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**CBC'S AND RADIO-CANADA'S STRUCTURED MEDIATION OF THE
CONSTITUTIONAL CRISIS: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF
THE JOURNAL'S "UNTYING THE KNOT" AND
LE POINT'S "LE NATIONALISME QUÉBÉCOIS"**

by

Michelle Gauthier, B.A.

A thesis submitted to
the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
in partial fulfilment of
the requirements for the degree of
MASTER OF ARTS
SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM
AND COMMUNICATION

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Thesis Supervisor

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ABSTRACT

This thesis entails a critical synthesis of the major strategies for news and public affairs analysis. The study provides a critical comparison of the main characteristics which either differentiate or homogenize CBC's and Radio-Canada's mandates, programs, journalists and audiences. The study's main focus is a comparative textual analysis of the ideological discourses and action-guides implicit in *The Journal's* "Untying the Knot" and *Le Point's* "Le nationalisme québécois". The textual analysis reveals that the range and hierarchy of ideological discourses and the action-guides offered to the respective English- and French-Canadian audiences differ dramatically in each series. The study also suggests the ways in which the objectivist discourse, rather than guarantee balance and non-distortion, serves to naturalize and reinforce the ideological content of these programs. The study concludes with a call for a more complete awareness of the structured mediation of the constitutional crisis provided by CBC and Radio-Canada.

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Michelle Gauthier
September 1992

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Thesis acceptance form.....	ii
Abstract.....	iii
Acknowledgements.....	iv
CHAPTER 1 - The Critical Synthesis: A New Strategy for News and Public Affairs Analysis.....	1
CHAPTER 2 - CBC's and Radio-Canada's Mandates, Programs, Journalists and Audiences: A Critical Comparison.....	39
CHAPTER 3 - An Analysis of Ideological Discourses and Action-Guides Implicit in "Untying the Knot".....	81
CHAPTER 4 - An Analysis of Ideological Discourses and Action-Guides Implicit in "Le nationalisme québécois".....	125
CHAPTER 5 - Final Analysis of <i>The Journal's</i> and <i>Le Point's</i> Mediation of the Constitutional Crisis.....	165
End Notes.....	189
Bibliography.....	207

CHAPTER 1

THE CRITICAL SYNTHESIS: A NEW STRATEGY FOR CONTEMPORARY NEWS AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS ANALYSIS

More than twenty-five years after the epistemological challenges to it were first raised, communication scholars continue to witness the decline but ever tenacious presence of the logical empirical tradition, the dominant paradigm of communication research. Despite the sustained challenge mounted by the critical school of communication theory which has held the dominant paradigm in check for almost twenty years, logical empiricism has cleverly and repeatedly outwitted the critical school's final move of check mate. The result of the dominant paradigm's refusal to concede defeat graciously has been an epistemological stalemate that has led communication theorist Cees J. Hamelink to remark: "In the field of communication research, funeral orations have remarkably little effect. The certified dead are obstinate and recurrently arise from their graves".¹

Initially, the theoretical fervour into which the paradigm stalemate thrust many communication scholars generated a healthy and promising ferment in the field.² Lamentably, however, the ferment which characterized much of communication theorizing in the 1970s and the 1980s has been replaced in the 1990s by an almost unintelligible murmur. In 1992, stoic resignation rather than epistemological fervour

seemingly sums up many communication theorists' reaction to the never-ending paradigm crisis.

The ebbing interest in defining and challenging the communication paradigm hierarchy is understandable. No discipline can sustain itself indefinitely solely on the basis of a methodological critique. Nevertheless, the departure of the bulk of communication scholars from the epistemological arena in favour of practical research pursuits is indeed problematic because the issues that the discipline has been grappling with over the past twenty-five years are of epistemological importance to all disciplines, from the humanities to the pure sciences. Essentially, the paradigm crisis in communication has incorporated elements of age-old political, economic and philosophical differences into one meta-headache that promises to rage well into the twenty-first century.

The search for a new dominant communication paradigm constitutes an attempt to reconcile objectivist and relativist claims, individualist and collectivist philosophies, capitalist and socialist ideologies, and modern and post-modern concerns into one applicable and comprehensive theory. This is no small task. Each time critical communication scholars, be they political economists or cultural theorists, presume to have discovered the ideal theoretical framework to supplant the dominant paradigm, the widespread acceptance of their theoretical approaches has eluded them. As a result, it

is not so much the success, but rather the process of paradigm reform which has been communication theorists' greatest contribution to the advancement of social theory. In their quest for the key to dethroning the positivist paradigm which has dominated communication research, communication scholars have been forced to radically rethink the role of humans, knowledge, society and the researcher in the creation and legitimation of meaning. They have also become brilliantly adept at exposing both the underlying assumptions and ideological discourses which shape communication researchers' respective theoretical stances.

Unravelling the dominant paradigm

The analytical prowess exercised in particular by critical scholars has been instrumental in exposing the theoretical underpinnings of the logical positivist tradition in communication research. Nevertheless, critical scholars have faced an uphill battle due to the positivists' relentless insistence that logical empirical research is value-free and thus has no discernible ideological base. Since its inception in the 1920s, the neo-positivist tradition has adamantly projected an image of the researcher as a neutral, objective observer who is removed from the subject of inquiry. Knowledge generated by means of empirical techniques was considered to be certain, unified and ahistorical. Behaviourists recorded regularities concerning human agency which were presumed to be applicable universally.

Functionalists studied society as a given, organic and interdependent whole, whose structured systems could be classified and controlled. Predictability became the prime motivating factor of communication research. As a result, communication research adopted administrative rather than philosophical pursuits. For the most part, communication researchers responded readily to the industry-imposed definition of their discipline and espoused the goal-oriented, administrative values of efficiency and control.³ They sought commercially useful knowledge regarding generalized human and societal behaviour that could continuously be bought and sold.

Critical scholars' attack on the dominant paradigm has been so vehement and so widespread that to critique the administrative school today is seemingly to flog a dead horse. Nevertheless, a brief recapitulation of the critical school's refutation of the dominant paradigm is in order. The critical school rejects the reductionist empirical techniques that are the hallmark of the administrative tradition. They argue that the exclusive importance accorded the tabulation of frequencies encourages the researcher to ignore the more "substantive questions of valuation".⁴ Critical scholars dismiss behaviourism's naive generalizations of human agency and deprecate functionalism's tautological explanation of society. As Stuart Hall explains, the administrative paradigm is plagued by "a systematic tendency to a kind of behavioural reductionism, consistently translating matters that have to do

with signification, meaning, language and symbolization into crude behavioural indicators".⁵

Most importantly, critical scholars refuse to accept that researchers who adhere to the dominant paradigm have no ideological persuasion. They argue that positivists' preoccupation with order and predictability is based on a preconception of order which is then used to identify disorder and to rationalize the prescription for desirable conditions.⁶ As a result, those who uphold the dominant communication paradigm display "an essentially conservative attitude biased toward the status quo...which takes for granted that order and managed interdependence should be the collective goal".⁷ Or as critical scholar Todd Gitlin has charged:

...by fusing its administrative, commercial and social-democratic impulses, the mainstream of [North] American media sociology has done its share to consolidate and legitimize the cornucopian regime of mid-century capitalism.

Unquestionably, the dominant paradigm's scientific ideal of knowledge entails a double assumption. It assumes that the positivist paradigm is the only true path to knowledge and secondly, it assumes that order is normative.

The school that would be crowned

Given the critical school's spirited and resolute critique of the administrative tradition, the question which begs to be answered is: Why hasn't the critical school replaced the logical empirical tradition as the dominant

paradigm in communication research? Undoubtedly the critical school has complied in several key respects with Thomas Kuhn's criteria for a scientific revolution or paradigm shift. Few would contest that critical scholars have masterfully uncovered "the omissions, errors, myths and superstitions [of the dominant paradigm] that have inhibited the more rapid accumulation of modern knowledge"⁹ regarding communication. Moreover, the critical school has relentlessly combatted the beliefs of the dominant research community which are based on an element of arbitrariness (i.e. the symbolic generalization of the universality of the human condition), a set of received beliefs (i.e. the preeminence accorded to quantitative content analysis research) and the educational initiation that prepares students for practice (i.e. mainstream communication schools throughout North America).¹⁰ Critical scholars have also "reconstructed prior theory and reevaluated prior fact"¹¹ in order to justify their rejection of the dominant paradigm's "time-honoured scientific theory".¹² However, despite all their efforts, the critical school has yet to be officially acclaimed as the new dominant paradigm of communication research.

The reason for this apparent anomaly is two-fold. Firstly, critical scholars have come to realize that mainstream communication research will not slither away into a dark hole simply because its intellectual and theoretical weaknesses have been exposed or because its ideological

foundation has been challenged. As Stuart Hall suggests in "Ideology and Communication Theory":

Something else holds it in place as the continuing structure of thought within which research is carried out, funding is offered, institutions rise and fall, careers develop and so on...as Marx reminded us, formations do not collapse through thought alone. Paradigm dialogues cannot destroy anything; they may shake the foundations a bit, but one has to ask what is the institutional basis of the continuing power of that particular mode of thought.¹³

Given critical communication theory's emphasis on the economic, institutional and societal basis of power and its concern with identifying and removing the restraints placed on human potential, it is unlikely to gain widespread corporate or government support. As Melody and Mansell observe: "existing institutions are not about to knowingly finance research into matters that could undermine their power".¹⁴ Therefore, though mainstream research may no longer serve the interest of the majority of communication scholars, it still serves the controlling groups' interest in a manner that is both non-threatening and reaffirming. The legitimacy it grants to late twentieth century capitalist institutions explains, in part, its uninterrupted reign as the dominant paradigm of communication research.

Cultural studies vs. political economy: a critical conundrum

The second and more decisive factor that has hindered the critical school's recognition as the new dominant paradigm of

communication research, is the twenty-year-old cold war between the critical school's two factions: cultural studies and political economy. Ironically, these two factions share many common traits. Both cultural theorists and political economists are fundamentally concerned with exposing the restraints placed on human potential by the dominant ideological forces. Contrary to mainstream researchers who believe knowledge to be certain and ahistorical, political economists and cultural theorists argue that knowledge is contingent and ideological; it reflects the elite or controlling groups' interests. As a result, they seek to undermine the ideological bases of the dominant interests rather than to stabilize or legitimize them. Radical change, not the maintenance of the status quo, is their organizing goal. They openly admit, therefore, that they cannot be objective and value-free researchers because they are historically and politically engaged in the struggle for meaning.

However, political economists and cultural theorists disagree in two key respects. Firstly, political economists and cultural theorists have radically different visions of the intersubjectivity of human activity. Whereas cultural theorists celebrate the supremacy of the individual and firmly believe in the individual's power to resist and reformulate the ideological messages he/she receives, political economists, on the other hand, tend to view humans not as

individuals, but as members of a given class or mass society. As a result, political economists have less faith in the individual's ability to resist incorporation or acculturation by the dominant ideology. Secondly, whereas cultural theorists argue that the nature of restraint imposed on human agency is a complex web of ideological forces stemming from gender, race and class inequalities which are experienced differently by each individual, political economists insist that capitalist class relations are the primary source of ideological domination. These different visions of human agency and the nature of restraint consequently lead cultural theorists and political economists to emphasize two different elements of the communication process in their research.

When faced with the infamous communication question of "Who says what to whom with what effect?", cultural theorists tend to focus primarily on "what" is being produced while political economists are more concerned with "who" is producing it. Stated otherwise, cultural theorists tend to concentrate almost exclusively on the construction of meaning as it is embodied in the text whereas political economists emphasize the institutional bases of the production and legitimation of meaning process. At first glance, the two different directions from which cultural theorists and political economists approach the analysis of ideology would seem to be mutually complementary. Clearly, to analyze a given text without sound knowledge of the producer can only

lead to a partial or erroneous interpretation of the text. Likewise, to define the production relations in such a way as to predetermine the content of the text and the anticipated audience response is equally erroneous. By failing to acknowledge the freedom of the individual to interpret the message subjectively, political economy risks falling into the behaviourist trap of mainstream communication theory. On the other hand, cultural studies, by the importance it accords to the individual, fails to fully address the very real societal influences on individual subjectivity. Seemingly then, these two critical theories would best reflect the communicative reality they purport to study if they could be fused into one comprehensive theory.

Feuding factions: the critical curse

However, most cultural theorists and political economists have reacted to the other faction's theoretical position with a mixture of indifference, recalcitrance and public antagonism. The respective camps have waged intellectual warfare in journals across North America and Europe for almost two decades. Cultural theorists are routinely discredited by political economists such as Nicholas Garnham who scathingly attacked cultural studies as:

...an ideology of intellectuals or cultural workers [which] privileges their special field of activity, the symbolic and provides for cheap research opportunities since the only evidence required is the unsubstantiated views of the individual analyst.¹⁵

Similarly, political economists have been subjected to the wrath of cultural theorists who charge that political economy has:

...a view of the conspirational and class originated source of ideology, which does not match the necessity of a theory of articulation [and is thus]...woefully inadequate. Its notion of the ideological field being already prescribed in place by the givenness of a class structure is exposed to the critique of teleology. It has no conception of the struggle for meaning.¹⁶

Unfortunately, rather than capitalize on the combined strengths of political economy and cultural studies, most critical theorists have focused on the theoretical weaknesses and the deterministic aspects of each tradition's stances.

To some extent, critical scholars' entrenchment in their respective camps can be justified both in practical and theoretical terms. To make the treacherous journey across intellectual borders in an attempt to unite these seemingly irreconcilable theories is to risk ostracism and contempt. For as Kuhn suggests in The Structure of Scientific Revolutions, adherence to a paradigm requires the complete denial of other potentially worthy approaches. In other words, "to desert the paradigm is to cease to practice the science it defines".¹⁷ For communication theorists, denial of the other school of thought has thus been a necessary manoeuvre to protect the hard-won advances of either the political economy or cultural studies tradition. As a result, the division created by the rift between political economy and

cultural studies is not confined to theoretical disputes, but spills over into hiring practices, research funding, conference engagements and classroom teaching.

It would be misleading, however, to suggest that political economists and cultural theorists have denied each other's tradition based solely on practical concerns for faculty appointments or grant money. In fact, many critical theorists have recognized that "with the benefit of hindsight, it is now obvious that asking whether communications is first and foremost an economic formation or an ideological/cultural system is a blind alley. It is clearly both".¹⁸ Yet while several critical theorists such as Stuart Hall, Graham Murdoch and Anthony Giddens have attempted to incorporate elements of the political economy and cultural studies approaches into one new theory, they are confronted with a theoretical impasse. Which variables should be privileged and which assumptions should be sustained? To adopt a theoretical approach to a research project is necessarily to confront the burden of choice. In the end, critical communication researchers must privilege one approach or perspective which, up until now, has either been predominantly political economic or cultural in nature. This inescapable reality of theory-building has proven to be the major stumbling block to the fusion of the political economy and cultural studies traditions.

In search of the critical connection

To illustrate the well-intentioned, but less than successful attempts to merge political economy and cultural studies, one has only to consider recent articles by British critical theorists, Graham Murdoch and Nicholas Garnham. In "Cultural Studies: Missing Links", Graham Murdoch describes the "missing link" in cultural studies as cultural theorists' inability to address how cultural industries function as "industries and how these operations impinge on the process of meaning making".¹⁹ He concludes his examination of the past and present state of cultural studies with a call to unite the two traditions in order to analyze the relationship between modern cultural products and ideology. However, his conclusion that "we need to investigate the ways in which economic dynamics shape the cultural field"²⁰ leaves little doubt that the economic sphere determines in the first, if not the last instance.

Likewise, Nicholas Garnham in "Media Theory and the Political Future of Mass Communication" proposes "the political economy of communication and culture"²¹, a model which recognizes both the centrality of the text and the presence of reflexive human agents. This approach is refreshing until it becomes apparent that, in the first instance, the emphasis remains on who has the power to speak to the audience by means of cultural production. As a result, Garnham's attempt to reassure cultural theorists that his

model is not economically reductionist is not totally convincing:

I am not arguing any simple notion of economic determinism. I am arguing rather for a hierarchy of determination within a mode of production such that the possibilities at each succeeding level are limited by the resources made available by the logically preceding level.²²

Despite the complexity and the depth of both Murdoch's and Garnham's analyses, the proposed research framework is still economic-bound; both the cultural products and the audiences' interpretations are considered to be heavily influenced, if not determined, by economic factors.

Cultural theorists such as Anthony Giddens who have attempted to fuse the two traditions without succumbing to a rigid structuration of culture in socio-economic terms, have faced an equally perplexing problem. In "The Orthodox Consensus and the Emerging Synthesis", Giddens revives the notion of "the knowledgeable human agent"²³ and recovers the concept of "practical consciousness"²⁴ defined as "all the things that we know as social actors make social life 'happen' but to which we cannot necessarily give discursive form".²⁵ He suggests that unlike the pure sciences, social science involves a double hermeneutic because the concepts and theories developed within society necessarily influence the subsequent conceptualizing and theorizing process of human agents. The production and legitimation of meaning thus entails a complex web of institutional and idiosyncratic

influences on the knowledgeable human agent. While Giddens' remarks reaffirm the centrality of communication studies to the social sciences, he fails to offer a practical framework in which to study the issues he raises. As a result, the problem remains: How can critical communication scholars study, in practical research terms, the continuous interplay of human subjectivity and institutionalized ideological forces which shape reality as we know it? Stated otherwise: How can communication scholars identify with any degree of certainty the cultural, social and economic influences on the production and legitimation of meaning process?

Stuart Hall: the critical cure

At least a partial answer to these unresolved questions is provided in the writings of critical scholar Stuart Hall. Of all the communication theorists who have attempted to integrate the two critical traditions, it can be argued that Stuart Hall has made the most remarkable contribution to the redefinition of the critical enterprise. Hall's contribution has been noteworthy on two equally important levels. Firstly, Hall has re-introduced or re-discovered the centrality of ideology in the study of the creation and legitimation of meaning processes. Significantly, Hall's understanding of ideological formations surpasses both political economists' traditional conception of ideology as the fixed, blanketing and hegemonical expression of the ruling class, and cultural theorists' more generic interpretation of ideology as a world

view and value system. Hall proposes that the analysis of ideology necessitates the consideration of both the types and the hierarchy of ideological discourses in any given "text". This revised definition of ideology addresses cultural theorists' concern with the production of meaning inherent in the text while simultaneously addressing political economists' concerns with hegemony, power and ideological control. By analyzing ideology both in kind and in degree and by conceiving the notion of dominance as "a structured field of relations...[which is] never permanently fixed"²⁶, Hall overcomes the primary weakness of both the political economy and cultural studies traditions.

By acknowledging that there are several ideological discourses, not solely that of consumer capitalism, which are competing for validity and can dominate the ideological sphere at any given time, Hall not only accounts for the complex manifestations of dominance in society, but also evades the economic rationalism that has characterized much of political economists' analysis of ideology to date. Moreover, by recognizing that "there is no message that is already there in reality...[because] meaning is polysemic in its intrinsic nature [and thus] remains inextricably context-bound"²⁷, Hall rejects political economy's definition of the audience as a unified box in favour of a more realistic depiction of the audience as a "maelstrom of potential ideological subjects".²⁸ In addition, Hall's emphasis on the hierarchy of ideologies

implicit in the text enables him to overcome, to some extent, cultural studies' traditional inability to delineate the relationship between the structuration of power in the text and the structuration of power in society. Hall's recognition of the interplay of power relations in the text lays the foundation for a concurrent study of the institutional factors which influence the similarities and dissimilarities between power structures perceived in the text and those perceived in society at large. As Hall explains:

Meaning cannot be conceptualized outside the field of power relations...There is no way that the study of communication systems could proceed without understanding the social, technological, economic and political conditions in which the systems of representation in society are located - how they are institutionally organized, how they are linked to particular positions and structures of power and how they are crosscut by the field and operation of power.²⁹

Clearly then, Hall has integrated a political economic and cultural studies approach to ideology into a workable theory which does not overly compromise the theoretical contributions of either school.

However, Hall's seminal contribution to critical studies is not restricted to the redefinition of ideology, albeit a key concept in communication research. Hall's legacy transcends any one concept, focusing instead on the whole of the critical enterprise. The true strength of Hall's argument rests on his integrationist vision of communication studies as a theory of internal, rather than external relations, which is

interdisciplinary by nature and which resists narrow classification into any one research paradigm. Despite the fact that the interdisciplinary design of communication studies poses several institutional problems for university administrators and academics who rely on neat and easy classificatory schemes, Hall insists that communication theory is "inextricably bound up with the success, the theoretical effectivity or ineffectivity of the general social theories or the social formation as a whole".³⁰ Moreover, Hall leads an unapologetic retreat from the scientific imperative, arguing that there is no way to purify in the scientific sense the semantic character of the media:

All the repetition and incantation of the sanitized term information, with its cleansing cybernetic properties cannot wash away or obliterate the fundamentally dirty, semiotic, semantic, discursive character of the media in their cultural dimension.³¹

While Hall does not categorically dismiss the potential utility of empirical techniques in the analysis of communication issues, he clearly affirms that communication theory must never again fall prey to scientific reductionism.

Lastly, Hall rejects the "either/or" binary mode of communication theorizing which has dominated two decades of epistemological debates. Instead, as Eileen Mehan explains, "Hall invites, engages and cooperates,"³² encouraging researchers to "coalesce around particular problems within particular historical moments".³³ Importantly, however, Hall

does not simply pay lip service to the value of theoretical pluralism, but rather embraces the contingency of research perspectives and invites his colleagues to engage in the activity of refining the collective understanding of "the enormously rich complexity of the concrete and contradictory historical foundation".³⁴ Hall's vision of the dominant paradigm's metamorphosis into the critical enterprise thus transforms communication science into "a truly human enterprise, collectively pursued within a concrete situation and in response to a particular material context".³⁵ His perspective is neither rooted in relativist nihilism nor in idealistic utopianism, but rather in a practical synthesis of actual communication questions and concerns.

Application of the new critical process to news and public affairs analysis

For the purpose of this thesis, the focus is on how this new epistemology redefines communication questions and issues in relation to a specific genre of media texts: news and public affairs programming. Critical communication scholars' adherence to the new communication enterprise affects the analysis of the media in several significant ways. Most obviously, the new critical process demands a reevaluation of the traditional assumptions about the role of the broadcaster, the essence of television texts, the nature of the television audience and the strategies for program analysis. Most importantly, critical theorists' reexamination of the

relationship between the sender, the receiver and the text, leads to a reconsideration of the audience as active, volitional agents, a redefinition of the text as a mediated message and a redetermination of the broadcasting unit as a complex ideological apparatus.

First and foremost, communication theorists' participation in the new critical process entails the rejection of the bias/objectivity dichotomy which has directed the bulk of early news and public affairs analysis. The traditional denotation of bias necessitated that researchers swallow unquestioningly the myth of objectivity. Within this context, news bias was defined as "the infusion of subjective 'opinions' by the reporter or news organization into a 'factual' account".³⁶ According to this definition, news bias resulted from a lack of balance on the one hand and from a distortion of reality on the other hand. The importance accorded to the notion of balanced coverage was modelled on liberal pluralism's marketplace of ideas in which contrasting viewpoints compete for validity. In contrast, the emphasis on non-distortion echoed positivism's confidence in the scientist's epistemological ability to uncover unified, reliable facts. Both of these ideologies are fused in objectivism.

However, communication scholars who wish to partake in the new critical enterprise must refuse to frame their analysis of the media in terms of the "objective/biased

journalist" or the "objective/biased news report". This conceptualization of the production and dissemination of information is unacceptable because it is founded on several logical empirical assumptions which are no longer sustainable in post-positivist communication research. While many of critical scholars' objections to the objectivist discourse mirror their previously discussed criticism of the assumptions implicit in the dominant paradigm, it is nevertheless worthwhile to reconsider these criticisms in specific reference to the journalistic process.

Just the facts, please

The first assumption which underlies the objectivist discourse is that there exists a "mind-independent world"³⁷ or a "permanent ahistorical matrix or framework to which we can ultimately appeal".³⁸ This vision of the world implies that there are certain, untainted facts that can be reported by objective journalists. From this perspective, "truth" is uncovered by astute journalists who remain value-neutral and exercise their rational powers of logical deduction to piece together the major events of the day. Ironically, despite the fact that many communication scholars have rejected the possibility of objective reporting, most journalists still function within the confines of this myth. As John C. Merrill discovered in a 1984 study entitled "Is Ethical Journalism Simply Objective Reporting?":

It is rather significant that of the 50 journalists responding almost all of them (47) said they believed in the possibility of objective news coverage. The educators, on the other hand, had almost no faith in the possibility of objective reporting with only eight believing in objectivity and 42 denying its journalistic possibility.³⁹

Paradoxically, while most journalists cling steadfastly to the importance of journalistic objectivity, few would acknowledge, or be able to identify for that matter, a common consciousness or a world view and value system shared by all.

Walking the invisible tightrope

The second assumption implicit in the objectivist discourse is that competition or a pluralism of views ensures freedom of expression, equality of opportunity, and thus, balanced coverage. This essential premise presupposes that all journalists and all citizens exercise equal positive freedom. However, in most instances, the reality of journalistic practice is altogether different as journalists systematically confront a wide array of professional constraints which inevitably curtail their freedom of expression. As François Demers discovered in his consideration of the good employee model which dominates contemporary journalism ethics:

...the good employee model represents a threat for journalistic autonomy and professionalism because it undermines the group's will to counterbalance the commercial incentives of the media corporations...Translated into media content, this means that media marketing

departments and business managers now control the types of information which will be published.⁴⁰

While journalists may still function on the assumption that they are autonomous conveyors of empirical facts, more often than not, they are not free to define, report or transmit news stories based on their own independent criteria.

Maintaining professional distance

The third assumption of the objectivist discourse is that order is both desirable and normative. At first, equating journalistic practice with the concept of order seems highly problematic. A simple glance at the evening news confirms journalists' pre-occupation with events that have changed, or will change, the ecological, political, economic or social maps of the world. In this context, representations of the status quo are clearly unnewsworthy; breaking news stories are what grasp the audience's attention. Given journalists' undeniable interest in news stories which have new, shocking and unexpected developments, it therefore remains to be seen how their discourse reinforces the status quo.

Journalists' essentially conservative penchant for the status quo stems predominantly from their adamant insistence that they play no role in shaping or changing reality. They consider themselves instruments through which information is funnelled, untainted to the public. However, journalistic objectivity, which is often equated with journalistic professionalism and ethics, depends precisely on the

reporter's uncritical acceptance of existing structures. Institutions such as the House of Commons or the Senate are not critically analyzed but naturalized into the political landscape of given "facts". Both the actors and the institutions are assumed a priori to be legitimate and thus worthy of daily attention in the news. When combined with the objectivist discourse, journalists' legitimation of the status quo thus creates a double dupe system, an "ideological form which effects a contraction of the sphere of public debate whilst simultaneously engendering the illusion that the sphere is entirely free and open".⁴¹ Therefore, by refusing to become involved in any way with the process of change, journalists unwittingly support the maintenance of the status quo. The objectivist discourse is so firmly rooted in journalists' psyches that even a senior journalist such as CBC bureau chief, Elly Alboim, staunchly contends that "media can only reflect the reality that Canadians are accepting and dealing with. I have no responsibility for social change. I'm not a social engineer. I report the best I can."⁴² By reducing their practice to that of a well-executed technique, journalists' objective reporting becomes causal, rather than goal oriented. As a result, what journalists who embrace the objectivist doctrine fail to realize is that critical distance is not a neutral position, but one which encourages them to legitimize the reigning order.

