NOSTALGIC NATIONALISMS AND THE SPECTACLE OF THE MALE BODY IN CANADIAN AND QUÉBÉCOIS CINEMA

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A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

Master of Fine Arts

Graduate Programme in Film and Video
York University
North York, Ontario

August 1997

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Abstract

Discourses on colonial masculinity in Canadina cinema after 1972 overwhelmingly positioned the male protagonist as a "victim" or "loser" whose inadequacies were traceable to a colonial culture with an ongoing sense of inferiority relative to Britain, France and the United States. This thesis joins other attempts to re-evaluate that approach, but re-orients the question around strategies for representating the male body in relation to anti-colonial nationalisms. Through close readings of five films -- Jean-Claude Lauzon's *Un Zoo, la nuit* (1987), Joyce Wieland's *Patriotism, Part One* and *Patriotism, Part Two* (both 1965-1986), Mireille Dansereau's *La Vie rêvée* (1972) and Mort Ransen's *Margaret's Museum* (1995) -- this discussion suggests that colonial masculinity is not the smoothly functioning, undifferentiated construct that it was often implied to be in early work on Canadian male protagonists. The films considered here trace out a cartography of difference, suggesting that the notion of a pan-Canadian 'crisis of masculinity' is shot through with contradictions. The 'problem' of the colonial male body is not the same for a young male director in Quebec; a woman coming into her own as a critical nationalist in New York in the mid-1960s; another woman struggling to assert her own voice at the dawn of first-phase feminism in Quebec; or a former documentarian adapting a tale of economic desperation in Cape Breton.

Discourses on colonial masculinity are shaped by and in particular social, political, ethnic, geographical and enunciative contexts, and benefit from reading strategies stressing discontinuity and difference. Moreover, such discourses have differed substantially according to their investment in (or opposition to) anti-colonial nationalisms. The nostalgia for a pre-colonial past which structures certain nationalisms around a sense of masculine loss and humiliation has at times coincided with strategies for keeping the male body veiled or dramatizing both its vulnerability to destruction and its hoped-for *in*vulnerability to threats from the outside. Meanwhile, a different experience of neo-colonialism can lead to a more oppositional approach, as we see in Wieland and Dansereau, who route their complicitous critiques of Canadian and Québécois nationalism through representations of the male body that subtly undermine empowered masculinity by calling attention to the humble, material basis of phallic power.

Acknowledgements

Elephants take less time to bear offspring than I've taken to produce this thesis, and I owe an elephantine debt of gratitude to many people for enduring and supporting me in this endeavour. Peter Morris, my supervisor, provided unfailing kindness, wisdom, and generosity over more incarnations of this project than either of us would care to think about. Blaine Allan, who has been my link to film studies in Kingston from the beginning, proved as indispensable as always in countless areas, not least of all as an eagle-eyed reader and all-around 'knowledge guy.' His sense of humour and e-mail often kept me going. Brenda Longfellow, whose critiques are always incisive, pushed me to think more critically about all three chapters and is largely responsible for Chapter Two existing at all. Sincerest thanks are also due to Gerald Pratley, the Film Studies Association of Canada, Telefilm Canada and the Ontario Film Development Corporation for financial assistance towards this project in 1994. Without regular encouragement from Christine Ramsay and Marcy Goldberg, there would have been many more lonely nights at the computer. Christine is also responsible in a more direct way for piquing my interest in masculinity studies, and has constantly provided a high water mark to try and reach. Donato Santeramo in the Italian department at Queen's University graciously provided help with translation, and I am indebted to Sylvia Frank and Rosemary at the Film Reference Library of the Cinémathèque Ontario for their friendly and eager assistance with videos and written sources. Thanks are also due to Warren Collins, Barbara Goslawski at the Canadian Filmmakers Distribution Centre and Linda Abrahams of the Women's Art Resource Centre for help tracking down Wieland's early work and for providing access to out of the way resources. Peter Harcourt was a peach to read and comment on an earlier version of Chapter Two. I am also grateful to Zuzana M. Pick for telling it like it is, and for the reminder that sometimes it is best to just "start with the films." Queen's University's Film Department generously provided access to films and videos, and Derek Redmond kindly devoted his time to help create slides for a talk based on Chapter One. Kathryn Kearn supplied a blizzard of helpful and friendly advice in the final stages of this project, and Lynne Wood was there for the long beginning. Jane Parpart, my role model in all things (including writer's block), believed firmly in this project even when I was having my doubts, and Arthur Parpart was a constant source of love and support, as were Nix and Madeline Wadden. Finally, there are ways too numerous to mention in which my husband, Ron Wadden, provided help, and I owe him enormous thanks.

This thesis is dedicated to the late Jean-Claude Lauzon, who may not have agreed with everything in Chapter One, but who deserves my gratitude for making such an intriguing film. He will be missed.

Contents

Introduction

Quebec feminist Madeleine Gagnon once commented that "the men here are softer than elsewhere" due to their experience of colonialism,[1] and the same has been said about men in other parts of Canada. Both English Canada and Quebec have supported and produced styles of masculinity which differ from each other and from those lived or 'performed' anywhere else -- and these differences have arguably had a profound effect on representations of men in Canadian cinema.[2] From Pete and Joey, the hapless Maritimers in Don Shebib's *Goin' Down the Road,* to the trumpet playing barber, Pokey Jones, in *Highway 61* and the opera-loving introvert in Yves Simoneau's *Perfectly Normal*, an overwhelming number of male characters in Canadian film have been aligned with subordinate -- or what Kaja Silverman terms "limp"[3] -- versions of masculinity.

At various times, this absence of a 'Canadian macho' within the nation's cinema has been taken to signal a sort of crisis. Robert Fothergill delivered the clearest expression of this concern in his 1973 paper, "Coward, Bully, or Clown: The Dream-Life of a Younger Brother," which identified recurring patterns of helplessness, foolishness and desperate aggression towards women among a large number of male characters in Canadian film.[4] The primary version of *la condition*

canadienne reflected to Canadians by their own feature films, he concluded, is "the depiction, through many different scenarios, of the radical inadequacy of the male protagonist -- his moral failure, especially, and most visibly, in his relationships with women."[5] He explained the pattern in terms of a now famous psychological analogy that figured Canada as a permanent "little brother" to its domineering southern neighbour, the United States:

> Aware of his more powerful brother as a feature in the landscape, in a way that has never been reciprocated, the younger brother has grown up with a painfully confined sense of his own capacity for self-realization. An abiding sense of himself as inescapably diminished, secondary, immature, has become second nature, has indeed shaped his nature and bred into it a self-thwarting knowledge of personal inadequacy.[6]

Although Fothergill has apparently retreated from this position in more recent years,[7] magazines and the popular press continue to rehash his thesis in less subtle form with perennial 'think pieces' about the inadequacy of male characters in Canadian cinema. Among these is a 1995 essay in *Take One* magazine by Toronto filmmaker Anthony Anderson, who attempts to grasp the social origins and significance of the "relentless parade of Dweebs" populating Canadian cinema. Without citing the Fothergill article to which his is obviously indebted, Anderson bemoans the proliferation of weak male characters who, he says,

collectively give the impression that "we're a nation of bugs wriggling helplessly on our backs":[8]

> Dredged up from those darkest parts of ourselves, quivering, cringing, and *colonial*, he is the Dweeb, the Geek, the Meta-Nerd, and what's more, he is everywhere. It is virtually impossible to consume our celluloid without having to chew over his nerd bits and geek bones ... [9]

The usual suspects and historical precedents are trotted out by way of an explanation: Canada's colonial history with Britain and France and its ongoing neocolonial relationship with the United States, the garrison mentality outlined by Northrop Frye[10] and re-formulated in Margaret Atwood's *Survival*,[11] geography and the weather are all cited as contributors to a failure of masculine will in Canadian cinema. And while Anderson concedes that Canadian heroes "must be appropriate" to their cultural setting, and that it would do no good to import falsely inflated masculine stereotypes from other national and cinematic traditions, he concludes that Canada has matured (an apparent reference to Fothergill's adolescent psychology thesis) and calls on filmmakers to respond to the change by creating more viable, active male characters.[12]

One of the many problems with this type of analysis is a tendency to conflate the health of the nation with the viability of masculine performative styles. Now that the nation is "grown up," the logic goes, it is ready to see more

adult (read: active, aggressive, sexually successful, verbally adroit) scripts of masculinity on its screens. Built into this idea is the assumption that hegemonic masculinities, or those that adhere to the ideal of an omnipotent, empowered and stable core of subjectivity, are desirable and a credit to the nation, while non-hegemonic, or subordinate, masculinities (those tinged by effeminacy, dissolution or disempowerment) constitute a threat to the maturity and stability of the nation. Just as crucially, such 'victim-loser' analyses have tended to assume that 'masculinity' and 'nation' are self-explanatory terms that exist in a natural equation with each other, rather than constructions brought together in the context of an anti-colonial nationalism with its own agenda.

It was partially this problematic bundle of assumptions that Christine Ramsay unpacked in her essay "Canadian Narrative Cinema From the Margins: 'The Nation' and Masculinity in *Goin' Down the Road*,"[13] which brought on something of a paradigm change in the way masculinities are understood to operate within English Canadian film. Arguing that dominant masculine gender identity and the modern nation are both "product[s] of imagination" (rather than essences) that are linked by a common metaphoric impulse to power and mastery, Ramsay points out that English Canadian films have tended to imagine both 'the nation' and the ideal of omnipotent, empowered masculinity from the position of

the margins. In keeping with a general, postmodern revaluing of margins, Ramsay argues that "minority discourse[s]" around masculinity and nation (of the kind she suggests are on offer in *Goin' Down the Road*) carve out a "performative space" for the representation of our social self. Such work, she writes, should be

> celebrated and studied ... for what it offers as a lived text that makes intelligible to us, as English Canadians, from the position of the margins, the unique way we have historically faced the problems of social and personal identity through the Western concepts of "the nation" and omnipotent masculinity."[14]

This thesis takes up the related, but narrower, question of how such minority discourses on colonial masculinity have shaped representations of the male *body* in selected Canadian and Québécois films of the last 30 years. If "masculinities vary not only over time but according to setting,"[15] as a number of ethnographers have argued recently, and if male film characters in Canada have so frequently been aligned with subordinate masculinities, I ask, how might these tendencies work their way into various approaches taken to representing the male body? Can we discern any meaningful differences in the way the male body has been constructed through representation in films from Quebec, the Maritimes, or by women, for example? How might these differences, if they exist, be understood in relation to social contexts, enunciative positions? Equally important, how might

these differences be theorized in relation to localized discourses on colonial masculinity or the terms of nostalgia permeating certain anti-colonial nationalisms?

By singling out the body as an aspect of on-screen masculinity in this 'marginal' setting I am tapping into a variety of theoretical projects which offer different ways of thinking through the representation of the body in non-dominant social and political contexts. These include: Mary Douglas' work on boundary anxiety and body pollution in marginal or threatened communities; Peter Lehman's work on male sexual representation in popular culture; Kaja Silverman's psychoanalytic argument (in *Male Subjectivity at the Margins)* about the conditions under which certain films say "no" to phallic power and refuse the normalizing pressures of what she calls the "dominant fiction;" and a range of work (by Cynthia Enloe, Mrinalini Sinha and others) dealing with the patriarchal foundations of anti-colonial nationalisms and the corporeal effects of colonization.

This final area takes on added importance in light of the tendency for discourses on masculinity in Canadian cinema (of the kind put into circulation by Fothergill and Anderson) to steep themselves in a sense of colonial loss that tends to make implied charges of physical emasculinization. The body is fully implicated in the construction of such critical frameworks for thinking through on-screen

masculinities, and I have looked to recent theoretical work on the corporeal effects of colonialism in an attempt to untangle these issues in a Canadian setting. While Linda Hutcheon is correct to caution that "the primarily white Canadian historical *experience* of colonialism, and therefore of post-colonialism, cannot be equated with that of the West Indies or Africa or India," without trivializing the latter or exaggerating the former,[16] this thesis starts from the assumption that many English Canadians and Quebeckers do experience themselves as colonized on some level, either in relation to Central Canada, Britain, France, the United States, or all of the above, and that this subjective position works its way, forcefully at times, into discourses on masculinity as well as representations of the male body.

The complex relationship between colonialism and embodiment that was analysed by Fanon in *Black Skin, White Masks*[17] has attracted renewed interest of late, leading the editors of one post-colonial studies reader to assert that "the body itself has ... been the literal 'text' on which colonisation has written some of its most graphic and scrutable messages."[18] Little work has been done, however, to clarify the *gendered* basis of many historical and more recent claims about the colonial body. One has to read between the lines of Fanon and forage around in feminist theories about the patriarchal foundations of anti-colonial nationalisms in order to begin to grasp the degree to which it is the *male body* that has been

thought to be primarily at risk or under siege in colonial or neo-colonial settings.

Fanon's surprising lack of pity or understanding for the "negress" -- the Antillean woman -- whose psychological response to colonialism leads her to desire the white man provides one important instance of this complex dynamic. While such women are viewed in Fanon's work almost as traitors to their race whose psychological motives are only worth uncovering as an afterthought, the colonized male subject's suffering and victimization are analysed in detail as the twin products of mistreatment from a European master and an indifferent, would-be (Antillean) mistress.[19] For all of Fanon's crucial contributions toward an understanding of colonial psychological structures and ideologies of race, his sexism remained largely unexamined (or, rather, his assumptions about gender remained very much of their time). As one result of this, he frequently seems to have taken it for granted that the effects of colonialism -- described in terms of the "epidermalization" of inferiority, or the depositing of a sense of inferiority literally under the skin[20] -- were written most clearly on the male body and held the most severe consequences for the male psyche.

This conflation of colonial rule and emasculinization has been a central concern for Cynthia Enloe, whose work on the gendered basis of anti-colonial nationalisms leads her to suggest that many, though not all, such movements are

founded on a profound sense of masculine injury:

> ...nationalist movements have rarely taken women's experiences as the starting point for an understanding of how a people becomes colonized or how it throws off the shackles of that material and psychological domination. Rather, nationalism typically has sprung from masculinized memory, masculinized humiliation and masculinized hope. Anger at being 'emasculated' -- or turned into a 'nation of busboys' -- has been presumed to be the natural fuel for igniting a nationalist movement.[21]

Such fears have not, of course, been entirely unwarranted. As the editors of a recent ethnographic study of masculinity point out, "the effects of colonialism have often been described in gendered terms; those who are ruled are feminized and portrayed 'of inferior vigour' in relation to the dominant masculinities asserted by the colonizers."[22] Mrinalini Sinha has discussed this in the context of British colonial stereotypes of the "manly Englishman" and the "effeminate Bengali babu" in the late nineteenth century,[23] and found that, among other things, Bengali males were disqualified from playing an active part in politics in part because they were seen to possess 'feminine' traits, (35) while colonial Britons often questioned Bengali manliness and self-control on the basis of their "excessive sexual indulgences" (18-19) and their disinterest in hunting and other games of sport (42). However Sinha's analysis also tends to complicate notions of modern Western

masculinity or traditional Indian masculinity as discrete or mutually exclusive categories by recognizing and historically theorizing their "mutual implication in imperial politics" (7).[24] In general, Sinha concludes that

> The history of colonial masculinity ... simultaneously exposes the patriarchal politics of nationalism and the limits of the anti-colonial claims made on behalf of such patriarchal politics. It appears likely that a systematic study of the formation of masculinities in relation to nationalisms will show that the anti-colonial agenda has in fact been limited or subverted by patriarchal politics.[25]

While this thesis does not offer a social history of colonialism (or my preferred term, neo-colonialism)[26] in English Canada or Quebec, it does take up the question of how discourses on colonial masculinity in both settings have worked to construct certain images of -- and ideas about -- the male body, often in relation to anti-colonial nationalisms. Furthermore, since it is *discourses* on colonial masculinity that primarily interest me in this context rather than the historical conditions of colonialism itself, I have been concerned to show how representations of what I am calling the 'colonial male body' differ not only over time but from place to place and according to who is 'speaking'.

I conceive of the colonial male body as a collection of surfaces and boundaries whose overall *habitus*,[27] or way of being in the world, is inflected and

in part formed by discourses on colonial masculinity and anti-colonial nationalisms. This definition has its origins in Marcel Mauss' argument that no detail of bodily comportment is wholely 'natural', and that all of the body's actions and ways of being are formed in part out of the details of cultural and social life. While it would be reductive to suggest that Canadian male bodies can or should be defined solely in terms of their relationship to discourses on colonialism or anti-colonial masculinities -- they are far more than that, in the greater scheme of things -- this thesis focuses on colonial discourses as one crucial force shaping the habitus (and cultural representations) of the male body, while allowing other influences and competing discourses to remain in the background.

The structure of this thesis is somewhat unorthodox. Rather than elaborate this theoretical basis further and then focus more briefly on one or two instances of colonial male embodiment in films that might illustrate a central argument, I have opted to minimize the overarching theoretical section (containing most of it in this introduction) and spend the rest of the thesis examining three quite distinct 'moments' in Canadian cinema (Quebec cinema in the late-1980s; films by women from the mid-1960s and early 70s; and contemporary Nova Scotian cinema) with regard to differences, rather than continuities, in the way they produce, construct and imagine the colonial male body within representation and in relation to

nationalism. Each of these moments corresponds to a time and a place or to a set of related authors and provides the basis for an analytic example that is meant to foreground particular issues related to masculinity and representations of the male body in a specified context. By structuring the thesis this way, I have hoped to highlight the diversity and localized character of screen masculinities and draw attention to the complex interplay of discourses on masculinity, social context and representations of the male body.

A caveat: Given the approach I've opted to take, this thesis cannot, and is not meant to, offer a comprehensive account of male sexual representation in Canadian cinema. Rather, each chapter is best thought of as a case study or micro-analysis that can begin to map out a sense of how the male body has been represented at various times, in various settings, and by various authors. Furthermore, although I viewed over 120 films during the research phase for this project (see the Appendix for a full listing), I wound up discussing only five of them in detail. Each was chosen not because it was representative of all or most other films from the same region or period, but because it struck me as illustrating in a particularly clear way *one textual response* to the complex interplay of discourses on masculinity and the male body in a particular setting.

Beyond this desire to situate each film within a social and discursive

context, I allowed each text or group of texts to guide the approach taken and the theoretical sources used in each chapter, and employed whatever combination of methods and perspectives seemed most appropriate to the film and the context under discussion. Thus, for example, the overwhelming importance of bodily boundaries and paternal conflicts in Jean-Claude Lauzon's *Un Zoo, la nuit* (1987) led me into a discussion of Mary Douglas' work on body pollution and Lacanian theories about the Law of the Father, whereas neither framework resurfaces substantially in my discussion of *Margaret's Museum,* which was more suited to a cultural studies approach emphasizing working class masculinities and folk identity in Nova Scotia. My hope is that this eclecticism at the theoretical level is compensated for by the added sensitivity of allowing each film to guide my choice of frameworks in each section.

Chapter One explores the depiction of male bodies in Lauzon's first feature, *Un Zoo, la nuit*, as an aspect of discourses on white, francophone, Québécois masculinity and in relation to the disillusionment of nationalist hopes following Quebec's first, failed referendum on sovereignty-association. Launched into the staggering void that many cultural commentators insist was left by this political decision, I argue, *Un Zoo* functions on one important level as the *crie du cœur* of a stalled anti-colonial nationalism whose central metaphor turns out to be the

suffering, threatened body of the neo-colonial Québécois male. Chapter Two takes up the matter of authorship and female enunciation by examining representations of the male body in three early films by Joyce Wieland and Mireille Dansereau, with a view to understanding how 'female desire' and women's different experiences of anti-colonial nationalism might shape their look at the male. While I find it impossible to argue that gender (any more than any other aspect of authorship) produces stable or predictable differences in expression, I nevertheless explore the possibility, put forward by Sandy Flitterman-Lewis in her work on French feminist cinema, that "the notion of authorship/enunciation in the feminine raises the question of female desire, indicating a terrain of representation from which various new positions can be engaged, scopic modalities which imply alternative conceptions of female subjectivity and desire."[28] Chapter Three returns to a discussion of regional cinema with an analysis of working class masculinity, internal colonialism and representations of the male body in Mort Ransen's 1995 feature, *Margaret's Museum*. While recognizing that this film is not an entirely 'indigenous' Maritime production, I nevertheless argue that it offers a clear opportunity to study the relationship between gender and regional identity, class and the colonial male body in a particular context: the coal-mining communities of Glace Bay and Reserve, Cape Breton, in the late 1940s.

Although I have not tried to prove a single overarching theory about representations of the male body in Canadian film, I have proceeded from a number of assumptions. Aside from those already mentioned in relation to neo-colonialism and the colonial male body, the most basic of these is my assumption that "masculinities vary not only over time but according to setting,"[29] and that the frameworks or imaginaries through which the male body is represented can often be understood in terms of socio-political factors that work to structure masculine performative styles. Given the danger of such an approach falling into naive sociological readings, however, it has been crucial to try and think about such contexts in terms of discourse, and to acknowledge Foucault's claim, in *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, that discourse is not to be taken as "groups of signs (signifying elements referring to contents or representations) but as practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak."[30] While it would be risky to assert a truly *systematic* basis for the formation of certain images or patterns of representing the male body, one of my concerns has been to show how discourses on masculinity -- which stem in part from social and political contexts -- help to shape the frameworks or imaginaries through which male bodies are represented.

In practice, this involved paying attention to a number of factors, including how, when and in what narrative and stylistic contexts the male body is made to

serve as erotic spectacle; how and when the penis, especially, is revealed or covered up; and the relationship -- often the gap -- between what is heard of the male body and what is seen of it on screen. In this regard I am indebted to Peter Lehman's work on male sexual representation in *Running Scared*, which addresses the paradox that

> Even as work on masculinity and the male body has finally begun, there has been a virtual silence on the topic of sexual representation -- how and when it is explicitly represented and, of equal importance, how and when it is avoided, covered up, displaced, and repressed.[31]

Lehman emphasizes the male body as object, rather than the male as subject, and reads a wide range of cultural texts in terms of how they address what he calls the "penis-phallus concept." This is his own, generic (i.e., not strictly psychoanalytical) version of the much-discussed relationship between the penis as literal organ and the phallus as symbol of patriarchal authority.[32] While he notes that psychoanalytic theory often tries to deny the existence of a direct link between the two terms, Lehman insists on the connection -- defining the phallus in global terms as an expression of the "persistent and pervasive manner in which contemporary Western culture attributes profoundly important symbolic dimensions to the penis" (35) -- and maintains that:

> In a patriarchal culture, when the penis is hidden, it is centered. To show, write, or talk about the penis creates the potential to demystify it and thus decenter it. Indeed, the awe surrounding the penis in a patriarchal culture depends on either keeping it hidden from sight (as we see, for example, the classical cinema does) or carefully regulating its representation (as the pornographic film does).[33]

Like Lehman, I assume that one important way of addressing the matter of how male bodies are represented on screen is to study the relationship of the penis to the phallus, and this receives attention in each of the chapters. At the same time, however, I assume (to a greater extent, I believe, than Lehman does) that this relationship varies considerably from place to place, between time periods, and according to who is speaking. While Lehman stresses continuity between cultures and authors dealing with the penis-phallus concept, I often look for (and find) contradiction and difference. Furthermore, in order to address the particular issues that arise in a Canadian context, it has been important to move beyond Lehman's framework by adopting a more all-encompassing view of the male body. Thus I frequently wind up addressing not only 'what is seen or not seen' of the body but more figurative questions of how the body is constructed, in Judith Butler's terms, as a "variable boundary, a surface whose permeability is politically regulated."[34] Such an approach allows me to conceptualize the male body in terms of politicized

zones, margins and orifices, gives me a vocabulary for understanding the metaphorical inscriptions on the body left by an experience of colonialism, and permits me to address the "edge-consciousness" that Gaile McGregor identifies as a defining feature of Canadian narratives.[35]

Colonial masculinity, I hope to show through these three close readings, is not the smoothly functioning, undifferentiated construct that it is often implied to be within discussions about male protagonists within Canadian cinema.[36] Discourses on colonial masculinity are shaped by and in particular social, political, ethnic, geographical and enunciative contexts, and benefit from reading strategies stressing discontinuity, contradiction and difference. Moreover, such discourses have differed substantially according to the degree of their investment in (or opposition to) situated, historically changing anti-colonial nationalisms. The nostalgia for a pre-colonial past which structures certain anti-colonial nationalisms around a sense of masculine loss and humiliation often coincides, my examples tend to show, with strategies of representation devoted to keeping the male body veiled or to insisting on its inviolability. The films considered here take very different approaches to the relationship of masculinity and nation, and exhibit varying degrees of interest in maintaining or violating the nostalgic sense of loss that has shaped anti-colonial nationalisms at different times and in different parts

of the country. Representations of the male body, as we'll see, are frequently affected by such relations, but rarely in ways that suggest a monolithic or uncomplicated operation of discourses on colonial masculinity.

