17. "The '80s Are Over; Dread Goes Out of Style," Newsweek (Jan. 4, 1988): Citing "signs of increased altruism," the decade is declared dead over two years early.
13. Seattle University sociologist David McCloskey publishes his map of "Cascadia," made of Western Canada and the Pacific Northwest (1988): FTA and Quebec separatism generate other ideas about redrawning borders.
11. Ayatollah Khomeini's fatwa against Salman Rushdie for The Satanic Verses (Feb. 14, 1989), if he'd known what would happen; Rushdie later says, he'd have written a more critical book.
5. Student occupation of Tiananmen Square, Peking, violently suppressed by People's Liberation Army (June 4, 1989): China is changing, but slowly and reluctantly.
4. Francis Fukuyama, "The End of History?" The National Interest (summer 1989): "We are, certainly since Nietzsche and Spengler, 'terminalists,'"—George Steiner, writing in 1972.
3. Terror spreads from Reston, Virginia, near Washington, D.C., when Ebola Zaire begins to kill monkeys in a lab (1989); it presages an era of mounting fear over uncontrollable viruses.
1. State Communism in most of Eastern Europe begins to disintegrate, symbolized by the opening of the Berlin Wall (Nov. 9, 1989).

P.S. When will the Post-Postmodern era end?
Presumably when the generation after the so-called "generation X" comes of age—those born between 1960 and 2000 will turn twenty from 2000 onward.

"When Does Postmodernism Begin?"—the prequel to this article—appeared in Border/Lines 31.
CULTURE-SLASH-NATION

Introduction
Cheryl Sourkis, Lorraine Johnson

Culture-Slash-Nation Speaks
(excerpted from Towards a Definition of the Cultural Producer: a video by
Cheryl Simon and Fred McSherry)

Lisa Henderson, Gerald Alfred,
Charles Acland, Jody Berland

Writing On The Wall
Barbara Godard

Politics After Nationalism, Culture after Culture
Jody Berland

Controlled Environments
Andrew J. Paterson

Visuals
John Marriott
Robin Colyer
Andrew J. Paterson
Laurel Woodcock
Dianne Frid
Gilbert Boyer
Kathryn Walter

Cover
(front) Laurel Woodcock, "bleuris," 1993
(back) Kathryn Walter, "Whitewash," 1995

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**CULTURE-SLASH-NATION: INTRODUCTION**

This insert represents the written components of an exhibition Culture-Slash-Nation, on view at Gallery TPW in Toronto from October 21 to November 25, 1995.

**SLASH-**

to cut with a sweeping motion
to cut slits to expose the material beneath
to l ash with a whip
to criticize
to reduce in a drastic manner

Culture-Slash-Nation is a response to the national and provincial policies that are reducing the frame of choice and limiting discourse about how we constitute ourselves as a nation. Specifically, we ask the question, if you squeeze the culture of the nation, if you slash cultural policies and institutions that have collectively defined that nation and "administered" culture with all the problems that suggests, what's left for the nation to know itself by?

Today, the frame feels not only shrunk, but mutilated. It seems that the language of commerce has co-opted any discussion of how we define ourselves as a nation. So, not surprising, the artists in Culture-Slash-Nation have turned to texts for expressions of their frustration. From Robin Collyer's erasure of public text from the landscape of vision, to Kathryn Walter's performative narrative of "whitewashing" public space, to Andrew J. Paterson's video interrogations of language and subtexts of arts funding, to Cheryl Simon's and Fred McSherry's video explorations of how artists and cultural theorists speak about culture and nationhood, to Katherine Knight's and Garry Conway's reinvention of the artist's voice into the cultural policy debate through oral texts found in the CBC radio archives, to Jody Berland's and Barbara Godard's critical investigations of how culture is constituted, instituted and suffocated through public policies.

Is the slashed frame fatally damaging public space, the space of collective invention? And how do we, as artists, critics and/or activists fight for culture as a public resource? In the current slashing/cutting/lashing/criticizing/reducing, just what material is exposed beneath...and beneath what?

**Co-curators.**
Cheryl Sourkies and Lorraine Johnson

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**CULTURE SLASH NATION**

What follows are responses to some variations on the question: given the establishment of multiple national economic linkages such as the European Economic Community and the North American Free Trade Agreement, is the concept of a nation state or a national culture still functional? Is the idea of a nation outdated?

