**Joceyln Maclure - “Narratives and Counter-Narratives of Identity in Quebec” in Gagnon (ed) Quebec: State and Society 3rd ed. (2004)**

\*This argument is expounded at length in Maclure, Quebec Identity: The Challenge of Pluralism (2003). This summary started with the article but wound up drawing on some important material that was in the book but not the article as well.

**Thesis:**

Quebec is a community of plurivocal and dissensual conversation about what the nation is and how its historical experience should be narrated. Two primary narratives has competed with each other – melancholic nationalism and anti-nationalism/cosmopolitanism.

**Main Arguments:**

The nation cannot be separated from its narrati9on, and narration of historical experience is fundamental. In Quebec, there are multiple narratives but the two that have been most vigorously contested are:

* Melancholic nationalism and the fetishization of refoundations: In this version, the conquest is read as a catastrophe of major proportions, followed by a litany of new injustices from the Durham Report and Act of Union to the hanging of Riel, conscription and the repatriation of the constitution. This is associated with the Montreal School of Historians and Frenand Dumont especially. The Quebec nation was stillborn. Mental colonization relates from these historical traumas, and the establishment of an independent state would help to cure the resulting pathologies.
* Antinationalism and cosmopolitanism: Associated chiefly with Trudeau and his fellow *citélibristes.* This vision sees a past backwardness that was the fault of a conservative, clerical society, rather than Anglo domination. It also sees the post Quiet Revolution nationalism as a continuance of this retrograde collectivist thinking. Trudeau's “New Treason of the Intellectuals” is the clearest statement of this vision.

In addition to these two visions, there have been some alternatives imagined:

* Nationalism as affirmationism: Maclure associates this school with André Laurendeau. It demanded equality of the two peoples as partners, but unity to resist American domination. Laurendeau argued that individual rights need community for their actualization (much as Taylor later argues). Scholars such as Guy Laforest are the modern inheritors of this intellectual tradition.
* Feminism: has been both a challenger to nationalism in Quebec and an ally.

**Method/Approach**

Maclure describes his work as “a critical ontology of ourselves,” following Foucault. It is intended not as a history of ideas, but as “a critical reflection on the present” which aims to expose arbitrary and contingent elements of identity that are taken for granted. It is an interpretive essay about the what Quebeckers 'are'. Similar to James Tully in methods.

**Contributions**

This is a nice summary of competing visions for Quebec, which is useful for mapping the terrain of Quebec thought. It makes explicit where the fundamental divergences are, and brings attention to the differences of historical narrative which drive competing visions.

Where McRoberts, Gagnon and Iacovino and others tend to present a monolithic Quebec position which privileges *la survivance* over all else, Maclure accords space to the Trudeauvian vision as one pole of Quebecois identity (despite being distinctly critical of the vision, with all the rest). By highlighting the contestation of identity, he problematizes the existence of an easily definable national imaginary in Quebec.

His work parallels Gagnon and Iacovino in its focus on the pluralization of Quebecois identity, and its coexistence with nationalism. He argues that interculturalism has opened Quebec to newcomers – counter to what is perceived in English Canada – but this has not altered the project of protecting a distinct public culture.