Endnotes

1. Madeleine Gagnon, "Mon corps dans l'écriture," in *La Venue à l'écriture*, Collection 10/8 (Paris: Union Générale d'Editions, 1977), 113. Cited in Karen Gould, "Madeleine Gagnon's Po(e)litical Vision: Portrait of an Artist and an Era," in *Traditionalism, Nationalism and Feminism: Women Writers of Quebec*, ed. Paula Gilbert Lewis (Westport, Connecticut and London: Greenwood Press, 1985), 199.

2. If Canadian cinema were better known and more widely seen by Canadians, it might be possible to argue the reverse as well -- that depictions of 'soft' masculine styles within Canadian cinema have, in turn, affected styles of masculinity at the level of the social -- but this is difficult to argue when less than three percent of all screen time in Canadian theatres is devoted to Canadian films.

3. Kaja Silverman, *Male Subjectivity at the Margins* (New York and London: Routledge, 1992), 136.

4. Fothergill, Robert, "Coward, Bully, or Clown: The Dream-Life of a Younger Brother," in *Canadian Film Reader*, eds. Seth Feldman and Joyce Nelson (Toronto: Peter Martin Associated Ltd. And Take One Film Book Series, 1977), 234-251. Reprinted from *Take One*, vol. 4, no. 3 (September 1973).

5. Ibid, 235.

6. Ibid, 243.

7. Fothergill has declined invitations to update the essay, saying he is no longer interested in the subject. Discussion with Peter Morris, Aug. 7, 1997.

8. Anthony Anderson, "Gawking at Geeks," *Take One*, 7 (Winter, 1995): 37. He lists, among others, Lorenzo in *Perfectly Normal*; Norman in Patricia Rozema's *White Room*; the cringing factory worker played by Simon Webb in John Pozer's *The Grocer's Wife*, virtually all of the male characters in Atom Egoyan's œuvre, the failed, self-deprecating serial killer played by Don McKellar in Bruce McDonald's *Roadkill* and Pokey Jones in *Highway 61*.

9. Ibid, 36, emphasis added.

10. Carl F. Klinck, General Editor, *Literary History of Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Presss, 1965), "Conclusion," reprinted in Northrop Frye, *The Bush Garden: Essays in the Canadian Imagination* (Toronto: House of Anansi, 1971).

11. Margaret Atwood, *Survival: A Thematic Guide to Canadian Literature*. First McClelland & Steward edition. Toronto: McClelland & Stewart Inc., 1996.

12. Ibid.

13. Christine Ramsay, "Canadian Narrative Cinema from the Margins: 'The Nation' and Masculinity in *Goin' Down the Road*," *Canadian Journal of Film Studies/Revue canadienne d'études cinématographiques* 2, 2-3 (1993): 27-50.

14. Ibid, 47. This is part of what Ramsay was getting at when she yelled "but phallic limpness is good!" into the microphone of a stunned Ralph Benmurgui in September of 1996, during a CBC phone-in show that addressed the question of "why Canadian films are weird". Ramsay had just been telling Benmurgui that many Canadian films present a view of masculinity that is characterized by "phallic limpness." After allowing her to make her point, Benmurgui withdrew his microphone and walked away, muttering something that seemed to imply that he thought phallic limpness might not be such a positive thing. Not wanting to let him get away with transforming her argument into another attack on 'the problem of the effete Canadian male,' Ramsay called him back and reiterated her point: that the phallically limp styles of masculinity found so often in Canadian cinema can be seen as a positive contribution, in line with postmodernisms' revaluation of the illusory unity of the (male) subject.

15. Andrea Cornwall and Nancy Lindisfarne, eds., *Dislocating Masculinity: Comparative Ethnographies* (London: Routledge, 1994), 8.

16. Linda Hutcheon, *Splitting Images: Contemporary Canadian Ironies* (Toronto, Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 74. She adds: "...perhaps, in view of the damage done to Indian culture and people by the French and British colonizers and the process of colonization, theirs should be considered *the* resisting, post-colonial voice of Canada" (75).

17. Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, trans. Charles Lam Markmann (New York: Grove Press Inc., 1967).

18. Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin, eds. *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995), 322.

19. Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 50-60. While Fanon holds forth passionately for several pages about the rage, humiliation and psychological consequences for the black man who is passed over in this context, he devotes much less space and intensity to the psychological reasons why black women may be led into a desire for the European, offering merely that "It is because the Negress feels inferior that she aspires to win admittance into the white world" (60).

20. Ibid, 13.

21. Cynthia Enloe, *Bananas, Beaches and Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics.* (London: Pandora, 1989), 44.

22. Cornwall and Lindisfarne, eds., *Dislocating Masculinity,* 8. See also Deniz Kandiyoti, "The paradoxes of masculinity: some thoughts on segregated societies," in the same volume, 197-213.

23. Mrinalini Sinha, *Colonial Masculinity: The 'Manly Englishman' and the 'Effeminate Bengali' in the Late Nineteenth Century* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1995). All page number references in this paragraph are to this source.

24. For example, intense local resistance to the 1891 colonial Consent Act restricting the rights of Bengali men to consummate marriages to child brides evoked sympathy from some ruling (male) Britons on the grounds that the act wrongfully curtailed the natural rights of husbands, and as a result this issue tended to bring "the claims of native masculinity into closer alignment with the agenda of late nineteenth century colonial rule." Ibid, 140.

25. Ibid, 181.

26. Ella Shohat and Robert Stam point out that "Although direct colonial rule has largely come to an end, much of the world remains entangled in neocolonialism; that is, a conjuncture in which direct political and military control has given way to abstract, semi-indirect, largely economic forms of control whose linchpin is a close alliance between foreign capital and the indigenous elite." This would seem to come very close to describing Canada's relationship with the more politically and economically powerful United States. The use of the terms "colonial" and "post-colonial" in a Canadian context can only relate unproblematically to Canada's historically finite colonial relationships with Britain and France. Ella Shohat and Robert Stam, *Unthinking Eurocentrism: Multiculturalism and the Media* (London and New York: Routledge, 1944), 17.

27. Marcel Mauss, "Les Techniques du corps," *Journal de Psychologie* 32 (1935): 271-93.

28. Sandy Flitterman-Lewis, *To Desire Differently: Feminism and the French Cinema* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1990), 19-20.

29. Cornwall and Lindisfarne, *Dislocating Masculinities*, 6.

30. Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language*, trans. A.M. Sheridan Smith (New York: Pantheon, 1972), 49.

31. Peter Lehman, *Running Scared: Masculinity and the Representation of the Male Body* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1993), 35.

32. Lehman's definition of the phallus is both precise and usefully broad: "I am not talking here of any single notion of the phallus -- Freudian, Lacanian, or any other -- but about all these and more: the persistent and pervasive manner in which contemporary Western culture attributes profoundly important symbolic dimensions to the penis, at times even denying the connection

between the penis and the phallus." Ibid, 35.

33. Ibid, 28.

34. Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York and London: Routledge, 1990), 139.

35. Gaile McGregor, "Grounding the Countertext: David Cronenberg and the Ethnospecificity of Horror," *Canadian Journal of Film Studies* 2, 1 (1992): 43-62.

36. In an important reappraisal of this approach to thematic readings of the male, Peter Morris pointed out that Atwood uses the terms "victim" and "loser" interchangeably to describe Canadian characters, but in fact these describe two often very different conditions. Peter Morris, "In Our Own Eyes: The Canonizing of Canadian Film," in *Responses: In Honour of Peter Harcourt*, eds. Blaine Allan, Michael Dorland and Zuzana M. Pick (Kingston, Montreal, Ottawa: The Responsibility Press, 1992), 158.

Chapter One

"Reading the Permeable Male Body in Jean-Claude Lauzon's *Un Zoo, la nuit.*"

> You know, maybe life is just a bit of sperm passing from someone to someone else to someone else. That's it.[1]
>
> Jean-Claude Lauzon

Discourses on masculinity and the male body in Quebec culture have at times been complexly bound up with nationalist hopes, fear of unwanted assimilation with the rest of Canada, and notions of an essential Québécois Dionysianism. A condensed expression of these themes appears in sociologist Marcel Rioux's classic sovereigntist text, *La Question du Québec*,[2] which at one point brings the yearning for political independence into an explicit connection with masculine performative styles and anxiety about the malleability of the male body. In the context of a discussion about the national personality traits of Quebeckers and English Canadians, Rioux argues that the Québécois "possessed a culture tending towards the pole of what anthropologists call a 'warm culture,' extroverted and Dionysiac," but that "in areas of prolonged contact with the [Anglo] Other, they had come to effect a kind of Apollonian personality; in their desire to put up a false front, they allowed this pseudo-personality to become second nature."[3] By way of example, he points to the "little fellows of St. James Street" who allow their authentic, Québécois style of

masculinity to be drawn toward the Apollonian pole through a series of seemingly minor but actually very important sartorial and somatic concessions:

> They dress in the English manner, (complete with rolled umbrella), keep their face expressionless when they speak, and affect a stiff and starchy mien, to make people think that they, too, must be counted among the builders of the British Empire. As Quebeckers come to their senses, [however], they become their old selves again, leaving the Other's umbrella in the vestibule.[4]

Although it is clear from the rest of the passage that Rioux wishes to speak for all Quebeckers, male and female, his choice of imagery speaks volumes about the masculinist foundations of anti-colonial nationalism during a certain period in Quebec. By virtue of a slide between gender and nation, the contamination of the Québécois character is construed, first and foremost, as a threat to masculinity -- the Apollonian taking over the Dionysiac, changing the way Québécois men dress and carry themselves, even the way they protect themselves against the weather (every part of what Mauss would call their *habitus*,[5] in other words) and generally leaving them bound up inside a leaner, meaner, less expressive style of masculinity than the one they enjoyed before contact with the Other. In Rioux's analysis, the spectre of the francophone financier attempting to 'pass' for a Bay Street banker becomes the reference point for a complex network of assertions about the male body and nation,

with the implied promise that if Québécois men were to rediscover their own masculine style -- and reclaim the original boundaries of the physical body -- it might help make it possible to fix and reclaim the social body in the form of an independent Quebec nation.[6]

While this is only one passage in one influential nationalist text, it does suggest the process by which colonialism has at times been viewed as an emasculating force that acts directly upon the body of the colonized male. Apart from its resonances with Fanon's work on the "epidermalization of inferiority,"[7] this concern with preserving the boundaries of the body against intrusions from the outside also recalls Mary Douglas' observation that "anxiety about bodily margins expresses danger to group survival."[8] Extrapolating from her research on the Coorgs (low-caste Hindus) and "the Israelites," Douglas argued that marginalized or minoritarian groups often display a heightened awareness about bodily boundaries and even orifices, since both tend to stand in for the threatened boundaries of the social body. When rituals express anxiety about the physical body's boundaries, exits and entrances, she suggests, "the sociological counterpart of this anxiety is a care to protect the political and cultural unity of a minority group."[9]

While Rioux stops short of discussing bodily orifices as zones of authentic, francophone, masculine identity, a number of films from post-Quiet Revolution

Québec have carried the basic concerns underlying his discourse on masculinity further and imagined threats to the male body in terms of illness, nudity, sodomy, and even gastro-culinary invasions. The gradual decline of a terminally ill man is the subject of *Jacques et novembre* (1984), for example, while *Les Ordres* (1974) spends a great deal of time focusing on the *bodily* effects of the War Measures Act, lingering on images of men being strip-searched and physically restrained by guards who often seem to enjoy the process. Pierre Falardeau's fictional re-enactment of the kidnapping of Pierre Laporte in the 1994 film *Octobre* displays a similar concern with scatology and sodomy, figuring Robert Bourassa's decision not to accept the demands of the Front de Libération du Québec (FLQ) as a kind of violent sexual betrayal ("We've been screwed by that stupid little shitface bastard," one of the hostage-takers complains. "The scumbag fucked us. Up the ass. All the way!"), and calling attention to the unruliness of bodily boundaries in a scene that has an embarrassed Laporte emitting a peep of intestinal gas during a supervised trip to the toilet. While the film seems to be building sympathy for Laporte's predicament at this point, this unusual focus on a moment of flatulence alludes to a general lack of control over the boundaries of both the social and the physical body during a political crisis.

One of the most emphatic and politically problematic expressions of the theme of threatened male embodiment is found in Jean-Claude Lauzon's first feature, *Un*

Zoo, la nuit (1987), which I will be discussing for the remainder of this chapter. Without advocating a naive sociological reading of the film, I do want to suggest that *Un Zoo, la nuit* can be read in light of a post-referendum sensibility that occasioned its own discourses on masculinity, and that also perhaps brought its own approaches to representing the male body. *Un Zoo, la nuit* takes the basic concerns expressed in Rioux's work to extremes of 'male body paranoia' that I have not found in any other film from Quebec, and in this regard it is not representative of the period. However, as a kind of limit text for the tendency to destroy and rebuild the male body in certain Quebec films of the 1980s, it helps to clarify how some of the problems (and solutions) of a neo-colonial society have been imagined and understood in relation to masculinity.

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Released seven years after the defeat of Quebec's 1980 referendum on sovereignty-association, *Un Zoo, la nuit* arrived into what is frequently described as a period of widespread melancholia in Quebec. Halfway through the decade following the vote rejecting independence from the rest of Canada, Michael Dorland and Arthur Kroker diagnosed Quebec's condition as one of mass exhaustion and depression, something beyond the September mood of Fernand Dumont's poetics and closer to the blank, imploding visions of the legendary separatist painter (and *Refus Global*

author) Paul-Emile Bourduas. "An awesome silence has descended," they wrote of Quebec, in the same year that Lauzon was completing the script for his semi-autobiographical feature. "Quebec is in shock over the triumph/defeat."[10] Bourduas's own paintings were held up as nihilistic gashes tracing Quebec's movement "towards disintegration, decay and cancellation," while the Gitane cigarette box paintings he carried out just before his death were read as containing one sign only: that of "sadness itself."[11]

Within the terms of medical diagnosis, psychic dissolution and corporeal decay pervading this discourse around sub-state national loss, Dorland and Kroker's analysis of Quebec social life in the 1980s slides easily into areas having to do with the body itself, quickly raising and moving beyond an analogy between the body-politic and the lived body, or rather the way in which a neo-colonial society,[12] saturated with the disappointment of a stalled nationalist project, makes use of and acts on this body. Quebec, they wrote, had by the middle of the decade "taken on the universally strained features of postmodern trauma," and:

> With the dissolution of the independentist
> body-politic that collectively embodied
> Quebec's first self-conscious culture,
> there is left only the physical culture
> of the atomized body: culture inscribed
> in the flesh. As Pierre Vadeboncoeur
> writes in *Trois Essais sur l'Insignificance*,
> culture that 'once again must be fled.'[13]

Leaving aside for a moment the important extent to which *Un Zoo, la nuit* represents a flight, if not from 'culture' per se, then at least from the difficulties of trying to live as a Quèbècois within Canada, I want to address the matter of how the film takes up its position in "the physical culture of the atomized body," how it wears what Chantal Nadeau has called the "aura of a post-referendum label"[14] on and through the bodies of its characters, and in what ways it may be seen to communicate through inscriptions on the flesh. This focus also extends to its apparent opposite: moments where the body is powerfully evoked but not seen, inscribed through conspicuous absence, withheld from view or parcelled up through framing. This is, in other words, to ask the questions that Judith Butler poses in relation to the body itself, but to adapt them to the boundaries established by means of the film frame:

> What is excluded from the body for the body's boundary to form? And how does that exclusion haunt the boundary as an internal ghost of sorts, the incorporation of loss as melancholia? To what extent is the body surface the dissimulated effect of that loss?[15]

The idea of flesh, or the body, as a site of cultural and political inscription has evolved through the pioneering work of Marcel Mauss, through to the later contributions of Mary Douglas,[16] and gained ascendancy since Foucault's call for "a history of bodies" that would inquire into "the manner in which what is most material

and vital in them has been invested."[17] Since then, Butler has clarified the degree to which even the body (along with gender and sex) is constructed and lacking in any pre-discursive essence -- any material 'being' prior to power or representation. The body, Butler says, is best understood not as a hypostatized biological entity with given or natural wants and needs, but rather as a "surface whose permeability is politically regulated, a signifying practice within a cultural field of gender hierarchy and compulsory heterosexuality."[18] And although the regulative schema policing the body are "historically revisable criteria," Butler concludes, by way of Douglas and Kristeva, that at any given time the boundaries of the body might be said to mark "the limits of the socially hegemonic."[19]

If so, this chapter asks, what becomes of the body, where are its boundaries and from what strategic positions (and to what ends) are they regulated, in representations emanating from the complex neo-colonial context of Quebec, where the boundaries of the socially hegemonic are by no means clear? How is the male body, in particular, marked as the inscribed surface of events at a certain moment in Quebec cinema, by a particular author? What "styles of flesh" emerge in the film, and how might those styles be understood as being gendered, and as having a history?[20]

To talk about the body in *Un Zoo, la nuit* is by definition to talk about the male body, for as Nadeau has pointed out, the film banishes woman to a "faraway place of

socio-sexual (in)difference" in its attempt to "define the new status of the Quèbècois man."[21] In her provocative analysis of the patriarchal foundations of Quebec cinema in the 1980s, Nadeau includes *Un Zoo* in a larger cycle of post-referendum films by Pierre Falardeau, André Forcier and others that, she says, adopt a "triumphant tone" as they "[consolidate] the centrality of the male subject in the construction of a national identity."[22] These films do more than simply explore the possibilities for masculine identity in post-referendum Quebec -- collectively, she argues, they launch a "sisysphian search for a holy grail: the patriarchal figure of Quebec society, the one which supposedly liberated the parochial spirit of pre-Quiet Revolution Quebec."[23]

Unlike films from the same period such as *Kalamazoo* (1988) and *Une Histoire Inventée* (1990), which in effect banish women by mythologizing them, turning them into what Nadeau calls "half-goddesses, half-demons...with quasi-supernatural and above all typically 'feminine' powers [of seduction],"[24] *Un Zoo, la nuit* comes close to eliminating woman altogether. Female characters provide a structuring absence, as "serenely positioned, maternal body"[25] (Marcel's mother, referred to constantly, but seen only once in what may or may not be an illusion) and as rejecting, inaccessible *putain* (Marcel's erstwhile girlfriend Julie, played by Lynne Adams), but the central problems of the film relate consistently back to crises of masculinity, with the terms and consequences of those crises often written directly

onto the bodies of the film's suffering, vengeful, dying and figuratively re-born male characters.

Although Lauzon at one time offered practical and technical reasons for the marginal role assigned to female characters in *Un Zoo*,[26] it seems just as likely that the film's hermetically sealed world of masculine conflict and reconciliation relates back to the heightened need for a fable of paternal origins at a particular moment in Quebec's "great disappointment" after the referendum. At a time when Quebec nationalists were taking stock of their movement, questioning the gains won since the start of the Quiet Revolution and looking for ways to reconcile the best of pre-industrial, rural, Catholic Quebec with the advantages of modernized, secular society, a certain amount of nostalgia developed for an "as it were ancestral" *identité canadienne*,[27] along with its allegedly clearer lines of paternal authority within the family.[28] *Un Zoo*'s staging of a reconciliation between father and son joins this broader cultural reaffirmation of Quebec's patriarchal past (though not seamlessly, as I'll argue), and simultaneously places men and their bodies at the centre of any turmoil relating to Quebec's neo-colonial status. The film, then, contains (but never merely reflects) a deep assumption that when sub-state nations and their separatist projects are under siege, as Quebec's unquestionably was at the time *Un Zoo* was made, it is primarily men who suffer, men whose identities are awash in colonial

uncertainty and men whose bodies bear the marks of colonial oppression.[29]

The crucial thing to note about *Un Zoo, la nuit* in this context is the way in which fear of emasculation or loss of power routinely takes the form of anxiety about threats to the permeable and vulnerable neo-colonial male body. The sympathetic male characters in *Un Zoo* undergo repeated threats to their bodily boundaries and must win any advantage in the struggle for personal and social identity through a series of exclusions, separations and expulsions that are geared to closing off the body's vulnerable points and making it function like a tomb. The contours and orifices of that body (its "entrances and exits, points of escape and invasion," to again quote Douglas) become a sort of battleground where the first contours of both the subject and the nation are worked out and painstakingly built up.

In Julia Kristeva's terms, these expulsions of matter designated as "abject" (that which has been expelled from the body, discharged as excrement, rejected as defiling, literally rendered 'Other') are the means by which a "not-me" is built up as the first contours of the self.[30] Far from being restricted to the subject, however, this process also applies to the social group under threat of dissolution. Abjection at the level of the subject appears as isomorphic to (follows the "same logic" as) abjection at the level of the group, Kristeva allows, with both having "no other goal" than "survival".[31]

At the core of the circuit of abjection in *Un Zoo, la nuit* is Marcel Brisebois, played with smouldering and sometimes ridiculous intensity by Quebec actor Gilles Maheu. An artist and musician who has just served two years in jail for selling drugs provided to him by the police, Marcel is a walking victim of the *prison sans barreaux* that serves as such a frequent metaphor for life in Quebec -- although he has also experienced a literal prison *with* bars -- and his body becomes the front line in a series of invasions and violent expulsions that structure the film.

The initial, all-important moment of penetration that launches the narrative and that sets off a series of attempts to cleanse the neo-colonial male body of abject matter is a "singing (ie., sodomizing) telegram" sent to Marcel during the last days of his jail sentence. The rapist's visit is arranged by Marcel's former drug suppliers on the police force, Charlie (Germain Houde) and his aggressive new Anglo-Canadian partner George (Lorne Brass), as an attempt to secure Marcel's silence and remind him that he still owes the police money from their last drug deal together. The attack functions as more than a plot point, however. As a hyper-literal instance of defilement by the Other, it launches a series of cleansing rituals that take the form of brutal acts of homophobic revenge, culminating in an elaborate set-up to entrap and kill both policemen.

That begins to describe roughly half of the plot of this strangely divided, or as

Geoff Pevere put it, structurally schizophrenic, film.[32] The other half, which is set apart formally as well as narratively, traces Marcel's conflicted relationship with his father, Albert (the late Roger Lebel), and their eventual reconciliation.

As a former hunter with a vast woodsman's knowledge (he can get the moose to call back during rutting season and knows just how much drizzle makes for a perfect day on the lake), Albert in many ways signifies an earlier, pastoral version of masculinity and serves as a reminder that Quebec -- despite having cast off nearly all of its parochial, agricultural and religious traditions in the dizzying space of one generation -- still has much to learn from its pre-modern, living ancestors. As Heinz Weinmann points out, the film honours Albert's expertise, which is that of the "'dernier Mohican,' le dernier 'courreur de bois' du Canada (français), atavisme d'un passe revolu dont le Québec n'a plus que faire."[33] In this sense, he joins other elderly characters in films from Quebec in the 1980s who "play a symbolic role as the founders of the social community, [and] who have to be given their rightful place in the continuum of Quebec's evolution."[34] On the other hand, Albert is routinely figured as emasculated, weak, and inadequate; a feeble underdog (in a long line of others in both Quebec and English-Canadian cinema) who is unworthy of calling himself Marcel's father until he passes an odd, self-appointed machismo/paternity test that involves carrying his son's remaining cocaine stash and drug money around in

a lunch box in order to evade the police. From this point on, having proven himself audacious and manly enough to reclaim some of the phallic authority he had lost as a colonial subject, so to speak, Albert's ascension to a so-called 'natural' paternal role is inevitable, and his reconciliation with Marcel is only a matter of time. In psychoanalytic terms, then, Albert becomes increasingly eligible to help his son engage with the symbolic realm of social responsibility and normative (heterosexual) desire.

