

**Theatre and Canadian National Consciousness: A  
Study of select Canadian plays since 1960**

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DECLARATION

I declare that the thesis entitled **Theatre and Canadian National Consciousness: A Study of select Canadian plays since 1960** submitted by me for the award of the degree of **DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY** of Jawaharlal Nehru University is my own work. The thesis has not been submitted for any other degree in this or any other university.

*Madhura Mukhopadhyay*  
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CERTIFICATE

We recommend that this thesis may be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

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# Preface:

This thesis aims to find a co-relation between Canadian theatre and its impact on the national consciousness of Canadian citizens. It traces the growth and evolution of a national consciousness within the Canadian nation that has been affected by its national theatre and vice versa. The duality present in identity of its citizens has often led to a questioning of the presence of a 'national' consciousness within the political and cultural fabric of its citizens' lives. Added to that has been the ambiguities of language, as both the founding languages had wanted to gain prominence in the political, social and cultural milieu. The growth of national consciousness is shown through various stages of theatre and their impact of the audience. While of the one hand, marginality is seen through plays based on race, religion and gender; on the other hand we find that policies have been made to overcome these issues of marginality and these have been showcased through theatre. At the same time, theatre has also served as a medium of visual protest and separation as can be seen during the Quiet revolution in Quebec. This research would look into the scope of the modern Canadian political plays within the purview of social and political changes and the creation of the national subject therein.

This thesis has attempted to prove the hypothesis of whether the effect of the growth of national consciousness can be seen upon Canadian political theatre. At the same it has tried to co-relate the fact that modern theatre after 1960 has helped in the cohesion of national identity despite the multicultural nature of the nation. Finally, through certain political and other plays it has shown that the Quiet Revolution has had an impact upon political theatre in Canada leading to identities based on separatist consciousness.

# CHAPTER 1

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## Introduction

### Theatre and the Nation

Theatre and plays have been seen as synonymous to reflections of the evolution and progress of society. They are one part of culture and the arts whereby they help in the formation identities, traditions, norms, more and values of a society are both constructed as well as decimated. They pave the way in which deviant, often taboo and anti- authoritarian values are expressed in an aesthetically and visually appealing manner. Social, cultural and political issues which are obvious, yet veiled within the bounds of cultural and political norms get expressed through the visual aids of theatre. As a result, they end up enlightening and educating the masses in a manner that would enable them to formulate opinions of their own thereby broadening their vision regarding certain situations in society. These situations are seen, more often than not, to be fraught with social and political dissent within factions of the society as well as between the society and the state. Following the precepts of western philosophical thought it cannot be denied that dramatic theatre has had a lot to do in the building up of political opinion of the masses and has been a part of the 'soft power' of a nation whereby dominance of a nation is created more through the cultural hegemony over others rather than through military domination over other nations. These have been solidified over the decades through the tools of globalisation. Theatre has been playing a significant role in the formulation opinions that affect the formulation of public policies of the electorate. Although having lesser influence than other electronic media, theatre has had a continuous influence as a visual art and therefore has been able to influence through the projected images of the nation and its people. On the other hand, policy makers are also part of this same electorate. They have realised the potential of theatre as a tool of both propaganda as well as that of voicing dissent within the cultural sphere.

### ***1. Theatre and national identity:***

The greatest ambiguity that seems to haunt the Canadian theatre audiences and makers alike has been the ever-pervading sense of national consciousness and identity whereby both the theatre going audiences and that of the theatre producing ones are grappling with the duality inherent in the subjective identity of their own. While it cannot be denied that Canada has for long been deemed as a nation where the immigrants form a sizable portion of the populace, the semiotics of identity has been seen to change over time and has thus been seen to embody these very differences as part of the 'multicultural mosaic' which has become the cornerstone of its official policies regarding the international and national associations. However, multiculturalism as a policy seems to lend itself mostly to the 'cultural' aspect of the lives of the people of the nation where the sociological derivations of the subject is created through the auspices of the cultural aspect of its native land along with the restrictions imposed by the same cultural mores and norms. Robert Jackson opines in his book *Classical and Modern Thought on International Relations* regarding 'Recognition' as being one of the oldest and one of the most fundamental norms of international relations (Jackson 2005: 2). He further opines that to contemplate world affairs in terms of drama, which is an ancient image at least as old as Sophocles' play *Antigone* written in the late 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C, is to be drawn into a profoundly human world a scene of various players engaged in activities of securing security from others or advantages over them (ibid). One can therefore, assume that theatres and plays have been tools of anti-authoritarian stances for a long time within the domain of international and national politics. It is when these feelings of 'insecurity' arise, leading to a loss in identity within the political and social hierarchy that protests occur. These protests are given visual aid through the overt as well as the covert metaphorical auspices of the political theatre.

### ***2. Theatre history and the colonial 'being':***

Theatre in Canada has had a long history and began with imperial designs of the French and the British. From its very beginning it was obvious that theatre in Canada was concerned mostly with that of the building up of a national identity that pertained to that of the colonizing nation and therefore led to the belittling of the native populace. The first recorded play that was staged in Canada was Marc Lescarbot's *Théâtre Neptune la Nouvelle France*, presented by French explorers in 1606. However, it did include words in various native Canadian languages as well as references to Canadian geography. What was to be noted was that the style of the play that was retained was that of the French plays (Goldie 1989: 186). In retrospect one realises that the theatre of the early Canadian nation were meant to foster a feeling of ownership and hegemonic identity within the conquering forces whereby colonial and imperialistic designs were given full play. Thus, the nature of theatre designed for colonial officers and/or troops (and the nature of colonialism itself) required that the plays produced in these countries be reproduction of imperial models in style, theme and content. Various elements of 'local colour' were of course included, so that an early settler might position a native character[...] as an outsider, someone who was in some central way ridiculous or intolerable (Gilbert and Tompkins ed. Goodman 1996: 231). Theatre played an indelible part in the creation of the subject especially in colonised nations like Canada, Australia and New Zealand. Imperial authority shaped not only the economic and the cultural space of the natives as well as the settlers; it also was inevitable that it included the 'metaphoric space of the mind' (ibid). Not only were the effects of colonial domination immediate in the socio-political sphere of the early nation of 'settler-invader cultures' like Canada, but also through the ages where most non-indigenous colonial subjects continue to be implicated in some existing imperial ministrations (ibid). The theatrical stage become another source and space for subjectivising the natives in the mould of the colonizer, namely, the French and later the British in Canada, especially during the later cultural skirmishes for a bilingual and bi-national identity. Gilbert and Tompkins went on to opine that the theatre could in fact, be used as a politically empowered space for the anti- authoritarian forces to 'actively decolonize' the mind, which can be a potentially productive site for releasing---through theatrical experimentation--- imperialism's hold on the colonized subject (ibid : 233).



However, it cannot be denied that, the intent of the hitherto colonized natives and the subsequent waves of immigrants wanting to assimilate within the matrix of the dominant culture circumvents the idea of the *mosaic* of the Multicultural Act, thereby bringing into focus the various deviant tendencies within man to create a space, an identity and above all define himself as a subject in the eyes of the 'other' – that is, create the notion of 'being' within the existing sphere of the global identity. In this respect, it is more often than not, the visual signs and symbols that help in creating the subject in the gaze of the 'self' and the 'other'. Identity and its focus on the creating of the 'other', thus, becomes a montage of the rapidly evolving and constantly reproduced symbols of cultural homogeneity within a particular community of people where civilisation of man is seen as being inevitable connected to his own identity. Artaud talks about civilization and its effect on the human psyche. He says, "We judge a civilised man by the way he behaves-he thinks as he behaves. But we are already confused about the words 'civilized man'. Everyone regards a cultured, civilized man as someone informed about systems, who thinks in systems, forms, signs and representations" (Artaud 1938: 4). The term culture and civilization also need to be debated upon if one tends to probe into the meaning of the word 'multiculture' as being innately intertwined with that of 'culture' as well as the norms and mores of a 'civilized' society. Julie Reeves points out that, historically 'Civilization' was the perfect term with which to set out to deliberately and consciously to conquer *others* and thereby force a better standard on them; 'culture', on the other hand, remained a personal matter (Reeves 2004: 14). Her assumptions regarding culture and civilization have been historically and chronologically traced to reveal how culture has now become a part of one's national identity. With the etymological derivation of "culture" from the Italian "*cultura*" one finds that it refers to a matter of 'cultivation' which was later rendered in commonsensical knowledge as that of the "cultivation of human behaviour" (ibid: 15). Culture has played a pivotal part in international relations throughout human history as a bone of contention between states and their practices including their domestic policies. Thus we find it being warped within the Nazi context of the German *Kulture* during the Second World War and thereby becoming intertwined with the notions of *race*. The intermingling of the terms *culture* and *race* linked with nationality have been

frequently at the root of human discrimination, marginalisation and its resultant protest within the concerned nations. Canada has been no less a part of this rigmarole. This is especially obvious through the Humanist concept of the culture that includes the derivations of civilization as the hallmark of a superior race as showcased through the French and British theatre in Canada. Through the ages, and especially after the 1960s, Canada has seen a lot of protests regarding its minorities, First nations and multicultural communities which have been espoused through theatre. These have been manifested through the use of Agitrop theatre which has employed the accumulated and popular cultural icons of nation and nationality through popular protest theatre. While quite late to adopt the notions of protest through theatre it has acquired a unique identity of its own through which protest is communicated to state authorities. These have often been responded to through changes in public policies which have had a direct effect on the community or the section of people who had been agitating for reforms.

### ***3. Types of Canadian theatre:***

If looked into thoroughly, one can see that Canadian theatre has been a theatre of division and differentiation since the beginning. The divide between the French theatre and that of British theatre has been that of establishment of nationality as per the native country rather than that of the building up of a new country. As a matter of fact, they seem to follow Morgenthau's view of culture as being that of domination and cultural imperialism where he pointed it out as a "deliberate displacement of one culture by another" (Morgenthau ed Julie Reeves 1948/1962: 58 and 60). Therefore, it can be concluded that from its very inception Canadian theatre can be thought of to be as political theatre of protest against the other dominant culture while at the same time also as a tool by the said cultures to entrench nationalistic fervour and values espoused by the state.

Theatre in Canada is not only a product of its historical origins as that of two cultures clashing for the dominance of a nation, it is also a result of the continuity of those values and traditions that have amalgamated into its cultural matrix resulting in the formulation of different policies and programmes. In the contemporary times it has been seen that in Canada both the Realists and the

Liberalists treat the identity of the actors as irrelevant. Richard Ned Lebow points out how identities are assumed to have a prior existence or develop in the course of interactions[...]interactions that are shaped ... by the character of the system in which they occur. (Lebow 2008: 558). Historically speaking, one can find the emergence of popular and political theatre to gain prominence in Canada since 1978. This was the year in which Ross Kidd, a Canadian Adult Educator returned from South Africa and started researching upon Canadian social and political theatre. This was also the time when he had visited Newfoundland and where the theatre group called the 'Mummers' had created a number of "*protest collectives*". This has been one of the earliest documented uses of theatre as a political protest tool. Political and other protest theatre in the later part of the 1960s occurred due to mainly ideological reasons regarding identities and Canadian national character. They were mainly protests against imported plays from Britain and New York. These led to newer kinds of political theatre which were also protest theatres. They can be divided as:

- *Collective Documentary:*

Some theatre groups like that of *Theatre Passe Muraille* directed by Paul Thomson started researching on specific communities. These were non linear forms of theatre about communities and were called 'collective documentary'. The scenes and characters were liked theatrically but not in narrative and were often celebrations of the community concerned.

- *Checking Back Method:*

This form of political theatre was started by a group from Alberta called *Catalyst Theatre*. The actors, directors etc of the group would first conduct a research on a community and create plays based on that research. They would then take back and enact these plays within the community concerned and make changes as per the discussions that resulted after the shows. Thus, this kind of theatre was a continual work in progress and led to a deepening of knowledge of that community. This was considered one of the most *ethical* mode of creating political theatre since it was theatre created for the community in which the community would itself be engaged and respond to the aberrations that would escape an outsider.

Other forms of theatre were discussed by Gilbert and Lo that are pertinent to the kind of theatre that had gained prominence in Canada after the 1970s as a part of the politically conscious theatre of the different communities and cultures. They included:

### *3.1 Ghetto theatre:*

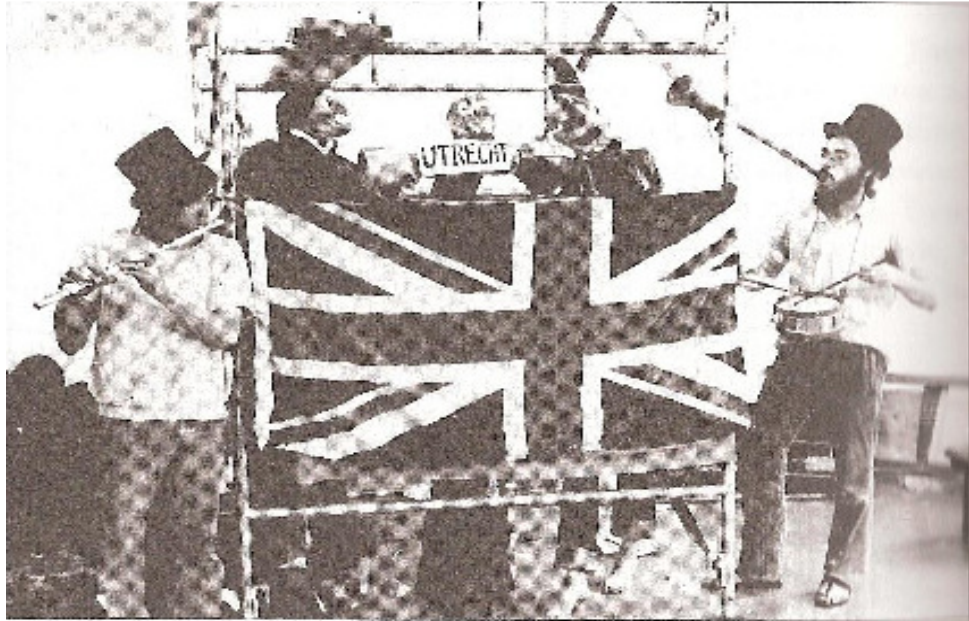
*Ghetto theatre* tends to be monocultural; it is staged for and by a specific ethnic community and is usually communicated in the language/s of that community. The political efficacy of this type of multicultural intervention is arguably limited since the performances are largely “in-house” and tend to focus on narratives about origins and loss. Much ghetto theatre is infused with a nostalgic privileging of the homeland (real or imagined) as seen from a diasporic perspective, with the result that more radical cross-cultural negotiations are muted.

### *3.2 Migrant theatre:*

*Migrant theatre* is centrally concerned with narratives of migration and adaptation, often using a combination of ethno-specific languages to denote cultural in-betweenness.

### *3.3 Community theatre:*

*Community theatre* is characterized by social engagement; it is theatre primarily committed to bringing about actual change in specific communities. This focus on cultural activism is seen as an oppositional practice concerned with subverting those dominant cultural practices which render people passive [as] consumers of imposed cultural commodities (Watt 1991: 63).



The Mummings Troupe, 1973: Paul Sametz, Christopher Knight, and Mr. Punch replay Newfoundland's colonial history in *Newfoundland Night*.  
Chris Brooks

Figure.1

*THE MUMMERS TROUPE WAS A PART OF AGITPROP AND COMMUNITY THEATRE.*

#### ***4. Political theatre and Ideology:***

With time all this gets amply showcased through the visual media, namely, through film and the theatre. While films are recorded and as such seem to be more often than not a finished product, immutable to change *in medias res* and therefore at the mercy of the viewers' response with a delayed time in responding, theatre is an instantaneous act which tends to move the human emotions viscerally as per the Greek notions of 'pity' and 'fear' of the climax leading to a catharsis of the self, thereby resulting in the creation of a new subject. Jonathan M. Weiss has stated that theatre depends on the public for its existence as an art form and the playwright must, if he has to accomplish anything more than the writing of the skeleton which is the text, find some element in society that is sympathetic to his message and to his style. Hence, the reciprocal relationship that the theatre has with its public, a relationship which presupposes a group experience and is linked to the historical,

social, and political conditions surrounding the presentation is seen. Political theatre in Canada has more often than not been intricately connected to the concept of identity in a nation bestrewn with various identities and vigorous debates on identities. Following this strain of thought it can be agreed with Baz Kershaw that performance (used here in lieu of theatrical performance) can also be used to describe an *ideological transaction* between a company of performers and the community of their audience (Kershaw 1992: 16). If such be the case then the theatrical value of performances be them within the traditional space of the theatrical stage or that of community theatre that seems to gain prominence in contemporary Canada (especially among the First Nations) is innately connected to that of the building up of the national consciousness of the citizens of the nation of Canada. Kershaw goes on to connect ideology as that inextricable part of a performance whereby it is the source of the collective ability of the performers and audience to make more or less common sense of the signs used in performance, the means by which the aims and intentions of theatre companies connect with the responses and interpretation of the audiences. This is especially true for the 1980s popular theatre of Canada which became known for its political activism and wanting to create within the theatrical profession a radical space for increasingly diverse cultural practices. It was meant to cement an effort at the national level to bring about a national consciousness despite agitprop theatre dealing with aberrations in political and social life within certain communities or provinces. An example can be seen in the photograph given below:



Thandie Mpumlwana as a health-care worker fighting a puppet germ in *Where's the Care?* – Ground Zero's 1991 agitprop intervention around the issue of health-care funding in Ontario.

Ground Zero Productions

Figure 2.

As per Michel Kirby's definition in his essay *On Political Theatre*, theatre is political if it is concerned with the state or takes side in politics. It is a performance that is intentionally concerned with government, which is intentionally engaged in or consciously takes side in politics. The rise of conflict in theatre and other mediums of the mass media was a result of the 'counter-praxis' to institutionalized consensual politics (Hall ed Goodman 1974: 75). Therefore with the advent of the multicultural act in Canada in the late 1960s and early 1970s, people belonging to the various minority and immigrant communities began clamouring for better and equal economic and socio-political rights which went counter to the prevailing notions of imperial hegemony that had been a part of its national culture since the beginning of the nation. Thus the new political developments of Canada began posing challenges to what had thereunto been perceived as the normative world of Canadian politics. It was again to gain political consensus that we find that the newer departments regarding culture and its proliferation began to be used to

propagate the ideologies of the state where indirect control over cultural mediums especially that of television and theatre were controlled through state funding. Studying the concept of political hegemony as developed by Antonio Gramsci and Louis Althusser would help in the reading and analysis of the texts as an important part in building up 'consent' within the state through theatre and art. Gramsci pondered on the two dominant forces that shape ideology in his opinion--- namely, the hegemony of the dominant group of society and that of the direct domination of the state. Althusser added to this through his use of the institutional state apparatuses whereby the dominant class maintained its legitimacy through social institutions and the mass media. Although one cannot wholly depend on such notions for facilitating a study on the rise of the political theatre in Canada and its contribution in the creating of a national consciousness, it cannot be denied that theatre in Canada is mainly of two kinds---- those funded by the state and those in opposition to the policies of the state. Thus, we find the mass media, including national and subversive theatre has the 'work of persuasive definition in the course of its formation' (Hall ed Goodman 1974: 78).

However, it has been observed that a more contemporary meaning of the term "Political Theatre" refers to theatrical acts of protest performed by surprise in public to draw attention to political issues. Douglas Kellner pointed out how in the 1920s Lukacs, Gramsci, Korsch and Bloch emphasized on the importance of culture and ideology. This reduced discrimination to the basis of hegemony on economical grounds thereby also presupposing a monolithic concept of ideology. However, critics have pointed out how this kind of reading is flawed since it does not take into account ideological hegemony based on the oppression of gender, sexuality and race. This therefore falls within the gambit of a multicultural ideology. Kellner opines how perceiving of the visual media is necessary within the contemporary world to gain an individual identity. From here it may be surmised that the individual also has a thirst to retain his identity based on the self along with that of the community especially in the highly individualised community of the contemporary times. He says "when individuals learn to perceive how media culture transmits oppressive representations of class, race, gender, sexuality, and so on that influence thought and behaviour, they are able to develop critical distance from the works of media culture and thus gain



power over their culture. Such empowerment can help ... induce individuals to join and participate in radical political movements struggling for social transformations. (Kellner 1995: 60-61).

Berger and Luckmann point out in their work *The Social Construction of Reality* regarding the various instruments of the mass media which reinforce the power of 'legitimation' accrued through the auspices of the state and the power that it wields through the approbation of the people in the majority and authority. They go on to explain how 'legitimation' upholds 'the institutional order by ascribing cognitive validity to its objectivated meanings' (Berger and Luckmann 1967: 111). It justifies the institutional order by giving a normative dignity to practical imperatives. It not only tells an individual why he *should* perform one action and not another; it also tells him why things are what they are (ibid). Thus, although we realise that the mass media does not often have the power to convince us the immediate efficacy of certain meanings and messages that are transmitted in the normative world, they do have a legitimating power to shape and define political reality. However, the mid 1960s Canada saw a lot of upheavals as regards theatre and the political scenario. Theatre shifted from the canonical to that of the influences of North American theatre of the streets and that of the culture revolution. From 1965 to the late 1970s the political and agitprop theatre in Canada followed definite stages of change and development pertaining to the various political changes happening within the different provinces. These had wide ranging social and political ramifications. They included the carnivalesque street theatre of Vancouver counter culture, the tactical use of advocacy agitprop by a group in Ottawa in 1970, the reinvention of the labour interventionist agitprop in the 1970s and the contemporary form of low tech and low budget protest performance and theatre as found in the campuses for student political activism. Its most recent example had been found in the mass students' protest in Montreal, Quebec, in 2012, where students had put up innovative plays and protests throughout college campuses and street plays in protest of certain government policies that they felt went against the nuances of the welfare policy of the province despite the ongoing electoral debates. Canadian students in the 1960s and 1970s felt that global political issues also had ramifications on Canadian political identity in the international arena. As Alan Filewood pointed out that for the most part of the

twentieth century political theatre was understood as the suppressed popular state that would be emancipated through revolution. This strain of popular dissent through theatre was carried historically from the Second International to the Cold War. Political theatre was thus, understood as both tactical (an arm of the revolutionary party) and popular (the theatre of the people) (Filewood 2011: 180).

### ***5. Contemporary political theatre:***

Placed within the context of the developing art form of the political theatre as developed by Bertolt Brecht a study of the epic theatre seem to be a great requirement. Brecht developed a style known as “Epic Theatre.” In this medium, actors did not strive to make their characters realistic. Instead, each character represented a different side of an argument. Brecht’s “Epic Theatre” presented multiple viewpoints and then let the audience decide for themselves. Thus, rather than imposing the views of the playwrights upon the viewer, this kind of theatre helped in creating opinion. Also Artaud’s use of the street scene can be looked into in certain plays where the body is used to denote the underlying restive spirit against certain political decisions as in the case of the plays of Louis Patrick Leroux’s three plays *Embedded* (1994), *Apocalypse* (1995) and *Resurrection* (1996). As Schinina pointed out in his work regarding the evolution of theatre from one of entertainment to that of political protest and awareness he pointed out how the relationship between the visible and the invisible in the 20th century had been culturally defined by the relation between the visible and the repressed. The long-standing link between theatre and madness is an example and symbol of the relationship between theatre, diversity, and marginality in general (Shinina 2004: 20). Inputs taken from amateur actors involved in community and political theatre have helped formulate opinions regarding the difficulties that are faced by these people. Leroux’s plays use theatre in the sense of space as a protest against the helplessness created through joblessness in the 1980s and the 1990s whereby young men and women became emphatic in their protest for want of an identity in a materialist society both as social beings in their community while at the same time in the changing scenarios of Canada’s international influence in global politics. Leroux creates an interesting paradox whereby as a playwright brought up in the Anglicized traditions of his father, he returns to his mother’s home

of French Canada, Montreal, to bridge the gap between the languages, yet unable to bridge the divide in his characters. His dilemma can aptly be summed up in the words of Alan Read where he believes that it is the dialectic between the traditions and the conventions and challenges of contemporary work that characterize theatre's dynamics (Read 1993 ed Goodman : 192).

Leroux's three plays *Embedded*, *Apocalypse* and *Resurrection* constitute within their scope what Kershaw points out as the disciplinary regime of the "theatre estates". Theatre estates seem to encompass the four following points of reference on which political theatre seems to evolve:

- Industry
- Professionalism
- Economy
- Canonicity that constitutes 'the Theatre'

It is thus, apparent that while all the three plays deal with the first three points of Industry, Professionalism and the Economy, the last has been subverted by Leroux. The lead characters of Ludwig who is an engineer, yet unable to secure employment and Mae, his girlfriend who is an economically successful actress makes the economy of the times apparent to the uninitiated. Leroux thwarts the canonicity of theatre by positing literally the 'internalized' and repressed feeling of the characters in a way acknowledge the "gests" of the contemporary time. Bertolt Brecht posited that political protests and activities in theatre always involved "gests" which were theatricalised actions that embody, enact and watch social critique. Filewood also emphasizes that theatre that participates in radical politics tends to refuse the institutionalized theatre's aesthetics and conventions (Filewood 2011: 2-3) for he believes that theatre work can witness a desire to articulate social vision, to express political convictions while at the same time advocate social change.

#### **6. Political theatre and Race:**

The concept of race and myriad cultures looked in through the tropes of multiculturalism along with that of interculturalism provide an intensive

knowledge regarding national consciousness in the process of being formulated through certain public policies. It is here that theatre plays a crucial role in the understanding of these concepts. As Ric Knowles points out in his allusion to the term 'intercultural' as being important for bringing into focus the contested, unsettling, and often unequal spaces between cultures, spaces that can function in performance as the sites of negotiation (Knowles 2010: 4). This neoliberal embrace of cultural difference celebrates the possibilities of cultural fusion and the construction of radical subjectivities beyond national and ethnic boundaries. Intercultural practice in this sense is deeply imbricated in globalization and the perceived deterritorialization of social, cultural, and political boundaries for those in the developed world Canada has for long tried to eke out a national identity of its own based on certain natural and societal issues (Lo and Gilbert 2002: 40). Theatre belonging to this category embraces the various cultures that fall within the ambit of the different cultures within the nation. At the same time this matrix of multicultures are seen as being constructed to counteract the various other global identities as a unit rather than through the differences. As a matter of fact Collins had implied in his work that for Canada the rise of nationalism was a response to international demands. However, in the recent times it has been seen that for Canada, nationalism has been a curious admixture of the global and the local and more in defining of what they are "not" rather than what they are. Again, the concept of the local is itself a bifurcated reality since from the very beginning of its existence as a nation Canada has been seen to share the dualities of the Anglophone and the francophone cultures. What strikes the passive onlooker is that in the dominant Canadian psyche national symbols are mostly manifested in external symbols rather than any uniquely cultural practice.

According to Raymond William's formulation of the dialectical development of discourse, in any cultural conjunction there are "dominant," "residual," and "emergent" discourses. In the Canadian context, ethnic writing currently constitutes a "residual" discourse. Ethnic writers experience the conflict of heteroglossia in a specific way as a deterrent to participation in a national tradition. The traces of this conflict have been defined as a translation effect or the "test of foreignness (Godard 1990: 157). While starting with language, dominance over certain ethnicities and cultures make inroads into other socio-political aspect of the

minorities which ultimately result in racism. Racism as a theatrical notion is read through the works of the playwright Drew Hayden Taylor. His plays have been noted for their satiric comment on society and as such also reflect upon the effects that certain public policies have had on the people of the First Nation. Again, racism and political separatism and the law of 'divide and rule' are seen in the plays of George Ryga and Sharon Pollock. The First Nations have been the colonized since the very inception of Canada as a nation. With the development of certain global issues regarding human rights, the Canadian First Nations have been coming out in the open regarding their treatment as the 'other' in the very nation that is their native land. Playwrights like Hayden write in the contemporary times in a manner that is quite conscious of their selfhood. His plays echo what Awam Ampka calls 'a conscious development of subjective selfhood'. One does agree when Ampka points out how the playwrights of the once colonized people tend to write. He opines that the colonized subjects are historically coerced into a cosmopolitanism and globalism within which their subjectivity is limited to at the most mimicry and at the worst subject-less-ness. Colonialism and European languages were not simply imposed on people, but also reorganised social relations, reinvented ethnicities, and sparked off varying cultural practices that identified and disidentified with its hegemonies (Ampka ed Goodman 2000: 118). Following this strain of thought, Ampka again points out the discrepancies that creep into the works of colonized peoples in the post colonial times. Thus, one does tend to agree that whereas in the earlier times the 'natives' were positioned to perpetuate colonial hegemony, their development as a counteractive force coupled with their sense of alienation led to contradictions in their cultural politics and practices. The traces left in cultural representations demonstrate a set of discursively negotiated nationalistic identities and counter hegemonic tendencies. Hayden's primary character in his play *AlterNatives* belongs to the First Nations and is on the verge of marrying a 'White' woman in the play. His character reveals his wish for assimilation into the majority through his marriage. What the play does reveal is the paradox intrinsic in the multicultural nation where multiplicities in national identity are being encouraged through governmental policies yet the minorities want to assimilate in within the politically powerful majority to regain a sense of their self as a part of the nation. It is here that we find the echoes of what seems to be the political reality that had been professed by Will Kymlicka when he

denoted assimilation as being essential for political stability and that of national consciousness (Kymlicka 1995: 14).

### ***7. Theatre and Language:***

Language is the mark of nationality in literature and literature in the modern sense of the word must be national, must be identified with a territory. Quebec writers using French, Canadian writers using English, break the chain of literature, nation, and language. While they find themselves in a double bind with respect to the writing of France and England, whose models they both must and must not use if they are to achieve recognition and authenticity, even greater is the disjunction of writing by someone whose language is other than French or English. For in addition to the difference with regard to those French and English models, this latter inscribes a difference with respect to mainstream Quebec and English-Canadian writing, Quebecicity and Canadianness being co-terminous with the French and English languages. The spectacle of alienation and its linguistic expression echo each other. For what began as a thematic representation of difference in the nineteenth century, a difference between Quebec and Canadian literatures and those of the mother countries, has become in contemporary Canadian and Quebec literatures a difference within, linguistically inscribed (Godard 1990: 154-155).

The belief that the loss of language means the loss of both culture and nation has been at the heart of the Canadian nation since contact as per the views of Ric Knowles and Ingrid Mundel in their preface to *'Ethnic', Multicultural and Intercultural Theatre* (2009). They point further elaborate by going on to say that this grounded the cultural genocide of First Nation peoples that proceeded through the residential school reassurance of the Native languages. With this notion in mind primary sources like the Bill 101 which is the foundation of the language discourse in an officially bilingual nation the most prominent site of strife and struggle over Quebec's culture and nationhood. The dominant culture's aesthetic conventions are mediated by the epistemic demands of languages which have been used by the dominating power which was wielding the political authority (Ampka ed Goodman:

116). Others like Rick Salutin and Michel Tremblay are playwrights who have brought to the forefront certain aspects of language and historicity that had been seen as deviant in the previous era. While Sharon Pollock based most of her famous characters in historical contexts she brought out the plight of the immigrant and the role of the Canadian polity in both the upliftment as well as the remaining backwardness of the same immigrants. The crisis of nationhood in an era of globalised corporate economies and cultural imperium produces a dilemma for the institutionalization of the national cultures and destabilizes fundamental assumptions of aesthetic and cultural values (Filewood 2011: 4). This is one of the main reasons that while in the earlier time of the colonial past when the colonizing and imperial powers of France and Britain were trying to develop a national identity, theatre was used enable the building up of a national consciousness. Filewood points out how in the *Massey Report* of 1951 theatre was seen a medium for the operation of power and its presence in the cultural network was that which constituted auxiliary nationhood in the modern empire. Vincent Massey was a diplomat and politician who led the Royal Commission and through whose endeavours and recommendation the National Arts Council was set up. Again it was in the post Second World War scenario that theatre changed in Canada. Public funding channelized through the Art Council and the provinces led to the formation of institutionalised which was 'mainstream'. Along with this a radical 'alternative' theatre movement emerged in which Canadian playwrighting came into its own. Stratford Festival offers a simulation to a national theatre in Canada today. However, in the contemporary times with fragmentation and multiplicity of identities political theatre in Canada seems to be asserting the primary fragmentations of language, province, gender and race. Since language is the part of our very consciousness through it denoting of the 'being', one cannot deny the use of language in the moulding of the national consciousness in Canada where it has been the bane of many a political strife over the years. In the 1950s culture was perceived as national property and therefore as a form of national defence against more powerful cultural intervention of the USA in Canada. At that time theatre had a new social identity as a marker of middle class taste and prosperity. By the 1990s theatres had become a means of announcing public assertions of the marginalised society.

### **8. Theatre, politics and the marginal:**

Still others like John Herbert and Sky Gilbert had dealt with the rising of involvement of society and politics with that of the certain sections of the populace who had till then been considered out the boundaries and the purview of 'normal' society — the homosexual, the transgender and the cross dressers. While plays like Herbert's *Fortune and Men's Eyes* dealt with homosexuals and the effect of the penitentiary and criminal justice system in modern society, Gilbert dealt cross dressers in *Drag Queens on Trial*. In both the plays the injustice of society is highlighted along with that of the apathy of the hitherto conservative and traditional state. Middle class values are questioned— the very same values upon which a large number of public policies are based. Similar questions are asked by Mahesh Dattani in the Indian context and a comparison can be made between the values of the globalised multicultural world where the post modern values have played a diffusing in the sense of history and continuity of the people. In this context Fredric Jameson's "The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism", *Postmodernism, Or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (1991) plays a crucial role for analysis. What can be seen as definitive here that within the vortex of multicultural multiplicities, identities of the people are not connected with the nation in so much as with the outward manifestation of nationhood. Rather, these plays are concerned with the justice system of Canada which is an essential tool of governance and nationhood. Transgenders, cross-dressers and often homosexuals depend upon theatricality and dramatization of their everyday existence to bring up their issues to the forefront in a society bombarded with rapidly evolving symbols of nationality to keep pace in a globalised world. More often than not, theatre, both within the 'staged' physical precincts and within cinema, television and the internet, is the only recourse for protest against political recognition and the creation of a national identity within the sphere of traditional political thoughts. This corresponds to what Raymond William terms as the 'dramatization of consciousness itself'.

### **9. Feminist political theatre:**

As regards the feminist theatre that pervades within the psyche of the nation that has for long had a history of feminist thought and radical feminism, it cannot be



denied that French Canadian theatre has had a more profound effect on the overall scenario. Powerful feminist dramatists like Pol Pelletier whose seminal play *Joy (Joie)*, along with Denise Boucher whose play *The Fairies Are Thirsty*, will be analysed in the following chapters. Gendered nuances in Canadian politics have been a bone of contention for a long time. Gender politics is fraught with not only economic and social ramifications in a society where women were initially considered as tools of colonization, but in the recent times it has become a regular occurrence within the political arena as well. Women have often been seen as one of the instruments whereby the “materiality of ideology” (Michele Barrett 1980: 90). Tracing the use of women simply as a means of colonisation we can see their use from the very inception of Canada as a nation when, from 1663 to 1673, about 1,000 orphaned, single women were sent by King Louis XIV to redress the disproportionate amount of males versus females in New France. They were called *Filles du roi* - or "daughters of the King." These women would spend an average of about two weeks living with nuns or missionaries before they could find a suitable man. In most circumstances, they would marry him right away for the sole purposes of starting a large family. Women, therefore, were treated as chattel. Therefore dramatists like Pelletier and Boucher are seen to reverse this subservient role of women through their performances to initiate a dialogue in society that will bring about an ideological change despite the advances that have already been made in the creation of their identity till date.

As Holledge and Tomkins point out that the newer exponents of the arts are more concerned with the political, with the creation of new intellectual subjectivities, with the corporeal reality of the performing female body and with the commodification of women and others in the light of the globalisation of cultures (Holledge and Tomkins 2010: 39). Certain performances can therefore be analysed with regards to this and be compared with the notions of feminism as faced in the other theatrical scenarios. Feminism and the sense of identity with that of the nation pervades in the plays of Sharon Pollock. Her concept of her sense of identity is intimately connected with that of her sense of history. She created symbolic or mythical individuals to propagate her views on the pervading aura of contemporary politics. In *Walsh, The Komagata Maru Incident* and *One Tiger to a Hill*, Pollock

examines historic events and tells them in a way that the audience will question the reality between the official story and what is shown on stage. Throughout her career Pollock continues to use history, that of Canada, such as in *Whiskey Six Cadenza* (1983), *Fair Liberty's Call* (1993), or *End Dream* (2000); as well as her own personal history in plays such as *Generations* (1980), or *Doc* (1984) as fuel for her plays. Again, the feminist perspectives in the world political scenario gains prominence through the work of eminent political scientist like Gurpreet Mahajan. Gurpreet Mahajan had pointed out in her article "Rethinking Multiculturalism" that while post-modernists upholding the politics of difference and minorities struggling for a voice in national political life find a natural ally in multiculturalism, liberals fear that multicultural political strategies would strengthen community conflicts and pose a challenge to national unity. The feminists too are anxious that protection granted to cultural community practices may destroy the limited gains that the women's movement has so far secured. Since most cultures endorse and permit control over women by men, preserving cultural practices may well become another way of allowing patriarchal domination in society. However, as regard the works of Sharon Pollock we find that the Canadian political system is brought into sharp focus as a capitalist society where individual choices have a huge role to play in the subjectivization of the individual. Anne F. Nothof in her essay on Sharon Pollock, namely, *Crossing Borders: Sharon Pollock's Revisitation of the Canadian Frontiers* points out how Sharon Pollock shows that public policy is predicated on, and effected through individual choices: although her protagonists are subject to large historical or political forces, they still have a degree of freedom of choice— whether to compromise justice, whether to subvert compassion. Borders may be psychological and philosophical as well as political. Pollock believes that her preoccupation with conflict between personal integrity and political expediency is a very Canadian phenomena conditioned by geographic, economic and political factors.

All these playwrights use certain dramatic techniques to bring out the discrepancies and the political debates that abound in a nation striving for a national identity amidst the rigmarole of multicultures. Heidi J. Holder in her essay

“The Destruction of the National Hero in The Early History Plays of Sharon Pollock”<sup>1</sup> quotes Richard Paul Knowles as saying that in the production of Pollock, Salutin and Reaney we can see an emphasis on the role of the audience in the ‘realization’ of the past where his analysis is based on the use of metatheatric devices. She points out how in Pollock’s plays these serve not so much in joining the playwright and the audience in ‘their’ shared and recreated history but puts them in an uncomfortable “dual” role within the audience. With globalisation bringing in a rampant array of thoughts, ideas and marginalised associations through the auspices of television, cinema, radio and the internet, theatre at a superficial level and drama at a much deeper level has undergone substantial changes.

#### ***10. Theatre and national consciousness:***

Globalisation in the contemporary world has been defined by Sparks as the event which is constituted in and through networks and the resulting circulation of symbols rather than things and that the immateriality of the media products are emblematic of the process of globalisation (Sparks 2007: 133). Therefore the media is seen to create meanings through symbols which change their signification with the alteration of their environment despite retaining the sameness of their physical orientation. What was once thought be within the domain of a particular culture and province is now gaining prominence at a rapid speed through the ease of access of television and the internet. Thus, traditional values are being subsumed within the onslaught of other newer values of certain marginalised sections leading to a generation of ‘consent’ and therefore political activity. As Raymond Williams observes in his lecture ‘Drama in a Dramatized Society’<sup>2</sup>in 1974, that at the deeper level is a persistent and pervasive dramatization of all aspects of political and social activity, to the extent that drama has permeated the rhythms of everyday life. What the theatre of a multicultural nation attempts is often an amalgamation of various cultures and nationalities based on those cultures in an attempt to delineate what is

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<sup>1</sup> Nothof, Anne (ed) (2000), *Sharon Pollock: Essays on Her Works*, Toronto: Guernica.

<sup>2</sup> McGuigan, Jim Ed (2015), *Raymond Williams on Culture & Society: Essential Writings*, London: Sage Publications.

thought to be the idealised version of what should be the national character and identity rather than what it really is. With regards to this one often finds theatre inclusive of the various cultures in an attempt to show the ‘realities’ of the contemporary Canadian nation. On the other hand this kind of ‘cross culture’ or rather, an attempt to create the cross- culture of the ‘mosaic’ of the multicultural nation as a part of national consciousness is often fraught with difficulties. Jonathan Dollimore’s reminder that to cross is not only to traverse, but to mix (as in to cross-breed) and to contradict (as in to cross someone) (Dollimore 1991: 288) suggests some of the possibilities for cross-cultural theatre to radicalize and intervene in hegemonic arts practices.<sup>3</sup> One of the most popular manifestations of this generative conception of cross-cultural encounter is the idea of the hybrid (art form, culture, and/or identity) (Lo and Gilbert 2002: 32). Gilbert and Lo point out that in Canada, multicultural theatre has come to signify a specific cluster of artistic practices often supported under the state-sanctioned rubric of community development, which has generated a defined body of critical literature (ibid : 33). They point out how multicultural theatre itself can be divided into various components whereby the way are enacted and produced result in their being seen that of identity formation or that of containment of an identity already formed by a state reluctant to further recognition. Broadly speaking, there are two major types of multicultural theatre: small “m” multicultural theatre and big “M” multicultural theatre. *Small “m” multicultural theatre* refers to theatre works featuring a racially mixed cast that do not actively draw attention to cultural differences among performers or to the tensions between the text and the production content. *Big “M” multicultural theatre* is generally a counter discursive practice that aims to promote cultural diversity, access to cultural expression, and participation in the symbolic space of the national narrative (ibid). Its processes and products are informed by an expressed agenda that speaks to a politics of marginality. It has been seen that Canada has a well developed multicultural theatre that has been engaged in nation building since the 1970s.

