles to Maritime unity and coherence, especially those anchored in locality and in practices linked to ethnicity. The question, therefore, and one which to be answered would require extensive sociological and anthropological inquiry, is the degree to which Maritime historians reproduce pre-existing culture rather than produce an abstract and official regionalism. Many contemporary groups cannot posit their existence on anything beyond participation in the shared sign systems and (micro)narratives by which they collectively create and enunciate their idealist positions. Acadie, on the other hand, is the unthinkable and the unspeakable of Maritime historical writing precisely because it is the only one of the region's many accredited and aspiring limited identities that is a self-referential and self-reproducing group, a culturally defined collectivity occupying a delineated space anchored in time. Although not fully instituted, Acadie is nonetheless an autonomous social entity capable of producing the entire range of symbols and institutions necessary for its organization and projection.[38]

Two phenomena mark Acadie's specificity, both of them cultural. The first is the existence of an authentic Acadian culture; the second is nationalism, posited on the ideological presupposition that Acadie constitutes a distinct society whose political incorporation into "the Maritimes" is "unnatural". All this is part and parcel of a larger

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37 For a broad and systematic approach to understanding nation/region and culture in tandem, see Marc-Adélard Tremblay, *L'Identité québécoise en péril* (Sainte-Foy, 1983) and Fernand Harvey, dir., *La région culturelle: Problématique interdisciplinaire* (Québec, 1994).

38 For the past social and intellectual development of Acadie, see P.D. Clarke, "L'Acadie, ou le culte de l'histoire", *Revue de la Bibliothèque nationale* [France], 33 (automne 1989), pp. 6-16, folio; and for a view of the contemporary picture, backed up by a strong analysis of sociological variables and extensive polling, see Hubert Cyr, Denis Duval et André Leclerc, *L'Acadie à l'heure des choix: L'avenir politique et économique de l'Acadie du Nouveau-Brunswick* (Moncton, 1996).

identificatory process taking place within the context of Acadie's specific response to the challenges of (post)modernity, in sharp contrast to the parallel process occurring in the Maritimes. Underlying these differences is the fact that the Maritimes, unlike Acadie, have no shared culture and identity of the kind which could underwrite coherent political action capable of engendering regional unity and shaking the complacent Centre. The political and cultural realities of the provinces and (sub)regions of the Maritimes do not come together in a coherent whole. More importantly, while for Maritimers "the Maritimes" augurs wider horizons and renewed hope, for Acadie it signifies acculturation and nationhood denied. Despite widespread acceptance of the broadening of the definition of collective interest, there are few indications that the new social categories of Canadian plurality will in the end displace nationalism, Acadian in this instance. The potency of national identity lies precisely in its reality as the expression of the "selfness" of a group defined not just by a complex of cultural realities based on the occupation of shared space, but by its origins, posited as reaching far into the past. As a rule, only this form of collectivity and its consciousness are crystallized and activated in "lieux de mémoire" — loci invested with the symbolic properties needed for the objectification of group history. Indeed, if this process of the spatial anchoring of identity applies to the Maritimes as a whole or to any of its subjectivities, surely, then, it is doubly true of Acadie which alone conceives of itself as a nation, a social entity whose reification depends upon its territorialization.[39]

Maritime and Acadian historical scholarship differ fundamentally in approach, in that the former may be characterized as functiono-regionalist and the latter as culturo-nationalist. They may well be inspired by shared dissatisfaction with the state of modernity and its dehumanizing correlates of progress and technology; but different realities have fostered differing strategies. Maritime historians have resisted by imagining for themselves a life-world (figured as a region) which encompasses the idealized life lived on the margins of the Centre; Acadian historians have done so by romanticizing culture, identity and the essentialism of the community whose core values they wish to preserve. Maritimists are attempting to break with the past by constructing a "radically" new identity; Acadianists, to the contrary (and notwithstanding their predictable objections to such a depiction), favour persistence. In both instances, such is the price for configuring the past in a fashion which provides tangible social meaning.[40] Maritime historians have unceasingly iterated the Fall

39 See P.D. Clarke, "Régions et régionalismes en Acadie: Culture, espace, appartenance", *Recherches sociographiques*, XLI, 2 (mai-août 2000), pp. 299-365 for a wide-ranging look at the development of Acadian identities resulting from the ecological adaptation of populations to specific spaces.