**Lise Henderson**

There is something very fascinating about dismissing the idea of nation when you are, indeed, a powerful one. It reminds me of the language of postmodern discourse where a grand deal has been made about the decentering of the subject and the loss of subjectivity...On the one hand, I accept that postmodern logic and, on the other, I've been very struck by how some of the thinking about the decentered subject has come from people who, historically, are quite accustomed to being the center of subjectivity...While this is a distant analogy the problems it points to are equally those of this discourse around the nation. Only with the privilege of global supremacy does one just dismiss with the idea of the nation state on the basis of any kind of policy making...But within that discourse of the nation I would find against nationalism coming to mean anything pure or essential in ways that reduce the sovereignty of groups within the nation who exist sometimes in resistance to the nation...That is always the tension within the concept of "nationhood."

**Gerald Alfred**

In the context of national relations in the past and present, nationalism has been the feature of the white perspective. [Canada] has a European style parliament, a charter of rights and freedoms which protects individual rights predominantly over group rights. All the laws and different attitudes embodied in the Canadian system are white European values. And it is that [form of] nationalism that is reflected in the structure of Canada. I agree with the observers that the nation state, the myth or the fundamentally wrong belief that the state represented nations or the plurality of nations in Canada, has broken down and [that] that is a good thing. Canada has never been a hospitable place for us. The more it breaks down and the more sensitive Canadians become to the fact that there are nations with competing sets of values and different cultures, the better because that opens up an opportunity to have ours respected.

**Charles Alcock**

It is a very bleak situation and we are talking about a situation in which the possibility of even talking about the Canadian nation is an impossibility. I'm not suggesting the return some kind of boomerang nationalism. That's not what I'm saying. We are talking about the loss of a space in which we can talk critically about our place. Not ours in the sense of Canada but ours as being the people around it and the people who happen to live in the city or provinces next door. That's part of a loss. I think one of the places for us to start is with the development of that discourse. To ask how we can talk about a strategic, contingent notion of national culture. This isn't to say that I haven't become increasingly suspicious about the concept of national culture. I think that may be in fact it has底线ed its usefulness as a site of cultural specificity. Rather, we need to talk about other things: the culture of a city, a town and its connection to a national and an international environment.

**Jody Berland**

As soon as you start to define the nation according to modernist concepts, it's already outdated. Nations are supposed to be entities that share language, history, religion, traditions as well as boundaries. It's never a matter of territories. When you introduce this definition to the Canadian situation, it seems outdated, and the nation appears an outdated concept. But in other senses it's not. It's still, however, inefficiently, the sphere where political decisions are made and where people seek to intervene in the politics of those decisions. The swing to the right presents us with a crucial choice about whether decisions are going to be made in the domain of the nation state or in the domain of the market, the corporation. Right now the state is potentially much more accountable than the corporation, although we have another space of opposition. We still look to the state in the place where we are not as effective in meeting our needs — whether or not we have or want a national culture as traditionally defined. In this sense it is not an outdated concept. So if it's outdated in some ways, but in other ways we're stuck with it....

Such amputations of public policies and institutions in Ontario especially have been made tyrannically by cabinet fiat, with lightning speed and no consultation in public debate. More massive changes in social organization are still to come. "Arts groups fear the sky is falling," announces another article meeting the abolition of the Ontario Arts Council. Now should artists, among the poorest members of Ontario society with average incomes of $14,000 to $15,000 for most arts occupations, with visual artists at the lower end at $8,000, expect to be spared in what is increasingly ex-
shift in financial commitment that will transform the cultural industries in Canada. Of what magnitude? With what shifts in policy? What is being lost?

Never addressing explicitly in the newspapers are questions concerning the interrelationship of the threatened alliance, the signifiers "nation," "culture," and "art" adduced.

What is at stake here? Which "nation"? Among the many contradictions operative in the discourses of "cultural and artistic nationalism" is the question of art in the arts, those prominent since the nineteenth century engage the artist's heterogeneous role as "unacknowledged legislator" contributing to a superior reality as civilians or deserters. This is where the repression of "interest" around claims to the "public good" finds fertile terrain. Rather than read the current situation within a rhetoric of crisis, as the news media would invite, I want to insist on the ongoing nature of this "crisis" for which there are many possible sources of origin.