Towards a new definition of bias

Clearly then, a new definition of the journalist's role, one that transcends the traditional and oversimplified notions of bias and objectivity, is required. Arguments in favour of greater accuracy or objectivity in the production and dissemination of news and public affairs programming must be rejected because these arguments only serve to further entrench the authority of the news. Moreover, to argue that journalists or news reports must be objective is to undermine the importance of the audience's ability to negotiate with the text. As John Fiske explains:

News of course, can never give a full accurate, objective picture of reality nor should it attempt to, for such an enterprise can only serve to increase its authority and decrease people's opportunity to "argue" with it, to negotiate with it. In a progressive democracy, news should stress its discursive constructedness, should nominate all its voices (not just the subordinated, disruptive ones) and should open its text to invite more producerly reading relations.⁴⁵

The bias/objectivity dichotomy must be discarded not only because it is based on false assumptions about the nature of truth and knowledge and about the role of the journalist and the viewer, but also because it lends greater credence, and thus greater control, to the message producers.

Despite critical scholars' demystification of the objectivist discourse, the new definition of the process of producing and disseminating news and information programming

need not entail a radical and categoric rejection of the epistemologies that have guided communication research thus far. Rather, strategies of analysis which, in the spirit of the critical enterprise, both draw on the strengths of previous methods and overcome their epistemological weaknesses, should be sought. In the same way that the analysis of the contemporary research paradigms led to a redefinition of the critical process, so too will a review of the contemporary strategies for news analysis privileged by each major school lead to a new concept of news and public affairs programming as "structured mediation".⁴⁴ Yet before proceeding to an in-depth consideration of media analysis as structured mediation, a review of the major strengths and weaknesses of previously championed methods for news and public affairs analysis is essential.

Quantitative content analysis: the dominant paradigm in action

The hallmark method of news analysis within the logical positivist tradition is quantitative content analysis. This method has been privileged because its proponents claim that the results obtained from content analysis are objective, systematic and generalizable. The results are presumed to be objective because if the content coding exercise is strictly replicated by other researchers they will supposedly obtain the same results from the same data. The results are perceived to be systematic because the criteria for news analysis are deemed consistent. Lastly, the results are said

to be generalizable because they provide relevant correlations between the content, the sender and the receiver. Could each of these tenets be emphatically sustained, content analysis would indeed remain the method par excellence for news analysis.

However, several problematic assumptions underlie logical positivists' faith in content analysis. Firstly, to meet the objectivity and systematicity criteria, the researchers must assume that bias in content can be operationally defined. This strategy for news analysis thus assumes that appropriate empirical measures can be adopted to assess, usually in quantifiable terms, bias in the media. More importantly, researchers who rely exclusively on content analysis to understand the news assume that the "tabulation of frequency is a useful indicator of the message the audience is receiving".⁴⁵ Insofar as the generalization of the results is concerned, the results can only be considered significant if the researcher internalizes positivism's conception of society as an organic whole and of humans beings as impotent agents of social change. To generalize content analysis to the entire communication process is to assume that there is no difference between the encoding and decoding of media frameworks. Stated otherwise, to make generalized statements about the news on the basis of news content is to assume that there is a common universe of discourse shared by the senders, the receivers and the analysts. Moreover, the emphasis on content as a

revelatory sign of bias suggests that the content of the message unveils the psychological or sociological bias of the sender.

If we base our analysis of the news on the assumption of the logical positivist paradigm, we risk the very real danger of misunderstanding, and thus misrepresenting the processes for the production, dissemination and reception of news. Researchers who rely on content analyses to provide objective, systematic and generalized knowledge about the news, fail to analyze the underlying code, the intended messages and the motives of the communicator. In other words, the logical empirical tradition is limited to the analysis of the manifest attributes of the text - attributes which are often of secondary importance. As a result, the essence of news structuration and its implication for the sender and the receiver generally fall outside the scope of the logical positivist's lens. Therefore, while logical positivist epistemology can be a useful starting point from which to analyze the news, it cannot provide a complete understanding of the complexities of the relationships between senders, receivers and the mediated message.

The hermeneutic tradition: semiotics and structuralism

Two of the most prominent methods of news analysis in the hermeneutic school are semiotics, the study of signs, and structuralism, the study of underlying codes. Both of these approaches are concerned with media texts as structured

entities rather than as fragmented units. Semiotics and structuralism seek to identify the interrelations between denotative and connotative levels of meaning, between the encoding and decoding of media texts and between the senders' explicit messages and their implicit world view and value system. Semioticians and structuralists accord greater importance to meaning rather than frequency and to implicit rather than manifest attributes of the text. Within this context, bias in the news is defined as the transmission of an implicit cosmology and axiology, or world view and value system, by means of a news broadcast. Bias is endemic because the sign, the signifier and the signified are inescapably culturally construed:

...television news is a cultural artefact; it is a sequence of socially manufactured messages which carry many of the culturally dominant assumptions of our society...in this sense bias in national news reflects news values determined by newsmen who are both part of a cultural process and who must consciously interpret national interest and cultural preference."

As a result, the hermeneutic school's recognition of news as a cultural construction edges communication theorists a step closer to the identification of the news text as an instrument of ideological mediation and control.

Nevertheless, as Robert Hackett suggests in his analysis of contemporary strategies for news analysis, "it is far from clear that semiotics has itself fully overcome the limitations of content analysis and developed a rigorous method for

reading ideology".⁴⁷ Like the logical positivist school of communication which it seeks to supplant, hermeneutics is also plagued by several problematic assumptions. Firstly, semiotics and structuralism "overestimate the autonomy of the text and the self-sufficiency of textual analysis".⁴⁸ Whereas logical positivism is criticized for its attempts to make universal claims about news bias based on the manifest attributes of the text, hermeneutics is guilty of the same sin in relation to the underlying structure of the text. Secondly, it can be argued that hermeneutic analysis is as ahistorical as content analysis because it assumes that the decoder can analyze the text in an ahistorical framework. The task of the semiotician or the structuralist is rarely extended to a consideration of the socio-political, economic or historical factors which have shaped the relationship between the text and the sender or between the text and the receiver. The decoder cannot legitimately extrapolate ideology from the text; to do so would be to resort to positivist assumptions about a common discourse shared by sender, receiver and analyst. The only epistemological escape is to "import sociological and historical assumptions"⁴⁹ to contextualize the findings.

The third limitation of this method of analysis is that it assumes that the text is a coherent, structured whole and thus it negates even the possibility of internal contradictions in the text. This assumption tends to reduce

hermeneutic analysis to functionalist or behaviourist interpretations which cannot account for the presence of ideology or structures of dominance in the text. Finally, semiotics and structuralism are often undermined because they assume that the findings of an individual analyst are all encompassing, even though the results are subjective, arbitrary, irreproducible and unverifiable. The fallacy here lies in the fact that the idiosyncratic musings of one researcher become the basis upon which collective understanding of the role and the power of media is founded. As Gerald Miller explains in "Taking Stock of a Discipline":

What concerns me about the sanctity of personal authority and value of idiosyncratic interpretation is the possibility of constantly increasing amounts of confusion about what is *known*, as opposed to what is *believed*.⁵⁰

Arguably, some form of proof is important, not because it tells us the whole story about bias, but because it ensures that what seems to be does not become an acceptable premise on which to base our statements about the world.

The critical school: the early years

In its analysis of news and public affairs programming, the critical school of communication theory has always accorded central importance to the relationship between ideology and the media. However, given the critical school's traditional emphasis on the political economic structure of ideology, its early definitions of ideology were not framed in

generic terms such as "a systematic body of concepts about human life or culture"⁵¹, but rather in political economic terms such as "the everyday expression of capitalism"⁵² or:

...a system of ideas, values and presuppositions which is characteristic of a particular social class and/or which expresses the political and economic interest of the class.⁵³

As a result, many of the early critical studies on media and ideology focused on the ways the media serve to reinforce existing class or state power.

These studies are problematic because they limit the study of news framing to the analysis of primarily political economic, rather than social or cultural forms of mediation. Moreover, the inextricable linking of media frames to the reinforcement of state or class interests suggests that as researchers, journalists and critical viewers become aware of this media function, they should attempt to counteract this coverage by ensuring that greater and better representation of dominated classes and minority political parties be provided. To overly emphasize the framing of the news in favour of a given political party or social class is thus to assume that non-partisan or non-political coverage of news events is indeed possible for the objective journalist. This research is counter-productive because it often calls for strict forms of impartiality in the production and dissemination of the news. Yet as our brief consideration of the objectivist discourse revealed, journalists' adherence to objectivity

makes the news even more effective in disguising the underlying ideological framework. Therefore, the more generic conception of media frames as "persistent patterns of cognition, interpretation and presentation, of selective emphasis and exclusion by which symbol-handlers routinely organize discourse whether verbal or visual"⁵⁴ is a much more useful tool for the detection of ideology in the news.

The critical process: a welcomed synthesis

The new critical approach to news and public affairs analysis entails a simultaneous synthesis of the strengths of research methods which have guided communication theorists thus far and a rejection of several problematic assumptions which are deemed unsustainable by the communication community at large. Firstly, new critical scholars must recognize that the search for transcendental truth is, to some extent, moot, because as individuals rooted in particular cultural and historical positions, communication researchers cannot transcend their material reality to consider the complexities of the modern world ahistorically and objectively. As a result, both the "truth" communication researchers purport to uncover by means of qualitative and quantitative research techniques and the "truth" they relate in their theoretical analyses of the media is necessarily contingent and ideological. Communication analysts' consideration of the role of the media in the creation and legitimation of meaning processes must therefore be fuelled by the knowledge that:

Each society has its regime of truth, its general politics of truth: that is the types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true; mechanisms and instances which enable one to distinguish true and false statements; the means by which each is sanctioned; the techniques and procedures accorded value in the acquisition of truth, the status quo of those who are charged with saying what counts as true. 'Truth' is to be understood as a system of ordered procedures for the production, distribution, circulation and operation of statements.⁵⁵

The study of news and public affairs programming, therefore, should not be undertaken as a study of the media's success at mirroring reality or presenting a window on the world, but rather as a consideration of the media's role in framing and legitimizing a wide variety of ideological discourses.

This new interest in the interconnectedness of the ideological content of the media in all its forms, be they political, economic, cultural or social in nature, leads critical communication theorists to emphasize both the types and the hierarchy of ideological discourses in the text. This analysis of the structuration in kind (the types of discourses) and the structuration in degree (the hierarchy of discourses) focuses on:

...the range of discourses particular cultural forms allow into play, whether they are organized around dominant discourses or whether they provide space for the articulation of subordinate and oppositional discourses...[and on] the way in which discourses are handled within the text, whether they are arranged in a clearly marked hierarchy of credibility which directs the audience to

prefer one over the others or whether they are treated in a more egalitarian and indeterminate way which leaves the audience with an open choice.⁵⁶

This approach to news and public affairs programming analysis is significant for three reasons. Firstly, it allows for the consideration of the nature and scope of the action-guides or preferred readings funnelled to the audience without stating the need to categorically assert that one particular reading will necessarily be internalized by the majority of viewers. In this way, the proposed study of structured mediation avoids the tendency to treat television programming "as a closed text, that is, as one in which the dominant ideology exerts considerable, if not total, influence over its ideological structure and therefore over its reader".⁵⁷

Secondly, this approach not only provides for, but requires, a consideration of the role of the text in society. Communication researchers cannot hope to fully understand the *raison d'être* of the kind and degree of ideological discourses analyzed in any given text, if they have not explored the relationship between the broadcasting corporation and the political, economic and cultural sphere; the relationship between the viewing audience and journalists; and the relationship between the viewing audience and the broadcasting corporation. The textual analysis must be contextualized by a priori knowledge of the role of the text in society at large. In fact, not only must the study of the relationship between sender, receiver and the text be completed before the

textual analysis, it must also guide the subsequent analysis of ideological formations in the text. Therefore, by insisting on a priori placement of the text in its material and historical conditions of existence, this approach evades the necessity of importing sociological and historical findings a posteriori to justify its textual claims.

Lastly and most importantly, this new critical process recognizes the substantial, albeit partial, contribution that each of the three schools of communication theory can bring to the analysis of news and public affairs programming. This is not to suggest that each media study will necessarily reflect the epistemology or the assumptions of all three schools. Rather, when confronted with a particular research problem, new critical scholars are encouraged to rely on the combination of empirical, semiotic and critical premises and findings which best fit the reality in question. The critical change in communication theorizing, therefore, does not result in a radical redefinition of communication epistemology, but rather in the researcher's humble recognition that his/her perspective remains partial, contingent and in need of further study from a different communication angle. In this sense, the critical process feeds on the integration of epistemological strategies for news and public affairs analysis; its survival depends on the proliferation of comparative studies which question and challenge the findings and assumptions of previous analyses.

With specific reference to the study of ideology in news and public affairs programming, the new critical enterprise entails the recognition that the complexity of the research on ideology lies precisely in the fact that there are no simple classificatory schemes to guide the researcher and no automatic recourse to empirical measurement to ground the findings. Having rejected the bias/objectivity dichotomy, television can no longer be viewed as a mirror or a windowpane; it is a prism in which the ritual, the discourse and the text converge to produce a specific ideological vision. As a result, ideology is not a static manifestation of news structuration that can be statistically coded, but a dynamic landscape that is continuously being reshaped by the interplay of the sender, the receiver and the text. Analyzing ideology thus requires that communication researchers discard the old vocabularies and language games which have stifled past research. The potential contribution of paradigmatic exclusivity has been satiated. Communication researchers must move beyond the dysfunctional preoccupation with dominant paradigms to attend to a more challenging and meaningful synthesis of contemporary strategies for news analysis. This contemporary synthesis of news and public affairs analysis must fuse the study of the structuration of the text with the study of the structuration of society; it must relate textual decoding to theories of ideology; and it must combine the analysis of news as an existential expression of cultural

cosmologies and axiologies with the analysis of news as a series of explicit and implicit ideological discourses. Only when this synthesis is complete will we gain a more complete understanding of the role of the news in the process of creating and legitimating meaning in late twentieth century society.

CHAPTER 2

CBC'S AND RADIO-CANADA'S MANDATES, PROGRAMS, JOURNALISTS AND AUDIENCES: A CRITICAL COMPARISON

The application of the critical synthesis to the study of news and public affairs analysis is a formidable challenge even for the most experienced and well-funded communication researcher. How successful then will the critical process be when applied to more modest research projects with limited funds? In other words, how plausible and practical is the critical synthesis for the bulk of communication studies? Can the critical synthesis be achieved with a relative degree of success in most research projects or does it remain simply an ideal for which to strive?

It is with this in mind that the current study has been attempted. It entails a comparative analysis of ideological discourses found in two four-part series broadcast on Radio-Canada's *Le Point* and CBC's *The Journal*, French- and English-Canada's respective primary television sources of public affairs information. The series entitled "Le nationalisme québécois" which aired on *Le Point* the week of January 21-24, 1992, traces the historic roots of Quebec nationalism from 1759 to the present. The series "Untying the Knot" presented on *The Journal* the week of February 18-21, 1992, considers the political, economic and social aftermath of a potential Quebec secession from Canada. These series, broadcast within one

month of each other, were aired during the constitutional conferences with so-called "ordinary Canadians" and were billed as a consideration of issues and angles related to Canada's constitutional crisis.

The relationships among the senders, the receivers and the programs

In accordance with the critical process, before the textual analysis of these two series can be undertaken, the relationships among the senders, the receivers and the programs, relationships which necessarily influence both the production and the reception of the mediated messages must be analyzed. To describe this first step in different terms, before the ideological discourses in the programs can be explored, the ideological discourses that fuel the legitimation of meaning in English- and French-Canadian society must be considered. Undoubtedly, volumes could be, and have been, written on the guiding ideology of English- and French-Canadian public broadcasting, on English- and French-Canadians' respective rituals and psyches and on the social space accorded to the television texts by each society. However, one short chapter cannot possibly provide a complete anthropological, historical, political, socio-economic and psychological profile of these complex and inter-related discourses which represent the essence of English- and French-Canadian culture. This second chapter will therefore be limited to an analysis of the main features which either differentiate or homogenize the respective relationships

amongst the broadcasters, the programs, the journalists and the audiences in English- and French-Canadian society.

First, this consideration of the relationship between television broadcasting and English- and French-Canadian society is based on the premise that television has become the main mediating symbol of late twentieth century secular Canadian society. As a result, it will be argued that television contributes significantly to the creation of a collective consciousness and that, in the case of television news, it has become an important secular Canadian ritual. Having established television's role as a type of cohesive social glue, the coupling of symbolic culture and political unity as it has been traditionally expressed in the Canadian context, will be explored. Specifically, this study will examine the CBC's and Radio-Canada's unique broadcasting mandate to promote Canadian unity as well as their respective programs' need to reflect, and to contribute to, a strong sense of Canadian identity.¹ Here it will be suggested that despite Canadian broadcasting policy-makers' historical emphasis on CBC's and Radio-Canada's ability and responsibility both to unite the country and to foster a symbolic Canadian culture or identity, the English and French divisions of the Canadian public broadcaster have in fact done the opposite. That is to say, while CBC has significantly shaped the English-Canadian identity and Radio-Canada has unquestionably enhanced the French-Canadian identity, neither has contributed to one, unifying collective consciousness or

symbolic culture. Rather, contrary to their mandate, the CBC and Radio-Canada have fostered two distinct and oppositional consciousness. This contention will be supported by a brief recapitulation of Canadian public broadcasting history and a review of comparative studies of English and French public broadcasting completed by both government committees and academics. The focus will then shift to a comparative analysis of the dominant professional traits of English- and French-language journalists. Despite the paucity of comparative analyses of the two worlds of Canadian journalism, this section will seek to identify French- and English-language journalists' professional ethics, practices and self-perceptions. In particular, the confrontational climate which, in light of the constitutional crisis, has dictated recent exchanges between English- and French-language journalists will be explored. Finally, the analysis will conclude with a consideration of the major similarities and differences between French- and English-Canadian audiences. This section will rely heavily on audience surveys completed both by the CBC-Radio-Canada Research Centre and by private consultants to trace the consumption habits and media expectations of English and French-language viewers, especially with regards to television news and public affairs programming. Overall then, this analysis of the relationships amongst the senders, receivers and the texts is intended to situate a priori the subsequent textual analysis in its historical, political and cultural conditions of existence.

Television: the main mediating symbol for secular Canadians

Arguably, the ideological discourse that has had the single greatest and most widespread influence on both French- and English-Canadian audiences' consumption of news and public affairs programming, especially with regards to the constitutional crisis, is the secularist doctrine. The constitutional crisis has forced Canadians to re-evaluate the fundamental fabric of their society, to re-examine the basic tenets of the Canadian constitution and to reinvent the relationships within Canadian federalism. While some Canadians have sought the answers to Canada's constitutional woes in the confines of the church or the political arena, the majority of Canadians who have rejected conventional religion and who are disenchanted with politicians, can neither rely on traditional meta-narratives to mediate their understanding of the crisis, nor resort to idiosyncratic musings.² For these secular Canadians, television has become the main mediating symbol and the primary source of legitimation. In fact, television sets, the secular religious icons of late twentieth century society, can be found in ninety-seven per cent of Canadian homes.³ Televisions preach into the family rooms, kitchens and bedrooms of the nation as Canadians spend an average of 24.2 hours per week in front of the screen.⁴ In addition, the fact that most Canadians regard CBC and Radio-Canada news and public affairs programming as among the best in the world only serves to reinforce the national public broadcaster's reign as the last bastion of objectivity for

secular Canadian society.

Television news and public affairs programming has thus become secular Canadians' gospel. Cast into the role of prophets or priests, television anchors such as CBC's Peter Mansbridge or Radio-Canada's Bernard Derome are regarded both as conveyors of truth and as witnesses who relay accurate, empirical facts about world events. As one CBC focus group concluded in April 1992, Mansbridge "tells it like it is...he sounds like someone you can believe".⁵ In fact some communication scholars such as Hal Himmelstein suggest that many contemporary viewers have "an image of the anchor as nearly omniscient and omnipresent".⁶ According to Himmelstein, evening news anchors are perceived as the "voice that orders the chaos of the everyday world".⁷ As a result, to substantiate their positions and defend their opinions, secular Canadians quote authoritatively not from the Bible, but from programs such as *The Journal* and *Le Point*. As James Curran explains in "Communication, Power and Social Order":

The mass media have now assumed the role of the Church, in a more secular age of interpreting and making sense of the world to the mass public. Like their priestly predecessors, professional communicators amplify systems of representation that legitimize the social system...The new priesthood of the modern media has supplanted the old as the principal ideological agents building consent for the social system.

Ironically, while Canadians' attendance at weekly religious services dwindles, secular Canadians religiously flock to the ritual of the evening news.

For many Canadians the rites of the evening news are as sacred as daily mass was to previous generations; to retire for the night without one's daily "news fix" is somehow to go to bed incomplete. As Gregory Goethals explains in The TV Ritual: Worship at the Video Altar: "the ritualistic power of the nightly news is due, in part to its regularly scheduled time and uniform presentation".⁹ In contrast with newspapers and magazines that can be consumed in a random and individualized fashion, television news forces the viewers into "a shared perception of order and events. This collective viewing provides community solidarity since countless citizens are exposed to identical explanations of current reality".¹⁰ Like the traditional Christian mass, the ritual of the evening news puts Canadians in touch with their community, gives them a sense of continuance and suggests a common purpose. For secular Canadians then, television viewing replaces conventional notions of communion as it is through the shared viewing of television that a common consciousness is created:

The media also emphasize collective values that bind people closer together, in a way that is comparable to the influence of the medieval Church: the communality of the Christian celebrated by Christian rites is now replaced by the communalities of consumerism and nationalism celebrated in media rites.¹¹

Television viewing thus plays a powerful role in promoting social cohesion, in fostering a collective consciousness and in legitimizing the dominant ideological discourses.

Canadian public broadcasting: a guarantor of Canadian unity?

The belief that the mass media play a seminal role in fostering a collective consciousness and ensuring political cohesion has long fuelled both politicians' and policy-makers' vision of public broadcasting in Canada. Since the first Canadian Radio Broadcasting Act received royal assent in 1932, public broadcasting in Canada has been integrally linked with the protection and the promotion of national unity. Declared a limited natural resource that should be nurtured by the federal government, public broadcasting quickly and firmly became recognized as a central Canadian institution. As Alan Plaunt affirmed to the Commons Committee on the Canadian Radio Commission on May 7, 1936: "A national broadcasting system is as important to the continued existence of Canada as an independent nation in the twentieth century as transcontinental railways were to its inception in the nineteenth".¹² Over the next 15 years, Canadian ownership of broadcasting stations increased, network coverage was extended to remote areas and the widespread recognition of public broadcasting as a Canadian icon blossomed in both English and French Canada. Frank Peers writes that the period between 1936 and 1951 was marked by a conscious effort to craft a solid bond between public broadcasting and:

...national survival, whether in English or in French Canada or in Canada as a whole; a Canadian sense of identity; national unity; increased understanding between regions and language groups; cultural development; and the serving of the Canadian economic interests...Seldom

was nationalist sentiment precisely articulated, but it was broader than patriotic jingoism and something more ambiguous than national self-interest. In particular, the different assumptions in French- and English-speaking Canada were left almost unexplored.¹³

In the early years of Canadian public broadcasting, federal policy was thus based on the assumption that there was a direct correlation between the health of public broadcasting and national unity.

This unwavering faith in public broadcasting's ability and responsibility to unite the country was only strengthened by the introduction of television in Canadian society in 1952. In 1951, the year before television services became available in Canada, the Massey Commission forcefully reaffirmed that: "the national broadcasting system...has contributed powerfully...to a sense of Canadian unity".¹⁴ This theme would be reiterated in the 1958 Broadcasting Act and again in the 1968 Broadcasting Act which required both the CBC and Radio-Canada to "contribute to the development of national unity and provide for a continuing expression of Canadian identity".¹⁵ While the pervasive force of public broadcasting in defining and reflecting Canadian identity was extended to both radio and television, the latter was unquestionably believed to have left a greater imprint on the Canadian psyche. In fact, former CBC chairman Alphonse Ouimet went so far as to suggest that: "the long term input of television on national identity is greater than that of all media combined".¹⁶ The sweeping rhetoric regarding Canadian broadcasting's pivotal role in the

protection and the promotion of Canadian unity remained largely uncontested throughout the first 35 years of the corporation's existence.

Unquestionably, the importance accorded to public television programming's role in the Canadian identity formation process has been particularly ardent in light of the constant threat of American domination of Canadian airwaves. Since the advent of radio and television broadcasting in Canada, Canadian broadcasters have "struggled to define themselves...in the shadow of the American cultural giant".¹⁷ Over the years, the proliferation of U.S. signals broadcast into Canadian homes has been so great that Canada has become the prima facie case study of American media imperialism. Ironically, however, Canadians' insistence on their natural right to free and untrammelled access to American programming has been paralleled only by their insistence on high quality indigenous programming produced by a strong and financially secure national public broadcaster. Arguably, private broadcasters' historically circumspect contribution to the production and exhibition of Canadian programming, has served to reinforce Canadians' perception of their public broadcasting system as the audio-visual rampart which protects them from American acculturation and assimilation. Yet Canadian scholars' and legislators' preoccupation with external threats to Canadian identity and their insistence on the role of CBC and Radio-Canada programs in defining Canadians to themselves, may have blinded them to potentially

devastating internal threats to the creation and promotion of a quintessential and unifying Canadian identity.

For instance, it was not until 1970 when the *Report of the Special Senate Committee on the Mass Media* was tabled, that the substantive differences in the nature of the senders, the receivers, the texts, and thus of the mandates, of the CBC and Radio-Canada, were openly acknowledged. As the Senate Study concluded with regard to Quebec:

...the traditions, the audience preferences, the mythologies, the economics of publishing and broadcasting--all are shaped by the French Fact, to the extent that the province's media cannot be viewed simply as part of the Canadian whole.¹⁸

These significant cultural, political and socio-economic factors, combined with the ensuing political Quebec-Canada events from 1970 to 1992, would lead government committees, communication scholars, Canadian nationalists and the Canadian public at large to re-examine their long-held beliefs in the singularly positive contributions of public broadcasting to Canadian unity.

Comparative analyses of CBC and Radio Canada public affairs programming: the wasteland

Considering the central importance Canadians attribute to public broadcasting's role in preserving national unity, relatively few comparative studies of news and public affairs content on the CBC and Radio-Canada have been done. Insofar as the CBC-Radio-Canada Research Centre in Ottawa is concerned, this anomaly is explained by senior research

officers as the recognition by the Research Centre that the English and French divisions of the corporation do not take kindly to comparative analyses of their performances.¹⁹ Comparative studies conducted within the corporation are said to lead to animosity and divisiveness and thus are almost considered taboo. On a more administrative level, the explanation offered is that Radio-Canada and the CBC are clearly established in the Broadcasting Act as two separate entities and thus their performance need not be competitively compared. Ironically, while CBC's and CTV's mandate are less compatible than the respective mandates of the CBC and of Radio-Canada, this fact has not stopped the research centre from engaging in on-going comparative research of their product with that of their competitors.²⁰ While limiting the number of comparative analyses of CBC and Radio-Canada over the years may have kept the corporate peace, it has done little to provide a clear portrait of how each entity has comparatively fulfilled its mandate to contribute to Canadian unity.