Viewed within this framework, *Un Zoo* seems to figure Quebec's crisis as one of interrupted masculinization, where unfinished Oedipal business stunts the acquisition of masculine identity and troubles relations between men, putting up roadblocks to normative psychosexual development and sustaining a climate of what Cynthia Fuchs has termed "homophobic homoeroticism".[35] Unable to "find" the phallus on his father (who lacks authority), but sensing that someone else 'out there' has it, Marcel has been unable to determine the boundaries of sexual difference. With no law close at hand, no authority figure within his immediate circle who can help to clarify the sexual difference that (according to psychoanalysis) every child notices, the film seems to suggest that Marcel is at a loss for sources of stable masculine identity. Stalled somewhere near the anal-erotic phase (as evidenced by a steady stream of ass jokes, images of other men defecating and, of course, the anal intrusion

of the rapist), Marcel is unable to form a stable masculine identity out of his love/hate for the father because (in the tautological terms set out by psychoanalysis and largely adhered to in this film) his father initially lacks the authority to help Marcel complete his journey to subjecthood. Unable to represent a castration threat to his son, Albert is himself 'castrated' in the many images of his nude body (in the bath and on his death bed, in particular) where framing gives the suggestion that his genitals are not merely out of frame but possibly missing altogether.

Unlike the protagonist in Lauzon's second feature film, *Léolo*, who, as Ramsay has shown, actively resists the symbolic by refusing to have his anal-erotic pleasures curbed,[36] Marcel seems to want to take a coherent place in the world, but doesn't initially know how. Tense and conflicted, going nowhere fast with either his artwork or his music, obsessed by fantasies of escaping to Australia where he believes he'll finally be able to have a career, and incapable of genuine intimacy with women (he refuses to let Julie visit him in prison for two years, then tries to reignite their relationship by essentially raping her on the hood of a car),[37] Marcel shows raw talent but has been wounded by a colonial system that interferes with paternal authority and normative routes of psychosocial development.[38] The solution he finds is to destroy the colonial usurper of his father's phallic power -- the police officer who also happens to be gay and Anglophone. Only after having killed the substitute father, the

père diabolique, as Jean Charbonneau puts it, can Marcel become a subject in the true sense[39] and assume what the film suggests is his proper relationship to Albert, the biological father who takes on an increasingly God-like role in the narrative.[40]

In her partial critique of the very psychoanalytic terms that inform this reading of the film, Judith Butler points out that "in the Oedipal scenario, the symbolic demand that institutes 'sex' is accompanied by the threat of punishment." Castration is the figure for punishment, and the fear of being castrated is said to motivate the assumption of the masculine sex, the fear of not being castrated motivating the assumption of the feminine. Implicit in the figure of castration, Butler adds, are at least "two inarticulate figures of abject homosexuality, the feminized fag and the phallicized dyke."[41] While the spectre of the phallicized dyke has little to do with *Un Zoo, la nuit*, since the film all but erases woman as a term of difference, fears about the feminization of the male surface continually, in ways that sometimes draw attention to the work involved in maintaining this threatening aspect of the Oedipal scenario. In this sense, parts of *Un Zoo, la nuit* seem to dramatize Butler's point that the

> symbolic ought to be rethought as a series of normativizing injunctions that secure the borders of sex through the threat of psychosis, abjection [and] psychic unlivability.[42]

These threats -- of psychosis, abjection and psychic unlivability -- circulate

everywhere in *Un Zoo, la nuit*, spawning a "relentless relay of anal erotic innuendos" and violent homophobic exchanges, and generally governing the way male bodies interact and appear in the frame.[43] The severity of the threat posed by homoerotic attraction is laid out with brutal clarity in the mentioned rape scene near the beginning of the film – one of very few occasions in non-pornographic cinema where the rape of one man by another is depicted in something approaching graphic detail. Viewers learn about the impending attack from a giant reel-to-reel tape machine that stores Marcel's messages in a warehouse loft on the St. Lawrence River. From the prison-like windows overlooking various symbols of travel, connection and escape, there is a dissolve to a real prison, where Marcel is serving out the end of his drug sentence. In the first of many verbal references to gender trouble, Charlie calls Marcel by his nickname, Poignard (which carries the phallic connotations of the word "dagger"), and tells the tape machine that he and his partner "tried to get Brigitte Bardot" to deliver the singing telegram, but "did the best we could."

Their best is a mute, hulking inmate who looks less like a 'prison goon' than a bronzed, buffed and Aryanesque Calvin Klein model. (Even the crisp white briefs are in place). A guard ushers this menacing Adonis into Marcel's cell, and there is a brief moment of ambiguity, in which it's unclear whether Marcel will embrace or attack his visitor. It is a tense gap in the drama that calls attention to the thin line this

film draws between repressed homosexuality and violence, and that brings to mind the "frozen silence" of Fanon's native, caught between the colonial directive, "Don't dare to budge," and the body's impulse, "Get ready to attack!"[44] Marcel finally does attack, but is easily subdued, and the ensuing sexual assault takes up an excruciating 30 seconds of screen time.

One of the many striking things about this scene, in terms of the way it arranges male bodies within a larger circuit of abjection, is the way in which the trauma that it wants to present is at odds with the aesthetic handling of the event. The abject threatens to spill over into the erotic, as blue light bathes the faces and bodies of both inmates, sculpting their features and literally quoting certain conventions of the blue movie. Although the lighting also obscures the bodies of the two men, the cutting pattern is a classical mixture of long, medium and close shots, maximizing what the viewer sees in a limited lighting situation. Lauzon also seems to have made an attempt at anatomical realism, although it is obviously not for me (as a straight woman) to decide how realistic or unrealistic the sex in this scene is. Amid all of the overt stylizing, what I think I notice in this scene is more of a naturalistic tendency to obey laws of gravity and to depict degrees of resistance and pressure than has been seen in other mainstream depictions of either rape or consensual sex between men. The rape of Ving Rhames's character, Marcellus, in *Pulp Fiction* (1994) and of Ned

Beatty's character in *Deliverance* (1972), for example, and the consensual sex scene between John Gilbert's character and a male prostitute at the beginning of Jeremy Podeswa's *Eclipse* (1994), all fail in many ways to duplicate the mechanics of bodies engaged in sex. These scenes suggest the idea of sex between men -- present it on the surface of the film as a narrative event -- but appear to actually *use* codes of inauthenticity (such as unlikely body angles and a lack of realistic sound) to mediate what amounts to a potent and almost unrepresentable threat within commercial cinema: the direct portrayal of homosexual sex.

Un Zoo, la nuit retains some of this reticence through lighting but opts for a graphic treatment in other ways, using what seems to be an exaggerated foley effect of the moment of penetration and the uncomfortable (or potentially erotic?) suggestion of a threesome in the arms of the guard jutting into the frame. In general, the scene oscillates between revealing and concealing the male body while rendering homosexual sex, or rather the rape of one man by another, both horrifying and aesthetically pleasing, by stylizing the very thing that is marked as abject within a larger circuit of repression and homophobic violence. As Andrew Campbell and Nathan Griffith put it in another context, "The viewer's eye surveys the bodily evidence in fascinated discomfort, never fully deflected back at itself, but never allowed full visual access."[45]

It is worth noting that this scene also simultaneously supports and deviates from the pattern identified by Steve Neale in his 1983 essay on male spectacle in mainstream cinema. Neale argued that representations of the male body in film are nearly always accompanied by frenetic action or ritualistic violence in order to repress "any explicit avowal of eroticism in the act of looking at the male,"[46] but in this scene, violence is always on the verge of being overwhelmed by an aesthetic appreciation for the male body. The lingering shots of the rapist's buffed and rippling abdomen in the moments before the attack, the blue lighting and the overall use of a stylized approach all tend to make the ritualistic violence topple over into eroticism.

What *does* tend to bear our Neale's thesis, but in a localized context, is the fact that everyone except the rapist gets hurt during this scene. Both the francophone guard and Marcel wind up crying and nursing their wounds on the floor as a result of the attack. The guard is injured when Marcel reaches through the bars of his cell and smashes the man's head against the metal, followed by a shot several seconds long of the uniformed man (the Law) writhing on the floor. This moment seems to serve two purposes: on the one hand, it temporarily relieves the spectator of having to gaze directly at what is usually marked as unrepresentable, at least outside of the conventions of gay porn -- the spectacle of two men having sex -- while in another sense it implicates the guard in a circuit of colonial violence. The guard's crime, it

would seem, is to have cooperated with the drug-dealing police in bringing about this abuse. As such he is marked as one of those 'Uncle Toms' within Quebec who colludes with Anglo-Canadians, a traitor in the style of former Parti Quebecois deputy (and RCMP informant) Claude Morin,[47] whose collaboration with the oppressor is part of what has kept Quebec subjugated. As both Marcel and the Québécois guard lay on opposite sides of the cell floor, clutching their injured bodies, the film seems to evoke the oft-cited metaphor of Quebec as a prison without bars, and suggest that the consequences of such an arrangement extend to all types of Québécois men, even those holding nominal power within the system.

Several scenes later, the suffering of these men is linked metaphorically with that of the bloodied and battered victims of other, in some cases more unambiguously colonial regimes -- anonymous Asian or East Asian bodies (male and female) whose trauma becomes the subject of a news show broadcast on Quebec TV, which is playing in Marcel's apartment. Having just had his own brush with psychic unlivability (and having just been reminded of it by hearing the message from Charlie) Marcel's reaction to these images of distant suffering and abjection is to over-identify, then violently reject them by literally trashing the television set.

It is interesting to note that this action coincides with a number of suggestions of 'feminization' or a rejection of the feminine on Marcel's part. Moments before

tossing the television set across the room, for example, Marcel is seen hauling down a number of large sheets painted with the faces of young, glamourously made-up women, each at least 10 square feet in size. And in the same montage, we hear a message on the answering machine from a salesperson asking for "the lady of the house," when there is none. In an inter-textual sense, the sudden appearance of black-and-white documentary footage of men and women running through the streets of another country after an unidentified disaster also tends to recall the similar use of documentary footage from the Third World in Ann Claire Poirier's film *Mourir à tue-tête*. However the apparent reference to this feminist classic takes on an uncomfortable irony when we consider that this time, the insertion of a film-within-a-film follows the rape of a man rather than a woman. Whether this is readable as a tribute to one of Quebec's most accomplished feminist filmmakers or as a case of a male protagonist "throwing out" feminist cinema, the reference circulates (among those who know Poirier's film) as one more indication of Marcel's closeness to, and apparent discomfort with, the feminine.

This confluence of the abject and the feminine comes close to bearing out Kristeva's idea that the quest for purity through abjection involves the subject in a preliminary rejection of the maternal space of the semiotic ("The abject confronts us ..." she writes, "with our earliest attempts to release the hold of maternal entity...").[48]

However, in this particular case -- in a neo-colonial setting that reformulates the rules of the psyche and of sexual difference according to local conditions -- it is not so much the maternal that must be rejected but the threat of being 'like a woman'. As the recently-raped musician/artist tears down his own paintings of feminine figures and endures the off-screen reminder that he is both lacking a woman in his life (Julie) and in danger of becoming too closely identified with a feared femininity, what's being suggested, I would argue, is the possibility that colonial power has inscribed itself on the male body in ways that tend to make it more permeable, soft, and inactive than it should be; more vulnerable, penetrable and open to defile. According to Catherine Waldby, the very idea of a male body that is permeable or penetrable constitutes a basic threat to the "hegemonic bodily imagos of sexual difference" through which sexual identities and practices are lived out in many settings. Within a culture that privileges masculinity, she argues, these imagos[49] understand the male body as "phallic and impenetrable, as a war-body simultaneously armed and armoured, equipped for victory," while the female body is its opposite,"permeable and receptive, able to absorb all this violence."[50] In neo-colonial Quebec, this part of the film seems to suggest, male bodies have trouble living up to this hegemonic ideal of being 'hard all over'.

Once again, as Fanon and Bhabha have argued in different contexts, the

particulars of colonialism (in this case, neo-colonialism or internal colonialism) wind up interrogating psychoanalysis and demonstrating that the contours of the subject are unlikely to be defined or secured in the same way everywhere, regardless of localized conditions and power dynamics.[51] In Marcel's case, for example, the "maternal entity" is absent rather than oppressive; Marcel's desperate need for expulsion is focused not on overcoming the "frustrations and prohibitions" imposed by a maternal authority in charge of "mapping ... the self's clean and proper body,"[52] but rather on expelling the reminder that as a neo-colonial subject, his own body can be made as vulnerable and permeable as that of a woman. Surrounded by visual and aural evidence of his "femininity" (the sales call and the paintings) and reminded of its source in colonial oppression (the televised images of faraway colonial violence), Marcel picks up the nearest offending object (his TV) and hurls it across the loft, smashing it to bits.[53]

What this attempt at expulsion can't do, however, is blot out the eroticism of the earlier rape scene, which amounts to a deep aesthetic fissure in the overall context of Marcel's engagement with the symbolic. While, according to Butler, the construction of masculine identity in the Lacanian scheme presumes and in fact requires that both figures of abject homosexuality inspire terror, in the rape scene, as I've noted, terror is mingled with cinematic codes (eg., the blue light, the 'striptease' structure of alternately revealing and concealing both men's bodies) that suggest the

strong possibility of the abject occasionally verging on the erotic. In Foucault's terms, "the prohibitive law has run the risk of eroticizing the very practices that come under the scrutiny of the law."[54]

Having said that, however, the effect of the rape within the narrative is quite clear: from this point on in the film it is open season on gay men, or rather a particular gay representative of the colonial oppressor: the Anglo police officer, George. As the key event in the narrative that motivates Marcel's intensifying homophobia in later scenes, the rape is made to justify a seemingly endless stream of bitter jokes, references to the penis and acts of homophobic violence, culminating in the murder of both police officers at a fleabag 'sex motel' punningly (and with a certain degree of Orientalism) referred to as the Bangkok Paradise.

The retaliation for what he endured in prison starts soon after Marcel's release, launching a series of expulsions geared to overcoming the fact that the colonial male body has been penetrated, and therefore polluted, by an Other. This need to rid the body of a defiling element, to reestablish (or begin establishing for the first time) "[his] own clean and proper,"[55] is what drives Marcel to his first act of homophobic revenge: an attack on a gay man in a local pool hall. The man makes the mistake of hitting on Marcel while he's trying to eat his supper[56] and, at the same time, make eye contact with his former girlfriend, Julie (Adams), who is ignoring him from

several feet away. Marcel reacts to the man's advances by luring him to the washroom, pretending he's about to let himself be fellated, and then subjecting his seducer to a vicious beating.

The victim turns out to be George, the Anglo *flic* who helped arrange for the prison rape, but it's important to note that Marcel doesn't know this until later in the film. At this point it's still a random act of violence, ambiguously justified within the narrative on the basis of what happened to Marcel in prison. If spectators notice that Marcel is assaulting a complete stranger who has done no more than make a nuisance of himself by hitting on the wrong person (and spilling coffee on Marcel's lap), they could be led to question what the film puts forward as Marcel's motivation for the gay bashing. But this connection must be made retroactively a few scenes later, and until then George tends to stand in for all gay men in a narrative so far geared to hysterically repressing any whiff of homosexual desire -- while, as I've tried to point out, frequently failing at that very attempt. In fact, repressed homoeroticism is in the air again when Marcel finds a gun on George and discovers that the would-be lover is a police officer. With sexually-tinged disgust for all cops who "get their kicks from sex in dirty pool hall washrooms," Marcel enacts a cold version of reverse-fellatio by thrusting the gun into George's mouth and telling him that it's "as thick as a goon's prick in prison."[57]

Weinmann has pointed out that as both an Anglo-Canadian and a literal representative of the law, George also seems to function in Lacanian terms as a stand-in for and illegitimate usurper of the Law of the Father, the *père castrateur* who must be destroyed before the natural Québécois father can take up his proper role in the Oedipal drama.[58] This connection is implied through verbal cues that suggest a falsely assumed paternity: flicking the cap off a bottle of Baby Oil as he prepares to go down on Marcel, George refers to him as a "little boy" and promises to turn him into a "big, big man." But in fact the film suggests that George has no intention of helping Marcel become a man, and is in no position to anyway, since his sexuality is 'deviant'. As both an Anglo (colonial) oppressor and an imposter in the psychosexual realm, George is figured as incapable of helping Marcel take his place in the world and assume a stable masculine identity. This job belongs to Marcel's 'natural,' Québécois father, Albert. But unfortunately Albert, for all the ancestral Mohican knowledge he will eventually be able to pass onto Marcel, is not quite up to the task, at least initially, because he has also been emasculated within the terms of the film.

Marked as yet another in a long line of weak, absent or abusive fathers in Québec cinema,[59] Albert is the somewhat sweet but bumbling tenant in an apartment attached to a pizza parlour where he's about to be evicted to make way for another dining room. As the film delves into his uneasy relationship with the Italian landlords

and follows his declining status among this overtly macho crowd of hunters and construction workers, his lack of authority is often conveyed through partial nudity and barely concealed references to castration. Rarely dressed throughout the film, he is often seen taking baths (accompanied in the bathroom by his pet parakeet, Florida), lying partially nude in bed, wearing only an undershirt or being given a sponge bath by Marcel during the film's final scenes. The literal exposure of Albert's body is one of the things that marks him as a beleaguered masculine subject who experiences oppression along at least three axes: class, nation and age. As an unemployed manual labourer of some kind that is never specified, as a neo-colonial subject and as an emblem of pre-Quiet Revolution Quebec who has been left behind by "l'urbanisation galopante du Canada français/Québec,"[60] Albert is a relic whose masculinity is, above all, at stake, and the extent to which this is a problem is written on his body.

Once a skilled game hunter with a wife and a decent job, Albert's life is now falling to pieces: he's given up the *chasse* due to heart trouble, Marcel's mother has walked out on him for the last time, his landlord and former hunting partner, Tony, is easing him out of his apartment to make way for the expansion, and the company Albert was working for (in what capacity, we don't know; he seems to have been a manual labourer of some kind; a cog in the Anglo-American industrial machine) has moved back to the U.S. Even Albert's past masculine accomplishments are in doubt,

since no one has actually *seen* the giant moose he claims to have bagged years earlier on Lake Abott. ("It was a monster!" he exclaims, but gives up when he senses disbelief). Claims to masculinity of this sort require proof -- either in the form of a photograph or, better yet, an animal head -- and Albert has neither, until the well-known scene near the end of the film in which Marcel encourages his dying father to shoot a captive elephant in the Granby Zoo. (When the proof of this sad, domesticated version of a hunting conquest does arrive, in the form of a Polaroid of Albert, clad only in pajamas, kneeling next to his prize, it not only comes much too late, but is easily readable as a desperate attempt to reclaim lost masculine authority).

In the days, weeks or months before this futile, last-ditch effort to re-establish himself as a viable masculine subject, Albert's declining status relative to Tony is often conveyed through unequal states of (un)dress. In a bathing scene near the beginning of the film, Albert complains about the construction (or rather destruction) going on in his rented house, where walls are being torn down by rough, unilingual Italo-québécois crews working on the restaurant expansion. During a particularly noisy morning in the restaurant, Albert and his pet bird have escaped into the bathroom of their ever-shrinking apartment, taking refuge from the young, hirsute workers who are literally tearing a hole in his living room wall. A hunting trophy (the head of either a deer or a moose) rests upside down on a chair, possibly signifying an

earlier, pre-lapsarian Québécois masculinity turned literally on its head. Tony comes to visit Albert in the bath, and although he is enough of a friend to earn the affectionate, if flatly stereotyping, nickname "Spaghet," there is a problem here: the immigrant, who couldn't speak a word of French when he first went to work with Albert at the plant years earlier, but whom Albert befriended anyway, has now surpassed him. Not only has Tony managed to keep his family intact, unlike Albert, but he has done well enough financially to be expanding his business -- an expansion that could put Albert out on the street. On a personal level, then, Albert is far from fulfilling the Québécois rallying cry of "Maitre chez nous." Not only is he not the master of his house, 20 years after this slogan was uttered by Lesage, but the house is owned by Italians, whose invasion will be complete when they can kick Albert out "so they can sell lasagne" -- further threatening the Québécois "clean and proper" by means of a gastro-culinary invasion.

This relationship may have held special resonance for Québécois audiences recalling statistics popularized by Marcel Rioux after the first Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism. In *La question du Québec*, he reported that in 1961, Italians living in Quebec were the only group to perform worse economically than the French-speaking Québécois, and he wondered in print whether the gap might already have closed.[61] At a certain period in Quebec's history, then, the position of Italian

immigrants seems to have served as a kind of low watermark for the aspirations of some French-speaking Quebeckers. In the bathroom scene of *Un Zoo, la nuit*, the watermark has literally shifted to a place right around Albert's seemingly missing loins,[62] while his friend looks down on him from on high, fully clothed, in a two-shot geared to exaggerating their unequal exposure and Albert's resulting vulnerability.

Power relations between men, degrees of emasculation and threats of psychic unlivability are not always written this overtly on the body, however. In fact, because *Un Zoo, la nuit* has so much to do, I've suggested, with locating the phallus that it sees as having gone missing in post-referendum, neo-colonial Quebec, the film actually has quite a lot invested in *not* revealing too much of the male body. Since in psychoanalysis the phallus is specifically *not* the penis but rather the 'non-thing' which symbolizes and constantly surpasses the penis (i.e., the "(symbolic) ideal that offers an impossible and originary measure for the genitals to approximate"),[63] *Un Zoo, la nuit's* search for the phallus predictably entails a steady stream of substitutes for the penis, while somewhat hysterically avoiding of the literal object of its own desire. This helps to explain the many references to smoked meat, pool sticks, cross-bows, fishing rods and other phallic substitutions, as well as the various innuendo-laden nicknames conjuring up Marcel's stunted psychosexual development, overcompensations or actual anatomy. In the original, French-language version of the

film, for example, Marcel's friends on the police force call him Poignard, while both the dubbed version (*Night Zoo*) and the English subtitles on the original settle for the somewhat cuddlier but equally suggestive nickname 'Whizzer'. Without too great a stretch, Marcel's French surname, Brisebois, might also be translated as "brise(r) plus bois," or broken wood, raising the intriguing, though perhaps unintended, idea in English of a 'broken woodie'.

What all of this wordplay and symbolism seems to accomplish is the simultaneous, metaphoric veiling and unveiling of the male body in a context where Marcel's unfinished Oedipal business leaves him vulnerable to homoerotic attraction – attraction that must be repressed. Unable to take his place in the world while he is still uncertain about who 'has' the phallus, Marcel winds up swimming in queer innuendo, endlessly confronted by 'proof' of his unresolved sexuality in the form of substitutions and phallic replacements.