Within a distinct set of contradictions regarding arts policies, in Canada there is nonetheless in the present conjuncture a certain shift in relations among the terms, epitomized in Susan Waller's "Jenius-Is Like- New Year's" summation of the arts in 1994. "Ask not what your government can do for you, but what your government is doing to you." (The Toronto Star, 1995). What the shift in prepositions signifies is a change in the role of the state in upholding and promoting a public concept of the common good, manifested in the establishment of arts councils, under the aegis of what Day Larter calls "proce- dural liberalism" with its privileging of individual rights, which has been reshaping the Canadian state since passage of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in 1982. However, there is an additional shift signaled in the ambiguity of Walker's title. "Professional arts naps had work cut out for them." "Arts naps" describe the activities of a large number of arts groups. There are two local and a third national. The work is for Walker, Michal Dupouy, Minister of Canadian Heritage, however, not Roch Carrier, head of the Canada Council, is the "Most Disappearing Man of the Year."

The artists' criticism of Carrier nonetheless highlights a difference from earlier moments when the Canada Council carried out "Sounding" with the arts communities in order to get feedback to enable it to perform more effectively its advocacy role with the federal government. Indeed, in another period of stress for the Council in its twentieth anniversary in the late seventies, when planned cuts following upon inflation, separatism from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, as well as the real possibility of Quebec nationalism and federal independence, curtailed the scope of Arts and Cultural Freedoms, Waller's "task force" from its members to formulate policies and initiatives for the renew- al of a Canada Council's mandate to "energize" or "seed" artistic activity. This proactive stance was articulated in the twenty rec- ommitment of the Canada Council to an action plan for the future which announced its difference which announced its difference in the form of a concrete program. Artists themselves formed the 1821 Committee, a common front to fight government cuts. Documenting the economic importance of the arts, this committee made the arts an election issue in 1979. Subsequently, the first conference of federal and provincial ministers of culture attempted to make their relations and policies more coherent. This conference in turn resulted in the establishment of the Federal Cultural Policy Review Committee (Appulaub-Huber) whose report generated many counter position pieces from the Canadian Conference of the Arts, though little legislative action.

Provisional art for the Council is lukewarm, squeezing it more tightly in its ambiguous "arms-length" posi- tion between arts communities and government. With per-capita spending on the Council at $3.48 the lowest in eight years, and anticipated cuts of $15 over the next four years pending the results of the Liberals' programme review, the

Council's panic is not surprising. The absence of any statement of policy principles or of a historical context for public funding of the arts in the "consultation workshop" sent to artists was disquieting in light of this critical negotiating role and the importance of such statements in previous government policy formulation. Such anxiety was justified by the subsequent decision following the federal budget to cut back funding to arts service organizations such as the Writers Union which formulate principles and open a discursive space for the arts in the political realm.

Wold be forgotten, in current dissatisfaction with the Canada Council, how it has radically transformed the situation of the arts in Canada over every dimension in the last forty years from the diversification of art forms to the dispersion of venues and variety of languages. Particularly notable is the expanding of the boundaries between profes- sionalism and non-professionalism and the growing visibility in the theatre where the exponential rise in small professional theatres and theatre com- panies, the proliferation of fringe festivals, has been accompanied by a decline in the amateur little theatres movement so important in the fifties. This explosion in the numbers of artists (double the growth rate of the total work force in the last twenty years) is the sign of the phenomenal success of the arts councils.—and of a limitation. Yes, there are many and varied venues for the arts: the CBC is no longer the only steady employer for actors and musicians. Yes, the standards of training of artists and production values of performances have increased enormously, as artists have moved through the ranks of the small professional companies to the stages of the large commercial theatres. A Hibernization more than a nationalization of theatre! Though the existence of the arts councils has accomplished legitimate participation in the arts, authorized the profession "artist," has it not significantly changed the economic status of artists who remain mostly part-time professionals.