While there are some external studies that were commissioned by the government or undertaken by academics, these CBC - Radio-Canada comparisons tend to have been undertaken at identifiable peaks in the Quebec-Canada conflict. For example, over the past twenty years, the bulk of comparative French-English news and public affairs studies have centred on historical events such as the FLQ crisis (1970), the sovereigntists' election victory in Quebec (1976),

the Quebec Referendum (1980) and the Meech Lake Accord (1987-1990). As a result, these studies tend to focus, for the most part, on historical periods in which the differences between English- and French-Canada are most exacerbated, and thus are likely to have a pronounced effect on the ensuing television broadcasts. Scholars' and politicians' preponderant preoccupation with these periods may therefore have skewed our understanding of the types and the degree of differences in the approaches privileged by the CBC and Radio-Canada in the fulfilment of their mandate to contribute to Canadian unity. Having stated this caveat, arguably it is during these periods of increased tension and pronounced misunderstanding between English- and French-Canada that the CBC's and Radio-Canada's mandates to promote Canadian unity are most severely tested. From this point of view, these studies provide an intriguing quantitative assessment of both the CBC's and Radio-Canada's depiction of Canada and each broadcaster's approach to promoting Canadian unity.

Comparative analyses: the last fifteen years

The first major comparative analysis of English and French public broadcasting telecasts was completed in 1977 by the Boyle committee under the direction of the CRTC at the request of then Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau.²¹ Given the 1976 election of the Parti Québécois which had plunged unsuspecting Canadians into the throes of a unity crisis, allegations were rampant that Radio-Canada, rather than

contributing to national unity, had engaged in subversive reporting which could threaten the future of Canada. Reporting to Parliament on July 20, 1977, the Boyle Committee excoriated the broadcasting industry with extreme vehemence directed at the public broadcaster:

The electronic news media in Canada, English as well as French, are biased to the point of subversiveness. They are biased by their assumptions about what is newsworthy and what their audiences want to hear. [Among other assumptions, they presume]...that English Canadians could not care less about what happens to French Canadians and vice versa. These assumptions are intolerable. They are also extremely stupid.²²

The Boyle Committee's biting remark: "If English and French Canadians were on different planets there could hardly be a greater contrast of views and information"²³ especially demeaned and discredited the CBC and Radio-Canada whose explicit mandate was to promote Canadian unity.

Subsequent studies comparing English and French public broadcasting have done little to reaffirm their success at uniting the country. Arthur Siegal's follow-up to the Boyle Committee's Report in 1978 found more common ground between CBC and Radio-Canada in their TV newscasts - up ten per cent from the 15-18% similarity factor reported the previous year.²⁴ In addition, Siegal reported that both the CBC and Radio-Canada had increased their coverage of Canadian national news, especially out of Ottawa, though Siegal cautioned that this finding might be due more to a lack of politically relevant news generated in Quebec during the sample period than to a

genuine desire to cover Ottawa more extensively.²⁵ Overall, however, Siegal's findings led him to conclude that:

The electronic and print media reinforce the linguistic differences in Canadian society; a matter of profound political implications. In this, the media broadcast and print news have an unsettling effect on Canadian integration; or at least do not promote it.²⁶

Like many earlier studies, Siegal's conclusions rest on the assumption that a direct link exists between the standardization of English- and French-Canadian public telecasts and the successful promotion of Canadian integration.

Another comparative analysis, "A Media Tale of Two Cities: Quebec Referendum Coverage in Montreal and Toronto" conducted by four communication researchers at the University of Windsor, analyzed 315 radio stories, 322 television stories and 531 newspaper stories related to the official referendum campaign in the French and English media capitals: Montreal and Toronto.²⁷ Their conclusions suggested that there were statistically significant differences in the viewers' perceptions of both political events and political actors. Admittedly, many of their conclusions, such as "a resident of Toronto...could only perceive Lévesque as a devious, dishonest manipulator, whose impressive ability to use the medium makes him all the more dangerous"²⁸, require that we accept the positivist depiction of the audience as homogenized clones who passively receive media feed. Despite these inherent

positivist fallacies, the real differences in quantitative and qualitative coverage of the Referendum identified by these researchers are nevertheless noteworthy. For example, contrary to the well-documented contention that the French-language media engage in more subjective, value-added journalism than their English-language counterparts, in this particular instance the researchers determined that "English-language media are more prone to offer evaluative judgements, in both positive and negative directions, than are the French media".²⁹ Furthermore, the researchers contended that while the French media provided balanced coverage of political actors and supported both referendum options (with a slight edge to the no side), the English language media were deeply critical of sovereigntists and highly supportive of the "Non" option.³⁰ In contrast then with the 1977 Davey Committee which found French-language media to be bathing in "bias", this 1980 study concluded that the English-language media were in this case, guiltier of the same sin.

CBC "bias" revisited: the case of the Meech Lake Accord

More recently, evaluations of English and French public broadcasting's role in promoting Canadian unity have centred on the public broadcaster's portrayal of political events surrounding the Meech Lake Accord. Ironically, almost 15 years after Radio-Canada was labelled a subversive, sovereigntist force, the CBC was forced to answer to accusations that it was covertly biased in its coverage of the

Meech Lake Accord. Attacked on all fronts, the CBC was simultaneously accused of displaying overwhelmingly federalist sympathies and of contributing to the ultimate failure of the federal deal. On the one hand, veteran francophone journalist Michel Vastel argued that Gérard Veilleux, Patrick Watson and the top CBC news and public affairs brass were involved in a conscious conspiracy to ensure the survival of the nation.³¹ In his book, *Bourassa*, Vastel writes: "The message was direct, the corporation had to cooperate with the last-ditch effort to save the Meech Lake Accord".³² On the other hand, Dr. John Meisel, a professor of political science at Queen's University and former CRTC Chairman, accused the CBC of surreptitiously scuttling constitutional reforms. In an essay entitled "CBC Television: Guilty or Maligned?", Meisel charged that: "It was patently obvious that the CBC was bitterly hostile and was vigorously trying to drum up commentators that would attack [the Meech Lake Accord]".³³ Whether the CBC overtly or covertly supported either constitutional stance remains unresolved, but what is clear is that the public broadcaster has been cornered between a rock and a hard place. It must contribute to national unity, but must not conspire to do so; it must reflect the Canadian political reality, but must not do so in a way that undermines attempts to foster national unity.

Standardization of public broadcasting programming

Since questions as to the success of public broadcasting's contribution to Canadian unity were first raised more than twenty years ago, there have been conscious efforts by both the CBC and Radio-Canada to standardize their news and public affairs programming. For example, after the Boyle Committee's report was tabled in 1977, a senior employee of the corporation was instructed to monitor "The National" and "Le telejournal" on a regular basis.³⁴ While this move, in itself, did not necessarily ensure similar news coverage, it did entail a greater corporate knowledge about what each respective division considered newsworthy. Likewise, in the 1980s there was deep concern within the corporation that employee frustration over the Conservative government's reduction of funding to the public broadcaster was linked to potentially biased coverage of political events. The French and English divisions of the corporation "responded to the allegations by carefully monitoring [their] own newscasts for indications of bias and simultaneously defending [their] reputation for political independence".³⁵ The heightened communication between the French and English divisions of the corporation prompted Donald Leith to conclude in 1988 that: "the view of the country presented on the government's television networks has been remarkably successfully standardized".³⁶ However, he also cautioned that "whether the standardization is a monument to national unity or to homogenization is less easily assessed".³⁷

Ironically, the nationalist call for a more cohesive representation of Canadian identity in CBC and Radio-Canada programming is actually a call for a more homogenized, generic portrait of the Canadian consciousness, one that stifles linguistic, regional, ethnic and cultural differences. National television culture, when forced to present unifying images from coast to coast "does not reinforce the concrete ways of life of individual neighbourhoods, towns or subcultures - it shows the way things are done in the 'big world'".³⁸ Consequently, to argue that the CBC and Radio-Canada must generate one symbolic consciousness to be internalized by all Canadians is to institutionalize, centralize and standardize the Canadian experience. As John D. Jackson warns in "Broadcasting: Centralization, Regionalization and Canadian Identity", the power and responsibility accorded to the national public broadcaster in its mandate to foster national identity grants it a seminal role not only in legitimizing official culture, but in creating it:

Institutions, by definition, are patterns of beliefs, values, goals, ways of doing and seeing things. The CBC, as a large scale organization, incorporates a particular institutional set and, though the "Canada" which it has articulated in its formation and broadcasting is restricted, it has been presented as universal. To the extent that the idea of region is incorporated, it is not as a living community, as a lived culture, but as a parochialism tied to the centre through a bureaucratic hierarchy.³⁹

Therefore, if any "Canadian identity" at all is propagated by

CBC and Radio-Canada news and public affairs programming it is a central Canadian consciousness focused squarely on the political, economic and social concerns of Ontario and Quebec.

However, comparative analyses of the CBC and Radio-Canada programs have indicated that the public broadcaster has done more harm to the creation of a unifying Canadian identity than simply to homogenize it into a central Canadian consciousness. As the analyses demonstrate, the respective divisions of the national public broadcasting corporation deepen the chasm between English and French-Canadian society, thereby heightening its divisive tendencies. Stated otherwise, while the CBC may contribute significantly to English-Canadian identity and Radio-Canada may serve a similar purpose among French-Canadians, the cultural and linguistic dualism that characterizes Canadian public broadcasting seemingly creates a barrier, not a bridge to widespread acceptance of one, unified Canadian identity. As Brian Stewart and Peter Desbarats have explained, rather than foster a shared Canadian consciousness, the public broadcasting system:

...is consciously designed to increase the volume of communication transactions between English-Canadians wherever they live, and again between French-Canadians wherever they live. The two language groups tend to live in separate media worlds.⁴

Therefore, whether the national public broadcaster homogenizes the Canadian identity into a central Canadian consciousness or dichotomizes the Canadian identity into separate English and French realities, it clearly does not contribute to an all-

encompassing and unifying vision of Canada.

National public broadcasting's role in promoting unity:
the 1992 verdict

Regardless of both the historical and empirical evidence which points to the national public broadcaster's clear-cut inability to promote a unifying Canadian identity, in many circles, the CBC and Radio-Canada remain an integral component of the Canadian unity equation. For instance, the public broadcaster's unequivocal role as the guarantor of Canadian unity is routinely emphasized by prominent spokespersons such as Keith Spicer, chairman of the CRTC, who stated on May 24, 1990:

The CBC is the back bone and the heart of Canadian broadcasting. It's a literal fact I believe that without the CBC for the past 50-odd years there would not be a Canada - or at least a Canada we would recognize. With or without the words national unity in the Broadcasting Act, national unity is what the CBC inevitably promotes just by being itself at its best - the mirror and echo-chamber of Canada.⁴¹

Likewise, despite the fact that the 1991 Broadcasting Act officially rescinded the corporation's mandate to promote national unity, 75% of Canadians polled in the 1991 Environics Media Study affirmed that the CBC and Radio-Canada contribute either "a great deal" or "somewhat" to Canadian unity.⁴²

The most recent data available from the Environics Media Group, a research agency that regularly tracks Canadians' perceptions of the CBC, concurred with these findings and indicated that:

To most anglophones the CBC symbolizes Canada. It embodies the national identity, it ties the country together, it fosters Canadian culture, promotes artists, and preserves that which is unique to Canada against the giant to the south and the rest of the world. This is the strongest, most consistent and most universally positive component of the corporation's image. It is a deeply felt, even patriotic feeling that the CBC does for Canada something that no other institution can do.⁴³

The same study confirmed that French-Canadians attribute equally great importance to Radio-Canada: "Radio-Canada is deeply woven into the fabric of francophone Canada...9 out of 10 francophones think it is important for the welfare of their society that Radio-Canada be maintained".⁴⁴ However, in the case of French-Canada, Quebecers' attachment to Radio-Canada likely stems more from the broadcaster's role in justifying Quebec nationalist sentiment than from its role in fostering Canadian unity. As Paul Attallah suggests in "Trends and Developments in Canadian television": "...television in Quebec induces in Quebecers an ever deeper conviction of their existence as an autonomous national/cultural identity".⁴⁵ Therefore, the likelihood remains that when Canadians are polled and they assert that CBC and Radio-Canada promote Canadian unity, they are applauding the French and English divisions' roles in promoting unity within their respective English and French-Canadian societies, rather than in Canada as a whole.

The debate rages on...

Clearly, questions as to whether Canadian broadcasting can or does promote Canadian unity or contribute to a unifying collective consciousness still intrigue communication scholars and policy-makers alike. The most recent debate to erupt over the traditional coupling of culture and polity, especially with regards to public television broadcasting, is the publication of Richard Collins' Culture, Communication and National Identity. Collins' central argument is a contentious and disturbing one for Canadian nationalists who have always assumed a strong link between polity and culture. As Collins explains:

The belief that cultural sovereignty and political sovereignty are mutually dependent is the core assumption on which Canadian broadcasting policy has been based. It is an assumption widely held outside Canada and restates one of the central stipulative precepts of nationalism - that polity and culture must be congruent. It is, I believe, a mistaken assumption, as careful examination of the Canadian case will demonstrate.⁴⁶

Collins proceeds to argue that the lack of a strong symbolic system has not threatened Canada's political integrity, but has in fact strengthened it because its "weak symbols have bred tolerance and a respect for diversity which are the envy of the world".⁴⁷ Reaction to Collins' position has been heated and mixed. The attacks on Collins' hypothesis have ranged from objections based on Collins' outdated knowledge of Canada and his flawed understanding of Quebec and Canadian

nationalism (Rowland Lorimer) to objections founded on Collins' disregard for economics and corporate power in the formulation of his argument (Peter Harcourt).⁴⁸ Other academics such as Mary Jane Miller and Gaetan Tremblay, while expressing reservations of their own, applaud Collins for challenging many deeply contested nationalist assumptions and for being "the first academic to attempt consistently to look at programmes, policies and critics in French and English".⁴⁹ While no consensus on Collins' thesis has yet emerged, it is clear that the debate over the relationship between polity and culture and over whether the national public broadcasting system does or should have a role in promoting Canadian unity remains an unresolved and highly contentious issue.

Canadian journalists: powerful strangers

If the limited number of comparative studies of CBC and Radio-Canada mandates and programming seemed surprising, the even more limited number of comparative analyses of Canadian journalists is daunting. In the introduction to his 1985 study "Canadian Newswriters: A Cross Media Analysis of Professional and Personal Attributes", George Pollard writes: "there is a paucity of work which examines the professional and personal characteristics of Canadian newswriters".⁵⁰ Richard Taras in The Newsmakers: The Media's Influence on Canadian Politics confirms Pollard's assessment stating that: "the journalistic elite has emerged in the 1990's as one of the most important groups in the country and one of the least

studied".⁵¹ Over the past thirty years, empirical appraisals of journalistic performances and practices have focused almost invariably on only one of the two linguistic groups. On the one hand, studies on professional ethics and practices such as McLeod and Hawley's 1964 study on the professional orientation of individual newswriters, Wright's 1974 and 1976 follow-up analyses based on McLeod and Hawley's method, Pollard's 1985 work, the first cross-media comparison of Canadian journalistic attributes and John C. Merrill's 1985 study on the correlation between ethical journalism and objective reporting - all without exception dealt exclusively with one half of the Canadian journalism equation: the English-language newswriters.⁵² On the other hand, similar studies of journalists in Quebec such as André Gosselin's consideration of the collective practices of Québec journalists and François Demers' analysis of the good employee model as a threat to professionalism, make no methodological or theoretical attempt to distinguish journalists based on the language of reporting.⁵³ And yet presumably very real and noteworthy differences do exist between the two solitudes of Canadian journalism. As Stephen Kline suggests in his comparative study of national broadcasts, comparative analyses of the two founding nation's respective approaches to news gathering and dissemination would likely reveal that "journalism as a social tradition, with a unique history of development and acceptance in each [nation], may have come to embody special forms of cultural expression".⁵⁴

The information that is available regarding the attitudes, expectations, ethics, practices and professional training of French and English-speaking journalists in Canada tends to consist of impressionistic, anecdotal accounts pieced together mainly by journalists themselves who based their studies on a delicate balance of personal experience and documented fact.⁵⁵ While these reports, often presented in the form of memoirs, make for good reading, they do not provide a comprehensive and conclusive analysis of the differences and similarities between English and French speaking journalists nor can they effectively explain the impact of these findings on French and English journalists' respective relationships to their viewing audience and the media texts. At best, government studies, journalists' memoirs and academic reports written to date provide a pointillistic portrait of the two worlds of Canadian journalism.

The marriage of politics and journalism

The most fundamental difference consistently noted between French-Canadian journalists and their English-language counterparts is the profound relationship between politics and journalism which prevails in Quebec. In fact, a remarkable number of French-language federal and provincial politicians who have significantly shaped the Quebec-Canada relationship were active commentators or editorialists at one point in their careers. Among these notable former journalists are former Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau, former Premier of

Quebec, René Lévesque and Liberal senator, Gérard Pelletier. As Lysiane Gagnon asserted to the 1981 Royal Commission on Newspapers: "French Canada's first great journalists were first and foremost, politicians and debaters".⁵⁶ In its final report, the Commission acknowledged the integral and historic bond between journalism and politics in Quebec, affirming that French-language journalists are "deeply involved in the social transformation of Quebec".⁵⁷ Given this fact, it is not surprising that French-language journalists tend to editorialize the news rather than report it. As Louis Plamondon explained: "They don't report the news in Quebec, they critique the news".⁵⁸ Moreover, this editorialist tradition in French Canada is not a recent phenomenon but has prevailed since the earliest days of the press. As early as 1898, then Prime Minister Wilfred Laurier commented to Henri Bourassa, founder of *Le Devoir*, on the subjective nature of French-Canadian reporting. In reference to Bourassa's critique of Canada's involvement in the Boer War, Laurier said: "Mon cher Henri, le Québec n'a pas d'opinions, il n'a que des sentiments".⁵⁹

The subjective nature of French-Canadian reporting contrasts sharply with English-Canadian journalists' traditional emphasis on the importance of apolitical reporting of political facts. Since the death of the partisan press, the objectivist discourse has been the guiding ideology of English-Canadian reporting. Although objectivism has gone through several mutations over the past seventy years, the

concept of fair, balanced and accurate reporting, used interchangeably with the notion of objectivity by many journalists, remains a powerful ideology in English-Canada today. However, the constant presence of an equally viable French-Canadian approach to news gathering and dissemination has influenced significantly the objectivist stance of the English-Canadian media. As Peter Desbarats, a 40 year veteran of newspaper and television reporting, explained in his Guide to the Canadian News Media, "the commitment of French-speaking journalists [to subjective reporting] forced their anglophone colleagues to acknowledge the extent of their own political biases in reporting".⁶⁰ Despite their commitment to fair and accurate reporting over the years, anglophone journalists such as Desbarats have thus been forced to acknowledge the political assumptions which guide their own conceptualization of news stories. In Desbarats' case, this entailed the recognition that "I could not longer pretend that my own federalist position was objective".⁶¹

Admissions of federalist bias such as this one by Desbarats explain in part the findings of the Windsor researchers in their 1980 study on Referendum coverage in the English and French media. This study's findings that the English media were more overtly biased in their reporting because they concentrated almost exclusively on the federalist option in the Referendum campaign, do not necessarily contradict the notion that francophone journalists more consistently engage in subjective reporting than do their

anglophone counterparts. Rather, they indicate that despite their objectivist stance, English-language journalists are increasingly quick to defend their own ideological positions, especially when these positions are threatened. Stated otherwise, while an intimate relationship between politics and journalism may have traditionally been the trademark of the French-Canadian media, in 1992 the marriage of politics and journalism is seemingly complete not only in Quebec, but throughout the remainder of Canada as well.

The two solitudes of the Canadian media

With the exception of a few ubiquitous journalists such as Jeffrey Simpson, Patrick Brown, Michel Vastel and Jean-François Lépine, for whom the lines between English- and French-language reporting are blurred, most journalists tend to function in only one of the two Canadian media environments. Moreover, especially with reference to English-language reporters, journalists' knowledge of Canada's other official language is often so limited that they cannot read or view the other solitude's journalistic product, except in translation. Not surprisingly, the misunderstandings and misrepresentations that ensue as a result of these divisions drawn along linguistic lines tend to parallel significant ruptures between English- and French-Canada. In most cases, when the working relationships between English- and French-language journalists do turn sour, relations between the journalists' respective viewing publics have long been

strained. In other words, when journalists begin to sing a dissonant tune, more often than not they have taken their cue from a disharmonic Canadian populace.

However, the latest series of professional and personal attacks launched by the feuding English and French factions of the Canadian media have reached new heights of hostility. Fuelled by the seemingly irreconcilable constitutional stances of English- and French-Canada, these biting exchanges have pitted English- and French-language journalists against one another in a war of propaganda that has taken on gigantic proportions. Despite decrees by Alain Saulnier, president of the Fédération professionnelle des journalistes du Québec and by the president of The Canadian Association of Journalists, that journalists should refrain from "propagating the demagogic excesses of one side or the other, because they exist in both camps",⁶² several prominent journalists continue to ignite an increasingly explosive constitutional fire. For example, *Globe and Mail* columnist John Dafoe infuriated his French-language counterparts when he chastised the Quebec press for what he perceived to be its constitutional complacency and when, on the basis of a one-day visit to a journalists' conference in Montreal, he determined that "Quebec journalists are a 'single voice' a self-justifying bunch who know little about Canada outside Quebec".⁶³ Likewise, Diane Francis, editor of the *Financial Post* sparked the indignation of Quebec's separatist journalists when in a November 1991 column she described separatists as "a band of

misguided zealots"⁶⁴ and depicted the aftermath of sovereignty-association as follows: "Like any hostage-taking it will invite violence, or at the very least, dire consequences which would bring the breakaway republic to its knees in days...Parizeau and his band of highwaymen would be deposed and arrested".⁶⁵

Most recently, Laurier Lapierre fuelled further controversy when he denounced Quebec journalists in his *Globe and Mail* article "Meet the Notables who Dictate what Quebeckers Think -The Media are the Mess". In this article, Lapierre argued that the Quebec media are members of an elite group of notables, composed of predominantly male, Québécois pure laine who are the builders and keepers of an impregnable wall that limits "both the content and the flow of information Canadians need to make a sensible decision about their future with or without Canada".⁶⁶ Furthermore, Lapierre contended that: "The media's message in Québec is clear: Beware of Canadians! With such an attitude mistrust dominates".⁶⁷ The retaliation from Quebec journalists was swift and intense. Lysiane Gagnon, a prominent Quebec editorialist, replied with an equally devastating list of English-Canadian media vices which included: blatant distortions, gross mistakes due to a lack of knowledge of French, flawed analysis and knee-jerk stereotyping.⁶⁸ Gagnon particularly resented:

...the constant, paternalistic lecturing by some colleagues who seem to think that they must educate those poor, parochial-minded Quebeckers and introduce them to the broad, enlightened world-class

outlook of the ever-cosmopolitan English-Canadian press.⁶⁹

The animosity that has dictated many recent French and English media exchanges has led journalists to "become amazingly adept at recognizing slights and injustices and reporting them to their audiences."⁷⁰ Given the antagonism that has increasingly marked English- and French-language journalists' coverage of constitutional issues, the consequences of the journalists' actions on constitutional reform and nation-building have been seriously questioned by their respective professional associations.

English- and French-Canadian media: divided they stand

A healthy professional self-doubt spurred in large part by the impotence of the objectivist discourse, has led to several panel discussions at journalistic conferences across the country on the role and responsibility of the media in the constitutional reform process. Yet rather than reglorify the journalistic gods of objectivity and rationality, these panel discussions have become a testimony to journalists' subjectivity and emotional involvement in their work. Despite many journalists' protests that they are not politically or socially motivated in their reporting, personal opinions have unquestionably impinged on professional practices. The 1992 Canadian Association of Journalists' Convention provided a case in point of how, in some instances, journalistic exchanges have come to typify the macrocosm of Canadian constitutional wrangling. As Gillian Stewart reported from

the convention, the panel entitled "Taking Sides: Federalist/Sovereignist Biases in the Media - Are the Two Solitudes Listening to Each Other?":

...presented Canada in a microcosm. There was Quebec hogging centre stage as it tried to sort out its internal contradictions. The West was left to watch. The only thing missing was Ontario as a moderator, speaking, of course, for the rest of Canada.¹¹

The end result of this panel discussion, meant to promote greater understanding of the other solitude's perceptions and opinions, was to further highlight the divisions that exist even within the two solitudes' respective camps.

Symposiums organized by the Fédération Professionnelle des Journalistes du Québec on nationalism and the media and on whether the media are losing their grip in reporting constitutional issues yielded similar results. At the symposium on nationalism and the media held in Quebec city, the Federation reiterated the objectivist creed, maintaining that journalists reporting on constitutional issues should not become the mouthpiece for any one political position.¹² However, panellist Michel Vastel threw objectivism to the wind and issued a call to arms to combat the "intellectual terrorism" of English Canadian media. In a passionate plea to his fellow Québécois journalists, Vastel railed:

The prominent columnists in English Canada are using the language of war, as though we are in a state of war. They are talking about the intervention of the army, the recovery of territory, the arrest of a democratically elected leader et cetera. I am talking about all kinds

of articles I have seen published in English Canada. What I am saying is that we have to act accordingly in French Canada. In my opinion, in situations of war there is only one just cause and that is your⁷³ own. All others are your enemies.

Unfortunately, pronouncements such as this one have only served to heighten the tension between English- and French-language journalists at a time when the Canadian media's role in providing a joint public forum for the consideration of constitutional issues is of utmost importance.

The two media groups have become so entrenched in their respective positions, that a quick and complete reconciliation seems highly unlikely. As veteran journalist Pauline Couture who has worked for both French- and English-language media for more than twenty years explains: "It's human nature that whichever side you are on, you think it's the best side. You think you have the truth down pat".⁷⁴ Nevertheless, given her knowledge of, and her ease with both of Canada's media worlds, Couture regrets that linguistic disputes hinder journalists from collaborating more frequently and more fully: "It often seems to me that both sides have a lot to learn from each other".⁷⁵ Perhaps the best evidence of Canadian journalists' inability to recognize how deeply they have sunk into tribal warfare or to admit that they are anything less than the staunchest guardians of the public trust, is revealed in Todd Phillips' recent assessment of the French-English journalistic feud. Phillips, a Montreal-based freelancer, concludes his consideration of the bickering between English- and French-

Canadian media with the warning that:

If the media remain actively and emotionally involved in the national unity debate, Canadians will have to turn to their politicians to help them understand what is being said on the other side of the linguistic fence. They will have to turn to the same politicians who have always taken advantage of Canada's unique linguistic duality to deliver distinctively different messages to the two solitudes.¹⁶

The irony of this statement lies in the fact that arguably more journalists, more often, have had more venues to do precisely what Phillips fears from politicians: propagate two distinct messages to English- and French-Canadians, audiences who for the most part, have unilingual viewing and reading habits.