In the 1970s, the search for new forms of social and political participation found in this transitional theatre one of the strongest means of

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<sup>3</sup> Lo, Jacqueline and Helen Gilbert (2002), “Toward a Topography of Cross-Cultural Theatre Praxis”, *The Drama Review*, Volume 46, Number 3. The MIT Press.

communication and symbolic self-representation, as well as a powerful cultural arm. Therefore, from a theatre perceived as part of show business, a widely disseminated theatricality evolved (Schinina 2004: 19). All these notions can be looked upon in the view of the audience as the subject who can be created or moulded as per the cultural construct of the times and their re-subjectivization as per the anti-authoritarian stance of the playwrights. While Marxian and post-Marxian views would be taken into consideration use of the theatre as a 'metaphor' of social and political nuances would be looked into through the criticism of Freud and Lacan in the creation of the viewer as the subject. It is especially in regard to feminist criticism and marginality in political theatre that we find Lacan's views pointing out to the discrepancies in the creation of a national consciousness regarding a national identity. Lacan placed the male in the subject position. The subject entered self-consciousness and language with a sense of separation and incompleteness, an ongoing 'desire' for an objectified 'other' that both threatens and promises a lost unity. As Judith Butler also points out in her work *Gender Trouble* (1993), that gender is category that has been constructed through performance not only through the theatre of the ages but also through the performances that is the result of ideological constructions in everyday life. It is this position of the other that women have protested against and which find expression in political theatre. While the history of newer multiculturalism can be traced back to an older interculturalism, it would not be remiss to study Canadian theatre in this light whereby the body of the performer is meant to implicate and often implicitly state the numerous methods of political subjectivisation that seems to pervade in a nation that is constantly undergoing newer concepts as regards to the notions of self, nationhood and identity. Multicultural theatre functions within a statist framework premised on ideals of citizenship and the management of cultural/ethnic difference, while intercultural theatre and, to a certain extent postcolonial theatre, have more latitude to explore and critique alternative forms of citizenship and identity across and beyond national boundaries, although the subjectivities they produce are not wholly free of state mediation (Lo and Gilbert 2002: 36). As a matter of fact, it is obvious whilst perusing the records of Canadian theatre that had be institutionalized by the state that theatre was a means to show the globalised world and promote the precepts that can be termed as Canadian and therefore a part of Canadian nationalism. Erin Hurley

points out in her essay ‘Theatre as National Export: On Being and Passing in the United States’ (2003)<sup>4</sup> that what needs to be considered is the geography of Canadian theatre in the context of economic and cultural globalisation. She focuses on the way in which the Canadian state enlists Canadian theatre as part of the country’s self promotion around the world. She asks the pertinent question as to what counts as Canadian theatre when the category of nation is no longer dominant or determinant. Hurley argues that globalisation has intensified the extent to which Canadian policy makers have emphasized Canadian theatre’s ‘representative function’ outside Canada. The representative function of theatre acts as a conduit to the world about all things supposedly Canadian and therefore to be continued to be regarded as such leading to a better notion of what may be considered as a national identity and consciousness. It is here that Hurley suggests that theatre should rather be suggested as having an ‘actantial function’ where theatre has gained the potential to act with material effect within a transnational political economy.

### ***11. French Canadian theatre and national consciousness:***

Northrop Frye points out that the creative instinct has a great deal to do with the assertion of territorial rights. The question of identity is primarily a cultural and imaginative question (Frye 1971: i). This enables one to bring into focus the very fact that has been the cause of strife within the Canadian nation from its very inception. While the French were the first to defeat the natives and colonize the lands, the British followed soon after and over powered them. This led to a period of struggle for supremacy over the land which was both political and economic. However, at its most basic level it was a struggle to regain territory and then retaining it through the spreading of the national culture of the colonising powers. Identity was therefore the most essential trope of nationality and national consciousness and was for a time territorial. With the passing of time, identity in the Canadian consciousness gained prominence to create a space within the world topographies, while at the same time trying to etch out the demographic and regional topographies within the nation itself. Frye pointed out how identity is local and regional, rooted in the

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<sup>4</sup> Hurley, Erin (2003), “Theatre as a national export: On being and passing in the United States”, Ed Sherrill Grace and A.R Glapp . *Performing National Identities: International Perspectives on Contemporary Canadian Theatre*. Vancouver: Talon Books

imagination and in works of culture; unity is national in reference, international in perspective, and rooted in political feeling (ibid: ii). Tracing the history of the rise of the modern theatre in Canada, a study would be made of the strains of theatre and public policies that have affected these themes in the plays. Since special reference would be made to Quebec theatre, and in effect French Canadian theatre, it will not be remiss in tracing the history of the Catholic influence in the French Canadian theatre. Also Canadian political theatre is pervaded by a sense of history which alludes to the need of its protagonists to place themselves in certain political and social scenarios in time so that their significance can be understood in the contemporary context. It is in this context that the Quiet Revolution of the 1960s gain prominence in the Canadian national consciousness and identity. It was after the 'Quiet Revolution' of the 1960s that political plays in theatre rose in French Canada. The Quiet Revolution was the name given to a movement that was started by the liberal French premier Jean Lesage in 1960. It ended before the October Crisis of 1970 and yet had a significant and lasting effect upon the national consciousness of the French Canadians leading to great changes in the social, economic and especially the political scenario of Canada. It led to the creation of the separatist Bloc Quebecois which has had an immense impact on the political scenario of the region. Nossal goes on to say that since the beginning of the Quiet Revolution in 1960, governments in Quebec City have sought to project into the international arena a special and separate dimension of the *statut special* (Nossal 1997: 316). As a matter of fact, since the Quiet Revolution it has been found that the state has tried to definitely define the Quebecois as being linguistically and culturally different and in the end 'nationistically' different from other Canadians. The state of Quebec started assuming the role of the protector of the francophones within its territory. It is therefore not surprising that the state tries to express its nationalistic intentions in the external policies of the nation as well.

It cannot be however, denied that when it comes to Quebec or Francophone Canada, the conception of a national identity and a national consciousness becomes skewed. Northop Frye pointed out in his essay on the Canadian imagination the changing concept of assimilation. He said that ``Assimilating identity to unity produces the empty gestures of cultural nationalism;

assimilating unity to identity produces the kind of provincial isolation which is now called separatism” (Frye 1971: iii). This was one of the bones of contention between the French dominated province of Quebec which refused to assimilate within the vortex of English Canada in their effort to mark their culture and territory. Yet Frye also pointed out how “Quebec in particular has gone through an exhilarating and, for the most part, emancipating social revolution. Separatism is the reactionary side of this revolution...” (Ibid: iv). In ‘The Map and the Garden’, John Vernon identifies two forms of schizophrenia that together frame the most common features of twentieth-century literature and culture: one the alienation of division, compartmentalization, separation (the map); the other, the absence of distinctions, the compulsion to see the world as inseparable, natural, erotic, and always whole (the garden). Vernon's contrast of "map" and "garden" shows a striking potential to absorb various contrastive analyses of English Canadian and Québécois literatures. Clara Thomas's characterization of English Canadian literature as masculine, linear, and Protestant formed under the image of Robinson Crusoe in opposition to the cyclical, feminine, and Catholic perspectives of a French Canadian writing dominated by the fable of the "Precious Kingdom" (1972) also supports the premise of the different ‘national character of the two nationalities that constitute the Canadian nation. Gregory J. Reid goes on to point out the fallacy of such a reading of French Canadian theatre as envisaged by Vernon and Thomas as simplistic and without taking into cognizance the various parameters of provincial nationality that seems to thrive in French Canada. He opines that Canadian comparativists who have pointed to the similarity between Québécois and Canadian literatures have done so by emphasizing thematic or shared patterns of mythology (Reid 2001: 292). This ambivalence in Canadian theatre was marked by what was termed as ‘conflicted narrative’ (Lecker 1995)<sup>5</sup>, where the duality rested in the fact that Quebecois theatre was at the same time affirming the ‘Canadianness’ while at the same time negating this very notion through its insistence on the use of only the French language and the showcasing of its own distinctive cultural mores and traditions.

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<sup>5</sup> In Gilbert, Helen, and Joanne Tompkins (1996), *Post-colonial drama: theory, practice, politics*. London: Routledge



Another notion of conflict that culminated in the Quiet Revolution and the formulation of Bill 101 was the language dispute between that of Anglophone Canada and Francophone Canada. While Godard maintains that Canada is a bilingual country with large ethnic groups that have vibrant literatures in their native tongues, a situation which may be described as polyglossia, though is experienced as diglossia by the individual. Within this context, minority writers are confronted with a choice of languages in which to write, a choice that has ideological as well as aesthetic implications. The diglossia remains today a part of the conflicts between two of the majority language rather than between the various ethnic groups. At the centre of this choice is the negotiation of a strategy of reterritorialization in face of the language of deterritorialization or dispossession (Godard 1990:159).

The 1960s, 1970s and the 1980s were turbulent times in Quebec. During that time, not only political systems, socio cultural norms and established institutions changed, it was also the time when hegemonic structures changed. This was not only due to the Quiet Revolution, but also due to the Sexual Revolution. Anti-colonial struggles in France's former colonies and the civil rights movements in the United States had a significant influence upon Quebec. Women in Quebec began to accumulate their strengths to subvert the inferiority in which they had been enveloped due to societal conditions of yore. It is here that we find powerful female playwrights in Quebec who have contributed much to the scenario of political theatre. It was believed that sexist ideologies which pronounced women as inferior and were amply distanced from the lived realities of women in society had to be overthrown in favour of gender equality. Paradoxically, it was found that plays which dealt with the marginalisation of women in both the domestic field as well in the socio-political field were over-shadowed by the on-going struggle of the Quiet Revolution. Even if women were shown in plays as marginal it, such as in Michael Tremblay's *Les Belles-soeurs* (1968), they were considered more in the form of the politically alienated as part of the Quebec province rather than as female alienation. Thus, we find that Pelletier's *Joy* as being rather documentary in tracing the protests and troubles that had bestrewn theatre for females between 1975 to 1985.

## ***12. Theatre and political change:***

The following chapters would not only deal with the various issues that have been discussed in the introduction, but they would also take into account the various technological changes that brought about changes in the production of political theatre itself. While many might argue that in the current technological scenario where globalised motifs are thought to be interchangeable, we find that theatre as a tool of protest still thrives. As Brenda laurel points out that technology has wrought about newer topologies of pleasure, emotion and passion. A similar transformation occurred in the Middle Ages when, when theatre exploded out of the textual universe of the monastery into the sensory fecundity (Laurel 1993). Thus, we realise that theatre still enamours and enables us to think by putting problems of social and political nature in different perspective and Canadian political theatre remains no less.

What remains to be seen is that whether theatres can bring about any political change in the contemporary world of global politics. While much of political theatre in Canada harp upon the concepts of national consciousness and identity; especially those pertaining to the Quebec province along with the theatre of the First nations. There are also theatres that have moved beyond into other spaces in an attempt to right the political wrongs of everyday life. An example would be a play called Practicing Democracy where six Vancouver citizens occupying Vancouver City Council Chambers, one standing on the Mayor's desk, another on the table where the mace is usually located All of these people are living issues of poverty, and they are demanding that local government address them. This was an experiment staged by Headlines Theatre in 2004, to 'use theatre to make law'. It was the first adaptation of Augusto Boal's Legislative Theatre in North America.



*Celebrating Practicing Democracy at Vancouver City Hall (2004).*

Figure 3.

### ***13. Conclusion: The questions that arise:***

Through this research an endeavour would be made to look into the problems that seem to arise and whose answers would be the crux of the research. These questions include:

- The question of national identity as espoused and debated upon by the post 1960s political theatre scene in Canada.
- Whether the Quiet Revolution had an impact on the growth of political theatre after the 1960s in Canada and especially in Quebec?
- Whether public policies like that of the Bilingual Act, Bill 101 and the acts of the Federal Department of Justice have deeply affected cultural and gender diversities (especially in Aboriginal cultures and people outside the peripheries of

mainstream society) and have been reflected in the modern political theatre of Canada.

- The effect of separatist politics on Canadian theatre after 1960.

The following chapters in this thesis would be dealing with certain hypothesis which would enable one to determine whether:

- The effect of the growth of national consciousness can be seen upon Canadian political theatre.
- Modern theatre after 1960 has helped in the cohesion of national identity despite the multicultural nature of the nation.
- The Quiet Revolution has had an impact upon political theatre in Canada leading to identities based on separatist consciousness.

## Chapter 2:

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### Effect of the Quiet Revolution upon Theatre

In the annals of Canadian history, the Quiet Revolution is a significant event that continues to reverberate within the political strata. The history of the Quiet Revolution and the events that took place therein, is a major force to be reckoned in when one is dealing with theatre as a form of political protest in Canada. Although a source of attrition between French speaking Canada and English speaking Canada, linguistic affinities led to a direct confrontation of nationalistic identities and matters came to as head in 1960 with the Quiet Revolution. As mentioned in Chapter 1, Nossal's observation, that, from the beginning of the Quiet Revolution in 1960, governments in Quebec City have sought to project into the international arena a special and separate dimension of the *statut special* (Nossal 1997: 316) rings true. As a matter of fact, since the Quiet Revolution it has been found that the state has tried to definitely define the Quebecers as being linguistically and culturally different and in the end 'nationistically' different from other Canadians. The province of Quebec started assuming the role of the protector of the francophones within its territory. It is, therefore, not surprising that the state tries to express its nationalistic intentions in both external and internal policies of the province. What does strike the unaware is that this leaning towards a separate national identity has been nurtured through both internal policies as well as political performances that have affected Quebec's dealings with the outside world. Quebec and the rest of Canada have always had separate national aspirations based not only upon their political and economic identities but also upon their cultural, of which the linguistic ones are the most important. These separate nationalistic tendencies that were wrought about by events of the Quiet Revolution in 1960 have had a significant effect on theatre as well as from theatre. The Quiet Revolution can be seen as one of the defining moments of Canadian politics that has created a national consciousness based on dissimilarities rather than similarities. It might also be seen as a precursor of the multicultural notions that defines the concept of nationhood in contemporary Canada. However, as Charles Taylor points out in his essay on recognition, that recognition is one of the

driving forces behind nationalist movements in politics. And the demand comes to the fore in a number of ways in today's politics, on behalf of minority or "subaltern" groups, in some forms of feminism and in what is today called the politics of "multiculturalism" (Taylor 1992: 42). Quebec nationalism was, therefore, not a new phenomenon. It has been part of Canadian national history for a long time. It was not until after the late 1950s that we find in Quebec a wish to depart from the national identity of Canada and wanting to carve out an identity of its own.

Until the 1960s and the 1970s we find that want for a new state of Quebec was not given vent in the political struggle amongst the Quebecers within the confederation. They worked with the notion that Quebec was within the confederation of Canada. However, with the rise of want for sovereignty that culminated with the referendum of 1993 we find that the urge to form an autonomous state within the confederation of Canada gaining a momentum. Issues such as growing unemployment within the educated classes have created a furore after the Quiet Revolution in 1960 in Quebec. While language had been the primary reason for the growing unrest and protests against the federal government, other issues such as welfare measures and separatist ideologies had gradually entered into the consciousness of the people, especially in the predominantly French speaking province of Quebec. Theatre, as a result, also changed with the changing scenario. Modern theatrical modes such as Brecht's 'Epic theatre' and Artaud's use of the 'Street Scene' came into prevalence. They became major tools of political protest theatre. Epic theatre presented multiple viewpoints and then let the audience decide for themselves. Thus, rather than imposing the views of the playwrights upon the viewer, this kind of plays helped in creating opinion. Also Artaud's use of the street scene would be looked into in certain plays where the body is used to denote the underlying restive spirit against certain political decisions as in the case of the plays of Louis Patrick Leroux's three plays *Embedded*, *Apocalypse* and *Resurrection* (2010).

## ***1. The Quiet Revolution:***

The term `Quiet Revolution` is paradoxical as it deals with a `revolution` that was practically harmless and bloodless till the `October Crisis` of 1970. The term `Quiet Revolution` was first used by a reporter, Brian Upton of *The Montreal Star*<sup>6</sup> and then by Peter Gzowski of *Macleans*<sup>7</sup>. This era, primarily, between 1960-1970 coincides with the coming to political power of the liberal French Premier Jean Lesage in 1960. Its` connotation points out to the fact that the revolution was wholly festered within the confines of political protests that had been going on for a long time, rather than to direct confrontation. Matters came to a head in the October Crisis of 1970. The struggle was more through cultural, social and welfare policies leading to recurring referendums, even as recently as the 2001. The Quiet Revolution had historical precedents in the struggle between Protestant Anglophones and Catholic Francophones who have inhabited Canada since the European invasions. It began with the notion which the separatists had, that the interests of the French in Quebec would always be subsumed under the majority of the rest of English speaking Canada. Language, however, was not the only bone of contention within these two `founding` nations. Quebeckers were deeply suspicious of the division of power of the federal system of governance. Foreign policy along with cultural policy would always seem to favour the majority, as per the separatists. One of the biggest draw for separatism that was promoted by the Quiet Revolution was the establishment of a new system of governance that would be advantageous to the distinct culture of Quebec. As a matter of fact, it meant to create a `nation` that was distinct from the rest of Canada.

Following the death of Duplessis in 1959, the Quiet Revolution wrought about significant changes within Quebec. Educational and economic reforms were carried out. Lesage led his Liberals to a sweeping victory in the Quebec provincial election of 1960 with the campaign slogan: "*faut que fa change*" (Things Must Change). In the elections of June 22, 1960, the Liberals defeated the Union Nationale by getting 51.5% of the vote of the public. In 1962 Lesage reaffirmed his

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<sup>6</sup> <http://www.cbc.ca/history/EPISCONTENTSE1EP16CH1PA1LE.html>

<sup>7</sup> Fleming, B.R (2010), *Peter Gzowski: A Biography*, Ontario: DunDurn Press.

popularity by winning another mandate with a new slogan, this one more overtly and self-assuredly nationalistic: “*Maitres chez nous*” (Masters in Our Own House) (Nardocchio 1989: 49). He declared French to be the official language of the province of Quebec. Lesage also started to agree to international pacts that went against the tenets of a federal government. Rising tensions in the political circle led to the division between the separatists. While reformers of the *Cité Libre* like Jean Marchand, Pelletier and Trudeau joined the ranks of federal politics in 1965, others like the Front de Libération du Québec (FLQ) became involved in terrorist activities. The FLQ attacked any symbol of English Canada that they saw fit to protest against the anti-Quebec policies. The fires of separatism were also fanned by Charles de Gaulle when he was on a state visit to Quebec where he called for ‘Vive le Québec libre’. Matters came to a head in 1970. The FLQ kidnapped the British diplomat James Cross and Quebec’s cabinet minister Pierre Laporte was murdered. This led to the ‘October Crisis’. Finally, Trudeau, the prime minister since 1968 was forced to adopt an extreme measure like the War measures Act.

The Quiet Revolution brought about rapid changes in the social and cultural horizon of Quebec. It embodied within itself the traits of secularization, a welfare state and also led to a reorganization of the powers of the federal structure and the provincial structure. There was nationalization of electricity which started put with the protest by 5000 mine workers for 3 months called the ‘Asbestos Strike’. This gathered momentum when it was realised that 90% of Quebec’s natural resources were financed by foreign investment especially that of Americans. Quebec was able to wrest power unto itself, which had otherwise rested upon the federal government. Changes were especially noticeable in that of Health and Education. While earlier both of these aspects had been under the auspices of the Church (the Roman Catholic Church) of Quebec, with the election of the Liberal Jean Lesage, both came under the auspices of the provincial government. Although often seen in terms of conflict between the provincial government and the Church authorities, it was also seen that a section of the Church was in support of this secularization of the province of Quebec. David Seljak points out in his thesis that “the church reacted to the secularization of Quebec society with relative serenity.” (Seljak 1996: 110). At the same time the Quiet Revolution coincided with the Second Vatican Council, whereby the Church had



decided to distance itself from issues of governance. One of the conventions of the Second Vatican Council was particularly relevant regarding the Quiet Revolution. It was the 'Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the World of Today'<sup>8</sup>. It encouraged all of the catholic clergy to engage with the contemporary world with an open mind and to incorporate changes with the changing contemporary world. This event was also an important factor in promoting the Quiet Revolution amongst the rural agrarian Francophone society of Quebec. The Catholic Church in its desire for social change insisted that the Church be engaged and concerned with the nationalism question of Quebec. They also wanted to keep on contributing to the culture of Quebec although Quebec was rapidly changing in both the social as well as in the political context. In the words of Gregory Baum we see that "Quebec society avoided the tragic cultural schism that marked the movement into secular modernity of Catholic countries like France and Italy."<sup>9</sup> It was pointed out that there were no ghettoization of the Catholics and the non-Catholics both during and post the Quiet Revolution. A new middle class arose which was well versed in Catholic cultures and values. However, this class was restive under with the undemocratic practices of the former premier Duplessis. While a segment of the older Church agreed with Duplessis, a large segment of the Church believed in the changes that were being wrought out in the social and political structure. The new middle class were well versed in catholic tenets and culture. At the same time they wanted a rational bureaucracy that would look after services of the state that were hitherto part of the Catholic Church's duty. They included education, social welfare and health infrastructure. However, with time the church was unable to meet the surging demands from both the populace as well as the drastic change in the contemporary modern world. A desire for change was felt both within and without the church regarding the issues of welfare, health and education. Brother Jean Paul Desbiens spoke out against the discrepancies of the education system in Quebec that had been prevalent in the earlier times. This was accomplished through his novel *Les Insolence du Friar Untel* which also spoke about the importance of the French language and culture, which was being subsumed under that of the Anglo influence in Canada. This is most prominent when the hero of the novel Untel points out that the language of the young people of Quebec is 'joual', which is a hybrid dialect of French

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<sup>8</sup> Source <http://www.britannica.com/event/Second-Vatican-Council> accessed on 22/04/2016 at 12:26 PM.

<sup>9</sup> Baum, Gregory. 1991. *The Church in Quebec*. Ottawa: Novalis.

and English. They passed Bill 60 which gave the provincial government right over education. Also, in 1970, the Official Language Act was passed which made Quebec a monolingual province.

However, Nardocchio points out that while the Quiet Revolution gained maximum prominence between 1960 and 1966, it was wholly concentrated on the linguistic aspect of culture in the beginning. She points out that at the time there was growing uneasiness with the situation of the French language in Quebec. In 1961 the provincial government created the Office de la langue française (French Language Bureau) to look into the state of language and to begin distributing educational bulletins on the vocabulary used in Quebec. In the early sixties, the Montreal daily newspaper *Le Devoir* published a series of articles by an anonymous critic who called himself *le Frere Untel* (Brother Anonymous). *Le Frere Untel* (who was Jean-Paul Desbiens), supported by Andre Laurendeau, the *Devoir's* editor, denounced the form of the French language spoken and taught in the schools. As an example of the unique character of Quebec's language, he strongly reiterated Laurendeau's claim that the current Quebecois pronunciation of the word for horse was not *cheval* as it was taught, but rather something like *joual* (Nardocchio 1989: 49-50). She points out how this *joual* became the language of Quebec. It was a mixture of Anglicisms, Old French, neologisms, and standard French. The term had both pejorative and nationalistic connotations. Some felt that *joual* was a black mark to be erased from French-Canadian culture. Others adopted it as a flag of Quebec nationalism, a symbol of the Quebecois cultural identity (ibid: 50).

At the same time it was realised that the Church was also reconciled to this new form of linguistic nationalism. This form of nationalism was not only political (and often separatist) but also social and cultural. This is due to the fact of *Joual* being used as a language for everyday use. This is significant as the dialect of *Joual* was able to harness and combine the languages of both the 'founding nations' and also that of the native community. The Church's "redefinition of its relationship to modernity had three immediate consequence" according to Seljak (Seljak 1996: 114). He points out how this support was a direct contradiction to what the traditional

nationalists were expecting. They had expected the Church to retain an older form of nationalism based on French linguistic continuity. However, acceptance of *Joual* as a linguistic norm was an exception to the rule. This in turn, made their opposition futile. If seen from the perspective of the precepts of nationalism we can see that this went a long way in legitimizing a nationalism which would be different than was being advocated by the rest of the country. The rural and agrarian populace of Quebec were able to identify with the new form of nationalism which advocated Quebec as part of the 'founding' nations and therefore promote their own distinctive language and culture which they felt was being subsumed by the English in Canada. According to Seljak, the Quiet Revolution along with the Second Vatican Council led to a "new concern for development and social justice among Quebec Catholics" (Seljak 1991: 115). At the same time, the Church in Quebec could develop a "sustained ethical critique" (ibid) of the contemporary society.

On the other hand, there were the liberals who proclaimed a newer form of nationalism which would include the unique identity of the populace of Quebec. Culture and language became the highlights for differentiation as well as for separation. There soon came a sharp divide between provincialisms and federalism. It was against this background that Quebec contributed significantly to protest in the form of literature. Theatres in protest of the bindings against individual liberty as espoused by the War Measures Act, and in support of separatism arose. It was, paradoxically, a primary reason for national consciousness being changed radically within the same nation. W.H. New points out that in francophone writing politics was both subject and methodology. (New 1989: 216).

Six premiers were part of the provincial government of Quebec during the Quiet Revolution. Rene Lévesque was a significant part of the Quiet Revolution. It was under his guidance as premier of Quebec that the first referendum on sovereignty was carried out in 1980. It was however, defeated by the supporters of the federalists structure. This resulted in Lévesque trying to work for Quebec's interest within the federal structure despite his absence in the ratification of the Canadian constitution in 1982. The separatist movement in Quebec resulted in various

windfalls for the Canadian economy despite the defeat in the referendum. Although touted mostly as a cultural movement it resulted in the value of the Canadian dollar diminishing and foreign investment slowing down. The ramifications of the Quiet Revolution could be felt for years after with two distinct communities being given significance with the Bilingual Act. However, as the predominant culture of the Quiet Revolution leaned towards a more welfare oriented society with Socialist public policies in the beginning. While the Parti Québécois is a social-democratic party, its separatist ideals led to a form of protest that followed the established tenets of socialism within a federal capitalist political and economic sphere. Again, The Quebec Liberal party, although supporting Canadian federalism, also has a dominant social-democratic ideology. Therefore protest theatre in Quebec also became predominantly socialist in its ideology.

## ***2. The Quiet Revolution and linguistic identities:***

In the political arena, Lévesque's brought about the concern of the Quebecker's regarding their language through Bill 101. This bill made French the predominant language for official purposes in the state law courts and business transactions within Quebec. This was however, later challenged in the Supreme court of Canada. On the other hand, Trudeau, as prime minister pushed forward the Official Languages Act of 1969 which enabled Canada to become officially and legally bilingual. However, the cultural volatility and the alienation that it entailed was one of the reasons that the federal government made available funds for the promotion of culture. This could be seen as both an attempt by the federal government to appease the dissenting factions, especially Quebeckers, in venting their angst in a peaceful manner, while at the same time it could also be seen as a measure to control and censor nationally subversive dialogue. Thus, regional theatres and local talents developed as an alternative to the theatre of the state.

In the words of Homi K. Bhabha it is the emergence of the *interstices* -- the overlap and the displacement of domains of difference--- that the intersubjective and collective experiences of nationness, community interest, or cultural values are

negotiated (Bhabha 1994: 2). If such is the contention, then it is not uncommon that the domain of difference in the Canadian sphere is language which is again a bigger part of the multicultural question. Bhabha goes on to talk about the 'language' of social crisis that are sparked off by the 'histories of cultural difference'. This would definitely encompass the fact that generations of cultural exclusivity that has been the hallmark of colonial Canada clashes with the various immigrant communities along with that of the existing First Nations. Immigration became a major part of the crisis of nationhood. Between 1870 and 1930 more than 720000 people immigrated to the United States. This created a crisis whereby Quebeckers thought that their political will and power would become lessened in Canada with their lessening numbers (Courville 2006: 129). This cultural exclusivity entailed a two pronged approach of the subjugation of the minority while at the same time perpetrated colonial ignorance and mystification. This mystification would almost seamlessly seem to merge with the colonial propaganda of the French Canada as a reaction to the outward bound immigration to the United States and that of British Canada. It was largely initiated by the Catholic Church and its colonization allies (ibid). Propaganda was made into a tool whereby a bucolic life of agriculture and religion would be promoted and that of the unknown in Canada (immigrants and the First Nations) decried. Theatre touring companies brought civilization to the Indigenous people while justifying economic exploitation and colonialism (Knowles 2004: 116). Again, it was one's linguistic identity that gave rise to 'nation' and the 'home'. This had particular proclivity in literature and performance in Canada. As Barbara Godard points out that the spectacle of alienation and its linguistic expression echo each other. For what began as a thematic representation of difference in the nineteenth century, a difference between Quebec and Canadian literatures and those of the mother countries, has become in contemporary Canadian and Quebec literatures a difference within, linguistically inscribed (Godard 1990: 155). It is again here that we find Alan Filewod's views quite pertinent when he states that in Quebec the language barrier preserved a sense of cultural self-sufficiency but here too colonialism was a major concern, from the opposite pole. Anglo-Canadian writers took pride in their colonial status, but Québécois writers chafed at theirs: they wrote about the complexities of a defeated francophone culture subjected to increasing colonialism - in the modern sense - from an Anglophone continent. He continues in the same strain when he states that as Quebec society became more secular, culminating in the Quiet Revolution of the

1960s, so did its polemical drama become more radical, more inclined to analyse colonialism in terms of class as well as nationality (Filewod 1987).<sup>10</sup>

Theatre and performance starts as the site of airing one's views which are beyond the ideology of the political and religion in the beginning but falls with the entire scope of the social. It is the public space whereby the individual connects the dots between the personal and the social life, thereafter becoming part of the political. The spectator connects these dots with the help of his or her personal experiences that form the context of his understanding. What is difficult to know, however, is the ideological influence that already exists within the spectator. The ideology of the spectator already starts forming at 'home'. The family being the primary unit of society is instrumental in forming the ideology and the outlook of the individual. Yet the dramatist will always want to be the instrument of social and ideological change within the spectator to enable him or her to view the text of the drama in a way beyond the purview of the spectator that is created at 'home'. In Canadian theatre the context of 'home' and that of society has been in conflict from the very beginning. Migrants and settlers have tried to create a 'home' there. It is however, the majority migrant communities (in this case the French and the British) who have shaped the ideology of 'home' in the smaller context and 'nation' in the larger. Through time, the shift in balance between these two major communities in Canada has tilted to form a multicultural nation. While the Quiet Revolution enabled Francophones in attaining their desired linguistic authority, it also enabled other communities to come forward which had hitherto been marginalised. As per statistics of the Canadian census 2011<sup>11</sup>, mother tongue of the Canadian national varied greatly though the dominant ones were English and French. The data of the statistics indicated that the immigrants who had a single mother tongue, close to one quarter (23.8 %) reported English as their mother tongue and 3.4% reported French. Among those whose mother tongue was other than Canada's two official languages, Chinese languages were most common, followed by

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<sup>10</sup> Filewod, Alan (1987). "The Ideological formation of Political Theatre in Canada", *Theatre Research in Canada*, Volume 8, No.2

<sup>11</sup>"Immigration and Ethnocultural Diversity in Canada" from *Statistics Canada*, accessed from <http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/nhs-enm/2011/as-sa/99-010-x/99-010-x2011001-eng.cfm>

Tagalog, a language of the Philippines, Spanish and Punjabi. The following table displays language division in Canada where immigrants and their language diversity form a very significant part of the national design. Being a multicultural nation, contemporary Canada places importance to language as a part of the national consciousness where multilingualism as opposed to bilingualism is now a marker of national consciousness. The creation of a migrant ‘home’ is brought about mainly through the use of mother tongues despite the use of official languages as per the provincial decree. The following table would help in knowing the differences in ‘mother’ tongue and the local language used which would enable one to know the effect of localised community theatre. Community theatre in Quebec has always had a mixture of joul (a dialect of French mixed with English) as well as the newer influence of other migrant cultures. Thus, while in Tremblay’s plays we find the predominance of joul in later plays of newer playwrights we find that language is more diverse with interspersed words from other linguistic cultures as a result of globalised migration as can be seen in the plays of Patrick Leroux.

**Number of languages spoken by immigrant status and period of immigration, Canada, 2011**

Number of languages spoken	Total population		Non-immigrants		Immigrants		Recent immigrants (2006 to 2011)	
	Numbers	Percentage	Numbers	Percentage	Numbers	Percentage	Numbers	Percentage
English only	16,542,730	50.4	15,208,855	59.1	1,278,505	18.9	116,450	10.0
French only	3,774,750	11.5	3,709,135	14.4	59,865	0.9	17,995	1.5

Non-official language only	502,175	1.5	96,890	0.4	387,330	5.7	91,765	7.9
Speaks more than one language	12,032,665	36.6	6,705,290	26.1	5,050,055	74.5	936,695	80.5
Both official languages only	4,369,345	13.3	4,178,205	16.2	176,830	2.6	24,965	2.1
Both official languages and one or more non-official languages	1,402,910	4.3	699,455	2.7	673,305	9.9	121,680	10.5
One official language and one or more	6,206,660	18.9	1,826,150	7.1	4,149,060	61.2	776,975	66.8



non-official languages								
Multiple non-official languages only	53,750	0.2	1,480	0.0	50,860	0.8	13,075	1.1

(Source: National Household survey 2011)

Figure 4.

Continuing this strain of thought we find Godard pointing out that the theme of difference "at home" has become the domain of the minority writer -- women, indigenes, Québécois and immigrants and the inscription of this difference within a new cultural context is complicated by problems of literary legitimacy (Godard 1990: 154). It is here that I would like to place Louise Patrick Leroux's play *Embedded*. The play has been translated by Shelley Tepperman and Ellen Warkenttin. Jane Moss points out how Leroux became the spokesperson for his generation---denouncing the political and the economic establishments that denied meaningful roles to educated francophones and castigating the generation of 1960s radicals who had grown complacent (2009: 11). Here the 'home' has the dual connotation at both the national level as well as the personal level. At the national level it alludes to various occurrences that took place within the province of Quebec and also the Canadian nation as seen after the Quiet Revolution. Placed within the context of the home (the bedroom) where the protagonists Ludwig and Mae enact their unchanging lives identities are sought 'at home'. The plays go out of their way to provoke the spectator to engage in thoughts that would take him or her out of the comfort zone of the known 'home', yet will also display the paradoxes of the 'home'. Comfort and identity associated with 'home' become subverted and soon add to psychological horrors and discomforts of the 'home'. It is through the dialogues that the spectator soon realises that the desires of the protagonist get subsumed within the everyday

futility brought about by the policies that govern everyday life. Lacan's location of the signifier of desire, on the cusp of language and the law, allows the elaboration of a form social representation that is alive to the ambivalent structure of subjectivity and sociality (Bhabha 1994: 31-32). If summed up in this way then it can be seen that while Ludwig and Mae are part of the sociality, they are also on the 'cusp of language and the law', for Mae is an actress whose job is to 'be' what she is not, but aspires to be. At the same time, Ludwig is an out of job engineer who dreams of abstract and absurd things in the hope that it will help him tide over reality. What Leroux intends to create through his characters is a sense of despair bordering on fatality, but also enabling the spectator to think a way out of this conundrum. His play seems to subscribe to the notion that performance can most usefully be described as an ideological transaction between a company of performers and the community of their audience. Ideology is the source of the collective ability of performers and audience to make more or less common sense of the signs used in the performance, the means by which the aims and intentions of the theatre companies connect with the responses and interpretations of their audiences (Kershaw 1992: 16). In commonsensical terms we realise that political theatre has always been socialist and therefore protest has always been ingrained within the texture of political theatre. Therefore, Leroux's theatre encompasses a protest that needed to be voiced as a result of a new economic, social and political order that was prevalent after the Quiet Revolution. While the youth of the province were expecting the rapid changes of the Quiet Revolution not only to persist after the revolution, the expectation that it would also be nationalistic in its influence was lost in the midst of global influences. Globalisation had as much an effect in Quebec as it had on rest of Canada. While the American influence was staunchly protested against we see through the characters of Leroux's plays that other global influences had seeped into Quebec's everyday life and which had very little in common with the previous Catholic, agrarian and 'white' culture of Quebec. This was a change that was fuelled by economic growth of the multinational companies and which Quebec could not escape if it had to keep apace with the rest of the world in both foreign as well as in economic policies. Contemporary nationalism of Quebec is therefore based not on the fact that it has retained its religious as well as its socio-political base after the Quiet Revolution. It also depends to a large extent on how it has been able to manage its foreign and immigrant policies after having wrestled it from the federal government. At the same time what also is notable is that while it has

been able to assimilate immigrants within the social and the cultural fabric of the province, it has successfully been able to retain its linguistic predominance as part of its national consciousness and its nationalistic ideal. This can be seen in the last abstract of Leroux's where the various characters appear in random order yet, they all retain their individuality.

The Quiet Revolution brought to the forefront the use of a 'national' language (in case of Quebec) as a marker of its national consciousness and its nationalistic aspirations. The Office québécois de la langue française, a public organisation set up in 1961 by Jean Lesage was given the duty "to align on international French, promote good Canadianisms and fight Anglicisms, [...] work on the normalization of the language in Québec and support State intervention to carry out a global language policy that would consider notably the importance of socio-economic motivations in making French the priority language in Québec."<sup>12</sup> Till date it has acted in the interest of the provincial government in maintaining the sanctity of French as the predominant language in the province of Quebec. Again, a product of the wave of the Quiet Revolution, it remains one of the principal governmental instruments in both restraining and moulding the linguistic ideologies of the people of Quebec and thus institutionalising and regularising the use of French as a medium of all transactions within Quebec. Ratified by the *Charter of the French language* in 1977, it has been zealously 'guarding' the use of French inside Quebec. Not far from Althusser's concept of the Ideological State Apparatus (ISAs) this institution can be seen in the creation of future citizens where nationalistic sentiments will be subjectivized through means of constant allusion rather than being forcibly applied. In the present scenario constant allusion is in the form of public policies that the Office québécois de la langue française enacts and enforces. Althusser's assertion that ISAs belong primarily to the 'private' (Althusser 1971: 144) domain is uncontested by the fact that the policies of the Office québécois de la langue française caters to those institutions that form a part of personal social behaviour of the citizen. In the case of Quebec, they are implemented through language policies regarding public signboards, public notifications, schools, colleges and other institutions. Recent incidents tend to

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<sup>12</sup>Accessed from [24 mars 1961 - Création de l'Office de la langue française](#), in *Bilan du siècle*, Université de Sherbrooke, retrieved on February 18, 2008

throw into relief the pervasiveness of these kinds of institutions as recently as in 2013 when an Italian restaurant owner in Montreal received a letter from the office warning him that he was using too many Italian words in his menu in contrast to French (*The Economist*, March 11, 2013). No doubt raising a few chuckles on the way, this report does enable one to notice serious issues that mark the incident. Trying to preserve its intrinsic cultural heritage governmental agencies in Quebec have to fine-balance between nationalistic (and often separatist) sentiments as well as protecting itself from the onslaught of English- the other predominant language. Before the implementation of Bill 101 in 1977, there was also a precursor of the Bill in 1974 known as Bill 22. The tussle between the languages was a manifestation of the power strife based on nationalism between the two founding nations of Canada. William D Coleman points out how in Quebec the Quiet Revolution was characterized by a desire for economic *rattrapage* where the francophone populace wanted to catch up economically with the rest of Canada and North America (Coleman 1981: 261). The conflict within these languages was one of the most significant parts of the Quiet Revolution in Quebec. However, it led to a reworking of the society on what could be termed as a more pluralistic society whereby the earlier distinctions between the societies were re-worked. Bill 22 of 1974 attempted to bring about a legislation whereby the divisions between people who spoke French and people who were born Francophone were sought to be lessened through public policies. Leroux's characters in Ludwig and Mae go on to explore all these as sites of contests where nationality is brought into focus as part of a design that is facing constant challenge from global assault of symbols of social and economic nature.

### ***3. Theatre and Quebec national consciousness:***

#### ***3.1 Theatre and contemporary Quebec society:***

Not only do Ludwig and Mae represent the current problems that their generation faces in the contemporary times, they also end up showing that they are a product of the mores, customs and politics of their previous generations. The conflict of generations as a theme is the most striking and extreme instance of a phenomenon new to drama, but born of general emotion. For the stage has turned into the point of inter- section for pairs of worlds distinct in time; the realm of drama is

one where "past" and "future," "no longer" and "not yet," come together in a single moment. What we usually call "the present" in drama is the occasion of self-appraisal; from the past is born the future, which struggles free of the old and of all that stands in opposition. (Luckas and Baxandall 1965: 148). The generational shift is also highlighted through the individualism that has become a patent force through the ages. Both Ludwig and Mae are individuals who are isolated from the rest of the society. While Mae wants to interact with the outside world through her profession as an actress, Ludwig refuses to mingle. In the later plays he is seen to converse with the symbols of his ego, superego and id, who are all essentially himself. The new drama is therefore the drama of individualism, and that with a force, an intensity and an exclusiveness no other drama ever had. (ibid : 151).

In *Embedded (La Litière)*, the setting itself is so much a part of the domestic arena that the spectator takes some time to realise that the situation created is wholly the result of non-domestic policies. The whole plot takes place in the bedroom where an absurd conversation regarding everyday life and aspirations of the protagonist help to bring out the issues of the contemporary age. The influence of external pressures subtly affects internal relations in the play. While on the one hand, Mae, who is an actor living in a make-belief world gets a job, Ludwig an engineer fails to get a job. This tends to bring out the unemployment situation of the age which has continued since the Quiet Revolution and was a primary reason for it. The irony of the situation provokes the viewer to think of contemporary political and economic policies as having been partially successful despite welfare measures. In fact this can be symbolised with the entry of an external force in the form of a Chinese delivery guy, who is being forced to become a part of their domestic lives. This can again be explained in the words of Luckas and Baxandall when they opine that realization and maintenance of personality has become on the one hand a conscious problem of living; the longing to make the personality prevail grows increasingly pressing and urgent. On the other hand, external circumstances, which rule out this possibility from the first, gain ever greater weight. It is in this way that survival as an individual, the integrity of individuality, becomes the vital center of drama. Indeed the bare fact of Being begins to turn tragic. In view of the augmented force of external circum- stance,

the least disturbance or incapacity to adjust is enough to induce dissonances which cannot be resolved (ibid: 154).