Artists today aren't baseball stars with million dollar contracts. Most still have salaried jobs in addition to their status as self-employed artists. There are major differences among the arts in respect to the performing arts, receiving 42% of grants in 1998; museums and galleries another 40%, with writing, film and the visual arts sharing the rest in decreasing proportion. This discrepancy results from self-employment by the least named group. Labour intensive, art becomes increasingly expensive in an age of mechanization. Yet salaries (time) are more flexible expenses than rents or materials (goods) and make weaker claims to support. Artists are still subsidizing the rest of the community by making art performance at a relatively low pay. The myth that artists are a privileged place still has itself become a form of oppression, suggests Heather Robertson, a means of segregation which, like reservations for the First Nations, works to keep them "powerless and poor" and, consequently, less creative.

Robertson's own response to this impoverishment and lack of respect has been to challenge the Arts Councils' bureaucracy, drawing attention to the inverse pyramid of benefits from grants, and the artist collector's speculation. The administrator is the only one with the permanent job. This situation might eventually be overcome. Robertson suggests, by more direct government intervention to subsidize the artist without the intermediary of the arms-length councils. However, the history of the Canada Council suggests that a populist move to democratize does not automatically nationalize. Greater funding with the introduction of government appropriations in 1956 produced clearer scrutiny and parlia- mentary interference to constrain grants or moral and political grounds. Moreover, the current system of subsidy might be seen as productive in a different way, that of constituting a cultural community, both the artistic community produc- ting a cultural discourse and the informed and involved audience to sustain the intensification of arts activity since the fifties. It is the availability of this audience to support Canadian artists which has enabled them not only to pursue careers in Canada but to produce substantial works responsive to the world. Consequently this argument contends that with changes in the economic basis of art came changes in its production. No longer dependent on the market place of the metropolis, artists could create more freely for the Canadian public. It is this explosion of creative work by choreographers, composers, poets, painters, film-makers, photographers, etc. in the last thirty years that has transformed the arts scene, made it a place of creative inno- vation rather than colonial repetition.

This came about in a society with a social contract forging an alliance between nationalism and the welfare state following the Depression and WWII which, with many contradictions, nonetheless make a space for the arts within a humanitarian discourse of balance and harmony and a nationalist discourse of self-knowledge. Now, forty years after the establishment of the Canada Council, another change is underway—a shock to European humanism which has been bolstered in an era of Americanization and Free Trade and their promulgation of individual rights over any collective goals a society might set. There is no place for art as a public good to be protected by the state within the individualistic, neoclassical, egalitarian discourse of procedural liberalism which misrepresents its production of inequality through the apparent symmetry of exchange value.

The complex orientation of the Canada Council might be read in terms of shifting institutional lines of accountability from Secretary of State to Minister of Communications, then Canadian Heritage. How far back in the past does one unlearn that the "independence of the arts" was a 1961 Kingston Conference of the Arts where 150 artists from across the country gathered to denounce the federal government for its apathy in regards to the arts? To the 1946 March on Ottawa by 16 artists or- ganizations—whose formed the Canadian Arts Council in 1945 changed to the Canadian Conference of the Arts in 1959—to prevent the federal government from reconstructing demands $15 million for the arts from the federal purse. So many men had sacrificed their lives during the war. For what? The national independence they had fought for would be meaningless if Canadians did not have an established and distinctive culture. To the Massey Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Science, 1949-1951, whose report inverted the underdeveloped state of
Canadian culture, the absence or neglect of cultural institutions little able to withstand the pressure of American invasion on the airwaves, in magazines, films, and advertising? To the British Arts Council, founded in 1947 to make permanent the support to the arts which had been an important moral justification of the war. The division among the various pressures of life, profit where value is determined by supply and demand through the exchange of goods with consumers of access to reduce cultural inequalities of regional, ethnic or linguistic varieties for citizens of collective identity, to develop national awareness for patriots where it has been distorted by colonialism, is constitutive in the conservative tropes of the documents I have been examining. McConnell introduces a postcolonial scholar as a model of change, a trope that would contribute to an occupational group and apply principles of affirmative action to equalize disparities. This introduces the important issue of symbolic capital, to the term "cultural capital" as it affects the production of new forms of power. However, this valorization is by the involvement of audiences in the process of distributing funds in a competitive consumption model of art as interactional process. This returns to a focus on audiences, on consumption. Recognition of different relations to the symbolic would frame culture in the plural. In the absence of an articulated theory of difference, McConnell's fragmentation of "public into audiences" works to undermine a concept of "public interest" or "common good," the understanding of artistic activity as an integral part of public life demanding an equitable share in the distribution of public funds. Such claims to public access, as opposed to "special interest," in a sense of the demands of the public as more than an aggregate of individual preferences, are what is at stake in the present renegotiation of the social contract.