French and English television audiences: the narrowing gap

While there are significant differences that must be noted between French- and English-Canadian television audiences, the two solitudes display remarkably similar expectations, attitudes and opinions with regards to the CBC and Radio-Canada news and public affairs programming. For instance, both English- and French-language viewers believe that the national public broadcaster presents the best television newscasts, commentaries and documentaries in Canada. In Quebec, over 50 per cent of viewers rated Radio-Canada the best purveyor of newscasts and commentaries, more than double the number who rated TVA the highest.¹⁷ Likewise, English-Canadian viewers surveyed by the Environics Research

Group chose the CBC by a 5:2 margin over CTV as the best source for news and documentaries.⁷⁸ Given English- and French-Canadians' appreciation for the national public broadcaster's news and public affairs programming, it is not surprising that over half of the respondents in both the English- and French-language polls indicated that they would believe the CBC and Radio-Canada respectively if they heard conflicting news stories from other media sources.⁷⁹ English- and French-language viewers also agree on the prominent features which distinguish the CBC and Radio-Canada from other television stations. The viewers believe that CBC and Radio-Canada, more than any other stations, give equal attention to all regions of Canada, contribute more to the general knowledge of the public and present more Canadian made programs.⁸⁰

With specific reference to the respective viewing audiences for *The Journal* and *Le Point*, the public affairs programming that is the basis of our textual analysis, many similarities have also been documented. For example, a study done by COMPAS, an Ottawa- and Toronto-based research firm which surveys the attitudes of public sector elites suggested that these two programs were regularly viewed by an important and influential group of English- and French-Canadians:

...in the eyes of the policy elite CBC television is pre-eminent. More than half (53%) report watching CBC and Radio-Canada television news at least five times a week compared to less than a sixth in the case of CTV and the French private network TVA (16%). CBC's

"National" and its francophone counterpart are the crown jewels in the mind of the policy elite. The audience for the ensuing the "Journal" and "Le Point" is halved from 53% watching the news program at least five times weekly to 26% watching the follow-up public affairs program.¹¹

Both the English and French television audiences tend to view their daily hour of evening news and public affairs programming (*The National* coupled with *The Journal* in English Canada and *Le telejournal* paired with *Le Point* in French Canada) as a package deal.¹² A spill-over effect from the news to the public affairs programming is thus created as Canadians first tune in to view the national newscast and then remain tuned in for the ensuing public affairs program. Recent polls suggest that *Le Point* generally reaches up to 70 per cent of *Le telejournal's* audience, while *The Journal* retains at least 50 per cent of *The National's* audience.¹³ "Consistent with this dedicated behaviour is the fact that over half (54%) of the panel members polled said they 'rarely or never' switched back and forth between *The Journal* and other programs."¹⁴ Clearly then, *Le Point* and *The Journal* following on the heels of *Le telejournal* and *The National* are watched frequently by prominent and influential Canadians in both English- and French-Canada.

CBC Research Centre's analysis of *Le Point's* and *The Journal's* seasonal audience shares as well as their audience shares during the two four-part public affairs series which are the basis of this textual analysis, further confirm these

findings. The 1991-92 season audience for *The Journal* was an average of 900, 000 viewers⁸⁵ whereas the 1991-92 season audience for *Le Point* was an average of 440, 000 viewers.⁸⁶ Insofar as the public affairs series "Untying the Knot" is concerned, the average minute audience share of all viewing to English-language stations was approximately 1.2 million viewers, a whopping 33 per cent more viewers than its seasonal audience.⁸⁷ The cumulative reach for all four programs was 4.8 million; that is to say, that approximately one in four English-Canadians was exposed to at least 15 minutes of *The Journal's* "Untying the Knot". Given these audience figures, "Untying the Knot" was undoubtedly a major television event in English-Canada. *Le Point's* average minute audience share of all viewing to French-language stations was approximately 400, 000 viewers, a little less than its seasonal audience figures.⁸⁸ Nevertheless, from the first to the third episode of "Le nationalisme québécois" its audience figures jumped by almost 40, 000 viewers.⁸⁹ Moreover, this public affairs series' cumulative reach from the 21-24 of January, 1992 was 700, 000 which clearly indicates that a substantial portion of Quebec's television viewing audience was exposed to some portion of this series.⁹⁰ Overall then, the statistics suggest that both *Le Point's* and *The Journal's* public affairs series were viewed by an influential and substantial number of Canadian citizens.

The distinct viewing habits of English- and French-Canadians

Despite these shared viewing traits, certain statistics do suggest that there are some major differences between English- and French-language audiences. For example, a study of the preferred media reliance of Canadians for news by language indicated that while 53 per cent of French-speaking Canadians relied on television as their primary news source, only 36 per cent of English-speaking Canadians relied on television for this purpose.⁹¹ More divided by their preferred news sources, 25 per cent of English-speaking Canadians identified radio and 39 per cent indicated newspapers and magazines as their preferred source, compared with 15 per cent and 31 per cent respectively in French-speaking Canada.⁹² A recent CROP survey commissioned by the French-language magazine *L'Actualité* also suggested that English-language Canadians have much more faith in journalists than do their French-language neighbours. Whereas 59 per cent of English-speaking Canadians were said to have confidence in journalists, only 49 per cent of French-speaking Canadians voiced similar confidence.⁹³ And yet this 10 per cent difference seems to have remarkably little effect on the credibility accorded to French-language newscasts. Arguably, this lack of confidence could be attributed more to the post-modern character of French-Canadian society than to the lack of credibility of Québécois journalists. Unlike English-Canadians who still display a healthy respect for most Canadian institutions and authority figures, Quebec society

seemingly does not feel honour bound to trust its journalistic opinion leaders.

For the purpose of the subsequent textual analysis, one of the most interesting statistics provided by the *Actualité* study was with regards to French and English television audiences' viewing of television programs in the other solitude's language. While French Quebecers were found to watch 8 per cent and English Quebecers 5 per cent of second language programming, BBM indicators for 1990-91 revealed that only 2 per cent of viewers outside Quebec watch French-language programming.⁹⁴ Moreover, this figure of 2 per cent was said to be inflated because it included the viewing habits of the million francophones living outside Quebec. The end result is thus that French-Canadians watch little CBC programming and English-Canadians watch almost no Radio-Canada programming. Therefore, with the exception of published comparative studies (of which there are very few) English and French-Canadian audiences have at best a mediocre, second-hand knowledge, and at worst no knowledge at all, of the sounds and images and thus the symbols and discourses that are conveyed to their French- and English-speaking neighbours by television, the most influential medium of late twentieth century Canada.

Conclusion

Our consideration of the primary features which shape the CBC's and Radio-Canada's mandate, programs, journalists and audiences suggest that there is an almost unbridgeable chasm between the guiding ideals and the realities of French- and English-language national public broadcasting. While the nationalist rhetoric applauds the corporation's success in promoting Canadian unity, a historical overview of the French and English divisions of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation demonstrates that the structure of the corporation privileges political division and cultural dualism, rather than union and cohesion. Likewise, whereas the corporate rhetoric proclaims that the CBC and Radio-Canada programs foster Canadian identity, comparative analyses of CBC and Radio-Canada programming suggest that the Canadian "identities" fed to viewers either differ substantially according to language or are homogenized into a Central Canadian portrait. Furthermore, while North American journalists continue to sing the praises of objectivism, recent exchanges between French and English journalists clearly indicate that the objectivist creed is an increasingly impotent professional work ethic in Canadian journalism today. Lastly, although both scholars and programmers continue to frame the English and French-language audiences as two distinct viewing publics who command different approaches to information consumption, recent audience surveys conclude that the French and English-language audiences are more similar than different with respect to

their consumption of news and public affairs programming. Having made these observations, our textual analysis of *The Journal* and *Le Point* must take into consideration both the fact and the fiction, both the rhetoric and the reality because it is this fusion of mythic beliefs with historical facts, and subjective interpretation with empirical analysis that forges the powerful ideological discourses which shape the production, dissemination and reception of the media text in both English- and French-Canadian society.

CHAPTER 3

AN ANALYSIS OF IDEOLOGICAL DISCOURSES AND ACTION-GUIDES IMPLICIT IN "UNTYING THE KNOT"

Now that the historical roles of the CBC and Radio-Canada have been considered and that the differences between French- and English-language journalists and audiences have been identified, the focus of this study shifts to the comparative textual analysis of CBC and Radio-Canada public affairs programming. As previously stated, the English-language component of this comparative analysis of English- and French-Canadian national public broadcasting programs, is the four-part public affairs special, "Untying the Knot" which aired on CBC's *The Journal*, February 18-21, 1992. Hosted by journalist Terence McKenna, this series addresses the potential aftermath of a Quebec-Canada separation. As explained by McKenna in his opening monologue, the premise for the production of this series, is that sovereignty association as a potential outcome of the constitutional crisis is an option that has not been considered seriously by Canadians outside Quebec. To resolve this lacuna in the public debate, each of the four full-edition episodes deals with a likely emotional, territorial, economic or political repercussion of sovereignty association for both Canada and an independent Quebec. Facilitated by McKenna who alternately plays the role of host, narrator and interviewer, each program begins with the presentation of a series of intriguing questions followed by

a consideration of plausible answers offered by Canadians who have differing visions of the potential Quebec-Canada negotiations. Each episode also features a "friendly" debate between two esteemed Canadians who represent opposite sides of the issues discussed in the program. In these debates, the federalist torch is carried, in order of appearance, by former Premier of Ontario David Peterson, Dalhousie University professor of law Mary Ellen Trepel, Toronto economist Patrick Grady and British-Columbian Senator Patricia Carney. The Quebec and the indépendantiste stance, assumed to be one and the same, are presented by Parti Québécois Vice-President Bernard Landry, P.Q. Executive member John Cliche, Quebec economist François Vaillancourt and former Quebec minister of trade and industry Rodrigue Tremblay.

The five major ideological discourses

While there are several secondary and tertiary discourses implicit in "Untying the Knot", five major ideological discourses have been selected for analysis. However, before the major ideological discourses are detailed, clear-cut definitions of three key terms, "discourse", "ideology" and "ideological discourse" are required. For the purpose of this study, discourse is defined as a "formal, orderly and usually extended expression of thought on a subject".¹ Ideology is a somewhat more difficult concept to define because this term has been given many connotations since the word was first coined by French philosopher Destutt Tracy in 1801 to denote

"the science of ideas which would reveal to men [and presumably to women as well] the source of their biases and prejudices".² Nevertheless, within the context of this study, ideology signifies both "a manner or content of thinking characteristic of an individual, group or culture"³ and "the integrated assertions, theories, and aims that constitute a socio-political program".⁴ These two definitions of ideology are combined because in accordance with the critical approach, ideology is conceived neither as a fundamentally political economic formation, nor as a predominantly cultural formation. Rather, it is a complex web of cultural, political and economic factors. Finally, the rationale for combining the terms discourse and ideology is simply to emphasize that the verbal and visual expressions of thought in these public affairs series are necessarily ideological, that is to say, they are a complex fusion of political, economic and cultural ideas and ideals which are expressed both at an individual and a group level. Having clarified the use of the key terms, attention is now shifted to the identification of the major ideological discourses.

The first discourse considered is the objectivist discourse with special attention given to the ways in which this discourse structures the presentation, classification and prioritization of other major discourses inherent in these programs. The second discourse examined is the liberal pluralist discourse. This discourse, with its emphasis on individual rights and consensual democracy, regroups several

secondary and sporadic discourses in that it provides a platform for the expression of the ideological discourses of ethnic, linguistic and regional minorities both in Quebec and in Canada. The third and fourth discourses analyzed are the federalist and separatist discourses which figure prominently in all four episodes of the series. In addition to exposing the fundamental assumptions of these two ideological discourses, this analysis will reveal how both the format and the content of this series posit these discourses in tandem, with subtle, and at times not so subtle preeminence accorded to the federalist discourse. Lastly, the capitalist discourse fuelled by consumerism and economic rationalism, that both permeates and overrides all other discourses in the texts, is examined. This analysis is intended to reveal both the content and the positioning of ideological discourses in this series. To this end, the importance of narrative reports, interviews and face to face debates in both the construction and prioritization of ideological discourses will be explored. In addition, the ways in which each discourse is interwoven with, undercut by, or superimposed on the next will be discussed.

Once these major ideological discourses have been identified both in kind and in degree, attention will then be shifted, albeit briefly, to the effect of this mediated structuration on the nature and range of the action-guides presented to the viewing audience. For the purpose of this analysis, "action-guides" are defined as both the prescribed

and proscribed course of action which the structure and presentation of the range and hierarchy of ideological discourses in these public affairs programs offer to the viewing audience. The motivation for identifying these action-guides is not to suggest that all viewers will necessarily internalize the action-guides in precisely the manner decreed by the broadcaster. Rather, this study is concerned with whether the ideological messages communicated to viewer are open or closed-ended and whether there is one preferred reading or several potential readings conveyed to the viewer. Furthermore, this study attempts to identify the components of these public affairs programs which are likely to reverberate forcefully with the viewing audience and thereby increase the possibility that the audience might adopt some of the action-guides as prescribed by the broadcaster.

The anticipated result of this textual analysis is two-fold. First, in keeping with the attempt to discern the ways in which public affairs programming structures Canadians' understanding of the constitutional crisis, the analysis of "Untying the Knot" when compared with the analysis of "Le nationalisme québécois" will reveal fundamental differences in the kind and the degree of ideological messages funnelled to Canadians by the English and French divisions of the national public broadcaster. Second, and in more general terms, this analysis will illustrate the effectiveness of the critical process in discerning the mechanisms for structuring ideology in news and public affairs programming.

Divorce as the central metaphor in "Untying the Knot"

Before the five major discourses are examined, the organizing metaphor of this public affairs series merits particular consideration. The central metaphor used to depict the sovereignty association option is the concept of a Quebec-Canada divorce, hence the title "Untying the Knot". This metaphor is repeatedly emphasized by narrator-interviewer Terence McKenna. In each of the four episodes, McKenna states the intention of the program as follows: "This week in a special series of programs, *The Journal* will assess the impact of a possible Quebec-Canada divorce".⁵ McKenna reiterates the divorce metaphor in rhetorical questions such as "Would the divorce proceedings between Quebecers and Canadians be very hostile?"⁶ and "How complex would be the process of disentanglement?"⁷ He also relies on the divorce metaphor to simplify complex issues such as the division of the national debt and assets between Canada and an independent Quebec: "It's a lot like a divorce. Who gets the house? Who gets the car? Who is going to assume the payments for the mortgage and other consumer loans?"⁸ Federalist proponents such as David Peterson and Patricia Carney also have recourse to the marriage/divorce metaphor to contextualize their arguments. Peterson compares the disputes between Canada and Quebec to normal and healthy bickering with one's wife,⁹ while Carney uses the divorce metaphor to summarize the antagonism she anticipates between Quebec and Canada in the wake of sovereignty association:

I'm saying that it's like a divorce. You and I may start out by saying...we're going to think of the children, but when it comes to property settlement, when it comes to who gets the share of the family business, when it comes to who is going to pay the cost of all the problems that will arise, I don't think it's going to be civilized.¹⁰

Notably, however, Quebecers and separatist proponents never refer to this metaphor, nor depend on it to substantiate their arguments in any of the four episodes.

By choosing the divorce analogy as the central and organizing metaphor used to depict the disintegration of the Quebec-Canada relationship, *The Journal* is from the very start imbuing the subsequent consideration of the sovereignty association option with a negative connotation that will reverberate forcefully across Canada. On a purely denotative level, "untying the knot" implies a disentanglement of two ends fastened securely together. On a connotative level, the use of "untying the knot" as a euphemism for divorce conjures up powerful images of the disintegration of the family unit, the separation of worldly goods and the severing of the sacred covenant between husband and wife. The divorce analogy is also a powerful metaphor because many Canadians have experienced divorce first hand or have witnessed the divorce of close friends and family members and can thus associate personally with this experience. The images that memories of divorce evoke for most Canadians are not of amicable settlements between friendly, rational parties, but rather of bitter, hostile and expensive legal battles for possession of

the real estate and material goods and for custody of the children. The title "Untying the Knot" thus suggests to viewers that Quebec and Canada are entangled in such a way that the knot can only be untied through great suffering and pain that will be emotionally taxing and financially costly to all Canadians.

The fact that the marriage metaphor resonates very deeply in English-Canada - 92% of Canadians outside Quebec polled for an *Actualité* study viewed marriage as a sanctified and important institution, compared with only 68% in Quebec¹¹ - further suggests that the English-Canadian audience will react negatively to the central metaphor of this program. As Northop Frye explains, metaphor is the generative force through which "a particular statement in a particular context acquires a universal significance".¹² The widespread connotation of "untying the knot" in English-Canada, especially when applied to the country, is of failure, antagonism and moral degradation. As a result, the presentation of Quebec as the partner who, for no apparently good reason, is unhappy with its current marital relationship with Canada, encourages the view that Quebec's insistence on a divorce is at best whimsical and irresponsible and at worst scandalous and unacceptable. Therefore, the choice of the divorce metaphor as the organizing image for an impartial examination of sovereignty association, clearly skews a priori English-Canadians' approach to the issues discussed.

The objectivist discourse

The first discourse considered is the objectivist discourse because it plays a crucial role in selecting, framing and prioritizing the subsequent discourses presented to viewers in "Untying the Knot". For the purpose of this study, the analysis of the objectivist discourse centres on three facets of the journalistic process. First, Terence McKenna's performance as host and narrator will be depicted as the personification of the objectivist discourse. Second, McKenna's interview techniques and his journalistic posturing will be analyzed. Lastly, McKenna's choice of the pro-con model to structure the presentation of the sovereignty association option will be considered.

McKenna: the personification of objectivity

In each of the four episodes, McKenna is strategically positioned as an objective examiner of the sovereignty association option. The opening monologue to each program which features McKenna standing alone asking rhetorical questions, immediately establishes him as a rational, impartial inquisitor. Moreover, by alternately picturing McKenna either beside an imposing boardroom table figured against a black background or against a distant and dark Montreal skyline, the producers reinforce the perception that McKenna speaks from an ideological void. Significantly, in the boardroom shots, McKenna is never seated at the

negotiating table. He delivers his monologue standing aloof to one side or casually resting against the table; he is clearly not a player with vested interests in the debate; he negotiates for neither side. Likewise, when McKenna is pictured perched against the Montreal skyline, the framing reinforces the notion that McKenna is well-distanced from the political crisis and ensuing debate in the city below.

McKenna maintains this objective posture throughout the four programs. During his interviews, he is pictured relatively infrequently and when the camera does rest on him, he is devoid of emotion. He displays no overt sympathy or disdain for any of the ideas put forth by the interviewees; his gestures betray no opinion in the form of a nodding head or a disapproving eye. When he must speak on camera, McKenna attempts to limit his role to that of a quiet and self-effacing host who presents the issues, introduces each guest and then politely leaves the parties to their discussion. For the most part, McKenna privileges the voice-over technique to narrate the program and connect various speakers' arguments and questions to one another. This technique serves to further distance him from the debate.

Paradoxically, while McKenna's limited physical presence on the screen combined with his voice-overs disassociate him from the arguments and emotions expressed in the program, these techniques also give him omnipotent control of the debate. The impression conveyed to the viewing public is that McKenna has little or no control over the opinions expressed

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in the program. In fact, McKenna is the all-knowing guide; he alone leads the audience through the program signalling the beginning and the end of debates, deciding the moments of pause (for commercials) and introducing the next topic of discussion. Furthermore, while it is the separatist and federalist proponents who ultimately appear on the screen expressing their ideas and opinions to the viewing public, it is McKenna who decides who will be allowed to express a particular argument in a particular context. As John Fiske explains in Television Culture:

Even though the dialogue "belongs" to the characters who speak it, it is *produced* by the author. In television news the same principle holds. Whatever an individual character may say, its meaning will be determined not by his or her intentions or situation, but by placing of the interview in the overall context of the story.¹³

McKenna is thus an omniscient, authoritative figure whose journalistic choices permeate the program. His voice comes from both nowhere and everywhere.

Interview posturing

McKenna's adherence to the objectivist discourse is also implicit in the interview techniques he privileges throughout "Untying the Knot". In keeping with the objectivist discourse, McKenna never relates information or asks questions from the perspective of the first person. Rather, he phrases his narration and questions in such a way that he always purports to speak on behalf of a recognizable collectivity be

they aboriginal people, ethnic minorities in Quebec or English-Canadians. As Ian Taylor explains in "Non-political television: The Nightly Discourse of *The Journal*", most *Journal* reporters display an overwhelming "concern to represent every conceivable aspect of consensual politics in Canada"¹⁴ by asking "questions either in interviews or during special reports, which represent most of the different ideological and/or political positions held to within the Canadian population".¹⁵

However, upon closer examination, it becomes clear that McKenna's objective posturing is not extended to the defense of French-Canadian separatists; he speaks solely on behalf of the English-Canadian majority. McKenna's consensual questioning therefore displays only the array of federalist positions; no questions in support of the separatist position are posed. For example, McKenna attempts to ascertain English Quebecers' and ethnic minorities' rights when he asked: "What do you think the obligations are of the federal government towards English Quebecers and other minorities that would say 'We want to remain in Canada'".¹⁶ Likewise, he categorically voices English-Canadians' concerns when he tells Joe Clark:

You know a lot of English-Canadians have said: 'Boy if it came to negotiating with a Quebec that had voted for independence, I don't think that I would like to see Mr. Mulroney from Baie Comeau or Jean Chrétien from Shawinigan taking a role in this'.

Yet the only time McKenna carries the torch of sovereign Quebecers, is to highlight the concerns of small business

people who fear commercial retribution from Canada in the event of sovereignty association or to inquire as to the fate of federal civil servants from Quebec who would lose their jobs after Quebec separates. Ironically, he never phrases his questions in a way that lends credence or support to the ideological stance of sovereign Quebecers. While McKenna avoids phrasing his questions or comments in a way that would undermine his objectivist stance, he clearly positions himself as a defender of federalist concerns such as the fate of minorities in an independent Quebec. In this instance then, the objectivist discourse cloaks the subtle ways in which McKenna's posturing disfavours Quebec separatists.

The pro-con documentary model

The third way McKenna attempts to adhere to the objectivist creed is with regards to the emphasis he places on a balanced presentation of contrasting viewpoints. From the opening sequence, it is clear that the program will posit those who chant "Canada uni, Canada uni"¹⁸ against those who chant "Vive le Québec".¹⁹ The introductory images repeated in each episode reinforce this pro-con opposition through the juxtaposition of the Canadian and Quebec flag, the Canadian Parliament and the Quebec legislature and the federalist and separatist protesters. However, as Richard Taras warns in The Newsmakers: The Media's Influence on Politics, rigid and sometimes ironclad adherence to the pro-con model can be "carried to some absurd lengths"²⁰ thereby leading to "some

peculiar generalizations".²¹

Such is the case with McKenna's use of this model in "Untying the Knot". In the opening minutes of the first program, McKenna suggests to the audience that: "Before the talks even begin there's one very perplexing question. In the event of secession, it's clear who negotiates for Quebec - the government of Quebec. But who would negotiate for Canada?"²² In light of this statement, McKenna's choice of Jacques Parizeau as the authoritative spokesperson from Quebec is indeed questionable. If the government of Quebec is clearly the legitimate negotiator for its citizens, why is not even one member of the present Quebec government featured in any of the four episodes? The answer McKenna provides to this question in "Untying the Knot" is that "Quebec would likely present a common front"²³ (visuals depict Jacques Parizeau and Robert Bourassa shaking hands and laughing jovially), - an extremely debatable assumption at best. The more likely explanation for the absolute absence of Liberal government spokespersons is that the Bourassa government's ambivalent separatist-federalist stance would not provide the easy and obvious oppositional and confrontational balance McKenna sought to present in this series. If more nuanced ideological positions from Quebec had been included, McKenna would have been forced to acknowledge and thus address the great divergence of opinions on sovereignty association that exists not only in Quebec, but in English-Canada as well. By positioning Jacques Parizeau and Joe Clark as the key

spokespersons for each side, McKenna was able to reduce the discussion of the sovereignty association option to a manageable dichotomy between committed separatists and determined federalists.

Significantly, this is not the first time that McKenna has been unable to "resist couching his report in the 'there are only two positions' model".²⁴ In a 1987 half-hour documentary on the Meech Lake Accord presented on *The Journal*, McKenna:

...argued that since Confederation there have been two 'opposing visions of Canada' although they have appeared in different guises, 'centralization versus decentralization, federal power versus provincial power, one Canada versus two nations and one Canada versus a community of communities'.²⁵

In this case, as in 1987, McKenna's insistence on presenting two perfectly balanced, albeit extreme, positions leads him to crudely reduce a complex historical, economic and cultural crisis into two neatly packaged alternatives. Ironically, McKenna's adherence to the objectivist notion of balance, leads him to betray the other half of the objectivist equation: non-distortion.

The liberal pluralist discourse

The pro-con model privileged for the examination of the sovereignty association option in "Untying the Knot" reduces the effectiveness and the import of both Quebec and Canadian minority groups' discourses. In the opening minutes of "Untying the Knot", McKenna gives the audience the impression that the series will consider a plurality of concerns and

views regarding the potential Quebec-Canada separation. In his opening monologue, he tells viewers: "We talk to the people who would be most affected by Quebec independence, minorities in that province...natives in the North...and Acadians in New Brunswick".²⁶ However, after this introductory overview, McKenna quickly rivets viewers' attention to the federalist-separatist, Canada-Quebec, English-French dichotomies in the program, a journalistic choice which severely limits both the quantitative and qualitative assessment of ethnic, linguistic and regional minorities' ideological discourses. When minority discourses are given a platform, they are situated in the context of the established federalist-separatist opposition. As a result, the ideological discourses championed by groups such as francophones outside Quebec or ethnic minorities in Quebec can only be perceived as secondary discourses when compared to the federalist or separatist ones which permeate all four programs. Having said this, the liberal pluralist discourse, which is clearly among the five major ideological discourses fuelling the presentation of facts and opinions in "Untying the Knot", provides an important venue for the introduction and consideration of minority discourses. With its emphasis on the protection and promotion of individual freedom and the supremacy it accords to democratic, consensual politics, the liberal pluralist discourse repeatedly forces the issue of minority rights to the forefront.

Moreover, insofar as it serves as a vehicle for the

expression of minorities' ideological discourses, the liberal pluralist discourse plays a noteworthy role in legitimizing the hierarchy of discourses in "Untying the Knot". When used by minority groups in Quebec, the importance the liberal pluralist discourse grants to individual freedom and individual rights consistently undermines the separatist discourse and reaffirms the pre-eminence of the federalist discourse. For example, Terence McKenna's question to Jacques Parizeau based on liberal pluralist assumptions, ("If the francophones in Quebec have the right to self-determination, how could you deny this for the aboriginal people of Northern Quebec"²⁷) plants the seed in viewers' minds that the separatist discourse is either hypocritical or highly selective because it does not extend the same privileges and rights it demands for its French-speaking majority to its aboriginal minority. Mary Ellen Trepel's recourse to liberal pluralist logic in her debate with John Cliche, the P.Q. member responsible for aboriginal issues, further underlines this inconsistency. Trepel argues that the Parti Québécois' policies are unacceptable because they are not premised on prior aboriginal consent, nor do they respect the aboriginal people's right to self-determination:

Aboriginal people have a right to self-determination exactly like Quebec has a right to self-determination. If the federal government was to say to you: 'You will have this arrangement with us. It will be a good arrangement for you. But you will not consent to it.' French-speaking Canadians would find that unacceptable. And that's what you're

saying to aboriginal people?! You're expecting them to accept what you would not accept in Canada."