In *Apocalypse (Rappel)*, the stage is set in for a ceremonial suicide. The protagonist is on the verge of committing suicide and is reflecting on the state of his life with characters on stage that are abstract and represent a manifestation of Quebec's life and culture. While the Pope represents religion of a bygone era, the Cow represents an idyllic agrarian society that has rapidly changed. Finally we see the Muse, as an age old inspiration for further change. At the same time one sees the setting as a kind of courtroom where the judgement takes place. In provocative political theatre one does notice that judgement forms a trope whereby the playwright conveys not only his own ideologies but also passes a scathing judgement on the prevailing systems of social behaviour. In *Apocalypse*, moral indictment is followed by the death sentence. Therefore Ludwig is judged by his conscience and the utopia of the self that he wants to attain. The stage attains the stature of a courtroom, where the laws broken are not only criminal but also moral. However, the irony remains in the fact that while the assaulter (Ludwig was a victim of molestation) remains free, the victim commits suicide denouncing the world. What one does notice is that Leroux seems to blatantly point out to the uselessness of state law and order where the ideologue can protest only through words. He goes on to say through Ludwig that

*We have to laugh about it; it's the only way to get even.*

*Contempt and irony are our weapons!* (Leroux 2009: 148)

As noted by A. G. Boss that dramatized trials are also often used for reasons outside the law. Augusto Boal's *Theatre of the Oppressed* uses the trial scenario to help participants deal with themes and problems or rehearse actions. Beside these therapeutic uses, we see the public watching, or being entertained by, trials in at least three ways: 1) fictional trials, or those constructed by a writer to create drama in a work of literature; 2) fictionalized/dramatized versions of actual trials; and 3) actual legal trials ( Boss 2010: 31). As he starts preparing for his judgement and ultimate demise he states his intent as being "*I want society to look bad, not me*" (Leroux 2009: 157). It thus becomes a dramatized trial. In a dramatized trial, the audience

often develops into a “juror” whose judgement cannot affect the outcome; the audience becomes a spectator/jurist, but without control of the outcome like a real jurist. This is similar to the notion of dramatic irony where the audience knows what is about to happen, but cannot change it. The outcome is predetermined (Boss 2010: 31).

Ludwig along with three imaginative characters of the Cow, the Pope and the Muse flawlessly instigates one to start making judgements. Symbolically the three represent the three stages of man from the worshiper of nature, to the classical Greeks and then modern religion. Yet Leroux’s iconoclasm breaks through these while at the same time deriding socialist and leftist values. However, it does not mean that these characters are not given a fair ‘hearing’ by the judge (Ludwig) and the jury (the audience). Christian Catholicism combines with the clamour of the modern world in the character of the Pope. This in itself seems symbolic of the Quiet Revolution where the Catholic church made an effort integrate in the modern life style of the province and associated itself with a new kind of linguistic and provincial nationalism. To the unaware spectator, at first glance, he seems to represent religion in a world where national identities and global identities clash. As Boss points out, dramatizations, of course, are inevitably subjective representations of reality, influenced by many factors including public and writer bias, and the unavoidable interpretation of fact (Boss 2010: 32). After the Quiet Revolution Quebec’s political character slowly metamorphosed into that of a left leaning, social-welfare province. This continues to baffle political critics who cannot reconcile the identity of the contemporary Quebecker as a religious individual who supports socialist policies without veering off to the far-left. The character of the Pope in the play seems to belligerently point this out when he says:

*I don’t want to be a stupid mime; I don’t want to play*

*charades; I want to be heard; I want to be listened to!*

*Listen to me!* (2009: 130)

### ***3.2 Religious influence on contemporary Quebec theatre:***

Leroux's character of the Pope seems to evoke the echoes of a bygone era of religion based public policies of the pre Revolution times. While the political reign of Duplessis bordered on extreme conservatism and isolationism for Quebec, theatre proved to be a weapon of subversion. Ironically, a clergyman, Father Emile Legault (artistic director of the College St-Laurent on the outskirts of Montreal), working within the church-dominated system created theatre that influenced an entire generation of actors and directors (Nardocchio 1989: 22). These were the predecessors, as well as the present generations of the directors who influenced the Quiet Revolution. Father Legault founded Les Compagnons de St-Laurent, a theatre company. Before Les Compagnons de St-Laurent disbanded in 1952, Father Emile Legault had succeeded in establishing a well trained, professional theatre organization in Quebec. With the continuous support of the Church, on which he often depended to provide halls such as l'Ermitage and the Gesu, he developed actors and directors and educated the tastes of a public who sometimes numbered as many as 3,000 for a particular play. Moreover, thanks to their regular tours, Les Compagnons de St-Laurent popularized the idea of high-quality production, not only in Montreal but throughout the province (ibid: 23). However, by the early 1970s Marxist rhetoric was common in Québécois theatres; AQJT in 1974 elected a radical board of directors, and when Théâtre EUH! led a walk-out of militant theatres from the association in 1975 it was not because the AQJT was anti-Marxist, but because according to the more radical troupes, any compromise with the bourgeois state was unacceptable. Affiliated with the Marxist-Leninist party En Lutte!, Théâtre EUH! was merely the most extreme in a theatrical field filled with Marxist troupes. The use of popular culture techniques, of clown shows, giant puppets and street parades, provided an accessible context for an essentially intellectual analysis. The relative popularity of Marxist analysis in Quebec may explain why Brecht has been significantly more influential there, as theorist and playwright, than in English Canada (Filewod 1987)<sup>13</sup>.

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<sup>13</sup>Filewod, Alan (1987). "The Ideological formation of Political Theatre in Canada", *Theatre Research in Canada*, Volume 8, No.2



#### ***4. Quebec theatre and Provincial funding policies:***

Susan Bennett's observation regarding Athenian theatre seems pertinent here regarding both early Quebec theatre as well as the recent example of Leroux's character of the Pope (although in a sarcastic manner). She points out that the main Athenian religious festivals establish drama as inextricably tied to the religious experience of the involved spectator. Greek theatre was also clearly inseparable from the social, economic and political structures of Athens. The importance accorded to theatre is further substantiated by the economic support it received, with production costs largely met by the state funds (Bennett 1988: 2-3). Leroux's character seems to echo this very concept. This phenomenon has, however, an uncanny resemblance to contemporary Canadian theatre which is often funded by the Canada Council of Arts. Apart from this Quebec had its own governmental funding and official recognition from the 1950s because of its deeply entrenched theatre culture. In 1954 the Quebec government created the Conservatoire d'art dramatique, with campuses in Montreal and Quebec. In 1957 the Montreal Arts Council, instituted in 1955 by Jean Drapeau, began subsidizing struggling local troupes like the Theatre- Club and the Theatre du Rideau Vert; in 1958, the provincial government contributed to the welfare of Quebec theatre by supporting the Canadian Amateur Theatre Association, ACTA (Association Canadienne du theatre d'amateur), founded, for Francophones by Quebecois actor and director Guy Beaulne, who had been involved for many years with the Dominion Drama Festival; 1958 was also the year the Canada Council handed out its first scholarships to aspiring writers and artists and gave substantial sums of money to established theatre companies such as the Theatre du Nouveau Monde (Nardocchio 1989: 28). Quebec theatre is therefore a mass of contradictory ideas and paradoxes. While on the one hand we find theatre acting as a tool of protest and subversion of contemporary policies, on the other hand its survival depends also upon this same government. Bennett points out that the survival of theatre is economically tied to a willing audience, not only those people paying to sit and watch a performance but often those who approve a government or corporate subsidy (Bennett 1988: 4). As per Canada's official website in 1990-1991, theatre as part of, performing arts companies received \$125 million in grants from all three levels of government, \$88 million in grants from the Canada Council, and an estimated \$59 million from private sources, including corporations, foundations and

individuals. In 1990-91, revenues generated from box office sales accounted for 51 per cent of funding for performing arts companies. The 1992 *Report of the Standing Committee on Culture and Communications: "The Ties that Bind"* recommended that the federal government should encourage "integrated policy and planning among all federal government departments with respect to culture and encourage partnerships with other levels of government, the private sector and Canada's cultural community"<sup>14</sup>. This led to a skewed perception of state control and censorship. While on the one hand there were companies (especially small film makers) who pushed for national control, there were others like national theatre chains who were assured of state benefits. They retained the rights of being uncensored by the state yet the very fact that they existed on the largesse of the government made them partially effective. These measures were taken in the name of cultural protection where they created 'national' culture on the basis of national aid rather than that of foreign aid. A result of anti-imperialist tendencies, these efforts were aimed at stemming the overwhelming American influence over Canadian culture. Pendaukar points out that 'The workers and small capitalists (independent distributors) joined forces to push for national control of Canadian cinema, whereas Canada's prominent capitalists (national theatre chains) and the international capitalists sought the cooperation of various sectors of the state machinery to keep their control intact' (Pendakaur, 1990: 167).<sup>15</sup>

If such is the case of theatre production then it is no wonder that playwrights chafe at the indirect censorship that prevails within the Canadian sphere. It is often circumvented through the use of the absurd and the symbolic. Although Leroux's plays are no strangers to this aspect of theatre he does make his dissatisfaction escape through the character of the Pope and Ludwig. While the Pope embodies Ludwig's superego it emphasizes what he aspires to be. Thus, the Pope's words are an echo of what Ludwig (and therefore Leroux) wants to say. When the Pope says that in the guise of a Chinese delivery he was glad for the privilege of delivering food, his sarcasm is the cornerstone of his thought. He says:

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<sup>14</sup><http://www.culturelink.org/culpol/ca.html>.

<sup>15</sup> See Sparks, Colin (2007), *Development, Globalization and the Mass Media*, London: Sage Publications.

*...I don't have to ask for Hand-outs from our glorious and exemplary nation.*

*I can really say I'm a model citizen ... (2009: 133)*

Although couched in grandiose and verbose language, the very pomposity of this character points out to the despair that is part of this generation as a part of the welfare state. In fact, Ludwig goes on to plainly state in his last will and testament his disillusionment with the political policies that dictate the nation in the contemporary times. He says:

*...I leave my place in the welfare line to the first comer who,*

*Like me, wasted time in university under the illusion that*

*the world would be waiting for him when he graduated... (2009: 155)*

Ludwig realises that he is a failure in his ambition to be 'recognized' and given an individual identity among the anonymous thousands that fall under the ambit of the welfare measure of the province. Despite being a mechanical engineer, he realises that in the eyes of contemporary society his economic worth (and therefore, his social and political worth) is negligible. Mae mirrors society in pointing out his worthless identity when she says:

*If it weren't for social assistance, you'd have stopped joking a long time ago (2009: 85)*

Ironically, Leroux here points out that while welfare policies are implemented by the governments in an effort to foster a sense of belonging to the nation, in some cases they have the reverse effect of making the individual realise that he has become one among thousands. This is in sharp contrast to the modernistic idea of individuality that is perpetrated by the mass media. The Quiet Revolution affected not only the social and the cultural but also had a deep effect upon the economic conditions of the province. The violence wrought about by the FLQ affected business concerns and they shifted their headquarters to other province. *The Economist* as recently as March 6 2014, where it was stated that corporate Montreal has already suffered the effects of long-term uncertainty about Quebec: many firms moved head offices in the late 1970s among them the Bank of Montreal, whose headquarters are now in Toronto. But few doubt that there would be further damage if Quebec spilt. The long term effects of the

Quiet Revolution have been in theatre through the years and this gets magnified in Leroux's plays. In the last ten years although Quebec has tried to form a distinct nationalism for itself, it cannot be denied that the basis for a different nation would require more than just a different language and culture as economic concerns have gained primary importance in this globalised world. Contemporary society asserts its social roles on the basis of profession and economic success.

Taylor points out that the birth of a democratic society doesn't by itself do away with this phenomenon, because people can still define themselves by their social roles (Taylor 1994: 31). At the same time Leroux has his characters start with a blank look of disillusionment in *Embedded*, where the actors exemplify the permeating cynicism in society as captured in the photograph below. Both Ludwig and Mae are shown to have blank expressions of characters that have reached the depths of disillusionment and are tired with the ephemeral world of social recognition and success.



Ludwig and Mae in *Charlenois Post*, 1999.

Figure 5.

Ludwig even talks about his flag in a derisive manner, scoffing at the idea of a national identity when he leaves his "little national-but-only-in-the-eyes-of-some flag to the anthropologists". The disillusionment of Ludwig's generation echo one that was taking place at that time the world over. While both *Embedded* and *Apocalypse* are eminently European in their treatment, they embody certain strains of global strains that were pandemic to all cultures at the time. It is this very similarity which, paradoxically, Canada as nation was attempting to overcome. Quebec was able

to carve out a 'different' identity based on a linguistic basis, yet it could not escape the national policies that rooted for a national identity. So while the Chinese Delivery Guy was an intruder in the bedroom of Ludwig and Mae in *Embedded*, it also sought to showcase the permeating influence of global cultures that have seeped in not only through migration but also through the development of technology based knowledge. This globalisation is made fun of by the Muse and Cow in *Apocalypse* when they laud the Pope for his job as a Chinese delivery guy. They point out that in the eyes of his nation and that of society is not a failure as he has "a position, even if it's a Mcjob" (Leroux 2009: 133).

A clash seems to be created within the trope of 'nationality' and that of 'globalisation' in contemporary Canada. Although this had its roots in the historical times, it cannot be denied that due to the auspices of globalisation, Canada and in this case Quebec, is struggling to foreground its cultural and social contexts. Benedict Anderson asserts that nationality, or, as one might prefer to put it in view of that word's multiple significations, nation-ness, as well as nationalism, are cultural artefacts of a particular kind (Anderson 1983: 4). He further points out that if nation-states are widely conceded to be 'new' and 'historical,' the nations to which they give political expression always loom out of an immemorial past (ibid: 11). The word "Mcjob" used by Leroux seems to point to a 'nation' (here Quebec) which has seen an avalanche of symbols and icons of 'history' as well as that of the politically 'new' province being submerged by the icons of globalisation spearheaded by the United States of America. While Quebec has long fought for a distinct recognition as a separate cultural entity within the Canadian nation, it has been unable to stop the seeping in of global icons that have entered with the support of international trade between nations. As Charles Taylor points out in his 'Politics of Recognition' that it is the want of recognition that aspires one to strive for a distinctive culture (1992). He points out that the very need of individual recognition goes against the tenets of nationalistic recognition that Quebec has been striving for and achieved after the Quiet Revolution. He notes that it is axiomatic for Quebec governments that the survival and flourishing of French culture in Quebec is a good. Political society is not neutral between those who value remaining true to the culture of our ancestors and those who might want to cut loose in the name of some individual goal of self-

development (Taylor 1992: 58). But post the global economic scenario of the 1980s-1990s and the diffusion of identities that took place through the mass media it seems that national consciousness in Quebec was also following that of the rest of the world.

Leroux seems to use metaphors to point out to the issue of Quebec nationality clashing with that of 'Canadian' nationality is made through Mae when she tells Ludwig in *Embedded* about her sojourns through Brittany. She says that she is

*... in a region where people choose to be. Not only are they born Bretons, one day they declare their Breton identity loud and strong, without being forced by flag, law, and anthem, and even while another flag, law, and anthem are forced on them. (Leroux 2009: 173)*

For the spectator it seems to recall to mind the struggle of the Quiet Revolution and that of the FLQ during the revolution. The direct references to that the icons and symbols of nation and nationality like the flag and anthem prove to the spectator that while the revolution might be over, it lingers on in social and political consciousness. This consciousness is then shown through that of national law. The impact of these lines resonate in the minds of the spectator as not only historical but also as the immediate echoing Barba's thought that "theatre is immediate experience" (1988: 27). This immediate experience not only has the cathartic effect of the immediate on the spectator through the spectacles created, they also act a cultural moulders in the form of remnants in the cultural fabric of society.

Leroux employs several ploys and methods to bring about the multifarious perceptions that were floating about in society at that time. I engage with his plays because they bring into a continuum the various ideologies and perceptions that has shaped Francophone society both before and after the revolution. The effects of the revolution are startlingly displayed through the tropes of identity connected both through psychology and that of ideology. The character of Ludwig's irresponsible father highlights the angst of the contemporary generation in against that

of the older generation. While the older generation is grappling and trying to frantically keep up with the rapidly changing new one, the younger is bewildered at the apparent choices of life arrayed before them (which in reality are the same old ones). The angst in Ludwig begins from his childhood despite his trying to conform to conventionality. This again echoes Walter A. Davis's point that parents project their conscious and unconscious conflicts into their children. That act is the birth, or origin, of the psyche. Internalizing parental desires and conflicts creates the first self-reference: our readiness to do anything to ourselves in order to preserve the love of our original love objects. Our self-division is the product of this founding act (Davis 2007: 129).

Another ploy that Leroux uses extravagantly is that of the left oriented theatre where ideologies form the basis of theatre. Yet Leroux totally subverts the issues by decrying both the left centric and the right centric ideology. While Mae is still a part of society that rebels at first but tends to conform to its rules later, Ludwig refuses to succumb to this malaise and prefers to end his life rather than conform. Also the fact that the contemporary world is one where paradoxically individuality gets submerged in the context of nationality Ludwig is also a part of a multitude whose voice is unheard in the din of other speakers. In an interview to the *Charlebois Post* Leroux opines that "Mae, on the other hand, gets it. She's moved on, she's not protesting, but she gets that to be 20 is to dream, to imagine the what-ifs, the why-nots, to raise in revolt against barriers and to open up onto possibilities and to actively imagine one's place in society. The "Me" Generation is not whiny; it is active and activist. It negotiates. It refuses unnecessary compromise and is keen to engage in debate. But it also expects much from the previous generations and from society. It is learning some hard realities (society's choices are complex and change is slow and usually incremental), but remains undeterred in its resolve."<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup>*Charlebois Post-Canada: Canada's Online Performing Arts Magazine. Sunday, March 24, 2013.*

### ***5. History of the Quiet Revolution and its impact:***

While Leroux engages with the post Quiet Revolution generations ensnared within the problems of the contemporary world, one of the most renowned dramatist during the period of the Quiet Revolution was Michel Tremblay. Tremblay laid the foundation for a new theatre language and identity that are peculiar to the province of Quebec. Quebec theatre was at that time vastly influenced by European theatre especially of Beckett and Tremblay's use of the joul was no different. As Therrian points out in his analysis of Beckett and his influence on Quebec theatre "Since theatre programs are planned at least a year in advance, it is interesting that *Godot* was slated for production during a time of unprecedented political violence in Québec's modern history. The year of La Crise d'Octobre, 1970, was defined by the insurrection of a group of pro-independent radicals; the F.L.Q. (Front de Libération du Québec) was composed mainly of French-Canadian proletarians and college students. Needless to say, their terrorist activities against bourgeois Anglophones heightened the political tensions between the Anglophone and francophone populations of Québec. These unusual violent acts must have imbued the average Québécois' life with a sense of surrealism. William Johnson, a journalist, describes that experience of disorientation and helplessness in an article published after the sequestrations and Pierre Laporte's murder: "*Les souvenirs enfiévrés de l'automne dernier semblent tenir de l'hallucination, comme s'ils appartenaient à une dimension de l'espace et du temps autre que celle du Montréal de tous les jours*" ("The memories of last fall seem to be part of a hallucination, as if they belonged to a dimension of space and time other than the ones of the familiar Montreal") (Johnson 114). Just like *Godot's* vagrant pair, the Québécois people had the sense of being unwilling participants in a *mise en abyme*, a nightmare where there is "nothing to be done" (Beckett 7). Reduced to spectators of a drama, their own life, they could only wait for something better to happen."<sup>17</sup>

A study of the translation of the text *Les Belles Soeurs* of Tremblay is required to substantiate the hypothesis. The play was first showcased in August 1968

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<sup>17</sup> Therrien, Eve Irene (1999). "Beckett and Québec: "Je me souviens"?", *Theatre Research in Canada*. Volume 20 Number 2



at Montreal's Théâtre du Rideau Vert. While it was lauded as being radical and therefore confrontational to national politics, it was also held as a call of liberation both aesthetic and political. At that time Tremblay refused to get the text translated into standard French. As Malone points out Tremblay had also forsaken standard French and written the play instead in *joual*, the sociolect associated with his own Montreal working-class background. In doing so, the playwright was resisting the colonizing traditions of both English and European French (Ladouceur, "Other Tongue" 212)<sup>18</sup>. The 1973 translation of Tremblay's work however, had the added criticism of not being 'true' to the contexts of the original *joual* text. Malone points out through his essay that in the 1973 translation of John Van Burek and Bill Glassco, reissued in a revised version in 1994 one might think its title an admission of defeat, since it is called *Les Belles-Soeurs* (originally without the hyphen, which the 1994 revision restores). It is true that "The Sisters-in-Law" would carry none of the irony of the original. As Louise Ladouceur points out, however, the retention of the original title which characterizes the majority of Van Burek's thirteen Tremblay translations (six of them in collaboration with Glassco) would become "the trademark of the English versions of Tremblay's plays. With titles bereft of meaning for an English audience [...] it is suggested right from the outset that the play portrays an untranslatable reality to which [*sic*] an Anglophone audience can hardly identify" ("Other Tongue"214). The translational difficulties point out to linguistic differences where class differences are not shown in the English translations between the characters of the Italian family and the French family residing in Quebec. Tremblay's own working class background helped him to contextualise the difficulties of the working poor of Quebec of the times and to delineate the direct effect of the Quiet Revolution. His strong characters express the alienation that was felt at that time in Quebec within the national scope as being a province sidelined by the majority of the Anglophones. Female characters hold their own in this play when they break out in revolt against the traditions and in effect the public policies that shape them. Their use of *joual* is exclusively as means to strengthen their position of rebellion against the state. Ruth B Antosh in a review of Michael Cardy's work points out that Cardy's

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<sup>18</sup> Malone, Paul (2003), "Good Sisters and Darling Sisters: Translating and transplanting the *Joual* in Michel Tremblay's *Les Belles Soeurs*", *Theatre Research in Canada*, Volume 24 Numbers 1 and 2.

comparison of joul to the English used in Newfoundland will find many similarities where archaic words survive in popular speech. He points out that although obscenities in joul are usually religious words, like tabernacle, Tremblay's characters also make liberal use of scatological and sexual terms. Cardy examines in some detail the key elements of Tremblay's joul: archaic words or phrases brought from France by the early Norman settlers; blasphemous or obscene expressions; Anglicisms; the 'subversion of both formal and oral grammar' (Antosh 2006: 260). Tremblay uses spectacles and other tropes to highlight the issues of the day. Infact he makes use of trading stamps in the denouement as backdrop against the women singing 'O Canada' at the end of the play. A snapshot of one such performance is given below.



*Les Belles Soeurs.*

Figure 6.

*Les Belles Soeurs* seemed to follow the Bakhtinian mode of using laughter as subversion against state and society. Using the spectacle of the chorus, we find it similar to that of post revolution Bakhtin in his study of *Rebelias*. Tremblay has a similar context of the Quiet Revolution. The "prevailing order" of Bakhtin's day was, however, that of folk culture from which the folk had been banished and replaced by its perverse double: "folklore." The poetics of the folk epos became a recommended literary paradigm; carnival laughter was stifled in the chorus (Lachmann et all 1989:

118). This can be seen in the chorus of Tremblay's play with the singing of "O Canada".

For a long time French Canadian Theatre had been bound by norms and rules that was predominantly a part of the colonial structure. It was after Michele Tremblay burst into the scene that Canadian theatre seems to have found a new political and social evolution. Tremblay brought into focus the setting and background of working class Quebec of which he himself had been a member. In the working class neighbourhood of Mont Royal he depicts characters who have been mired in the conventions of religion and colonial policies that had remained unchanging and were increasing coming under the pressure of the world outside Quebec. His use of joul as a dialect that was coarse yet essential in conveying the angst of the characters point out to how language was used as a tool to overcome the barriers of alienation and subjugation. It seems almost a re-enactment of Gayatri Chakrabarti Spivak's of the subaltern speaking. What she goes on to say about representation as 'speaking for' as in politics and representation as in 're-presentation' as in art is completely displayed in *Les Belles Soeurs*. The squabbling amongst the characters that are predominantly female, point out to the dissatisfaction that society has been germinating within itself. This dissatisfaction is shown mainly through the female characters in their being subaltern on the basis of their not only being female but also due to the restrictive and prohibitive moral codes that were an amalgamation of religious practices and that of a patriarchal societal setup. Poverty and wish fulfilment is a constant in the two act play.

The plot of the play revolves around a female character Gemaine Lauzon who has won a million trading stamps and plans to spend them on what she has been wishing for a long time and yet could not afford. She invites fifteen friends including her daughter and two sisters and they come to arrange and paste the stamps in her kitchen. Amid the cacophony of the dialogues, the wishes of the other members also come out along with their petty jealousies which find their way into their 'happy' labour. What comes then is a litany of suppressed desires which spout out in the form of the coarse language of joul. While there are no overt political overtones in the play it is apparent that the alienation suffered by the women is a reflection of that which Quebecers in general were undergoing in their fear of being over ruled by

English and Anglophone culture in general. On the other hand, through this play Tremblay seems to hint at a lot of society's grievances that can only be guessed at by the audience.

*Les Belles Soeurs* goes beyond naturalism in theatre to the realm of the sarcastic when it goes on about the materialistic ambitions of the protagonist as she asks help for pasting of the stamps in the catalogue. Non-stop verbosity is part and parcel of the play to show the feeling of sudden freedom (in this case economical) as a hysterical outpouring of garbled feelings. Germaine's wish for frivolous things as "a sunken bathtub, new sink, bathing suits for everyone" and "mickey mouse" wallpapers for the kids bedroom gives the feeling of apparent cheap consumerism and materialistic ambitions. But they also act as a way for the women to assert their own choice for once in their cloistered lives. In the very first few dialogues Germaine says:

*Sure, that's right. Put me down...*

*...I never have any pleasure. Someone's always got to spoil it for me.*

(Translated by John Van Burek and Bill Glassco 1973: 101)



Figure 7.

The apparent hysteria, as shown in a poster of one of the performances of the play given below, points out to this very idea of hysteria as an outpouring of suppressed emotions. As a matter of fact, one of the characters, Pierette goes on to say during a quarrel:

*Let them talk. They love to get hysterical.* (ibid: 121)

This verbosity of the female characters in the play by deliberate contrast seem to reiterate Spivak's contention of women being 'marginal' in society where she points out that for the 'figure' of woman, the relationship between woman and silence can be plotted by women themselves; race and class differences are subsumed under that charge (Spivak 1988:82). Literally, when the play starts the protagonist is backstage. She is 'heard' but not 'seen' unlike the common notion of women being 'seen' and not 'heard'. The setting of the play is the kitchen which is assumed to be the common domain of females. The 'silence' that Spivak speaks of can be seen in Germaine saying about the delivery guy (who delivered the stamps) that "*I wish your father had been here. He could have talked to him*". This almost seems to denote that she as a woman is not qualified to talk to a man.

Tremblay uses songs and choruses even though this play is not vaudeville. When other women of the group enter they narrate their "stupid rotten life" in a monotone befitting the drabness of their lives. This helps Tremblay put them in direct contrast with that of Germaine as the only one who has hope to change the monotone of her life and which finally get upturned when all her stamps are stolen by her 'friends' and her own sisters. The irony lies in the fact that the very sister who had been thrown out from the family-Pierrette and labelled as a "whore" is the one who stands by her in the end. Biting sarcasm is found in the end where despite her friends stealing her stamps, when they are leaving they can be heard cheerfully singing "O Canada". Wiping her tears of frustration Germaine joins in the singing and stands up to complete the song.

#### ***6. Quebec theatre and marginalisation:***

On the surface, there is no direct reference to the various issues that plague not only women in that society but also that of children. In fact child abuse is a common point in both Leroux's plays as well as in Tremblay's. While these issues have been controversial and have been much debated upon for long, their genesis can be traced to the beginning of the Quiet Revolution. Buried within these are the sneering overtones of a national consciousness that do not affect the marginalised like women and children. Tremblay did not vouch for a separatist idea of

Quebec. His female characters in the play almost seem to echo the views of their male counterparts when speaking in public. Their ideologies are 'learned' and governed by religious overtones. At the same time they do not fall short in trying to impart this same conditioning to their children (in this case Linda Lauzon, especially when she is forbidden to talk to her Aunt Pierrette who works in a nightclub). Althusser's ISAs can again be seen here in the form of schooling and societal norms. In both the plays we realise that the revoking of the earlier welfare system along with that of education has had mixed response within society. While on one hand the generation of women shown in Tremblay's plays have been conditioned to follow the dictates of a patriarchal society, the newer generation shown in Leroux's plays are shown to suffer the wrong policies and mistreatment of a previous generation which had not been able to put back society on the right track despite the Quiet Revolution. All the systems and institutions (e.g religion, education, etc) of governance had failed them as children as well as during their adulthood.

Tremblay naturally brings in children, who are an important part of the women's life. It starts with Germaine forbidding her daughter from going to meet her boyfriend Robert, and her natural teenage rebelliousness. On the other hand, as we move along into the play we find that her friend Lise is found to be pregnant. The other women maliciously gossip about it and point out that it must be her stepfather's child. The very callousness of the other women point out to the helplessness of Lise who is still a child under Quebec's laws. Unlike most other provinces, Quebec considers 18 to be the age of adulthood and therefore eligible for state protection. In most other provinces it is 16, while in British Columbia and Yukon it is 19. Even Leroux points out how Ludwig had been a victim of child abuse from a neighbour and neglect from his father. This neglect is predated in that of Tremblay's play where Rose (Germaine's sister) points out about her daughter in law that "*She took better care of them [her birds] than she did her kids*" (*Les Belles Soeurs*, Trans, 1973: 108). The latest data that could be obtained by this researcher has shown that this has been a part of the national scenario from a long time. While the provincial governments have been doing its best to overcome child maltreatment and increase child welfare, it is falling short of the efforts required. As per data obtained till 2008 in Quebec, child maltreatment has reached the following levels:

Category of Maltreatment	Number	Rate per 1,000 children	Percent
Risk of Future Maltreatment	1,494	0.96	8%
Physical Abuse	4,322	2.79	23%
Sexual Abuse	1,204	0.78	6%
Neglect	5,219	3.37	27%
Emotional Maltreatment	2,713	1.75	14%
Behavioural Problems	4,700	3.03	25%
Exposure to Intimate Partner Violence	4,017	2.59	21%

Categories of Substantiated Child Maltreatment Investigations in Quebec, 2008  
accessed from <http://cwrp.ca/provinces-territories/quebec/statistics>

Figure 8.

On the other hand as mentioned above, child welfare is a part of the provincial preserve where foster care is a big issue due to lack of concrete nation-wide data. Also rising expenses have taken a toll on foster care homes. A report on *CBC News* (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation News) on Feb 19, 2012, that “*Some children are placed in foster care without full safety checks while others wind up in supervised apartments or overcrowded homes, say child advocates who warn of a deepening crisis across the country*”. The reporter points out that foster care is in dire straits in the country. He states that “*Observers of a stressed-out system agree on one thing: the cost of doing nothing. Children who spend time in foster care are less likely to finish*

*high school and are over-represented in the criminal justice system.*”<sup>19</sup> If such is the case, then Quebec cannot be far behind. However, the feeling of national integration cannot be seen much in citizens who have been products of this system. Lise’s willingness to go for an adoption rather than giving up her child to foster care can also be taken to be a subtle hint to that contemporary politics at the time. In the last few years unravelling of certain events and incidents have pointed out to a schism in Quebec’s society that have had quite an impact on the sentiments of post Quiet Revolution generations. Having roots in the Duplessis era, this involved the caring of foster children in Quebec. Called Duplessis Orphans in contemporary common parlance, these were children numbering to around 20, 000 who were falsely certified as being mentally unstable and shipped off to mental institution. Rene Bruemmer of *The Gazette (The Montreal Gazette)* wrote in a report on Dec 5, 2012, that:

*From the 1940s to the 1960s, the Quebec government under Maurice Duplessis and the Catholic Church transferred thousands of children to insane asylums or had the orphanages reclassified as mental health institutions, because those institutions would receive federal funding. Many of the children were abused, neglected or classified and treated as mentally ill patients. In 2001, the Quebec government finally paid 1,500 out of an estimated 3,000 surviving Duplessis orphans who banded together to reach a settlement on average of \$25,000 each. In 2006, another \$26 million was distributed, with the stipulation the orphans could not sue the Catholic Church. While the government apologized and paid the bill, religious organizations and medical practitioners who were implicated in classifying the orphans as mentally unstable did not.*

The first reference to any political subterfuge might be seen at the apparent randomness of a dialogue of Therese when she suddenly says that “*I guessed the mystery voice on the radio...It was Duplessis.*” Although no direct connection

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<sup>19</sup> “Canadian foster care in crisis, experts say Some children placed in homes before safety checks made”. *CBCNews* Feb 19, 2012, accessed from <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/canadian-foster-care-in-crisis-experts-say-1.1250543>



might be found, yet the fact that it was the conservative Duplessis' policies that were greatly protested in the Quiet Revolution is shown in the discontent of the women.

What *Les Belles Soeurs* starts to point out is that Lise is willing to go for an abortion despite the deeply religious overtones of her Catholic upbringing. Her feeling of being burdened as a single mother is not shared by the so-called 'good' women of the party. In fact Rose goes on to say quite righteously (although in a coarser manner) that "*Nope, for me unwed mothers are all the same. A bunch of depraved sluts.*" She then goes on to say that her husband agrees but her soliloquy later on in the play points out to the helplessness of her own situation where she is tired as a forty-four year old woman with four children and one on the way due to the constant attention of her husband and the toll that it has taken upon her body and spirits.

On the other hand, everyday politics that affected daily life were all placed in *Les Belles Soeurs*. Issues like political demonstrations, females in the working space, abortion, domestic violence, racism, language and nationality all get reflected in the play. All of these have serious repercussions in the consequent years regarding Quebec and the growth of its citizens as part of either Quebec nationalism or Canadian nationalism as a whole.

### ***7. Quebec Nationalism and Religion:***

To understand Quebec's nationalism it is essential to know the scope to which it is shaped by religion in the earlier years. As the spectator is reminded immediately in the first act of the play that Germaine had been waiting to pray and her beliefs are therefore shaped by it. When her friends have come over, she suddenly points out that she needs to turn on the radio as she needs to pray along with the broadcast. Ironically, the materialistic values of the group of women seem to be in tandem with their hypocritical gestures of wanting to seem spiritual. For her sister Rose asks that "*What does she [Germaine] want with Ste-Thérèse, especially after winning all that?*" It seems apparent that winning subsumes all the desires that these women have. As per the stage directions we find "Germaine turns on the radio. We

hear a voice saying the rosary. All the women get down on their knees. After a few 'Hail Marys' a great racket is heard outside." What the playwright seems to point out here is that despite their apparent reluctance none of the members of the group would ever utter a word to show what they would really want to do at the point in the fear of losing social acceptance. The one person, who did go against them, that is, Pierrette, is ostracized from the family. Her open announcement of wanting material wealth is repudiated by the rest of the sisters, yet Tremblay wryly points out to the fact that Germaine is attempting to attain these same ends through the Gold stamps that she has won. Her wants seem endless and over the top at one time. Even Lise seems to have the same wish. Thus, we find that want for material things do not escape the next generations. The fact that technology in the form of radio is being made use of by those in power and authority do not escape the spectator.

To the contemporary audience, on retrospection it seems as if the unfulfilled desires of the women are also a part of the idea that they did not go out to work in any professional capacity in the world. Their husbands are the sole bread earners and therefore their status in society depended upon the economical condition of their husbands/boyfriends. Thus, while Lisette is disliked for her affluence (she visits Europe, and has a mink coat). At the same time Thérèse points that "... *three months ago my husband got a raise. So welfare stopped paying for his mother.*"

Tongue-in-cheek Tremblay makes fun of the economical aspect of the state both through religion as well as through welfare measures that have been introduced by the government. When Thérèse says that "*If God put poor people on this earth, they gotta be encouraged*" it almost seems as if she is acting in the stead of the state doling out welfare measures. This again shows the nationalistic designs of the state and the nation (for it is a federal responsibility and covers a wide spectrum). On the other hand this dependence on welfare is also mentioned in Leroux's play as a sign of loss of social dignity as it means a reference to genteel poverty. Quebec itself has several welfare measures including that of Old Age Pension plans. However, here the fact that Thérèse has to bring along her mother-in-law to this gathering point out that it is not sufficient as she cannot afford adequate for them. These things have been

addressed by subsequent governments in Quebec by implementing policies regarding working immigrants and educational policies. While immigration policies have been there since Canada's inception as a nation to bring about feelings of national consciousness, in recent times it is also getting importance in governmental policies. While in the play, the women talk about their Italian immigrant neighbours as dirty, the fact that a well travelled person like Lisette goes on to say that "*In Europe, people don't wash*" shows the scepticism entrenched in their minds regarding immigrants. In the contemporary world these same issues still find predominance in national and provincial politics. An example would be the surge in the popularity of the separatist Parti Québécois (PQ) in recent times. *The Economist* (March 6, 2014) reports that the party's recent surge in the polls has little to do with public support for separation, which has stayed around 40% for the last 12 years. It has everything to do with the PQ's proposed law to ban public servants from wearing overt religious symbols such as a hijab, kippa, kirpan or a large crucifix. Critics see this as a naked attempt to polarise the electorate, pitting traditional Quebecers against new immigrants from Muslim countries in North Africa and drawing a line between multicultural Montreal, a stronghold for the opposition Liberals, and the rest of Quebec. The reporter further points out that there are strategic reasons not to promise a swift referendum, too. Talk of national unity tends to bolster the federalist Liberal party, which held 49 seats to the PQ's 54 in the outgoing provincial legislature.

However, in the play the Lisette's soliloquy points out also to the fact that she yearns to attain the refinement that she thinks that Europe embodies. She goes on to say

*...and Europe! Everyone there is so refined!*

*... in Paris, you know, everyone speaks so beautifully and there they talk real French.*

While this is definitely a mockery of the refinement she yearns for, since this play is written in joul (a mixture of coarse French for everyday use), it also points out to the colonial roots of some people of Quebec, who were harking back to the old days of colonial domination. From there the conversation veers somewhat to nationalistic affiliations when they debate when they all debate whether they like English or French movies. Again, the wry overtones of the playwright cannot be missed when it

is decided by Rose that she like the “English ones better” because the French ones are too “realistic”. It is here that surrealism of the play finally gets hold of the audience. From the beginning there is a tone of the surrealist in the play where exaggeration is the method of acting. Sarcasm and mockery are also made use of. However, a feeling of national affinity is felt when the women debate and discuss the merits of Canadian men versus French men. What does strike the spectator is the glaring invisibility of comparison of Quebec men with that of other men in Canada.

In *Les Belles Soeurs*, theatricalism is used to point out to violence in everyday life. The violence is both sexual, as in the case of Rose, whose husband wants his “rights” despite her unwillingness, or that of the old doddering Mrs. Olivine Dubuc, who is beaten up by her “saintly” daughter-in-law Thérèse. Exaggeration is used to show the unconcern of the women to the plight of the old Mrs. Dubuc when (as per the stage direction) “She [Thérèse] socks her mother-in-law on the head and the latter settles down a little.” The fact that she settles down is due to the physical pain that leaves her in a daze. Thérèse points out that she was told to this by her own husband, that is, old Mrs. Dubuc’s own son, when she was brought back from the hospital.

Again, this phenomenon of domestic violence is not a new thing in the country. Efforts are being made by both the federal and the provincial government to stem this abuse. In terms of national consciousness and national duty, it is the hallmark of a nation as being prosperous where it can be shown to the world that all its citizens are well cared for. This is a utopian design for most of the countries in the world, where rampant human rights violations are the order of the day. Today Canada has emerged as one of the leading nations in the international arena promoting human rights and working towards its protection. This has also been its effort within the domestic sphere. Based on police-reported data, nearly 2,800 seniors aged 65 years and older were the victims of family violence in 2010. Presented as a rate, the senior population had the lowest risk of violence compared to any other age group, irrespective of whether the incident involved a family member or someone outside the family. Overall, seniors were most at risk from friends or acquaintances (73 victims

per 100,000 seniors), followed by family members (61 victims per 100,000) and strangers (51 victims per 100,000). As per the research data on Statistics Canada this researcher was able to find out that in 2010, senior women were more vulnerable to family violence, with rates 34% higher than those of senior men. Conversely, senior men's rate of non-family violence was almost double that for senior women (166 versus 90 per 100,000).<sup>20</sup> Tremblay seems to bring out also these characteristics through his various women characters across all the cross-segments of people gathered there.

### ***8. Effect of Separatism:***

Tremblay brings out the nuances of Quebec separatism through the varied characters of his play. The singing of the national song of "O Canada" at the end with the visual impact of the raining of the gold stamps is symbolic of various things. While on the one hand they refer to the breaking down of the materialistic aspirations of Germaine, it metaphorically seems to point out that if Quebec remained a part of Canada, it would also be stolen of what was rightfully its own. Its culture, language and religion would be lost within the mires of "English movies" which do not show realities (again a snide reference to the version of English Canada regarding the Quiet revolution). His play seems to point out that the harsh realities of separatism as a movement would be termed as extremism and terrorism within the English sphere. On the other hand an allegiance to France would seem indicate a subservience which Quebec was not willing to give it. Through the use of joul as the language of the play Tremblay seems to point out to the fact that Quebec has its own distinctive identity based on its policies and religion. While problems may exist they would not overtake the main issues that have been plaguing Quebec for a long time. When the three sisters are squabbling and fighting amongst each other it seems that they have almost broken up as a family. This is again indicative of the state of Quebec at the time when the play was written. Squabbling with the federal structure was one of the main issues of the divisions and separatism that was part of the separation movement. Wanting more recognition and financial help from the federal government

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<sup>20</sup> Accessed from **Statistics Canada** at <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/85-002-x/2012001/article/11643-eng.pdf>

it was felt by Quebeckers that they were being relegated to the level of other provinces despite being part of the founding nations.

### ***9. Political Consciousness and Public Policies:***

The political consciousness of the women in *Les Belles Soeurs* is brought into question in this play where they are shown as being bereft of political affiliation. When the women talk about their day to day activity we see them as women who do not have any avowed profession and are simply immersed in community services as part of their effort to maintain their social significance among their peers. Thus, when Angèline is revealed as a person who goes to the accursed 'clubs' she points out that people of social consequence like Lady du Courval who is in charge of the recreation in the parish and is also the President of the Altar society at Our Lady for Perpetual Help. This is again a mockery of the existing system, since none of these women help Pierette nor would they go out of their way to help the teenage Lise who is pregnant. Instead she is helped by the very person who is considered a sinner in the eyes of the society. The sense of isolation and further alienation is therefore a marked factor of these characters.