The end of a period in which "culture and state relationships were shaped by nationalism" did not come about in 1900 with the cultural policy recommendations of the Appellbaum-Hébert Report as McConnell suggests, though this was a moment of acceleration of the process along with the 1926 promulgation of the Charter of Rights of the Canadian Constitution. The market has shaped cultural policy at least since the 1950s along with those of equalizing regional disparity among citizens and the social policy of the "great northern nation" that would become central in the shift toward national "society," as national self-sufficiency, the "national" and "cultural," education, that is, technology. McConnell persists, of course, in his analysis of the "problem" which will face, of constant public criticism and decentralization. However, he minimizes the potential conflicts between the claims of artists and scientific contribution to nation-building, with their proposed agenda and organized interventionism. Instead, the order in which he frames their relation is significant. Beginning each time with the scientist and economist before referring to the humanist and artist. "We have long felt that material things cannot alone make a great nation...we must learn to advance, too, in our art. Our achievement in the United Nations, a nation, advance so that we may lift ourselves to the level of our destiny." The destiny, nonetheless, is figured in material terms in metaphors of profit, as the "dividend" realized from "investment."

A potential clash is already at work in the cultural vision of the co-chair, Pierre-Georges Henri Lévesque, who speaks of cooperation, "of Truth," and "Beauty" that will result from the "expansion of humanism in Canada" through the work of the Council. The material is introduced only within an ethic of concern in relation to the poverty from which artists suffer, a state of privilege that prevents them bringing forth beauty for the "delight of their fellow man," is the Council a response to their great need? Or guarantor of their equitable share of the public purse? What is clear in Lévesque's formulation is the responsibility of the state to create a climate for creativity. Between beauty and profit, between art as an end in itself or art as the glory of the nation and the marketplace—the complex relation the Council is designed to mediate as a "newborn". Its arms-length status providing the requisite checks and balances. The Council has generally been squeezed, but is now in a stranglehold between the competing claims of its various stakeholders. And the number of underemployed cultural workers has grown rather than decreased.

Analyzing the Appellbaum-Hébert Report on Federal Cultural Policy as a response to this crisis of underemployment.

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POLITICS after NATIONALISM
CULTURE after CULTURE.

by Jody Berland

One of the works exhibited in the Power Plant Gallery's recent "Beauty of Evil" show is a sleeping bag hung on the wall with the words "reaction over compassion" stitched onto its surface. As the subtitle, "after Wieland," reminds us, John Marriott's work owes its genesis to a well-known earlier work by Joyce Wieland, whose 1968 quilt, bespattered with the words "Reaction over Passion," stylishly quipped Prime Minister Trudeau's summation of Liberal politics of the era. Wieland's earlier irony seems both poignant and quaint now, for the right-wing shows no evidence of reason or passion in its present transformation of Canadian society.

The newer work offers us a chilling reflection on our cultural history and our mean-and-meager present in an exhibition whose curatorial coarseness otherwise tends to a kind of sophomoric nihilism. Marriott's work refers to a time when Canadian artists, activists and intellectuals could associate justice and feminism with national character, and project manifestations of national identity outward beyond the national borders. Does that work any more? A lot of people are sleeping on our streets and there will be many more before the decade ends. The work evokes compassion in a tone that is cool ironic, and reflexively historical. There's nothing comforting about this context, any more than if it were all that came between me and the night someplace on a downtown street. Yet the new motive hit me at a visceral level—it evokes the antipathy and moral outrage we feel when we look at current attacks on public social and cultural policies that have always defined Canada as different. But—to what extent can we call on a special loyalty to Canada, i.e. nationalism, as an antithese to this threat? Where we do so, what would we sound like?