A similar respect for individual choice as it is embodied in the liberal pluralist discourse is also insisted upon by Robert Libman, President of Alliance Quebec. In defense of English Quebecers' right to remain Canadian citizens in an independent Quebec, Libman asserts: "We feel that at least the territory that we are part of, the territory that belongs to us... the soil under our feet, is Canadian soil. Who has the right to come to us and tell us that it no longer belongs to us?"²⁹ Without exception, when the liberal pluralist discourse is evoked by minority groups inside Quebec, it serves as a rallying cry for the triumph of the individual over a potentially autocratic and authoritative imposition of Quebec independence.

However, the liberal pluralist discourse is a two-edged sword; it can both undermine and fuel the separatist discourse in Quebec. In other words, while the liberal pluralist discourse is used against the separatist discourse to defend the rights of the minorities in Quebec, it also serves to defend the rights of the French-speaking minority in North America against the federalist discourse. For example, the liberal pluralist discourse is intermingled with the separatist discourse during the debate between David Peterson and Bernard Landry in the opening program of the series. Ironically, Landry resorts to the same ideological discourse

used against sovereignty association by minority groups to defend the merits of the separation option, when he states:

What we are proposing is precisely this new arrangement in harmony that everyone is wishing. Sovereignty association...is that sort of modern arrangement respecting national entities, national dignities and differences.³⁰

The liberal pluralist discourse also forcefully conveys Rodrigue Tremblay's point in his debate with Patricia Carney, when he argues that the decision-making power should be in the hands of the people:

Let Quebec take its own decision. Let the electorate in Quebec decide what type of government they want...You know, we patronize Quebec and say, poor little Quebec, they should do this and that...let Quebecers democratically decide for themselves.³¹

In this instance as in several others, the liberal pluralist discourse serves to dramatically reinforce the separatist cry for respect of the French-speaking minority's rights to democratically and independently determine their own future. Overall then, the liberal pluralist discourse's effect on the hierarchy of discourses implicit in "Untying the Knot" varies according to whether it is interwoven with the federalist or separatist discourse.

The separatist and federalist discourses

The federalist and separatist ideologies in "Untying the Knot" are juxtaposed as confrontational, oppositional and contradictory. Given that the series is structured as an in-

depth consideration of the sovereignty association option, the separatist discourse is clearly an offensive one; it is saddled with the burden of proof. The separatist discourse must convince Canadians that the status quo is unacceptable, that sovereignty-association is in the national interest of Canada and Quebec, and that both the separation negotiations and the subsequent Quebec-Canada relationship will be civilized, peaceful and relatively cost-free. The federalist discourse, on the other hand, operates as a direct contestation of the separatist discourse's assumptions. Significantly, the federalist discourse contains no well-defined counter-plan for renewed federalism; it offers no solutions to the constitutional crisis. Limited to a defensive role, its sole function in this series is to refute the arguments of the separatist discourse. As a result, the fate of the federalist discourse rests entirely on its ability to convince Canadians that sovereignty-association is not in the national interest, that it would lead to explosive emotional exchanges and violence, and that it would be extremely costly in both political and economic terms for Canada and Quebec. To better illustrate how these two discourses function in "Untying the Knot", the arguments advanced by the separatist discourse and the refutations provided by the federalist discourse will be reviewed. Thereafter, the ways in which each discourse undermines, opposes or negates the other will be considered.

The fundamental tenets of the separatist discourse

The separatist discourse as presented in "Untying the Knot" is premised on three fundamental assumptions. The first of these is that Canadian federalism is a dysfunctional political system administered by an English-speaking majority that has traditionally disfavoured Quebec and mismanaged its affairs. This ideological stance is first introduced to the viewing audience during the debate between David Peterson and Bernard Landry in the opening program of the series. Despite Peterson's suggestion that Canada is one of the best countries in the world in which to live, Landry insists that "the evidence is clear that Canada is no longer operational nor politically, nor economically".³² Furthermore, Landry contends that "we have all paid in advance, including the rest of Canada, the price of Quebec sovereignty. Twenty five years of quarrelling and bickering over constitutional issues is not the way to run a country".³³ In the final debate of the series between Rodrigue Tremblay and Patricia Carney, Tremblay reiterates the separatist belief that Canadian federalism is meaningless to Quebecers because it is premised on a historic disregard for Quebec's interests:

The Ottawa government for us, is a remote government with faceless far away bureaucrats. And as you know, you negotiated the Free trade- there was no Quebecer on that team - this was negotiated away from the Quebecers.³⁴

The separatist discourse as voiced by Landry, Tremblay and other P.Q. members, repeatedly and categorically insists that

the present Quebec-Canada relationship is intolerable. The first assumption of the separatist discourse is therefore that a new arrangement, one that will free Quebec from the suffocating anglophone grasp and release the rest of Canada from tiresome and taxing constitutional wrangling must be sought.

The second assumption underlying the separatist discourse in "Untying the Knot" is that sovereignty association is not only the best solution to the constitutional crisis for both Quebec and Canada, but in fact it is the inevitable solution. Parti Québécois leader Jacques Parizeau is emphatic on this point. In the opening program, he calmly yet tersely remarks to Terence McKenna: "I think there will come a point where it will be clear for most people that Quebec is becoming a sovereign nation - that nobody can do much about it".³⁵ Again, in the final program of the series, Parizeau explains to McKenna that unlike the 1980 Referendum, Quebec no longer seeks permission to chart an independent course: "We're not in other words asking authorization...What I am trying this time in the debate is just to say, what is, from the point of economic lease between the two countries, inevitable".³⁶ Parti Québécois Vice-President Bernard Landry concurs with Parizeau's assessment of the inevitability of sovereignty association when he tells David Peterson: "If secession is not tomorrow, it will be the day after".³⁷ Overall however, Landry attempts to paint the sovereignty association option in less deterministic and fatalistic terms. He emphasizes instead

the promise this new arrangement holds both for Quebec and for Canada:

A new Canada rearranged with a happy and free Quebec dealing equal to equal with the rest of Canada...to have the rest of Canada play its role and its game, with its cultural characteristics, in peace - with the cooperation of a friendly neighbour - that could be a very interesting adventure as well.³⁸

Landry reinforces his vision of sovereignty association as the guarantor of a bright and peaceful future for Canada and Quebec in his parting remark of the series, when he affirms: "We will be happy enough to live the new tale of two countries this time".³⁹ Although the separatist discourse frames Quebec secession as a *fait accompli*, it is nevertheless fuelled by the argument that this option is in the best interests of all Canadians.

The third assumption of the separatist discourse is that Quebec-Canada separation proceedings would be tempered by economic realities and would thus be conducted in a civilized and rational manner. When asked by McKenna how tough he would expect the negotiations to be, Parizeau down plays the potential difficulties, reassuring Canadians: "Oh, I don't think that they will be particularly tough".⁴⁰ Again, in the third episode Parizeau insists that issues such as how to divide up the national debt and assets would not be as complicated as federalist proponents suggest. Almost ridiculing the federalist concerns, Parizeau laughingly tells McKenna: "The problem with a lot of shall we say, 'models',

is that they run against the KISS principle, Keep It Simple and Stupid".⁴¹ In part, Parizeau's nonchalance in regards to separation negotiations is meant to counter-balance federalist proponents alarmist strategies. As Parizeau tells McKenna:

It's perfectly understandable that those who want Canada to keep together are trying to add up to the bill as much as they can, so as to either say, 'you are going to have a terrible negotiation', or else to say, 'You'll be bankrupt, we'll see to it that you're bankrupt'.⁴²

Parizeau's attempt to minimize the threat of a potential Canadian backlash is again evident in his final comment of the program. Parizeau concludes: "One can say to be alarmist. 'Oh, it will be difficult, it will be difficult'; frankly these difficulties, I don't see them".⁴³ Despite the fact that separation negotiations would entail the severing of 125-year-old emotional and political ties, the separatist discourse as voiced by Jacques Parizeau staunchly maintains that these negotiations would be neither acrimonious, nor difficult.

The federalist discourse's refutation of separatist tenets

The federalist discourse's opposition to the separatist discourse is fuelled by one all-consuming belief: that separation would be disastrous both for Canada and Quebec. As a result, the federalist discourse repeatedly insists that separation negotiations would be acrimonious, that the economic repercussions on both Canada and Quebec would be severe and that the political consequences would be devastating. Notably, with the exception of David Peterson

who tells Bernard Landry that "it is my view that you can fulfil 90% of your aspirations inside a federation"⁴⁴, the federalist discourse does not overtly discuss the characteristics of a renewed federalism. Moreover, the federalist discourse never challenges the separatist discourse's assumption that the present constitutional arrangement is unacceptable. The sole purpose of the federalist discourse in "Untying the Knot" is to denigrate and thus undermine the separatist discourse by accentuating the dire consequences of sovereignty association.

The federalist discourse underscores the dangers of sovereignty association in two important ways. First, in contrast with the separatist discourse which emphasizes the traditional image of Canadians as rational, peaceful people, the federalist discourse stresses the emotional side of the Canadian psyche. In each of the four programs, federalist proponents attack the separatist discourse's argument, that popular reaction to sovereignty association will be tempered by rational resignation to the inevitable, as a misguided and ill-founded assumption. Spurred by the federalist discourse, David Peterson warns P.Q. member Bernard Landry: "I don't think you account for the deep emotions in this country. I don't think it's going to be easy. I think it's going to be extremely difficult".⁴⁵ Motivated by the same federalist discourse, Peter Lougheed, introduced to the audience as "a friend of Quebec" admits he shares the concern that:

The sovereignists in Quebec don't understand and perhaps appreciate in my judgement, the degree of love of country that most of the rest of Canada has and the feelings of hostility that will emanate from a decision of Quebec to separate.⁴⁶

Moreover, the federalist discourse claims that the emotional hurt suffered by Canadians at the departure of Quebec would lead to "an atmosphere full of bitterness and full of misunderstanding"⁴⁷ which in the words of Constitutional Affairs Minister Joe Clark "would bring out the worst in us".⁴⁸ Ovide Mercredi, Chief of the Assembly of First Nations, further feeds the federalist discourse's vision of an emotional backlash when he asserts that sovereignty association "is bound to be violent...if our people are not dealt with honourably and justly by anyone who wants to break up the country".⁴⁹ In the first instance then, the federalist discourse counters the separatist discourse's attempt to minimize the negative effects of separation by depicting the potential Quebec-Canada divorce as a hostile, violent and emotionally charged "watershed event in the history of the country".⁵⁰

Second, whereas the separatist discourse minimizes the political and economic costs of separation to Quebec and Canada, the federalist discourse maximizes them. For instance, in the third program dedicated to economic issues, the federalist discourse emphasizes the decline of foreign investment, the devaluation of the dollar and the loss of thousands of jobs as the immediate and irrevocable

consequences of sovereignty association. As Sylvia Ostry explains to McKenna, the international economic reaction to sovereignty association would be swift and intense. Investors would simply "pick up the phone..and utter one word and it's in English - doesn't have to be translated - and it's sell".⁵¹ Patricia Carney reinforces the federalist discourse's argument that the economic repercussions would be devastating when she warns that separation would not only hinder international trade, but domestic trade as well. According to Carney, separation would result in full-scale economic warfare:

Trade wars are wars...and there's the smell of gun-powder and there's bitterness and there's vested interest vs. vested interest...Trade is war and trade is jobs and trade is the national interest.⁵² Don't tell me it's going to be peaceful.

The federalist discourse's prognosis for the respective political futures of Quebec and Canada as independent nations is equally disturbing. Not only does the federalist discourse forewarn Quebecers that "the tragedy is you will end up less sovereign than you are now"⁵³, it also argues that Quebec's separation would lead to the disintegration of the Canadian federation. As Joe Clark explains: "I think that we would be a people that had kicked ourselves in the teeth and we would feel that and I think the capacity to hold together would diminish".⁵⁴ The federalist discourse thus counteracts the separatist discourse's attempt to lull Canadians into a sense of security by painting the bleakest picture possible of the potential political and economic impact of sovereignty

association.

The predominance of the federalist discourse over the separatist discourse

At first glance, the federalist and separatist discourses in "Untying the Knot" appear to be presented in tandem, with no obvious ideological advantage given to either discourse. Seemingly then, the relative importance accorded to each discourse by the viewing audience rests entirely on each discourse's ability to present compelling arguments and a convincing case. However, closer examination reveals that the separatist discourse is disadvantaged in several key respects - a fact which only serves to reinforce the federalist discourse's predominance in all four programs.

The first and most obvious obstacle confronting the separatist discourse is language. Whereas the federalist spokespersons speak English fluently and eloquently, English is clearly not the separatist proponents' mother tongue. Although some separatists such as Jacques Parizeau speak English as a second-language admirably well, they would obviously speak more confidently and be more at ease were the debates and the interviews conducted in French. The separatist speakers' occasional language slips, grammar mistakes and pronunciation errors therefore detract from their arguments because they shift the viewers' attention from *what* is being said to *how* it is being said.

Importantly also, the separatists' French-language metaphors do not resonate in English. For example, when

Bernard Landry argues with David Peterson: "You are telling us to go eat an egg cooked"⁵⁵ (Vous nous dites d'aller manger un oeuf cuit), the translated version of this popular Quebec insult is first awkward, then humorous and ultimately meaningless. As Christian Dufour suggests, when Quebecers are forced to debate in the symbolic world of their English-speaking adversaries: "from the point of power management...the result is clear: by speaking English, Quebecers are putting themselves in someone else's territory, where they are handicapped in comparison to their listeners".⁵⁶ Separatist debaters and interviewees in "Untying the Knot" are thus disadvantaged in comparison with their federalist counterparts who wield the English language as a powerful ideological weapon.

The second way in which the separatist discourse is undermined in "Untying the Knot" is through the limited range of separatist representatives. Insofar as the choice of interviewees and debaters is concerned, the proponents of the separatist discourse are presented as a remarkably homogeneous group. Whereas the federalist discourse is championed by male and female, white and native, eastern and western, and English- and French-speaking Canadians, the separatist discourse is defended solely by white, middle-aged, professional, *pure laine* Québécois males. For example, in the debate between prominent Canadians, the federalist side features both men and women (Grady and Trepel), liberal and conservative, (Peterson and Carney) and Central, Western and

Eastern Canadian debaters. In contrast, the separatist discourse defended by Bernard Landry, John Cliche, François Vaillancourt and Rodrigue Tremblay, is seemingly the exclusive terrain of an elite group of Québécois intellectuals. The separatist discourse's limited representation of the various segments of Quebec society thus suggests that while the federalist discourse enjoys widespread Canadian support, the separatist discourse is not a widely embraced ideology even within the province of Quebec.

However, the strongest blow to the separatist discourse is dealt not by federalist interviewees and debaters, but by Terence McKenna and his production team. McKenna's narration is tinged with patronizing references to Quebec which undercut and at times ridicule the separatist discourse. For instance, in the third program, McKenna tells the predominantly English-Canadian audience:

If you are having trouble keeping up with the latest twist and turns of the great national unity debate, imagine the poor Québécois who are completely overwhelmed by the deluge of details. On entertainment programs like Metropolis, Quebec comedians can only laugh about how the politicians here keep confusing everybody with their arguments.⁵⁷

Here, McKenna clearly strays from the objectivist discourse to become a spokesperson for the federalist discourse. When dissected, McKenna's narration reveals several other editorial comments such as "Quebecers are scared stiff"⁵⁸ or Quebecers "have reason to worry"⁵⁹ which subtly reinforce the federalist discourse's argument that separation is a dangerous and

frightening prospect. McKenna's choice of visuals and music also tend to support the federalist discourse's contention that sovereignty association is undesirable. For example, as McKenna asks the question: "What would be the climate of negotiations"⁶⁰, the audience views a winter scene of the cold and foggy Ottawa river strewn with broken ice. These visuals provide an obvious and direct answer to McKenna's question: separation negotiations would be cold, icy and divisive. Likewise, McKenna's choice of haunting instrumental theme music suggests impending doom. Or as Rick Salutin described it in his "Cross Current" column: "The musical theme was like the drumbeat slaves stroked to in Roman galleys (according to Hollywood). DUMdumDUMdum".⁶¹ Punctuated with staccato and in a minor key, the theme music thus creates a sense of immediacy and urgency.

The balance between the federalist and separatist discourses is also skewed in the four debates between prominent federalists and separatists. Rather than present the debates in real time, segments of the pre-taped debates are carefully selected and edited for the viewing audience. The editing technique privileged is to freeze frame one of the debaters, fade out to black and then fade in to the next round of argumentation. Each debate contains at least three major editing breaks. As a result, it is impossible for the viewers to gain a true sense of the debate because they are only allowed to see pre-selected portions of the federalist-separatist exchanges. Particularly noteworthy, however, is

the fact that federalist debaters are given the final word in debating rounds twice as many times as the separatist debaters. Moreover, in the first and last debates of the series, the ones which feature the most prominent English-Canadian debaters (David Peterson and Patricia Carney), the federalist side controls all the strategic parting shots. In the first debate between Bernard Landry and David Peterson, the one that inevitably sets the tone for subsequent debates, Peterson is given the last word in all three rounds. This editing technique not only effectively emphasizes Peterson's position, but also creates the impression that Peterson has completely refuted all of Landry's arguments. In the final debate, Rodrigue Tremblay does manage to get the last word in two of the four rounds. Nevertheless, Patricia Carney has the last word where it counts most: in the opening and closing rounds - the segments of the debate most likely to stick in viewers' minds. The overall effect of both this editing technique and all other journalistic devices used by *The Journal's* production team is to surreptitiously grant an ideological advantage to the federalist discourse.

The capitalist discourse: the dominant ideology in "Untying the Knot"

While the federalist discourse clearly supersedes McKenna's objectivist discourse, minority groups' liberal pluralist discourse and French Quebecers' separatist discourse in order of relative importance, it is not the dominant ideology in "Untying the Knot". The ideological discourse

that exercises the paramount influence on the questions and issues raised, and the answers provided, is unquestionably an economic discourse. The assumptions, beliefs and selective facts which guide the journalist, debaters and interviewees are overwhelmingly rooted in a late twentieth century capitalist discourse. The crucial issues concerning sovereignty association as depicted in "Untying the Knot" are thus questions of property rights ("Would the present provincial borders be recognized as the borders of the new state of Quebec?"⁶²), of international trade ("What would happen to the free trade agreement with the United States?"⁶³), of economic union ("Would both sides want an economic association if the political ties had been broken?"⁶⁴), and of monetary rights and responsibilities ("What would happen to the Canadian currency? How would the national debt be divided?"⁶⁵). The answers provided to these questions whether by separatists, federalists or Terence McKenna himself, are preponderantly based on three fundamental components of the capitalist discourse: consumerism, economic rationalism and economic determinism.

The first characteristic of the capitalist discourse as expressed in "Untying the Knot" is the emphasis on consumerism. Significantly, the most consistent image of Canadians presented to the viewers is not of determined warriors or politically active masses, but of conscientious and competitive consumers. As a result, the most disconcerting consequences of sovereignty association for the

fundamentally consumption-driven Canadians depicted in "Untying the Knot" are not the detriments to Canadians' hearts, minds and souls, but the detriments to their pocket books. Capitalizing on this presumed economic determinant of the Canadian psyche, both federalists and separatists depend heavily on consumer-based arguments to justify their respective ideological positions. For instance, federalists such as Peter Lougheed reduce the "human costs" of sovereignty association to a consideration of the job loss that will occur in the aftermath of Quebec's separation: "the consequences of [sovereignty association] to the ordinary citizen trying to find a job... would be very, very serious".⁶ In other words, sovereignty association should be avoided because it will jeopardize Canadians' economic prosperity and thus limit their purchasing power.

Separatists such as Jacques Parizeau are equally quick to remind English-Canadians that economic retaliation against Quebec independence will cripple their economy and catch them in a consumer stranglehold. As Parizeau explains:

Some people in agricultural circles say, 'Well we won't buy your eggs and your milk products in Quebec if you secede from Canada' - I say, for God sake's, have you thought about your beef? Where do you think your largest market for beef is...in Quebec!

Bernard Landry uses this same consumer logic to diffuse David Peterson's argument that the emotional hurt suffered by English-Canadians in the wake of sovereignty-association would have devastating consequences on the Quebec economy.

Emphasizing the power consumerism exercises over politics, Landry relates his personal experience as a consumer and sardonically tells Peterson: "Would you believe that a couple of weeks after the Meech rejection, my family bought two Canadian cars because the price-quality ratio was interesting?"⁶¹ The insinuation here, as well as in the bulk of separatist - federalist exchanges, is clear: consumerism, not patriotism, dictates Canadians' present and future political reactions and economic actions.

The deference paid to economic rationalism and economic determinism by both federalists and separatists also serves to secure the capitalist discourse's ideological domination in "Untying the Knot". Whether it is federalists' insistence that sovereignty association would be economically disastrous or separatists' assumption that sovereignty association would be tempered by economic realities, both discourses consistently acknowledge that economics is the determining variable of the Quebec-Canada equation. As a result, despite federalists' emphasis on the emotional repercussions of sovereignty association, the first and foremost reason that this option is rejected is not that it is politically, morally or socially unsound, but because it "would be very disruptive of the financial system"⁶² and would lead to an uncertain and volatile economic climate. The parting federalist comment in "Untying the Knot" strongly emphasizes this economic rationalism. Gordon Ritchie, the chief Canadian negotiator of the Canada - U.S. Free Trade Deal, warns Canadians:

Events take on a life of their own, a character of their own and they take us in directions that we cannot now foresee and which is one of the reasons why sane and intelligent people will work out an accommodation within our existing arrangements rather than breaking Humpty Dumpty apart and somehow trying to put him back together again.¹¹

In light of the fact that the viewers were told in the opening program that "money always follows safe havens"¹¹, this warning has significant and ominous economic undertones.

Separatist proponents such as Rodrigue Tremblay also bow to economic arguments. For instance, in his debate with Patricia Carney, Tremblay recognizes the power the capitalist discourse exerts over all others when he states: "the daily life of the people is to survive economically".¹² Even more importantly, Jacques Parizeau admits that economic factors forced him to reverse his long-held belief in the need to relinquish the Canadian dollar and create a new Quebec currency once sovereignty is achieved. Ironically, Parizeau readily submits to this economic necessity even though it entails a partial loss of political sovereignty and thus undermines his separatist discourse:

I have seen how the currency issue, the money issue has been used to try and terrify Quebecers and therefore I've come to the conclusion that we keep the Canadian currency. And if you ask me 'does the lack of a specific currency imperil the general exercise of sovereignty?', I say no. 'Does it imply that we lose the use of one of the economic instruments that are normally in possession of governments?', I say yes.¹³

The separatist discourse, like the federalist discourse,

unquestionably yields ideological ground when confronted with the capitalist discourse.

Lastly, Terence McKenna succumbs to economic rationalism and determinism in both his consideration of the rationale fuelling sovereignty association and the likely repercussions of its acceptance as a solution to Canada's constitutional dilemma. McKenna compares the present unity crisis with that of 1980 and determines for the viewers that Quebecers' sense of economic self-sufficiency, rather than their cultural, linguistic or moral self-determination, is the single most important factor that legitimizes the independence option in Quebec. McKenna once again displays his tendency to concentrate exclusively on the economic implications of sovereignty association when he considers the inevitable disruption to government programs that will result from the reorganization of the federal civil service. Of all the potential government disruptions, McKenna focuses on the Supply and Services department's inability to issue pension, family allowance and welfare cheques to presumably needy, consumption-hungry Canadians. A third and final example of how McKenna reduces the effects of sovereignty association to an economic equation is his consideration of the fate of English-speaking Maritimers after Quebec's secession. McKenna suggests to viewers that the most significant effect of sovereignty association for Eastern Canadians is that the rupture of the Canadian federation would likely spell the end of transfer payments to the Maritimes. Editorial choices such

as these combined with the fact that McKenna chose Montreal, the French-Canadian business capital, rather than the political capitals of Ottawa or Quebec, as the setting for "Untying the Knot", reveal the central importance accorded to the capitalist discourse in the framing of the sovereignty association option.

Audience reception: the action-guides implicit in "Untying the Knot"

When viewing "Untying the Knot" for the first time, this four-part public affairs series' mediation of the Canadian unity crisis seemingly offers Canadians a wide array of action-guides from which to choose. The opening minutes of the first program detail the vested interests of French Quebecers, English-Canadians, aboriginal nations, Acadians and English Quebecers, in the national unity debate. The impression conveyed to the viewer is thus that *The Journal* will engage in a full-scale consideration of the sovereignty association option from every conceivable angle. This initial impression is carried throughout the four programs and is again reinforced in the concluding segment of "Untying the Knot". Rather than provide a direct indication of how Canadians should react to the sovereignty association proposal, the series concludes with comments from several political and economic figures who each offer a different prognosis, be it optimistic or pessimistic, of Canada's future. The suggestion then, is that as mature and rational viewers, Canadians will critically analyze the opinions and

facts presented, weigh the evidence and determine their own political course of action.

However, when the range of ideological discourses and their prioritization in "Untying the Knot" is taken into consideration, the choice of action-guides is suddenly not as diversified as initially appeared. The action-guides presented to the viewing audience implicitly and explicitly force Canadians to choose between positions which are polarized. Canadians are given the option to either wholeheartedly embrace or systematically reject the tenets of confederation; they are urged either to fully support or vehemently deny aboriginal self-government in Quebec; they are encouraged to use every means at their disposal either to hinder Quebec sovereignty or to facilitate it. In no instance are Canadians presented with partial solutions or nuanced positions; the action-guides prescribed by the hierarchy and content of ideological discourses in "Untying the Knot" are categoric and definitive. McKenna's choice of the debate format rather than a panel discussion or a town hall scenario is also significant because the antagonistic nature of these exchanges incite Canadians, once again, to take sides. Moreover, whether Canadians choose to adhere to federalist or separatist action-guides, the ideological sphere is further contracted by the fact that the hierarchy of discourses in "Untying the knot" ultimately constrains Canadians to economic considerations and market logic. Therefore, while many Canadians may believe that they are being offered several

action-guides from which to choose, in reality "Untying the Knot" is severely limiting the proposed choice of acceptable responses to the Canadian unity crisis.

When we situate the viewing audience in its socio-cultural and historical context, the choice of action-guides becomes even more limited. As indicated in Chapter 2, the vast majority of *Journal* viewers are English-speaking Canadians. As a result, *The Journal* tailors its production to the concerns and interests of its English-speaking audience. *The Journal* speaks not to or for all of Canada, but to or for English Canada. Like any sooth-sayer's attempt to predict the future, *The Journal's* consideration of the potential aftermath of a Quebec-Canada separation thus seeks to do one of two things. *The Journal's* predictions will serve either to reassure English-Canadians that the future will be ordered and secure or to warn them that the future will be wrought with chaos if they do not act now in the prescribed way. In "Untying the Knot", *The Journal* clearly privileges the latter approach. As David Chaney explains in "Mass Media and Social Change", the documentary style adhered to in "Untying the Knot" is designed to provoke an intense audience response:

A documentary is a medium for the public to observe and reflect upon itself...the premise of reporting such discoveries is that the audience will recognize that it should be outraged at what is possible in 'their' society.