Politically, abortion has had a long history of dissent in Canada and it all began around the time that the play was staged. Marked by social customs and mores, abortion was considered taboo under both societal laws as well as religious laws. Therefore, Lise's wanting an abortion can be read at the literal level as well as at the political level. At the literal level she encompasses all the dissent and stigma attached to the act of an unmarried woman and teenage pregnancy. The Criminal Law Amendment Act, 1968-69 introduced by Pierre Trudeau's Liberal government, legalized abortion as long as a committee of doctors signed off that it was necessary for the physical or mental well-being of the mother. In 1988, the Supreme Court of Canada ruled in *R. v. Morgentaler* that the existing laws were unconstitutional and struck down the 1969 law. In contemporary Canada there are no legal laws where abortion is a criminal offence and is punishable by law. It depends solely upon the prerogative of the mother in consultation with her doctor. In the

metaphorical sense, Lise's unwanted child might also indicate the feeling that Quebec was receiving step-motherly treatment at the hands of the predominantly English federal government and therefore should 'abort' the relationship that it has with Canada as a nation. It is here that we also find the plight of both Rose and Lise to be similar despite their different official standing in society. While Rose is a respectable married woman in the eyes of society, Lise will become a 'fallen' woman if she gives birth to her child. On the other hand the helplessness felt by both of them is similar. Both of them cannot sustain the burden put on them by their pregnancies albeit for different reasons. Therefore, the question of abortion also becomes fraught with the tensions of women emancipation. It was highly disputed. At the same time it over ran previously held norms and mores in a patriarchal setup.

#### ***10. Identity in the marginal in Quebec theatre:***

The feminist theatre movement was growing simultaneously with the Quiet Revolution. While the Quiet revolution gave voices to various strata of francophone society in venting their grievances, it also seem to give impetus to other marginalised voices. However, these two movements did not exist peacefully side by side. They had common ground in overthrowing the existing social, political and ideological set up, yet they would often clash in their view of the marginalised. Both Leroux's plays and Tremblay's play contain marginalised characters who are trying to find acceptance and a voice in society. While Leroux's characters are in the contemporary age where acceptance in Quebec and especially Montreal has become more liberal, in the time of Tremblay's play the acceptance of the marginal characters was quite unthinkable. Also the metaphorical gatherings of misfits in both the plays are cathartic in displaying the various problems of assimilation that consumed society then and continue to consume society even today. In case of Tremblay's play what does seem to be apparent, is that society in Quebec is satisfied neither with its association with the other founding nation at that point nor with its past imperialist master, that is, France. While on the one hand the women in the play point out that they do not like the looks of the French men and consider them effeminate compared to their own rough husbands, it is apparent here that the playwright is alluding to the founding history of French Canada, where men were pioneers and faced many

hardships in the new vast land, and compared to their European brethren were far more suited to face the hardships of Canada. It seems almost to be echoed when Lisette in her soliloquy points out that her husband Leopold had warned not to associate with coarse people like Germaine as it would lower their standards.

On the other hand in the contemporary plays of Leroux, collectively known as *Ludwig and Mae*, we find that the distinctions of are based on economy rather than on culture. The globalised world of multinationals had taken over the economy and people were more concerned with social standing based on economy rather than on religion or other social mores. The primary difference between the plays starts with the inversion of the division of labour between the man and the woman. While in Leroux's plays it is the woman who has a vocation while the man is still out of the professional world, in the latter play of Tremblay it is just the opposite. What matters more is that in both the cases unemployment remains a constant. So does the dependence on social welfare. This enables one to realise that while the post Quiet Revolution generation might have been weaned away from the concept of political unrest and separatism, what remains constant is the provincial government's use of state apparatuses to mould public views. Public policies have the effect of both demonizing the state as well as of deifying the state. While in the contemporary times it is religion itself that is marginalised (as displayed in the character of the Pope who is Ludwig's superego) in the older play of Tremblay, it is the cornerstone on which the distinctive culture of Quebec is built upon and which is quite different from the rest of Canada.

### ***11. 'Isms' and Quebec Theatre:***

The 'isms' and ideology that dominated the theatre scene of Quebec in the 1960s have somehow been permeated into the twenty first century and yet remains enmeshed within the structures of theatre itself. While in the play of Tremblay a surrealistic feel is got in the unconnected soliloquies revealing the innermost wishes and fears of the characters which in their turn reveal the fears of the citizens represented in the play. Ideologies of state domination and colonisation along



with that of 'liberal democratic' states remained side by side producing a confusing mixture of ideology on both side. The other 'isms' that dominate the play are of socialist bent. While the women are shown as characters who are steeped in patriarchal values that have been augmented by the socio-political scope of the Duplessis era, we realise that these same women are on the verge of change as they are trying to find economic independence through superficial things like lotteries. While one of the characters Lise is shown to be on the verge of defying the church when she says leaves an open ended message of either going for an abortion or being a forced to become a mother. This in itself is seen as harbouring winds of change within society as theatre showcased in what can be manifestly seen as a defiance of the church, on the other hand we see that if Quebec had to keep up with rest of the economically powerful provinces it had to quickly reshape its ideals and ideologies and embrace a more globally prevalent ideology. Women had to be quickly acclimatised to an urban market driven economy. The previous agrarian based economy was being relegated to a thing of the past.

However, in case of Leroux's play the 'isms' have changed into globalisation and a different kind of culture colonisation with the advent of global technology. Post modern notions of historical signifiers without any historical background abound in his plays. But what remains is a sense that the overwhelming presence of the state in the life of its citizens (through welfare and other measures) make them conscious of being moulded into 'subjects'. Such political plays enable the citizens to dissent through visual mediums like theatre. Characters like Ludwig and Mae represent the disillusionment of the generations post the Quiet Revolution who had great expectations from the state and society. Yet dominant market forces of the globalised world were driving them beyond a point of tolerance. While the years during and immediately after the Quiet Revolution were years of rapid change and led to the formation of a newer kind of nationalism based on language and culture, it was in the 1990s and in the early 2000s that we see that generations of young people were chafing under the strain of an economy that was being dominated by multinational companies. Ludwig's disillusionment stems from the very fact. His refusal and rebuttal of nationalism is seen as a protest of the fact that the nationalism as practised by his province does not allow him the freedom to live life as he wants. At the same

time we see him blaming the socio-political structure along with that of the religious structure for having had failed to protect him from being molested when he was child. Thus, we see that the national consciousness in case of Leroux's plays are more in the forms of symbols and icons; as seen in the character of the Pope and the flag used, rather than in the form of any conscious ideology.

## ***12. Conclusion:***

The influence of theatre has been profound both during the Quiet Revolution as well as after it. On the other hand the Quiet Revolution has had a great impact on the political, cultural and social landscape of Quebec. The cry for separatism was voiced louder during this movement. Theatre has been a part of the political protest of Quebec as well as part of the fabric of society that has been working to criticise and reform the ills of contemporary society. As Eugenio Barba points out the spectators must be cradled by a thousand subterfuges: entertainment, sensual pleasure, artistic quality, emotional immediacy, and aesthetic refinement. But the essential lies in the transfiguration of the ephemeral quality of the performance into a splinter of life that sinks roots into their flesh and accompanies them through the years (Barba 1988: 16). The play was written and directed at the peak of the Quiet Revolution and was therefore pertinent to the very events that shaped the revolution. Earlier examples of French nationalism were based on the concept of a separate language and culture. But post the Quiet Revolution it was also decided that not only was the French culture district it was also under threat from the other dominant culture, that is, English. It was slowly being subsumed under the influence of English. This was again an impetus for the French charter of 1977. As Alana Ulnick points out in her PhD thesis on Tremblay's plays that there are no male characters in the play. This was because Tremblay believed that there were no men in Quebec in an interview with Rachel Cloutier, Marie Laberge and Rodrigue Gignac in 1971. He believed in the ideology of separatism as a way to bring about the protection of Quebec's sovereignty within the Canadian sphere. However, as recently as in 1996 the supreme court of Canada was asked by the federal government whether Quebec had the right to secede from the rest of Canada and the court answered in a resounding

no. It was ruled that Quebec had no right to unilateral secession, under Canada's constitution or international law.

## Chapter 3:

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### **Effect of Public Policies on National Consciousness and Theatre**

The onus of building a sense of nationalism is often a part of the discourse of culture and cultural symbols. Within these symbols lie various aspects of citizenship that have already been ingrained within the citizens of the nation as being part of popular discourse and narratives. Canada's multiculturalism has often been beckoned as a beacon of tolerance. Yet, within this scenario numerous instances of intolerance arise despite the attempts of its federal governments in making and implementing policies of social and cultural cohesion. Nationalism is seen as a primary tenet for a country's identity. However, Canada's multicultural aspect has often led to multifarious identities that seem to be at cross-purposes to a uniform sense of national consciousness. Various public policies through the ages have been created with the notion of creating a sense of being that may be considered to be wholly 'national' and 'Canadian'. Theatre has been indispensable in this effort as it projects images which are both prevalent or which are sought to be popularised by communities to bring it into common parlance. Various hurdles are however, present in the creation of a single national consciousness. With time and especially after the official Multicultural Act, diversity has been celebrated as part of nationality and national consciousness in Canada.

Regionalism and the ever-present tussle between the provincial and the federal governments however, have added to the confusion regarding a national culture. The case of theatre in Canada is no different. This chapter will deal with the consequence of various governmental policies and their effect on the common citizens at the federal level that have been implemented to bring about a national cohesion in culture, arts and theatre. What comes to mind is that culture is being used now as a means to bring about a social and national cohesion which had hitherto been absent in the Canadian context. The absence was a result of the continual tussle for political

power amongst the founding 'nations', that is, the English and the French. At the same time it becomes obvious that natives of the country were indifferent to a sense of national consciousness as there was no cultural or political cohesion among the various tribes and clans. In the terms of Benedict Anderson one realises that the 'nation' was still at a stage where it could not be 'imagined' as a 'community'<sup>21</sup>. Isolation and marking of territories between these native communities marked a sense of national alienation. This was later augmented by the fact that these native communities were relegated to 'reservations' by the colonising powers, that is the British and the French. There was a sense of resentment among the native communities against these nations as invading forces. This resentment among the founding nations, the native communities and even recurring immigrant communities often found outlet through culture and art. However, culture and art also became a medium of cohesion among these communities as they served to portray the interest of these communities in conflict. Conflict of men amongst themselves, as well as with the wilderness of Canada became a constant theme in literature, culture and the arts. Canada as a nation also started growing in the consciousness of these communities and people. The nation Canada became embellished as a landscape that needed to be tamed and civilised. Icons and symbols of Canadian-'ness' started to emerge. Theatre was able to highlight this through visual imagery which tried to encapsulate the idea of Canadian nationalism that was subjective to the community that portrayed it through its culture and theatre. From the very beginning there was a truncated concept of 'Canada' as a nation as well as the various sides of its nationality. Theatre formed a part of an oral tradition that would try to make sense of this new and truncated form of nationalism that was being formulated at that time. As a matter of fact, theatre was successful to a large extent in not only being a tool of colonisation and 'civilisation' but also as a medium of harnessing a sense of belonging and identity created through the image and symbol of Canada as a specific territory with its own unique and idiosyncratic brand of nationalism. At the same time, theatre as a tool of survival narrative in the continued consciousness of Canada as being a vast wilderness tamed by man and his efforts, was a continual presence in the cultural landscape specific to this notion of a national consciousness.

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<sup>21</sup> See Benedict Anderson's "Imagined Communities".

### ***1. Components of 'nationality' in theatre:***

While the notion of Canada as being 'tamed' by man has been part of its national discourse for a long time, recent events have also been marked in theatre by bridging the *urban-rural divide*. Immigration has led to a change in the national discourse of Canada leading to the formal adoption of *multiculturalism* as a national policy to embrace as well as 'protect' its citizens from cultural clashes. At times it seems almost as if multiculturalism had been adopted to contain diversity rather than for just integration. *Theatre has been used often in this case as a tool for knowledge discourse*. It enables the viewer to inculcate a sense of the nation through cultural symbols. Thus, it not only provides a sense of shared identity but also the language used is one where the narrative of 'shared' nationhood is most obvious. In this context a reading of the connection between Bill 101 and that of national consciousness would not be amiss.

One of the primary concerns of national identity is that of spatiality and citizenship. However, theatre has not only been restricted to that of spatiality alone. While colonialism has wrought upon the Canadian society a keener sense of space, the continuing influx of immigrants have also added to the debates of space in the socio-cultural space as well as in the economic space. Earlier narrations of Canadian nationalism would concentrate on the conquest and 'civilization' of a space. Recent narratives, however, concentrate more on the concept of displacement and re-claiming. Theatre reflects that as well. *In theatre, space is always seen as a trope of nationalisation akin to the civilization of the land*.

Again, governmental policies regarding welfare are also connected to that of national cohesion. *Welfare and poverty* form a dominant part of citizenship and belonging. Canadian welfare system and its availability to its citizens form a cornerstone in the current scenario of citizenship and therefore national consciousness. On the other hand poverty seems to emphasize a sense of disenfranchisement where the federal and provincial government are often thought to discriminate between citizens thereby violating the basic right to equality. This brings

us to the inference of the state being the ultimate site of identity, where the notion of citizenship is embalmed within both practicality as well as the ideology of the welfare state.

Finally the question of *marginality* arises. Theatre has been successful in depicting the marginal in society in the language of the dominant class. Political policies and theatre have gone hand in hand when matters of protest arise. Societal norms that have led to marginalisation have been challenged through theatre and arise from them as a mode of visual political protest. However, rather than the seat of politics, i.e. the Parliament, the arena of theatrical protest is the stage. In fact, it has been the arena for the voice of the marginalised for ages. Thus, we hear the grievances of women, children, Aboriginals and homosexuals from within theatre. Within these parameters of social and economic exclusion, the plays by Sharon Pollock, Judith Thompson, Drew Hayden Taylor and Rick Salutin will be analysed for this chapter. Through these plays all the above discussed issues would be traced in an effort to read deeper into the problems that arise out of the official policies of nationhood, including that of multiculturalism.

‘Political theatre’ or ‘Theatre of Crisis’ which has egged on social change has been described by Phillip B. Zarilli as those publicly enacted events that often take place during , and /or inspired by periods of social or political crisis and/or revolution (Zarilli 1998: 222)<sup>22</sup>. Marginality and discrimination that had earlier risen out of the colonial context are now seen to be the products of xenophobia, poverty and global issues based on foreign policies and immigration laws. Whenever these plays and are staged they interrogate the hegemony of a certain section of the populace that have become internalised and therefore accepted as the norm. This questioning of established norms leads to greater discourse and therefore is the harbinger of social and political change.

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<sup>22</sup> Goodman, Lizbeth and Jane de Gay (2000), *The Routledge Reader in Politics and Performance*, New York: Routledge

## ***2. Poverty and Belonging (Welfare and National Cohesion):***

Poverty in Canada is laced within the contexts of race and social prejudice. However, poverty is not merely economical but it is also sociological and emotional. It can be starkly felt in Drew Hayden Taylor's play *Girl Who Loved Her Horses*. The growing occurrence of cultural poverty despite the avowal of freedom provided through multicultural identity and citizenship is seen in direct opposition to it. Through the play, notions of Canada as being a proponent of the Welfare State and the current status of the First Nations within the system is delved into. Social by-products of poverty, namely, intolerance, teenage bullying, child abuse and neglect, as well as the ever present menace of alcoholism is seen swirling within the vortex of the play. They shape the lives of the young people portrayed in the play on the verge of adulthood. Taylor's portrayal of the rural-urban divide (both economical and socio-political) when studied through his characters make the spectators realise that the cultural heritage of the First Nations and other aboriginal communities have now become a part of the globalised commercial world,. They have become all-important as economic determinants rather than simply a way of life. Poverty in the reservation is overt, and depressingly all pervasive. One of the primary characters succinctly and sarcastically proves it when she says, "You no sale, me no job, we no eat" (Taylor 1997: 156). The Community Well Being Index from 1861- 2011 show that while there has been an improvement in the lives of the First Nations and the Inuit communities, it has not been in such a significant level as that of other non-aboriginal communities.<sup>23</sup> Non-Aboriginal communities have improved significantly over time and have a higher standard of living. Before 2001 it was seen that aboriginal communities improved faster than non-aboriginal communities. However, between 2001 and 2006, it was seen that non-aboriginal communities developed faster due to their emphasis on garnering educational qualifications. The following figure shows us this phenomenon. While the Aboriginal people have their own legal rights that have been recognised by the government of Canada, these have not led to visible patterns

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<sup>23</sup> The Community Well Being Index has a special significance for the Canadian nation. It is used to measure the well being and quality of life of individual Canadian communities by taking into account the factors of their socio-economic well being including education, labour force activity, income and housing. It was constituted by the Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC). The majority of the data collected is from Statistics Canada's Census of Population data. While the Inuit communities are not defined by the INAC, they are taken into account due to their presence in four land areas and provinces. For further details one can look into <https://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100016579/1100100016580>



of improvement at par with the other non-aboriginal communities in the Community Well-being-Index. If such be the case, then it is obvious that changes are required at the policy making level of both the Federal as well as the Provincial level. Theatre has been used by other aboriginal communities, First Nation, Inuits and Metis community playwrights as a tool to create a bigger impact on governmental policy makers through blatant images so as to evoke a vigorous response thereby initiating quicker welfare measures and changes.

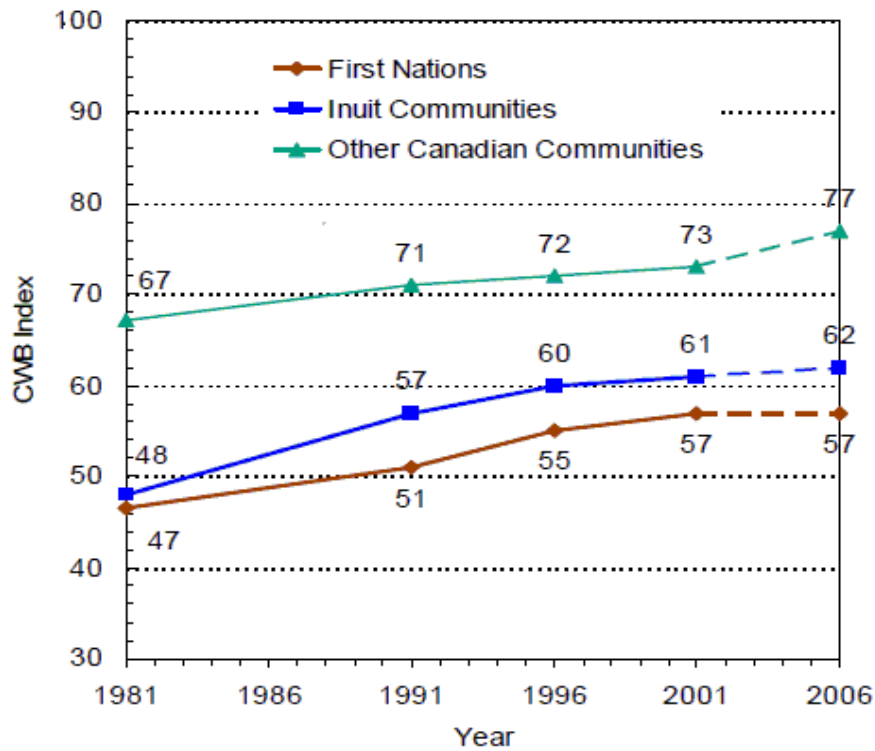


Figure 9.

The play *Girl Who Loved Her Horse* is a one act play with 11 scenes. It begins with a young Native man, Ralph, in his twenties staring awestruck at a wall that he had discovered in a rundown area of the town with a partly covered mural of a horse. He tries to uncover the whole mural and realises that it has been washed away in part by grime and rain. Yet the mural still retains its original vivacity. Ralph then hurries home to inform his sister, Shelley, and his friend William about the painting as it reminds him of the one that had been painted on their kitchen wall 15 years ago by a young 11 old girl called Danielle. The following scenes depict in part the harsh reality of young First nation's people regarding their joblessness and their helplessness to

enter the mainstream social and economic order. At the same time William embodies the corruption that had seeped into their society as a result of external influences that have become a part of their reservation life. The play then flashes back to the time when the three characters were themselves children and their meeting with Danielle—being given the nickname of the “girl who loved her horse”. She drew vivid, lifelike paintings of horses wherever she went, in an attempt to find security and companionship to escape the abuse of her family life. In the end she disappears when her mother’s boyfriend gets a job in Toronto.

What the play does accomplish is to give us a vivid picture of life inside the reservation and the bleakness of the surroundings of these children as they grow up in genteel poverty. The play also portrays the stereotypes that afflict the perception of the First Nation people. In fact, Taylor in the Introduction to the play goes on to say that that “Contrary to popular belief, only a small percentage of Native communities have horses. Mine [Taylor’s] wasn’t one of them” (Taylor 1997: 154). This while the characters in the play are distinctly aware of the fact that they are Canadians as opposed to Americans, it does not give them a sense of belonging or a national consciousness.

The sense of isolation is felt in the stage directions where the Reservation is felt to be a separate entity away from the nation. On the other hand, the tenuous grip of the state over the life of its citizens is felt through the policies of welfare. The direction for the setting of the play point out that it is a “Typical Reserve household, three hours from the city”. Shelley and William get into a fight as she had given up her job in her day care center and he was unable to sell his boat due to his inability to cater to the whims of a moneyed American. It is here that one realises the connection between governmental policies and social stratification.

*SHELLEY says: Welfare's sounding better and better.*

*WILLIAM: I can't go on Welfare. I used to be the Chief of this Reserve. How will that look?*

*SHELLEY: Don't give me that. You didn't care how things looked when you were Chief. You misappropriated funds to build this damn place. People are calling it William's Watergate Marina.*

Welfare in this context is seen as a demeaning mode of living. Dependence on the federal and the provincial governments is akin to a loss of independence with remnants of the harsh colonial past for the First Nations. While the federal nation gave an identity to the colonising nations as the 'founding' nations, the First nations were seen as colonised and therefore weaker Welfare policies were seen as a way to alleviate the lower social standing of the aboriginal communities. It compounds the notion of loss of identity as well, where loss of social standing is added to that of economic standing. It also seems to go along with the notion of corruption. Ralph is seen as one of the few who is trying to create an identity outside the reserve as a policeman by going to college in the city. Education is noted as the gateway to a better life, but is available only outside the reserve. As per the data of the *Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada* (compiled in 2012) \$7368 million have been spent in "efforts to improve social well-being and economic prosperity" of Aboriginal Peoples. Yet their conclusions point out that while significant improvements have been made in the last 25 years the people of the First Nations and the Inuits are still lagging behind. The following figure gives one the idea of how education is better found beyond the bounds of the Reservations. At the same time education is the means to a better mode of life away from the reservation, as jobs are mainly available in urban areas. Education has always been the preserve of provincial and federal governments in Canada. The paradox is seen when we realise that the play criticizes national policies as eroding native tradition, values and cultures, yet points out to the fact that without embracing a national identity with common cultural and socio-political values, the residents of the reservation would slowly starve to death. It, therefore, becomes imperative that when these people emigrate to urban areas they need to assimilate within the majority culture where the aboriginal way of life that had been guaranteed by the Multicultural Act is difficult to maintain. As a result, culture and identity become subservient to economic expediency that a globalised world economy requires. The following table enables us

to analyse data whereby educational achievement based on a 'Canadian' mode of learning is associated with living in a reservation, thereby connected to identity.

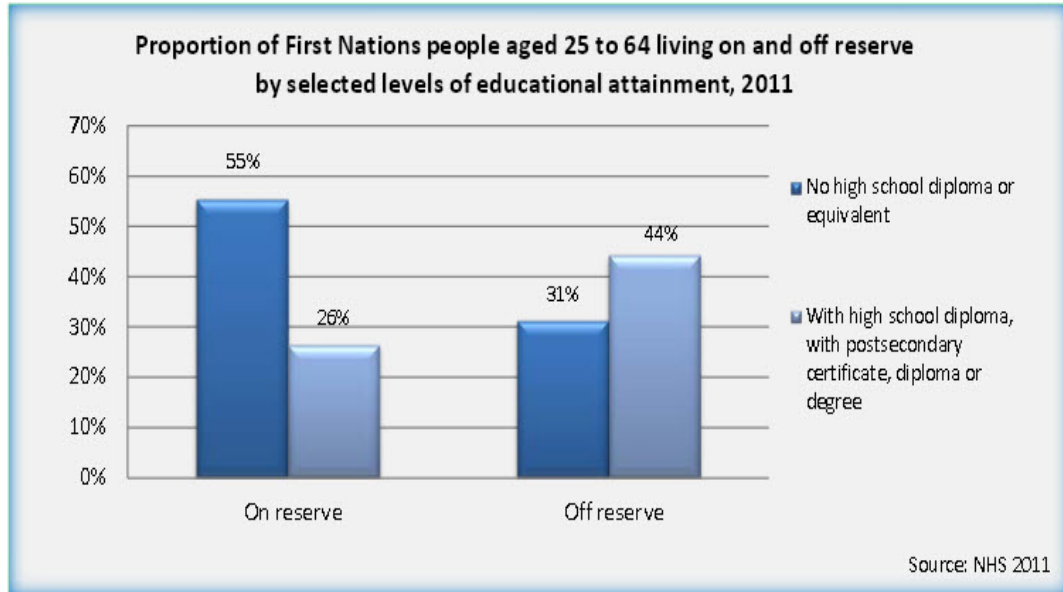


Figure 10: Source - <http://www.esdc.gc.ca/eng/jobs/aboriginal/bulletins/fall2013.shtml>

Unemployment seems to be the first point that Taylor begins with. With Shelley losing her job she spews her rage, helplessness and disillusionment when she says *“I’m tired of being underpaid, understaffed, and overwhelmed. The council doesn’t appreciate what I do there...”*. While this refers to her disillusionment within her community itself, William’s solution to it sums up the apathy that is felt towards the public sphere at large. William says *“Your diploma says Early Childhood Education, it’s either that or a McDonald’s. And the Reserve doesn’t have a McDonald’s.”*

While Shelley does have qualifications she is judged to be lacking in qualifications for jobs outside the reservation. It seems to point out to the fact that she is not ready to be assimilated within the matrix of a common culture and socio-

political order which is a tenet of nationalist identity. Even within the nation itself, she is marginalised on the basis of location rather than of education. Although she is outside the ambit of a common national identity as is shared by other Canadians on the basis of her economic status, she is ironically within the ambit of globalised economic forces like a 'MacDonald's'. Her educational degree would be useless outside and she is deemed as being fit for only unskilled jobs as per popular perception. While subsequent governments in Canada have made efforts to include First nation communities within the ambit of economic growth, there have been hurdles based on different cultural and social ethos. Not only has the federal government have had to overcome these hurdles they have also had to overcome the hurdle of a colonial past where segregation was a national policy regarding the First Nation communities. Nation building and the development o a national consciousness have led to policies of integration based on multicultural practices by the Canadian government. It is after these developments that we find First Nations have started to assimilate within a larger citizenship of the Canadian nation and yet tried to retain their essential traditions and culture. As per the data of the Center for Social Justice, college education amongst the youth of the First Nations had increased from only 800 in the mid 1960 to 27000 around 1999. However, their 1995 survey found out that certain points were laid out as being responsible for the low employment of First Nation people in mainstream professions. The reasons cited were in the areas of communication, culture, skills and training, misconceptions and low educational qualifications. This echoes in William's oft repeated dialogue when he says that he *did not fail but was left behind*. The following figure helps to elucidate unemployment issues based on education which in turn often lead to disillusionment with the state and the sense of national belonging. One of the primary reasons for marginalisations has also been stereotyping and misconceptions regarding the First Nations and other aboriginal communities. Perceived as unskilled workers they are often relegated to less paying jobs.

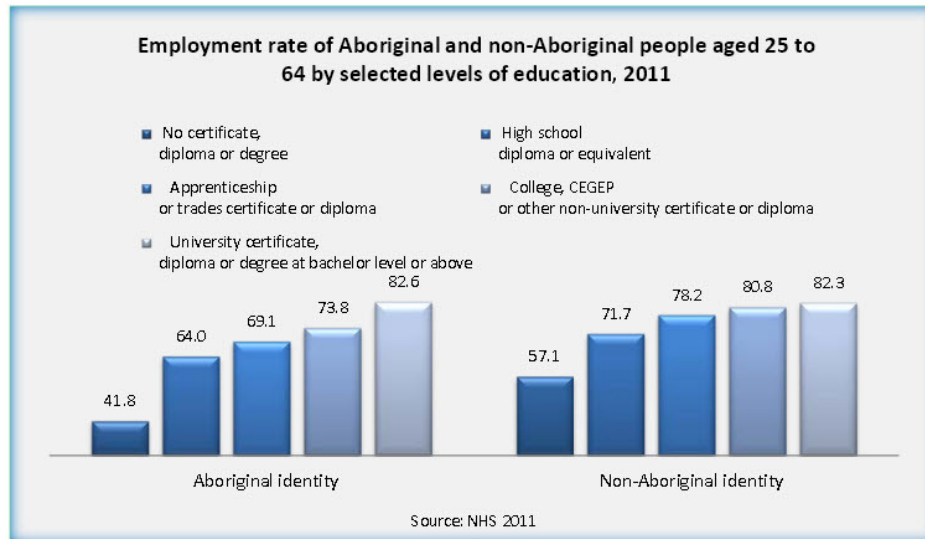


Figure 11: Source- <http://www.esdc.gc.ca/eng/jobs/aboriginal/bulletins/fall2013.shtml>

Ralph's bid for a life outside the reservation is successful only after he leaves the reservation behind. Therefore, the play shows poverty due to unemployment only near the reserves, increasing the rural- urban divide. While the feeling of a national consciousness is thought to be part of the recognition of the First Nations as citizens compromised by the prevalence of poverty in the reservation. Poverty is spatial here. A conclusion drawn by Daniel Wilson and David Macdonald<sup>24</sup> based on the census data of 1996, 2001, and 2006 points out to certain paradoxes as well. It was seen however, that non-aboriginals still earned \$2000 more than aboriginals in rural areas. It was also found that aboriginals in the reserves also have a non-monetary source of income that is not recorded in the census (Wilson and Macdonald 2010: 11). They include food from farming/gardening, hunting and fishing. This is aptly demonstrated when Shelley talks about her mother buying a cow to cut down on the money spent in buying butter, milk and cheese. However, this kind of living is decreasing with time.

The play depicts the realities of the social and cultural results of poverty thereby affecting the relations with the state. While Danielle, the child - artist, does live outside the reservation, she is a victim of familial abuse and dire

<sup>24</sup> <https://www.policyalternatives.ca/newsroom/news-releases/income-gap-aboriginals-stubbornly-high-report>

neglect. Her mother and her boyfriend are alcoholics and abusive. Their loud verbal altercations affected the child Danielle to such an extent that she was unable to interact with children of her age. It is again poverty and unemployment that remains the root of this problem. The stage directions introducing Danielle point out that:

*Loud and angry noises can be heard; DANIELLE appears afraid to enter. She finally musters up the nerve and enters her house, making a quick beeline for her room, where she immediately crawls into bed, letting the books fall to the ground. The noises seem to get louder and louder, and DANIELLE crawls under the covers seeking protection.*

Protection from Child abuse and maltreatment has been part of the welfare debate for a long time in Canada. Along with that is the spectre of child poverty. This is thought provoking because these children would become future citizens of the Canadian nation. Being shaped by their familial and economic circumstances, when they are found lacking in the larger employment scheme, they become disillusioned with the State and the Nation. However, these children are inextricably linked with the state when they fall under the system of welfare. Protection from the government has now been made in the form of laws and social services. The official site of the government of Saskatchewan reads as:

*Anyone who has a reason to believe that a child is being abused or neglected has a legal duty to report it. You are not expected to determine if a child is being abused or neglected, a trained social worker will make that determination. Members of the public are simply obligated by the law to report suspected abuse or neglect. If you do not report a suspicion of abuse or neglect, you could be fined up to \$25,000, or get a jail term of up to 24 months, or get both a fine and a jail term.*

The following figure illustrates the extent of child abuse, neglect and maltreatment that has existed in the Canadian society and nation, thereby affecting feelings of national sentiments and the growth of a national consciousness in Canada. Children form a part of society whereby their citizenship as national entities are often seen in terms of human resources for future national practices. Not only do these

children form a part of human resource, they are also a part of the fabric of the culture of the nation. Their sense of nationalism is a created consciousness when the nation has already been given an identity of its own. This learned form of national consciousness has a great impact on future domestic and foreign policies as these very children become citizens later, and create and change policies and national decisions based on their consciousness as citizens of the country. National health is a part of national consciousness where the health of its citizens is monitored through the institutions of the government and part of the fabric of national consciousness. Child welfare schemes, vaccination programmes etc all add to the sense of belonging that will be nurtured in the child as being a citizen of the country. Therefore Hayden's play about child abuse rings true regarding the consciousness of a child who is neglected by both the parents as well as the nation.

TABLE 5-1: Child Age and Sex in Child Maltreatment Investigations and Risk of Future Maltreatment Investigations, and in Substantiated Child Maltreatment Investigations in Canada in 2008\*

Child's age group	Sex of child	All investigations*			Substantiated maltreatment**		
		Number of investigations	Rate per 1,000 children***	%	Number of investigations	Rate per 1,000 children***	%
0-15 years	All Children	235,840	39.16	100%	85,440	14.19	100%
	Female	116,504	39.66	49%	42,588	14.50	50%
	Male	119,336	38.69	51%	42,852	13.89	50%
0-3 years	Female	20,507	44.72	13%	10,611	16.08	12%
	Male	31,688	45.87	13%	10,799	15.63	13%
< 1 Year	Female	8,568	52.00	4%	2,894	17.56	3%
	Male	8,933	51.63	4%	2,880	16.64	3%
1 Year	Female	7,247	44.26	3%	2,633	16.08	3%
	Male	8,713	50.75	4%	2,968	18.94	3%
2 years	Female	6,727	40.59	3%	2,557	15.35	3%
	Male	7,491	43.04	3%	2,785	16.00	3%
3 years	Female	6,965	42.26	3%	2,527	15.33	3%
	Male	6,551	38.07	3%	2,226	12.93	3%
4-7 years	Female	28,537	41.75	12%	10,472	15.32	12%
	Male	29,867	41.72	13%	10,944	15.29	13%
4 years	Female	7,356	44.30	3%	2,439	14.69	3%
	Male	6,758	38.90	3%	2,676	15.40	3%
5 years	Female	6,836	40.73	3%	2,558	15.24	3%
	Male	7,559	42.84	3%	2,523	14.30	3%
6 years	Female	7,358	42.18	3%	2,638	15.12	3%
	Male	7,937	43.50	3%	3,181	17.43	4%
7 years	Female	6,987	39.87	3%	2,837	16.19	3%
	Male	7,613	41.54	3%	2,564	13.99	3%
8-11 years	Female	26,218	34.50	11%	8,820	11.81	10%
	Male	31,838	39.79	13%	11,335	14.17	13%
8 years	Female	6,147	34.21	3%	1,812	10.09	2%
	Male	8,323	44.26	4%	3,341	17.77	4%
9 years	Female	6,795	36.64	3%	2,568	13.85	3%
	Male	7,992	40.64	3%	3,005	15.28	4%
10 years	Female	6,948	35.54	3%	2,184	11.07	3%
	Male	7,981	39.07	3%	2,683	13.13	3%
11 years	Female	6,328	31.74	3%	2,276	11.42	3%
	Male	7,087	33.56	3%	2,306	10.92	3%
12-15 years	Female	32,242	38.68	14%	12,695	15.20	15%
	Male	26,398	30.09	11%	9,774	11.14	11%
12 years	Female	6,870	34.13	3%	2,704	13.43	3%
	Male	7,202	33.91	3%	2,690	12.67	3%
13 years	Female	7,697	37.30	3%	3,093	14.99	4%
	Male	6,758	31.14	3%	2,823	12.09	3%
14 years	Female	9,300	44.10	4%	3,621	17.12	4%
	Male	6,532	29.55	3%	2,305	10.43	3%
15 years	Female	8,375	38.91	4%	3,267	15.18	4%
	Male	5,906	26.02	3%	2,156	9.50	3%

Canadian Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect - 2008  
\* Based on a sample of 15,980 child maltreatment-related investigations.  
\*\* Based on a sample of 6,163 substantiated child maltreatment investigations.

Figure 12: Source: Public Health Agency of Canada (2008)<sup>25</sup>.

<sup>25</sup> Accessed from <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/cm-vee/csca-ecve/2008/cis-eci-09-eng.php> on 23-12-2014 at 2:20 PM.



Though Canadian provincial and the federal governments have made great strides in the area of child and women protection, yet, much more remains to be done. Furthermore, it has been observed that while only 4 percent of the total population are constituted by the aboriginal people, yet nearly 20 percent of the children in care of social services are aboriginal children. Taylor gives stark evidence of this with the conversation between Danielle and Shelley. Her interaction with Shelley indicates her desire for a `normal` family life.

*SHELLEY: Afraid of what?*

*DANIELLE: Mommy. Her boyfriend. They make fun of me. I don't like being made fun of. Mommies aren't supposed to do that. Yours don't.*

Here we see divergent views of what should be the norm of familial behaviour and what is the outcome of familial behaviour marred by poverty as a result of unemployment. This kind of behaviour affects children belonging to these families and they often end up being the wards of the state as a part of the social welfare programme. Thus, while the state does seem to give its best attempt in alleviating poverty of the aboriginals, including the First Nations, the Inuits and the Metis, it often flounders in the execution of such policies. Welfare is seen to associate with social standing, while culture becomes a part of the economy on the verge of exploitation due to economic needs. Future citizens of the country, that is, children become affected as a fallout, thereby fracturing their concept of what can be assumed as a national consciousness. Another cause for child neglect is that of cramped living spaces as a result of poverty. CBC News reported that in 2012, that in an Ojibway community in north-western Ontario, there has been more than 60 suicides of young people (as young as 10) in a community of 2400. The place had 90% unemployment and severe shortage of housing and no fuel in winters. Again, this finds echo in Taylor's play where Shelley's sole concern for money is heating during the winters.

Welfare and family life are intricately connected in the context of Canadian nationalism. The first Canadian welfare laws were rather late in being implemented. It was only after the world depression in 1929 that the first federal

welfare scheme regarding unemployment came into occurrence. This welfare scheme was the Employment and Social Insurance Act. However, as per the 1867 Constitution only the provinces could implement a social insurance scheme. Thus, after much debate, in 1940, the federal government was able to finally implement this act at the federal level. It is from this welfare policy that the process of centralization and the growing of a national consciousness is said to have started in Canada. This was followed by the more controversial Family Allowance Act, where children below the age of sixteen would be given certain benefits if they fulfilled certain governmental criteria. This Act was one of the largest social welfare measures that had ever been implemented in Canada. It had vast implications regarding the fostering of a national consciousness and a majority of Canadian children fell under its ambit. This was, however, strongly protested by the province of Quebec, on the basis that this scheme was limited to children only in small families. It did not take into account the larger families that populated catholic Quebec. They felt that this slight was against their regional interest and therefore unfair distribution of welfare resources. In fact French-Nationalist felt that these welfare schemes aimed at a centralization process that was a threat to their regional and provincial interests and therefore were against these 'nationalist' policies.

In context of theatre we find welfare policies and family relations conjoined in the several contemporary plays. The state is always at the background, providing either unemployment benefits or even child protection. While Danielle ( the child-artist) in the *Girl Who Loved Her Horse* is a non-native 'white' child living in the reservation, she provides the basis of all relationships that take place in the reservation leading to the debates of a child unable to leave the shackles of her troubled familial existence. On the other hand, we find the native children growing up in better conditions, yet facing the harsh realities of unemployment and possible starvation in their adult lives in the larger society. They refuse to bow down to it, yet welfare dole is the only option left if they have to survive the harsh Canadian winters. Despite Danielle's ever present danger of maltreatment, she is afraid of being reported to the authorities as that would mean a separation from the only family that she knows. Thus, her only refuge is in the world of imagination and art where she is

accompanied by the horse that she keeps on drawing on the walls of whichever place she tends to reside in.

### ***3. Multiculturalism and Theatre as Knowledge Discourse:***

Canada's cultural policy has always aimed at *integration* rather than *assimilation*, resulting in the Multicultural Act. However, this has also led to a recurring search for a national identity. In the past, before the birth of a multicultural nation, Canada had always been the center of dualities (in language and culture) as well as debates. However, with the onset of the multicultural domain it has started to attain an identity where it is seen as a nation which has accommodated the dualities present in language, the myriad cultures of its First Nation population, Inuits and Metis along with that of immigrants that have been part of its economic and foreign policies for ages. With these policies both at the federal and the provincial level, the various communities have been able to have a political presence unlike their counterparts in the United States of America. In an interview in 2003, the Ojibway writer, Drew Hayden Taylor answers the question regarding the popularity of Native theatre in Canada as contrasted to the United States. His thoughts on it become an eye opener regarding the success of multicultural policies. He says:

*It has to do with the representation. I think the Native voice is much more prevalent in Canadian society: we have very strong political representation, and we have very strong cultural and artistic representation in the larger Canadian mosaic. And Native people are the constant and predominant nonwhite presence available in Canada, whereas in the States, it's the complete opposite. There are Native people there, but they are fragmented; they don't have any unified voice, and there are other cultures that are more represented in the media than Native people.<sup>26</sup>*

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<sup>26</sup> This is in answer to the question "Why is Native theater so much more successful in Canada than in the United States?" in *An Interview with Drew Hayden Taylor* (2003), by Birgit Däwes and Drew Hayden Taylor, *Contemporary Literature*, Vol. 44:1. Accessed from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1209060> on 22/05/2014 04:08.

This representation has been successful due to the auspices of the Multicultural Act and the successful implementation of the various multicultural policies at the federal and the provincial level. He also points out to the paradoxical success of theatre in the age of digital mass media by pointing out that theatre is a continuation of the story telling practice of the First Nations, where body, language and gestures are still in use. At the same time it also uses the myths and the more typical to the native cultures in the modern day contexts, thereby ensuring their cultural survival. Cultural lines and boundaries are overcome, but never in a way that the native community cannot identify with them as stories about themselves within a national context.