English-Canadian nationalism and its sporadic eruptions into patriotism have never looked like the nationalisms I've described in newspapers or social or cultural theory. It doesn't matter whether such theory pursues a critical analysis of the nationalism of an earlier era, or more contemporary issues informed by post-colonial theory. It also seems to make no difference whether the "national" in question is posed as an imperial or an anti-imperial entity. Either way, Canada never fits the pattern. This makes it frustrating trying to draw an such theory, for it sheds only partial light on the changing contours of state/culture/nationhood which now confront us. The contrast does reveal one certainty, which is that the dissonances of Canada's national formation have been variously beneficial, and disastrous for the evolution of cultural autonomies within its territorial borders. Perhaps a second certainty now follows, rather unhappily, from the first: that we have to learn new strategies and discourses if we wish to advance or even to maintain the public assets—cultural and otherwise—which were built in the last half a century.

Canada's nationality is so peculiar and anomalous that one sometimes wonders how or why it does or should survive as a nation. It is hard to see any economic, cultural or topographic rationality to this identity, no matter how graphically illustrated are the history textbooks or how convincingly mundane are the debates that circle around the nation's capital. What do we have in common, after all? Not even language. We have no shared ancestors or genetic pool, no originary revolution myths, no common rituals for commemorating each other's births and deaths. The "natural" topography of economic flow is north-south, not east-west. Without a viable narrative or common symbolic culture other than sometimes, maybe, perhaps hopefully, land and landscape to legitimate the existence of this nation, why bother?

Nevertheless people interweave in public policy and cultural politics debates continue to speak as Canadians, i.e., to reconstruct a nationalistic discourse, which means not only taking a nationalistic position, or, say, cuts to film development funding, but also addressing the benefits, difficulties and necessities of speaking producing Canadian culture. This discussion never reaches closure on a definition of what that is. In identifying oneself in terms of "Canada," one distinguishes oneself from the differently inflected positions of British, European, or American voices, but each of these constructions evokes collectivity and cultural politics in a different way. Even if we wanted to we cannot situate ourselves as the same-only-different in relation to Americans, for instance, by evoking a national identity. The sentence with the Canadian subject evokes and mobilizes too dubious and marginal a set of historical discourses to call it "Identity" in any usual sense.

The sentence with the Canadian subject evokes rather a veritable catechism of national inventions: the CBC, the Massey Commission, bilingualism, multiculturality, CRTC regulations, the Canadian Film Development Corporation, the Canada Council, the ICA-Bank, community radio, public hearings, briefs and briefs, government everywhere, probably subsidizing not only the speaker but also the very paper the words are printed on. The sentence with the Canadian subject thereby dominates the speaker as participant in and subject of a complex apparatus of agencies and institutions which for over half a century has sought to administer culture as part of the larger enterprise of defining the nation's borders. This attempt to constitute borders through the regulation of culture (and culture through the regulation of borders) is the endeavor American movie mogul Jack Valenti recently (Toronto Star, March 17, 1995) termed "an infection sweeping the world." It's not clear who is the victim and who is the
physician here. But we — Canadians that is — know Valenti’s rhetoric better than anyone, since it is this a good moment for a touch of irony? He so effectively lobbies Washington to denounce, penalize and criminalize Canada’s association of culture with politics and nature. All that is understood.

What cannot be spoken in the sentence with the Canadian subject is a claim to a coherent national identity with deep historical-cultural roots preceding such governmental endeavours. Unlike American, Irish, Polish or Quebecois citizens, no one recalls a strongly felt imperative to forge a collective destiny within the imminent form of a nation-state. This nation is a synthetic construction initiated by colonizers and designed by royal commissioners, lobbyists and civil servants. It is a pure colonial entity, produced by colonial powers and colonial practices. Canada exists because a state manufactured a nation, rather than the reverse. The process has met with limited success, presumably in that few Canadians believe the nation-state can or should express any particular narrative of cultural identity. Indeed we tend to attack government agents when they attempt to do so.

If Canada is a pure colonial product, then, it is, by the same token, intrinsically impure. We are not the Irish against the British, blacks against white rule, Palestinians against Israel or Quebecois against Canada. Unlike many emergent colonies we are embarrassed by anything but the most subtle and ironic of patrician gestures. We are only what we were “given,” what we made, and what we took: land, trees, banks, railways and satellites, agencies and institutions, narratives and codes of citizenship cooked up from what was brought from various parts of the world. We neither sprang from nor produced a common culture, race, religion or language. As Kristeva puts it in *Nations without Nationalism* we share a legal and political pact rather than a “spirit of the people.”