One striking display of this Oedipal confusion occurs during Charlie and George's first visit to Marcel's apartment, after his release from prison. Charlie has brought smoked meat sandwiches and repeats the name several times, bluntly eroticizing their lunch and playing on the fact that Marcel has recently been raped. With George's arrival the tension mounts considerably, since he recognizes Marcel as the gay basher from the pool hall, the one who humiliated him with his own service

pistol. After a series of minor confrontations and taunts about Baby Oil, George wanders around Marcel's loft, comically mis-firing a cross-bow, then overcompensating for his 'impotence' with a new weapon by plugging Marcel's target full of bullet holes -- one of several instances where violence is conflated with the threat of penetration.[64] At this point, the phallic confusion takes an odd, stylized twist. While George is playing with his weapons in the background, Charlie and Marcel stand and sit (respectively) in the foreground, discussing the $200,000 Marcel owes the police from their last deal together -- the one that landed Marcel in jail. During a verbal cat-and-mouse game that gradually turns to veiled threats of violence against Julie and Albert, Charlie walks into the foreground until his groin takes up the whole left half of the frame in close-up. For the next 16 seconds, then, it looks as if Marcel, who is seated on the right half of the frame, is holding a conversation not so much with Charlie as with Charlie's penis -- a sort of literal manifestation of the policeman's 'phallic power' in this situation.

Marcel's monologue during this unusual two-shot brings to the surface *Un Zoo, la nuit*'s concern with bodily boundaries, purity and pollution. It also clarifies the extent to which Marcel's survival -- his attempt to establish a "self's clean and proper" -- depends on ridding the body of defilement, sealing off the orifices that leave him vulnerable in the neo-colonial situation, 'entombing' himself against further

invasions. This necessity is conveyed through a dense relay of references to excrement (a primary symbol of the abject, according to both Douglas and Kristeva), liminal fluidity, corporeal containment and concealment: "You got *shit in your trousers* when the feds started tracing back things," Marcel tells the bulge in Charlie's pants. "You were sure I'd *spill* it, Charlie. I didn't. *I was like a tomb*. What'd you freaks do for me? Your connections with the judges -- bullshit. *What I've got hidden*, that's gonna pay for a vacation to forget those two years."[65] Later, as the policemen leave without their money, Charlie prolongs this excremental moment by warning Marcel that he'd better come up with the cash, or "the next present we send you, it's going to take more than a velvet cushion under your fanny to recover" -- a warning that rape, however terrible, is not the worst thing that can happen to a man (or a threat of further anal intrusions).

What these metaphors of spillage, containment and concealment do, I would argue, is set up a dynamic of "inner" and "outer" by which Marcel can differentiate himself from the Other and attempt to build up the contours of a viable self. His monologue carries the barely concealed subtext of a wished-for impermeability: the Other may have "shit in his trousers," but Marcel's body is separate, distinct, and enclosed. It behaves like a tomb: it "hides" things, and while it is capable of deliberate expulsion, it doesn't involuntarily "spill". While it is possible to view Marcel's self-

entombment as a positive (or at least culturally necessary) strategy for survival within neo-colonial Quebec, Iris Young's work suggests that the process by which he tries to make himself impermeable is the same boundary-creation strategy by which sexism, racism and homophobia are formed and held aloft. Young points out that the operation of repulsion can consolidate 'identities' founded on the instituting of the 'Other' or a set of Others through exclusion and domination:

> What constitutes through division the "inner" and "outer" worlds of the subject is a border and boundary tenuously maintained for the purposes of social regulation and control. The boundary between inner and outer is confounded by those excremental passages in which the inner effectively becomes outer, and this excreting function becomes, as it were, the model by which other forms of identity-differentiation are accomplished. In effect, this is the mode by which Others become shit.[66]

It is, arguably, this binary distinction between "inner" and "outer" (and this assumption that the Other is shit) that leads Marcel to his final act of expulsion: the execution-style murders of both police officers. Once again, in keeping with the film's disturbing logic of homophobic revenge, abjection follows from the sexual entrapment of a gay man -- carried out this time by Marcel's prison buddy, known only as his "American friend" (Quebec actor Jerry Snell), who agrees to act as 'fag-bait' in return for Marcel's prized motorcycle. "Don't worry, man, it'll be great,"

Snell's character assures Marcel in prison. "No fag's going to be able to resist me."[67] And sure enough, George falls for the blond ex-con's sexual come-on, letting himself be led from the pool hall to the Bangkok Paradise, where peeling, graffiti-covered walls suggest the degree to which parts of post-industrial Quebec have sunk into excremental disorder. Marcel delays a moose hunting trip with Albert in order to carry out the plan on short notice, and goes to the hotel where he has been instructed to listen for a tape of his own music playing in one of the rooms. Bonfires, seemingly burning on every corner, in every trash can and even reflected in Marcel's dark glasses, suggest a certain seedy purifying power as Marcel enters the hotel, bursts in on the abject spectacle of gay sex (this time carried out in almost complete darkness) and starts shooting away. "You're late," the friend tells him. "That pig tried to fuck me twice."[68]

Much of the tension that I have suggested stems from Marcel's unresolved sexuality evaporates suddenly after the murders and as the narrative turns to Albert's heart attack, his hunting of the elephant and his death. Having destroyed the false, Anglo patriarch and done away with another potential colonizer by politely dismissing the American friend,[69] Marcel is finally in a position to say and do things that in his earlier, Oedipally unresolved state would have raised homoerotic alarm bells: during a visit to Albert in the hospital, for example, Marcel lays alongside his

father, admiring his "beautiful" hair for the first time, and gently propping the old man up to watch a silent film of moose in the wilderness. After wheeling Albert out of the hospital and taking him to shoot the elephant in the zoo -- a disturbing scene that pushes *Un Zoo*'s exploration of subordinate masculinity briefly over the top -- Marcel returns his father to the apartment, where he begins a death watch punctuated by ritualistic washings and cool cloths to the forehead. Intimacy is finally possible now that the usurpers of the law have been eliminated and that authority can be returned to its rightful owner, Albert the good, or Albert the God, whose sudden divine status during the final scenes is signalled by the presence of votive candles and a sheet draped across his loins, in the manner of a portrait of Christ. As Marcel lovingly washes his father's arms and legs and feet, the film's search for the "patriarchal figure of Quebec society"[70] broadens out into a more general dialogue with the Catholic church, suggesting, perhaps, a wished-for return to a time before the Conquest, when the Church maintained the borders of the body politic in a tight metaphor with the body of Christ.

Knowing that the post-referendum period in Quebec brought a renewal of interest in aspects of Quebec's pre-revolutionary past, including religion,[71] it is easier to understand the specific nostalgia at work in these final scenes. As the camera rotates above Lebel/Albert's bed, revealing a scar on his abdomen similar to the gash

left on Christ's side during the crucifixion, *Un Zoo, la nuit* focuses its nostalgia on the rediscovery of tradition in the form of a beloved, familiar and safe paternal body. But as the framing adjusts slightly to reveal more of Christ's body than is conventionally seen in religious portraiture[72] -- including, for a brief moment, a partial view of a tiny portion of Albert/Christ's penis -- it seems clear that Marcel and the film are seeking a renewed sense of tradition; one mindful of the need for Quebec to continue the progress it has made since the Quiet Revolution rather than simply going back to an earlier metaphoric relation between the social body and the body of Christ.

When Marcel leaves his father's side temporarily and goes to sit at the bar, it's significant that he comes into contact with a flood of 'Other' bodies on a television set high in the corner of the room -- specifically the honed, active, jumping, swimming, diving, bronco-riding bodies of athletes whose images appear on a grainy station identification reel as it signals the end of the broadcasting day. With a warped-sounding version of the (English-)Canadian anthem whining in the background, Tony's father trying to comfort Marcel in untranslated Italian[73] and the blurred, hyperactive, strangely mechanical bodies of Olympic athletes leaping through space, this scene is a reminder of how alienating the bodies of those not like us can be, and how profoundly the establishment of a known, safe and homogeneous community depends on the exclusion of unfamiliar elements.

In another sense that one of my readers found unconvincing but which I can't let go of, this scene at the bar resembles the rhythmic, semiotic *chora* that Kristeva describes as a kind of anteroom to the symbolic, a space of transgression, ambiguity and maternal energy that can be occupied, for a time, before the boundaries of the self harden around an expulsion of the maternal in the acquisition of a normative psychosexual identity. As Kristeva explains in *Revolution in Poetic Language*, the *chora* is neither a sign nor a position, but

> an essentially mobile and extremely provisional articulation constituted by movements and their ephemeral stases ... Neither model nor copy, the *chora* precedes and underlies figuration and thus specularization, and is analogous only to *vocal* and *kinetic* rhythm.[74]

With the 'foreign bodies' on the television set engaged in relentless action, an essentially foreign anthem warbling in the background and the Italian grandfather speaking to Marcel in a foreign tongue, the setting seems defined by vocal and kinetic rhythms that lay just outside meaningful signification. Furthermore, the fact that Marcel's mother (or perhaps a fantasy version of his mother, since she appears out of nowhere and disappears without a trace) is visiting Albert on his deathbed throughout this surreal scene at the bar makes it all the more conceivable that Marcel is experiencing is an engagement with the *chora* as he moves toward the symbolic.

Viewing the scene this way, one could also say that Marcel's completion of

this transition is the thing that fundamentally changes his relationship to the male body. In his new condition, Marcel no longer has anything to fear from proximity to male flesh, and he demonstrates this in a show of uninhibited intimacy with the body of his dead father. When Albert dies, Marcel suspends his veneer of toughness by letting the tears flow for a moment, then stripping naked and laying down next to Albert's equally bare body. Although the framing restricts what we see to their faces and shoulders -- indicating the necessity of handling a taboo subject by imposing a veil in the representation of the penis[75] -- it is, nevertheless, a moment of father-son intimacy that verges perilously on homosexual desire and incest. What stops the scene from taking on these connotations is the sense that Marcel has resolved his psychosexual dilemma, albeit through a colonial proxy, and transferred his desire for the father into a non-sexual identification, achieving what psychoanalysts would call a 'normal' relation to the father and to the phallus.

In a classic bracketing device, the deathbed scene answers the prison rape at the beginning of the film. From a state of abject fear and vulnerability in relation to other male bodies -- bodies that represented either the threat of sodomy, homoerotic attraction, violence, or all three simultaneously -- Marcel has progressed to a state of comfortable intimacy with the body of at least one other man. Viewed one way, the "warm," Dionysian masculinity that Rioux described as "natural" to the Québécois

man can seemingly flourish again, now that the cold, Apollonian intrusions (and their sadistic undercurrents) have been excluded from the body.

Given the religious symbolism in this scene, Marcel's new comfort level also brings with it a powerful sense of baptismal renewal, as though we are witnessing the birth of the new Québécois man within a revived, although significantly changed, Catholicism. There are overt signs of such a re-birth: the presence of water, of course, and the interesting though perhaps unintended detail that in early Christian homes, baptism rituals closely resembled the course of events at the end of *Un Zoo*. As Wayne Meeks points out in his history of the first urban Christians, someone who felt ready for baptism undressed completely, then plunged into a tub of water in a room or space separated from the space of the ritual feast.[76] With a feast going on in the Italian restaurant abutting the room where Albert dies, Marcel seems to enact his own baptism as he gropes for a way to live in post-industrial, urban, secular and multicultural Quebec, after the death of his father and the traditional values Albert embodied.[77]

Like those early Christians, for whom Meeks says the baptismal bath "[became] a permanent threshold between the 'clean' group and the 'dirty' world,"[78] Marcel purchases his renewal -- and the sense of intimacy it allows him to finally enjoy with his father -- by means of a series of separations and exlusions that are as

rigid as any Levitical law, and at the expense of various Others. As the scene of father and son lying nude together dissolves to a shot of the quiet rural lake where they spent a day fishing, the film seems to reach for a 'natural,' pre-lapsarian Québécois masculinity that can only be pursued through various exclusions -- of gays, women, and non-francophone ethnic minorities, to name a few. It is a 'Holy' moment in the Old Testament sense of the root word, k-d-sh, which implies the separation of known and approved elements from unknown and unapproved ones.[79]

Conclusion

Both Douglas and Kristeva issue warnings about the cost of pursuing purity, at the same time that they acknowledge the necessity, or at least the inevitability, of the process -- especially among social groups worried about their survival. As Douglas puts it, the quest for purity is "pursued by rejection," and "it is part of our condition that the purity for which we strive and sacrifice so much turns out to be hard and dead as a stone when we get it."[80] The same conditions obviously apply to Albert at the end of *Un Zoo, la nuit*, but within this film's logic, death, holiness and separation are essential ingredients in the construction of a viable francophone community in Quebec. As I've tried to show, the male body is integral to this process, since it is so heavily coded as a site of colonial violations and a hoped for, post-

colonial renewal. Routinely figuring the threatened margins of the social body in terms of the vulnerable exits and entrances to the physical body, *Un Zoo, la nuit* maps both the problems and the solutions of Quebec society onto the suffering, permeable and finally reborn figure of the male. In doing so, the film is engaging with familiar discourses on colonial masculinity which assume that the main humiliations of colonial oppression are those of men turned into a "nation of busboys."[81]

Given all of this, it is hard not to agree with Nadeau's opinion that *Un Zoo, la nuit* takes part in a regressive project to "maintain the place of men as the referential space" for all notions of alterity in Quebec, while "consolidat[ing] the centrality of the male subject in the construction of a national identity."[82] However, I hope I've indicated some of the reasons why there are no easy judgements to be made about *Un Zoo, la nuit*'s politics. Parts of the film appear just as heavily invested in its own cracks and fissures -- in its own eroticizations of the law -- as they are in carrying out a pure sisyphian search for the lost patriarch of Quebec. Furthermore, although the final images do tend to evoke a hermetically sealed world of masculine reconciliation, they also contain an implied challenge to Christian prohibitions against the son gazing at the father's nakedness,[83] while potentially harking back to an early Greek sense of a sense of community based on mutual acts of disclosure.[84] Thus while the film is not yet ready to show *us* the 'whole' body of the father/Father (unlike so many recent

Canadian films, this one never does show us the penis in its entirety),[85] it is ready to tentatively conceive of a time when men might expose their bodies to each other without shame. This in itself presents a very different set of discourses on masculinity and the male body than we seem to find in the film's otherwise conservative adherence to an Oedipal drama of masculine conflict and reconciliation. As Foucault reminds us, all discourses are irreducibly complex and unstable grids of intelligibility that can simultaneously align themselves with power and resistance.[86] Such instability seems to define the complex operation of discourses on masculinity in *Un Zoo, la nuit*, which understands the male body as a shifting and contradictory site of permeability, excess, resistance to Anglophone authority and attempts to secure power over various internal Others, but which also holds out the faint promise of a homo-social community based on the capacity for mutual exposure.

Endnotes

1. Lauzon, Jean-Claude, "Howls from the Asphalt Jungle," interview with José Arroyo, *Cinema Canada* 7 (May 1987): 9.

2. Marcel Rioux, *Quebec in Question*, trans. by James Boake (Toronto: James Lorimer & Co., 1978). Originally published as *La Question du Québec* (Paris: Éditions Seghers, 1969).

3. Ibid, 136.

4. Ibid.

5. Marcel Mauss, "Les Techniques du corps," *Journal de Psychologie* 32 (1935): 271-93.

6. Such stereotypes as the Dionysian vs. the Apollonian male could, of course, persist in part because they have some truth value. Certainly one gets used to hearing about francophone men being 'softer' and more expressive than other men in Canada, particularly English Canadians of British descent. However, my interest is in not in the truth or falsity of such ideas but in *how* discourses about masculinity circulate within culture, and how they shape representations of the male body.

7. Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks* (New York: Grove Press Inc., 1967), 13.

8. Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (New York, Washington: Prager Publishers, 1966), 124.

9. Ibid, 123.

10. Michael Dorland and Arthur Kroker, "Culture Critique and New Quebec Society," in *Culture Critique: Fernand Dumont and New Quebec Sociology*, ed. Michael A. Weinstein (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1985), 10. They quote Laurent-Michael Vacher, "Intellectuel l'an prochain, même: tentative d'idées simples," *La Nouvelle Barre du Jour* 130-131 (October, 1983): 24.

11. Dorland and Kroker, "Culture Critique," 20 and 24.

12. For an analysis of claims that Quebec is an internal colony, see Kenneth McRoberts,"Internal colonialism: the case of Quebec," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 2, 3 (July 1979): 293-318.

13. Dorland and Kroker, "Culture Critique," 9.

14. Chantal Nadeau, "Women in French-Quebec Cinema: The Space of Socio-Sexual (In)difference," *CineACTION* 28 (1992): 5.

15. Judith Butler, *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"* (New York and London: Routledge, 1993), 65.

16. In his seminal work on the techniques of the body, Mauss observed that there is no detail of bodily behaviour or comportment that is entirely natural or innate. Routine approaches to eating, sleeping, moving, resting, even the actions of the body in sex, vary from one culture to another, across time and between genders. Mauss, "Les Techniques du corps," 271-93. Having laid the groundwork for a social symbolism of the body, Mauss never enlarged upon this work. Some 30 years later, Mary Douglas picked up where he left off, exploring the relationship between social structure and bodily behaviour across a range of cultures.

17. Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Volume One: An Introduction* (New York: Random House, Vintage Books Edition, 1990), 152.

18. Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York and London: Routledge, 1990), 139.

19. Ibid, 131.

20. Ibid, 139: "...I suggest that gendered bodies are so many 'styles of the flesh.' These styles are never fully self-styled, for styles have a history, and those histories condition and limit the possibilities."

21. Nadeau, "Women in French-Quebec Cinema," 4-5.

22. Ibid, 8.

23. Ibid, 6.

24. Ibid, 8.

25. Julia Kristeva, *Desire in Language*, ed. Leon S. Roudiez, trans. Thomas Gora, Alice Jardine and Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980), 156. This line appears in the context of a discussion about Beckett's *First Love* and Giovanni Bellini's Christian paintings, in an essay titled "The Father, Love and Banishment." The essay traces the meaning of the death of the father for the son, arguing that the father-son dyad gains significance as it fills the place that would have been occupied by the son's desire for the mother.

26. In interviews, Lauzon explained that the marginal role of women characters in *Un Zoo* was due to a technical problem. Elsewhere, he said he dropped the scenes "pour des raisons d'efficacité

dramatique et de budget." "Interview," avec Leo Bonneville, *Sequences* 130 (Août 1987): 13; and Jean Charbonneau, "Mise au point sur une image du père québécois," *CopieZero* 36, 13.

27. This term is from Benedict Anderson's discussion of an "as it were ancestral Englishness" conveyed by the phrase "Earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust." Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983).

28. For a description of the father's centrality in pre-modern Quebec family life, see Colette Moreux, *Fin d'une religion* (Montréal: Presses de l'Université de Montréal, 1969), 37-38.

29. This is a manifestation of the belief that, as Cynthia Enloe put it, nationalism springs from "masculine memory, masculinized humiliation and masculinized hope," while "anger at being 'emasculated' -- or turned into a 'nation of busboys' -- [is] presumed to be the natural fuel for igniting a nationalist movement." Cynthia Enloe, *Bananas, Beaches and Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics* (London: Pandora, 1989), 44. For a discussion of the difficulties faced by Québécoise women whose feminism and nationalism are often in conflict, see Roberta Hamilton, *Gendering the Vertical Mosaic: Feminist Perspectives on Canadian Society* (Toronto: Copp Clark Ltd. 1996), 125, and Diane Lamoureux, "Nationalism and Misogyny," in *Boundaries of Identity: A Quebec Reader*, ed. William Dodge (Toronto: Lester Publishing Ltd., 1992), 103-107.

30. Julia Kristeva, *The Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, trans. by Leon Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), 2.

31. Ibid, 68.

32. Geoff Pevere,"Family Ties," *Canadian Forum* (December 1992): 24.

33. Heinz Weinmann, *Cinéma de l'Imaginaire Québécois: de la* Petite Aurore *à* Jésus de Montréal (Montréal: L'Hexagone, 1990), 118.

34. Ian Lockerbie, "Quebec Cinema as a Mirror of Identity," in *Canada on the Threshold of the 21st Century*, eds. C.H.W. Remie and J.M. Lacroix (Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 1991), 307.

35. Cynthia J. Fuchs, "The Buddy Politic," in *Screening the Male: Exploring Masculinities in Hollywood Cinema*, eds. Steven Cohan and Ina Rae Hark (London and New York: Routledge 1993), 209.

36. Christine Ramsay, "Leo Who?: Questions of Identity and Culture in Jean-Claude Lauzon's *Léolo*," *Post Script* 15, 1 (Fall 1995): 26-27, 30-31.

37. Few critics writing about the film in the late 1980s chose to describe this scene as a rape, and my use of the term is in dispute. However Julie clearly says no -- and appears to mean it -- several

times before Marcel enters her anyway, and I see no compelling reason to interpret the scene as anything other than a rape. To do so would seem to presume that by going with him in the first place, Julie was somehow consenting to sex. My reading is no doubt affected by changes in public opinion over the past decade in the precise definition of rape, and it is very likely that Lauzon intended the scene to be more ambiguous than this suggests. However, there is another issue here that transcends authorial intent: while the better part of *Un Zoo*'s narrative is geared to settling the score for the rape of Marcel in prison, his rape of Julie is never returned to, and there appear to be no consequences for either of them as a result of the encounter. A super-subtle reading might find cause to view this as a critique of sexual violence against women, but in fact the film simply moves on from this event as though nothing happened. Even if one chose not to view the scene as a sexual assault, as Blaine Allan has pointed out to me, the scene tends to 'answer' the prison rape and add to the film's overall suggestion of a thin line between sexuality and violence.

38. The idea that psychoanalytic processes might be fundamentally different for colonial subjects stems from Fanon, and has been developed by Bhabha. While comparisons of colonialism in Quebec and elsewhere stumble on the crucial fact that Francophone Québécois were originally part of an imperial settlement plan -- a fact which positions the Québécois as both colonizers and colonized -- Fanon's notion of a reordering of relations to the Law can, I think, be applied with partial success to Quebec and to Marcel's psychosexual dilemmas in *Un Zoo, la nuit*. Bhabha writes that "In the colonial condition, the dictates of the Law and the authority of the superego -- embodying moral values, taking a coherent place in the world -- become forms of cultural knowledge constituted of guilt and doubt. The colonial subject constitutes its identity and authority, not in relation to the 'content' of the Law or its transgression of its edicts. His existence is defined in a perpetual performativity that intervenes in that syntax or grammar of the superego, in order to disarticulate it ... The installation of the phallic Damoclean sword as the agency that installs a social ideal evokes an ambivalent social identification embodied in the muscular tension of the borderline native. His 'disincorporation' in paranoia and in melancholia are attempts to break the marginality of the social and political limits of space; to redraw the boundaries in a psychic, fantasmatic space." Homi K. Bhabha, "A Question of Survival: Nations and Psychic States," in *Psychoanalysis and Cultural Theory: Thresholds*, ed. James Donald (London: Macmillan, 1991), 100.

39. Charbonneau reads the death of the two police officers in psychological terms: "Dans le cas du père diabolique, il y a donc projection sur le père de cette hostilité de l'enfant déjà éprouvée contra la mère et déplacée ensuite. Le père diabolique, tel qu'imaginé par l'enfant, est en effet tout puissant et a le pouvoir de le mettre a mort lui, l'enfant en tant que rival potentiel. En fait, il faudrait bien mettre à mort ce père, mais trop de culpabilité empêche que la chose ne soit représentée directement. C'est le sens de la mise à mort des deux policiers dans le film qui incarnent le père diabolique de façon deguisée." Charbonneau, "Mise au point," 14.

40. Ibid, 13.

41. Butler, *Bodies that Matter*, 96.

42. Ibid, 14.

43. Sharon Willis, "Disputed Territories: Masculinity and Social Space," in *Male Trouble*, eds. Constance Penley and Sharon Willis (London, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), 270 and 273.

44. Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1969), 41-43.

45. Andrew Campbell and Nathan Griffith, "The Male Body and Contemporary Art," in *The Male Body: Features, Destinies, Exposures*, ed. Laurence Goldstein (Ann Arbor, Michigan: The University of Michigan Press, 1994), 162. They're discussing Joel-Peter Witkin's photographs.

46. Steve Neale, "Masculinity as Spectacle: Reflections on men and mainstream cinema," in *Screening the Male: Exploring Masculinities in Hollywood Cinema*, eds. Steven Cohan and Ina Rae Hark (London and New York: Routledge, 1993), 9-20. Originally published in *Screen* 24, 6 (1983).