As the consideration of the content and hierarchy of ideological discourses in "Untying the Knot" reveals, *The*

Journal frames Quebec's secession from Canada as an economic and political disaster and thus incites appalled Canadians to resoundingly reject the viability of sovereignty association.

Another important element, the familiarity factor, also encourages *Journal* viewers to accept the action-guides prescribed by the federalist discourse in "Untying the Knot". With the exception of Jacques Parizeau, the separatist debaters and interviewees are largely unknown political and social figures in English-Canada and are thus strangers to most *Journal* viewers. As a result, separatists' opinions carry little weight with English-Canadian viewers who are likely to view their arguments with some suspicion. In contrast, the key federalist spokespersons are well-known English-Canadian icons whose presence on the screen reverberates with meaning for the predominantly English-Canadian audience. As John Fiske explains, their convictions and arguments resonate forcefully in English-Canada because:

The elite who appear repeatedly, bear the accumulated meanings of past appearances. Because they are embodied in an individual they carry greater semiotic weight in our individualistic society than do the accumulated meanings of roles such as union organizer, victim and so on. The social power of elite persons is underscored by the narrative power that familiarity confers.¹⁵

For the English-Canadian *Journal* audience, debaters such as Bernard Landry and Rodrigue Tremblay have no significant individual importance; they are identifiable only by their role as Quebec separatists. Joe Clark and David Peterson, on

the other hand, carry the weight of their past appearances and are thus immediately recognizable to many *Journal* viewers as "Captain Canada" and "the Ontario Premier who tried to save Meech Lake". Moreover, while the separatist speakers overtly represent the ideological position of one political party, the Parti Québécois, the federalist speakers are largely depoliticized. For example, David Peterson and Peter Lougheed are introduced as former politicians and Patricia Carney is presented merely as a B.C. Senator. The fact that the separatist position is framed as a partisan discourse whereas the federalist position is presented as a non-partisan discourse further serves to reinforce the credibility of the federalist position. Therefore, both the familiarity of the federalist speakers and the fact that their discourse is perceived to be less politically-motivated than the separatist one, encourage *The Journal's* audience to favour the federalist action-guides over those proposed by the separatist speakers.

Conclusion

This consideration of the ideological discourses and action-guides implicit in *The Journal's* "Untying the Knot" furthers Canadians' collective understanding of the public broadcaster's role in structuring the mediation of the Canadian unity crisis in three significant ways. First, the analysis reveals how the use of the objectivist discourse subtly naturalizes both the series' ideological discourses and action-guides into what is billed as an impartial

consideration of the sovereignty association option. The objectivist discourse thus serves not as a mechanism to impartially assess the sovereignty association option, but rather as a powerful ideological construct which legitimates certain discourses, such as the consumer capitalist and federalist discourses while undermining others, such as the separatist discourse.

Second, the examination of Terence McKenna's and *The Journal's* selective use and interpretation of the objectivist discourse does not subject the journalist and the broadcaster to accusations of bias so much as it suggests that the objectivist discourse is itself a cultural construct. That is to say, the parameters of impartiality, the infusion of subjectivity and the concept of balance and non-distortion are defined not against a universally acknowledged ideal of objectivity, but according to the limitations of what is considered acceptable by the broadcaster, the journalistic profession and the viewing audience within a given society. In the case of "Untying the Knot", the objectivist discourse is defined according to 1) the ideological constraints imposed by the dominant discourses of consumer capitalism and federalism, 2) McKenna's self-perception of his role as an impartial narrator and 3) the English-Canadian audience's expectations of both the public affairs genre and their Canadian public television programming.

Third, the analysis of the range and hierarchy of ideological discourses in "Untying the Knot" points to the

ways in which the program's structured mediation of the constitutional crisis serves to further entrench English-Canadian viewers in their predominantly federalist stance. In this sense, "Untying the Knot" provides explicit and categoric action-guides for English-Canadian viewers to follow. This series declares that if the viewers truly love Canada, if they want to ensure economic prosperity for themselves and their descendants and if they want to live in a peaceful and ordered country, they will staunchly reject the sovereignty association option. The categoric nature of these action-guides is problematic, but not because all viewers will necessarily internalize the action-guides in precisely the manner decreed by the broadcaster. In fact, there is no way to definitely determine the audience's response to this public affairs series; even a full-scale audience reception study could only point to or suggest the likely audience reaction to this series. The main reason that the range and hierarchy of ideological discourses and the action-guides implicit in "Untying the Knot" are problematic is because they are organized as a closed text, that is to say, they offer a prepackaged constitutional consciousness for viewer consumption. Therefore, rather than expand the parameters of public debate - an integral component of the public broadcaster's mandate - *The Journal* contracts the ideological sphere filtering both the kind and degree of discourses made available to the Canadian viewing public.

CHAPTER 4

AN ANALYSIS OF IDEOLOGICAL DISCOURSES AND ACTION-GUIDES IMPLICIT IN "LE NATIONALISME QUÉBÉCOIS"

The French-language component of this comparative analysis of English- and French-Canadian national public broadcasting programs, is the four-part public affairs special "Le nationalisme québécois" which aired on Radio-Canada's *Le Point*, January 21-24, 1992, one month before "Untying the Knot" was broadcast on *The Journal*. Unlike "Untying the Knot" in which Terence McKenna is both host and narrator, "Le nationalisme québécois" is hosted by anchor Madeleine Poulin and narrated by journalist Gilles Gougeon. The series opens with a studio discussion between Poulin and Gougeon in which Gougeon is asked why he chose to review, at this particular time, the history of nationalism in Quebec. Gougeon suggests that in light of all the unanswered questions, of the confrontations between francophones and anglophones, and of the re-emergence of the Quebec-Canada identity crisis which have sprung from the constitutional chaos, some historical perspective is needed:

On s'est dit dans tous le brou-ha-ha actuel, il fallait prendre du recul. Du recul, pourquoi? Pour savoir un peu d'où l'on vient. Un peu comme lorsqu'on est en voiture, pour savoir où l'on s'en va, il faut toujours avoir l'oeil un peu sur le rétroviseur, alors nous, on s'est plongé dans le rétroviseur et on s'est demandé d'où venons-nous?

Ironically, while *The Journal* sought the answers to the

country's constitutional woes through a speculative account of future relations between English-and French-Canada, *Le Point* found its answers by re-examining past relations between these two groups. As a result, each of the four episodes details a particular period in the history of Quebec nationalism. The first episode spans more than one hundred years from the infamous Conquest of New France on the Plains of Abraham in 1759, to the creation of Confederation in 1867. The second episode presents the period from the Louis Riel insurrection in 1884 to the end of World War I. The third episode features the rise of Nazi-inspired nationalism in the 1930s, the World War II conscription crisis and the Quiet Revolution - in other words, the Duplessis years which ended with his death in 1959. In the final episode, the most notable events depicted are the 1960s protest years, the FLQ crisis, the Quebec referendum, the repatriation of the Constitution and the signing and the death of the Meech Lake Accord. Produced in traditional documentary style, Gougeon relies primarily on historical photos and paintings, period music, television footage and interviews with prominent Québécois historians to visually and orally depict the history of nationalism in Quebec.

The textual analysis: methodological considerations

Whereas the ideological importance of the five major discourses in "Untying the Knot" depends heavily on informed speculation, well-defined arguments and spirited refutation, the ideological effectiveness of "Le nationalisme québécois"

is rooted in the power of historical narrative. In other words, the ideological efficacy of the discourses propagated in *Le Point's* public affairs series stems from their ability to "take off from a real fact which they reshape to suit the needs of the ideologue".² The construction and prioritization of ideological discourses in "Le nationalisme québécois" thus differs from those of "Untying the Knot" in two significant ways. First, while "Untying the Knot" readily acknowledges the presence of at least two ideological discourses, the federalist-separatist dichotomy, "Le nationalisme québécois" naturalizes the implicit discourses into a "factual", historical account of Quebec nationalism. The distinction between the actual content and hierarchy of discourses in the historical periods depicted and the content and hierarchy of discourses propagated by the producers of the program is thus blurred. This naturalization process makes it more difficult, therefore, for both the viewer and the analyst to detect, differentiate and dissect the ideological discourses implicit in "Le nationalisme québécois".

Second, the range and hierarchy of discourses in the series are defined as much if not more by the facts that are selectively excluded as by those that are strategically included. As a result, unlike the study of "Untying the Knot", the textual analysis of "Le nationalisme québécois" cannot reveal the underlying assumptions of the inherent ideological discourses solely by analyzing the explicit and implicit information conveyed to the viewing public. To fully

grasp both the range and hierarchy of ideological discourses in "Le nationalisme québécois", the textual analysis must demonstrate how the omission of certain historical facts and the emphasis on certain historical events serves to reinforce the dominant ideological discourse in this series. Moreover, in order to reveal the particularistic nature of *Le Point's* account of nationalism in Quebec, this analysis must contrast *Le Point's* version of history with other potential interpretations of these same events. Overall, however, the analysis of the ideological discourses and the action-guides implicit in "Le nationalisme québécois" will be sufficiently similar to the analysis of "Untying the Knot" so as to provide a strong and relevant basis of comparison for analysis in the final chapter.

The five major ideological discourses

For the purpose of this analysis, five major ideological discourses have been identified. As with the textual analysis of "Untying the Knot", the first discourse considered is the objectivist discourse with special attention paid to the ways in which Madeleine Poulin's and Gilles Gougeon's interpretation and selective use of the journalistic creed differ from that of Terence McKenna. The role played by the objectivist discourse in the presentation, classification, and prioritization of other major discourses inherent in these programs will also be explored. The second discourse analyzed is the capitalist discourse. Although the capitalist discourse in "Le nationalisme québécois" is not granted

anywhere near the same importance it receives in "Untying the Knot", it is nevertheless a major discourse which merits consideration. Whereas the capitalist discourse depicted in "Untying the Knot" renders Canadians slaves to consumer capitalism and economic rationalism, the capitalist discourse in "Le nationalisme québécois" liberates, unifies and empowers French-Canadian society. As the analysis will reveal, the capitalist discourse also contributes significantly to the legitimation of other major discourses in this series.

The third and fourth discourses analyzed are the federalist-nationalist and separatist-nationalist discourses, ideologies which jostle for prominence in all four episodes of the series. For instance, while the federalist-nationalist discourse contends that English- and French-Canadians can live in harmony and respect each other's cultural and linguistic distinctiveness, the separatist-nationalist discourse argues that English- and French-Canadians have irreconcilable visions of their country. Likewise, while the federalist-nationalist discourse propagates the belief that Quebec can achieve its full potential within the Canadian federation, the separatist-nationalist discourse claims that the federal government cannot fulfil Quebec's aspirations and militates in favour of an independent, autonomous state. When juxtaposed, these discourses thus offer viewers two contradictory, oppositional visions of Quebec's past, present and future from which to choose. The last discourse studied is the Conquered People's discourse which permeates *Le Point's* entire account of the

history of Quebec nationalism. Unquestionably the dominant ideology in these programs, the Conquered People's discourse is underscored by a confrontational framing of events which pits "them" against "us", conqueror against vanquished, oppressor against victim, and English-speaking majority against French-speaking minority. Moreover, the Conquest of 1759, the cradle of the Conquered People's discourse, is unanimously adopted by journalist Gilles Gougeon, anchor Madeleine Poulin and all the Québécois historians interviewed as the central metaphor guiding their consideration of nationalism in Quebec. As with the study of "Untying the Knot" , this analysis of "L'histoire du nationalisme québécois" will thus reveal the content and positioning of ideological discourses in these programs and determine the nature and range of action-guides offered to the viewing audience.

The objectivist discourse

The fundamental assumption of the objectivist discourse as it is expressed by journalist Gilles Gougeon, anchor Madeleine Poulin and Quebec historians, Jean-Paul Bernard, Robert Lahaise, Réal Bélanger, Pierre Trépanier, Robert Comeau, Richard Desrosiers and Louis Balthazar is that there exists only one external historical reality embedded in the national collective consciousness of the viewing audience. Consequently, *Le Point's* version of the history of nationalism in Quebec is not presented as one among a myriad of potential interpretations of significant people, places and events, but

as the factual, true account of Quebec nationalism. The closest the series ever comes to admitting that there may be different or contradictory accounts of the history of nationalism in Quebec is in the final episode when anchor Madeleine Poulin tells the audience "Plus nous rapprochons du moment présent, plus les événements sont documentés bien sûr, plus les archives sont riches et le tri a donc été encore plus difficile à faire."³ However, she quickly reassures the audience that this final episode is not a partial or limited version of Quebec nationalism's history when she says: "Mais vous allez voir que c'est réussi et que chaque événement prend tout son sens".⁴ The objectivist discourse in "Le nationalisme québécois" is thus a realist discourse which seeks to create an "identity or at least an equivalence between signifiers (loosely speaking words or other symbols), signified (concepts) and their extralinguistic 'real world' referents".⁵ As a result, every component of this series, from its title to its images to its narration, is carefully chosen to imitate as accurately as possible the historical "reality" it depicts. For instance, unlike Terence McKenna who chose the metaphor "Untying the Knot" for his speculative consideration of a post-confederation Canada, Gougeon chooses the unembellished, factual title "Le nationalisme québécois". Moreover, whereas Terence McKenna is forced to use past and present images to depict a future reality, Gougeon relies exclusively on historical prints and paintings or actual footage of the events depicted in "Le nationalisme québécois" to substantiate his account. The immediacy and the sense of

'you-are-there' that the historical footage provides to the viewers thus assure that "the film stands as the guarantor of the narrative's validity".⁶

Furthermore, in keeping with the central aim of the objectivist discourse in "Le nationalisme québécois", Gougeon assumes the role of the quintessential realist narrator. Unlike Terence McKenna who appears on screen in *The Journal's* documentary, Gougeon distances himself completely from the images presented to the audience. With the exception of his introductory remarks to the series which notably are offered from a studio chair rather than within the documentary itself, Gougeon does not appear on screen at any time during the documentary. By completely disembodimenting himself from his journalistic product, Gougeon ensures that while the viewers are watching the documentary his voice does not appear to be that of an author or interviewer, rather "its source appears to be a true reality which speaks".⁷ The Quebec historians interviewed for this series are also framed as disciples of the objectivist discourse. Without exception, they restrict their account of the history of Quebec nationalism to a third-person description of events and people. They avoid personalizing their remarks and attempt to speak impartially even about those more recent historical events which they have witnessed first-hand. Moreover, their comments are integrated into the historical account of Quebec nationalism in such a way that their depiction of events is fused with the facts themselves and thus naturalized in the programs. The

objectivist discourse therefore creates a symbiotic relationship between the narrator, the historians and the factual images and sounds; they simultaneously feed on one another and grant each other legitimacy in the text.

However, the relationship that the objectivist discourse creates between the signified, signifiers and external reality in "Le nationalisme québécois" is necessarily an illusory one because even within the French language, these three referents "do not have fixed internal 'meanings', but only meaning-potentials which are actualized in use".¹ As a result, to maintain the illusion of this relationship in "Le nationalisme québécois", the objectivist discourse must effect a contraction of the ideological sphere while purporting to leave the ideological evaluation of historical fact to the viewing audience. The objectivist discourse thus plays a noteworthy role in framing and prioritizing the other discourses in the text because the narrative realism on which the series is based requires it to simultaneously limit the penetration of oppositional discourses and privilege the dominant discourse. More specifically, Gougeon's interpretation of the journalistic creed leads him to frame the factual account of Quebec nationalism so as to encourage the audience to readily adopt the version implicit in the Conquered People's discourse, and therefore read both the text and the images solely according to the meaning conveyed by this dominant discourse. As J. Woollacott explains:

The dominant discourse in a classic realist text effects a closure of the subordinated discourses and the reader is

placed in a position 'from which everything becomes obvious'. This is achieved through the effacement of the text's signifying practice, through the concealment of its construction.

By privileging the realist narrative, the objectivist discourse thus succeeds remarkably well in framing the Conquered People's discourse as the only authentic version of the history of nationalism in Quebec.

Given the ideological role of the objectivist discourse in "Le nationalisme québécois", statements by either anchor Madeleine Poulin or journalist Gilles Gougeon which might otherwise have been construed as editorial, subjective comments are transformed by the ideological power of the dominant discourse into true, incontestable facts. For instance, Madeleine Poulin could easily be charged with attempting to skew *a priori* the audience's reaction to the programs because her introductory remarks to each episode are saturated in the Conquered People's discourse. However, in light of the credence the objectivist discourse grants to the Conquered People's discourse, her suggestions that the Act of Union of 1840 was a "coup dur"¹⁰ or that "les Canadiens-français ont appris à jouer le jeu de la confédération"¹¹ are glossed over as an accurate, impartial assessment of the historical "facts". Likewise, while Gougeon's depiction of every conceivable historical event as another example of the humiliation and isolation of Quebec must be contested, it should not automatically be concluded that he displays a blatant disregard for the objectivist discourse. Arguably,

Poulin, Gougeon and the historians have respected the tenets of objectivism, that is to say they have transmitted a rational and impartial account of facts based on their understanding of external reality. Therefore, while it would indeed be tempting to conclude that the objectivist discourse is the ideology most readily sacrificed to appease the dominant discourse and thus judge the series to be biased, to limit the observations to a bias/objectivity dichotomy would be to ignore the catalytic role the objectivist discourse plays in the process of defining and prioritizing ideological discourses in "Le nationalisme québécois".

The capitalist discourse

The fundamental message propagated by the capitalist discourse in "Le nationalisme québécois" is that to free themselves from the stigma of the Conquest of 1759, to unify their separatist factions and to achieve their ultimate goal of sovereignty, Quebecers must first control the means of production in their territory. The capitalist discourse in "Le nationalisme québécois" is thus a discourse of liberation which urges Quebecers to seize economic power in Quebec and thereby "reconquer" French-Canada. The first way the capitalist discourse hammers home the message that to become "maîtres chez nous" Quebecers must control the production levers in their society is by reminding French-Canadians of their historical economic impotence. In the opening minutes of the first episode, French-Canadians are repeatedly depicted as a people who are at the mercy of the economic interests of

a foreign power. For instance, it is suggested that whether Britain or France dictates economic policy is of little importance to late eighteenth century French-Canadians who do not benefit from the commercial profits in either case.¹² Historian Robert Lahaise also reminds viewers that despite the fact that Canadian-born Marquis de Vaudreuil argued in favour of fighting for economic control of all existing trade zones from Hudson's Bay to the Gulf of Mexico, his strategy was rejected by French-born Montcalm who chose to defend only the more densely populated areas of New France.¹³ The insinuation here is that had France adopted Vaudreuil's strategy, French-Canada might have staved off the advance of British troops and possibly acquired exclusive control of New France's economy. Finally, Gougeon tells the audience that after the Conquest, France was more concerned with maintaining its commercial fishing rights off St. Pierre and Miquelon than with protecting the political and linguistic rights of its former colony.¹⁴ The overall effect of this initial portrayal of early French-Canadian citizens is thus to suggest that although they were politically distinct ("Ils sont francophones, mais pas Français"¹⁵), French-Canadians' complete lack of economic means precluded any possibility of political independence.

Subsequent episodes of "Le nationalisme québécois" reinforce the capitalist discourse both by underlining English-Canadians' economic dominance of Quebec and by exalting those French-Canadian thinkers who recognized that economic power was the key to political freedom. For

instance, in the third episode, English-Canada's economic control is underscored by Gougeon who describes the 1920s as a period in which Quebec preached the virtues of rural life while Montreal was being developed by the anglophones who controlled both the capital and the industries.¹⁶ Later in the same program, Lionel Groulx is exalted by historian Pierre Trépanier, who tells the audience that of all the nationalists of the period, Groulx is among those who best understood the importance of the economy in the fight for national affirmation.¹⁷ Groulx is thus hailed as an astute French-Canadian who had fully recognized that "la question économique se représente sous l'angle d'une reconquête attendue, la reconquête de l'économie canadienne-française".¹⁸ The seminal role of economic liberation in the quest for political independence is again reaffirmed in a 1962 clip of Jean Lesage's address to the nation in which he issues a call to arms to the French-Canadian people, urging them to seek economic freedom:

Nous avons atteint la maturité politique, nous sommes prêts maintenant pour la libération économique. Il n'y a plus de maintenant ou jamais, ce soir nous devons dire c'est maintenant que nous deviendrons maîtres chez nous!¹⁹

Fuelled by the capitalist discourse's liberation metaphor, Gougeon tells the audience that hydro-electricity became the war-horse of national affirmation and that economic discrimination, not political discontent rallied Quebecers to march in the streets.²⁰ As Gougeon explains, tensions between French- and English-Canadians flared in 1962 over CN President

Donald Gordon's declaration that he could not find one French-Canadian among all his personnel who deserved to occupy one of the twenty-eight executive positions of CN Rail.²¹ Ironically, this one incident takes on transcendental importance as Gougeon tells the viewers that Gordon's comment is indicative of the type of opinion held by many English-Canadians regarding French-Canadians at that time.²²

In the final minutes of the series, the capitalist discourse is shown to have fulfilled its promise of economic liberation for French-Canadians. René Lévesque's message to Quebecers in the 1960s, "Arrêtons d'avoir peur et faisons-nous confiance"²³, is said to have taken twenty years to root and mature, but it ultimately culminates in the establishment of a dynamic and innovative French-Canadian economy. As historian Louis Balthazar explains:

Avec le temps, ces instruments qui sont ceux de la révolution tranquille ont fini par produire leurs fruits et qui est un entrepreneurship proprement québécois, une entreprise privée proprement québécoise ou mieux si vous voulez un réseau économique proprement francophone québécois. Ça n'existait pas dans les années soixante. Le réseau économique des affaires au Québec était un réseau anglophone.²⁴

The message trumpeted by the capitalist discourse is that by working diligently over the past thirty years, Quebec has succeeded in freeing itself from the economic chains that bound it to English-dominated Canada. This hard-earned French-Canadian control of the means of production in Quebec is thus said to pave the way for political freedom because Quebec independence is now a viable goal.

Therefore, while the capitalist discourse is one of the least prominent in the hierarchy of major discourses in "Le nationalisme québécois", it does play a noteworthy role in legitimating certain discourses and discrediting others. For example, by emphasizing the liberating power of economic control, the capitalist discourse fuels the separatist-nationalist discourse which insists that Quebec's autonomy can only be guaranteed through the creation of an independent state. Significantly, "Le nationalisme québécois" makes no mention of economic advantages that Confederation has entailed for Quebec. Lucrative government contracts such as the CF-18 plant or the frigate program that were both awarded to Montreal instead of Winnipeg and Halifax are conveniently omitted from the economic history of Quebec. Furthermore, by repeatedly contrasting English-Canadians' economic dominance with French-Canadians' historical economic impotence, the capitalist discourse reinforces the claim of the Conquered People's discourse that French-Canada is still suffering from the humiliating defeat on the Plains of Abraham. Finally, by positing crown corporations such as CN Rail as institutions which reject French-Canadians' presence in leadership roles, the capitalist discourse as expressed in "Le nationalisme québécois" undermines the federalist-nationalist discourse's contention that French-Canada can achieve its full potential within the Canadian federation.

The federalist-nationalist discourse

The federalist-nationalist discourse as expressed in "Le nationalisme québécois" holds that Quebec can best realize its political, economic and social goals by being a strong and outspoken member of the Canadian family. The nationalist sentiment expressed by federalist proponents is thus an integrative nationalism; federalist-nationalists seek the recognition of Quebec's distinctiveness within the confines of the Canadian federation. As a result, from the opening minutes of the first program the federalist-nationalist discourse offers viewers a vision of Quebec's history which at times contrasts sharply with the account provided by either the separatist-nationalist discourse or the Conquered People's discourse. For instance, rather than depict nineteenth century French-Canadian settlers as a despondent, vanquished and cynical lot, Gougeon relates that for Lafontaine and numerous other leaders of the period, the union of Upper and Lower Canada was not essentially a negative experience and was even considered to entail potential opportunities.²⁵ Historian Jean-Paul Bernard concurs with Gougeon's assessment and tells the audience:

De manière générale, après avoir désespéré de l'avenir, on se dit : 'Ça va aller' et on se met à se dire que c'est moins tragique qu'on avait cru, qu'il y a moyen de se débrouiller avec ça. L'idée d'une survivance pas si pénible, pas si terrible à supporter, devient une idée majoritaire."

In instances such as these, when either journalist Gilles Gougeon or Quebec historians such as Jean-Paul Bernard adopt

the federalist-nationalist stance to editorialize the history of nationalism in Quebec, this discourse imposes, if only briefly, a forceful oppositional reading to that provided by the dominant discourses. Overall, however, the gaps in the text are narrow and the opportunities infrequent, for the federalist-nationalist discourse to directly confront the separatist-nationalist's and Conquered People's current which fuels the "factual" account of Quebec nationalism presented in "Le nationalisme québécois".

The federalist-nationalist discourse's inability to refute the assumptions of the dominant discourses is in part due to the fact that while the federalist and separatist discourses in "Untying the Knot" were provided a forum in which to directly contest the assumptions and statements of their ideological adversaries, the federalist-nationalist discourse in "Le nationalisme québécois" benefits from no such arena. As a result, the federalist-nationalist discourse depends exclusively on Gougeon's narration and Québécois historians' testimony to emphasize the historical presence and power of this discourse in Quebec. Both Gougeon and the historians interviewed do underline the ideological importance of the federalist-nationalist discourse, if only because certain historical events and figures are such integral components of the history of nationalism in Quebec that they cannot easily be overlooked or ignored. Throughout the four programs, the text repeatedly confirms that the federalist-nationalist discourse was widely embraced not only by ordinary citizens, but by many renowned Quebec leaders who had great

faith in the Canadian federation. For example, French-Canadians' confidence in the federal system is said to have been coupled with great pride in 1896 when Canada elected its first French-Canadian Prime Minister, Wilfred Laurier.²⁷ Henri Bourassa, Laurier's political rival for many years, is also presented as a strong federalist by historian Réal Bélanger who contends that Bourassa belongs to the federalist tradition because he sought the protection of the French-Canadian nation within the parameters of the Canadian nation.²⁸ Likewise, historian Richard Desrosiers insists that despite Duplessis' nationalistic fervour, it would be a grave mistake to label him anything but a federalist:

Sur le plan constitutionnel, Duplessis croit à 1867, croit au fédéralisme et on aurait tort de penser que Duplessis était séparatiste pour deux sous, mais pas du tout. Au contraire, les quelques fois qu'il y fait allusion, c'est avec dédain, dégoût et mépris.²⁹

Even in the final program of the series in which the separatist-nationalist discourse is most ardent, the staunch federalist-nationalist stances of former Prime Minister Pierre Elliot Trudeau, Prime Minister Brian Mulroney and Quebec Premier Robert Bourassa all figure prominently. The depiction of these powerful Quebec politicians from 1896 to the present, speaking and acting in favour of a strong Canadian federation, unquestionably highlights the federalist-nationalist discourse and strengthens its ideological import in "Le nationalisme québécois".