In a survey on values that can be termed as ‘national’ and ‘Canadian’, it was found out that ‘multiculturalism’ ranked seventh and ‘loyalty to Canada’ ranked third. The complete list is given below for reference and further discussion. Provinces like Quebec (QC), Ontario (ON), Manitoba and Saskatchewan (MN/SK), Alberta (AB) and British Columbia (BC) were surveyed. The percentage of people who consider certain values as being ‘Canadian’ was ascertained.

<b>In English</b>	<b>In French</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>QC</b>	<b>ON</b>	<b>MB/SK</b>	<b>AB</b>	<b>BC</b>
Respect for human rights and freedoms	Respect des droits et des libertés de la personne	21%	19%	26%	19%	24%	16%
Equality and equal access to basic needs (e.g. health care and education)	égalité et accès aux besoins essentiels (p. ex., soins de santé et éducation)	19%	19%	24%	17%	18%	15%
Loyalty to Canada	Loyauté au Canada	16%	15%	6%	22%	14%	22%

Democracy and the rule of law	Démocratie et respect de l'État de droit	14%	14%	12%	13%	18%	15%
Civility toward others, mutual respect and politeness	Civisme respect mutuel et politesse	10%	17%	12%	7%	11%	10%
Generosity, compassion and empathy toward others	Générosité, compassion et empathie envers les autres	9%	9%	6%	9%	7%	9%
<b>Multiculturalism</b> - respect for cultural and religious differences	Multiculturalisme - respect des différences culturelles et religieuses	4%	1%	3%	4%	4%	2%
Humility, modesty about who we are	Humilité, modestie envers ce que nous sommes	3%	2%	2%	3%	3%	4%
Patriotism	Patriotisme	3%	0%	3%	4%	1%	5%
Official bilingualism	Bilinguisme officiel	2%	3%	6%	2%	0%	1%

Figure 13: Source: Report on Canadian Values<sup>27</sup>

Going by the above survey we find that even in contemporary times, the search for a Canadian identity and Canadian national consciousness has been going on. While

<sup>27</sup> In a survey conducted by October 6, 2014, these were the 'Canadian' values that were thought to be the most significant as markers of identity and values. This survey was conducted by The Canadian Race Relations Foundation and the Association for Canadian Studies (ACS).

human rights are at the top of the list as being part of the Canadian value and related to identity, it all starts with the basic concept of a multicultural society that permits the tolerance and existence of various cultures and religions within the Canadian 'mosaic'.

Multiculturalism has been primarily discussed within the federal structure till date, yet, it is a responsibility of both the federal government and the provincial government. As a matter of fact Saskatchewan became the first province to announce its multiculturalism policy in 1974. Other provinces followed thereafter. Liaison institutions like the Ontario Human Rights Commission were instituted to educate the people of the province regarding multicultural rights and laws to protect them. As per their website:

*The Ontario Human Rights Commission (the OHRC) works to identify the root causes of discrimination, and to bring about broad, systemic change to remove them. It develops policies and provides public education, monitors human rights, does research and analysis, and conducts human rights public interest inquiries.*<sup>28</sup>

Judith Thompson's play *The Crackwalker* can be interpreted as a play that point out to the cracks and fissures that have developed in the Ontarian society of Kingston, despite years of official multiculturalism. The issues of abuse, racism and alcoholism that have seeped through the cracks and affected the lives of its citizens are shown despite the best efforts of the provincial and the federal government. Staged for the first time in 1980, it has been repeatedly enacted through the years because of the constant nature of the problems that plague the characters. Judith Thompson is one of the most popular and well known playwrights of Canada. While Pollock has been lauded in bringing to the forefront a sense of continued history that has shaped the contemporary concept of citizenship and 'nationhood' in Canada, Thompson has carried on that sense of 'wanting to belong' to the level of the personal. 'Belonging' can be viewed in reference to the characters' wanting to live life with dignity in society. Canada being a democratic, liberal, plural and

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<sup>28</sup> <http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/guide-your-rights-and-responsibilities-under-human-rights-code-0>

multicultural nation ensures equality before law and the State. Thus, Theresa and Alan want a life that is being lead by `normal` everyday people. At the same time Joe wants a life outside the niche of poverty that he dwells in. he strives his utmost to leave it knowing that he has as much right to a better life as any other citizen of Canada irrespective of class, education, religion and race. They all want to be treated with the same dignity as per other citizens of the nation. As Charles Taylor points out that in the contemporary age we have the modern notion of dignity, now used in a universalist and egalitarian sense, where we talk of the inherent “dignity of human beings,” or of citizen dignity. The underlying premise here is that everyone shares in it. It is obvious that this concept of dignity is the only one compatible with a democratic society, and that it was inevitable that the old concept of honor was superseded. But this has also meant that the forms of equal recognition have been essential to democratic culture (Taylor 1992: 27). Thompson`s play admits the existence of laws and policies that are there to protect Canada`s citizens, yet due to the lack of liaisons between the government and its citizens, along with the spread of misinformation, we see how the public policies and the welfare system are not fail safe. Thus, national consciousness is not so much as an inherent notion, but rather a constructed reality where language and communication is an essential tool. The federal and provincial government are seen as political sources of national consciousness whereby each successive government create public policies in a bid to legitimize the citizen`s right to the nation and its resources.

The play depicts the life of two couples who live in a marginalised and seamy part of Kingston, Ontario. The urban space is shown as seedy and surreal. Multiple identities abound. However, with the establishment of a democratic multicultural nation, the governmental agencies are shown to try to reach out to all strata of society, especially the economically backward, in an attempt to bring about an equality of opportunity. This supports Taylor`s statement that democracy has ushered in a politics of equal recognition, which has taken various forms over the years, and has now returned in the form of demands for the equal status of cultures and of genders (ibid). Multiculturalism has taken this a step further by allowing people to practice their own cultures and religions as well as giving them the freedom to integrate with the majority cultures. In case of the play this can be equated to the

yearning of the characters for a `normal` life. While poverty is ever present, the couples dogged by alcoholism and domestic abuse want a `normal` life. Normality is a mental state that has been propounded by images of a family life. Thus we find, Sandy and Joe, the more intelligent among the two couples mired in issues of domestic abuse, gambling and anger management issues. On the other hand is Alan is feeble minded, yet insistent that he wants to take care of his girlfriend Theresa. Theresa is a slightly mentally handicapped young native woman, devoid from the realities of the world. She wants a `normal` life with her boyfriend Alan, but doesn't know the way to go about it. Due to her feeble intelligence she never knows that she has been sexually abused. At the same time her lack of education makes her ignorant of the laws that have been implemented by the government to protect her. However, the fact that the governmental authorities have reached out to her and tried to build a relationship with her, in an attempt to explain the intricacies of social welfare and protection under the various multicultural schemes, is found in her first monologue. The snapshot of the characters below, go a long way in describing the characters. The background setting show the unlikely photograph of some men in suits in a bar, while the principal characters are dressed informally and are lounging about. The men are seen to assume protective with the women shadowed in their strength. Yet, one finds that the male characters are the ones who show signs of dissociation. While Alan completely breaks down by the end of the play, Joe is able to break free from the drudgery of his class only by disowning himself from them. Joe closes himself off from his identification with the others (Walker, Craig. S 2001: 368)<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Walker, Craig. S (2001), *Buried Astrolabe: Canadian Dramatic Imagination and Western Tradition*, 2001, Montreal: McGill University Press,





Figure 14: Source: <http://archive.criticalstages.org/criticalstages3/entry/Where-the-Wild-Things-Are-The-Voice-of-Unreason-in-the-Work-of-Canadian-Playwright-Judith-Thompson>

Theresa's character has been etched out from the experiences that Thompson had as a social worker. Based on real life incidents she brings out the fissures that have sprung up in the system of welfare, multiculturalism and the sense of belonging as citizens, in Canada. The close relationship between the lower classes and that of the social workers is seen when Theresa goes on to expound on her experiences with the "sosha workers", that is the social workers. She is completely dependent upon the State for her "pension checks" and her boyfriend Alan for her survival.

She says:

*... and I'm saying 'Trust me Mrs. Beddison, Ya gotta trus me,' cause the sosha workers are always goin on about trus and that... (Thompson 1988: 134)*

Primarily centered around Theresa and her relationships we find at the very beginning a subtle reference to her resistance in reading the Bible when she is made to read it by Mrs. Beddison after having committed a 'sin'. Her way of life

leaves her without any finite religion and if looked at from the point of view of the multicultural laws, Theresa seems to be perfectly within her rights to do so. Yet she is coerced by Mrs. Beddison in following her orders in reading it. She goes on to say that:

*She make me read the Bible! I don't like readin... Ya get a stomach ache doin that...*  
(ibid).

Theresa's conformity to a religion that is not her own, arises out of her sense of wanting to be part of a social order which is that of the majority and therefore wanting to evoke a sense of national belonging.

Her cultural background is not explicitly described. Yet the spectator cannot help but wonder from her dialogues and her attire, that she is an uneducated, young woman without the sense of familial roots or other cultural links like religion and language. Her mode of speaking is that of English without any proper grammatical intonations and punctuations. Ironically, rather than her 'white' boyfriend knowing about the icons of religion, it is Theresa who supplies the information. When her boyfriend Alan calls her "*that madonna lady*", Theresa replies by giving the name "The Virgin Mary". She however, again proves her ignorance when she says that she loves her because she has been "*... askin her for stuff*" (Thompson 1988: 147). Matters of spirituality are lost upon her. Yet what does reach out to the spectator is the childlike simplicity that both the characters of Alan and Theresa encompass. It seems as if they are two children playing at being adults, yet unable to understand the various norms, mores and other cultural indices that make up society. The only thing that they are sure about, are the rituals of marriage which they adopt as symbols of normality and belonging. This discourse on normality and belonging is achieved through the social space occupied by religion and culture. At the same time, theater acts as mirror to these spaces of religion and culture in evoking a sense of consciousness which translates into a consciousness of the mores and norms of society. This in turn is a reflection of a commonality of socio-political scenario to which these characters want to belong, thereby unconsciously wanting to

affirm their identity as equal citizens of the Canadian nation. In case of *The Crackwalker*, the religious sentiments of Theresa and Alan are tenuous at best and non-existent at its worst. Alan does point out that he has never been to Sunday Church all his life. Yet he aspires for the legitimacy of the Church regarding his marriage to Theresa as he realises that it is one of the institutions that would endow him with the social sanctions of ‘normality’ that he so yearns for. This is a marker of identity that forms a part of one’s national consciousness. Thompson shows us through his character that he is ignorant of a ‘civil’ marriage ceremony at a government institution. As a matter of fact, Theresa is more in touch with the governmental agencies through the social workers. This might also be the fallout of the multicultural system that has been attempting to take care of the various ethnic cultures (in this case Theresa) but has neglected to lookout for people in need belonging to the numerical majority. Alan falls in the latter category. Being part of the “white” majority, he is uneducated regarding governmental structures to enable him in leading a better life. He one of the many, who have fallen through the ‘cracks’, despite all his attempts of not wanting to be a ‘crackwalker’ (symbolical of living at the margins). Theatre, thus, becomes not only the tool of knowledge discourse regarding society, government and national policies; it also becomes the tool of critique for the same. It therefore, has the power to change the perception of the spectators in analysing and critiquing public policies and their effect on the national citizens. Spectators can see it conforming to Foucault’s concept regarding power and discourse. Discourse transmits and produces power; it reinforces it, but also undermines and exposes it, renders it fragile and makes it possible to thwart it (Foucault 2005:267)<sup>30</sup>.

A tolerance for all cultures is seen in Alan, unlike Joe. He befriends a Native Indian who is a vagabond roaming the streets. Thompson seems to almost indict the system of federal welfare through this character when she points out that this character having the sobriquet of ‘Man’ as being every man who had slipped through the cracks of the welfare system and suffered abuse based on their race and culture. The Man seems to form the strata of society that Alan has been desperately trying to save him and Theresa from. At the same time the Man, represents the

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<sup>30</sup> Foucault (2005) “Rule of the Tactical Polyvalence of Discourses” in Joseph, Johnathan (ed) *Social Theory: A Reader*, Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh Press.

violence associated with native history. When Alan first meets him the play settings point out that:

*There is an Indian MAN on the street, his wrists bleeding heavily. He is ambling past ALAN. He is very drunk.*” (Thompson 1988: 158)

When Alan tries to look after him, this Man recoils from his help and is placated only when Alan says:

*That's ok man my fiancée she's Indian.* (Ibid)

Tolerance for others is found in Alan rather than in the more intelligent Joe. Ironically, racism is seen when this same hapless character of the Man later goes on to abuse a paramedic who had refused him some medicine by calling him “*NIGGER, YOU NIGGER*” (Ibid 175).

Despite the prevalent forms of multiculturalism that the government has been trying to implement, it can be seen that discrimination exists through the cracks. These in turn affect national cohesion when one sees the neglect that these citizens have fallen into. Bringing them within the ambit of socio-political atmosphere of the multicultural remains a constant effort of the federal and the provincial governments. Theatre also becomes a tool of knowledge discourse here when we notice the subtle innuendoes that have been put up by Thompson. She points out to the existence of racism through ironies (as in the case of the Man), social dependence on the state (Theresa) and striving for an identity (Joe and Alan). Even the United States of America is mentioned when Joe points out that his friend the Mayor is cultured as he had studied at a university in the US (Thompson 1988: 148). Theatre here serves as a platform for the dispersing of an ideological stance of the playwright. In terms of Baz Kershaw's use of ideology in theatre, we find that Thompson's play has also successfully been part of the ideological discourse. She uses the idiosyncrasies of society as the setting of her play to critique it. Thus, the performances deal in the values of its particular society and thereby deal with ideology (Kershaw 1992: 18). While Thompson doesn't go out of her way to evoke a

moral reaction to her play, yet the visceral reactions of the spectators to the killing of the infant baby of Alan and Theresa is profound. Symbolically she is denouncing the contemporary way of life where despite the presence of liberal multiculturalism, certain sections of people are being dominated by the majoritarian ideology.

#### ***4. Immigration and theatre as a tool of survival narrative:***

Jürgen Habermas argues that new immigrants to a liberal state should not be required to assimilate to the culture of the majority nation, but instead must simply “assent to the principles of the constitution within the scope of interpretation determined at a particular time. Immigrants and national minorities must only integrate into a common “political culture” unified around these constitutional principles (Stiltz, Anna 2009: 257-258)<sup>31</sup>. Contrary to this perception, is Barry’s view of what an immigrant means by becoming a citizen of a different country. He argues that while some critics deem it oppressive that immigrants be made to adopt national loyalty towards the migrated country, Barry points out that the concept of a national identity also depends on what might be deemed as the idea of a common national identity. For multiculturalists and liberals, the idea of a national identity is simply for the nation to be a `state` and the idea of nationality is that of being it`s citizen (Barry 2001:77)<sup>32</sup>. This, however, clashes with the concept of nationality where nationality is bestowed on the basis of a common language, territorial integrity and common culture. In modern multicultural states, nationality is also bestowed when a person is born within the geographical extent of that country (as in the case of second generation immigrants) but discrimination persists on the basis of loyalty to the migrated nation. Contemporary world issues, like terrorism lead to this very type of xenophobia and discrimination. Canada’s perception as a peace-keeping, liberal and multicultural nation is being debated upon by conservative governments, who have been ushered in by the sense of unease regarding these events. It can be observed here that with the new Justin Trudeau government of 2015, Canada is now rapidly embracing its multicultural aspect in a world that is sharply divided on this aspect. While the rest of the world is gaining in xenophobic tendencies ( as in the case of

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<sup>31</sup> Stiltz, Anna (2009), “Civic Nationalism and Language Policy”, *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 37, no. 3, Wiley Periodicals Inc.

<sup>32</sup> Barry, Brian (2001), *Culture and Equality: An Egalitarian Critique of Multiculturalism*, UK: Polity.

Great Britain's exit from the European Union), it can be seen that in Canada, it is the government which is taking the initiatives of inclusion.

Canada has been a nation made up of immigrants for a long time. It continues to welcome immigrants to its fold, to ensure a skilled population. At the same time, being a huge part of the UN Peace keeping endeavour, it welcomes asylum seekers from all over the world. However, when looked through the lens of history we find that the asylum seekers in the early days of Canadian nationalism were often denied basic rights. Will Kymlicka points out that it was only after the 1970s that immigrants had the right to freedom to practice their own culture, dress, religion and recreation. This was no longer deemed as disloyal or unpatriotic as regards the various ethnic and immigrant communities.<sup>33</sup> Subsequent governments have endeavoured to right those wrongs, but the very beginning of these immigration policies have had a divisive effect on the creation of a national consciousness. In this context a study of Sharon Pollock's *Walsh* delves deep into the problems of migration, integration, political asylum and basic human rights.

First performed by Theatre Calgary in 1973, *Walsh* is one of the earliest successes of Sharon Pollock. Nations and nationality have been questioned through this play. Assumptions regarding nations as having a finite geographical boundary, sharing a common culture and having a common mode of communication, that is, a common language is questioned through this play. Since it was first produced in 1973, the time line of the play places it within the span of the raging debates regarding the creation of an official multicultural state in Canada and the effects of a separatist movement in Quebec as a result of the Quiet Revolution. In the international scenario, the Vietnam War was being waged at the time and Canada was again being inundated with US wartime refugees.

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<sup>33</sup> Kymlicka, Will (1995), ed. *The Rights of Minority Culture*, New York: Oxford University Press.

Amidst these political issues Pollock's play, *Walsh*, endorses history to bring out the debates that were raging in contemporary times. *Walsh* becomes the focal point not only as a play enacting the history of immigration (and the beginning of political asylum seekers) but also becomes a medium of survival narrative. Anne Nothof points out in her essay that Sharon Pollock shows that public policy is predicated on, and effected through individual choices: although her protagonists are subject to large historical or political forces, they still have a degree of freedom of choice. She goes on to point out that borders may be psychological and philosophical as well as political. According to Nothof, Pollock believes that her preoccupation with conflict between personal integrity and political expediency is a very Canadian phenomenon, conditioned by geographic, economic and political factors (Nothof 2000:83). She points out that in *Walsh* the borders were rigidly maintained and justice compromised through devious legalities (Ibid: 84). She seems to refer to both the physical boundary of the state as well as the political boundary of a nation in the process of carving out an identity of its own. Historically speaking national boundaries have been defined in the following way. A boundary, like that of a Westphalian state, is a "precise linear division within a restrictive, political context"; a frontier "connotes more zonal qualities, and a broader, social context." The linear boundary typified the Westphalian polity with its territorial view of society, reinforced by the European principle of contract and Euclidean conceptions of space. The idea of a zonal frontier allows for overlapping "civilizations," with continuity regardless of changing linear boundaries (Ferguson and Mansbach 1996: 22)<sup>34</sup>.

*Walsh* narrates the story of the Sioux leader Sitting Bull coming across the border from the United States of America into Canada in search of asylum and rehabilitation after the Battle of Little Big Horn, popularly known as the "Custer Massacre". As per the Westphalian definition, *Walsh* also portrays an overlapping of 'civilizations' since it narrates the story of the First Nations before they were recognized as part of the Canadian nation as citizens with equal rights. He starts to negotiate with Major Walsh of the North West Mountain Police or the "Mounties" as

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<sup>34</sup> Ferguson, Yale. H & Richard W. Mansbach (1996) in "The Past as the Prelude to the Future?: Identities and Loyalties in Global Politics" in *The Return of Culture and Identity in IR Theory* (ed) By Yosef Lapid and Freidrich Kratochwil, London: Lynne Reiner Publisher.

they are known in common parlance, for asylum and immigration. In case of the Sioux community they have become homeless, being driven out of their lands by the American colonial expansion. The Cree tribes' rejection by the Canadian nation can be taken as a rejection of identity based on spatial parameters. At the same time it is a rejection by society for being without a country and citizenship, they are facing 'Social death' (Barry 2001: 77)<sup>35</sup>. Although the negotiations go on for a long time the Crown refuses to give them a proper chance at rehabilitation. Major Walsh becomes disillusioned and finally leaves the dying community at the mercy of the personal kindness of his subordinates rather than to the benevolence of the state. He is reduced to the likeness of an anti-hero, and reduces him from his stature of the benevolent host representing his country. The cover page of the play simply depicts the portrait size photograph of Sitting Bull. His proud visage shows not only the angst of losing his brethren; it also shows the hapless nature of his request in seeking asylum in Canada. Therefore the loss national identity that he faces is also created on the basis of his wanting an identity that is different from the one that he already has. His tribal identity is subsumed under that of a national identity. The support of Major Walsh in his endeavour to become a part of the Canadian nation is seen as a validation of the process of gaining a national identity.

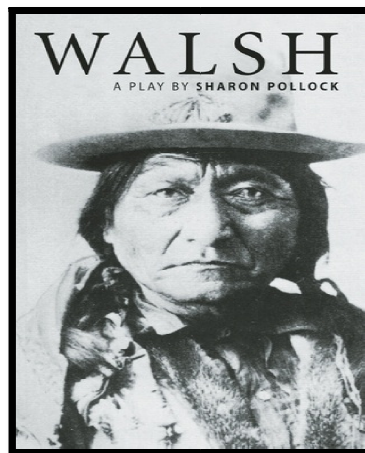


Figure 15: Source: Cover Page *Walsh*, Talon Books, 1973, British Columbia, Canada.

As part of the nation building process and the generation of a national consciousness in its citizens, *Walsh* goes a long way in achieving these ends.

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<sup>35</sup> Barry, Brian (2001), *Culture and Equality: An Egalitarian Critique of Multiculturalism*, UK: Polity.



In the beginning Major Walsh embodies all the qualities that Canada itself would like to be known for in the international arena. For years, Canada as a nation has tried to develop an identity of its own whereby it is seen as an enlightened, tolerant, liberal nation embracing the values of equality through official multiculturalism and UN peace keeping. It has been quite successful in fostering this image. However, Pollock through her play is able to show both the pros and cons of such diplomacy during an event which may have had international repercussions (as, if the United States of America had decided to retaliate by going into Canadian territory in search of the Sioux); and which definitely had domestic implications. Shown from the personal perspective of Major Walsh the play portrays the dilemma of the state when forced to choose between state security and immigrants. Nothof further opines that Walsh locates abuse of indigenous peoples in the expedient policies of the Macdonald government of the 1870s (Nothof 2000:45).

Issues of immigration are associated with unconditional acceptance of the conditions that would be stated by Major Walsh to Sitting Bull for the granting of citizenship. Yet this identity is already in danger of being split, for as Gall of the Hunkpapa Lakota introduces himself, he refers to his people as the “Sioux Nation”. Being the representative of Sitting Bull he already recognizes the multiple identities of his people depending upon their nationality. Entering Canada he wants to be recognised as a community of people worthy enough to be given asylum and in future land to establish a home. As Charles Taylor points out in his essay that due recognition is not just a courtesy we owe people. It is a vital human need (Taylor 1992: 26)<sup>36</sup>. Gall’s crossing of the border into the Canadian nation with his people is not strange as he evokes history to prove that his people have a relationship with the British colonial rulers of Canada. He wishes to be recognized as an equal claimant for asylum as other Indians he had heard of in Manitoba. He says:

*My grandfather was a soldier for the grandfather of Queen Victoria. At that time your people told him that the Sioux Nation belonged to that grandfather of the Queen. My people fought against the Longknives for your people then. ...Now The Longknives*

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<sup>36</sup> Taylor Charles (1992), “The Politics of Recognition” in Gutmann, Amy (ed) *Multiculturalism : Examining The Politics of Recognition* (1994), New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

*have stolen our land. We have no place to go. We come home to you asking for that protection you promised.* (Pollock 1973: 40).

The Sioux nation have already claimed Canada as their home based on their past historical relationship with the British. On the other hand, Major Walsh keeps on repeating the words of his 'government' as he does not know how to deal with the probability that these people would soon become his countrymen or not. Demarcations of borders within borders start when they talk about Reservations for the Natives in the guise of protection. They are seen in terms of possession rather than as citizens with inherent rights. Major Walsh tries his best to persuade them to return to the United States of America as the Crown was unwilling to let further immigration of the natives to take place. Major Walsh says:

*The Queen won't feed or clothe you as she does her won Indians* (Ibid : 49)

He spouts the words of both the US government and Canada verbatim in his effort to convince Sitting Bull to return. He goes on to say that:

*(official)...The President in Washington has requested the Sioux to return, and promises fair treatment to all.* (Ibid: 50)

However, from the beginning Major Walsh is shown to believe in equality of all men devoid of any racial discrimination. He expostulates vehemently in response to Sitting Bull's statement that "*I have no white friends*". Major Walsh goes on to say:

*For Christ's sake, forget the colour of our skin!...I came here to speak to you as a man, and I expect the same from you!* (Ibid: 51).

Pollock's subtlety is seen when she weaves in international diplomacy at every stage of the negotiation between Major Walsh and Sitting Bull of the Lakota Indians. Immigration and political asylum are being negotiated on the grounds with Canada's relations to its nearest neighbouring country, the United States of America. Major Walsh points out that international relations change when he tells that Britain

has made peace with the Americans. He goes on to say in the words that Sitting Bull can relate to that the ``*Great White Mother (the Queen) has made peace with the Americans*`` (Pollock 1976: 48).

The play becomes a space whereby the very survival of a community of people is being debated upon. As a protector of the frontiers Major Walsh is even willing to let the American Army inside the borders and drive the Sioux out. He blatantly puts it when he says:

*If it can be proven that you've carried out an act of war against the Americans while camping here in Canada, your refuge will be in jeopardy.* (Ibid: 53)

His loyalty to his country is manifested in his loyalty to his government. This subsumes his sense of the justice and fairness later on. Thus, Pollock has already shown many of the tendencies and ideologies that go on to create national cohesion and a sense of national consciousness within the citizens of Canada within Major Walsh. The play converges to the point where both Sitting Bull and Major Walsh lose their essence due to the policies of the government. They include qualities that are uniquely Canadian. Pollock shows us the beginnings of the creation of a multicultural state in the acceptance of Major Walsh regarding the Sioux as equal to his stature. At the same time the mixed lineage of Louise points out to the notion of integration of various peoples within the Canadian demography. What Pollock also is able to accomplish is push to the forefront the singular symbol that is uniquely Canadian, that is the Red-Coated Mounties. Often romanticised in the canons of Canadian literature, they are shown as the guardians of the vast frontiers of Canada, thereby demarcating and protecting the borders of the nation; while at the same time underlining the principal concept of a national consciousness--- belonging to a certain geographical area.

However, in the contemporary age, national consciousness becomes fragmented when seen from the point of view of geographical nationalities. This is especially true for immigrants. Dual identities become hyphenated identities once the immigrants become part of the Canadian nation. Citizenship is connected to multiculturalism in the contemporary times and therefore to the growing of a national consciousness. On 30 October 2008, responsibility for the Multiculturalism Program was transferred to the Department of Citizenship and Immigration Canada, under the mandate of the Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism (Citizenship and Immigration Canada 2009c).<sup>37</sup>

Again, the Citizenship Act does not prohibit the holding of multiple citizenships, and dual citizenship has thus been permitted since 1977. As a result, a Canadian citizen who acquires the nationality of another country may retain his or her Canadian citizenship; likewise, a foreign national who obtains Canadian citizenship is not required by Canada to renounce the original citizenship (see CIC 2009).<sup>38</sup> This is again one of the primary reasons that identity in Canada is multiple layered. However, the incidents in *Walsh* take place at a time when the governance of Canada had a center outside of Canada. Here again we find an angst similar to that of contemporary fragmented identities as a result of dual citizenships. When Macleod points out that there are certain advantages to be gained by sacrificing the Sioux to the Americans, an enraged Major Walsh questions the validity of this decision and wants to know the advantage gained. However, MacLeod fails to answer Major Walsh and tries to divert him by saying that this was the kind of weighty decision that the Prime Minister of Great Britain and London must contend with. The center of power is shown to be outside the nation. This causes a fragmentation of the national consciousness within Major Walsh. Thus, a national consciousness is created whereby this fragmentation is manifested in his divided loyalties between his nation of origin and the spatial nation that he inhabits and protects.

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<sup>37</sup> <http://www.queensu.ca/mcp/immigrant/evidence/Canada.html>

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

*Walsh* dominates the debates on national symbolism by also foregrounding the image of a nation having a superior political morality (Wasserman, 2008:104)<sup>39</sup>. Canada has always maintained an international demeanour whereby it has never been seen as the aggressor, but rather as a human rights protector. Major Walsh points out that a section of the Sioux had been given land in Manitoba despite having fought against the Canadian Mounties without being provoked by them. On the other hand the Lakota Sioux are victimized despite being massacred by the Americans.

While *Walsh* is firmly embedded in the history of Canada, its narrative is a pointer as to how certain First Nation communities survived and how some were annihilated by the policies of the government. The façade of the benevolent and liberal Canadian nation is questioned by Pollock in Walsh. Ironically, she uses the one symbol that is particularly Canadian --- the Mounties, in asking these questions.

In contemporary times, immigration is one of the most significant factors that affect the demography of Canada. Eva Mackey points out that immigration was essential for nation-building, yet also perceived as potentially dangerous if it threatened the development and maintenance of a national population and a national identity (Mackey 1999: 45). *Walsh* has provided us with an example of immigration of the First Nations in the historical context. Canada has had a sustained policy of immigration for a long time and this has also had an impact on the evolving of a national consciousness. There have been ebbs and flows in the waves of immigration into Canada since the beginning. Immigration was flexible depending upon the need of the hour and the ideological preference of the government at helm. Referring to Mackey again we find that up until the Second World War, when most immigration ceased, Canada had a strict hierarchy of preferred racial groups for

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<sup>39</sup> Wasserman, Jerry (2008), "Remembering Agraba: Canadian Political Theatre and the construction of Cultural Memory" in Maufort, Marc and Caroline de Vagter (ed) *Signatures of the Past: Cultural Memory in Contemporary Anglophone North American Drama*, Brussels: P.I.E Peter Lang.

immigration. Immigrants had entered Canada either as source of labour or as asylum seekers. Canada has needed immigrants to populate the country so as to discourage American ‘expansionary tendencies’ and to ‘protect the Pacific Rim’ from heavy Asian immigration (ibid). In the case of *Walsh* we find the latter. However, Pollock’s *The Komagata Maru Incident* is a throwback to the historic incident, yet it does point out to the continued influx of Asian immigrants into Canada till the contemporary time. More recently, immigration has been mobilised to create an image of Canada as a land of opportunity, characterised first by the ‘fairness of British institutions’, and now by the ‘civility of state-sponsored pluralism in the form of official multiculturalism’ (Harney 1989:53). It has become a major part of nation building and creating a consensus on national consciousness As per the National Household Survey of 2011 (NHS) more recently, the largest group of newcomers to Canada has come from Asia (including the Middle East) (Statistics Canada 2011:6)<sup>40</sup>. The table below gives a better idea of current immigration trends. As one can see after going through the data given below, that immigration is one of the key elements in the evolving of dualities in national sentiments. Immigration is the bedrock on which later Canadian national consciousness has been created as that of a cosmopolitan and multicultural entity that is part of the national idea and there whose national consciousness is part of common societal lore. Theatre in Canada is seen to encompass the emotions of immigrants in an effort to be inclusive of all those who as a collective form what may be termed as a national consciousness. As the data below reveals, we see that Toronto continues to receive the maximum amount of immigrants in Canada. This has helped Toronto retain a unique multicultural aspect where visible imagery, especially through theatre affirms the citizens of ideal of Canada as a nation.

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<sup>40</sup> Statistics Canada – Catalogue no. 99-010-X2011001

**Count, percentage distribution and relative ratio of total population, immigrant population and recent immigrants, in Canada and by census metropolitan areas, 2011**

		Total Population			Immigrants		Recent Immigrants (2006-2011)	
	Number	% age	Number	% age	Relative Ratio	Number	%age	Relative Ratio
Canada	32,852,320	100.0	6,775,765	100.0	...	1,162,915	100.0	...
Toronto	5,521,235	16.8	2,537,405	37.4	2.2	381,745	32.8	2.0
Montréal	3,752,475	11.4	846,645	12.5	1.1	189,730	16.3	1.4
Vancouver	2,280,700	6.9	913,310	13.5	1.9	155,125	13.3	1.9
Ottawa - Gatineau	1,215,735	3.7	235,335	3.5	0.9	40,420	3.5	0.9
Ottawa - Gatineau (QC part)	310,830	0.9	30,910	0.5	0.5	7,760	0.7	0.7
Ottawa - Gatineau (ON part)	904,910	2.8	204,450	3.0	1.1	32,660	2.8	1.0
Calgary	1,199,12	3.7	313,880	4.6	1.3	70,700	6.1	1.7

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Edmonton	1,139,580	3.5	232,195	3.4	1.0	49,930	4.3	1.2
Québec	746,685	2.3	32,880	0.5	0.2	10,665	0.9	0.4
Winnipeg	714,635	2.2	147,295	2.2	1.0	45,270	3.9	1.8
Hamilton	708,175	2.2	166,755	2.5	1.1	18,775	1.6	0.7
Kitchener - Cambridge - Waterloo	469,935	1.4	108,720	1.6	1.1	15,245	1.3	0.9
London	467,260	1.4	87,655	1.3	0.9	11,905	1.0	0.7
Halifax	384,540	1.2	31,260	0.5	0.4	8,305	0.7	0.6
St. Catharines - Niagara	383,965	1.2	64,385	1.0	0.8	5,650	0.5	0.4
Oshawa	351,690	1.1	56,175	0.8	0.8	4,080	0.4	0.3
Victoria	336,180	1.0	60,075	0.9	0.9	6,440	0.6	0.5
Windsor	315,460	1.0	70,290	1.0	1.1	9,225	0.8	0.8
Saskatoon	256,435	0.8	27,355	0.4	0.5	11,465	1.0	1.3
Regina	207,215	0.6	21,735	0.3	0.5	8,150	0.7	1.1



Sherbrooke	196,675	0.6	12,115	0.2	0.3	4,045	0.3	0.6
St. John's	193,825	0.6	5,875	0.1	0.1	1,615	0.1	0.2
Barrie	184,330	0.6	22,350	0.3	0.6	2,135	0.2	0.3
Kelowna	176,435	0.5	24,450	0.4	0.7	3,150	0.3	0.5
Abbotsford - Mission	166,680	0.5	39,035	0.6	1.1	5,935	0.5	1.0
Greater Sudbury / Grand Sudbury	158,260	0.5	9,775	0.1	0.3	665	0.1	0.1
Saguenay	154,235	0.5	1,705	0.0	0.1	535	0.0	0.1
Kingston	153,900	0.5	18,085	0.3	0.6	1,740	0.1	0.3
Trois-Rivières	146,930	0.4	4,045	0.1	0.1	1,570	0.1	0.3
Guelph	139,670	0.4	27,515	0.4	1.0	3,025	0.3	0.6
Moncton	135,520	0.4	5,995	0.1	0.2	2,250	0.2	0.5
Brantford	133,250	0.4	15,080	0.2	0.5	985	0.1	0.2
Saint John	125,010	0.4	5,365	0.1	0.2	1,290	0.1	0.3
Thunder	119,140	0.4	10,895	0.2	0.4	850	0.1	0.2

Bay								
Peterborough	116,175	0.4	9,495	0.1	0.4	535	0.0	0.1

Figure 16: Source: Statistics Canada, National Household Survey, 2011.

Another aspect of immigration is that of the colonial discourse. The survival narratives that have been displayed in the play *Walsh* have continued into the contemporary age to that of *The Girl Who Loved Her Horse*. It is quite blatant in *Walsh* with rampant reference to the American colonial intentions regarding the Indians as well as to that of Canada being under the aegis of the British crown. At the time when this play was written, Canada was able to avoid involvement in the Vietnam War due to the prudence of its Prime Minister Lester Pearson. *Walsh* reiterated the fact that nothing good could come out of a senseless war as attested by the "Custer Massacre". On the other hand, the influx of political refugees from across the American border at the time, seem ironically reminiscent of the fact that Canada has always given way to refuge seekers when faced with the international political scenario of the US- Canada relationship. The play *Girl who loved Her Horses* was written at the turn of the millennium in 2000. While great strides had been made in the arena of recognition of minorities in Canada as citizens, discrimination still persisted in the form of educational, social, cultural and economical achievements. This would get translated to a lower economic category for the Native Indians along with those of other emigrant classes. Characters in the latter play are always shown in a continual mode of motion, wanting to immigrate to the city. Discrimination persists. Homi Bhabha has aptly described this phenomenon in the following words. This has led to the creation of stereotypes which we find relevant even today. He says:

*...the point of intervention should shift from the identification of images as positive or negative, to an understanding of the processes of subjectification made possible (and plausible) through stereotypical discourse... (Bhabha 18 )*

He further goes on to say that:

*The construction of the colonial subject in discourse, and the exercise of colonial power through discourse, demands an articulation of forms of difference —racial and sexual. Such an articulation becomes crucial if it is held that the body is always simultaneously inscribed in both the economy of pleasure and desire and the economy of discourse, domination and power. (ibid 19).*

Colonial discourse has often been blamed for stereotyping along with the implications of the “White Man’s Burden” of civilizing the natives. Pollock deals with history of the nation in the making. Ironically, not only do the immigrants to Canada have divided notions of citizenship and national consciousness warring within them (as in the case of the Lakota Sioux), Major Walsh is also shown as someone intrinsically Canadian, yet having to obey the British Crown, having its center of power outside the geographical boundaries of Canada. Thus, we see the ongoing colonial project in Canada. Contrary to popular perceptions, Canada today is one of the primary destinations for immigration among the developed countries. This is because of its official multicultural status and its acceptance of immigrants within the welfare system.

##### ***5. National consciousness and Language dominance:***

Theatre, political or otherwise, has been instrumental for ages in pointing out to the discrepancies in society that need to be remedied. It has enabled voices of dissent to be heard and have therefore often been the harbinger of change. The dialogic nature of theatre has enabled it to be thus. It has used language and also been used to create a language, though gestures, that can be understood by the spectators. In case of Canada, theatre has been used post the 1960s, to build up a consensus regarding national issues, especially those on language nationality. The primary of notion of language as being intricately connected to the Canadian sense of nationality is seen through the following survey data. Taylor’s essay on recognition points out that “however one feels about it, the making and sustaining of our

(Canadian) identity, in the absence of a heroic effort to break out of ordinary existence, remains dialogical throughout our lives` (Taylor 1992: 34).

The oft repeated debate that emerges in Canada is that of language and identity. It is not only one of the most significant instigators of the multicultural act, at the same time it is still a matter of constant debate , since it is often taken as a marker of majority rule and a national identity. It does not simply include the debates of French of English majoritarianism regarding language, but also includes the debates regarding the mother tongue of various communities of the First Nations, the Inuits and the Metis along with that of immigrant communities. As the most recent survey conducted in October 2014, the table below points out to the percentage of Canadians reporting “very attached” to selected markers of identity.

<b>Very Attached</b>	<b>Très attaché</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Atl.</b>	<b>QC</b>	<b>ON</b>	<b>MB/SK</b>	<b>AB</b>	<b>BC</b>	<b>French Franco-phones</b>	<b>English Anglo-phones</b>	<b>Allo-phones</b>
Your language	Votre langue	58%	73%	65%	56%	61%	59%	46%	70%	61%	41%
Your country	Votre pays	56%	71%	29%	64%	64%	71%	60%	29%	68%	53%
Your gender	Votre sexe	49%	57%	48%	49%	50%	51%	44%	49%	53%	39%
Province	Province	40%	48%	48%	34%	33%	42%	40%	53%	38%	32%
City or town	Métropole ou ville	33%	35%	34%	35%	28%	32%	30%	33%	32%	37%
Ethnic	Groupe	28%	33%	32%	29%	22%	24%	19%	35%	26%	24%

group	ethnique										
Religious group	Groupe religieux	18%	18%	10%	20%	18%	22%	20%	10%	19%	21%
Social class	Classe sociale	15%	18%	15%	18%	14%	14%	8%	17%	16%	12%

Figure 17: Source: Report on Canadian Values<sup>41</sup>

If looked at from the point of view of nation building and national consciousness, the sharing of a single language goes a long way in creating national cohesion. However, Canada being a multicultural and multilingual state has had the option of language being a dual identity creator. Bilingualism has had a long history within governmental policies. Bills like Bill 101 have created official language (in this case, French, for the province of Quebec) which have separated it from federal policies.

In all the three plays discussed in this chapter, it can be seen that language plays a significant role in how the characters enact their role and at the same time place themselves within their socio-political and economic context. While in *Walsh*, Louise is seen as mixture of various races due to inter-marriage, in *The Crackwalker* Theresa's mode of speech reflects a mind that cannot conceive of things in a rational manner and is slowly going farther away from reality. Again the incoherence of the Man in the play acts as a metaphor for broken down human existence in contemporary Canada with fragmented identities that are a result of vacillating racial and immigrant policies. On the other hand, we find the character of Danielle in Hayden's play unable to express herself except through her art. Her isolation from her peers as well as for her family is the result of the emotional abuse she faces at the hands of her mother and her boyfriend.

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<sup>41</sup> This survey was conducted by The Canadian Race Relations Foundation and the Association for Canadian Studies (ACS).

Important identity factors regarding integration and assimilation in the Canadian national culture would be intermarriage. The character of Louise in *Walsh* is a perfect example of this phenomenon. Castonguay points out that intermarriage between the census years 1971-1976 was the prime reason for the rise of English as a language being spoken at home rather than French (Castonguay 1982). Language is an essential indicator of national identity and national consciousness as it is the medium through which social and cultural reality of a country is created. It also happens to be the medium of ideology. In theatre it is an inescapable part through dialogues. Both what has been said and what has not been said, matters. In *The Crackwalker*, the principal characters have long monologues. The apparent discontinuity of these monologues represents the fragmented existence of the characters. At the same time they reveal in almost Freudian terms the contexts and traits that have shaped the characters. They also foreground the characters' search to attain a sense of identity in a destabilised universe, according to Maufort and Lang (2006: 29). They point that these monologues help to assert the identity of the various characters as a form of fiction, thereby reconstructing the reality (ibid).