47. Claude Morin was René Lèvesque's minister of intergovernmental affairs when it was revealed in 1981 that he had been selling information about the Parti Québécois to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. Morin admitted the allegations and resigned, but the full story did not get out until 1992. As John F. Conway reports, this was an extremely serious betrayal from within the PQ's own ranks. Morin had been a key adviser to every Quebec premier since Jean Lesage and had been a central influence shaping Quebec's moderate course, including the referendum strategy and the decision to place the hyphen in "sovereignty-association," and the fateful decision to join ranks with the English-Canadian premiers who eventually patriated Canada's constitution without Quebec's consent. John F. Conway, *Debts to Pay: English Canada and Quebec from the Conquest to the Referendum* (James Lorimer & Company, 1992), 121-123.

48. Kristeva, *Powers of Horror*, 13. "The abject confronts us ... with our earliest attempts to release the hold of maternal entity even before ex-isting outside of her, thanks to the autonomy of language. It is a violent, clumsy breaking away, with the constant risk of falling back under the sway of a power as securing as it is stifling."

49. Waldby uses Lacan's term 'imago' (instead of 'body image') because it avoids the connotation of a biological body over which a cultural image is laid: "Rather it places the morphology of the body, the configuration of its flesh, its boundaries and the relationship between parts, in an indissociable relationship with its psychic investment by the subject who lives in that body." Catherine Waldby, "Destruction: Boundary Erotics and Refigurations of the Heterosexual Male Body," in *Sexy Bodies: The Strange Carnalities of Feminism*, eds. Elizabeth Grosz and Elspeth Probyn (London and New York: Routledge, 1995), 268.

50. Ibid.

51. As Diana Fuss points out, one of Fanon's most important contributions to political thought was the critical notion that "the psychical operates precisely as a political formation." Diana Fuss, *Identification Papers* (New York, London: Routledge, 1995), 165.

52. Kristeva, *Powers of Horror*, 72.

53. The television set as bearer of colonial images also makes sense in the context of Québécois complaints about the deadening intrusions of North American "telematic society," or "television society." See Bordwell and Kroker, "Culture Critique and New Quebec Sociology," 25.

54. Butler, *Bodies that Matter*, 109-110. Along with Foucault, Butler suggests that taboo behaviour always provides the potential for its own (erotic) undoing: "...the juridical law, the regulative law, seeks to confine, limit, or prohibit some set of acts, practices, subjects, but in the process of articulating and elaborating that prohibition, the law provides *the discursive occasion* for a resistance, a resignification, and potential self-subversion of that law."

55. Kristeva, *Powers of Horror*, 20.

56. It is significant that Marcel is both eating and trying to reassert his heterosexuality when these unwelcome (homo)sexual advances come his way. As Mary Douglas points out, anything related to digestion and procreation will have a broad scope for symbolising social relations and social processes, in particular those related to purity rituals. (Douglas, *Purity and Danger*, 8.) In *Un Zoo, la nuit*, food is often present or referred to when defilement by the Other is threatened. Marcel abandons his meal at the pool hall in order to deal with the threat of a homosexual encounter; his father, Albert, is in danger of losing his apartment because Tony, the Italian immigrant, wants to enlarge his restaurant; Albert vows that he won't leave just so Tony can "sell lasagne." The invasion of Quebec culture is figured to some extent as a gastro-culinary invasion -- an encroachment on the cherished food preferences of the francophone majority. Identity is troubled at the level of the gut when "les pattes de cochon" are in danger of being replaced by "les pizzas quatre saisons." Weinmann, *Cinema de l'Imaginaire*, 110-111.

57. At the end of this scene, Marcel shoots the gun into a mirror image of himself and George. While this can be read as an attempt to shatter the relationship between colonized and colonizer, it is also an example of what Kristeva means when she suggests that abjection often involves a spitting out of the self, along with the establishment of a "not-me." Kristeva, *Powers of Horror*, 2.

58. Weinmann, *Cinema de l'Imaginaire*, 113. "Ici George incarne les pulsions sadico-anales d'un 'père-flic' tyrannique qui jouit lorsque Marcel, attaché de force au barreaux de sa prison, se fait pénétrer analement ou bien qui oblige Marcel à la pointe de son arme à une fellation...dans les toilettes ... En fait, George, Candien anglais, *est* la prison sans barreaux, invisible, dans laquelle Marcel reste enfermé, même une fois libéré de la prison 'réelle.'"

59. Weak, dishonest, insane or absent fathers appear in such films as *Le Confessional* (1995), *Les Bons débarras* (1980), *Jacques et novembre* (1984), *Piwi* (1982), *Léolo* (1992), *Bonheur d'occasion* (The Tin Flute, 1983) and *La Petite Aurore l'enfant martyre* (1951-2). Janice Pallister points out that "the impractical, 'absent' male is [also] a constant in French Canadian literature," appearing in such works as *Mills of Power* and Hubert Auquin's *Prochain Episode.* Janice L. Pallister, *The Cinema of Québec: Masters in Their Own House* (Madison,Teaneck: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press and London: Associated University Presses, 1995), 77 and 158.

60. Weinmann, *Cinema de l'Imaginaire*, 116.

61. Rioux, *Quebec in Question*, 99.

62. While Lebel's penis is not glimpsed in this scene, the framing reveals so much of his pubic area that it could lead viewers to question how it was shot *without* revealing the penis. This is why I refer to his "seemingly missing loins."

63. Butler, *Bodies that Matter*, 61.

64. Another instance has George threatening to pierce one of Marcel's ear ducts with a knife. Instead, he puts a gash several inches long in Marcel's cheek. Once again, Marcel's vulnerability to penetration by a colonial Other coincides with signs of feminization: Albert has just given Marcel a package which turns out to be a bottle of perfume from Marcel's mother. Later in the film, Albert tells Marcel about a visit he received from the two police officers, who were looking for their money and/or drugs. Referring to them as "travel agents," he tells his son that the men "both had what looked like punches. I'm sure they could puncture holes this big in your train ticket with those."

65. Emphasis added.

66. Butler, *Gender Trouble*, 133-34. Citing Young, Iris Marion, "Abjection and Oppression: Unconscious Dynamics of Racism, Sexism, and Homophobia," paper presented at the Society of Phenomenology and Existential Philosophy Meetings, Northwestern University, 1988. The paper is included as part of a longer chapter in Young's *The Politics of Difference*.

67. Snell's character is in some ways a puzzle, and part of the film's ambiguous approach to masculinity. It is unclear whether he is gay by choice or by convenience during this one job, although bi-sexuality may be indicated by the fact that he pins erotic images of both men and women to the walls of his prison cell. Although Snell's character seems to fall in line with the film's overall revenge plot against homosexuals, one bit of dialogue also has him exposing the workings of compulsory heterosexuality. While talking to Marcel in the prison's visiting area, a guard comes too near, and Snell's character knows just what to do: he switches into conventional "guy talk" until the guard is out of earshot. "Yeah, I told her ... man, this bitch with tits out to here, right, chased me all the way down the block, man. Fuckin' dream." The suggestion here -- that this guard's suspicions could only

be appeased by a stream of aggressive hetero pick-up babble -- comes as a sudden and surprising (partial) corrective to the film's overall conflation of homosexuality and colonial oppression. This is one of those seemingly peripheral moments that wreaks havoc with any attempt to judge Lauzon's final 'position' on sexual orientation. Rather than take anything that might be referred to, simplistically, as a stance, Lauzon, as Ramsay has pointed out in reference to *Léolo*, tends to offer "lyrical interpretation[s] of the hard psychological and social realities of the disaffected Québécois male subject." Christine Ramsay, "Leo Who?," 36.

68. The reader might object that I've overinvested George's status as an Anglophone, since Marcel also kills the straight, francophone police officer, Charlie. However, the second killing is merely an afterthought, a practical necessity rather than a deep-seated, bodily craving for expulsion. Marcel's first priority was to cleanse himself of the sodomizing, colonial, *père diabolique.*

69. Snell's character provides an interesting variation on the "solitary outlaw" identified by Blaine Allan as a recurring figure in Canadian films from the 1980s. Epitomizing the ambiguous position of American characters in recent English Canada and Quebec cinema, this American friend is both a helper and a potential bad influence on Marcel -- someone who can be very useful on a single job (eliminating a point of corrupt Anglo power) but who ultimately has little to offer Marcel or Quebec. As Marcel sends Snell's character back to Nebraska and turns to domestic problems, the film seems to suggest that for Quebec, running to the Americans is no long-term solution. See Blaine Allan, "Canada's Sweethearts, or Our American Cousins," *Canadian Journal of Film Studies* 2, 2-3 (1993): 67-80.

70. Nadeau, "Women in French-Québec Cinema," 6.

71. Langlois, et al, *Recent Social Trends in Quebec*, 319. While church attendance declined in the 1980s, the post-referendum period saw "a renewed multiplication of associations, including the Catholic Action movements, spirituality movements, and other groups oriented toward missionary assistance and particular needs in the community."

72. For two views on the sexual representation of Christ and God the Father, see Howard Eilberg-Schwartz, "God's Body: The Divine Cover Up," in *Religious Reflections on the Human Body*, ed. Jane Marie Law, 137-148 (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1995), and Leo Steinberg, *The Sexuality of Christ in Renaissance Art and Modern Oblivion, October 25 (*Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1983). Steinberg points out that the adult Christ is never depicted naked, and that even in death his hidden penis is covered and emphasized by Mary's hand, his own, or even by the hand of God the Father. Cited in Mira Schor, *Wet: On Painting, Feminism and Art Culture* (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1996), 17.

73. Queen's University Italian instructor Donato Santeramo provided a translation of the old man's dialogue: "Until [as long as?] there is life, there is hope. Don't worry, Marcel. Everything will be alright. Drink your coffee. Sometimes health is so fragile. It becomes a problem for us."

74. Toril Moi, ed. *The Kristeva Reader* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell Ltd., 1986), 12. Kristeva is quoted in Moi's introduction to the excerpt from *Revolution in Poetic Language*. Emphasis added.

75. Schor, *Wet: On Painting*, 25.Schor discusses a similar image of two men on a bed in the Eric Fischl painting *Father and Son* (1980). In the painting, "the relationship between father and son, father and wife, the interchangeability of son and wife, son and mother, are touched on in a subtle manner," but "the taboo subject [once again] imposes a veil on the representation of the penis..." The same could be said of this scene in *Un Zoo*, which challenges prohibitions on father-son intimacy and gazing but pulls back from a thorough repudiation of phallic power by keeping the penis veiled.

76. Wayne A. Meeks, *The First Urban Christians* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), 153. Cited in Richard Sennet, *Flesh and Stone: The Body and the City in Western Civilization* (New York, London: W.W. Norton & Company, 1994), 139.

77. Ian Lockerbie points out that the death of the father has been "almost obligatory" in Quebec films of the 1980s, and attributes this to the "particular strain imposed on the paternal role by social change" of the kind experienced in Quebec since the 1960s. Lockerbie, "Quebec Cinema," 305.

78. Meeks, *The First Urban Christians*, 153.

79. Douglas, *Purity and Danger*, 8.

80. Ibid, 161.

81. Enloe, *Bananas, Beaches and Bases*, 44.

82. Nadeau, "Women in French-Quebec Cinema," 8 and 11.

83. Eilberg-Schwartz, "God's Body: The Divine Cover Up,"146. Eilberg-Schwartz argues that the severe prohibitions against the son gazing at the father's nakedness and the lack of bodily images for God (as well as the veiling of those that do exist) in Judaism form part of an attempt to block the disturbing potential for homoeroticism between male worshippers and their deity.

84. Sennet, *Flesh and Stone*, 33. Sennet points out that to the ancient Athenian, displays of the nude body affirmed one's dignity as a citizen: "Athenian democracy placed great emphasis on its citizens exposing their thoughts to others, just as men exposed bodies. These mutual acts of disclosure were meant to draw the knot between citizens even tighter."

85. Male nudity is almost becoming *de rigeur* in English-Canadian film, while it seems to show up less regularly in films from Quebec. A partial list of recent films to unveil the penis: *Mustard Bath; Paris, France; I Love a Man in Uniform; The Adjuster; Whale Music; Life Classes; Le Confessional; Margaret's Museum; Live Bait;* and *La Côté Obscure du Cœur.* MacGillivray's *Understanding Bliss* also includes prominent views of an erotic male nude painting. Gregory Wild's

1994 feature, *Highway of Heartache*, assaults the viewer with what seems like dozens of images of grotesquely oversized 'puppet penises,' and the group production *Pink Komkommer*, an animated short that includes characters drawn by Alison Snowden and David Fine, delights in the graphic depiction of phallic objects dreamed up by a snoozing (and otherwise proper-looking) elderly woman. Another film from Quebec that come very close to revealing the penis but ultimately doesn't is *Jacques et novembre*. Films by gay male directors, such as John Greyson *(Zero Patience, Urinal Lilies),* and Bruce LaBruce (*No Skin Off My Ass, Super 8 ½),* would seem to be in their own category, and have been less likely all along to keep the penis under wraps.

86. Foucault, *History of Sexuality,* 101."Discourses are not once and for all subservient to power or raised up against it ... We must make allowance for the complex and unstable process whereby discourse can be both an instrument and an effect of power, but also a hindrance, a stumbling-block, a point of resistance and a starting point for an opposing strategy."

Chapter Two

"Tube Steaks and Tiny Men, or Feminist Remappings of the Colonial Male Body in *Patriotism I* and *II* and *La Vie rêvée*."

> To take men as the objects of our fantasies and the subject of our art is to shift power relations within art ... presented through women's eyes, men can no longer be Man.
>
> Rozsika Parker, *Women's Images of Men*[1]

Having looked closely at one male director's approach to colonial masculinity at a particular juncture in Quebec's social history -- and found it to be generally full of acute anxiety about the permeable male body -- I now turn to a discussion of how such discourses have been handled in work by two women, English Canadian artist/filmmaker Joyce Wieland and Quebec director Mireille Dansereau. As partial 'outsiders'[2] to the patriarchal politics that have often shaped anti-colonial nationalisms in English Canada and Quebec, I want to suggest, both filmmakers have had a tendency to address questions of colonial masculinity from within their own frameworks and agendas (from within 'the margin of the margin' that is Canadian feminist film), and have in some cases arrived at very different ways of representing the male body than those found in Canada's more 'dominant'[3] narrative tradition.

There is no consistency or predictability to this pattern as a general feature

of female enunciation, any more than one can argue that all films by women veer toward an associational logic or use the colour blue. As Sandy Flitterman-Lewis reminds us in her study of the French feminist avant garde, *To Desire Differently*, there is never simply a feminine 'content' or 'expression' that emanates directly from the woman's place, for it is "never a question of films having been made by individual men or women, or of a specific content speaking to the needs of a particular sex."[4] Rather, the challenge is to look for particular enunciative patterns and practices that surface in various ways, and to understand those in relation to the unique (but not homogeneous) social and desiring positions occupied by women.

With this in mind, I am interested in exploring the possibility that Wieland and Dansereau's different *experiences* of neo-colonialism and anti-colonial nationalism in English Canada and Quebec may have helped them to generate different understandings of the 'humiliations' of colonial rule -- ones perhaps not as invested as others have been in fear, nostalgia, or a metaphorics of the body that foregrounds illness, ingestion and expulsion. Among other things, Wieland and Dansereau have a tendency to approach colonial masculinities from within a 'doubled' discourse that Linda Hutcheon and others associate with feminist ironic practice,[5] upholding certain nationalist aims while at the same time minimizing or

parodying the colonial male's concern about lack or quest for phallic authority. As a representational strategy for 'stripping' discourses on colonial masculinity of some of the life-and-death quality that they take on in other films, this sometimes involves revealing the nude male body in playful contexts or referencing the penis in ways that foreground what Kaja Silverman calls its "incommensurability" with, the phallus.[6]

Before moving on to discussion of how these patterns manifest themselves in Wieland's visual art from the 1960s and 70s, in her two early films, *Patriotism, Part One* and *Patriotism Part Two* and in Dansereau's *La Vie rêvée*, however, I need to address a number of theoretical issues raised by the suggestion of a specificity to women's expression, and by the idea that women might bring their own formal approaches or thematic preoccupations to images of the male body. While a more complete discussion of these issues would take me far afield of the main issues I want to address, it needs to be pointed out that a large body of work on gender and authorship (respectively and together) over the last 30 years has undermined both the notion of stable gender categories and the idea of a self-present author who is the punctual source of meaning within texts, making it more hazardous than ever to generalize about 'women' or 'women's films' in ways that gloss over the real diversity and contradictions that exist between individual

women or their cultural products. I do not intend to bypass Judith Butler's crucial assertions about gender performativity by re-asserting the stability of the category of 'woman'[7] (although I may have to assume such a category exists in order to address the topic at all). Nor, to borrow a phrase from Silverman, do I intend to "resuscitate the author laid to rest by Barthes in 1969."[8]

Instead, I have tended to approach female authorship or enunciation as a tentative construct that offers a set of *potential* differences that emanate, in part, from the equally tentative category of 'female desire'. Whereas classic auteur theory positioned the biological author as the punctual source of meaning within film texts,[9] and while later, post-structuralist elaborations of authorship tended to erase the role of the author 'outside' the text altogether,[10] this chapter adopts a position somewhere between these two poles. In keeping with Silverman's reformulated notion of the author as one of *several* subject positions that need to be accounted for within texts (rather than the only one, or a mere absence), I accept that "the director may in certain situations constitute *one* of the speakers of his or her films, and that there may at times be pressing political reasons for maximizing what might be said to derive from this authorial voice."[11] Many of these political reasons are well encapsulated by Flitterman-Lewis in *To Desire Differently*, which argues for the need to take sexual difference and female desire

into account in all work on the enunciative positions that speak through texts by women. Any attempt to apply the concept of enunciation[12] to work by women must consider the problem of sexual difference, or risk remaining *in*different to gendered power relations and the function of those relations within texts, she argues, since enunciation in the feminine "recasts the very terms and relations of sexuality, vision, authorship and text" and

> raises the question of female *desire*, indicating a terrain of representation from which various new positions can be engaged, scopic modalities which imply alternative conceptions of female subjectivity and desire.[13]

As I've noted, Flitterman-Lewis cautions that this in no way implies that women's work automatically produces a feminine "content" or "expression" that flows directly from the woman's place. However, she does view it as a critical necessity (and a political imperative) that female enunciation be differentiated according to its "possibilities," and its potential for generating alternatives to dominant enunciative positions, narrative approaches and economies of vision. Listing some of those possibilities, she argues that female enunciation can, under certain circumstances, lead to:

> ...a problematization of the enunciating subject itself and the indication of alternative positions, a denaturalization of the gaze structured according to phallic logic, a shift

> of emphasis in the quality and intensity of the controlling look -- as well as in its object, a new recognition of what Chantal Akerman calls "*la jouissance du voir*" (the erotics of vision unhampered by the strictures of voyeuristic definition), and, at the level of the diegesis, differing structures of point-of-view and identification as well as the creation of new possibilities for destabilizing the inevitability and homogeneity of the patriarchal narrative.[14]

A similar, but much simpler, set of assumptions about gendered looking and the difference posed by female desire underlies a small body of work on 'women's images of men' in the visual arts, produced by such writer/artists as Sarah Kent, Jacqueline Morreau, Roszika Parker in the early 1980s and updated in the mid-1990s by Mira Schor. Much of this work bypasses debates on authorship and argues that women, by virtue of their desires and experience of patriarchy, will tend to represent the male body in ways that either mock, openly eroticize, diminish or impair it, while in rare cases producing a 'matter-of-fact' glimpse at the genitals of a well-known and well-loved subject. Roszika Parker, commenting on the *Images of Men* exhibition held at London's Institute of Contemporary Art in 1980, for example, suggested that revenge against a sexist society might play a prominant role in shaping women's approach to the representation of the male:

> It is (perhaps) inevitable that women's images of men in art as much as in literature should be about the effects of differ-

> ences of power between the sexes; about the fear and hatred it can generate, and about the desire to reveal, challenge, transform or destroy the imbalance ... I am not suggesting that we all want to reduce men to helpless invalids (though some of us may want just that) but that through art women express the fantasies and desires engendered in us by a sexist society.[15]

Similarly, in a chapter devoted to "representations of the penis" in her recent book of essays, *Wet: On Painting, Feminism and Art Culture*, Mira Schor notes that "women's representations of the male nude, and of the penis, often forego conventional eroticism for a critique based on anger and humor," while others exhibit a "a degree of unsentimentality" that she says is uncommon in work by gay or straight men.[16] (Schor makes the somewhat sweeping, though not altogether unsubstantiated, claim that gay male artists tend to enlarge the penis and its 'role' in the visual drama, while all but a very few straight men avoid sexual representations of the male body altogether).[17] In a recent deviation from these arguments, Peter Lehman has drawn attention to a potential *sameness* in male and female authorship, arguing (in the context of a discussion about the video *Dick Talk)* that "dominant patriarchal sexual ideology may have a pervasive impact on how some women respond to and create images of male sexuality," since men and women draw upon the same cultural stereotypes and ideological assumptions

about sexuality and the male body. Given this shared starting point or imaginary, Lehman argues,

> we may expect that some women filmmakers, artists, and photographers ... may replicate many patriarchal assumptions about the male body, including those of power, size and musculature."[18]

While this appropriately qualified statement does seem to apply in some cases (*Dick Talk* [1986] and Kathryn Bigelow's depiction of buffed and hysterically active male bodies in action films such as *Point Break* [1991] would seem to be prime examples),[19] it seems to me that the argument bypasses more compelling reasons why women might differ in their representational strategies and approach to the male body. Among other things, as Sarah Kent has argued, women who spend time with men generally "know too much" about the way in which masculinities are painstakingly performed and built up rather than transparently lived,[20] so that every attempt by a woman to represent the male body comes with the potential for a certain amount of de-mythologising mischief. Thus, for example, while art historians have noted that male artists frequently treat the penis with "loving care, affection or amused indulgence," Kent suggests that a female artist may not show the same respect:

> On the contrary she may display a lack of reverence for an organ which she experiences as wilful and inconsistent -- making

> demands while not guaranteeing satisfaction. For although characterised in pornography and popular fiction as a powerful weapon or tool that can hurt or rape ... in real life the penis often fails to make its presence adequately felt.[21]

Patterns similar to these show up in both *Patriotism, Part One* and *La Vie rêvée,* where the penis-phallus tends to be miniaturized (in the form of hot dogs and lipsticks, for example) or foregrounded in ways that draw attention to the gap between the penis as literal organ and the phallus as symbolic construct. However in both cases, representations of the male body are complexly bound up with discourses on anti-colonial nationalisms and masculinity in English Canada and Quebec, suggesting the need to read 'women's images of men' within the social and discursive contexts which produce them. Both films were produced during periods of heightened nationalist sentiment in English Canada and Quebec (the mid-1960s and early 1970s), and both works filter through a number of the basic concerns associated with the (very different) anti-colonial nationalisms that were being played out at the time in each setting. However, *Patriotism, Part One* and *La Vie rêvée* are also inflected by their authors' positions as women, and as subjects on 'the margin of the margin' who were apparently drawn to critiquing the masculinist foundations of these movements.

For Dansereau, as I'll show, the need to deflate the male body to a more

manageable size or call attention to the gap between penis and phallus is expressive of the basic conflict that we know to have developed between her own sensibilities (including her emerging feminism) and the goals, desires and imaginaries of male-dominated nationalism in Quebec. (Dansereau suggests as much in an interview that calls attention to the clashes between her 'personal and subjective' vision for the film and the agenda she felt was being forced on her by male nationalists wanting her to adopt their ideological vision of a first feature film by a woman in Quebec). Foregrounding the lack of fit that began to occur in the 1970s between the male-dominated Quebec nationalist movement and first-phase feminism, I resurrect two key scenes of male sexual representation that have been bypassed in most discussions of *La Vie rêvée* and argue for the need to view each of them (with their steady stream of images of miniaturized and exposed male bodies) partially in terms of a feminist response to anti-colonial nationalism. Before turning to that discussion, however, I look at Wieland's longstanding fascination with the male body and view this penis-phallus fetish in relation to her playful and passionate -- but always critical -- engagements with pan-Canadian nationalism in the 1960s and early 70s.