40 The imaginary sense of "the Maritimes" is posited on a rupture in the historical consciousness(es) of the people(s) of this region, an hypothesis that Daniel Jacques, "Histoire politique du désenchantement de la société québécoise", *Les cahiers d'histoire du Québec au XXe siècle*, 3 (1995), pp. 45-60, has applied to the rise of Québécois nationalism, which he perceives as resulting from Québec's passage to modernity, itself incompatible with the substantive elements of French Canadian identity. Acadians, to the contrary, are still now emerging into modernity; still, to a large degree, evolving within traditional forms of sociability; and still marked by group memory and the empire of lived experience. For notions related to the persistence of traditional regimes of signification in Acadie, see P.D. Clarke, "Pêche et identité en Acadie: nouveaux regards sur la culture et la ruralité en milieu maritime", *Recherches sociographiques*, XXXIX, 1 (jan.-avril 1998), pp. 59-101.

(from grace and normalcy) — Confederation refigured as the source of dashed hopes, diminished expectations and low self-esteem— and still strive to incorporate the Maritimes into the Canadian mainstream. This, in turn, explains the emphasis placed on the facts of dependency, which, while not antithetical to the emergence of emancipatory impulses, certainly accentuates entropy as opposed to progress. Acadian historians, by contrast, have always been galvanized by "la Survivance" which, if not "nation-building", is certainly a form of collective assertion. Acadian historiography, even while focusing on the Deportation, is still posited on Renaissance and liberation, a heady brew of past and future hope.

The socio-economic preoccupations of Maritime historiography have meant that, at least until recently, meaning and signification, that is culture, have been largely neglected. Without the culturalist perspective, or at least due regard for culture, differences can only be comprehended in terms of differentiated access to wealth and power and not in terms of ethno-cultural, linguistic, religious and other factors that are no less significant in shaping societies. Maritime historians have shown little inclination to delve historically into the sociology of the life-world(s) they purport to represent. The paradox is that "the Maritimes" has been defined as the sum of all those limited identities that derive from imagined communities and can be constructed independently from geographical considerations. By making regional concerns subservient to identity politics of all kinds, Maritime historians have unwittingly sown the seeds of the fragmentation of regional purpose of which they so complain. If they are to come to grips with disintegration, they must first concentrate their efforts on lived cultures, including of course Acadie. The important point here is that any attempt to study Acadie and the Maritimes within a single category must do so on the basis of commonality. Analysis, in this instance, would of necessity concentrate on economic structures and on the conflict between centre and periphery, phenomena which, as they apply to Acadie and the Maritimes, may be said to be characterized more by shared antagonisms than fundamental differences. In both cases, culture is the big Unsaid, yet culture is the very element upon which is posited Acadie's claim to distinctiveness; and culture, too, is the element which divides Acadie and the Maritimes, despite similar material circumstances.[41]

A new generation of historians is needed for Maritime historiography to make a rapprochement with Acadie, which can come only with the return of language and the concomitant rise of culturalism, a "turn" which, in Maritime historical writing, is still in its infancy. This would entail not just a retreat from the hegemony of hard data but the embrace of methodological practices posited on a new epistemology of symbolism and meaning. There is hope. Whereas the *Acadiensis* generation achieved distinction through its singular devotion to investigating the economic and political sources of regional disparity, the current assemblage of Maritime historians has moved in the direction of a more subjective, language-based history. A growing number are intent

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41 For an idea of the approach needed to comprehend Acadie, Maritime historians would do well to consult Greg Allain, Isabelle McKee-Allain et J. Yvon Thériault, "La société acadienne: lectures et conjonctures", in Jean Daigle, dir., *L'Acadie des Maritimes: Études thématiques des débuts à nos jours* (Moncton, 1993), pp. 341-84 and Ricky G. Richard, "Le déploiement de l'Acadianité moderne: une morphologie de l'identité culturelle minoritaire", *Égalité: Revue acadienne d'analyse politique*, 39-40 (printemps-automne 1996), pp. 185-210.

upon exploring the socio-cultural expressions of material reality — historical consciousness, meaning-production, cultural consumption, commemoration and memorialization, values and norms.[42] Most importantly, these changes have coincided with the arrival on the scene, at the beginning of the 1990s, of a new generation of historians of Acadie, ready to contribute, as never before, to the flowering of a newly-defined Maritime historiography. Together, they may make *sense* of "two nations warring in the bosom of a single [region]".

P.D. CLARKE

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42 For examples of this trend, see Ian McKay, *The Quest of the Folk: Antimodernism and Cultural Selection in Twentieth-Century Nova Scotia* (Montréal and Kingston, 1994) and Daniel Samson, ed., *Contested Countryside: Rural Workers and Modern Society in Atlantic Canada, 1800-1950* (Fredericton, 1994). These works are important in that the first confirmed cultural history as an important field in Maritime historiography and the second because it shows not just awareness of the contribution of francophone historiography in Canada but sensitivity to the cultural and symbolic attributes of rurality.