Paradoxically however, while the federalist-nationalist discourse is underscored by both ordinary citizens' and

prominent Quebec politicians' adherence to the tenets of federalism, it is also undermined by the depiction of these same nationalist-federalists' stoic resignation to their leaders' traditional inability or unwillingness to protect Quebec's interests even when they occupied positions of power in the federal or provincial government. The rampant examples of Quebec federalists' political ineffectiveness or impotence in "Le nationalisme québécois" suggest an ambivalent endorsement of the federalist-nationalist discourse even by its staunchest supporters. For example, Wilfred Laurier's significant contribution to Canadian federalism is undercut by the fact that he is said to have succumbed to the English-Canadian majority's vision of Canada, despite his own dream of a bilingual and bicultural Canada. By crediting Laurier with the dubious distinction of having created "un Canada qui est en quelque sorte, ni bilingue, ni biculturel"³⁰, historian Réal Bélanger tarnishes Laurier's image as an ardent federalist-nationalist and sheds doubt on this discourse's ability to meet its proponents' expectations. Similarly, Richard Desrosiers, the same historian who insisted on Duplessis' federalist-nationalist allegiance, acknowledges in his very next breath that the federalist-nationalists' politicians of Duplessis' era were people "qui ne voulait pas aller trop loin. Quand certaines mesures ont risqué de heurter nos ennemis à Ottawa, on a reculé".³¹ Desrosiers' admission that Duplessis and his federalist-nationalist allies were limited in their ability to carry their cause to fruition accentuates the unfulfilled promises of the federalist-nationalist

discourse. The ideological power of the federalist-nationalist discourse wanes even further at the end of the four-part series when Gougeon juxtaposes images of a jubilant Robert Bourassa at the 1987 Constitutional Conference with images of a visibly distraught Bourassa at the historic death of the Meech Lake Accord in June of 1990. Gougeon's editorial comment "C'est non à la société distincte, même si le Québec est dirigé par un gouvernement fédéraliste"³² deals a final and potentially fatal blow to the credibility of the federalist-nationalist discourse. Therefore, by depicting the federalist-nationalist discourse as an ineffective, idealistic and misguided ideological stance, "Le nationalisme québécois" consistently attacks the validity of this discourse, minimizes its positive influence in Quebec and ultimately holds it responsible for Quebec's historic inability to achieve its goals.

The separatist-nationalist discourse

The separatist-nationalist discourse confronts, contradicts and often overrides the federalist-nationalist discourse in "Le nationalisme québécois". The first way the separatist-nationalist discourse opposes the federalist-nationalist discourse is by conveniently ignoring all historical events which underline French-English compromise, cooperation and tolerance. Instead, the separatist-nationalist discourse emphasizes historic periods in which tensions between English- and French-Canadians were exacerbated, exaggerates the importance of these conflicts,

and on the basis of this evidence, concludes that the two solitudes have irreconcilable visions of Canada. For example, the separatist-nationalist discourse points to three historic wars, the Boer War, World War I and World War II, and focuses exclusively on English- and French-Canadians' polarized visions of the country's role in these conflicts. As a result, English-Canadians' insistence that Canada should send troops to support Great Britain in the Boer War is contrasted with a clip of Henri Bourassa emphatically objecting to this course of action. Stressing the dichotomy between English- and French-Canadian allegiances, Bourassa is shown arguing, "Vous Anglais, vous parlez, vous agissez pour l'Angleterre, moi Canadien, je parle et j'agis pour le Canada!".³³ The separatist-nationalist discourse again pits English-Canadians against French-Canadians during the World War I and World War II conscription crises. Historian Réal Bélanger depicts these debates as categoric examples of English- and French-Canadians' contradictory visions of Canada. In reference to the 1917 Conscription Crisis, Bélanger states:

Lorsqu'arrive la conscription, le choc est brutal - deux visions différentes - et la conscription pour les Canadiens-français a été vu comme, comment dirais-je, le refus de la part du Canada Anglais, vraiment, finalement, un refus final de leur perception du Canada.³⁴

Significantly, any reference to cooperation between English- and French-Canadians during war-time periods such as the creation of the "Vandoos", an infantry regiment comprised of both English- and French-Canadians who fought with distinction during the Second World War, is discarded from the separatist-

nationalist version of Canadian history.

The second way in which the separatist-nationalist discourse undermines the federalist-nationalist discourse is by attacking the latter's traditional faith in the federal government. As the analysis of the federalist-nationalist discourse revealed, despite their allegiance to Canada, federalist-nationalists are historically ambivalent about the federal government's ability to protect Quebec's interests against those of the English-speaking majority. The separatist-nationalist discourse capitalizes on this uncertainty and consistently blames the federal government for all of Quebec's problems from the creation of Confederation in 1867 to the present. Among other accusations, the separatist-nationalist discourse contends that by repeatedly refusing to protect Quebec's linguistic and political rights, the federal government has contributed to the insularity of Quebec society and has fuelled the separatist dream of a sovereign nation. In the first episode of the series, Gougeon supports this argument by telling the audience: "Chaque fois que les Canadiens-français ont fait appel à la protection du fédéral telle qu'indiquée dans la constitution de 1867, et bien chaque fois le gouvernement s'est rangé du côté des provinces anglophones".³⁵ Gougeon's affirmation is reinforced by accompanying visuals of a nineteenth century banner which reads "Canada Forever". The absence of the French-language equivalent, "Le Canada pour toujours", strongly suggests that only English-Canada will live forever if Quebec remains within Confederation.

Again in the introduction to the third episode, anchor Madeleine Poulin suggests that from 1920 to 1950, Quebecers felt abandoned by a federal government that repeatedly refused to accord them equal status in Canada. As a result, Poulin argues that Quebecers withdrew within themselves and insulated their society in a period that would be known as "la grande noirceur".³⁶ However, in a review of "Le nationalisme québécois", journalist William Johnson contests this interpretation of the federal government's role in shaping Quebec society. As Johnson argued in "Radio-Canada series promotes victimized-Quebecer myth":

The attempt to create an all-Catholic, ultramontane rural society was the dominant theme of Quebec's intelligentsia from the 1840's until the Quiet Revolution. To blame it on the federal government is just another instance of the nationalist mythology; all the social and economic problem of French Canada were the fault of *les Anglais*.³⁷

Admittedly, William Johnson's refutation of Poulin's interpretation of history is rooted in his own ideological and cultural understanding of the historical relationship between the federal government and the province of Quebec. However, the juxtaposition of Johnson's perspective with that of Poulin's suggests the way in which the historical relationship between the federal government and the people of Quebec is organized in "Le nationalisme québécois" to coincide with the separatist-nationalist discourse's ideological need to frame the federal government as an unrepentant oppressor. By privileging this depiction of the federal government over the

one provided by the federalist-nationalist discourse, "Le nationalisme québécois" seemingly vindicates separatist-nationalists and incriminates federalist-nationalists.

The third and final way that the separatist-nationalist discourse's ideological importance is asserted in "Le nationalisme québécois" is through the connection of as many historical events as possible to the organizing goal of Quebec independence. Significantly, whether French-Canadians of the period from which the events are appropriated have any knowledge of the concept of Quebec independence or have any yearning to achieve it is of little importance. As William Johnson suggests, "discrete events become part of a single, grand scenario, a dramatic story that stirs passions, in which conflict is the only reality, the true significance of history".³⁸ As a result, every potential expression of Quebec autonomy from 1786 when Gougeon suggests that for the first time since the defeat of 1759, "les Canadiens-français voient se définir les frontières d'un territoire sur lequel ils peuvent se sentir autonomes"³⁹ takes on transcendental meaning in the historic struggle for Quebec independence. Even the British North America Act of 1867 which firmly entrenched federalism in Canada and in Quebec. is depicted as an important event in the separatist-nationalists' independence saga. In the words of historian, Réal Bélanger: "la confédération permet au Québec, aux Canadiens-français d'avoir leur état provincial et ça c'est une dimension importante puisqu'ils auront l'impression de pouvoir conduire leurs propres affaires dans leur propre province".⁴⁰ "Le

nationalisme québécois" continues to build the separatist-nationalist discourse's momentum in its account of the next hundred years of Quebec nationalism, seizing every conceivable opportunity to flaunt Quebec's economic or political victories as the building blocks of independence.

However, it is in the 1960s that "Le nationalisme québécois" begins its most frenzied climb towards the climax of the separatist-nationalist dream. Punctuated by dramatic and intense images and music, the 1960s are described as a period in which Quebec songs, poetry and theatre proclaimed "la fierté d'être Québécois et la volonté de donner à ce peuple un pays où ils seront majoritaires".⁴¹ The 1960s are also hailed as the period in which Quebec's separatist-nationalist aspirations are fully recognized by politicians outside Quebec. French President Charles de Gaulle's infamous and controversial statement during his visit to Montreal in 1967: "Vive Montreal! Vive le Québec! Vive le Québec libre!"⁴² reverberates with significance both on the screen and in the audience as Gougeon asserts: "La phrase fera le tour de la planète. Le monde entier vient de découvrir la vigueur du nationalisme québécois".⁴³ Each historical event in this period thus resonates with one purpose: the realization of Quebec independence. Yet the event that ultimately crystallizes, confirms and celebrates the separatist-nationalist discourse as presented in "Le nationalisme québécois" is René Lévesque's first election victory in 1976. Significantly, "Le nationalisme québécois" switches from black

and white to coloured footage with a clip of an emotional René Lévesque telling a pro-sovereigntist audience immersed in a sea of *fleurdelisés* that "J'ai jamais, j'ai jamais pensé que je pouvais être aussi fier d'être Québécois que ce soir".⁴⁴ The effect of this sudden switch to colour, reminiscent of Dorothy's arrival in the land of Oz, is to suggest that Lévesque is the prophet who will lead separatist-nationalists to the promised land. Therefore, by framing all historical events from 1786 to 1976 as integrated components of the sovereignty saga, "Le nationalisme québécois" solidifies the separatist-nationalist discourse's version of history and tightens its grasp on the popular québécois imagination.

The Conquered People's discourse

Undoubtedly the most pervasive ideology in "Le nationalisme québécois", the Conquered People's discourse dictates both the content and the hierarchy of the other major discourses in this public affairs series. As a result, ideologies such as the federalist-nationalist discourse which either conflict with or contradict the assumptions and arguments of the Conquered People's discourse are consistently undercut and where possible, summarily ignored. On the other hand, ideologies such as the capitalist or separatist-nationalist discourses which lend credence to the Conquered People's historical account of Quebec nationalism, figure prominently in all four episodes. Yet the substance of the Conquered People's discourse is not limited to the manipulation of other discourses to suit its ideological

purposes; it also shapes *Le Point's* consideration of the history of Quebec nationalism in three significant ways. First, the Conquered People's discourse depicts the history of English-French relations in Canada as a never-ending political, economic and linguistic war of "us" vs. "them". Second, the Conquered People's discourse contends that the English-speaking majority's control of Canada has been consistently sustained by a violent repression of French-Canada. Finally, this discourse argues that French-Canadian history is a continuous tale of the humiliation and isolation of Quebec.

The ideological importance accorded to the Conquered People's discourse in "*Le nationalisme québécois*" requires that a solid and clearly divisive wall be constructed between English-Canadians and French-Canadians, between the oppressive majority and the victimized minority, between "them" and "us". As Christian Dufour explains in *Le défi québécois*:

That which defines it [the Conquered People's discourse], that which is essential for its survival, is not such and such a content, but rather the psychological border between the members of one group and those who are not part of it...between 'us' and 'them'. Well Quebecers have obviously not lost the ability to use an 'us' charged with emotion.⁴⁵

Unquestionably, the Conquered People's discourse as expressed in "*Le nationalisme québécois*" not only capitalizes on the perceived chasm between English- and French-Canada, but effectively widens the gap. This series seizes every opportunity to reinforce the divisions between the two

solitudes by pointing to the linguistic, political and economic factors which distinguish them. Moreover, every example of collaboration between the two entities, and there are significantly few in this series, is tinged with foreboding remarks regarding future confrontations. For instance, the depiction of the fathers of Confederation celebrating their success is tempered by Gougeon's ominous statement: "Les pères de la confédération ne pouvaient savoir que les années qui vont suivre seraient marquées par des événements qui feront ressortir les divisions profondes entre Canadien-français et Canadien-anglais".⁴⁶ Likewise, Gougeon's account of Trudeaumania which unites English- and French-Canadians in a political love-in is immediately followed by a depiction of Trudeau as "le Canadien-français qui remettra le Québec à sa place".⁴⁷ By emphasizing the most acrimonious and antagonistic events in the history of English- and French-Canadian relations and by accompanying the collaborative periods with a sense of impending doom, Gougeon reinforces the "us" vs. "them" mentality propagated by the Conquered People's discourse, the dominant ideology in "Le nationalisme québécois".

The "us" vs. "them" dichotomy established in this series also fuels the Conquered People's discourse's version of the history of nationalism in Quebec as the incessant and violent repression of French-Canada by *les Anglais*. In accordance with this account of English-French relations, the opening sequences of "Le nationalisme québécois" picture British Red

Coats attacking the outnumbered French troops at the battle of the Plains of Abraham. The shots that ring out in these opening seconds set the tone for the subsequent depiction of the repression of French-Canada from 1759 to the present. English-Canadians are repeatedly pictured as military oppressors who crush the French-Canadian resistance. In each case, the violent acts of the French-Canadian instigators are minimized while the militaristic response of the English-Canadian troops or police officers is maximized. For example, in his account of the 1837 rebellion, Gougeon depicts the French-Canadian offensive as "quelques attaques ratées"⁴⁸ which resulted in "the plundering and pillaging of French-Canadian villages, the arrest of more than 1,000 men, 108 trials, 60 deportations and 12 death sentences".⁴⁹ Again, in his consideration of the Louis Riel Rebellion of 1884-85, Gougeon underplays the violent and subversive acts such as the murder of Thomas Scott committed by Riel and his compatriots. Instead, Gougeon focuses on the guilty verdict delivered by an English-only jury and the death penalty imposed by English-Canadian Prime Minister John MacDonald, despite French-Canadians' demand for clemency.⁵⁰ Riel is thus transformed into a martyr whose "assassination" is proclaimed by Honoré Mercier to be not only a blow to the heart of the French-Canadian race, but also a travesty of justice.⁵¹

Almost a hundred years later, French-Canadians' disrespect for the Queen of England is again said to be met with violence by incensed provincial police officers. Notably, Gougeon chooses only images which show police

officers victimizing innocent Quebec citizens; the images of the protesters harassing the Queen are conveniently omitted. Gougeon tells the audience that although Quebecers were simply protesting against "le vieux symbole de la domination du Canada-Français...la répression brutale de la police provinciale face à une foule sans armes sera baptisée 'le samedi de la matraque'".⁵² The most blatant example of this series' attempt to paint the English-Canadian majority as military-style dictators, however, is Gougeon's account of the FLQ crisis. Accompanied by warrior music, footage of soldiers marching on Montreal and slow motion frames of the police arresting Quebec dissidents, Gougeon's description of the crisis is sombre and almost macabre:

Le gouvernement fédéral de Trudeau réagit en décrétant la Loi des mesures de guerre. L'armée s'installe à Montréal. Les libertés civiles sont suspendues. En une seule nuit on arrête sans mandat plus de 400 personnes soupçonnées de sympathies à l'égard des mouvements de revendications et des idées socialistes ou nationalistes. C'est l'arbitraire le plus total.⁵³

By immediately preceding the announcement of the death of Pierre Laporte with these images and comments, Gougeon seemingly attempts to justify the violent acts of the FLQ, or at the very least suggest that the terrorists were provoked by the totally arbitrary and unnecessary display of force by the federal government. The history of Quebec nationalism as written by the Conquered People's discourse is thus the story of a beleaguered French-Canadian minority's attempt to affirm itself nationally in spite of continuous and unwarranted

attacks by a repressive and cruel English-Canadian majority.

While the erection of insurmountable barriers between English- and French-Canada and the portrayal of the English-speaking majority as violent oppressors are both integral components of the dominant ideology in "Le nationalisme québécois", the central theme of the Conquered People's discourse is the continuous humiliation and isolation of Quebec as embodied in the "Conquest" of 1759. The fact that the Conquest of 1759 has only recently been framed by Quebec's intelligentsia as "a kind of original sin, a traumatic happening par excellence"⁵⁴ does not undermine in the least the ideological power of the Conquered People's metaphor as expressed in "Le nationalisme québécois". As Max Nemni explains:

It must be noted that the memory of the 'conquest' - which in fact was not a conquest but the secession of a territory from one imperial power to another - is far more an ideological construct than the consequences of the historic event itself.⁵⁵

As a result, every political event that can be depicted as a rejection of Quebec, regardless of its historical relation to the original secession of New France to Great Britain, resonates with the humiliation and isolation Quebecers are said to have suffered at the battle of the Plains of Abraham. Thus, the election campaign of 1917 is said to have been conducted "sur le dos des Québécois pour rallier des Canadiens-anglais hésitants"⁵⁶ thereby isolating Quebec. Likewise, the series' consideration of the conscription crisis of 1939 in which 80 per cent of English-Canadians voted in

favour of conscription and 72 per cent of Quebecers opposed it, again emphasizes the isolation of Quebec.⁵⁷ "Le nationalisme québécois" also depicts more recent events as examples of the continuous debasement and rejection of Quebec such as the night that would come to be known in Quebec as "the night of the long knives" during the constitutional conference of 1982. Despite the fact that political scientists such as Max Nemni have noted that "a non-ideological analysis of these events could hardly fail to note, at the very least, that the Quebec delegation had contributed to its own isolation"⁵⁸, "Le nationalisme québécois" pictures a dejected Quebec premier telling the nation, "Aujourd'hui le Québec revient à sa position traditionnelle. Hélas, c'est pas nous qui l'avons cherchée, ça finit avec nous qui sommes seuls dans notre coin".⁵⁹ By framing all political events from the Conquest to the present as ignominious defeats suffered by Quebec at the hands of a domineering English-Canadian majority, "Le nationalisme québécois" effectively presents an account of the historical relations between English- and French-Canada which frames the Quebec people as unredeemed martyrs. Moreover, as the dominant discourse in the series, the ideological constructs and action-guides implicit in the Conquered People's discourse are largely unchallenged by the other ideological discourses in "Le nationalisme québécois".

Action-guides conveyed to the audience

Unlike "Untying the Knot" in which the audience is clearly advised to privilege the federalist option over the separatist one, "Le nationalisme québécois" does not provide definitive action-guides regarding the choice of either the federalist-nationalist or the separatist-nationalist discourse as the unequivocal stance Quebecers should adopt in the constitutional talks. Admittedly, this study has shown that the separatist-nationalist discourse is accorded greater ideological importance than the federalist-nationalist discourse in "Le nationalisme québécois" because its assumptions coincide with those of the dominant discourse whereas the federalist-nationalist assumptions contradict them. Moreover, scenes from "Le nationalisme québécois" such as the one of a teary-eyed René Lévesque telling a dejected sovereigntist crowd who mourn the death of the 1980 independence dream, "Si je vous ai bien compris, vous êtes en train de dire à la prochaine fois"⁶⁰, leave little doubt that this series repeatedly glorifies both the idea of separation and the people who promote it. Nevertheless, the ideological presence of the federalist-nationalist discourse is sufficiently strong to offer committed federalists in the viewing audience a message that resonates more intimately with their own ideological persuasion. For instance, *Le Point's* choice of a conciliatory statement rather than an inflammatory one as the final intervention by a historian in the series supports the contention that viewers are not categorically

defied from adopting a federalist stance. As historian Louis Balthazar tells the audience, Quebecers can have a happy and prosperous future within Confederation if English-Canada can accept that Quebecers' first allegiance is to their province:

Je pense que les Québécois aiment le Canada, sont prêts à vivre au Canada, même à vivre dans un pays qui s'appelle le Canada. Ils l'ont démontré à plusieurs occasions. Mais leur appartenance immédiate, leur premier patriotisme s'adresse au Québec. Et dans la mesure où les Québécois pourront être Québécois d'abord et Canadiens ensuite, ils pourront, je crois, aller assez loin dans leur canadianisme.⁶¹

The fact that according to the most recent polls Quebecers are divided almost 50-50 on whether to vote yes or no in a referendum on Quebec sovereignty may indeed have influenced *Le Point's* decision to leave the choice between pro-federalism or pro-sovereignty somewhat open-ended. Arguably, while *The Journal* knew that its viewing audience overwhelmingly rejected the idea of independence for Quebec and would thus associate strongly with the anti-sovereignty action-guides implicit in the text, *Le Point* recognized that insofar as this issue was concerned, their viewers were a much less homogeneous ideological audience. Conceivably then, to account for this fact, *Le Point* created ideological space in "Le nationalisme québécois" to accommodate potential oppositional readings.

However, if *Le Point* leaves the decision regarding whether to support the federalist or separatist position largely to personal choice, the series leaves no doubt as to the rationale which must fuel the constitutional talks and the

criteria which must dictate the outcome of the crisis. No matter whether the sovereignty-association option or the renewed federalism option ultimately prevails, Quebecers are categorically told that they must be vindicated for the endless replays of the humiliating defeat they suffered in 1759. As with "Untying the Knot" which was intended to spring English-Canadians into action by enraging them with a consideration of what was possible, although unthinkable, in their society, "Le nationalisme québécois" issues a call to arms to French-Canadians urging them to no longer passively accept the historical inequities between French- and English-Canadians. The indignation and the frustration that "Le nationalisme québécois" attempts to evoke in French-Canadian viewers is perhaps best captured in separatist Pierre Bourgault's impassioned plea to French-Canadians to free themselves from the psychological oppression of the Conquest:

Tous ceux que nous vénérons depuis deux cents ans ont été battus. Ils s'appellent Montcalm, Lévis, Papineau, Riel, Chanier - tous sans exception - tous ont été battus. Pas un seul, pas un seul parmi eux en deux cents ans a gagné une bataille. Et c'est ça d'être colonisé. Quand on n'a que des martyrs, comment voulez-vous qu'on ait des aspirations, comment voulez-vous qu'on ait envie de se battre, lorsqu'on sait depuis deux cents ans qu'on perd et qu'on perd.⁶²

The action-guides implicit in Bourgault's testimony and countless others like it, are as categorical as those presented to viewers in "Untying the Knot". The fundamental message of "Le nationalisme québécois" is indisputable: Quebecers cannot afford to lose this constitutional battle as they have lost

all the battles that have come before. Consequently, the series urges Quebecers to seize control of the political and economic levers that have eluded them thus far because "for as long as Quebec does not become its own conqueror, it will be condemned unfortunately to lose the same battle of the Plains of Abraham over and over again".⁶³ In keeping with these action-guides, the series invites Quebecers to conclude that they cannot accept any concessions in this round of constitutional negotiations; compromise is completely out of the question. Nothing short of a decisive French-Canadian victory that will highlight English-Canadians' past wrongdoings and vindicate Quebec will be acceptable. Moreover, if Quebecers must separate from Canada to achieve these goals then "Le nationalisme québécois" says: so be it.

Three notable factors increase the likelihood that *Le Point's* viewing audience will associate with the action-guides implicit in "Le nationalisme québécois". First, the Conquered People's metaphor resonates profoundly in Quebec especially in the post-Meech era when many Quebecers still profess to be deeply wounded by English-Canada's rejection of Quebec's "five reasonable demands". Given the present political context, the Conquered People's discourse therefore acts as both a shield and a sword; it protects Quebec society's ideological frontier and fuels Quebec's attacks on reconciliatory discourses from English-Canada. As Christian Dufour explains: "Nothing stimulates a national identity more than adversity. Threatened, this identity's absolute priority is to maintain

its borders".⁶⁴ The Conquered People's discourse as expressed in "Le nationalisme québécois" fulfils this function extremely well, making it likely that the metaphor will reverberate forcefully with the viewers. Second, the fact that the version of Quebec nationalism's history presented in this series is corroborated by several renowned Quebec historians makes it more believable to the viewing audience. In a recent Crop study commissioned by L'Actualité, 80 per cent of Quebecers polled indicated that they trusted teachers. Moreover, of all the groups included in the survey, teachers were by far the most trusted professionals. In light of the credibility these university professors enjoy in Quebec society, the viewing audience will be more likely to accept the historians' testimony as a confirmation of the authenticity of the facts presented. Finally, most viewers are not well-versed in the minute details of the history of Quebec nationalism. As a result, many viewers will not easily be able to contest the historical account of Quebec nationalism provided by *Le Point*. Furthermore, even many of those viewers who do remember their history lessons will not be inclined to disagree with the depiction of events in "Le nationalisme québécois" because as Jeffrey Simpson explains, the nationalist history taught in Quebec is fuelled by the Conquered People's discourse:

In Quebec the school of nationalist historians who have all but obliterated competing schools of interpretation trace Quebec's humiliation back to the Conquest. Ever since, Quebec has been

engaged in a struggle against *les autres*
in Quebec and beyond.⁶⁵

All these factors combined thus make it more likely that many Quebecers will tend to read this public affairs series as ideologically prescribed by the dominant discourse. More importantly, however, like the categoric nature of the action-guides offered to the viewing audience in "Untying the Knot", the action-guides in "Le nationalisme québécois" negate the possibility of constitutional compromise or cooperation and encourage Quebecers to adopt an equally intransigent constitutional stance.

Conclusion

When compared and contrasted with the textual analysis of "Untying the Knot", this consideration of the ideological discourses and action-guides implicit in *Le Point's* "Le nationalisme québécois" indicates that Radio-Canada's mediation of the constitution crisis differs dramatically from that of the CBC. Notably, while both programs purport to offer a critically distanced perspective of the crisis and while both McKenna and Gougeon adhere to the same journalistic creed, the objectivist discourse, the range and hierarchy of ideological discourses and the content of the action-guides are remarkably different in each series. As in "Untying the Knot", the objectivist discourse in "Le nationalisme québécois" naturalizes both the ideological discourses and the action-guides implicit in the series into the "factual" account of the history of nationalism in Quebec. Arguably,

the objectivist discourse's role in this naturalization process is even more effective in "Le nationalisme québécois" because it is combined with a realist discourse which reinforces the idea that the programs are a mirror of Quebec's socio-economic and political landscape or as accurate as possible a representation of Quebec's historical reality.

Importantly, however, Gougeon's interpretation and selective use of the objectivist discourse is dictated by different cultural concerns and constraints than those that determine McKenna's use of this same journalistic creed. In "Le nationalisme québécois", the objectivist discourse is shaped by the ideological constraints of the dominant Conquered People's discourse, by Gougeon's self-perception of his role as a realist narrator and by the French-Canadian viewing audience's expectations of its public television broadcaster. Moreover, both Gougeon's and Poulin's interpretation of the objectivist discourse is shaped by the journalists' traditional role in Quebec society not as impartial reporters of historical fact, but as politically involved editorialists.

Insofar as the action-guides are concerned, the nature of the messages conveyed to the viewing audience are as categoric as those presented on *The Journal*, though the message is exactly the opposite. The purpose of "Le nationalisme québécois" as explained by journalist Gilles Gougeon in his opening remarks to the series was to enable the viewing audience to emotionally distance themselves from the explosive

climate of constitutional negotiations in order to gain some historical perspective with which to more rationally consider the issues at hand. However, "Le nationalisme québécois" declares to its predominantly French-speaking audience that Quebecers cannot compromise in this round of constitutional negotiations, that they must stand up for their rights and that they must vindicate their ancestors who have continuously been manipulated and defeated by English-Canada. As with "Untying the Knot", the categoric nature of the action-guides offered in "Le nationalisme québécois" is problematic because rather than provide critical distance from which to assess the constitutional stalemate or contribute to the breadth and depth of the discussion on the constitution, *Le Point*, like *The Journal*, contracts the sphere of public debate and filters both the kind and degree of discourses made available to the Canadian viewing public.