Joyce Wieland: flag jobs and the (pre-)feminist/national gaze at the male

Although it is only one small component of a large body of work that has been enormously important to Canadian feminists,[22] Joyce Wieland's consistent attention to the male body (as a source of playful imagery, erotic inspiration and fuel for satiric explorations of phallic sexuality) raises important questions about the potential for a female gaze at the male within an English-Canadian context. As the so-called 'mother' of the Canadian feminist avant garde, Wieland was the first to launch a sustained analysis of the male body in relation to Canadian landscape and national identity, and her work still provides some of the clearest (and 'cheekiest') juxtapositions of masculinity and nation in English-Canadian visual arts and film. Despite the immense variety in Wieland's approach to male embodiment, however, this aspect of her work has not received the close attention it deserves. While her overtly women-centred works have been discussed in detail, (leading, for example, to important analyses of *Water Sark* as an example of *feminine écriture*)[23] a lack of conceptual models for including a gaze at the male within the range of activities thought of as feminist has at times led to the collapse of Wieland's multiply-positioned, complex looks at the male body into the general terms of a "pre-feminist" absorption with "phallic pleasure".[24] On the contrary, Wieland's early stain painted and pop art versions of the penis (i.e., *Penis*

Wallpaper and *Balling*), her numerous Tiepolo-inspired paintings of nude male angels, and at least three early films dealing with the corporeal effects of colonization (*Patriotism, Part One, Patriotism, Part Two* and *Pierre Vallières*), call to be read as instances of a simultaneously Canadian and female gaze that reads, constructs and imag(in)es the male body to its own ends. And because Wieland never really loses her interest in the male body, producing what must easily be her most explicitly erotic portrait of the nude male in 1983 (the self-portrait *Artist on Fire*, which features Wieland, hooved like Pan and engulfed in flames, putting the finish touches on the erect penis of her male model),[25] the implied division of her work into phallic and woman-centred phases obscures what amounts to a more organic mingling of two aspects of Wieland's work. In a more general sense it is also a critical mistake to label her early work "phallic," when in fact, as I'll try to demonstrate here, Wieland often seems to be foregounding the difference between the penis and the phallus and speaking the male body from the margins (through an overt but never simple or xenophobic Canadian nationalism) in ways that *call into question* the colonial male's quest for phallic authority.[26]

Such political aims were not always immediately apparent in Wieland's work from the 1960s, which routinely broke taboos on male sexual representation but did so in isolation from the nationalist themes that would eventually inform her

work. In *Penis Wallpaper* (1962), for example, sets of detached male genitalia float in a sea of red dots, "decoratively domesticated," as Randi Spires has noted,"like so many inquisitive goldfish circling a bowl."[27] Cuddly rather than conquering or overtly erotic, these penises had a benign quality that was shared by many of Wieland's early Pop art images of hot dogs and airplanes chugging or flying across canvas, quilt and page. Such work offered new and rather daring ways of imagining the male body at a time when women (and most men) didn't paint such things. However, as Hutcheon points out, it was not until the mid-sixties and early seventies -- "when Canada was once again self-consciously indulging in an identity crisis"-- that Wieland began to add further, political ironies to her gendered ones by toying with icons of national identity such as the maple leaf, the beaver (*The Spirit of Canada Suckles the French and English Beaver* [1970-71]), the Battle of the Plains of Abraham (*Montcalm's Last Letter* [1971] and *Wolfe's Last Letter* [1971]) and the national anthem (*O Canada Animation* [1970]).[28]

An increasingly passionate Canadian nationalist during this period, Wieland nevertheless made a specialty out of wreaking playful havoc with patriarchal versions of the same ideological attachment to home and country that she indulged in to different effect during the 1960s and 70s. In her 1971 National Gallery

retrospective, *True Patriot Love/Véritable Amour Patriotique*, for example, Wieland sold bottles of a perfume she created, called 'Sweet Beaver: The Perfume of Canadian Liberation." As Hutcheon points out, "the beaver as sweet here suggests more than a 'nostalgic longing for a Canadian wilderness past,'"[29] and is instead loaded with feminist, environmentalist, and nationalist ironies which are grounded in postmodern and post-colonial strategies of resistance:

> As a symbol of Canada, the beaver is 'sweet' not only because it is both pleasurable and innocent, but also because it was an appealing lure to European fur-traders and colonizers, first, and then to American capital. In the Western tradition, however, as medieval bestiaries always explain, the beaver (*castor*) is also the gentle beast whose testicles are so important to medicine -- and perfume. When hunted, the beaver is said to bite off his own testicles and thus escape at least with his life. Wieland's Canadian beaver may also be self-mutilating but safe.[30]

What Hutcheon might also have pointed out is that the very idea of Canada as a "gentle beast" that bites off its own testicles in order to survive conjurs up a particular version of colonial masculinity grounded in contradictory notions of utility, strength, victimization and vulnerability. Wieland's campy and presumably ironic reference to"Canadian Liberation" -- as though the whole country were literally being held hostage by enemy forces -- and the suggestion that Canadian

(or perhaps Québécois?) 'revolutionaries' might benefit from a whiff or a dab of such virile stuff as beaver semen, adds to the sense that colonial masculinity is one of the main things under investigation in this piece. It does, after all, encapsulate quite nicely a number of the paradoxes of anti-colonial nationalism and masculinity in Canada. The beaver is tiny compared to its elephantine neighbour, but the beaver can make itself useful by felling trees and building dams, and has wily methods of escape that often, unfortunately, require self-mutilation. Such a blend of strengths, weaknesses and unhappy contingencies can cause serious confusion -- of the kind Canadians witnessed recently, for example, when British Columbian fishers horrified federal officials by unilaterally declaring war on U.S. poachers in Canadian waters. Anxious to mobilize a show of empowered masculine opposition[31] to ward off the intruders, but unable to make it work because the U.S. is simply too massive and powerful to be tangled with succesfully on this issue (or most others), the B.C. fishers -- and their uncharacteristically macho premier, Glen Clark[32] -- forced the federal government into ball-biting paroxysms of embarrassment and retreat that highlighted the gap between a *desired* masculine response on the ground and the *reality* that Canada's neo-colonial condition requires a different set of masculine traits, including subtlety, conciliation and diplomatic manoevring.

Of course, "Sweet Beaver" emerged out of a different time period and was likely a response to very different triggers in national life. With Pierre Elliott Trudeau three years into his mandate, the economy looking good and much of Canada still in a self-congratulatory mood over the mind-boggling international success of Expo '67, but with Quebec having just erupted into a political crisis that required (or at least drew) the use of the War Measures Act and federal troops, Wieland was seemingly working from within a social climate that was part cauldron, part Polyanna glow. Meanwhile, Trudeau's confrontational attempts to manufacture a pan-Canadian nationalism that would counteract the sub-state nationalist tide sweeping Quebec raised the problem of how to manage multiple versions of anti-colonial nationalism within a single federation. All of these factors and events were, of course, 'gendered' in diverse ways. With Quebec *independentistes* such as Pierre Vallières redefining the profile of the male revolutionary and reminding his followers of how much women and Quebeckers had in common as oppressed classes (a connection he would restate in the film *Pierre Vallières* the following year), it is perhaps not surprising that Wieland found cause, at this particular moment (1970-1), to combine a parody of revolutionary talk about "Canadian Liberation" with a soothing, commercialized message about the sweet scent of beaver balls. Given all of this, I would suggest

that part of her achievement in this piece was to use her 'doubled' position as a member of what Monika Gagnon calls "the oppressed sex in a patriarchal culture haunted by a history of colonization"[33] to foreground the paradoxes of anti-colonial masculinity, while basically affirming her own feminist, parodic version of pan-Canadian nationalism.

All of which leads me, finally, to a discussion of that other, equally fascinating and complicit critique of colonial masculinity found in one of Wieland's earliest stop-motion films, *Patriotism, Part One* (1965-1986). Wieland once called this little-seen short her "hot dog film" and downplayed it as a "technically bad" experiment in animation.[34] But as an early product of her years in New York (1963-71, during which Wieland says she became increasingly politicized as a Canadian nationalist and as a woman faced with the often overt sexism of her male colleagues in the avant-garde), the film gestures towards a view of the male body as a complex, vulnerable site, criss-crossed by power and inscribed with the marks of gendered national identity. Shot in New York and finished in Canada in the mid-1980s, the film features a young man (the late structuralist filmmaker David Shackman) enjoying a fitful sleep under a white sheet while a small army of hot dogs advances up his body in stop-motion, to the strains of a Sousa military march. Stopping near his chest, some of the animated

wieners receive what appear to be 'flag-jobs' from a miniature version of Old Glory, then slip under the sheet to take sexual advantage of their snoozing object of desire. When Shackman's character wakes up, he gingerly peels several of the franks off his body (from the area near his bottom) and holds them next to his face as his look of discomfort gradually turns into a sheepish smile.

Although in some ways it is just a trifle -- part of Wieland's self-training in the art of stop-motion photography -- the film's approach to macho American masculinity can be read against a backdrop of Wieland's emerging Canadian nationalism and gradual discovery of a women-centred artist's territory. *Patriotism* has been described as a parody of phallocentrism, which seems appropriate, but it is worth remembering that only one of the masculinities held aloft in the film is phallic, in the sense that it's succeeding at being "top dog". The other is lying prone in bed, playing the receptive role in an ambiguously sexualized cross-cultural exchange, and in fact sleeps through the whole experience of being colonized/sodomized. By placing her male character under a white sheet that could be taken to signal death or surrender, and by staging what amounts to a simultaneously camp/homoerotic and American imperialist attacks on his body, Wieland seems to be referring to a passive (perhaps even Canadian) masculinity that is both "in bed" to some extent with the Yankee Doodle wiener and one that

may even find that there are pleasures to be had from the colonizer's attentions, as long as one remains asleep.

The problematic conflation of colonization and sodomy that I'm detecting here may be a byproduct of Wieland's particular, anthropomorphizing version of a pan-Canadian nationalism that increasingly defined itself in opposition to American culture in the 1960s and 70s. Years after making this film, Wieland would state that she sees Canada as "female" while its *de facto* colonial ruler, the United States, is best thought of as "male" -- a construction that may have allowed her, by extension, to distinguish between "feminised" national masculinities which are 'penetrated' and those which primarily 'penetrate'. But as Kass Banning points out,[35] Wieland's true patriot love for Canada has never been of the facile, flag-waving sort, and her analysis of the interplay of dominant and subordinate masculinities is anything but straightforward either. In keeping with her tendency to foreground "the inherent contradictions underlying our engraved national consciousness"[36] rather than engage in simple celebrations of national identity, Wieland leaves the door open for a certain amount of complicity on the part of the colonized/penetrated male.

In one sense the film is recognizably 'Canadian' in that it takes up the matter of how dominant and subordinate masculinities function and interact

through tropes of national identity -- a preoccupation that shows up in dozens of male-authored English Canadian and Québécois films dealing, directly or indirectly, with the way in which socioeconomic marginality and the humiliations of neo-colonial rule are visited upon the male body and masculine subjectivity.[37] But *Patriotism, Part One* substitutes parody for anxiety about the male body and marks itself off as an early (literally 'pre-feminist')[38] instance of female writing through its willingness to deflate the phallic accoutrements of national identity to hot dog proportions and to 'probe' colonized masculinities for signs of complicity. The film's would-be phallic-colonial oppressors are, after all, just tube steaks -- smaller than the average penis-phallus and decidedly lacking in prowess or aesthetic appeal. One could not, as Spires notes in another context, conflate them with "the mighty phalluses of myth".[39] Moreover, even a receptive, subordinate masculinity (as embodied in Shackman's sleeping character) gets playfully interrogated for signs of collusion with the colonizer. Passive -- in some senses perversely inviting victimization -- and caught up in a complex circuit of power plays and semi-pleasurable submission, the colonial male body in *Patriotism* is one that not only benefits to some degree from its own seduction by the imperial American Other (hence the sheepish grin), but which is, in a progressive sense, also *capable* of enjoying a passive role.[40] At roughly the same time that male

critics were thinking about raising a hue and cry about weak and imperilled masculinity in Canadian cinema, then, Wieland was finding something to celebrate (and, of course, gently satirize) in a vision of the vulnerable, penetrable, but slyly resisting colonial male.

Another approach to the same thematic material emerges in Wieland's follow-up film, *Patriotism, Part Two* (1965-1986), which is in some ways a more nuanced look at the seductions of national identity and the parallel world of domestic things. Shackman (once again the film's only 'character') sits in a chair this time, staring impassively at the camera for several minutes while a large, animated American flag twists and turns in the air around his head, 'caressing' his cheeks and hair and at one point wrapping itself around him in the form of what looks unmistakably like a Muslim headdress. This confusion of codes -- male subject as erotic object, flag as seducer, flag as a shifting site of various national identities and as bearer of potentially different styles of masculinity -- is then intercut with images of domestic objects (plates, cups, etc.) and a knick knack Statue of Liberty swirling around on a table in stop-motion as they wrap themselves up in a white cloth.

By simultaneously contrasting these two spheres and connecting them through the trope of swirling cloths -- one of which is heavily invested in the

symbolism of 'official' national identity, while the other conjures up associations of surrender or domesticity -- Wieland seems to present a world in which the feminine exists in an unofficial space parallel to the masculine, but in which the distance separating them is not so great (or inevitable) as is normally supposed. Vulnerable, passive, provisional and once again open to seduction, the male subject whose head is caressed and encircled by a shape-shifting flag in this film is finally an *object of desire* for the ideology of nation, which courts him with a range of possible identities and positions on the spectrum of phallic and 'phallically limp,' Western and non-Western, empowered and disempowered, masculinities.

Both films are rather subtle in their approach to these questions, and it must be admitted that short, silent, non-narrative films of this kind are often a bit like Rorschach tests, inviting the spectator (or the film theory student) to find what she or he wants to find. Nevertheless, a reading stressing relations of colonial masculinity and nation seems appropriate in light of Wieland's choice of imagery in both films and her interest in similar questions across a range of other work, including "Sweet Beaver: Perfume of Canadian Liberation". Even with their subtle and implied address to a colonial male body criss-crossed by Imperial desire and attempts at occupation, both *Patriotism* films can be read productively as part of

the 'doubled' discourse of a female artist who was in a privileged position to explore the underside of colonial masculinities and to interrogate the stability of gender roles within the nation. As an English-Canadian woman with a certain psychological distance from gendered discourses on the humiliations of colonial rule, in other words, Wieland was free to envision penetration and seduction by the neo-colonial Other in ambiguous rather than anxiety-ridden terms, from within a metaphorics of the body that made room for both the pleasures and the perils of passivity.

Quebec feminisms in the early 1970s: *La Vie rêvée*

A similar, but culturally distinct, approach to colonial masculinity shows up in two rarely-discussed but revealing and important sequences in Mireille Dansereau's 1972 film, *La Vie rêvée*. So much has been written about this feminist classic[41] that I will limit my comments to two main questions that seem relevant here: how the film's use of a shifting, fantasy-based and at times overtly objectifying female gaze at the male body manifests itself, and how its representational strategies toward the male might be understood in relation to the uneasy confluence of nationalist and feminist thought and practice in Quebec at the start of the 1970s.

In its approach to the male body, I want to suggest, *La Vie rêvée* can be

read as the product of a cultural moment in which Quebec nationalism and Quebec feminism were starting to diverge, under the influence of feminist writers such as Nicole Brossard, Louky Bersianik, and, later, Jovette Marchessault and France Théoret. In their work with the literary journal *Barre du Jour* and in their insistence on developing a feminine (often a lesbian) language for the discussion of overlapping issues of social and personal colonization in Quebec, these feminist writers and activists added a personal, subjective and embodied element to the analysis of issues perceived primarily in 'political' and economic terms by those involved in male-run nationalist organizations in Quebec.[42] In Mary Jean Green's analysis of the period, feminism and nationalism in Quebec were becoming "divergent discourses ... [or] 'two solitudes'."[43] One way of regarding this split is to suggest that it opened up a space for feminist re-intrepretations of nationalist goals and objectives, and in the case of *La Vie rêvée*, I would argue, the re-interpretation of colonial masculinity became one part of a larger re-evaluation of the nationalist agenda.

Despite her longstanding support for the feminist movement, Dansereau has said that she did not make *La Vie rêvée* with the "deliberate intention of serving [or making use of] feminism," [44] and this undoubtedly complicates any attempt to read the film within the phases of Québécoise feminist thought and practice.

However her approach to 'remapping' the male body (and substituting in its place the potential for a lesbian union or one based on female friendship) seems partially indebted to a strand of Quebec feminism that in the 1970s was moving away from what it increasingly considered 'masculinist' approaches to social change.[45] While Brossard and others were using the *Barre du Jour* as a platform for transforming Quebec society by exploding patriarchal *language* from within -- a semiotic tack that distinguished their work from the more conventional socio-economic analyses of the Marxist-Leninist *Parti Pris* -- Dansereau enacted a similar move into private fantasy as an arena for social change with *La Vie rêvée*. While the film deals on a narrative and thematic level with some of the same revolutionary concerns that were paramount in Quebec nationalist circles after 1960 (especially the idea that an authentic and ideally socialist Quebec society would have to jettison the market-driven sensibilities and consumerism of North American "telematic society"),[46] *La Vie rêvée* opts to present these familiar political problems in subjective and psychological terms. As Dansereau told A. Ibranyi Kiss in a *Cinema Canada* interview, this determination to present the political in personal terms meant making a film that her male activisist colleagues didn't want her to make:

> The men thought that if I made a film on
> women, it should be militant. A sociological-

> Marxist analysis, or something like that. A very political film. But you see, that is a *man's* idea of what is revolutionary about women. They think that we should get together and form a political party and fight, and give intellectual ideas about the problem of women as related to our society and to Quebec. Men thought that what would bring a change in the status of women is a clear analysis of women: sociologically, politically, and financially. They couldn't accept my intuitive, very emotional and personal approach.[47]

This 'intuitive, emotional and personal' approach includes a rather unflinching and at times 'complicitly critical' gaze at the male body which has rarely been discussed -- despite the fact that, as Brenda Longfellow writes, *La Vie rêvée* is a film "about females who are subjects, actors and initiators ...[and] in which the voyeuristic gaze is turned on a man as the object of female desire".[48] Given that the film deals with the evolving friendship of two young women -- Isabelle (Liliane Lemaître-Auger) and Virginie (Véronique Le Flaguais) -- who come to share a sexual obsession with the same older man, and given the degree of scopic control granted to these characters in the course of their real and imaginary episodes of voyeurism, more needs to be said about Dansereau's enunciative look at the male in *La Vie rêvée* and her choice of strategies for representing the male body. Key discussions of the film have considered how Dansereau represents women -- specifically whether she winds up subverting or reinscribing a

traditional, objectifying gaze at the nude *female* body[49] -- but critics have generally missed or bypassed the subversive installment of a female gaze at the male in two key sequences: a slide show of Virginie's art work near the start of the film, and the final scene in which J.J. (their distantly cool object of desire, played by Jean-François Guité) desperately tries to cover his naked body and escape the women's shared apartment after failing to perform sexually with Isabelle.

The slide show is especially interesting in relation to colonial masculinity because it raises one of the major driving forces behind Quebec nationalism -- the desire for a sovereign, 'authentic' Quebec, free of English Canadian domination and of all the market-driven influences of North American society -- while bringing the subjective syntax of female desire to bear on its critique of consumer culture. The scene takes place in an office at Boston & Creative Films, where Virginie works as a graphic artist and where Isabelle has been recently hired in some other capacity that is never specified. The two women meet in the company washroom (in front of a mirror that initially threatens to put up a competitive barrier between them), and after overcoming this subtly implied hurdle to female solidarity, they take the first tentative steps toward a friendship. Virginie is obviously bored and disillusioned with her job, which at one point has her colouring in the upper thighs of a young, idealized female figure that is being used

to sell some unidentified product. "Art school -- what's the use?" she asks herself, clearly unhappy about being a paint-by-numbers accomplice in the objectification of female bodies for commercial gain. (To make matters worse, the profits from her work will apparently flow to the film's Anglophone boss, a sexist buffoon who insists on speaking English to his francophone staff.) Early on in her friendship with Isabelle, in what seems like an antidote to her disillusionment with the job, Virginie invites Isabelle into her office to view a slide show of photo-collages. The show-within-a film lasts several minutes and takes place in almost total silence, which tends to give the images a certain prominence while drawing attention to a circuit of knowing looks between the two women as they react to the slides and appear to reinforce each others' readings.

It is unclear whether the images are meant to be examples of Virginia's own (potentially 'oppositional') artwork, or if these are more of the same grotesquely parodied versions of commercialism that we see at the beginning of the film. In a sense it is this ambiguity that gives the slides their power. Like reversals of the famous Magritte painting, *The Ocean* (1943) which shows a naked bearded figure whose erect penis has become a tiny female nude,[50] several of the collages include images of miniscule, nude men sitting on or next to the heads of large (roughly life-sized) women. In one of the slides a woman's head is photographed from

below so that her elongated neck and face unmistakably resemble a penis, while in another image a woman is looking to one side as lipsticks fly out of her eyes at 45 degree angles, like torpedos forming a phallic trail from her point of vision to the edge of the frame. A nude man sits atop the back of this woman's head, looking relaxed but missing the top of his *own* head and obscuring his genitals with one crossed leg. One of the final images depicts a woman's head split in two -- with an empty V-shape where her chin should be -- as a miniature man stands next to her, wearing only a winter coat, boots and a fearful expression of vulnerability.

Although they are obviously quite diverse and open to various readings, what these images have in common is a tendency to toy with the tropes of consumer advertising while granting partial, ambiguous control of the situation to female models who are simultaneously objectified and objectifying. In their resistance to and complicity with traditional scopic regimes, the slides bear a certain resemblance to the work of controversial feminist artists Abigail Child and Lutz Bacher, who borrow materials that are "somehow not OK", such as male-authored pornography, and recontextualize them in ways that unsettle the original power relations inscribed in the work, investigating what Liz Kotz calls the "warped relationship of a female viewer" to such documents.[51] While the slides Virginie shares with Isabelle are not pornographic *per se*, they take a complicitous

route to revealing the phallic underpinnings of so much consumer advertising directed at women, mobilizing vaguely objectifying images of women and offsetting them with miniature male bodies in ways that manage to "lay bare" market-driven attempts to construct female desire along romantic, heterosexual and ultimately consumerist lines.