In *Walsh*, the language used by Louise is used to point out to his socio-linguistic background. He goes on to say that:

*Louis*: (indicating himself)

*Louis Leveille. Fort Walsh scout...Mother red, father white...*

*but not so white as da Major dere... Louise` father*

*French.* (He laughs. Clarence realizes it`s a joke and smiles back.) (27)

What this dialogue enables the spectator to realise is that Louise is not only part native, as signified by `red`, but also French. However, wry humour is found when he pointedly remarks that he is not as `white` as he wishes to be since he is not British. This would seem to point out though the subtlety in the dialogue that the French due to their policy of assimilation were not considered as racially superior as the British in their colonial endeavours. Thus, from the very beginning we find the French being

able to assimilate both language and culture within themselves. This debate continued through the years and especially affected domestic governmental policies in the 1960s and the 1970s. An example would be the Supreme Court's rejection of a constitutional challenge to the Official Languages Act in 1974. Citizens questioned bilingualism as a government priority.

Seen from this context Pollock's characters in *Walsh* use language as a subtle tool of domination. Gall's awareness that he is the subjugated in the colonial context, as Sitting Bull's representative, he elects to speak in broken English. His refusal to accept a translator is due to his realisation that a lot of important nuances get lost in translation. Godard points out that language comes to represent the uncertain spaces of cultural difference, the issues of geopolitical power and dominance (Godard 2000: 333). When Major Walsh beckons Louise to act as an interpreter, Gall stops him by saying:

*We speak as men – to each other* (meaning he does not need an interpreter) (39)

This might also seem to connote that the men, from varied backgrounds with different language have essentially similar characteristics of honour and dignity. This is associated with their identity. The only difference is that Gall is without the recognition of a nationality and country. However, he immediately recognizes Major Walsh as being associated with a particular language because of his national identity. The very act of uttering a sentence in the language of the host country then becomes a performance that would lead to a definite space and context. This seems to adhere to Austin's point that the uttering of the word is the leading incident in the performance of the act. He goes on to say that speaking generally, it is always necessary that the circumstances in which the words are uttered should be in some way, or ways, appropriate (Austin 1955: 8). If looked from the point of view *Walsh*, the circumstance, that is, a plea for asylum and ultimate granting of citizenship is intimately connected with Gall's use of Major Walsh's native language and Sitting Bull's choice of words later. What strikes the spectator is that since Major Walsh is morally and politically superior here due to his national identity he makes no effort to

learn the language of the natives. They are made to learn his language. This choice is faced by contemporary immigrants to Canada even today despite it being a multicultural and thereby multilingual society. Chiswick and Miller point out that, immigrants tend to gravitate to the official language that is closer to their mother tongue, that predominates in their region of residence and that has the broader labor market or economy (1993: 119). After some survey they gathered that. Immigrants tend to gravitate, both by region of residence and the dominant language selected, to the language closer to their mother tongue (lower cost of obtaining dominant language fluency), to the language that predominates in their region of residence (due to exposure and economic benefits), and to the language with the broader labour market or economy (English)(ibid: 129). The fact that they gravitate towards an official language that predominates, show the desire of the ethnic minorities and that of the immigrants to be identified as a part of the national whole. This also helps to give a certain cohesiveness to national values which in turn help to build up a national consciousness. At the same time Kymlicka points out that Canada`s language diversity is sorted out around a formal commitment to institutional bilingualism. The Official Languages Act 1969 declared French and English as equal languages in federal institutions (1992: 148). Other languages have a distressing scenario due to their diminishing use. This can be seen in young adults and children preferring to use the language that is seen in the multimedia rather than what may be termed as their mother- tongue. In their bid to identify with the majority in an effort to avoid discrimination, this portion of the population has embraced language as a tool of identification in terms of nationality and national consciousness.

#### ***6. Spatiality, Regionalism and the division in the National 'Being':***

The modern Canadian nation is already a liberal, plural multicultural state. Yet ensconced within these various nuances are hidden the effect of regionalism which also lead to the concept of spatiality. Spatiality is more to be considered as the effect of both geographical vastnesses that has been endowed to Canada along with the mental set up of its citizens. The liminal spaces that citizens occupy in the hierarchy of societal structures are often questioned and lead to a further confusion in national identity and consciousness. Regionalism has been part of the



dominant discourse on national consciousness in Canada due to the federal structure of its state and governance. While each region or province tries to uphold its territorial integrity it is often found that they have had long disputes at the federal level. A discussion on the concept of spatiality regarding Canadian identity, nationality and national consciousness would encompass within it the concepts of regionalism as well as the psychological space occupied by its citizens when connected to the notion of identity. With multiculturalism and the existence of a plural society a subversive view of spaces occupied by various identities is being seen in the contemporary age.

An instance of spatiality is that is seen as being part of the national psyche yet increasingly under the threat of modern day vices is seen in Judith Thompson's *The Crackwalker*. Pre-occupation with ``talk`` is seen in *The Crackwalker*. When Theresa remarks that she and Alan talk all the time when they go out, we find that the level of communication between the two opens up a discursive space where a bond grows between them despite their originating from different regions. At the same time *The Crackwalker* is a play that delves deep into the human psyche to bring out to the forefront the spaces within the mind that have been influenced by popular ideology as well as with the concept of reality that is prevalent in society.

In Thompson's play, the fear of the females regarding the strangers in their houses is justified as invading the only space that they have. In case of Sandy, she jealously guards her space from her husband Joe when she feels that he is being seduced by Theresa. On the other hand, we find Theresa finally getting a space of her own when she marries Al and has a baby boy Danny. However, his death at the hands of Al takes away the new found peace of her life. She then finds solace in the space of the same religion that she had decried in the beginning of the play.

In case of *Walsh* space and physical territoriality are intertwined with notions of a national identity and national consciousness. While immigrants, the Lakota Sioux are literally looking for territory to settle down in. They are willing to

pledge their loyalty to the British Queen if they be allowed to settle in Canada. she has been identified as the `Great White Mother`. Here both the Sioux and the British colonizing forces have been boxed into spaces with certain identities, often leading to stereotyping. The play has been successful in highlighting these stereotypes and their breaking down through the character of McCutcheon. While in the beginning Mrs. Anderson calls the natives ``*this savage... this heathen... this Indian*`, it is later one sees the enormity of the savagery of the ``Longknives`` or the American colonizers, in the play. Ghettoization of the natives start when are told that they would be given land for reservations which Sitting Bull vehemently decries. This is starkly reiterated in the setting of Hayden`s play when he points out in the first line that the reservation is three hours away from the city. Ralph is shown to achieve progress only when he moves away from the territory of his reservation.

Ironically, Danielle`s persistence in drawing the same horse wherever she goes on the wall, creates a space and a territory that she feels safe within. The physical drawing of the horse on walls creates an imaginary `homeland` for her. Symbolisms abound here, since walls might be symbolic of not only creating a fence for stopping people from getting in, they also act as literal dividers between spaces. They create borders. In the end it is a wall that she claims to be her own through her unique drawing of a horse that act as a cohesive force in bringing the three characters in the play together in their adult lives. The `wall` gives Danille an identity of her own that she had been denied as a child. Metaphorically taken, it might also refer to territorial borders of a nation as well as within the nation. The image below show that the characters are united in their appreciation, recognition and caring for the young Danielle in their stance around the wall fresco.



Figure 18: Source: 1995 production of *Girl Who Loved Her Horses*, which took place at Theatre Direct Canada, Toronto, and was directed by Richard Greenblatt. (Photo by David Hawe)

The divide between the provincial governments and the federal government is also based on territoriality and this has created tension in national cohesiveness. Glaring examples can be found in the Quiet Revolution in Quebec which has been discussed in the previous chapter. Community theatres based on provincial issues have been able to evoke responses within the spectators by uniting them to a common cause. Steven Smyth makes a case study of Yukon, where he states that most federal initiatives have had adverse effect on the citizens of Yukon. In the tussle between the Provinces and the federal governments it is often the latter which comes out at the top. In *Walsh*, the immigration of the Sioux is stopped at the federal level. This has been continuing for a long time. The notion of ‘climactic unsuitability’ was enshrined in immigration law as a reason for barring nonwhites until 1953 (Mackey 1999: 47). Extremes of climatic conditions pointed out to immigrants from Asia and the Middle East that Canada was a country whose extremes had to be won over by human perseverance.

A final point regarding territoriality is that of international territoriality with the United States of America. In all the three plays mentioned, the US features either prominently or at the background. While in *Walsh*, it is the overt danger presented by the American colonizers that make the Sioux seek new borders and new nationality, in *The Crackwalker*, it is the place where Joe’s friend, the Mayor goes for

university education. He is however, shown to die horribly in a plane crash. The affluence of the an American university education is unable to save the mayor in a physical crisis. On the other hand, the home grown tough Canadian Joe is seen to survive and live a hale and hearty life. Again Hayden`s play *Girl Who loved her Horses*, begins with William`s dialogue - ``*I'm gonna kill that American*``. The American is shown as an uncultured person lacking the sensitivities of a true artist. Yet at the same time he is the source of wealth that will keep them from starving in the harsh winters. There is an underlying feeling of economic envy as well as cultural condescension. At the same time the envy spills onto the space of identity as well. As Eva Mackey points out that Canadians envy the surety of American national consciousness as compared to the divided and fragmented national consciousness of the Canadians. Her studies show that in general, people did not suggest that minority groups should reject their cultures, or that Canada should have only one culture, but that Canadian culture should be first, it should be the primary loyalty (Mackey 1999:162). Doran and Sewell point out that historically the Canadian dominion was a deliberate effort to create a political society distinct from the United States while accommodating both European founding nations. The saga of extending the Dominion from sea to sea similarly bespoke an aim of protecting the Canadian project from its neighbor and its neighbor's way of life (Mackey 1988: 107). Walsh substantiates this when we find the constant underlying compassion of Major Walsh as compared to Captain Custer of the United States. Moral superiority is marked in the tolerance of Canadian national identity and consciousness. Again referring to Mackey we find that in Canada, as in Britain, there exists no common culture for all classes, regions, or cultural groups. However, the *ideal* of, and the work to *create* a common core culture through flexible strategies, has been integral to the project of nation-building in Canada (Mackay 1999: 164). Theatre in Canada has been attempting to do this either through discursive elements of citizenship as in *Walsh*, or through contemporary portrayal of various classes and communities as in *The Crackwalker*, or through the childlike simplicity of wanting a place to belong as in *Girl who loved her Horses*.

## ***7. Cultural nationalism in Canada: The Massey Commission Report.***

One of the most important public policies regarding the protection and establishment of Canadian art and culture was based on the Massey Commission Report chaired by Vincent Massey. The commission was appointed on 8 April, 1949 and submitted its report on 1 June 1951 during Prime Minister Louis St. Laurent's time. The commission report is a benchmark in the history of Canadian public policy regarding the arts and culture as it led to the establishment of National Library of Canada and the Canada Council of the Arts. The latter institution became the crux on which a national consciousness grew which promulgated all things 'Canadian'. It was after the Second World War that a national consciousness grew and people artist in Canada wanted to show this through their art. Theatre was no exception to it and therefore it was felt that an economic and political impetus was needed to portray an evolving national consciousness through the arts. This was provided by the Canada Council for the Arts to theatre and led to an increasing emergence of drama as a tool portraying a national consciousness. It was at this time that there was an increasingly different portrayal of Canada and its problems that were being portrayed through the arts. According to Richard Courtney "specifically Canadian voices" were being heard through Canadian art and that "they were angry, nationalistic, a little raucous and thrusting, and decidedly Canadian" (Courtney 1975: 661).

It was in 1944 that there was the first attempt to politicize the arts, especially theatre. It began with the march of the artists to Ottawa on 21 June, 1944. The three groups of the Federation of the Canadian Artists, a committee from the Royal Academy of Canada and a committee from the Arts and Letters Club of Toronto proposed a government intervention as regards the arts and theatre. Among them the first three demands became the primary conditions which can be found in the Massey Commission Report. They were:

1. A government body to promote the arts.
2. Community cultural centres.
3. The promotion of Canadian art abroad (Ibid).

The Massey Commission Report was a reaction to the wave of propaganda that was witnessed by the world during the Second World War. While on the one hand, the Russians and the Germans had made use of governmental resources of arts and culture for the spread of their own ideas and ideologies, on the other hand other countries were using governmental resources to counteract this propaganda. This is a phenomenon that continues till date. It was decided by the Canadian government of the times to try to preserve a national heritage and culture. At the same time it was decided that a Canadian federal policy would be created that would look into the aspect of trying to protect and then evolve a national consciousness based on the fact that it would promote intrinsically Canadian ideals. This was again a result of apprehension of the effect of the USA on Canadian life and culture. It is ironical that prior to the implementation of the recommendation of the Massey Commission Report, it was seen that the arts and cultural endeavours in Canada was being funded by the US. People started to grow apprehensive of the cultural onslaught of the USA. As a nation it received around \$7.3 million from the Carnegie Foundation in the USA and around \$11.8 million from the Rockefeller foundation<sup>42</sup>. This in turn led to an unquestioning acceptance of America values and consumption of America culture. It went against the tenet of nationality and nationhood as had been envisaged to be a part of a national consciousness. It was seen that with the establishment of the Canadian Council of the Arts theatre and other cultural aspects of Canadian nationality received a fillip. What remained foremost in the mind of the policy makers of the federal government was that funding to the arts should remain out of the ambit of governmental influence. At the same time narrow sectarian interests of the authorities should also be ruled out. Therefore, we find that paradoxically while the arts and culture of Canada receive national funding, they are never under the ambit of governmental censorship. This has in turn led to a culture of protest through theatre and plays where voices of dissent could be heard as well as be seen in society. Before the advent of public funding regarding theatre in Canada, it was seen that the Canadian theatre was a localised form of art that did not have any viewership across the Canadian geography. This was being addressed by the Massey Commission where 114 meetings were held all over Canada and which took into account the opinions of 1200 people as witness to these meetings. The meetings spanned across sixteen cities

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<sup>42</sup> <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/cultural-policy/>

of Canada thereby making this one of the earliest federal efforts in trying to help in the evolution of a national consciousness. Thus, we see that these meetings were directly a result of public policies in an effort to build consensus regarding a national consciousness for the arts and cultures of Canada. The biggest threat to a national culture in Canada was seen to be from the United States of America. The report stated that the problem with Canada was due to “vast distances, a scattered population, our youth as a nation, [and] easy dependence on a huge and generous neighbour.”<sup>43</sup> The Massey Commission report led to the conclusion of the fact that while the USA’s influence was considered to be ‘friendly’, yet the very fact that it had permeated to all levels of society, it was seen as being pervasive and thereby detrimental to the evolution of a Canadian national culture and consciousness. The Massey Commission Report stated the some problems regarding Canadian drama and theatre. It stated that while the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation provided the most “stimulus” for Canadian theatre, it was no substitute for the living art. As a result of the inadequate support that was being meted to Canadian theatre the Massey Commission Report stated that facilities for advanced training in the arts of the theatre are non-existent in Canada. As a consequence, our talented young actors, producers and technicians, revealed through the excellent work of the Dominion Drama Festival, must leave the country for advanced training, and only rarely return. The Massey Commission Report also pointed out that in Canada the writing of plays, in spite of the few vigorous creative writers who have found encouragement in the C.B.C., has lagged far behind the other literary arts. We have been informed that there is little writing for the theatre in Canada because of our penury of theatrical companies; these are few in number for lack of playhouses for which there is no demand since our people, addicted to the cinema, have rarely the opportunity to know the pleasure of live drama professionally presented. The Commission Report also advocated change in the school curricula regarding drama and methods for the evolution of a national drama as a part of the endeavour to create and evolve a national consciousness through the arts. The Report stated that “although the field of formal education lies outside the competence of this Commission, we have noted with interest that increasingly drama is recognized in the school curricula of most provinces, notably in Western Canada, as a valuable means for attaining some of the objectives of general education.

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<sup>43</sup> <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/massey-commission-emc/>

Throughout the country, too, drama and the arts of the theatre are receiving increased attention from educational authorities and voluntary organizations concerned with adult education. A few Canadian universities have full-time departments of drama, and in such summer schools as the Banff School of Fine Arts much excellent work is being done. But nowhere in Canada does there exist advanced training for the playwright, the producer, the technician or the actor; nor does it seem rational to advocate the creation of suitable schools of dramatic art in Canada when present prospects for the employment in Canada of the graduates seem so unfavourable” (Massey Commission Report: 196)<sup>44</sup>. It finally pointed out to the need of a National Theatre.

The Massey Commission Report was a result of a long period of negotiation between the government of Canada and that of artists of Canada. It was a result of wanting recognition of a national identity based on ‘Canadian’ values and that of an identity that would be distinct from Canada’s neighbour that is, the USA. The overwhelming presence of the USA was seen as a detriment to the growth of a national consciousness due to the culture of mercantilism that was being followed by the USA in its cultural exports to Canada. Even the means of distribution of culture to the masses was through the means of American and masses of Canada were being deprived of Canadian culture due to the paucity of funds that would promote Canadian art and culture. After the march of the artist to Ottawa in 1944, the three marching organisations banded together to form the Canada Arts Council. This should not be confused with the later Canadian Arts Council which was set up as a result of the Massey Commission Report as a part of the federal endeavour in the promotion of Canadian art and culture. Inherently tied up with this want of national identity it can be seen that a national consciousness was growing along with it. The older Canadian Arts Council engaged with the federal government rigorously. After their formation on 5 December, 1945, the Massey Commission was set up in 1949 and submitted its report by 1951. The report of the Massey Commission was successful in leading to the setting up of several significant institutions like the Canada Council and the Canadian Commission for UNESCO. The Secretary of State became responsible for

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<sup>44</sup> <https://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/massey/h5-425-e.html>



all the agencies for culture. Thus, we see that finally culture came within the ambit of the federal structure of Canada and therefore became a part of the fabric of national consciousness of Canada.

It was gradually seen that the government of Canada got more and more involved within the cultural space of Canada as it realised that funding the arts would be an intelligent political manoeuvre as it would be tied within the State Apparatus and Institutions. It would therefore coincide with both the ideological leanings of the government as well as help to shape public opinion. At the same time the national consciousness that was growing within artists found expression within the nationalism as portrayed through the arts.

The Massey Commission Report identified that the primary concern of theatre in Canada was the scarcity of playhouses for theatre. The lack of permanent playhouses in Canada made both amateur as well as professional theatre groups reluctant to travel across the country for enacting their plays. Along with that was the prohibitive cost of travelling across the country for shows. It is here that we see that the Canada Council of Arts has gradually eased the financial burdens of both aspiring dramatist and actors along with that the professional ones.

A significant point of the deliberations of the Massey Commission Report was the fact that federal help to theatre would inhibit the freedom of the art. In the Report it was mentioned that “the dangers inherent in attempting to establish and to operate an agency for the advancement of national culture directly under government control have been expressed to us wittily and with force in the Special Study on "The Theatre in Canada" which was prepared at our request by a well-known Canadian writer and actor”<sup>45</sup>. However, it was also discussed that theatre should not directly benefit from direct funding of the government as that would lead to a moral censorship of the artists. According to the Report “the government patronage of the

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<sup>45</sup> <https://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/massey/h5-425-e.html>

arts, unless it operates under special safeguards, can become severely repressive in its influence”<sup>46</sup>.

With time it has been noticed that Canadian funding to the arts has undergone a change. After the recognition of the need for such kind of federal help in funding the development of a national art, it has been seen that the development of theatre has been simultaneous with the increase in the increased funding of the arts. However, the fluctuating expenditure of the government is being questioned as per the ideology of the party in power. As per Kate Taylor from *The Globe and the Mail* newspaper, in 2014 companies were conveyed that there would be cuts in grants for theatre groups. The funding of 117 English speaking theatre groups that were being funded by the Canada Council had been seeing significant cuts of around 7%-8% of their grants. Since 2008 there has not been any increase in grants to theatre across provinces. However, in 2014 the Canada Council decided to decrease the grants of older theatre groups and increase the funding of newer theatre groups<sup>47</sup>. Theatre and its funding received a fillip with the policies of the new Justin Trudeau government. It was decided that the liberal government of Trudeau would give \$380 million to the arts and cultural agencies of Canada<sup>48</sup>. This in turn would boost each and every part of cultural productions thereby adding to the multicultural assets of the country and having an impact on the national identity of the people. The relation between public policies and that of the arts became more apparent during the election campaign of 2008, when the Conservative government made more than \$45 million cuts in the funding to the arts and culture. Actors across the spectrum of Canada, including theatre actors publicly criticised this move and they also later helped in the shaping of public opinion towards the liberals in the later elections.

Thus, we see that despite the beginning made by the Massey Commission Report of 1951, the Canadian federal government has always been in a volatile relationship with the arts, especially that of the performing arts of which theatre is a significant part. This in turn has often led to dissent within theatre which get reflected through the plays themselves. Thus, we see that not only do the plays

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<sup>46</sup> (ibid)

<sup>47</sup> Taylor, Kate (2014), “Why the Canada Council’s Theatre Budget decision has some companies crying foul”, *The Globe and the Mail*. Feb 07, 2014.

<sup>48</sup> CBC News (2015), “Justin Trudeau promises increased funding for the arts”, *CBC News*, Sep, 22, 2015.

protest against certain public policies, they have also been able to help shape policies through the use of their art. This in turn has also affected national consciousness at a level where the people of the nations have been able to think beyond the concept of identity as being just as political but also as being that of social and economic.

***8. Grants and funding in Canadian theatre: Tracing its history and its impact on national consciousness:***

To make theatre into a mass production art form, it is apparent that the very nature of theatre being a living performance art is detrimental. However, it can also be seen that within the vast geographical tract of Canada, for a drama, play or theatre to have any effect it needs to move through the vast land. Extremes of climate and the vastness of the land have made travelling companies vie for economic sustenance. Traditionally, theatres in Canada have got their economic sustenance from the following three sources:

- Donations and gifts from individuals, corporate or institutions. This would include sponsorship and corresponding advertisements of the products of the companies sponsoring the event.
- Grants and funding from the government. While in the earlier decades this funding was based on the concept of governmental propaganda, after the Massey Commission Report government agencies were set up to look into this aspect.
- Money got from the sale of the tickets and the subscription of the theatres.

It is the second source that has had an impact on both the theatre goer as well as the director. For the director it can be seen that the government is one of the primary donator of funds and therefore the director is able often under a moral obligation in portraying the state and the nation in a positive light. A national consciousness is created within the viewer which follows a pan-Canadian trajectory. On the other hand the government is successful in maintaining its status of cultural protectionism again adding to the concept of a cultural national consciousness.

For quite a while the funding of theatre had been through non-governmental agencies (till the setting up of the Canada Council of the Arts as a result of the Massey Commission Report of 1951). The government had helped indirectly in gathering funds through tax reductions in donations as seen during the First World War. The Council for Business and the Arts which was set up in 1974 would help non-governmental corporate organisations in trying to find out an cultural groups that could be sponsored and this agency was able to raise the amount of donations to the performance arts. By 1992, according to Statistics Canada, non-governmental donations to theatre and other performance art was around \$62.2 million.

Governmental funding has not always been from the Canada Council of the Arts. It can be seen both from the provincial level as well as the federal level. Departments like the Indian and Northern Affairs, Human Resource Development, Foreign Affairs have all contributed to theatre funding as part of the federal structure. However, with the entry of governmental agencies in public funding of the arts and theatre we see that governments had granted money to the arts in an effort to develop a 'national' culture evoking a national consciousness within its citizen.

### ***9. Conclusion:***

It can be seen that the funding generated for theatre and other performance art has always been in flux. Yet, it cannot be denied that theatre has been a continual source of images that represent each aspect of the country of Canada and which have helped to shape public opinion and garner a form of national consciousness. The crisis in national identity has for long been a bone of contention in Canadian literary and dramatic history due to language debates and that of the races within the multicultural nation. The recent and ongoing changes in perceptions of identity along with the evolving and changing national indicators of such identities can be through theatre in an ever changing globalised economy. Public policy has been affected by theatre. At the same time, theatre has been affected by public policies in such a way that they have had a lasting impression on the minds of theatre spectators. At the same time, the continuity of a national ideology is possible through

these public policies as they lead to the creation of a national consciousness that will linger and then grow within the spectators of these kinds of theatre.

## Chapter 4:

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### **Separatism, Marginality and National Consciousness**

Political commentators and social troubadours of the past have been able to explain significant changes in the policies of the government and the effect that these policies have on the people. From Arthurian legends to the Interludes of the medieval ages to that of the theatre of the 1960s--- they all have a common thread of trying to explain either complex issues of contemporary society, or tried to mould public opinion to agree with that of the reigning governments. Sears and Hughes help us in understanding that citizenship and national identity go on to focus on global and therefore neoliberal citizenship which rests alongside a more traditional emphasis on traditional modes of showing nationalistic fervour which includes 'indoctrination' through citizenship education (Sears and Hughes 1996: 4). Canada has been no different. Issues ranging from that of colonial narrative discourse to that of racism, separatism and marginality have all had their chance under the spotlight of creation of a national consciousness in the annals of Canadian theatre. Albeit a newer kind of nationality has been on the rise after the adoption of official multiculturalism, Canada has been grappling with the forces of discrimination. Theatre has often times become a tool for its voice of protest. Protest against existing, as well as previous wrongs, have been highlighted through theatre. It has become the medium through which the playwrights have sought to influence not only the upper classes but also the niche audience where political power often resides in the form of economic power. At the same time, theatre has been a great medium through which the various classes and segments have been given a voice of their own where they can be heard by the people at large. While most politically inclined playwrights go out of their way to point out to social wrongs and political helplessness, the visual imagery of theatre has helped spectators at large to somehow identify with grievances of their own community as well as address perceived public wrongs by that community through theatre.

In this chapter the notions of marginalisation as associated with that of women along with the LGBT community (Lesbian-Gay- Bisexual-Transgender Community) who have been on the fringes of societal and political policies for a long time will be analysed through Canadian theatre. What strikes an observer is that women despite being part of the feminist wave in Canada and at the forefront of many a political protest have yet to gain an equal stature in public policies as well as in economic and societal schemes. Jaqueline Kennelly has pointed out that those who have been traditionally outside the norms of Canadian citizenship include women, people with disabilities, homeless people, people in prisons, Aboriginal peoples, immigrants and refugees , the working class/ working poor and gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgendered people (Kennelly 2006: 542). While many welfare schemes have been made and implemented in the recent past aimed at women and the weaker sections of the society, including immigrants from the diasporic community, it has often been overturned and negated by the policies of official multiculturalism. Women of different cultures have been assigned and left to their own defence as the policies are often curtailed in the name of culture. In a way sexuality and repression are often seen going hand in hand and playwrights like Sharon Pollock (*Blood Relations*), Dennis Boucher (*The Fairies are Thirsty*), and Rick Salutin (*I Have Aids*) have explored these issues in their plays.

Michele Foucault had made a study of the connection between war, repression, power and discipline in his seminal work *History of Sexuality*. What is to be noted is that he talks about sex and power in terms of repression. In a way, it has been observed that for a long time in history, war has been taken as a ‘masculine’ method of domination in the public and political sphere, and the woman’s body is also seen as a site of conflict for this same masculine domination, albeit in the private sphere. This notion coincides with Paddy Hillyard’s opinion in the essay ‘In Defence of Civil Liberties’ that “at the global level, the boys are prepared to go to war to uphold human rights.” Hillyard terms this as “muscular humanitarianism”<sup>49</sup>. Feminist point out that, women as a site of repression during peaceful times is shown through her emergence as a cultural carrier, whereby she is seen to be the receptacle of

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<sup>49</sup> Hillyard, Paddy (2002), “Defence of Civil Liberties’, Ed P. Scraton, *Beyond September 11: An anthology of Dissent*, London: Pluto Press.

cultural practices as well as a conduit of these same cultural practices through the ages, especially to her children. While marginalisation is primarily seen as cultural, it spills into the political and the economic sector whereby cultural practices often stop women from either getting state sponsored welfare or prohibit them from the beginning as they have been ingrained with the practices of their own culture and are reluctant to seek help from what they consider as an alien culture. Women and the members of the LGBT community have often been marginalised at the risk of loss of political identity and disenfranchisement. Their previous role in Canadian society as being subservient to a majority, politically powerful, patriarchal system had found a medium of protest through theatrical productions. While cinema and other modes of mass productions are more expensive, theatre has provided an inexpensive mode and this has been aided by the internet. Lack of national identity based on citizenship rights had earlier resulted in a lack of national consciousness among women and members of the LGBT communities in Canada.

Foucault pointed out that as the fostering of life, and the growth and the care of the population becomes central concern of the State, articulated in the art of the government, a new regime of power takes hold. He calls this regime “bio—power”. He further goes on to explain that bio—power is inevitable linked to the concept of power and in turn,

*“...brought life and its mechanism into the realm of explicit calculations and made knowledge—power an agent of the transformation of human life ... modern man is an animal whose politics places his existence as a living being in question”* (Foucault 1984: 17).

Foucault’s concept of bio-power can be analysed and inferred as a phenomenon that has had a continual recurrence within the polity and government of every nation. At the same time women of the majority community also fall within the ambit of the same as can be seen in the plays of Pollock, Boucher and Thompson. Information in the form of Welfare schemes have empowered these women. On the other hand the



information gathered by these service providers of the government can also be seen as medium to gather information regarding these sections of society.

However, it cannot be denied that being a liberal democratic country Canada has come a long way in trying to right various wrongs that have been prevalent through the ages, especially regarding women, children, youth and the otherwise marginalised like the LGBT community and immigrants within its territory. Judith Butler pointed out in a lecture at the Universidad Complutense de Madrid in 2009 that we live within ‘bounded performativity’<sup>50</sup>. These are rules that guide the way we perform and conduct ourselves in society and are learned rules of conduct. She goes on to explain that the “appearance” of gender is often mistaken as a sign of its internal or inherent truth; gender is prompted by obligatory norms to be one gender or the other (usually within a strictly binary frame), and the reproduction of gender is thus always a negotiation with power (Butler 2009). Thus, if taken within the context of a theatrical performance we find that our perceptions of learned visual images often correspond to our responses regarding newer dimensions of the LGBT community. It is only through a continuous re-enactment of these established genders that a newer kind of perception can grow regarding all the marginalised within society. Social and political activists in Canada have been doing this quite a while and have been successful to an extent in changing precepts of the marginalised in society especially regarding women, diasporic women, immigrant youth and the LGBT community. It is here that one notices that Salutin’s play bombards us with a number of images and repartee between the societal and political policies of the state and that of a homosexual individual with that of the state. The disconnect and disillusionment with the state is seen to rise and dissolve as both the institution and the individual come to terms with a changing political society where the state is slowly but surely granting rights to individuals based on their human rights rather than their socio-politico differences. What also needs to be considered here that it is also this very feeling of association with a country that would lead to a recognition as a citizen of a country as well as lead to the existence of a cosmopolitan liberal society based upon the premises of a liberalised globalised economy.

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<sup>50</sup> Butler, Judith (2009), ‘Performativity, Precarity and Sexual Politics’, *AIBR. Revista de Antropología Iberoamericana*, Vol 4 No.3, Stable Url: <http://www.aibr.org/antropologia/04v03/criticos/040301b.pdf>

Foucault pointed out that the power of the State was both an individualising power as well as a totalising form of power. As a matter of fact, the control of the State would extend to the minute details of the lives of its citizens. The modern state is no exception and Canada has been forced to follow the precepts of surveillance especially after the act of terror upon the USA on September 11, 2001. It led the nation not only to believe that the state had to be protected at all cost but that ideas and cultural perceptions of immigrants and people having a difference from majority opinion had to be closely monitored. This again created a feeling of alienation among newly naturalized citizens. Victoria Kannen points out that the privilege granted to identities that are, or are perceived to be, culturally dominant is the site of 'visible privilege' (Kannen 2008: 150). This in turn points out that even marginalisation connected to identity is often due to visible social, religious and cultural difference.

### ***1. Marginality and Canadian society:***

Marginality is inextricably linked to the concept of society and social identity. It is a state of social exclusion whereby certain sections of the population are relegated to fringes of society and are often overlooked when the wellbeing of the nation is accounted for. This would in turn lead to a feeling of dissociation from the political, social and cultural norms and mores of the nation and a sense of identity in opposition to that of a national identity are created within the marginalised group. It is this sense of dissociation that often leads to the concept of separatism. Thus, we find that marginality and identity are the two sides of the same coin. Marginality is also connected to the precepts of hegemony and power. Social exclusion would often include a systematic refusal of entire communities from the benefits of political, economic and cultural rights and opportunities. It was only after Canada was declared an officially multicultural country that equal importance began to be given to all communities in what was termed as a 'mosaic' of communities. While in the beginning marginalisation of women was centered on that of majority 'white' women, in later years marginality of women belonging to the First Nations, other aboriginal communities and that of diasporic women began to be seen.

Marginalisation of women has been a result of many factors in Canada. Social exclusion has been a direct result of marginalisation leading to a feeling of alienation within the nation which is supposedly a tool for garnering a feeling of nationality and national consciousness. Amongst all the marginalised people in Canada, a feeling of disenfranchisement with the state has been the result of this marginalisation. Other factors that have led to marginalisation are globalisation, immigration, social welfare, language and religion. Of these the last two are intimately connected to that of women as being cultural carriers of a community and has been the most effective tool of cultural hegemony leading to a tussle of power between the genders. This can be seen in Sharon Pollock's play *Blood Relations* quite appropriately. In the historical context Pollock's *Blood Relations* begins with the oldest form of female relationship where the protagonist is being asked to marry a man who is quite a bit older to her. On the other hand we see that in the contemporary society the economic participation of women has helped to bring them out from the status of the marginalised. In 2014, women represented 47.3% of the labour force.<sup>51</sup>

Marginalisation has also been a result of not recognising certain sections of the society as being part of the larger society. Charles Taylor states that non-recognition or misrecognition can inflict harm, can be a form of oppression, imprisoning someone in a false, distorted, and reduced mode of being (Taylor 1994: 25). If such is the case then aboriginal peoples had not been recognised in Canada as citizens for a very long time. In the earlier chapter, we see how a community of Sioux people belonging to the USA had been persecuted and were looking for both political asylum as well as a place to call their own nation in the play *Walsh* by Sharon Pollock. Similar instances have been seen in the history of Canadian citizenship thereby playing a pivotal role in Canadian national consciousness. Although often termed as incidents in the past or historical events, these political events have had repercussions in the contemporary age due to the effect of the reverberations that governmental policies have on the marginalised people who are still in the process of being uplifted.

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<sup>51</sup> <http://www.swc-cfc.gc.ca/initiatives/wesp-sepf/fs-fi/es-se-eng.html>

Marginalization can be seen as a result of poverty. Women when they are recently immigrated, are more liable to be marginalised as they do not have a ready source of income. They are often marginalised within the workforce through the mediums of payment and work conditions. Yet Canada is far better than most countries in trying to ensure that its citizens have a better working condition. It was seen that people in the Canadian society who are marginalised due to poverty include persons with disabilities, single mothers, aboriginals and racialized minorities. If such be the case then it is easy to explain the need for money that women in Canada have had for making a better life. Sharon Pollock's play *Blood Relations* point out to the fact that the need for economic independence in women has been there for a long time. Her play is a historical reference to such a situation among women. Thus, Lizzie Borden is reminded time and again that she is kept by her father rather than earning her own way through life. Despite being in one of the upper classes she is economically deprived. This is a continuation of the situation of that of her step mother. Her step mother is shown as marrying a much older man with two children when she is arguing with Lizzie. If such is the case we see that apart from marrying, in the contemporary times of the play women had no other option but to be married for economic support. At the same time we see that with Gilbert's play, poverty strikes those who are considered marginalised. Ron, who is a homosexual is diagnosed with aids. Again, in the previous chapter it has been recorded that in the area of child poverty Canada is ranked 17<sup>th</sup> among 38 countries in the ranking of child poverty in 2011. If such is the case then we can see that until and unless public policies are made to eradicate this poverty then the ideology of nationality and a growing national consciousness is threatened.

If looked at from the point of view of the whole of Canada we can see that almost every section has been affected by poverty and this has led to a form of dissatisfaction with the federal government. Nationality and national consciousness is only possible and will take place when Canada's citizens feel that their government and the state are meant to protect their interest not only from outside intervention but also from marginalisation within the country. The following table gives us an idea of poverty in Canada within all family groups between 1976 to 2008 with reference to their incomes and the income gaps after paying taxes to the Canadian nation.

Percentage of persons in low-income after tax, by economic family type, 1976 to 2008

Table summary

This table displays the results of Percentage of persons in low-income after tax. The information is grouped by Persons in low-income appearing as row headers and is grouped by 1976, 1981, 1986, 1991, 1996, 2001, 2006, 2007, 2008 appearing as column headers, calculated using percentage as a unit of measure.

Persons in low income	1976	1981	1986	1991	1996	2001	2006	2007
	percentage							
<b>Elderly families</b>	17.7	9.6	4.9	3.1	3	2.9	2.9	1.8
<b>Non-elderly families</b>	9.7	8.8	9.8	10.8	13	8.6	7.9	6.5
<b>Married couples</b>	5.8	5	5.9	7.7	8.4	6.4	5.6	4.8
<b>Couples with children</b>	8.2	7.5	8.5	8.7	10.7	7.3	7.1	5.6
<b>Other couples</b>	3.2	2.6	3	2.8	4.6	4.4	2.2	1.4
<b>Female lone parent</b>	53.7	44.2	48.7	49.8	52.9	34.2	28.9	24
<b>Male lone</b>	17.9	12.2	16.3	18.7	24.5	11.4	6.9	9.2

<b>parent</b>								
<b>Other non-elderly families</b>	13.1	11.8	11.6	12.7	13.3	7.4	9.4	9.4

Figure 19: Source: [Statistics Canada, CANSIM table 202-0804.](#)

Again when we see the concept of women as marginalised in all strata yet revered as the receptacle of culture, Boucher's characters portray them with an intense exploration amongst three kinds of women whom she gives generic names. These three women have abstract conversation, in the form of soliloquies on stage, yet each character represents the many areas of repression of women and their successive struggle against them. While some of these fights have been won and public policies have been formed and implemented, other are still in the process of being formulated and it is theatre of these kind that protest and help to formulate opinions which would lead to changes in the internal and external policies of the country. The federal government in 1967 set up the Royal Commission on the Status of Women to examine the situation of women, and in its 1970 report the commission made 167 recommendations for greater equality of women.<sup>52</sup> These protests have led to several mass movements and opinions garnered through theatre have gone a long way to obtain mass support. It has resulted in the right to choice in obtaining a legal abortion, the entrenchment of sex equality in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms in 1982. The Canadian Human Rights Act prohibited discrimination on the grounds of sex in employment and services in federal jurisdiction. Enacted in 1977, it also promoted the code of equal pay for equal work.<sup>53</sup>

<sup>52</sup> <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/womens-movement/>

<sup>53</sup> <http://www.cbc.ca/archives/entry/women-in-the-labour-force>

Again marginalization of young people through poverty and that of aboriginal peoples has been a continual problem within public welfare schemes. With the onset of official multiculturalism in Canada, it was thought that inequalities and marginalisation would decrease in society. However, with time it was also seen that certain old practices remained which had an effect on marginalised communities and even individuals. In 1971 Canada adopted the multicultural policy. It has been noticed that multi-national societies are states that have incorporated previously self-governing cultures such as aboriginal peoples whilst polyethnic societies are states where cultural diversity arises from immigration. Canada is an example of a country that is both multinational and polyethnic. It has national minorities (for example, Aboriginals and the Quebecois) as well as a significant immigrant population. The politics of equal citizenship and economic redistribution are not fully equipped, argue multiculturalists, to deal with the diverse concerns which are raised in multinational and polyethnic states.

Whenever one looks back into the theatres of the past to find a trace of marginalization, we immediately notice that in most of the plays from the very beginning there is a feeling of marginalization within all characters even if they themselves are the ones in majority. This paradoxical situation is often given rise due to the fact that the earlier generation of playwrights had to portray a Canadian culture which itself had never been homogenized on the basis of a shared national consciousness. An example can be seen in Sharon Pollock's play *Blood Relation* (1980) where the young daughter is accused of murdering her family. Being one of the most celebrated of Pollock's plays (for it had won the Governor's Award), this play explores the human psyche through a visit into the past while at the same time where the protagonist is trying to find her true self despite having now become somewhat re-assured in her maturity. Pollock looks to the past for a justification and a reiteration of an ideology of Canada through the history of Canada. Her search for a commonality of a Canadian national character that would take into account the varied nature of its demography is seen through *Blood Relation*. Although biographical in nature, this play takes into account all the controversies and the dominant themes of the day that have led to the concept of a nation. They include gender domination, marginalization of women and the themes of economic and religious marginalization even among 'white' people. The very act of killing might be symbolic of the fact that

old mores and rituals were being destroyed within the scope of the new nation. Lizzie Borden's (the protagonist) iconoclastic methods of riding herself of the mediums of her suppression might seem drastic and totally illegal to the common spectator. The play wholly dictated by the needs of women in an age that is marked twenty years ago, is seminal in its portrayal of a Canadian society that is on the verge of change. Again, role playing within the play itself seems to portray the fact that chaos occurs when people try to go beyond their designated role in society. At the same time we see that Ms. Borden is free from the strictures set upon her by society and her parents only when she has got rid of them. Her marginalization is fought by herself where her own ideology is the one that sets her 'free'. The following picture does show the murderous intent of the protagonist in her attempt to be free from the strictures set upon her by society where her voice becomes marginalized.



Figure 20: Source: [http://archive.theatre.ubc.ca/blood\\_relations/credits.shtml](http://archive.theatre.ubc.ca/blood_relations/credits.shtml)

This marginalisation gets further compounded when her father and stepfather sees her talking to the 'Irish Dr. Patrick'. As his very name suggests he is Irish and therefore a catholic Christian, which was a bone of contention amongst earlier English settlers in Canada. Except for the province of Quebec, much of Canada was inhabited by protestant Christians. Lizzie goes on to say:



*You`re married- and Irish besides- I`m supposed to ignore you. ... Don`t you realise  
Papa and Emma have fits every time we engage in ``illicit conversation``. They`re  
having fits right now...*

Although a doctor his merits are negated by the fact that he is now one of the marginalised in society on the basis of the fact that he belongs to a culture and community that is at war with the homeland of the dominant culture, that is, the British. This is especially true for the age when Pollock is talking about a nation in the making. While contemporary Canada is much vaunted as a country whereby multicultural communities are working and existing in harmony and where the federal government along with the provinces have done much to garner support for their acceptance within the cultural and economic milieu of the country, in the era that Pollock is talking about the feeling of nationhood and national consciousness was still in the nascent stage. It had all the symptoms of a society where marginalisation on the basis of religion and language was rampant.