CHAPTER 5

FINAL ANALYSIS OF *THE JOURNAL'S* AND *LE POINT'S* MEDIATION OF THE CONSTITUTIONAL CRISIS

This comparative analysis of *The Journal's* "Untying the Knot" and *Le Point's* "Le nationalisme québécois" sheds new light on the mediation of the constitutional crisis provided to English and French-language audiences by the respective television divisions of the Canadian public broadcasting corporation. To conclude, this study thus summarizes the major findings regarding the respective roles of the programs, the broadcasters, the journalists and the audiences implicit in these two four-part public affairs series.

First, as the analysis has demonstrated, this study contends that contrary to their mandates, CBC and Radio-Canada public affairs programming do not foster a shared collective consciousness. Rather, French- and English-language programming reinforce two distinct and oppositional mythologies, symbolic cultures and consequently, French- and English-Canadian identities.

Second, this analysis concludes that by reinforcing linguistic stereotypes and by limiting the presence of the other solitude to a confrontational role, CBC and Radio-Canada reinforce the divisions between English and French-Canada and fuel further misunderstanding and mistrust. As a result of these respective programming choices, the French and English divisions of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation must

therefore be regarded not as a catalyst of Canadian unity, but as a potential agent of political and social division.

Third, this study argues that English- and French-language journalists' adherence to the objectivist discourse is based on their respective and often contradictory interpretations of the external political, economic and social reality. As a result, rather than insist on strict forms of impartiality in public affairs reporting which would further naturalize the journalists' world view and value systems, both the journalists and the viewing audiences must be made more aware of the cultural, socio-economic and political biases implicit in the objectivist discourse.

Fourth, this study concludes that in light of the constitutional action-guides conveyed to the viewing audiences by each of these four-part series, Canadian viewers must become better educated and more conscious of the means by which both the CBC and Radio-Canada structure the range and the hierarchy of ideological content in their public affairs programming. Lastly, insofar as the epistemology privileged for this analysis is concerned, this study suggests that the critical process provides an excellent starting point for the analysis of the kinds and degrees of ideological discourses in the text. Importantly, however, the study of the range and hierarchy of ideology in the text is only a first step towards a more complete understanding of television's role in the process of creating and legitimating meaning in late twentieth century Canadian society.

CBC and Radio-Canada public affairs programming: the great divide

As the comparative analysis of "Untying the Knot" and "Le nationalisme québécois" has demonstrated, on the basis of these public affairs series, neither the CBC nor Radio-Canada could be said to reflect or contribute to a unifying Canadian mythology, identity or collective consciousness. Yet a great deal of the corporation's human and financial resources were obviously committed to the preparation of these series which were intended to widen the scope of public debate by their respective considerations of the constitutional crisis. However, the travesty is not that the English and French divisions of the corporation failed to live up to their own journalistic expectations or that they failed to fulfil their government-imposed mandates to strengthen Canadian identity. Presumably it could be argued that the CBC and Radio-Canada have been saddled with a quasi-impossible task - that the two distinct languages, cultures, histories and political agendas which characterize English- and French-Canada largely negate the public broadcaster's ability to reflect, and contribute to, one unifying Canadian identity. As Daniel Drolet suggests:

Many countries have a unifying mythology, a prism through which their history is reflected. France had the French Revolution; the United Kingdom has the monarchy and its parliamentary tradition. Canada has no such unifying mythology; the closest is Confederation.¹

In any event, to suggest that *The Journal* and *Le Point* should be criticized for not having fostered one collective

consciousness would effectively be to argue that these public affairs programs should provide a standardized, homogenized and thus largely vacuous mediation of English- and French-Canadian political reality. Yet while the CBC and Radio-Canada should not be expected to foster one distinctively Canadian collective consciousness where none exists, the public broadcaster can and should fulfil its mandate to promote greater knowledge and understanding of English- and French-Canada by reflecting and presenting the cultural, political and socio-economic realities of one founding nation to the other.

This study's fundamental criticism of CBC's and Radio-Canada's mediation of the constitutional crisis as expressed in "Untying the Knot" and "Le nationalisme québécois" is thus that despite their stated goal to both enhance the sphere of public debate and to provide critical distance from which to assess constitutional issues, both these programs do precisely the opposite. Rather than attempt to heighten their respective audiences' awareness and understanding of the ideological positions of the other solitude and thereby open a channel of communication between English- and French-Canada, both series reinforce the traditional divisions between English- and French-Canada and through their accounts of past and future relations between the two linguistic groups, breed further misconceptions and distrust.

For instance, in "Untying the Knot", *The Journal* had an excellent opportunity to rationally explain the fundamental

tenets of the sovereignty-association option to a predominantly anglophone audience for whom any form of Quebec nationalism or separatism is a foreign and repulsive concept. However, rather than seek to render the sovereigntist position "if not familiar, then at least, comprehensible"², *The Journal* makes it blatantly obvious from Terence McKenna's opening monologue that the series will consider only the political and economic costs, the trauma of disentanglement and the potentially hostile divorce proceedings that would result from the acceptance of the sovereignty association option.³ As a result, after viewing "Untying the Knot", English-Canadians have no better understanding or appreciation of the assumptions and ideals which fuel Quebec sovereigntists' passionate fight for independence. In fact, rather than open English-Canadians' minds to the ideological positions of sovereigntists, *The Journal* contributes to English-Canadians' ignorance of the sovereignty option and further entrenches them in their federalist stance by playing on their fear that sovereignty-association will entail economic and political disaster. What is most disturbing of all is that *The Journal* accomplishes this feat by couching its account of sovereignty association in the objectivist discourse, an ideological position which enables the journalist to "play with simulated reality like an Olympian God. He can remain at a distance, safely invisible behind his shield, uninvolved".⁴ By privileging a debate forum and by billing its series as a consideration of the wide array of opinions on the sovereignty

association option, *The Journal* had a clear-cut responsibility to present both the federalist and sovereigntist positions; a responsibility it obviously did not fulfil.

In contrast, by positing itself solely as an account of nationalism in Quebec, "Le nationalisme québécois" arguably absolved itself from the responsibility to present an English-Canadian perspective of either Canadian nationalism or Canadian history. Yet if *Le Point*'s purpose was to provide its viewers with critical distance from which to assess the constitutional crisis, an account of nationalism which shed greater light on both English and French-Canada's perceptions of the historical origins of the constitutional impasse might have been more successful in accomplishing this goal. In other words, *Le Point* could have seized the opportunity to explain to its Québécois audience that one of the fundamental obstacles to achieving constitutional agreement is that English- and French-Canadians espouse two different mythologies and two different versions of Canadian history which dictate their understanding and their expectations of constitutional reform. As Jeffrey Simpson argued in "History with a Sense of Grievance - the tale of contemporary Canada":

There is nothing remotely approaching a unifying sense of Canadian history, in schools, universities or public discourse. On the contrary, history of both the taught and publicly felt kind - has become even more particularistic... the more particularistic the historical obsessions and the more fervently their use to justify contemporary positions, the more divisive the debates and the narrower the path towards compromise.⁵

Rather than attempt to enlighten the Québécois audience as to why English-Canadians regard Quebec nationalism as a destructive force or to explain to the Québécois how and why English-Canadians' version of history differs significantly from their own, "Le nationalisme québécois" chooses instead to engage in a particularistic account of history which sheds no new light on past or present constitutional positions and issues.

By saturating its account of the history of nationalism in Quebec in the Conquered People's discourse, *Le Point* negates *a priori* the possibility of presenting the other half of the historical equation, the English-Canadian account, which in 1992 remains largely alien and incomprehensible to the Québécois. Moreover, the fact that "Le nationalisme québécois" relies solely on Québec historians to corroborate a blatantly particularistic French-Canadian version of history further rules out the possibility of introducing an English-Canadian perspective. As a result, "Le nationalisme québécois" does not contribute in the least to Quebecers' understanding of the historical basis of either English-Canadians' categoric rejection of separatism or of their staunch ideological adherence to federalism. Rather, *Le Point* series fuels further ignorance and even hatred of the English-Canadian majority. In addition, by indulging in linguistic stereotyping, by focusing exclusively on English-French conflicts and by portraying the Battle of the Plains of Abraham as an unforgivable original sin, "Le nationalisme

québécois" firmly reinforces Quebecers' sense of isolation and shame.

What is most regrettable is that like "Untying the Knot", "Le nationalisme québécois" legitimizes its historical perspective by presenting its mythologized, revisionist version of Quebec nationalism as an impartial, balanced and "factual" account of Canadian history from 1759 to the present. *Le Point* veils its particularistic account of Quebec nationalism in narrative realism despite the fact that the producers, journalists and anchor should recognize that "TV cannot transmit 'raw historical' events, as such to its audiences: it can only transmit pictures of, stories, informative talk or discussion about, the events it selectively treats".⁶ The narrative realism in which both journalist Gilles Gougeon and *Le Point* hide is particularly unfortunate because not only does it contribute nothing to Québécois' understanding of English-Canada's mythology and history, but it also serves to justify French-Canadians' historical ignorance, indignation and intransigence vis-à-vis English Canada.

CBC and Radio-Canada: the closing of the Canadian mind

Given the analysis of the ideological structure and content of these two public affairs series, it can hardly be said that either *The Journal* or *Le Point* in any way create an informed awareness of the other solitude's constitutional concerns, beliefs and positions. However, when these two series are situated in their historical context, the mediation

of the constitutional crisis provided by *The Journal* and *Le Point* is even more troubling. As previously stated, "Le nationalisme québécois" and "Untying the Knot" were aired in the midst of the five constitutional conferences with ordinary Canadians. To the great surprise of both politicians and journalists these conferences were marked by a strong sense of compromise, good will and determination to resolve the country's constitutional impasse. Significantly, the participants' particular determination to recognize Quebec's distinctiveness within Confederation prompted Joe Clark to remark about the conferences: "I think their success was a surprise, at least to me. Certainly the degree of success".¹ After months of failed committees, inter-provincial squabbling and political stalemate, the constitutional climate from mid January to mid February 1992 was thus one of renewed promise and hope. As a result, the fact that, at a time when the rest of the country was bending over backwards to accommodate Quebec in Confederation, *Le Point* aired a series whose action-guides reinforced Quebecers' sense of being an isolated and victimized minority who must at all costs be vindicated in this round of constitutional negotiations, can only lead to the conclusion that *Le Point* was an agent of division, rather than of political cohesion. Likewise, the fact that *The Journal* posited sovereignty-association as a viable alternative to the constitutional impasse and then rejected it out of hand as a completely unacceptable solution at a time when ordinary English-Canadians were openly considering all

options, suggests that *The Journal* encouraged a similar intransigence in its viewers. The point is not that *The Journal* and *Le Point* should have skewed their public affairs programming either in favour or against constitutional reforms, but rather that they both promised to provide a fresh perspective or an unconsidered angle to enlighten their audiences regarding their constitutional choices. Instead, they reinforced English and French-Canada's respective prejudices and attempted to convince each group that the only viable solution to the constitutional impasse was the one that each linguistic group already espoused. In the case of English-Canada this clearly meant federalism, in the case of French-Canada, this meant whatever option gave Quebec the greatest economic and political power.

The objectivist discourse: journalists' powerful ideological tool

Analysis of Terence McKenna's and Gilles Gougeon's selective interpretation of the journalistic creed in "Untying the Knot" and "Le nationalisme québécois" reveals that in each case the objectivist discourse plays a pivotal role in structuring the range and the hierarchy of ideological discourses in these public affairs series. Moreover, the varied interpretation of the journalistic creed in each series combined with the fact that the objectivist discourse is used by McKenna and Gougeon as a means to promote two very different ends indicates that this discourse is in itself an important cultural construct. As Stephen Kline suggested:

"One wonders whether the high credibility of the news in part isn't due to the way that journalistic forms of impartiality reflect deep seated cultural assumptions about objectivity".¹ Consequently, to limit the assessment of the journalists' performance to a bias/objectivity dichotomy would be to overlook the more substantive issue of how the guise of objectivity as it is expressed by different cultures serves to naturalize the journalists' structured mediation of ideology in the texts.

One of the ways that the objectivist discourse naturalizes the ideological content in these series is by blending the discourses into the political, economic and cultural landscape of given "facts" which constitute the essence of each program. In the case of "Le nationalisme québécois" this is accomplished through narrative realism whereas in "Untying the Knot" the premise is an impartial hearing for the sovereignty association option. Ironically, however, the same objectivist discourse serves to reinforce two radically different mythologies, histories and action-guides. In "Le nationalisme québécois", the objectivist discourse is the eager page of the Conquered People's discourse, willingly delivering the message that Quebec is a victimized, oppressed minority which must claim its rightful political and economic power. In contrast, in "Untying the Knot", the objectivist discourse is the humble servant of the capitalist and federalist discourses, fervently spreading the curse of economic disaster if federalism is rejected by Quebec. Clearly then, the objectivist discourse is not an

organized discourse so much as an *organizing* discourse; it is not a container but a strainer through which ideology is filtered to the audience. In this sense it is a powerful ideological tool wielded by journalists who have so fully internalized its assumptions that they are often unaware or forgetful of its seminal role in the creation and legitimation of meaning process.

As a result, the main point regarding the journalists' role in these series is not the recognition that Terence McKenna and Gilles Gougeon do not or cannot possibly provide a balanced and accurate account of constitutional-related issues and facts to their viewing audience. Rather, the more important conclusion to be drawn is that the journalists' discourse is "a blend of traditional objective journalism and a kind of quasi-fictional prime-time story-telling which frames events in reduced terms with simple clear-cut values".¹ In other words, the objectivist discourse's role in structuring and legitimating the ideological content in these series is significant both in the ways it constructs neutrality and the ways it organizes the facts into a compelling and believable story. This study has already suggested both in the opening chapter and in the analysis of the public affairs programming the many ways in which the objectivist discourse posits both the journalists as impartial observers and the programs as neutral, factual accounts of reality. However, the journalist's role as storyteller merits further, albeit brief, consideration here.

In the case of both "Untying the Knot" and "Le nationalisme québécois" the narrative genre privileged could almost be said to be a traditional fairy tale. However, both *The Journal's* and *Le Point's* reliance on historical fact to substantiate their narrative makes a comparison of these series to a modern drama more accurate. This analogy is supported by a CBC news editor who admitted in an interview with David Taras: "We look for conflict often to the exclusion of the story. It's overwhelmingly prevalent. It's the nature of journalism to be a storyteller. It needs drama."¹⁰ Drama is indeed the driving force behind *The Journal's* and *Le Point's* mediation of the constitutional crisis in "Untying the Knot" and "Le nationalisme québécois". First, each series has a well-defined protagonist and antagonist. In both cases, the hero is depicted as a larger than life character who is beyond moral reproach; the antagonist is an evil and unrepentant criminal. However, the choice of the hero and the villain differ significantly in both series. In "Untying the Knot", sovereignty-association is unquestionably the mythic dragon that must be slain; separatists, the evil criminals that must be controlled before they harm society any further. In "Le nationalisme québécois", English-Canadians are clearly framed as the antagonists, the violent and oppressive tyrants who must be made to see the errors of their ways.

Second, in both series the narrative feeds on a mounting conflict between the forces of good and evil. In "Le

nationalisme québécois" this conflict is depicted as the repeated outbreak of violence between English and French Canada from the Battle of the Plains of Abraham to the FLQ crisis. In "Untying the Knot", the conflict is sustained through the four debates between federalist and sovereigntist proponents and through the back-to-back comments of Joe Clark and Jacques Parizeau. The one way that these series depart from the structure of modern television drama is that unlike the latter which provides the resolution to the conflict in the final moments on screen, the final visual and oral segments of these public affairs programs do not resolve the conflict on screen. Instead, the series provide closure by offering clear-cut action-guides to the viewers; action-guides which enable viewers to enter the drama, become the protagonists and restore order and justice themselves. *Le Point's* series prescribes that the restoration of order and justice will be achieved by vindicating Quebec and by supplanting English-Canadians' traditional control of the economic and political levers; *The Journal's* series tells the viewers that order will be restored by fighting off the threat of separatism and by preserving the structural and philosophical integrity of the country. Yet particularly noteworthy is that while the structural basis of the story is the same in both English and French-Canada, the choice of protagonists and antagonists, the nature of the conflict and the implicit action-guides vary according to the political, cultural and social realities of each narrator and listening

audience. So it is with the objectivist discourse; the fundamental role of the discourse is the same, but the cultural assumptions about what constitutes a believable tale, what the moral of the story should be and how involved the narrator should be in the story-telling process differ according to English and French-Canada.

Audience reception: what stories are viewers being asked to believe?

Given the categoric and divisive nature of the constitutional action-guides implicit in "Untying the Knot" and "Le nationalisme québécois", it is essential that both English and French-Canadian audiences become more fully aware of the objectivist discourse's role, not in eliminating bias from Canadians' news and public affairs programming, but in reinforcing and naturalizing it. Canadian viewers must come to realize that the objectivist discourse's combination of dramatic narrative with the myth of neutrality has a crucial influence on the decoding process, because as John Fiske explains:

It is this myth that is constant from day to day and that provides the ground rules by which we are led to interpret the daily differences and it may be argued that this constancy makes the form of the news ideologically more powerful than the individual differences of reading which occur largely at the level of content and which are weakened by the inefficiency of memory.¹¹

The consideration of these two public affairs series clearly demonstrates that both the range and the hierarchy of ideological discourses and action-guides implicit in each

series are organized in such a way that they pose no threat to their respective English- and French-Canadian audience's deep-seated historical, cultural and constitutional assumptions. As a result, the historical or futuristic account of French-English relations presented by *Le Point* and *The Journal* are more likely to seem normal, accurate, reasonable and incontestably true to their respective viewing audiences, when in fact, the accounts are particularistic ones which reinforce linguistic prejudice, division and ignorance.

However, to gain the critical distance required to become more conscious of Canadian public television's role in mediating the constitutional crisis to English- and French-Canadian audiences, viewers must demythologize the objectivist discourse and attempt not only to discern, but to question the stories they are being told. As Barry Cooper explains in "How to Watch TV News":

One way of being less stupid about TV news shows is to use your literate, analytic intelligence. In common sense language, that means watching TV rather as if you were an anthropologist among strange and savage peoples. Pay attention to silences, to intonation and gesture; listen to words not as vehicles by which information is transferred but as bearers of meaning. Ask yourself not 'What is happening in the world?' but 'What is the story I am being asked to believe?'.¹²

Admittedly, in light of both the speed and the intangibility of evening news and public affairs programming, asking Canadians who tune in for information about the world at the end of long, demanding and increasingly hectic days, to

critically analyze not only the content but the structure of the public affairs programming is seemingly to engage in extreme academic idealism. To discern the stories that Canadians were asked to believe in "Untying the Knot" and "Le nationalisme québécois" required that the analyst repeatedly view these series, carefully consider the omissions and abstractions in the constitutional information transmitted, and historically contextualize the findings. Clearly this is a great deal to ask of each Canadian viewer. However, to passively accept that Canadians are unable to critically analyze their main instrument of mediation and legitimation and thus to conclude that they are destined to bathe in ignorance by uncritically accepting the constitutional perspectives provided by their respective divisions of the public broadcaster is even more undesirable. As a result, this study functions on the premise that English- and French-Canadian audiences will sometimes accept and sometimes reject the structured mediation of news and public affairs programming offered to them by their respective divisions of the national public broadcaster. In this sense, this study places its faith in the analytic intelligence of the Canadian people and hopes that most Canadians can learn to recognize and to criticize the ideological content in their news and public affairs programming.

While there are undoubtedly numerous ways in which Canadians can sharpen their critical appreciation of news and public affairs television programming, two immediate and obvious recommendations come to mind. First, in order to

identify and to contest the stories, myths and particularistic accounts of history that they are being asked to believe when they watch television, Canadians need to have other sources of news and public affairs information such as newspapers, magazines and radio programming which can offer potentially more in-depth, or at least complementary, facts and perspectives with which to better assess the constitutional crisis. Canadians should also seek to gain a greater knowledge of, and thus a better appreciation for, constitutional positions and ideas which conflict with their own, if only to be able to more effectively criticize the depiction of marginalized ideologies in television news and public affairs programming. For bilingual Canadians, this might entail occasionally watching television or reading newspapers in their second language to gain a different or comparative angle on constitutional developments. Second, Canadians need to make the public broadcasting policy-makers, programmers and journalists aware that they dispute some of the choices of metaphors, allegories, stories and action-guides that are being conveyed to the French and English viewing audiences. Throughout the constitutional crisis, Canadian citizens have been remarkably adept at identifying partial and particularistic accounts of constitutional issues in newspapers and have resoundingly voiced their opinions in the letters to the editor section in papers across the country. A similar public forum must be found, either on television or in other media, to routinely express and discuss these concerns with regards to television news and public

affairs programming's role in mediating daily political reality. Such a forum would go a long way in combatting positivist communication researchers' and some policy-makers' traditional vision of the audience as an uncritical mass.

While these suggestions may seem like a great deal of work for most Canadians, becoming an informed citizen is not only each Canadian's right, but also each Canadian's responsibility. Furthermore, Canadians' insistence on being full participants in the constitutional negotiations makes no sense whatsoever if they are unwilling to do the necessary intellectual work to prepare themselves to be active and informed participants in the debate. To assume that watching television news and public affairs programming qualifies the average citizen to decide the country's future is a gross error, for as Eric From argues in "Ordinary people may not be fit to decide the fate of the nation":

People who claim to be informed by news programs are not familiar with background information - the history, arguments and philosophies that underlie every story. They are familiar only with the non-toxic effluent that has been strained through the production filters.¹⁵

Therefore, to suggest that Canadian citizens who, both by their democratic vote and their political voice, wish to participate fully in constitutional decisions should become critical and conscientious viewers of television, their main mediating instrument, is from the point of view of this study both a reasonable and a fair request.

The critical process: a renewed emphasis on understanding

The use of the critical process as defined by Stuart Hall to guide this comparative analysis of the ideological discourses and action-guides implicit in CBC's and Radio-Canada's public affairs programming is both instrumental and insightful. First, by encompassing both the political economic and cultural roots of the thought formation and mediation process, this study contributes to a more complex and more complete understanding of the relationship between ideology and the media. As the analysis clearly demonstrates, culturally based ideologies such as the Conquered People's discourse in "Le nationalisme québécois" or the separatist discourse in "Untying the Knot" are fused with different versions of the consumer capitalist discourse in each series. Therefore, had this study limited its analysis exclusively to either the economic or the cultural manifestations of ideology in the text, the analysis would have resulted in a partial and presumably skewed perspective of the major ideological discourses implicit in these public affairs programs. Second, by defining dominance as "a structured field of relations which is never permanently fixed"¹⁴, this analysis was able to account for the ways that the ideological discourses in these two four-part series are at different periods in the programs, interwoven with, undercut by, or superseded by, other discourses in the text. In this sense, this study was able to transcend the traditional and seemingly erroneous notion of ideology as a static, blanketing force. Hall's emphasis on both the kind and the degree of ideological

discourses in any given media texts, is thus a useful epistemological tool to more fully understand both the content and the hierarchy of ideology in the media.

Third, by recognizing that there is no universal law which governs the relationship between the encoder, the decoder and the message, this study averted the need to conclude that all members of the audience would necessarily internalize the action-guides in precisely the same manner. Having said this, by depicting television as Canadians' primary mediating symbol and by explaining the cultural, social and economic factors which made it likely that the action-guides would reverberate forcefully with the respective viewing audiences, this analysis justified its conclusion that many members of the audience would be likely to at least partially internalize the action-guides as presented by the broadcaster. By recognizing both the individual autonomy of the viewers and the societal influences upon them, as well as the polysemic nature of the texts and the preferred readings implicit in them, this approach is thus instrumental in bridging the gap between cultural theorists' and political economists' respective views of the audience.

Fourth, this study demythologizes the objectivist discourse and makes "objectivity, as a rhetorical device and practical norm, itself the object of investigation, rather than the standard"¹⁵ by which news content is evaluated. As a result, the comparative analysis of "Le nationalisme québécois" and "Untying the Knot" transcends the bias/objectivity dichotomy that has characterized the bulk of

news and public affairs analyses to date and focuses instead on Canadian public broadcasters' and journalists' more substantive role in structuring reality. In other words, this study shifted the emphasis from the need to *prove* that the programs were biased to the desire to *understand* how each series structured its ideological presentation and mediation of the constitutional crisis for its respective viewing audiences.

Finally, Hall's approach is noteworthy because it enables analysts to admit that their perspectives are necessarily culturally and historically based and that as a result, their conclusions remain partial and contingent. Importantly, however, this admission can be made without devaluing the contribution of a given research project to the collective understanding of the communicative process. In the case of this particular study, this entails the recognition that while the comparative analysis suggests that *The Journal* and *Le Point* play a powerful and divisive ideological role in the mediation of the constitutional crisis for their respective viewing audiences, concurrent studies would shed more light on the many factors which influenced the production and reception of the mediated messages in "Untying the Knot" and "Le nationalisme québécois". In particular, studies which analyze English and French-Canadians' respective reactions to public affairs programming and studies which examine the specific institutional factors at CBC and Radio-Canada which influence the structuration of the ideological discourses and action-

guides during the process of producing these series would be beneficial.

Conclusion

As the comparative analysis of *The Journal's* "Untying the Knot" and *Le Point's* "Le nationalisme québécois" has clearly demonstrated, "the highest power of television journalism is not in the transmission of information, but in the transmission of experience".¹⁶ The French and English divisions of the Canadian public broadcasting corporation and their respective journalists have been entrusted with a unique mandate to mediate Canadian reality in a way that fosters a collective Canadian experience, or consciousness. As a result, both the broadcasters and the journalists play a pivotal role in defining and shaping Canadians' understanding of their political, economic, cultural and social landscape. The fact that many Canadians increasingly question the legitimacy of the church and the state and thus rely predominantly on television to mediate their relationship with the world around them, only tightens the highly regarded national public broadcaster's grasp on the Canadian imagination. Nevertheless, this study does not call for journalists' strict adherence to the objectivist discourse, nor does it conclude that the CBC and Radio-Canada must work more diligently to foster one, unifying collective consciousness. The former recommendation would simply reinforce and naturalize the French- and English-language biases in the media while the latter would homogenize the

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broadcasters' public affairs programming into an equal unreflective and vacuous Canadian experience. Rather, this study encourages both the French and English divisions of the Canadian public broadcaster, their journalists and their audiences to become more fully aware of the power of television to tell stories which can either unite or divide, shed light on or misrepresent, and build barriers or demythologize. As Joe Clark suggested on February 15, 1992, in the aftermath of "Le nationalisme québécois" and the advent of "Untying the Knot": "Words can be weapons or they can work wonders. They can open wounds or close them. It is the responsibility of all of us to choose our words with care."¹⁷ This study thus argues that coupled with this increased awareness of their powerful ideological role in Canadian society, CBC and Radio-Canada broadcasters and journalists should avoid facile dichotomies, dramatic conflicts and vivid stereotypes such as those that characterized *Le Point's* and *The Journal's* mediation of the constitutional crisis. While these elements may make for good television drama, they contribute nothing to, and in fact detract from, Canadians' understanding and appreciation of the concerns, ideas and discourses which guide English- and French-Canadians' respective interpretation of the Canadian unity crisis.

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Chapter 2

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