The slides *look* somewhat like the kind of product advertisements that John Berger includes in *Ways of Seeing* to demonstrate just how transparently phallic so much commercial art became in the 1960s and 70s.[52] But by rearranging elements in the frame, adding nude and semi-nude male bodies to what is generally preserved as a space for *veiled* allusions to the phallus, and by opting for a de-naturalized scale that miniaturizes the male body, Dansereau ruins the commercial potential of these ads from within and creates a situation whereby, as Silverman puts it, "power invades spectacle ... [so that] spectacle functions phallically."[53] The women in the ads *signify* as spectacle, in other words, but their steady gaze back at the camera/viewer, and their apparent 'ability' to conjur up small, embodied (and ultimately non-threatening) versions of the phallic Law in whose name consumer advertising attempts to shape female desire, holds the potential to *re-shape* that desire within a feminist (and specifically a Québécois feminist) context. As such, the ads form part of *La Vie rêvée*'s overall concern with what

Longfellow describes as a process of "investigating [the] structuring of female desire, showing how our primordial experiences in the family, the condensation of memory, and [in this case] the subliminal fixations induced by consumer advertising, organize our desire and predetermine our object choices."[54]

By literalizing the phallic basis of those subliminal fixations, the slide show sequence in *La Vie rêvée* proposes an autonomous, self-directed version of female desire and -- to return to my earlier argument -- forcefully installs 'the feminine' as a term of difference within the same basic set of concerns put forth by a larger, nationalist-based movement toward a sovereign, socialist, anti-consumerist society in Quebec. In the enunciative framework set out by *La Vie rêvée*, consumer culture is not only a threat to authentic Québécois life, but is more specifically a threat to the independent desiring capacities of women, who are understood by the film to be capitalism's (and, in an important sense, also colonialism's) primary targets. This in already an effective reversal of one of the major assumptions of anti-colonial nationalism: namely, the idea that colonialism's most scrutable messages are written on the body of the suffering and humiliated male subject who is reduced to the status of a 'bus boy' (Enloe) and made to experience his sense of inferiority 'under the skin' (Fanon).[55]

At this point in this film, though, the mock ads are still only a *potential* site

of resistance. It will be some time before the final scenes in which Isabelle and Virginie ritualistically 'cleanse' themselves of consumer culture and (seemingly) reject the compulsory heterosexuality that its images of romantic love work to support. Much of the episodic narrative leading up to the film's muted, non-phatic 'climax' (which is, interestingly, signalled by a man's literal *failure* to climax) consists of fantasies and dream sequences related to Isabelle's sexual obsession with JJ, the older, married man who she spies across a crowded cafeteria at Boston & Graphic and with whom she is sexually obsessed for what seems like the better part of a year.[56] Throughout the film, connections are drawn between Isabelle's adult fantasies for JJ and the Oedipal dramas underpinning the nuclear family. Many of the fantasies -- like the grainy images of a man carrying a young girl to the sea, and a brief, startling scene in which Isabelle crouches doggy-style on a lawn and lifts up her white dress, exposing her bare bottom to a man standing in the foreground -- evoke what Longfellow refers to as "the god-like [father] figure of the child's first romantic fantasy, her protector, her lover,"[57] and do so in ways that might initially be read as reinscribing normative psychoanalytic accounts of female desire. But *La Vie rêvée* finally undermines these same psychic dramas by dismantling the images and undoing the projections and disavowals through which phallic identification is said to be enabled.

A key way it accomplishes this is by drawing attention to the mystified relationship between penis and phallus through which Silverman says subjects are "accomodated to the Name-of-the-Father" and acclimated to the "dominant fiction" in any society.[58] While Silverman points out that the dominant fiction (defined as that compendium of images and stories through which a society figures consensus, and by means of which the subject typically assumes both a sexual identity and a place in the collectivity) "calls upon the male subject to see himself, and the female subject to recognize and desire him, only through the mediation of images of unimpaired masculinity,"[59] *La Vie rêvée* undermines this psychic and social structure by foregrounding the *in*comensurability of penis and phallus within a drama of *impaired* masculinity.

The scene where this is perhaps most apparent takes place near the end of the film, when Virginie, who has either come to share Isabelle's fantasy for JJ or thought of a clever way to eliminate him from their lives, proposes that they "get ahold of him ... to get him off our mind." (The wording of her suggestion implies that she knows what Isabelle doesn't: that any consummation of the fantasy is bound to be a disappointment on some level -- or, as it turns out, on every level). Since JJ has been Isabelle's object of desire all along, she is the one who calls him and -- without any difficulty -- arranges a rendezvous. After a typically

'Harlequinized' montage that collapses their initial meeting and day of bliss into a series of stills and brief moving shots, a hint of opposition intrudes: as they lie together on a bed, with Isabelle in the closed-legged 'penetrator's' position while JJ lies underneath her with his legs spread apart, it becomes clear that JJ has not been able to perform sexually. "We'd better make it another time," he says, but finds he can't agree to a date for their next meeting because it conflicts with his daughter's birthday. Isabelle has rolled over and is laying next to him, obviously disillusioned, when Virginie bursts in and cheerfully offers to make coffee. Embarrassed by the presence of another woman and by his own bare body (of which we've actually seen very little at this point), JJ initially refuses, but is persuaded to stay for one cup. When he insists on leaving after a single sip, he stands up, clutching a wad of clothing to his loins, and escapes behind a wall in order to dress. The static full shot of his body as he rises from the bed draws attention to his awkward attempts to keep his penis out of sight (in particular away from the prying and potentially judgemental eyes of these two women, who represent the threat of a kind of two-headed Medusa, hardening -- or perhaps softening -- everything in its path),[60] and foregrounds the degree to which phallic power and entitlement can only function veiled.

As Peter Lehman, Susan Bordo, Barbara de Genevieve and others have

variously argued, the sight/site of the penis almost automatically spells trouble for the phallus, since the "swag of flesh"[61] serves as a reminder that phallic power is built on a myth of masculine unity and imperviousness. Lehman suggests this is one key reason why Hollywood cinema tends to go to such great lengths to avoid or carefully control the sexual representation of men, and why "the dominant representations of phallic masculinity in our [U.S.] culture depend on keeping the male body and the genitals out of the critical spotlight."[62] By foregrounding JJ's frantic attempts to keep his penis veiled in the presence of two women (a neat reversal, one could argue, of the process by which Gayle Rubin says the phallus "passes through the medium of women from one man to another" in structuralist and Lacanian accounts of intrafamily exchange),[63] *La Vie rêvée* draws attention to the *relationship* and the *gap* between the organ and the symbol, and highlights the degree to which empowered masculinity relies on keeping the penis out of sight. (At the same time, however, this scene makes trouble for Lehman's assumption that "when the penis is hidden, it is centred," while showing, writing or talking about the penis "creates the potential to demystify it and thus decenter it,"[64] since *La Vie rêvée* accomplishes this task *without* actually exposing JJ's genitals, but rather by drawing attention to what is *not* being revealed, leading spectators to wonder why so much is at stake in the protection of this vulnerable, mutable

organ. Rather than refuting Lehman's position, this variation on his model suggests the need to always read moments of male nudity -- or its conspicuous absence -- in context).

Lehman might be tempted to interpret this scene as a less-than-progressive case of one female filmmaker "replicat[ing] ... patriarchal assumptions about the male body, including those of power, size and musculature"[65] (or in this case, sexual performance and stamina, since JJ is being mocked for his failure to 'get it up'). And while he wouldn't be entirely wrong, since there is undoubtedly a wicked undercurrent of revenge in their discovery of JJ's impotence, it makes more sense in the context of the film as a whole to view this scene as a breakthrough in Virginie's and Isabelle's progress toward an increasingly 'authentic' version of their own (female) desire. After JJ's semi-nude scene and hasty retreat from their apartment, it is a short step to the film's almost orgiastic final moments, in which Virginie and Isabelle celebrate their freedom from (hetero)sexual obsession by lunging around on the bed, yelling "J'suis libre! J'suis libre!" and tearing down a seemingly endless stream of posters and magazine ads featuring conventional images of romantic love.[66]

Declaring that they're "through with dreaming life away," Isabelle and Virginie seem ready to reject the psychic dramas that have been structuring their

desire according to the requirements of both capitalism and patriarchy. And while the unconscious may not be amenable to political intervention or agency, as Constance Penley and Sharon Willis argue in *Male Trouble*,[67] *La Vie rêvée* holds out the possibility that women can at least carve out an alternative version of female desire and a different set of relationships to phallic power than those conventionally on offer within, for example, market-driven images of romantic bliss. In keeping with Flitterman-Lewis' attempt to define the strategies of feminist counter-cinema, *La Vie rêvée* attempts to "reinsert the subject -- a sexed subject -- into the process of meaning-production, thereby allowing its structures to subvert, rework, or offer alternatives to the pervasive logic of masculine desire articulated by dominant cinema."[68] As I've been pointing out, it is this determination to insert the problem of sexual difference into a critique of consumer culture that marks *La Vie rêvée* as a text produced from within the "doubled rupture" of a cinema that is both female, or feminist, and Québécois.[69] Furthermore, the scenes I've focused on here demonstrate an important but overlooked strategy in the film -- that of mobilising images of impaired (or 'miniaturized') masculinity in the process of articulating new versions of female desire.

Of course, as Chapter One showed, the spectre of impaired masculinity is hardly new to Quebec film. One might even argue that the depiction of male

suffering, marginality and Dionysian 'warmth' or sensitivity (three different things, I realize) is something of a specialty in Quebec cinema, even more so than in English Canadian film. A wide range of male-authored Québécois films from *L'homme renversé* (1986) and *Jacques et Novembre* (1984) to *Les Années de rêve* (1984) and *Pouvoir Intime* (1986) have explored the agonies of a marginal, colonized masculinity and/or the virtues of what Madeleine Gagnon refers to as "soft" male subjectivities in Quebec,[70] and have, to quote Yves Lever, found various ways to reveal "the Québécois man in all his vulnerability, with all his fears and weaknesses."[71]

What signals a difference in *La Vie rêvée,* I would suggest, is its tendency to filter such ideas about colonial masculinity through a feminist re-interpretation of nationalist priorities and concerns. Recognizing that Quebec nationalism contains a "dominant fiction" of its own through which a concensus is figured around the assumption that men are the primary targets and victims of colonial oppression, *La Vie rêvée* seems determined to shift the terms of the debate and include a consideration of the ways in which the "telematic society" impinges, often directly, on female desire. One of the ways it accomplishes this is by re-investigating the politics of representing male bodies and by undermining the dominant fiction's core assumption about the commensurability of penis and

phallus. Thus it is a feminist concern with *neutralizing* colonial masculinity's nostalgia through a remapping of male bodies that distinguishes the film from other, more sympathetic (or anxiety-ridden) treatments of the plight of the neo-colonial Québécois male.

Conclusion

While the films and other cultural products considered here differ in many ways, they share an attitude of complicitous critique that involves upholding selected parts of a nationalist agenda while critiquing other aspects of it from within. One rarely discussed method both filmmakers have used to intervene in the debate over empire and colony has been to re-investigate the politics of representing male bodies. While both *Patriotism* films deal more directly with questions of nation and gender than does *La Vie rêvée*, all three have a great deal invested in re-articulating the terms of loss and humiliation that shape discourses on colonial masculinity. In both of Wieland's films, the (English Canadian) focus is on a re-evaluation of what it means to be seduced and even 'sodomized' by the Stars and Stripes, while Dansereau's film divides its attention between a critique of Anglo-Canadian imperialism and a wider consideration of what it means to be a Québécoise in North America's market-driven, consumer society. Both directors align themselves with and articulate some of the basic fears and concerns

associated with their own society's version of anti-colonial nationalism, that is, but go further by also critiquing the assumptions underlying those movements.

As Monika Gagnon has pointed out, feminism has a particular role to play in re-articulating the terms and conditions of Canadian identity:

> In its historical position representing an excluded and marginalized group (culturally, economically and symbolically), feminism has a strategic contribution to make to the debate over empire and colony, a debate which has a particular urgency for Canada, especially in the context of its desperate attempts to establish both a political and cultural identity. Given this cultural context, we might consider the condition facing Canadian women artists [and filmmakers] as one of a double oppression: as the oppressed sex in a patriarchal culture haunted by a history of colonization, a colonization that begins with the French and the British and continues today with American dominance culturally and economically.[72]

As this quote inadvertently makes clear, it is *patriarchal culture* that is thought to be haunted most directly by Canada's history of colonization, and thus patriarchy which views itself as bearing the deepest and most politically significant wounds inflicted by Canada's historical and ongoing colonial and neo-colonial entanglements. If women are indeed "doubly oppressed" within this system, it may give them greater latitude to express 'doubled' critiques of both neo-colonialism *and* the patriarchal politics underlying anti-colonial nationalisms. This productive

tension is evident in both Wieland and Dansereau's work, which is often simultaneously 'nationalist' in its implied cynicism towards American and/or Anglo-Canadian imperialism, and 'feminist' in its implied critique of a nostalgic sense of masculine loss. Whether using an approach that includes tube steaks or images of tiny men, Wieland and Dansereau have tended to complicate debates over gender, nation and empire by minimizing and demystifying the colonial subject's reach for phallic authority, finding ironic rather than anxiety-ridden ways of exploring colonialism's effects on the male, and generally shifting the terms of the debate around colonial masculinity.

Endnotes

1.Roszika Parker, "Images of Men," in *Women's Images of Men*, eds. Sarah Kent and Jacqueline Morreau (New York, Writers and Readers Publishing: 1984), 45.

2. Beverley Diamond pointed out to me that while Wieland and Dansereau may be 'outsiders' in one sense, they are both fully aware of the patriarchal politics of anti-colonial nationalisms in their own settings and actively resist such a politics through their work.

3. Dominant, of course, only in relation to other Canadian cinemas, such as feminist film and the Canadian avant garde. The classic study of the political economy of the Canadian film industry is: Manjunath Pendakur, *Canadian Dreams and American Control: The Political Economy of the Canadian Film Industry* (Toronto: Garamond Press, 1990). Pendakur reports the now famous figure that Canadian films account for less than three per cent of Canadian screen time.

4. Sandy Flitterman-Lewis, *To Desire Differently: Feminism and the French Cinema* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1990), 19 and 23.

5. Linda Hutcheon, *Splitting Images: Contemporary Canadian Ironies* (Toronto, Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 96-112.

6. Kaja Silverman, *Male Subjectivity at the Margins* (New York and London: Routledge, 1992), 15-16, 43-44, 47. Silverman argues that the 'dominant fiction' -- the compendium of images and stories through which any society figures concensus -- depends on a collective make-believe in the commensurability of the penis and the phallus. However, she finds that certain films say 'no' to the dominant fiction by de-phallicizing and at times radically de-idealizing the male body.

7. See, for example, *Judith Butler, Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York and London: Routledge, 1990), 136-137 and 140. Butler proposes that gender be thought of as a "constituted *social temporality*" and a "stylized repetition of acts" (140) rather than a stable identity or locus of agency.

8. Kaja Silverman, *The Acoustic Mirror: The Female Voice in Psychoanalysis and Cinema* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1988), 202.

9. See, for example, Andrew Sarris, "Notes on the Auteur Theory in 1962," *Film Culture* 27 (Winter, 1962): 1-8.

10. Stephen Heath, "Comment on the Idea of Authorship," *Screen* 14, 3 (Autumn, 1973): 86-91. Within Heath's model, as Silverman describes it, "ideology takes the place earlier occupied by the

author -- the place, that is, of origin or impetus. Cinema is seen no longer as the expression of an individual vision, but rather as an 'ideological formation.'" Silverman, *Acoustic Mirror*, 198. For a good summary and analysis of key debates on authorship, see John Caughie, ed. *Theories of Authorship* (London, Boston and Henley: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981).

11. Silverman, *Acoustic Mirror*, 202.

12. Enunciation, as Flitterman-Lewis defines it, is "a concept, rooted in authorship, which combines linguistics and psychoanalysis in an effort to account for the production of 'texts' -- literary, cinematic, or fantasmatic." Stressing the simultaneous action of the *énonce* (the utterance, the statement itself) and the *énonciation* (the process of production, the position from which the statement proceeds), enunciation "points to the fundamental importance of the extralinguistic in any act of communication, and therefore emphasizes subjectivity -- the subject's place in language -- as constitutive of the production of all utterances, of all human discursive exchange." Flitterman-Lewis, *To Desire Differently*, 13.

13. Ibid, 20.

14. Ibid, 20-21.

15. Parker, "Images of Men," 44.

16. Mira Schor, *Wet: On Painting, Feminism and Art Culture* (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1996), 29.

17. Ibid, 27.

18. Ibid, 23-24.

19. Even these examples are not seamless, however. See Yvonne Tasker's discussion of *Point Break* as a buddy film that is "visually given over to the spectacle of the male body engaged in physical feats such as surfing and skydiving." Yvonne Tasker, *Spectacular Bodies: Gender, Genre and the Action Cinema* (London and New York: Routledge, 1993), 162-164.

20. Sarah Kent, "Looking Back," in *Women's Images of Men*, eds. Sarah Kent and Jacqueline Morreau (New York, Writers and Readers Publishing: 1984), 66.

21. Ibid, 69. Margaret Walters, in one of the few book-length studies of the nude male, points out that even Picasso, who "wrenches the female nude and sex organ into the most startling and disturbing shapes... tends to treat the male unconventionally." Margaret Walters, *The Nude Male*, (New York, Penguin Books: 1979), 270.

22. This is not to exclude American feminists who have written about Wieland and find her important to their work, but to acknowledge Kass Banning's point that Wieland has things to say of particular importance to Canadian women. See Banning, "The Mummification of Mommy: Joyce Wieland as the AGO's First Living Other," *C Magazine* 13 (March 1987): 32-8.

23. See, for example, Kay Armatage, "The Feminine Body: Joyce Wieland's *Water Sark*." In *Dialogue: Cinéma canadien et québécois*, eds. Pierre Vèronneau, Michael Dorland and Seth Feldman (Montreal: Mediatexte Publications Inc., 1986), 283-295.

24. Armatage, "The Feminine Body," 283-295. Armatage describes the films *A Salt in the Park*, *Larry's Recent Behaviour*, *Patriotism II* and the painting *Balling* as examples of "an approach to sexuality which is clearly prefeminist, particularly in its absorption with phallic pleasure...".

25. The model is apparently Wieland's former lover and fellow-filmmaker, George Gingras. Interview with Linda Abrahams of the Women's Art Resource Centre in Toronto, Oct. 11, 1996.

26. Longfellow points out that Wieland's work frequently involves a "playful dephallicization of nationalist discourses," through cinematic antics geared to disarming and deconstructing male political power. Brenda Longfellow, "Girls and Trains," paper delivered at the Learned Societies of Canada Annual Conference, Université de Québec, Montréal, May, 1995.

27. Randi Spires, "True Matriot Love: Joyce Wieland's One-Woman Show," *The Canadian Forum* (August/September 1987), 31.

28. Hutcheon, *Splitting Images*, 102-103.

29. Lauren Rabinovitz, "The Films of Joyce Wieland," in *Joyce Wieland* (Toronto: AGO; Key Porter Books, 1987), 168-9. Cited in Hutcheon, *Splitting Images*, 88.

30. Hutcheon, *Splitting Images*, 88.

31. This is not to minimize the serious labour and trade issues involved in this dispute but merely to isolate one of the gendered aspects of the conflict.

32. Media accounts of the dispute tapped into issues of habitus formation and colonial masculinity when they noted that Clark's belligerant style on this issue coincided with his spending part of the summer studying for his motorcycle license. One story predicted that by Fall, Clark would be in 'full leathers,' implying that this kind of behavior and comportment were uncharacteristic for a Canadian premier. For an account of the dispute, see Chris Wood, "Darn Yankees!" *Maclean's* 110, 31 (Aug. 4, 1997): 12-17.

33. Monika Gagnon, "Work in Progress: Canadian Women in the Visual Arts 1975-1987," in *Work in Progress: Building Feminist Culture*, ed. Rhea Tregebov (Toronto: The Women's press,

1987), 121.

34. Lauren Rabinovitz, "An Interview with Joyce Wieland," *AfterImage* (May 1981): 8.

35. Banning, "Mummification of Mommy," 33.

36. Ibid.

37. See, for example, *Goin' Down the Road*, *Un Zoo, la nuit*, *Jacques et novembre*, and *Perfectly Normal.*

38. In the sense that it pre-dates feminism's widespread arrival in North America.

39. Spires, "True Matriot Love," 31.

40. See Catherine Waldby, "Destruction: Boundary Erotics and Reconfigurations of the Heterosexual Male Body," in *Sexy Bodies: The Strange Carnalities of Feminism*, eds. Elizabeth Grosz and Elspeth Probyn (London and New York: Routledge, 1995), 266-277.

41. *La Vie rêvée* was the first privately-made feature film by a woman in Quebec. Of the many discussions about it, see in particular Brenda Longfellow, "The Feminist Fiction Film in Quebec: *La vie rêvée* and *La cuisine rouge*," in Seth Feldman, ed., *Take Two: A Tribute to Film in Canada* (Toronto: Irwin Publishing, 1984), 149-159; Louise Carrière, *Femmes et Cinéma Québécois* (Montréal: Les Èditions du Boréal Express, 1983), 164-5; and Jean Bruce, "Querying or 'Queering' the Nation: The Lesbian Postmodern and Canadian Women's Cinema," *Canadian Journal of Film Studies* 5, 2 (Fall, 1996): 35-50.

42. In discussing this phenomenon across a range of feminist texts from Quebec in the 1960s and 1970s, Mary Jean Green puts the term "political" in quotes to distinguish between narrow and broader definitions of the word. She uses "political" to refer to the word's "most limited and generally understood sense, in its relationship to the governance of states," while pointing out that "feminists and many other theorists have enlarged the scope of this term to describe a broad range of power relations." The same distinction applies here, though in single quotes. Mary Jean Green, "Quebec Women Writers and the Quiet Revolution," in Georgiana M.M. Colvile, ed. *Contemporary Women Writing in the Other Americas: Contemporary Women Writing in Canada and Quebec*, Vol. III (Lewiston, Queenston, Lampeter: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1996), 370.

43. Ibid, 367.

44. Marie-Christine Abel, André Giguère et Luc Perreault, eds., *Le Cinéma Québécois à l'heure internationale* (Montréal: Les Èditions internationales Alain Stanké, 1990), 160.

45. See for example, Mary Jean Green, "Quebec Women Writers," 367-381. Green writes that by the time a Quebec woman writer succeeds in fusing the Quebec nationalist discourse with an exploration of feminine passion (Anne Hébert's *Kamouraska* [1970]), "it is perhaps already too late for an integration of the increasingly vocal concerns of women, which are now beginning to identify themselves as 'feminist'. See also Karen Gould's analysis of the feminist rearticulation of nationalist rhetoric in works by Quebec writer France Théoret: Karen Gould, "France Théoret's Feminist Hyperrealism: Denaturalizing Female Domesticity in *L'Homme Qui Peignait Staline*," 394-395.

46. Michael Dorland and Arthur Kroker put it this way: "Quebec is one society where Weber's Protestant Ethic has met its match in a popular will to preserve the *vouloir-vivre* (Aquin) of daily (non-market) culture ... In the television culture of North America, Quebec is a social anomaly. It's a real society." Michael Dorland and Arthur Kroker, "Culture Critique and New Quebec Sociology," Introduction to Michael A. Weinstein, *Culture Critique: Fernand Dumont and New Quebec Sociology* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1985), 24-25.

47. Longfellow, "Feminist Fiction Film in Quebec," 151.

48. Ibid, 152.

49. Deborah Knight, "Exquisite Nostalgia: Aesthetic Sensibility in the English-Canadian and Quebec Cinemas," *CineAction!* (Winter, 1987-88), 35; and Longfellow, "The Feminist Fiction Film in Quebec," 154-155.

50. Edward Lucie-Smith, *Sexuality in Western Art*, 2nd ed. (London: Thames and Hudson, Ltd., 1991), 158.

51. Liz Kotz, "Complicity: Women Artists Investigating Masculinity," in *Dirty Looks: Women, Pornography, Power*, eds. Pamela Church Gibson and Roma Gibson (London: British Film Institute, 1993), 104.

52. John Berger, *Ways of Seeing* (London: British Broadcasting Corporation and Penguin Books, 1972).

53. Silverman, *Male Subjectivity*, 153.

54. Longfellow, "Feminist Fiction Film in Quebec," 153.

55. Cynthia Enloe, *Bananas, Beaches & Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics* (London: Pandora, 1989), 44. Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, trans. Charles Lam Markmann (New York: Grove Press Inc., 1967), 13. A more culturally specific sense of how this rhetoric functioned in Quebec can be found in stories by women, including Andrée Maillet's

"Pleure, Pleure!" While the daughter in the story is trying to talk to her father about her grief at being abandoned, the father is fixated on a radio show lamenting the fact that Quebeckers are "not *masters* in [their] own homes." Andrée Maillet, *Les Remparts de Québec* (Montreal: L'Hexagone, 1977), 22-23 and 29. Meanwhile, Mary Jean Green argues that in work by such writers as Jacques Godbout and Hubert Aquin, "The exploration of masculinity seemed ... to coincide exactly with the exploration of what it meant to be québécois." Green, "Quebec Women Writers," 373.