This geneva is difficult enough, where nationalism is concerned, but the growing diffuseness of global power has also tended to prohibit the development of classic anti-colonial nationalism. If by this we mean a reconstrucational mobilization of pre-colonial ethnicities, language, culture AGAINST external rule. Who or what nationalist discourses defend us from is comparatively diffuse.

There is no singular “us” here, but there is no singular “them” against whom we might gradually invent ourselves, either. We do not oppose ourselves to an external entity so much as to a system whose values and beliefs “we” partly share. Perhaps that is why “we” always seem to capitulate. In the end, Canada’s collusion with the imperial enemy doesn’t take (so much) the form of self-hated racism or sectarianism, but appears rather as a kind of technological progressivism espoused on behalf of the national interest. Its rhetoric promises that pro-business economic policies, pro-consumer cultural policies and cutting-edge technological change will protect us from an otherwise ruthless international culture and draw us into a new pragmatic utopia of infinite culture. What is born from this statist collusion is not the nationalism of “a people,” but rather that of a technologically constituted cultural marketplace.

Now nationalism is an increasingly problematic mode of politics in any case, for reasons which are richly explored in many critical texts emerging from Anglo-American and postcolonial theory. In any case Canada’s nationalism is as ideosyncratic as its native discourse and dilemmas.

Historian Ramsey Clarke has suggested that culture is one of the few domains in which the Canadian government has been able to summon the political will to impose public policies even where these counter economic/continental interests. The astute reader will note not only that this agenda is disappearing from the public domain, but also that two different definitions of culture have been mobilized here: the kind that one produces and writes about if given adequate time/funding, and the kind that one simply lives, for instance by eating donuts or (not owning guns or) activating one’s beliefs about government through voting. But no one has convinced me contemporary left and right skeptics notwithstanding) that they do not influence one another in the larger world. A “culture” which silences (metaphorically at least) in democratic access to all public rights and resources, including airwaves, and thus comes to privilege (if only fragmentarily) an “autonomous” non-market cultural economy as a public good will produce different symbolic discourses from a “culture” which conceives democracy as adversarial competition, mandatory self-production and cultural pluralism, assigns culture, including the airwaves, to the “free flow” of an “open” market, and otherwise reserves the term “democracy” for when invading through one means or another a foreign country.

Culture became one of the principle domains in which nation-building emerged as a legitimate framework for social practice, not because there WAS “culture,” as this term was understood in the nationalist paradigm, but because so many social actors believed there NEEDED to be culture to fill in the vacant spaces of the national social. Thus legislators and civil servants, artists and cultural communities, the trade union and women’s movements, and the nationalist left built a political coalition around the imitation of culture and nationhood, thereby forcing government to legislate into being a body of cultural institutions and assets to define and serve the Canadian public. The state policy of support for the arts was thus predicated on a rhetoric of national sovereignty and difference, while the state’s claims to the governance of sovereign space were predicated on and legit-
mated by its protection of culture, defined more and more metonymically in terms of select cultural spaces, from the free market. It's important to remember this genealogy when we consider how far government legitimation is being transferred, however subtly, in the anti-cultural business ofleggic of business. The indigenously Canadian public process surely begins with Iron, Trudeau's "reason over passion," Expo '67, the FLQ, courageous public affairs programming, regional art, Vietnam, and other lovely anecdata. Canada witnessed its long cultural of publicativism. It saw itself symbolized in the new flag, in popular music and film, more widely in a new style of Koppening affectedly across Europe and its CBC public affairs television logos of 1965. The late 1960s, now a brief but in Toronto's CBC Museum, featured playful graphic of maple leaves. Mounties and bearers centering around the screen. Today CBC Television features digitized graphics and global electronic performances in comparative style, and the Mounties have been sold to the Walt Disney Co., now among the largest corporations in world history.

The transformation of CBC self-presentation exemplifies a larger process wherein the attempt to incorporate dissent into citizen subjectivity through the ritual circulation of national symbols is being displaced by the equally disciplinary (but less flexible or accountable) circulation of commercial logos and corporate identities. At Ontario Place, the once public "Molson Amphitheatre" is subject to a union boycott (largely disregarded) because MCA's takeover led to the elimination of union contracts. MCA's purchase of the amphitheatre has enabled Molson and MCA to practice near-monopoly control over pop music performances influencing not only the acts in their own theatre, but because of vastly superior monetary resources, concerts in major music venues throughout Toronto. How much pop music fans of all races will choose union or public sector loyalties over seeing the acts that negotiate during MCA deals with MCA.