Another symbol that runs throughout the play is that of birds and the cages. While on the one hand it depicts the segregation of Lizzie through the metaphor of a bird who is meant to be free yet is in the cage of domestic, social and cultural mores; on the other hand it also acts as a fence to keep out others. When the birds are killed by her father we see that the rage that has been festering in her burst forth. This in turn frees her from her emotions and gives vent to them although in a manner that leads to her spilling blood. It can be taken to be a symbolic connotation of the marginalised in search for freedom. Yet this freedom comes at a price where blood is spilled. It can almost be seen as a replication of the struggle of the marginalised in Canadian society, that is, of women, aboriginal communities and the first nations, who after much struggle have got a recognition that had been long been denied to them. The props on which the female protagonists are sitting and enacting this historical event resemble the birds` cages. Again, Pollock is harking back to history to show a struggle which led to a dubious emancipation. This can be seen in the picture below. The two female characters can be seen in the picture below as isolated individuals in their own separate worlds. While one is dressed in complete

white the other is in black, and this creates a striking contrast visually to point out to the contrasting ideologies of the past and the present. The patterns of lights around them help to illustrate their caged existence.



Figure21:

Source:

<http://yorkspace.library.yorku.ca/xmlui/bitstream/handle/10315/26941/DSCF9583.JPG?sequence=10>

Another image that comes to mind is that of a bird fluttering at the edge of the cage waiting to break free. In the play we see patriarchal concepts of economic behaviour. We can see through the costumes of the play that the setting of play was dated well in the past around the early 1900. The stage directions point out that Mr. Borden feels ``... *She has the qualities that he would like in a son but deplores in a daughter.*`` Again we find Lizzie`s step mother pointing out to her the helplessness of her situation because of her economic dependence which is one of the real causes of the marginalisation of her thoughts and opinion both in her family and within society. Mrs. Borden goes on to narrate to her the facts of life as was present in the contemporary times for women. She goes on to say that:

*You Know, Lizzie, your father keeps you. You know you got nothing but what he gives you. And that`s a fact of life. You got to come to deal with the facts. I did.*



Figure 22: Source: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/flat-earth/5382490354>

This is almost the same scenario where she keeps the helpless birds but who are always clamouring for freedom. If such be the marginalised condition then if we look at the larger picture, it is not unnatural for Lizzie to be attracted to Dr. Patrick and wanting to flee to foreign shores where she would be able to attain her freedom. In this case it is in Boston in the USA. The spectators realise that Lizzie has no qualms about leaving her home and country and neither does Dr. Patrick. Since one is marginalised in society on the basis of his religion and the other on the basis of her economic weakness, it is seen that the sense of national consciousness is yet to grow in them. If looked at it from the point of economic benefits to the nation as well, it is noted that women`s economic participation raises development, not only by decreasing the dependency ratio and increasing the proportion of wage earners to dependents who must be supported, but also because women have been found to be significantly more likely to reinvest their earnings in

things that benefit the family than men are (Benard et al 2008: 5). These kinds of inequality and marginalisation lead to conflicts. This is very apparent in the murder of Lizzie Borden`s parents.

On the other hand we see that nation building in Canada and the role of women in it had been very basic in the beginning. They were brought to propagate and populate the colonisers land. Therefore Lizzie was constantly being pressurised to marry a person well beyond her age. Tracing the use of women simply as a means of colonisation we can see their use from the very inception of Canada as a nation when, from 1663 to 1673, about 1,000 orphaned, single women were sent by King Louis XIV to redress the disproportionate amount of males versus females in New France. They were called *Filles du roi* - or "daughters of the King." These women would spend an average of about two weeks living with nuns or missionaries before they could find a suitable man. In most circumstances, they would marry him right away for the sole purposes of starting a large family. Thus, with Lizzie crying out ``I`ve a legal right to one-third because I am his flesh and blood``, it is the moment that the spectators realise that she is wanting her rights as an individual and not that of a woman in society. This is in vehement denial of the statement where Mrs. Border, her stepmother says that she ``has got no rights``. Ironically this is the same blood that she spills in the end as it was negating her very identity as a person. Vijay Agnew pointed out that throughout the 1980s and the 1990s identity became significant in epistemology, and a site of contestation. Initially, identity was viewed as comprising criteria such as race, gender, class and sexuality, and how these intersected in particular groups and individuals. She further goes on to say that identity is socially constructed and is not fixed but historically influenced and since it is constantly negotiated within societies and cultures, it is fluid and changing (Agnew 2009: 5). Thus we find her being pushed back towards the metaphorical cage where she would lose even the last vestige of her freedom as well as her own opinions.

## ***2. Canadian national symbols and marginalisation:***

The identity of the Canadian citizen and that of the Canadian nation is inextricably linked with that of language. Historically it has always been a bone of contention in determining national identity and has often been seen as an impediment to national consciousness. Being geographically surrounded by the United States of America and historically connected to that of the British Isles, it is seen that even among the numerically stronger English speaking population, English as a source of language has led to certain divided identities. On the other hand the strife between the French and the English as different cultures was also based upon language. Yet the subtle divide in English as a language and that of Canadian identity has been remarked upon by Frye. He went on to say that the simultaneous influence of two larger nations speaking the same language has been practically beneficial to English Canada, but theoretically confusing. It is often suggested that Canada's identity is to be found in some *via media*, or *via mediocris*, between the other two. This has the disadvantage that the British and American cultures have to be defined as extremes (Frye 1971: 6). Thus, the United States of America became a source of the national "other" along with that of the French for the English Canadians. As a basis of narrative it forms a very important part of culture. Canada from the very beginning has defied the tenets of a traditional nation. Being bilingual had added to the duality present in its citizens. However, with the opening up of the immigration laws of 1976 and that of 2001 it has acquired the roots of heteroglossia along with that of plurality of cultures. As Benedict Anderson has pointed out that there is a special kind of contemporaneous community which language alone suggests "...for it shows from the start that the nation was conceived in language, not in blood, and that one could be 'initiated' into the imagined community. Thus, even today the most insular nations accept the principles of naturalisation." (Anderson 1983: 145). In this context we see that both Pol Pelletier's play and that of Denise Boucher's have a significance as they have been written in French. Being Quebec women playwrights, they have been in the forefront of the movement for equality in language. Again religion is seen in Michele Trembley's plays as well.

Boucher's play in the modern context is metaphorical and symbolical to a large extent. The three female characters are shown to portray every aspect of women that are acceptable in society. Yet none of these women are 'free' to do as they want. Even the statue of liberty is shown as not being free as she has been born a female. Marginalisation is shown through certain symbols in the play by Boucher, that is, *The Fairies are Thirsty*. The haphazard dialogical structure of the play points out to the various fragmented identities that the characters of the play undergo. Following no linear or chronological structure, the play takes into account the stories of three women, one of them an inanimate woman and makes them into generic example of womankind. However, if one leaves aside the obvious feminist perspectives of the play, the audience is swamped by the imageries and the iconography of a nation grappling the forces of separatism in the midst of religious and language conflicts. Multiculturalism and equal adult franchise for women seem apparently useless in the face of the deep seated colonial and patriarchal practices that have been there within the Canadian nation from the inception of Canada with the idea of a nation.

On the other hand we find how marginality is a part of women when they belong to the First Nations. Not only are they socially excluded for bring part of the community; they are also excluded on the basis of being women. It is through visual representations of plays and theatre that a strain of protest has developed over the ages. Taylor in his seminal essay on recognition helps us to clarify the notions and importance dialogues between different sections of the society. if taken in the literal sense it would encompass not only theatre but the debates of marginalisation based on recognition through language debates that has been part of the Canadian political fabric for a long time. This in turn would definitely affect the concept of citizenship and nationality as necessary from the growth of a national consciousness. He states that the relationship between recognition and identity is crucial in human life due to its fundamentally *dialogical* character. We become full human agents, capable of understanding ourselves, and hence of defining our identity, through our acquisition of rich human languages of expression. For my purposes here, I want to take *language* in a broad sense, covering not only the words we speak, but also other modes of expression whereby we define ourselves, including the "languages" of art (Taylor 1994: 32)

The postmodernist notions of Hutcheon regarding 'otherness' would not be amiss when associated with aboriginal women for she goes on to say that

*the concept of alienated otherness (based on binary oppositions that conceal hierarchies) gives way ... to that of differences: to the assertion not of centralized sameness but of decentralized community ... the local and the regional are stressed in the face of mass culture ... Culture...has become cultures ... And this appears to be happening in spite of— and, ... maybe even because of— the homogenizing impulse of the consumer society of late capitalism. (Hutcheon 1987: 252).*

However, what one can notice is that while in earlier times social exclusion was generally related to that of the labour market, in recent times it has been more of a cultural division than otherwise. Demographic change with the onslaught of globalisation has led to varied differences that are more cultural and religious rather than that of the economic. While on the one hand, economic differences are definitely seen, exclusion and marginalisation based on the economic factors are often the result of cultural factors. In the case of Canada, it has also been that of language. While in the previous chapters we have seen how the issue of language is central to the notion of a nation within Canada, especially in the province of Quebec, it can also be seen that language has had an impact on other migrant communities as well. While the predominant form of communication in contemporary Canada is English, it cannot be denied that strife and struggle through such cultural idioms have led not only to internal political divisions, but to external ones as well. World political opinion of Canada has often been influenced by the way it has handled its crisis of national identity as based on that of language and the demographic mixtures of its various cultural immigrants.

Characters, when looked at from the point of view of marginal characters, it is seen that women in *The Fairies are Thirsty* the characters are shown in an abstract form where their very dissociation in time and space is seen as

dissociation from the rights that should have been given to them in society. This marginalization is seen through all the aspects of women- both in the public sphere as well as in the private sphere. Language is seen as a patriarchal tool where women are submitting to the fact that they should remain silent. Domestic violence is considered one of the primary sources of marginalization in Canada today. It has been seen that women who suffer in silence from domestic violence also pass on to their off springs the semblances of silent suffering. On the other hand it has also led to violent behaviour where repression of basic human rights have led to an outburst of anger which gets directed either to the society at large leading to terrorist acts or reverted back to the domestic scene. The following data has been collected from <http://www.swc-cfc.gc.ca/rc-cr/pub/violence-partner-partenaire-eng.pdf>.

- In 2011, eight in 10 victims of police reported intimate partner violence were women. Women's increased risk was evident in both police reported spousal and dating violence, with women almost four times more likely than men to be victims of these forms of violence.
- The costs of spousal violence against women in Canada have been estimated at close to \$5 billion annually.

As seen from the above data, the nation is also impacted when domestic violence leads to marginalization. A national consciousness is part of the feeling of security that the nation is able to provide to all its citizens irrespective of class and gender. The faith reposed in this right is somewhat justified in Canada, yet it is also seen the state which cannot enter the domestic sphere is trying its best to maintain the welfare of each and every of its citizens. The following graph aptly displays this. Through Boucher's play one notices the depiction of three women characters who are taken from different economic and social milieu. The character of the prostitute wants to get a higher social standing in society and freedom from both physical as well as economic exploitation. The character of the 'statue' represents a status quo in society where women emancipation has prevailed mostly in the areas of debate rather than in practical policies. The character of the housewife is again a victim of spousal abuse hidden behind the gentility of the middle class.



**Victims of police-reported violent crimes, by sex of victim and accused-victim relationship, 2011**

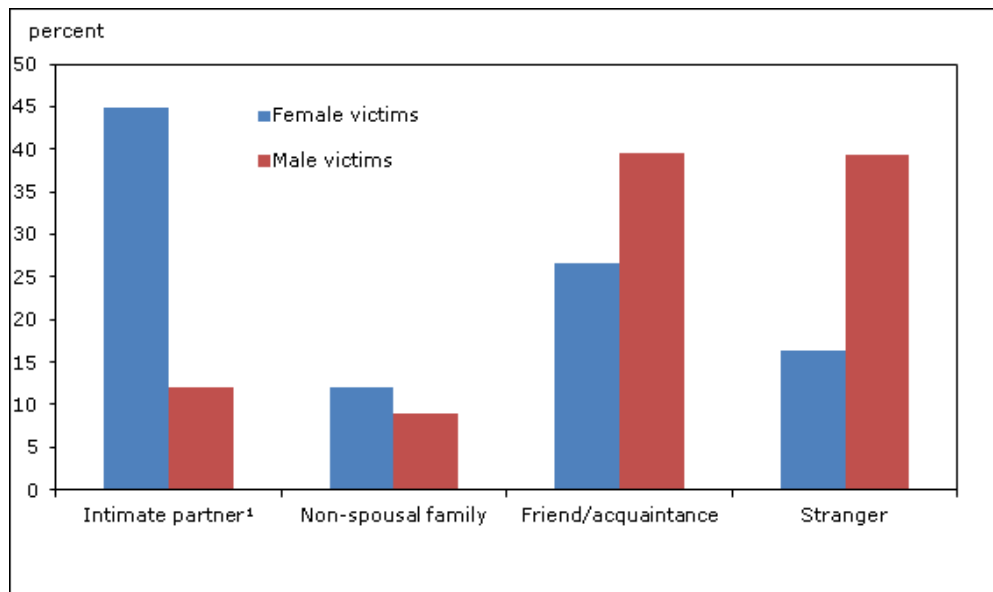


Figure 23: Source: <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/85-002-x/2013001/article/11766-eng.pdf>

Although the above graph does show us that males have also been victimised, it cannot be denied brute physical strength has become a part of a dominant part which would dominate the other half. This has been showcased in plays like Hayden's *Girl who Loved her Horse*, Pollock's *Blood Relations*, Tremblay's *Les Belles Seours* and Boucher's *The fairies are Thirsty*. Although policies have been made and implemented to address these problems, a lot more is required if fellow feeling within one's countrymen is to be generated.

While in the play *The Fairies are Thirsty*, we find that the three women are taken as generic types who are almost akin to every woman; Marie and Madeline are taken as two opposing and contrasting women types. While one is in the domestic sphere, the other is in the public sphere. Yet both are alone and unable to give voice to their grievances. This in itself is a major part of marginality. We can see

here there is a direct co-relation between power, hegemony and knowledge. While the woman in the domestic sphere Marie is kept waiting for her husband she ends up thinking that her husband would accept her only if she has more children. On the other hand Madeline, wants to be left alone so that she can garner knowledge in peace. Yet she is never left alone. On the other hand we find the female statue spouting the fact that eve she is not free as she is bound by the elevated position that society has bequeathed her. While males have also fallen victims in this process of power hegemony, it has been seen that in Canada women have been victims for a longer time. This can be seen in the following graph.

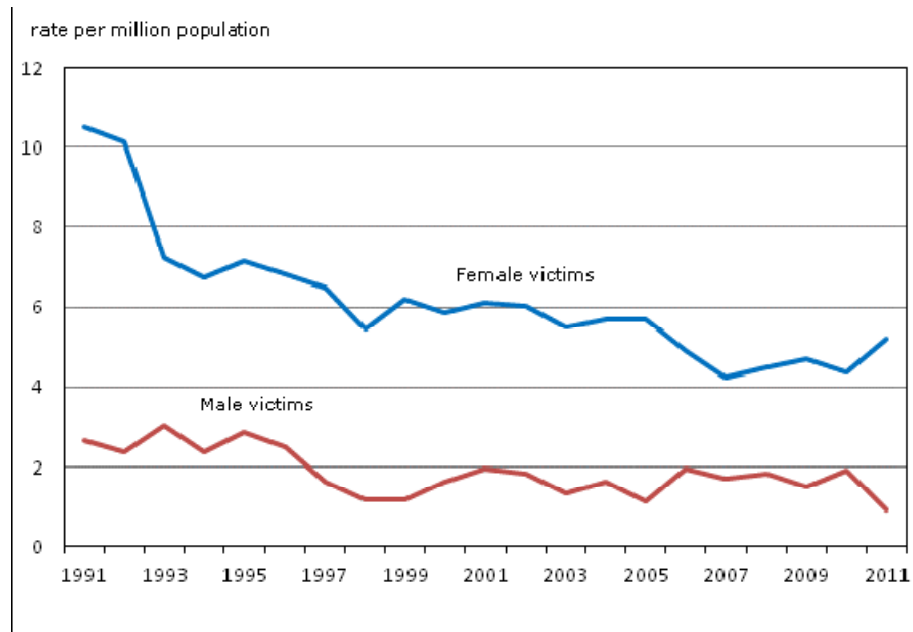


Figure 24: Source: <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/85-002-x/2013001/article/11766-eng.pdf>

Canadian society is imbued within the matrix of cultural identity which is inextricably linked with that of both cultural identity as well as an image of itself in international arena. In Boucher’s play we find that both of these are underlined in the sporadic dialogues of the three characters. When Marie proclaims that they should “talk” she goes on to emphasize the word “talk”. For her talking is something that had been denied to her for a long time. Dialogic correspondence between the spectator and the characters are meant to evoke a sense of commonality

of suffering and therefore open up public debates regarding women emancipation and address discrimination. She says:

*Let's Talk. Talk. Talk. More words.*

*Hymns. Songs. Dances. Laughter. Tears.*

*Let's hammer at the wall of silence.*

To this we see that the inanimate statue adds that everyone should “*Open the shutters of our words. Evil by evil. Guilt by guilt. Fear by fear*”. ( Boucher 1978: 354)

When looked at from the point of Canadian identity and a connection with national consciousness, we see that the feelings of what Frye and Atwood termed as “Garrison mentality” are on the verge of being broken by the characters of the play. Northrop Frye in 1943 pointed out that the theme of ‘garrison mentality’ has been prevalent in the Canadian psyche for a long time. This can be especially be seen within earlier Canadian literature that existed before cosmopolitanism in the form of a multicultural society became a part of Canada’s national identity and therefore national consciousness.

While Frye’s concept has been largely debated upon and often debunked in recent literature as going against the tenets of multiculturalism, for a long time it has remained one of the major themes in Canadian literature. Frye generally used the term for describing the strife with the vastness of the Canadian territory and nature with that of man. Atwood uses it in a sense where the theme of “survival” runs through the texts. She goes on to say that the central symbol for Canada – and this is based on numerous instances of its occurrence in both English- and French-Canadian literature – is undoubtedly Survival, *la Survivance*. She adds that for French Canada after the English took over it became cultural survival, hanging on as a people, retaining a religion and a language under an alien government. And in English Canada

now while the Americans are taking over it is acquiring a similar meaning (Atwood 1972:16). In case of Boucher's characters when they are on the precipice of breaking free from their fetters they are opening up to the world around them defying the "garrison mentality" that was said to be prevalent in Canadian art in the contemporary times. Atwood's opinion that the mentality of Canadian women was connected with the language and culture can be seen within Boucher's characters. When they want to take down the walls, they are talking of moving into uncharted territories, both in culture or language. If looked at from Atwood's point of view women writing became feminist when they took on their own challenges within the conventional patriarchal concept of the theme of survival and enclosed mentality leading to a marginalisation of thought and other processes. She opines iconoclastic writing is breaking these land patterns and calling for a redefinition of the "natural" itself; it engages current controversies over women's place and language and the possibility of an *écriture féminine*. The situation of the woman author in English Canada is paradigmatic of woman's place – both within, and without, the symbolic order (ibid: 62) this is completely reflected in Boucher's feminist portrayals of women surviving domestic abuse and national apathy.

### ***3. Aboriginal marginalisation and Theatre:***

An identity is established in relation to a series of differences that have become socially recognized (Conolly 1991: 64). Taking into account this version of identity we see that marginal identities are created through a continual differentiation between the dominant mode of societal and political practices and that of the non-dominant minority. In the case of the aboriginals it has also been part of the colonial endeavour which has led to this kind of marginalisation. Marginalisation has also been a result of hyphenated existence that can be seen not only in that of diasporic population but also within that of the aboriginal peoples based on their provinces and communities. Ironically, they had all been identified in a single entity by the dominant political powers when the nation was in the throes of its conception. The politics of their location is not only primary in their identity as citizens; it is also a factor in their situation in the larger picture of their presence in the multicultural mosaic. In the contemporary times of global and 'Glo-cal' cultures, it is almost

mandatory that one should be able to adapt not only to the norms, mores and practices of the majority population, but at the same time adapt to the changing policies and laws that circumstances throw up from time to time. However, if such be the case then it can be seen that for the aboriginal people it has been a long struggle to rise from the margins and become nominally a part of the national policies due to their struggle for citizenship and at times even for nation hood. It was as late as 1982 when they were first recognised by the state. It was through Section 35 of the Constitution Act that they garnered recognition within the federal nation of Canada. Although Aboriginal rights had already existed in Canada before the formulation and implementation of the Constitution Act the Canadian government did not initially plan to include Aboriginal rights so extensively within the constitution. Early drafts and discussions during the patriation of the Canadian Constitution did not include any recognition of those existing rights and relationships, but through campaigns and demonstrations, Aboriginal groups in Canada successfully fought to have their rights enshrined and protected<sup>54</sup> Section 35 of *the Constitution Act* states:

*35. (1) The existing aboriginal and treaty rights of the aboriginal peoples of Canada are hereby recognized and affirmed.*

*(2) In this Act, "aboriginal peoples of Canada" includes the Indian, Inuit and Métis peoples of Canada.*

*(3) For greater certainty, in subsection (1) "treaty rights" includes rights that now exist by way of land claims agreements or may be so acquired.*

*(4) Notwithstanding any other provision of this Act, the aboriginal and treaty rights referred to in subsection (1) are guaranteed equally to male and female persons.<sup>55</sup>*

What is important to note is that the subsections 3 and 4 were added by later amendments in 1983 and finally recognised the equality of both males and females in the guaranteeing of rights to them as citizens of the country. The *Indian Act* of 1867 was the first consolidated form of legal provisions for the Aboriginal

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<sup>54</sup> <http://indigenousfoundations.arts.ubc.ca/home/government-policy/constitution-act-1982-section-35.html>

<sup>55</sup> <http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/const/page-16.html>.

community in Canada. It states that 'a person who, pursuant to this Act, is registered as an Indian or is entitled to be registered as an Indian.' Later amendments were meant to civilize the Aboriginal population as per that of the colonizing powers. It was only in 1969 that the Pierre Trudeau government decided that the people of the First nation and the Intuits and the Metis would be given equal legal and political rights based on the concept of equal social, political and cultural rights for its citizens. This in turn did seem to encourage a feeling of national consciousness equally among all the citizens of the nation. What is of greater importance is that the amendments in the legislation off the *Indian Act* have been having an impact on national consciousness for a long time. The Indian Act was amended in 1985. It was accomplished through the amendment called Bill C-31 to redress the grievances that had been unfulfilled through that of the original *Indian Act*. For the first time it addressed the needs of Aboriginal women. Before the amendment was added to the bill it was seen that those women who married non-status men would lose their status as Registered Status Indians. Therefore we can see the hitherto marginalised section of Aboriginal women was being addressed for the first time in the Indian Act. This in turn seems to point out to the fact of greater participation in the socio- political process of the nation and seem to foster a greater national consciousness for people who had otherwise been marginalised in the social and political process for a long time.

As the median age of the population of women is much younger in case of Aboriginal women it can be seen that their contribution to the Canadian workforce will have an immense impact. Participation of women has increased with time. It has been seen that in 2014, women represented 47.3% of the total workforce. This has increased from 45.7% in 1999<sup>56</sup>. Therefore we see that with change in any legislation on the marginalised the demography of the workforce changes and has a positive effect on the economy. Integration into the national system also takes place with an involvement into the political and economic sphere thereby decreasing the number of marginal. The increase of their contribution to the labour market has led to an empowerment from their hitherto marginalised status. Aboriginal women have also in recent years been part of the new labour force and this again has helped in

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<sup>56</sup> <http://www.swc-cfc.gc.ca/initiatives/wesp-sepf/fs-fi/es-se-eng.html>

removing them from their marginal status. Aboriginal women make up 37% of all Aboriginal self-employed people, and 51% of Aboriginal-owned small- and medium-sized enterprises belong to women, either entirely or in part. Economic Action Plan 2013 confirmed \$109 million over four years, 2013–2017, to improve the on-reserve Income Assistance Program to ensure that young recipients, including women, who can work have the incentives to participate in the training necessary for them to gain employment.

Keeping in mind the various forms in which aboriginal marginalisation have taken place in Canada, an analysis of Tomson Highway's play helps us in obtaining a clearer idea of the prevalent forms. In case of the play *Dry Lips Oughta move to Kapuskasing* by Tomson Highway is an accompanying play. While the first play by Tompson that is the *Rez Sisters* focused on the trials and tribulations of seven female characters from the aboriginal characters, the latter play focuses on the trials and tribulations of female from the First Nations by the male of that community. It was first showcased in 1989 in Theatre Passe- Muraille in Toronto. In 2010 this play was also translated into Cree language making it accessible to not only the majority population but also to the indigenous population. What we realise here is that marginalisation of women in Canadian society was more pronounced not only in diasporic communities where women were also culturally marginalised due to their cultural restrains but also due to that of patriarchy. This is also seen in First Nations as well. However, what also comes to the forefront that despite the men in that community embracing all kinds of cultural, social and economic mores of the majority population that are unable to bear the fact that women in their society would be poaching on what was till then a 'male preserve', that is hockey. Each of the seven men in the play embodies at least one ideal of the more powerful majority populace. Yet they are unable to grasp the concepts of equality of genders. While they themselves are marginalised they are unable to prevent themselves from marginalising women from their own communities. This play was staged as a sarcastic and humorous take on the marginalisation prevalent at every level of the community from within as well as without. Not only did the characters try to turn away from their own

culture they also tried to embrace a culture that has seeped into their lives within the reservations as a result of the Europeans colonising them.

Theatrically, in Tomson Highway's plays, a few tropes are used to show this disjunction and layered marginalisation within their community as well as a spiritual disjunction with their old selves. The modern and the ancient come into clash when we see Big Joey being refuted on the basis of tribe pride and that of individual glory. Team sports such as "hockey" is used as metaphor for a team striving to win against all odds. We see this when Big Joey says:

*BIG JOEY: ... and I aim to prove this broadcasting of games among the folks is one sure way to get some pride ...*

*ZACHARY: Bullshit! You're in it for yourself.*

Zachary goes on to state what he hopes that his business enterprise might do for the people of the reservation. His aspirations are similar to that of government endeavour but which belay the fact that government endeavours have taken time to take off and are not spreading as fast as he hoped for. He says:

*And there's my bakery. And this bakery could do a lot for the Indian people. Economic development. Jobs. Bread. Apple pie. So you see, there's an awful lot that's hanging on them shorts. This is a good chance for you to do something for your people, Simon, if you know what I mean ...*

Highway makes use of myths and other traditional tropes like the trickster to point out to a cyclical continuity of life that would enable changing times to give a better life to all the characters of the community. While typical ills that plague the first nations are mentioned here as well, such as joblessness and alcoholism, the helplessness runs deeper in the cycle of life and death as represented by the trickster. However, with time native theatre has had a great impact on the people as they have become more conscious of the marginalisation of the first nations through them. Awareness has spread along with the successful protest through theatre for the first



nations. Marginalisation being showcased through the old cultural trope of native performances has given these plays a more nuanced definitions of theatre that border on the fringe of political and national consciousness. A collage of production photos from Highway’s play give us an idea of the varied entities that abound in the play as metaphors of those who exist in reality.



Figure 25: Source: <http://www.nativeearth.ca/about-us/history/>

Reality intruded in Zachary’s life where despite being educated in the outside world he is unable to circumvent Big Joey’s blackmail. Having been brought up away from the reservation in a catholic school he is a lesser version of another of the characters like Spooky Lacroix who is imbued with catholic ideals which class with that of the old ideals of their tribes.

This has been mentioned in the Canadian Parliament as well. It said In June 2008, the Prime Minister offered an official apology on behalf of the Government of Canada to former students of Indian residential schools in a solemn declaration in the House of Commons. The government recognizes that the treatment of children in these schools is a sad chapter in our history and that this policy has had a lasting and damaging impact on Aboriginal culture, heritage and language. A ‘Truth and Reconciliation Commission’ has been established, which will hear the testimonies of the victims and define the principles of a new and lasting relationship based on mutual faith and confidence.

A land claims settlement process has been in place since 1982, designed to resolve age-old disputes. It was under this process that Nunavut, a new and separate territory largely controlled by Inuit, was created in 1999. The healing continues.<sup>57</sup>

#### ***4. The Queer, national consciousness and theatre in Canada:***

On 22 December, 1967, the then Prime Minister of Canada Pierre Trudeau stated that there was no place for the state to enter into the bedrooms of the nation. This was the sum of the interview that was published in the 1967 edition of the *Globe and the Mail* newspaper where Trudeau had stated that it was the duty of the state to legislate and not peep into the bedrooms of the nation. He went on to say that

*“Take this thing on homosexuality. I think the view we take here is that there's no place for the state in the bedrooms of the nation. I think that what's done in private between adults doesn't concern the Criminal Code. When it becomes public this is a different matter, or when it relates to minors this is a different matter.”*<sup>58</sup>

However, when taken into the contemporary context of the LGBT community, we see that traditional political legislation has permeated into almost every section of the society whereby the very concept of identity of a citizen is question based on his or her personal sexual history which would affect his political and economic views. At the same time legislations have been required to save this community from discrimination in the social, political and economic sphere and this has been mainly through performance. Amongst all the public performances that have been put on to bring to the forefront the marginalised condition of the homosexual and the transgender community, we find that powerful theatrical rhetoric has also played a role in raising public consciousness. In 1965 a mechanic hailing from the Northwest Territories, George Klippert was sent to jail indefinitely on the charge of being a

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<sup>57</sup> <http://www.parl.gc.ca/About/Senate/Aboriginal/Aboriginal-e.htm>

<sup>58</sup> <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/timeline-same-sex-rights-in-canada-1.1147516>

homosexual. He was also treated by a psychiatrist in jail who declared that he could be cured of his homosexuality even after treatment and was therefore “incurable”.<sup>59</sup>

Sky Gilbert’s play *I Have Aids* explores the latent marginality that is seen in society amongst homosexuals despite their being established members of society and who have fruitfully contributed to both society as well as to the economy. When one of the protagonists is diagnosed as HIV +. He immediately assumes that he will die. What is brought to the forefront is his interactions with the state health officials and their scepticism regarding his ability to contain his disease. His societal relations are questioned, despite his being a responsible adult and his contributing to society as a responsible citizen. Through this play the notions of a national consciousness are covertly questioned when the protagonist questions the role of the state in what he deems to be his personal life. However, one of the other character’s life is also shown where he had earlier been diagnosed as HIV+. He lives on public welfare and medical care of the government and the state. Thus, we see here the positive reactions to the state’s intervention in the personal life and health of its citizen. The cycle of public health, welfare and that of execution of its legislation is shown. As a matter of fact, the issue of health and homosexuality has always been a bone of contention amongst legislators and their electorate depending on the dominant from time to time.

The year 2003 was the first year in which the Canadian ‘Community Health Survey’ took into account health related issues of the homosexual community. This was done to compile the reasons and to understand the issues that affected the health of homosexuals, heterosexual and transgendered people. It was conducted in an effort to measure whether the physical preferences would give rise to mental issues, access to health benefits and other stress related issues and whether they were connected to societal norms as a whole. The following graph indicates the differences in the health measures of homosexual and heterosexuals. The following table was

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<sup>59</sup> <http://www.cbc.ca/archives/entry/jailed-for-homosexuality>

constructed to show the number of homosexual population as compared to heterosexual population as pertaining to each province.

<b>Sexual orientation, 2003</b>		
	<b>Homosexual or bisexual</b>	
	Number	% of total population
<b>Total</b>	<b>316,800</b>	<b>1.7</b>
Newfoundland and Labrador	4,100 <sup>E</sup>	1.3 <sup>E</sup>
Prince Edward Island	F	F
Nova Scotia	5,900 <sup>E</sup>	1.1 <sup>E</sup>
New Brunswick	7,200 <sup>E</sup>	1.6 <sup>E</sup>
Quebec	103,400	2.3
Ontario	107,200	1.5
Manitoba	9,600 <sup>E</sup>	1.5 <sup>E</sup>
Saskatchewan	6,600 <sup>E</sup>	1.2 <sup>E</sup>
Alberta	23,400 <sup>E</sup>	1.2 <sup>E</sup>
British Columbia	47,700	1.9
Male	172,600	1.8
Female	144,300	1.5

18-34	139,200	2.0
35-44	101,900	1.9
45-59	75,700	1.2
<sup>E</sup>	Use with caution.	
<sup>F</sup>	Suppressed due to high sampling variability.	

Figure 26: Source: <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/040615/dq040615b-eng.htm>

The results indicated that for some health-related measures, there were significant differences between the heterosexual population and the LGBT population. Among individuals aged 18 to 59, 21.8% of homosexuals and bisexuals reported that they had an unmet health care need in 2003, nearly twice the proportion of heterosexuals (12.7%). Homosexuals and bisexuals were more likely than heterosexuals to find life stressful. 31.4% of homosexuals and bisexuals reported that they were physically active in 2003, compared with 25.4% of heterosexuals.

**Differences in health-related measures for heterosexuals, homosexuals and bisexuals**

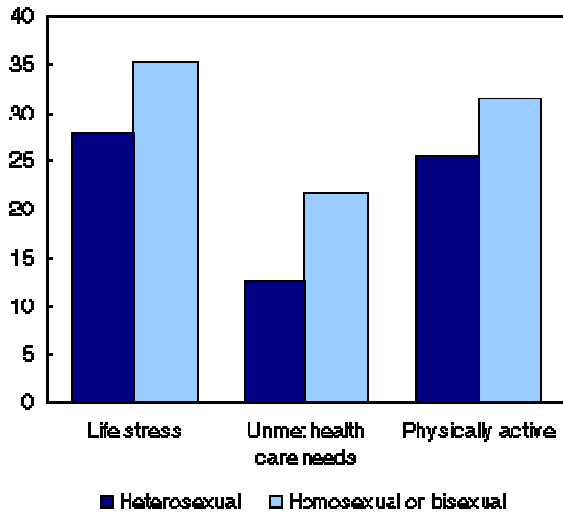


Figure 27: Source: <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/040615/dq040615b-eng.htm>

Social and legal acceptance in the form of same sex unions was seen in Canada when same sex union was legalised in 2005. However, what is still being debated upon is whether it is now these unions would give rise to other health issues for the community. Gens Hellquist, the Executive Director of the Canadian Rainbow Health Coalition, opined the following as being the cause of the poorest health statuses in the nation. He said:

*“Health issues affecting queer Canadians include lower life expectancy than the average Canadian, suicide, higher rates of substance abuse, depression, inadequate access to care and HIV/AIDS.”*

Source: <http://www.crisismagazine.com/2015/animus-towards-gay-sex-means-love-homosexuals>

The possibility of violence both in the form of discrimination or in the form as a release from repression is seen in the homosexual community and are being

addressed to by the community. It has been seen that the LGBT community has been the victims of hate crimes for a long time. All these issues are explored and have a presence in Sky Gilbert's *I Have Aids!*. The plot of the play revolves around the principal characters Prodon and his partner Vidor. They are in a steady relationship and are on the verge of settling down. *I have Aids!* was first enacted in 2009 at 'Buddies in Bad Times Theatre' in Toronto. The setting of the play opens in an 'upscale loft' apartment of the same-sex couple and aims to defy the negative image that had at one time surrounded the homosexual community. It was a popular perception that the gay community had to live in ghettoized areas, where they would have been living in unhygienic conditions and therefore more prone to life threatening diseases. What is also seen is Gilbert's effort to showcase the fact that the homosexual and the transgender community are as responsible as that of any other community despite Prodon having just been diagnosed as being HIV +. When Gilbert wrote the play it was the time when gay activism was nearing its peak and he was indignant at the fact that with the rampant spread of aids, the knowledge of the gay community was not being put to use by the heterosexual community. The play is based on the medical welfare of the gay community along with others of the LGBT community. The role of the nation state is represented in the character of Katy Marshall, the Health Department official. The play can also be seen as an indictment of the prevalent health welfare system where more often than not people of the LGBT community are separated from the heterosexual community and looked at with closer inspection as they are often thought to be more prone to life threatening diseases than others. Prodon points out in the first Act that he was only found out to be HIV + because "... some stupid homophobic doctor in a clinic" gave him an Aids test without even bothering for his permission. While on the one hand it seems to be a blessing in disguise that his illness was found out on time, the very fact that the doctor did not even bother to take his permission points out to a basic human rights violation where the matter of choice over life and death situation is taken away from the individual because he is considered to be different. At the same time we see Prodon's own disdain for the immigrant doctor whom he terms as "not from this country but from a foreign place where they stone homosexuals to death..." (Gilbert 2010:10). While on one level we can understand Prodon's frustration of not being thought of as a responsible adult citizen of the country at the same it is quite apparent that he maintains that people of the homosexual community have a greater degree of freedom

in Canada along with greater human rights and citizenship rights as he feels that the doctor's homophobia arise from the fact that he has been moulded by the policies and the society of a nation where homosexuals are not given even the basic right to live. The above quoted dialogue also points out to the denigration of the citizens of certain 'foreign' countries where homosexuals are not even considered human and are stoned to death like animals. Canada's multicultural environment is seen here as one of the positive features of the nation as it has accepted all kinds of people on the basis of the accepted personal preference as an individual of the society.

While marginalisation and exclusion have for long been based on that of economic factors in case of the protagonist of Gilbert's play we see that it is based on that of cultural and social perceptions of the LGBT community. On the one hand we see that both Prodon and Vidor are people who have been marginalised as people with needs other than what is deemed 'normal' by the society, on the other we see that as individuals they each follow the emotional upheaval that is common to all humanity when they face similar emotions of one's own mortality. At the same time they are each given individual traits that show them as having almost contrasting characteristics from each other. While Prodon is excitable and wholly emotional, his partner Vidor tries to assimilate the fact that his partner is facing imminent death. Reactions of the society at large are shown through that of the character of the community health worker, Katy. When Katy goes on to say that "*It is important for us to speak to people who test positive for HIV*", we realise that the state is intervening into the lives of its citizens through that of state health welfare measures. She then goes on to say "*And that's why I am here*". She is shown as ticking of an itemized list where although she smiles at Prodon we realise that it is almost a mechanical task for her as she goes on to say that "*The public health department loves to see check marks!*". What really seems to irritate Prodon is that she does not treat him as a responsible adult of the state. She almost negates his existence when she asks whether he has called up all his acquaintances and probable sexual partners and warned them about the fact that he is HIV positive. But instead of being tactful she comes straight to the point as to whether he could do it for "us". When asked to clarify by Prodon she goes on to say that she not only means to refer to the acquaintances of Prodon but also to the public health at large. She also points out that they need to get tested as well. It



is here that we see that Gilbert is scoffing at the idea of the state health department where human dignity is being subsumed by that of preconceptions of the state. If such be the case then we see that a lot of the homosexual community have been marginalised on the basis of health and the fact they might lead to greater health problems within the society at large. Katy's constant giggling and smiling is often seen as a macabre attempt of society to connect with the LGBT community as something out of the realm of the ordinary. Yet the very fact that she engages with Prodon immediately after he has been tested positive shows that that the state has been trying to look after each and every of its citizens' health. However, the angst of Prodon spills out when he points out that she is only "protecting other people, mainly straight people and children..." from the spread of his disease. However, as Katy rightly points out that it is against the law to infect anyone knowingly with such a virus, she is propagating the state laws which have been into place to look after the health of the people of the nation. Plays like *I Have Aids* by Gilbert help to highlight the fact that while a lot has been done in the area of health legislation for the citizens. A lot more needs to be done for people of the LGBT community to feel at home and at par in treatment with other majority communities. On the stage the two characters of Prodon and the Health department official are often shown as being on opposite sides of the stage. This physical distance seems to be symbolic of the distance that is felt by Prodon as a citizen of the nation with the apparatuses of the nation which in this case is the health department.



Figure 28: Source: <http://ttdb.ca/shows/i-have-aids/>

On the other hand, a subversion of the nation's sentiments is seen in that of the transgender Booty who is dressed in the garb of a nurse. While the name might be suggestive of carnal desires irrespective of responsibilities of a citizen of the state, what it does show is the connection between the LGBT community and that of their susceptibility to fatal diseases and the nation's need to address them through the state apparatuses. Booty's response to Prodon's diagnosis is that of bacchalian revelry which goes against the very tenets of a rational and ordered nation and state. However, Gilbert's portrayal of his character does bring out that the excesses of Booty although stemming from a warm nature is irrational and disruptive thereby symbolising the citizen who if given unbridled freedom by the nation will chaos and even death to its citizens. An example of the excesses can be seen in the picture of the character as below"



Figure 29: Source: <http://ttdb.ca/shows/i-have-aids/>

Again, the fact that one of the later characters in the play Ron is a beneficiary of the state's health system is seen when he points out that he gets all the benefits from the state. Although he used to feel alienated in his own hometown, in the big city of Toronto he is seen as just being part of the gay community. As Prodon points out in his last big soliloquy that although he doesn't mean to get all political in the end, it is true that everything is 'political'. Despite the sense of alienation in his home town, the anonymity of the city blends with the fact that he is able to find a sense of belonging within his community. At the same time it has been seen that this sense of community has also been linked to that of identity and then national consciousness.