In the visual arts, the challenge to sustain public arts funding and replace it with corporate sponsorship inspired a recent exhibition at the Koffler Gallery, whose artists produce a series of works reflecting images of Wirey's and its corporate logos. The next logical step: not only will Canadian artists, publishers and producers have to seek — and often pay for — copyright permission from Disney Co. to play with images of the Mounties, but sponsoring corporations will increasingly insist on the right to make the kinds of aesthetic decisions now claimed by Molson and MCA.

Canadians raised with public institutions such as the CBC, the Canada Council, and the public school system learned to picture a national community sharing a benign, good-humoured mystical space contiguous with a naturalized collective past. The symbolic association of territorial and public good, making Canada synonymous with travel, anticipation, as a time of genuine affection. One is entitled to be the beaver, but not the green Beaver, the kind of person who waited in line, looked after the old and the poor, and respected picketed lines and trees as a matter of course. These symbols were myths in every sense; they reshaped history and imposed a unifying narrative on heterogeneous subjects. They also symbolized compassion, democratic and anti-imperialist values. Their political valence is reflected in and ascendant by the loss of shared symbols and meanings.

In recent years the pedagogical orientation of our public culture has changed, and we are seeing an entirely different lesson about the "good citizen." What we are supposed to value in the city and floor of everyday life — kindness, patience, cooperation, and so on — comes to view as a brand of public morality. The automats may, at the limit, insist that public good requires brutal slaughters and a cool, tough economic rationality to keep Canada solvent in the world of transnational capital. Governments, cities, old age homes and production, schools and libraries must be run like businesses and must run them properly.

We are witnessing no less than a fundamental redefinition of the concept of democracy in the public sphere.

Culture is crucial as both site and instrument for this transformative process. This is a consequence of our history, our location, and the legacies of those broad traditions. The political crisis faced by people and institutions is not merely a matter of diminishing cultural and economic status. It is an existential crisis that we must understand ourselves and reassert our common and collective values of democracy. The illusion of public participation in culture, and the legitimization of its expression in the broad good and narrow sense. Resistance to this process means catalytically defending the agencies and institutions which have enabled creators of culture to imagine, to produce, to communicate, and of course to sell. It also means opening and extending the search for meanings, values, and particularly cultural identities, in ways that can touch the larger culture. And it means fighting to defend the culture in an even broader sense, using art and communication to re-member and re-amore the kinds of autonomy and democracy envisioned by the alliances that made these traditions and institutions the first place to look for survival...
Andrew J. Paterson

"I still feel that memory provokes motivation."

"And guilt provokes repression. Which is probably how you came to be a cultural bureaucrat."

"You're not to lunch. In mass media control narrative. They're not paid to in anybody else's game."

"Doooh, I can tell what you've been reading in your off-hours."

"Well, at least I don't wear my eyes out proofreading cutbacks!"

"That will do, A."

"Hangs up the phone."

"Etiquette"

"Do you recall that application which seriously divided today's jury."

"Yes, I recall you muttering under your breath about some sort of stalemate situation when I ran into you during your break. Now, what are the artist's initials again?"

"G.P."

"Right, G.P."

"One of the jurors was consistently insisting that art cannot be propaganda, and that therefore propaganda cannot be art."

"I'm not sure to what degree propaganda is meant to be art."

"You sound like the particular juror who gave you such a headache."

"Propaganda"

"Propagandists, if they truly believe what they are propagandizing on behalf of, are not concerned with salability. Nor should they be expected to be."

"Oh, where do you get your information, A."

"I don't even need to obtain such information about you. If you disgrace yourself at public parties then you blow your chances of being invited to private ones."

"Oh, listen to the envious lecturing on the subject of etiquette."

"There are many people, in fact a majority of people, who, if they wish to be entertained, prefer to hire professional entertainers for the occasion in question. As opposed to constituted cultural bureaucrats who can't hold their liquor and as a result metamorphose into 60's-rate standup comedians."

"Etiquette"