The feeling of social exclusion and marginality has been dealt here in symbols where violence against homosexuals is symbolised as vandalism against their homes. This can also be seen as a direct attack on their person which would otherwise have not taken place if they had been assured a place as equals in a society, despite being given equal status by law and legislation. A measure that they have been

recognised as having equal societal laws can be seen in the fact that Canada is the only nation in the world where even the church voted for the legislation of same-sex marriages. In August 14, 2003, the United Church of Canada voted for the recognition of same-sex unions. It was in July 20, 2005, that Bill C-38, the legislation giving the right to same sex marriages received royal assent and becomes a law. So by 2005 Canada officially becomes the fourth country in the world to legally give the rights to same sex couples the legal, economic and social benefits as per heterosexual couples. Playwrights like Sky Gilbert have been working through these dilemmas to try to mould public opinions to those that are beneficial to the LGBT community. At the same time, it is these public opinions that would influence legislators and thereby help in the legislation of laws. This also has the effect of creating loyal citizens who in the search for equality of human rights and to escape from discrimination from their own countries have been seeking asylum. Nearly 78 countries criminalise same-sex unions. However, Canada's legalising of the same has been seen in a favourable light by many in the arena of international politics. Around 1991-93 Canada was much praised as a humanitarian country where people who faced persecution in the name of gender and sexual orientation were given asylum in the country. However, with the revision of on the Immigration Act in 2012, it was found that LGBT people seeking asylum in Canada would be facing greater hardships. As per a global Round table summit held on 2012 called *Envisioning Global LGBT Human Rights*, it was found that

*In recent years, service agencies, LGBT and HIV/AIDS education and prevention groups have reported increasing numbers of LGBT refugees and immigrants seeking support. The amendments to the federal immigration legislation found in Bill C-31 have raised*

*concerns about its impact on LGBT refugees coming to Canada.*<sup>60</sup>

Thus, we see that with their immigration policies, while earlier marginalities were being reduced, revisions are now widening the gap between rich

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<sup>60</sup> Nick J. Mulé and Erika Gates-Gasse, *Envisioning LGBT Refugee Rights in Canada: Exploring Asylum Issues*, 2012.

immigrants and poor immigrants. Again, the greater number of Aids and HIV positive people has led to greater awareness and Sky Gilbert's play has been at the forefront of bringing about such awareness. When in the last long speech of Prodon, he goes on to berate the people of the affluent, technologically powerful western world he goes on to say that the government along with that of charitable institutions have forgotten or are neglecting the spread of the disease among the resident LGBT community. On the other hand, in order to garner better international opinion they are concerned with the spread of the same disease in impoverished and underdeveloped countries. The scathing criticism that can be seen in this speech is an indictment on the health welfare system of Canada. as the following photograph shows, Prodon feels stifled and bound within the perimeters of his disease as can be seen when he is shown to sit on the symbolical hospital bed. The fact that he is holding and talking in a microphone can be seen as symbol of his wanting to get out and spread his anger and angst against the government's impersonal welfare schemes, according to him.



Figure 30: Source: <http://ttdb.ca/shows/i-have-aids/>

Another thing that strikes the audience is the working of the doorbell to the apartment of Prodon and Vidor in the end. It starts ringing after the stages of

denial, partying and then faith. It starts to play the song 'People' which was a song composed in 1964 by Jule Styne for a Broadway musical. The essence of the song conveys the message of people who need other people, both emotionally and physically and are not cut off from others. This seems to symbolise the relationships that Prodon has not only with his partner Vidor, but also with Booty, Ron and even Katy Marshall of the Health department. Thus, we see that it is almost a microcosm of the various factions of society that make up the life of a homosexual person in Canadian society where he is neither economically denied nor politically persecuted but rather culturally demeaned and neglected through the indifference of the State and the nation. The While in the beginning the bell is broken and is seen as a random act of vandalism as a result of a hate crime.

### ***5. Conclusion:***

This chapter has attempted to point out to the marginalisation that has existed at all levels of Canadian society is being dealt with and being rectified by the government in Canada. With time all marginalised classes and communities are being sought to join the multicultures of Canada whereby a sense of nationality would grow through the auspices of various visual aids including that of theatre. Visual aids have often been sought as being more appropriate to spread the ideology of integration as it is seen to be more effective. In this case theatre has been seen as garnering instantaneous response. Images through theatre have proved to have a great impact over soft power relations between the state and its citizens. While Canada's immediate neighbour, that is, the United States of America is seen as a melting pot which leads to the ultimate identity of its citizens as being that of Americans, it can be seen that with Canada's 'mosaic' a lot of questions regarding 'hyphenated' identities are raised and the 'nay sayers' are having a great voice when it comes to the question of a common national identity. However, it cannot be denied that despite various grievances the subjectivity of the playwright is seen in the self determination of the playwright which has been guaranteed by the state, thereby enabling the playwright to believe that although there are certain lacuna in the sense of national identity as propounded by the national and the state, it has at least been able to safeguard the freedom to create and express through the art forms. This in turn has led to a creative

input that is thought provoking but at the same time helps both the spectators and the playwright to identify with the state as belonging to the same nation.

## Chapter 5:

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### Conclusion

#### Theatre, Ideology and National Consciousness

##### *1. Introduction:*

The preceding chapters had dealt with various aspects of the growth and evolution of a national consciousness in Canada within the matrix of theatre and the images that it produces for the common masses. Before the advent of mass television, theatre was often seen to be the primary source of visual influence apart from cinema. While cinematic productions were thought to be an excellent mode of national propaganda, theatre was seen as a more localized form of propaganda based on more immediate needs and having a greater immediate impact. Therefore the aesthetics of theatre also changed from place to place depending upon the need of the hour of both the 'national' authority as well those who need to subvert this authority. If so, it can be seen that the opinions of Romain Rolland in his book *The People's Theatre*<sup>61</sup> has been justified. He went on to point out that the theatre is of two kinds. The first one belongs to the people and the second one believes in theatre as an art itself. If such is the case then one can see that while one kind of theatre believes in the creation of a new societal order for the people and the changing society, the other believes in the existence of the old order or want a status quo in society where changes or want for any change within society will not get reflected in the theatres of the times.

Maintaining the status quo of the societal rules has always remained the prerogative of the majority power in any political society. In case of Canada it was seen in the English immigrants who soon overtook the French immigrants through sheer numbers. At the same time it cannot be denied that the French section of the Canadian society have been voluble in voicing their opinions and have been quite

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<sup>61</sup> Rolland, Romain (1918), *The People's Theatre*, ed Barrett H. Clark, New York: New York Holt



successful in bringing about political and social changes often based on cultural aesthetics. The whole concept of a nation based upon cultural nuances is created on the premise that shared cultural aesthetics and rituals are a necessity to the creation of a national consciousness. However, this notion was thrown into confusion when multiculturalism became the motto of the Canadian state. It soon became apparent that the authoritative powers wanted it to be the cornerstone of its 'image' in a world increasingly fighting against the status quo of earlier political systems. Not only was the globalised world creating newer power dynamics based on trade and manufacture, the use of technology and its constant evolution has been helping in the dissemination of knowledge of societal structures to such an extent that identity lines has become blurred along with the amalgamation of various cultures. Canada has been no exception. Added to the fact that it has often been termed as a 'young' nation, it has for a long time dealt with an ambiguity in identity due to its being a part of the British colonial venture. This difficulty in creation of a national identity is seen as natural fallout of these circumstances. Unlike Romain Rolland's premise that the State will want to maintain its own existence in the 'petrified' form so that the nation remains under its bureaucratic power, we see that the Canadian state has endeavoured to create a new identity away from the past that was already there, in the hope that a new identity and a national consciousness can be created based on newer icons of nationalistic tendencies. The final chapter of this thesis will be bringing together the threads of the emerging cosmopolitanism and nationalism based upon the newer ideals of multiculturalism and multilingualism which has paradoxically become a mainstay in creating a national consciousness of Canada as a nation. In this chapter the agency of theatre as being an important part of economic nationalism due to its 'soft power' is validated.

Cultural nationalism in Canada, through multicultural policies, has gone a long way in promoting the ideals of a nation based on a shared sense of history for every new wave of immigrants who had decide to make it their home after leaving their own countries of origin. This national ideal of cosmopolitanism as a result of official multiculturalism has also been criticised somewhat as often letting perpetrators of cultural dominance within a community getting away scot free. However, it has had more positive effects than negative ones since it allows different

groups of people to live their own lives based on their own perceptions and beliefs thereby reiterating the fact that Canada as a nation is based on the premise of cosmopolitanism and multiculturalism. At the same time through this chapter the fact that not only has there been a concentrated effort in building up economic nationalism, but also cultural nationalism through theatre will be looked into. While theatre has repeatedly been used to protest against the solidifying of societal and cultural norms which are often based on economic practices of the society yet at the same time theatre in Canada has been put to use to create cohesiveness in a hitherto divided society based mainly upon economic hierarchy. At the same time theatre as a disappearing form has emerged within the virtual space of the internet. Within this space it has been able to create ripples that are also affecting political thought processes today due to its far reaching effects. While localised theatre has an immediate effect, within the sphere of the internet it is recorded and therefore has a rippling effect which lingers for a longer time. At the same time, the information obtained from the internet help playwrights to shape their plays to the demands or grievances of the people in a more artistic and visually appealing way in which the aesthetics of theatre are taken and altered by taking into account the various cultural and social ramifications for the targeted audience. It is here that one notices that literary subjectivism becomes a complement to social control both for the nation and the state along with that of the various multicultural communities.

A further fact that needs to be noted is that in the globalised world, the internet has become an omniscient presence and transfers information and news at great speed. Therefore, political disturbances in any part of the world get reported immediately and have immediate reactions. This immediacy finds a reflection in the cultural arena. Theatrical productions in Canada have acted as mediums of political and social caution and this power of theatre has been supplemented by the use of the internet. While a localised audience sought, with the help of the internet theatre has been able to have a widespread audience on immediate issues. Plays by Leroux, Gilbert and Hayden have been able to create awareness about localised Canadian issues even outside their country due to internet. Geographical proximity in garnering attention as regards theatre is being slowly done away with and this has resulted in a wider viewership of theatre. Although, purist might decry the relevance of theatre in

the globalised world, it is seen that the newer evolving form of theatre is essential for its survival in this world of instantaneous images. At the same time, theatre is able to fulfil its role as a medium of transferring localised images based on localised issues.

## ***2. Theatre, Aesthetics, cosmopolitanism and belonging:***

Theatre when seen within the spectrum of mimesis points out to the similitude in society that are being portrayed through a reality that is 'twice removed' as opined by Aristotle. However, this in no way takes away attention from contemporary situations that are being portrayed through theatre. In case of Canada, it has been seen that the aesthetics of theatre have played an important part in building up the image of the nation amongst its citizens in a way that has moulded public opinion for a long time. Mimesis as seen through theatre operates at a level where theatre is part of the oral tradition that is constantly adding to the flux of icons of national identity. Since Plato believed that mimesis was an obsolete oral culture (Wulf and Gebauer 1995: 45), it can be observed that mimesis in the form of theatre has long been seen as the repository of oral cultures. In the case of Canada, it can be seen to represent oral cultures of various communities and thus, would often be represented through community theatres. This would give voice to the pluralistic democratic aspect of the Canadian nation. Theatre therefore, becomes representational of a national attribute, which Canada has been nursing as one of the primary indicators of its identity as a nation in the international arena. Theatrical aesthetics have now been amalgamated with the ideas of cosmopolitanism and that of multicultural existence in Canada. This in turn has added to further development of these very ideologies. Therefore we find the co-existence of community theatre along with that of mainstream theatre including that of political theatre within the Canadian cultural spectrum.

Another aspect that needs to be studied is the existence of performance in terms of theatrical productions in the times of *electronic data interpretation*. The latter can be seen in the constant bombardment of images through television and the internet. Structurally studying them, we can see that while in the case of other older

nations of the western world, building up of national consciousness can be studied as a simple matter of diachronic development. In the case of Canada, it has taken a longer process of synchronic development that would often lead to a conflicting sense of national identity in the former generations. However, with time it is also evolving in a more orderly manner. Simplistically speaking, a diachronic study of the development of identity rests on the chronological development of cultural identity. However, if a synchronic study of the national identity of a Canadian citizen is ever carried out, then we would see the bombardment of various icons, ideals and ideologies along with that of cultural differentiation being simultaneously present. Looking at theatre through the lens of synchronicity we find Marshall McLuhan's 'Laws of the Media' also being validated to some extent. He points out that in the age of electronic media; we are all being inundated with various cultural images simultaneously. He points out that since electric speeds of information constitute a sort of simultaneous structuring of experience, synchrony, representing all directions at once, is, as it were, acoustic; whereas the diachronic, representing one stage at a time, is visual in its analytical pattern (McLuhan 1975: 74). If such be the case, then it is natural that the space provided by theatre should be used to create a national identity that is ironically being represented as diachronous. Emblems, symbols and icons of Canadian origin have been put forward in Leroux's play. Therefore it become apparent when the Pope is brought forward that Quebec as a province is being addressed due to its primary Catholic religious sentiments.

The electronic media has had a lot of impact on theatre especially in the postmodern age. It has been seen that the whole concept of narration has been flowing from one medium into another and theatre is no exception. Looking closely at the background of these theatrical productions we see that with the onset of mass media, the properties used to maintain a state of verisimilitude have always corresponded with the contemporary existing mass media. Thus, in *Les Belle Seours* by Trembley, one observes a radio playing in the background. Again, in Gilbert's play *I Have Aids!* It is noticed that a modern household with all modern appliances, while in that of Hayden's play the very absence of modern mass media is striking. Electronic media has been used by the nation state to create a national consciousness through the auspices of cultural persuasion. Integration amongst the various multicultures is

sought through a few `Canadian` icons, like that of territoriality and economic plurality. At the same time, the mass media has been used by the upper echelons to create Canada as a symbol of liberal democratic nationality where the existence of multiplicities of ethnicities is promoted as a welcome notion in direct contrast to that of its historical past. It is here that we see theatre making a parody of this public propaganda. In Canada theatre has made an effort to take these very principles and portray through its visual medium an antithetical scenario that has often been proved right. Thus, Gilbert`s and Boucher`s play make use of these elements to point out to the deficiencies in a nationalistic society. Trembley makes a direct allusion to this when he points out through the singing of ``O Canada!`` at the end of his play that although the citizens of each province might have nationalistic instincts yet the very fact they are different geographical entities have also added to the divisive nature of a common national identity. It was after the 1970s and with the establishment of the Canada Council that we see a more pluralistic viewpoint of Canadian theatre. Only Quebec had continued with its nationalistic tendencies as showcased through its theatre. The rest of Canadian theatre had concentrated on the growing diversification of its changing demography. This was further aided by the state when we see the amount of state sponsorship given to various cultural activities to staunch American electronic influence through the mass media. Patrick Leroux`s trilogy of plays titled *Ludwig and Mae* have aptly brought out these through the delivery man and other societal symbols. Leroux`s plays have also pointed out to the importance of visuals as a medium of constant influence. Audiences are made aware of the growing cosmopolitanism in Canadian society through the various characters that has been paradoxically imbued with `Canadian` traits. The audience is made aware of the fact that technology has seeped into every aspect of our lives and has yet has failed in attributing a meaning to life. It is seen in the character of Ludwig where he is an unemployed engineer whose only solace and balance in life is begot through his relationship with Mae. The postmodern traits of characters that have seemingly no relation to the play yet are seen as being representative of the times, is portrayed in the plays by Leroux to showcase the crisis that has been germinating within the façade of normality in society.

Cosmopolitanism is seen through the admixture and the coexistence of seemingly opposing characters throughout Leroux's play. Emotional turmoil of the characters are portrayed through varied characters like the Cow, the Pope and the Muse in Leroux's plays. Using the concepts of Dia Da Costa<sup>62</sup>, it is apparent that theatre in the case of Leroux aptly embraces the concept of each character speaking for its own class. If taken in the context of contemporary global economy we see that while Ludwig profession as an engineer points out to the failure of technology in bringing people closer together, Mae's profession as an actor also denies her the satisfaction of expressing her real feeling except in her last monologue. The dystopia symbolised through the characters equally condemn modern globalised society, yet at the same time condemn past actions as having led to the dystopic contemporary world of the characters. Looked at from the point of view of national identity and a sense of national consciousness, we see from each of the characters here that the concept of the nation is experienced from the personal level as something that is intricately connected to the political economy of the country. This in turn has been based upon political and economical policies of years past. In the case of Canada till before the Second World War these policies were primarily based upon the imperialistic designs of the two colonising powers, that is, the British and the French. However, while the French believed in settlement through integration with the local populace from the beginning, we see that with the British it was matter of settling and colonising. The waves of immigrants and their cultural impact are seen through the presence of the Chinese delivery guy in the play. On the other hand, it can also be seen that this same character is also a part of the contemporary situation of an influx of immigrants who have been welcomed by Canada in recent times. Canada as a nation has made efforts to integrate these immigrants within its national ambit and has been quite successful in doing so. Although due to the auspices of multicultural policies hyphenated identities abound in Canada, yet it cannot be denied that recent immigration and re-settlement policies have helped the settlement of immigrants within a national coterie.

While the early Greeks had insisted on cosmopolitanism as a part of everyday life, it is a continual realisation that with the emergence of Canada as a

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<sup>62</sup> Costa, Dia Da (2012). "Learning from Labour: the space and work for activist theatre", in *Contemporary South Asia*, 20:1, 119-133, DOI: [10.1080/09584935.2011.646073](https://doi.org/10.1080/09584935.2011.646073)

multicultural nation, cosmopolitanism is now playing a bigger role in the formation of a national consciousness. It is here that we see theatre has been able to showcase various segments of society and portray their individual problems as well. Starting with Pollock's play where we see the innate wish of wanting to establish a cosmopolitan society by Major Walsh; in *Blood Relations* the audience are made to realise the coexistence of the Irish Doctor as an example of its evolution despite the racial overtones. Later on in Boucher's play we see that women comes together to reach out to the audience. They negate all their differences through the portrayal of animate and inanimate women from various walks of life and point out to the generic discrimination that is faced by their gender. Cosmopolitanism is seen here in the very attempt by all females to collectivize their grievances and express them in a space that would entail the presence of all genders as well as invite outside views. The theatrical space is therefore used as a political space where the clash of prevalent Canadian values and that of evolving Canadian values are put to view for the discerning audience to contemplate and therefore provoke change within society.

### ***3. Theatre and the concept of national 'space':***

Theatre has become a space that is divided to visually represent an image whereby the audience may be able to identify with the performances on stage. As McLuhan pointed out in his seminal essay in "Laws of the Media" that visual space is the only space that is divisible, we realise that it is again through theatre that national identities belonging to space are created. Resulting demarcations can be seen in the representation of various communities and that of the urban rich and the rural poor. Also the whole politics of *ghettoization* due to misinterpretation of multicultural practices and a continual change in cultural demography (due to the constant influx of immigrants) is represented through theatrical spaces. It is here that we see political theatre and theatre as activist becoming one, in their effort to give voice to the marginal and the subaltern in society.

*Political geography* has had a great impact on theatre in Canada. This, in turn, has added to the change in the treatment of issues within the spectrum of

national consciousness in Canada. it has been seen that with the change in rural urban demography, the sensibilities of nationality and national consciousness have also undergone a change. Migration within the country along with the change in the demography of migrant population has led to changing national values and icons. While earlier it was seen that Canadian values were propounded through descriptions of nature and the vastness of the territory, in recent times, especially after the 1980s, with the change in migrant demography we see that the concept of a multicultural domain has been gaining in prominence. Rural and urban myths were de-mystified and instead of Canada being portrayed as a vast country with harsh geographical conditions that has to be either conquered or reluctantly accepted, we see in recent theatre Canada as the basis of a cosmopolitan urban space that is connected to the rest of the globalised world and is slowly being permeated with the economic conditions of that globalised world. This in turn is being seen as changing ideological concepts of territory and national identity. This is seen in accordance with Parekh's contention that for the pre-modern western and non-western world territory has played an incidental role in the shaping of political identities. A polity was distinguished by its way of life (Parekh 2000:179). If such be the case, then, we realise that in the pre-modern world it was the traditions and the cultural way of life that determined the identity of a race or a group/ community of people. The nomadic existence of tribes ensured that loyalty and identity were based on conditions other than territoriality. On the other hand we see that in the modern world, territoriality is the crux on which identities are based. People adhering to the geographical limitations and territoriality were thought to be the norm in their practice of national identity.

The influx of migrants had at first rendered them as ineligible to be national citizens. In the same way, the First Nations had also been questioned in regard to identity. However, postmodern practices of acquiring citizenship based on the showcasing of loyalty to the adopted country have gained prominence within the migrant community to garner loyalty and a feeling of national consciousness among the people. Thus, we see that ironically, the Canadian nation has been quite successful in garnering a sense of loyalty and fostering a sense of national consciousness whereby diversity is encouraged through policies of multiculturalism. Theatre has been quite successful in encompassing this diversity in a way that has fostered this



sense of a liberal and diverse society, where urban-rural divisions and provincial divisions are overlooked in favour of a national consciousness. Parekh's contention can be taken into account here again when we realise that the premise he makes is appropriate for the contemporary state of Canadian national consciousness. He goes on to say point out that the divisive nature of the strife between the province of Quebec with the federal structure is not so much a geographical divide, but one based a "national society or a territorially concentrated cultural community" (Parekh 2000: 189).

Thus, it is found that the changing values of the Canadian nation have also had an impact on theatre when seen in the context of political geographical boundaries. Referring to one of my previous chapters we see this is apparent in the play by Sharon Pollock- *Walsh*. In *Walsh*, we see that the feeling of belonging and nationality is only attributed to a certain geographical territory, that is, Canada. When the asylum seeking aboriginal tribe from the United States of America are denied basic rights, they are all based on the premise that they do not belong within the geographical boundaries of Canada. Again, the only thing that separates them from immediate annihilation is the fact that they have not crossed back into the territory of the USA. Later on one notices that this same premise of geographical boundaries is changed in Drew Hayden Taylor's play *Girl Who Loved Her Horses*. In that play we see the characters of the First Nations people remain the same, yet the setting of the play changes from literal geographical borders to that of mental borders. Demarcations are made on the basis urban-rural divide and the resulting economic differentiations. Theatre reveals the changing nationalistic idioms that have evolved in Canada through the years. While earlier it was the strife between the colonial powers that created demarcations and inequalities, in the recent globalised age we see that the demarcations are based on the perception of nationality in the international arena as an independent nation. However, in Canadian theatre we do get to notice the continued existence of the influence of the two principle colonial nations even today, that is France and Britain. It can however, be seen that with the proximity that Canada shares with the United States of America, the influence of this neighbour has also been profound especially due to the prevalence of the electronic media. Added to that has been the inter-dependence of these two countries based on trade. Therefore, we

see that the political geography of Canada has had a great influence upon theatre and vice- versa.

The *use of space* is seen in the theatrical stage through that of the intermingling of the *domestic space* and that of the *public and professional space*. In the case of Gilbert's play we see that the domestic space is shown in the beginning in an aesthetically pleasing manner. However, this domestic space is soon invaded by a representative of the State as shown through the entrance of the Health Worker. This invasion of domestic space is seen as being symptomatic of state policies that affect individual thought and choice. Thus, we notice how space becomes important in the matrix of national consciousness.

At the same time we see that language is also used to denote space within theatre. In the case of Tremblay's play *Les Belles Seours*, we see that it was first produced in French and then later translated. Even, though this thesis deals with the translated text it is apparent to the audience that the discourse it contains is an amalgamation of all the codes and symbols that are a product of its culture and space. Thus, we see that the discourse contained in Tremblay's play is based on the knowledge and hierarchies that have been prevalent culturally and socially at the national level and which is being now manifested in the domestic through the female characters of the play.

Theatrical space is not only physical but also psychological. When we take into account Judith Thompson's play *The Crackwalker*, from the very title the spectator is intimated of the narrow edge on which the lives and thoughts of each of the characters are balancing upon. Each of the characters is teetering on a knife edge space, where the slightest infraction from the line would mean the deletion of the space between sanity and insanity. Symptomatic of society as a whole Thompson's play is seen to showcase the various cracks through which the state has failed to redress the grievances of its citizens. Hegemony is seen within the characters. Yet there is a constant negotiation between the various characters where none of the

characters lose their individuality in the play. Authentic language belonging to each group and community is used in the dialogues to point out to this negotiation. Each of the character is 'heard' by the spectators and therefore theatre has been able to fulfil its primary role of creating awareness among the citizens of the Canadian nation. Not only have the audience been made aware of the fate of the various characters, they are made to vicariously participate in their lives and therefore become part of the negotiating relationship between the state and the various groups and communities. This dialogic interaction also helps to create a sense of kindred kinship amongst the spectators. Dia Da Costa points out that activist theatre is a significant space of contemporary oral culture, subaltern voice and vernacular vocabularies (Costa 2012: 120). If such be the case then is apparent that the marginal and the subaltern are the primary characters in all theatre that aims to create a national consciousness, for theatre is inclusive in its attempt to mould the audience.

Through the perusal of various Canadian plays in their context it has been observed that with the use of language a gendered space is also created. Since the interpretation of meaning is subjective and through the use of language, we can see that language can be used to create a space for diversity not only in theatrical conceptions of marginality between communities but also through the tropes of female marginality. This is a running theme in *The Fairies are Thirsty*. Female subjectivity is lost within the patriarchal discourse of language as power. On the other hand, Boucher's graphic but staccato mode of dialogue delivery by the three characters including that of the 'inanimate' statue shows how playwrights have been trying to break this mode of differences through spaces and language. While theatre uses gestures and body to create a space through mimesis, it cannot be doubted that these very same gestures and mimesis itself is based on the fact that they all follow societal norms that have been preset as a result of patriarchal practices. Even the concept of national consciousness seems at times to be much dependent upon this aspect. The sharing of a national value system is always imposed on a primary basis upon the females of a community. Being part of the societal system of transferring cultural and political practices through marriage and children women have been the receptacle for all efforts in building up a national consciousness. In this case again we see that that not only is the concept of a growing national consciousness a part of the

cultural discourse, at the same time it forms a big part of the political economy of a country. Canada has not been an exception. The concepts of space, language, community and gender discourse have all intermingled in the bid to foster a national consciousness. The diversity in the play and various postmodern devices of the play often leave the spectator questioning and exploring the values described in the play. This is in concurrence with Stephan Chinna's assertion that in the postmodern age that that the very diversity, in terms of specificity and context, creates a situation where agency can operate – either during the event, after the event or at a later date (Chinna 2003: 177). Thus, the spectator then becomes 'empowered' and it is this same spectator who would then be exercising his vote at the ballot as a citizen. Thus, theatre here acts not only as an agent of protest but also as an agent of change although its effect would not be immediate.

While migration is seen to deal directly with the concept of space we see there has been a continual attempt to re-engage boundaries and enclose spaces. While a physical manifestation is seen in the reservation in Taylor's play, it is also seen in the gendered boundaries in Tremblay's play as well. On the other hand migration happens to be a contentious issue in the globalised world. In contemporary times it is prevalent in all foreign policy formulations. Recent migrant situations in the Middle East affecting Europe have been splayed all over world news. However, with regards to Canada, we have seen that the international image of Canada as a nation is also based upon it being seen as a benevolent and liberal nation for all asylum seekers. Therefore, diasporic communities have been given a lot of importance within the Canadian national fabric. What stymies one's perception is whether these diasporas are ever able to portray and integrate Canadian national ethos through a national consciousness. When taking the examples of the texts discussed through this thesis we see that to a lot of extent Canada has been successful in protecting the rights of its Diaspora and its minorities. Thus, the Irish doctor is able to practice medicine, while the homophobic doctor in Gilbert's play is also able to continue with his life.

But the development of a national consciousness clashes directly with the contemporary notions of globalization. As Sara Kalm points out that while

'Globalization' as a vision of unbounded space and uninhibited mobility is one of the most powerful images in our geographical and social imaginations (Kalm 2008: 17), it is in direct conflict with the notions of a national consciousness bound within the space of territoriality. Globalisation on the other hand is a postmodern phenomenon which entails a lessening of cultural differences based on the motif of ease of access and visibility. The very notion of the 'Other' in cultural spheres, are being blurred. Visibility and constant bombardment of images have made the 'Other' a norm. In this case we see nation states as being pro-active participants through immigration as well as through international diplomatic communications. Recent instances can be seen in the cabinet of the present Prime Minister of Canada, Justin Trudeau, where multicultural ethos has been embraced and where inclusiveness of various cultures is seen to be a norm rather than an exception.

#### ***4. Economic nationalism:***

Diasporic intermingling as well as the very concept of diaspora is based on the notions of political economy. While political persecution has been the reason for many an exodus to Canada from its inception, it cannot be denied the atmosphere of a stable political economy has helped immensely as an impetus for the growth of a Canadian national identity. While mostly a liberal pluralistic country, the Canadian government has had a great impact on the economic policies of its nation. While the state promotes *laissez faire* policies when it comes to the notion of economy and the movement of wealth, the policies regarding immigration and diaspora along with the policies of the government regarding various social and cultural welfare schemes have become a part of the political economy of the country. In such a scenario we see that theatre can often be seen as the true reflection of a society that can be fragmented at any moment on economic issues despite the political will of the state. Nationalism therefore becomes a tool not only for geographical unity but also a basis for political and economic equitability. Theatre then becomes the trope through which the effect of political economy is showcased through the instances of the community or the individual affected. However, this self-perception is also affected by the external factors like a common welfare scheme targeted as a specific segment which utilizes public funding but has different implication for

different people. Thus we see in the protagonist in *I have Aids!* and *The Crackwalker* have different reactions to the policies of the Health Ministry. While Theresa in the latter play belongs to a native family and has been at the receiving end of the Health Ministry's policies for public welfare, she does not seem to like the fact that the notion of choice had been taken away from her. She talks about how the "sasha workers are always goin on about trus and that" (Thompson 1980: 134) in a manner which shows that had she had a choice in the matter she would have avoided all contacts with the same people. Aggressiveness seeps into the stance of her husband Alan when he goes on to say that "Nobody don't tell me what to do and nobody don't tell me how to take care of my baby never" (Thompson 1980: 169). His incoherent ranting against the social workers shows a wobbling system that is trying its best to cope with the various demands of individual wants. On the other hand the former play show the character of the Health official Kate pointing out to the protagonist to warn all his acquaintances of his disease so that the benefit of the larger group is taken into account. In both the cases it cannot be denied that help was needed by both the aggrieved parties and that it was the state that had stepped in to work for the larger benefit. However, it can also be seen that it was the socio-economic conditions of the characters themselves that had led to the clash between the two different groups. The state worked within its authority to provide for the welfare of its citizens. Thus theatre was able to showcase the sides of both the parties in way that has had a lasting impression upon the audience.

Economic nationalism can also be seen in the play of Sharon Pollock *Walsh*, where the initial reaction against the migrating Cree tribe was both cultural as well as economical. While on the one hand, the indigenous people were thought to be culturally lower, it was the thought of sharing economic resources with them that led to a clash between the dominant British power and the immigrating native tribe. This can again be seen in Drew Hayden Taylor's play, *Girl Who Loved Her Horses*, where the character of William is willing to indulge in corrupt practices despite being offered welfare measures. His association of governmental welfare with that of societal status is directly a result of the continued influence of the Indian Act which is one of the primary acts that dominate relations between the Canadian nation and aboriginal people. This is seen to corroborate Jean Baudrillard's assertion of the

postmodern world where he asserts that we have reached a stage in social and economic development in which 'it is no longer possible to separate the economic or productive realm from the realms of ideology or culture, since cultural artefacts, images, representations, even feelings and psychic structures have become part of the world of the economic' (Connor 1989: 51).

### ***5. Canadian national identity and cultural protectionism:***

Canadian national consciousness has also been shaped through education over the years based on specific needs of politically dominant groups of the times. Therefore, while in Quebec education was based on the needs of an agrarian French Catholic society with traditional values and patronage, the rest of Canada was influenced by the Eurocentric values of the economically dominant British settlers. On the whole, the education and existence of aboriginal people had been historically neglected with the political and social sphere of Canada. Kennelly points out in her article regarding education in Canada, that race has been a central determining factor. This can be seen clearly in the traumatic history of education for Aboriginal peoples in Canada. The very conception of citizenship explicitly excluded Aboriginal peoples (Kennelly 2006: 545). Aboriginal people were seen as outside the ambit of citizenship as they would not historically conform to dominant cultural practices. With the influx of the colonizing forces within Canada, aboriginal people were sought to be brought within the influence of the dominant European forces of the French and the British. We see that during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Canadian Indian Residential School system was established to politically and culturally assimilate aboriginal people<sup>63</sup>. These were schools that were funded by the Indian Act. The Indian Act is considered to be the primary agreement on which all relationship between the aboriginal people and that of the nation and the state would be based on. Although passed in 1876, this Act is still in function with various amendments from time to time. The primary function of the act was the definition of aboriginals as "Indians" and therefore given an identity and political status of being either 'registered' or 'status' Indians. Ironically, it can be seen that if an aboriginal left his or her "status", it was only then that they were allowed to take part in the primary role of the citizen as being allowed to vote. This was a

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<sup>63</sup> Indian Act 1985. For more information see <http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/i-5/>

practice even as late as the 1960. Within its ambit fall all social, political and cultural agreements with the government of Canada. Thus, national education was a big issue in the Indian Act.

Schools established under the various earlier acts were therefore thought to be spaces for “cultural genocide” or where indigenous culture was mitigated early in childhood through cultural assimilation resulting in a nationality based on common ideological and political principles. Therefore they were debarred from political existence within Canada where their cultural affiliations were a hallmark of their identity rather than their political existence as citizens of the nation. National consciousness was void when it came to the people Aboriginal origins. It was only when they were politically recognised as being a part of the “First Nations” that they gained political and national recognition. This is quite apparent through the contrast as shown in Sharon Pollock’s play *Walsh* and Drew Hayden Taylor’s *Girl Who Loved Her Horses*. While in the former, aboriginals were displaced people who were disenfranchised citizens and therefore even denied the right to life, in the latter play they had been brought into the ambit of nationality and therefore were aware of a national consciousness. Gellner’s definition of nationalism asserts that nationalism is, essentially, the general imposition of a high culture on society, where previously low cultures had taken up the lives of the majority (Gellner 1983: 57). Therefore, the dominance of the colonial powers as regards culture was seen to be that of “high” culture and that of the indigenous people as “low” cultures. While in *Walsh* we notice how each of the characters undergo changes as result of their cultures coming together, on the other hand we see the struggle of the new generation of aboriginals in Taylor’s play struggling to come in terms with a newer way of life that could turn violent at any moment despite the veneer of civilization. This is ironically shown through one of the primary characters who has moved out of the reservation in order to assimilate in the ‘high’ culture of the urban, educated sphere of the Canadian citizen. Although he is now an educated man, the character of Ralph wants to become a policeman. Violence, culture and poverty are shown to go hand in hand in the play. On one side we see the natives of the reserve being bombarded with an alien culture shown through the metaphor of a rich “American’ wanting to draw a shark on his boat. On the other side we see how this play imparts knowledge of traditional Inuit culture through dialogues. However, the play is able to showcase the enormity of



cultural assimilation through the character of William where his ignorance of traditional culture is apparent despite his having grown up within a reservation. When Ralph talks about the Inuit tradition of carving on walls, William's cultural ignorance is seen when he asks "What wall? Pink Floyd's "The Wall"? The big one they have in China?" (Taylor 1988:158). For the character of William, everything can be seen in the postmodern condition of culture and education as being commercial and therefore a part of economy. This indictment of national education is seen through the medium where ironically global knowledge or knowledge of the "Other" becomes more familiar than knowledge of the "Self". Hayden makes use of theatre as a medium to educate and inculcate ethnic values within the new generations. Thus, education becomes both a political space for protest as well as for cultural integration. This is reflected in the very title of the play which says that it is a "One- Act play for young audiences". Hayden in the Introduction to the play pointed out that during the original run of *Girl Who Loved Her Horses*, Theatre Direct and I received a strong response from schoolchildren. They found something they could relate to in either the Horse itself, Danielle-the little girl-or William (Taylor 1988: 153).

Cultural protectionism was therefore sought in the later years when the Indian Act was amended by the aboriginal people. It was only with the inclusion of multiculturalism in policies that inclusiveness also became a part of national consciousness. This was also a result of Canada's own consciousness were it was facing an onslaught of American culture through tools of globalisation like mass media technology. Commercial and non-commercial aspects of culture became a part of the national fabric due to the influences of postmodern global ethos.

## **6. Conclusion:**

A study of the various theatres produced in Canada during the last few developed a national consciousness that has been able to accept the multicultural ethos of the Canadian nation. As per the research hypothesis posited, that is

- The effect of the growth of national consciousness can be seen upon Canadian political theatre.
- Modern theatre after 1960 has helped in the cohesion of national identity despite the multicultural nature of the nation.

it was found that the effect of the Quiet Revolution on theatre as a political tool has been substantial. The influence of theatre has been profound both during the Quiet Revolution as well as after it. On the other hand the Quiet Revolution has had a great impact on the political, cultural and social landscape of Quebec. The cry for separatism was voiced louder during this movement. Theatre has been a part of the political protest of Quebec as well as part of the fabric of society that has been working to criticise and reform the ills of contemporary society. This also answers the research question of “Whether the Quiet Revolution had an impact on the growth of political theatre after the 1960s in Canada and especially in Quebec” and has been elucidated in Chapter 2 of this thesis.

Again, theatre has been indispensable in this effort as it projects images which are both prevalent or which are sought to be popularised by communities to bring it into common parlance. Various hurdles are however, present in the creation of a single national consciousness. With time and especially after the official Multicultural Act, diversity has been celebrated as part of nationality and national consciousness in Canada. Thus, regionalism, the provincial – federal divide, religion, language and ethnic diversity have all been addressed through theatre. The repetitions of images through drama have helped to codify certain symbols as national and succeeded in creating a national consciousness within the vast Canadian nation. Culture is being used now as a means to bring about a social and national cohesion which had hitherto been absent in the Canadian context. The absence was a result of the continual tussle for political power amongst the founding ‘nations’, that is, the English and the French. At the same time it becomes obvious that natives of the country were unable to bring about this sense of national consciousness as there was no cohesion among the various tribes and clans. From the very beginning there was a truncated concept of ‘Canada’ as a nation as well as the various sides of its nationality. Theatre formed a part of an oral tradition that would try to make sense of

this new and truncated form of nationalism that was being formulated at that time. As a matter of fact, theatre was successful to a large extent in not only being a tool of colonisation and 'civilisation' but also as a medium of harnessing a sense of belonging and identity created through the image and symbol of Canada as a specific territory with its own unique and idiosyncratic brand of nationalism.

Protest against existing, as well as previous wrongs, have been highlighted through theatre. It has become the medium through which the playwrights have thought to influence not only the masses but also the niche audience where political power often resides in the form of economic power. At the same time, theatre has been a great medium through which the various classes and segments have been given a voice of their own where they can be heard by the people at large. While most politically inclined playwrights go out of their way to point out to social wrongs and political helplessness the visual imagery of theatre has helped the spectators at large to somehow identify with the grievances of their own community as well as address perceived public wrongs by that community. Marginality is inextricably linked to the concept of society and identity that the society confers upon people. It is a state of social exclusion whereby certain sections of the population are relegated to the fringes of society and are often overlooked when the wellbeing of the nation is accounted for. This would in turn lead to a feeling of dissociation from the political, social and cultural norms and mores of the nation and a sense of identity in opposition to that of a national identity is created within the marginalised group. It is this sense of dissociation that often leads to the concept of separatism. Thus, we find that marginality and identity are the two sides of the same coin. Theatre has been successful in Canada in portraying marginality in a way which had hitherto been hidden within the precepts of multiculturalism. Marginalisation due to gender, sex and poverty have been showcased through theatre in an effort to bring the marginalised within the mainstream of Canadian national consciousness.

Enumerating the research question as stated below it can be seen that political theatre has been an influential agency in evoking a sense of national consciousness in Canada since the 1960s. The research questions are:

- The question of national identity as espoused and debated upon by the post 1960s political theatre scene in Canada.
- Whether the Quiet Revolution had an impact on the growth of political theatre after the 1960s in Canada and especially in Quebec?
- Whether public policies like that of the Bilingual Act, Bill 101 and the acts of the Federal Department of Justice have deeply affected cultural and gender diversities (especially in Aboriginal cultures and people outside the peripheries of mainstream society) and have been reflected in the modern political theatre of Canada.
- The effect of separatist politics on Canadian theatre after 1960.

All these questions have been studied through the view of Canadian political theatre and their effectiveness in garnering a sense of nationality and national consciousness in Canada have been shown through successive plays and their effect on the audience. Placed within the context of the developing art form of political *theatre as protest theatre*, the effect of contemporary issues such as unemployment and discrimination on political opinion of the masses has been seen. While discrimination regarding identity is at the very root of nationhood and nationality, a gendered view of political identity can be seen in certain plays. Powerful feminist dramatists like Pol Pelletier whose seminal play *Joy (Joie)*, along with Denise Boucher whose play, *The Fairies Are Thirsty*, are seminal in their espousing of topics that have national relevance and thereby evoke a sense of sharing among citizens.

Holledge and Tomkins point out that the newer exponents of the arts are more concerned with the political, with the creation of new intellectual subjectivities, with the corporeal reality of the performing female body and with the commodification of women and others in the light of the globalisation of cultures. (Holledge and Tomkins 2010:39). These plays have often been brought to the forefront to protest and demand for the secularization of the workplace and welfare measures regarding women in the Canadian social and political landscape (both in French and British Canada).

*Effect of the Quiet Revolution* on theatre has been profound. Issues such as growing unemployment within the educated classes have created a furore after the Quiet Revolution in 1960 in Quebec. While language had been the primary reason for the growing unrest and protests against the federal government, other issues such as welfare measures and separatist ideologies have gradually entered into the consciousness of the people, especially in the predominantly French speaking province of Quebec. Theatre, as a result, also changed with the changing scenario. Thus, we see that Canadian political theatre has been seminal in portraying a national consciousness that has evolved over time.

With time it has been noticed that while theatre had earlier been used simply as an ideological apparatus in the colonizing ventures of the founding nations, it has now become amalgamated in the cultural sense of a national consciousness. National consciousness in Canada has evolved from that of a 'two-nation' country to that of a multicultural despite strife between the founding nations. Economic liberalisation and the apprehension of over dependence on the United States of America have gone a long way in helping it to evolve a national consciousness based on a cultural consensus. Development of a multicultural nation has also been ridden with some criticism, yet it cannot be doubted that this very concept has become a part of national consciousness of the Canadian nation. Theatre has been able to portray such a multicultural with the help of governmental policies, such as the Massey Commission report. Thus, Canada is now a nation where its citizens are able to showcase the interests of their communities through various forms of theatre, including that of the diasporas, LGBT and localised community theatre.

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