56. Although it has been called a "joint fantasy," there are indications that this is largely Isabelle's sexual obsession, and that Virginie wants a relationship with Isabelle. The most overt indication of this comes during the cemetery picnic scene. Eating grapefruit segments while sitting across from each other in the nude, Virginia and Isabelle talk about going away together, but Isabelle wonders if they'll get bored. In voiceover, Virginia frets that Isabelle is "still thinking of him" and says to herself "I wish it could work. How did I get into this mess?"

57. Longfellow, "Feminist Fiction Film in Quebec," 153.

58. Silverman links belief in the commensurability of penis and phallus to the 'dominant fiction' (a term first coined by Jacques Rancière), explaining that "our present dominant fiction is above all else the representational system through which the subject is accomodated to the Name-of-the-Father. Its most central signifier of unity is the (paternal) family, and its primary signifier of privilege is the phallus." Within the dominant fiction, she writes, "the phallus/penis equation occupies absolute pride of place." Silverman, *Male Subjectivity,* 16, 34-35.

59. Ibid, 42, 47.

60. I'm indebted to Suzanne Moore for this idea. Moore writes that "the fear experienced by men of women's Medusa-like stare, which petrifies everything in sight, is in reality a fear that the female gaze will soften everything in its path." Suzanne Moore, "Here's Looking at You, Kid!" in Lorraine Gamman and Margaret Marshment, eds., *The Female Gaze, Women as Viewers of Popular Culture* (London: The Women's Press Limited, 1988), 59.

61. Maxine Sheets-Johnstone, "Corporeal Archetypes and Power," *Hypatia* 7, 3 (Summer, 1992): 69

62. Peter Lehman, *Running Scared: Masculinity and the Representation of the Male Body* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1993), 28.

63. Rubin points out that both Levi-Strauss and Lacan construct models in which "the phallus [defined as the embodiment of male status, to which men accede, and in which certain rights inhere] passes through the medium of women from one man to another -- from father to son, from mother's brother to sister's son, and so forth," so that "women go one way, the phallus the other." Not so in this scene, where phallic power is demystified and fails to circulate. No other

man is around to receive its effects, and the women gang up, in a sense, to reject their role as conduits for the circulation of phallic entitlement. Gayle Rubin, "The Traffic in Women: Notes on the 'Political Economy' of Sex," in Rayna R. Reiter, ed., *Toward an Anthropology of Women* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1975), 191-192. As cited in Teresa de Lauretis, "Through the Looking Glass," in Philip Rosen, ed., *Narrative, Apparatus, Ideology: A Film Theory Reader* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), 364.

64. Lehman, *Running Scared*, 28.

65. Ibid, 24.

66. Some of the images include a close-up of a woman's breasts divided by what looks like a zipper; a woman's wet torso; a silhouette of a man and woman holding hands; and an image of a bare-legged woman riding behind a bare-chested man on a horse, accompanied by the text "He's not a knight in shining armour -- it took him months to get up his ..." (The rest is illegible).

67. Penley and Willis warn warn that "if anything was ever *by definition* politically incorrect and not amenable to revision, it is the unconscious." Constance Penley and Sharon Willis, eds., *Male Trouble* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), x.

68. Ibid, 23.

69. Flitterman-Lewis, *To Desire Differently*, 25.

70. Gagnon, "Mon corps dans l'écriture," in *La Venue à l'écriture*, Collection 10/18 (Paris: Union Générale d'Editions, 1977), 113.

71. Yves Lever, *Histoire du cinéma au Québec* (Montréal: Boréal, 1988), 351.

72. Gagnon, "Work in Progress," 121.

Chapter Three

"Pit(iful) Male Bodies: Masculinity, Class and the Deconstruction of Folk Innocence in *Margaret's Museum.*"

Charlie Dave was big
Charlie Dave was strong
Charlie Dave was two feet wide
And almost six feet long ....

When Charlie David was sixteen
The roof fell on his head
His laughing mouth is full of coal
Charlie Dave is dead.
-- *The Ballad of Charlie Dave*[1]

In Mort Ransen's 1995 film *Margaret's Museum*, Clive Russell's character writes a song about his new sweetheart, Margaret's, older brother, who had died years earlier in a coal mining accident. Whether they are intended to or not, the lyrics of *The Ballad of Charlie Dave* foreground one of the major paradoxes of working class (specifically coal miner) masculinity in Cape Breton, namely, the simultaneous projection of empowered, 'hardy' manhood and a sense of the male body as a permeable site constantly threatened by destruction. Charlie Dave may be "big and strong ... two feet wide and six feet long," that is, but his imposing stature cannot save him from the destructive physical consequences of being a working class male on the periphery of the nation.

As a miner, his body is the site of a contradiction: hard physical labour

makes the body "hard all over," in the sense described by Catherine Waldby as a hegemonic bodily imago for the "fantasy of the always hard and ready penis/phallus ... characterizing the entire surface of the male body,"[2] but the constant threat of explosions and collapsing mine shafts tends to map a different set of characteristics onto the male body that have more to do with its vulnerability to destruction and dismemberment. Something along these lines is suggested by the ballad's description of Charlie Dave's physical condition at death. Of the countless images that might have been used to describe his corpse, the one that writer Sheldon Currie chose draws particular attention to the boy's status as an invaded orifice. He is not simply limp or still -- his mouth is actually "full of coal," in a sense that subtly contradicts widespread cultural assumptions about the empowered male body as one that remains closed off, intact, and inviolable.

It would be possible, within the framework set out here, to understand this condensation of ideas about working class masculinity and the male body in relation to Cape Breton's geographical, political and economic 'marginality' and feelings of cultural distinctiveness relative to the rest of Canada. Certainly there are students of neo-colonialism in Canada who argue that Cape Breton (or Atlantic Canada in general) stakes an even firmer claim to the status of being an 'internal colony' of Canada than does Quebec, at least in economic and political terms.

In a complex federal situation like that of Canada where "a region may at the same time be both core and periphery," Kenneth McRoberts has suggested, "Quebec is very much a core in its relations with Eastern .. Canada."[3] Cape Breton in particular seems to fit the category of an internal colony, given the near-complete annihilation of one of its founding settler languages (Gaelic) and the significant fact that with the growth of strong Canadian financial centres, control of Cape Breton's coal industry was delivered into the hands of central Canadian financial interests and remained that way until the industry went into a general decline.[4]

Given then that Cape Breton is or has been a *de facto* internal colony of Canada (even if the preferred term is 'regional dependent') and given that local identities on the island are intense enough to qualify as a *form* of nationalism,[5] we might expect Cape Breton to generate anxiety-ridden images of the male body as a locus of colonial humiliations and destruction, while hitching that anxiety to an almost nationalistic sense of loss. To a limited extent, this is true of *Margaret's Museum*, which charts a narrative trajectory culminating in the physical dismembering of the bodies of three miners (men, of course) whose tongue, fingers, lungs and penis become grisly 'souvenirs' on display in a miner's museum curated by a widowed Margaret MacNeil. But if such overt, even gothic, signs of cultural panic about the suffering male body seem to put us in the same territory as

Un Zoo, la nuit -- suggesting the possibility of a similar, patriarchal engagement with lost 'national' (in this case, regional) origins -- I want to argue that this is not the case. The two films differ greatly in their choice of frameworks for representing the male body, and do so in ways that suggest distinctions at the level of authorship and in terms of how anti-colonial nationalisms ('regionalisms') are played out in each setting.

A simple way of putting it might be this: *Un Zoo, la nuit* projects a heightened sense of anxiety about threatened masculine identity and vulnerable bodily margins that is in keeping with its culture's intense fear of assimilation, deep longing for a separate identity, and active battles over language with the rest of Canada. *Margaret's Museum,* on the other hand, projects a mediated version of the same concerns and an ability to interrogate the patriarchal foundations of its own society's nostalgia for lost origins, in ways that may be in keeping with the more moderate assertion of a distinct regional identity and its more muted, largely inactive battles over language. (Scots Gaelic, while once the third most common language in Canada and a contender for official language status,[6] has been effectively extinct outside Cape Breton for a long time and is now at the core of a small-scale but passionate revival movement centered on the island).

Having made this generalization, though, it must be added that films never

simply 'reflect' cultural conditions, and that equal emphasis needs to be placed on other factors, including those having to do with enunciation. Atlantic Canadian filmmakers (or, in the case of *Margaret's Museum*, Central Canadian filmmakers working from stories written by a Cape Bretoner -- an important distinction to which I'll return shortly) do not somehow have a monopoly on the ability to interrogate the patriarchal foundations of their own cultural nostalgia, any more than all films from a certain period in Quebec might be expected to lack that ability.

Several (male-authored) films from Quebec have been explicitly concerned with critiquing the "discourse of virilization"[7] that is said to have pervaded early Quebec nationalism, and have launched important narrative investigations into the gendered nature of political action during that period. Jean-Claude Labrecque's *Les Années de rêves* (1984), for example, traces the devastating consequences for a marriage and a child's life when a young revolutionary persists in storing bombs for the Front de Libération du Québec while ignoring his family and his wife's obvious unhappiness. And although Pierre Falardeau's *Octobre* (1994) is less directly concerned with the gendered consequences of revolutionary action, it does allude in an interesting way to the identity conflicts that can arise when "the oppressed" and the "screws" change roles, suggesting the possibility that power

might corrupt the colonial male subject. Given that such questioning narratives exist, it would be patently wrong to suggest that all (or even a majority) of recent Quebec films engage in an unthinking consolidation of the centrality of the male subject in the construction of a national identity,[8] or that a more modulated and self-critical approach to masculine identities is somehow automatically available to filmmakers in Atlantic Canada or those working from Atlantic Canadian stories. Narratives don't work this seamlessly or monolithically, and nor, apparently, do regional or national identities. What can, I think, be said about *Margaret's Museum*, however, is that it manages to express profound anxiety about the violability of the male body in a neo-colonial setting *without* then attaching that analysis of colonial masculinity to an unreflective, patriarchal quest to restore lost origins. More than that, the film explicitly questions the gendered nature of such discourses on neo-colonial loss, claims part of that loss for 'the feminine,' and finally launches a qualified refusal of the idea that the primary or most important targets of colonialism are masculinity and the male body.

Inseparable from this trajectory in *Margaret's Museum* is another, equally important, layer of critique directed at what Ian McKay[9] calls the myth-symbol complex, or mythomoteur, of Folk Innocence in Nova Scotia. As he explains in his detailed and persuasive study *The Quest of the Folk*, the term relates to a diffuse

strategy of cultural selection that first emerged during the inter-war period out of a political and economic imperative to 'sell Nova Scotia' as a haven of anti-modern purity to an increasingly anxious modern world. Along with its appeal to tourists in search of an idyllic, premodern escape and its essentialist proposition that Nova Scotians are a simple folk society made up of hardy, physically powerful men and demure, *Evangelinesque* women, the concept of Folk Innocence also tended to turn every available aspect of Nova Scotian folk culture into a tourist attraction or commodity. The commercial imperatives and the gendered nature of Folk Innocence are deeply intertwined, McKay suggests, and it is this particular part of the myth-symbol complex that is targeted by *Margaret's Museum.*

The centrality of this theme is foregrounded in the title and is the basis of the film's narrative movement towards the establishment of Margaret's 'anti-folklore' museum -- a disturbing but important site that pits itself in opposition to every other miner's museum on the island that has ever been satisfied to put pan shovels and masks on display without calling attention to the destruction of human life underground. As is suggested by the film's final (mental) image of men's body parts floating in formaldehyde while Margaret waits to show them off to her first set of tourists, this critique of the commodification of Cape Breton life is closely connected to the film's approach to subordinate, colonial masculinities and

strategies for representing the male body. Both gestures involve a refusal of nostalgia -- a refusal, that is, of patriarchal nostalgia for the 'secret world of men' that characterized an earlier, pre-lapsarian Cape Breton, and a refusal of the type of anti-modern nostalgia that, McKay argues, has shaped discourses on Folk Innocence in Nova Scotia.

Having laid out the beginnings of this argument, however, I should mention that this is in no way a seamless operation. Indeed, there are important ways in which this film's Central Canadian outlook, casting choices and status as an international co-production tend to reify the very notion of an Atlantic Canadian folk identity that the original stories were dedicated to unravelling and that on other levels the film successfully reproduces. Although *Margaret's Museum* was shot largely on Cape Breton and is based on two stories in Cape Breton-born writer Sheldon Currie's 1979 anthology, *The Glace Bay Miner's Museum*[10] (while also incorporating elements from his later novel, *The Company Store),*[11] other factors lead to an 'authenticity gap' that is readable within the film. The director, Mort Ransen, has spent most of his career in Quebec and British Columbia (along with a stint in Sweden), and the choice of two British leads -- Helena Bonham Carter as Margaret MacNeil and the Scottish actor Clive Russell as her miner husband, Neil Currie -- tends to interfere with some people's responses to the film.

Bonham Carter's glazed-over, gape-mouthed performance often reads like someone's clichéd idea of how a Cape Breton bumpkin might behave, and this installs a paradox in the film's critique of Folk Innocence. Picking up on this, one Nova Scotian woman acting as a 'local reviewer' for the Metro-Halifax Movie Guide Web site offered that it was a "neat idea for a movie," but found Helena Bonham Carter's portrayal of Margaret MacNeil more than a little problematic:

> She comes across as the village idiot, and that accent, well! In a perfect world, Mary-Colin Chisholm or someone of her calibre would have been cast, and the movie would be truly great.[12]

While none of these factors -- the director 'from away,' the foreign production money or the use of British leads -- should be viewed as *automatically* inauthenticating or problematic if we accept that authorship has yielded to readerly texts, one could argue that production circumstances and place of enunciation become more important in texts from the margin. While the film is largely rescued, for me at least, by its close relationship to Sheldon Currie's work, *Margaret's Museum* needs to be understood on one important level as a compromised reversal of the postcolonial imperative by which Homi Bhabha would like to see "the people of the periphery return to rewrite the history and fiction of the metropolis," or at least their own.[13]

Having admitted to choosing an imperfect example of indigenous Atlantic Canadian cinema, however, I find the film fascinating and worthy of study for what it has to say about the connections between gender and regional identity, class warfare and the male body in its particular setting: the coal-mining communities of Glace Bay and Reserve, Cape Breton, in the late 1940s. Given the complexity of its approach to these questions, and given the film's *reasonably* successful attempt to reproduce Sheldon Currie's critique of Cape Breton stereotypes and cultural commodification, it adds an important regional dimension to my study of male sexual representation in Canadian cinema. In fact, in spite of the 'authenticity gap' I've described, *Margaret's Museum* offers an important exploration of what it means to 'be a man' in Cape Breton, one that analyses the construction of gender identities within mining communities and the ability of capital to destroy working class male bodies, and that taps into the homosocial intimacy, stoicism and survival skills of men who make their living in the pit. Furthermore, as I've suggsted, by routing this study of subordinate, Maritime masculinity through the subjectivity of a female character, the film also winds up challenging the masculinist basis of coal miner solidarity and dismembering any sense of paternalism or nostalgia governing wider notions of regional identity.

The male body lies at the centre of this exploration of gendered regional

identity, providing a constant reference point as the film unfolds its story of a young Scots Catholic woman from Reserve, Margaret MacNeil, who meets and marries a charismatic Gaelic songster, Neil Currie, only to eventaully fulfill her mother's dark prophecy for her by becoming a miner's widow. Having lost her father and older brother to the pit by the time she meets Neil in the local Chinese-run café, Margaret lives with a terror of being abandoned again and only agrees to the marriage because Neil, a former miner, has promised not to go back underground. But when the poverty gets to be too much he breaks his promise, and his death (along with that of her younger brother and her grandfather) launches Margaret on an almost pre-conscious campaign to reveal to the world the consequences of living on an island 'made of coal.' Using an anatomy textbook to guide her as she cuts up their bodies, she saves the parts that mean something to her and pickles them for use as exhibits in a museum she means to open just as soon as they let her out of the local 'nuthatch' in Muddy River.

By circulating multiple versions of masculinity in the same narrative space (those of the manly, 'pit-hardened' coal miner, the mute and immobile victim of Black Lung disease, the immature boy eager for an apprenticeship into 'miner manhood' and the sensitive, pipe-playing defender of a dying Gaelic culture) and by calling attention to the masculinist foundations of a particular folk identity, the

film reveals a "fluctuating gap"[14] between 'manliness' and threats to manliness, and between Folk Innocence and the complex, lived reality of Cape Bretoners. A key byproduct of these cultural negotiations is the suffering and finally dismembered body of the Cape Breton coal miner: the inert result of an ideology of Innocence (with its insistence on the stereotype of the happy-go-lucky backward poor) that arguably helped to justify policies which, for many years, consigned Cape Breton miners and their families to exploitation by absentee industrialists.[15]

The film's two brief opening scenes provide a kind of double bracketing effect while laying down a capsule version of all of the terms that contribute to the film's deconstruction of regional identity, gender, class, and Folk Innocence. As the opening credits roll over a gorgeous, extended helicopter shot of the Cape Breton coastline, accompanied by the Rankin family's ghostly version of the traditional Gaelic tune *Chi mi na morbheanna*, the camera eventually settles on a close-up of tall grass in a field where a young Margaret MacNeil (Amy Jo Lamb) is caught up in a childhood sexual game with two little boys. Having been offered a nickel to let both boys sleep with her, Margaret lays down in the grass but is almost immediately abandoned when the boys run off, screaming "I did it, I fucked Margaret!" as they cross the field and run toward an immense smoke stack. Having used this long 'travelogue' shot to set the scene for what appears to be a clichéd

reprisal of other films and television shows about the simple rural delights of Nova Scotia,[16] then, *Margaret's Museum* quickly drops its *Anne of Green Gables* veneer by raising the terms of money, sex, industry and frightened masculinity as interrelated parts of the same problematic. Not only does the flashback establish the basis for Margaret's later (apparently undeserved) reputation in the community as a "snot-nosed whore," but it subtly links subordinate masculinity, in the form of a boyish fear of sex, with the industrial straightjacket in which most men in Reserve, Cape Breton, were presumably held during the 1930s, when the childhood incident would have taken place.[17] As the boys run towards the obviously phallic smoke stack where they'll likely work someday, having fled in terror from their first potential sexual conquest, the film veers suddenly away from the pastoral mode and the scene is set for an exploration of masculinity in all its peripheral, marginalized and subordinate forms.

The next bracketing scene is a flash-forward to the end of the film, to a time shortly after Margaret has established her miners' museum in the cliff side home built for her by her now-dead husband, Neil (Clive Russell). A middle-class American couple[18] can be heard bickering as they drive their brilliantly polished car along the sun-dried Glace Bay coast. "I'd rather hold it in than see another museum," the wife complains, but agrees to stop when it seems that Margaret's

house contains the only bathroom for miles.[19] Once inside the house, her sudden, hysterical screaming alerts us to the fact that this is no ordinary museum. The scene ends with Margaret standing out on the cliff, staring vacantly after the couple as they speed away from her in terror. Wearing a faint, blank smile and a potato-sack dress that sports some kind of colonial amalgam of the British and Canadian flags as its logo, Margaret embodies the logical conclusion of Folk Innocence -- the technically insane, dirt-poor product of regional inequality, compounded by colonial conditions (the ownership of the mines by British, American and Central Canadian capital) and the touristic gaze.[20]

While the American woman's remark that she'd rather "hold it in than see another museum" alludes to the great insistence with which Nova Scotia folk culture was preserved and constructed as a commodity starting in the interwar years, Margaret's response to the category of Folk Innocence is to literally dismember it, filling up her museum not with bits of marketable Cape Breton memorabilia but with the pickled remnants of actual miners, whose bodies were sacrificed to the requirements of capital. Like R.D. Laing's schizophrenic, whose apparently 'insane' actions are only a logical response to illogical surroundings, Margaret turns the mythomoteur of Folk Innocence against itself by revealing the destruction wrought in the name of an illusion of "happily underdeveloped east

coast Folk."[21] In doing so, she not only undermines the deeply conservative logic that substitutes an essential Folk character for any notion of "workers" or "labour," but she engineers a situation in which, as McKay puts it in reference to Alden Nowlan's work, "the fond patronage of the outside observer is thrown back, is *refused*: the lure of Innocence is resisted."[22]

Cape Breton is in some ways the ideal setting for such a refusal, since the island is the part of Nova Scotia that has the most difficulty maintaining a conception of itself as belonging in any meaningful way to the myth-symbol complex of Innocence. Heavily industrialized along its northeastern shore as a result of mining activity that began in the 1820s, Cape Breton island actually serves as a reminder of the artificiality of the concept of Innocence, and of the difficulty with which it can be applied to the whole of Nova Scotia. And as McKay points out, the notion of Innocence constructed by professional folklorists beginning in the 1920s and 30s and by state-funded tourist boards as of the 1940s generally excluded coal miners and coal mining towns on the grounds that they lacked the necessary "purity" to represent antimodern ideals. Folk Innocence was a category that applied to fishermen, farmers and craftspeople -- not the semi-urban spawn of shanty towns like Sydney or Glace Bay:

> Nova Scotia's heart, its true essence, resided
> in the primitive, the rustic, the unspoiled, the

> picturesque, the quaint, the unchanging: in all those pre-modern things and traditions that seemed outside the rapid flow of change in the twentieth century ... [23]

As an indication of the gap between pure and corrupted versions of the Folk, even the tourists in *Margaret's Museum* have trouble stirring up enthusiasm for the island's bleak north shore and banal museum culture. One can almost imagine them settling on the cheap vacation -- Plan B -- rather than going to Paris, London or Montreal. "I'd rather hold it in than see another museum" is the comment of a tourist who is not finding what she expected, whose desire for 'authenticity' has not been satisfied. Ironically, when Margaret gives her a dose of just that -- a 'realistic' look at the ravaging consequences of living on an island made of coal and controlled by outside capital[24] -- it proves to be more authenticity than the woman can handle within the narrow semiotic confines of the touristic gaze.[25]

What this gaze can't accommodate, in particular, is any kind of visible record or evidence of what can happen to men's bodies in a dangerous industrial context on the periphery of the nation. As we discover near the end of the film, the only artifacts in Margaret's tourist museum are large mason jars containing the pickled organs and other body parts of her younger brother, Jimmy MacNeil, her husband, Neil, and her grandfather, Donald MacNeil -- a trinity of marginal, non-

omniscient men spanning a range of masculine performative styles available in a particular setting. Carefully labelling each exhibit, Margaret displays the parts of their bodies that remind her of better times or that might function as evidence to indict the poor safety record of the mine owners. Her grandfather's black lungs are contrasted to Neil's pink ones in order to prove the company doctors wrong in their assessment that Donald MacNeil could still work, while Neil's tongue and fingers float in separate jars as a reminder of his gift of the gab, his attempts to preserve the Gaelic language and his facility with penny whistles and bagpipes. Lastly, her little brother Jimmy's penis merits a place in the museum because, as Margaret tells the doctors at Muddy River psychiatric hospital, "at his age it was the most important thing he had."

Although this is the explanation she gives to the therapists who puzzle over her actions, the near-literal castration Margaret performs on her brother can also be read as a reflection of the figurative castrations to which men in this community are subjected all the time. Obliged by chronic economic uncertainty to live in sub-standard company houses and to shop at the company store -- an institution with a long and controversial history as an emblem of internal colonialism in Cape Breton[26] -- the miners in the film experience their masculinity as a precarious identity that is constantly vulnerable to collapse, like the mines themselves.

At times, this vulnerability takes on an explicitly sexual character. Within the gendered language of coal mining communities, for example, where the pit itself is figured as a "she"[27] -- a kind of *vagina dentata* capable of swallowing men whole or crushing them in its teeth -- the male body is routinely threatened with disappearance or dismemberment. Margaret's decision to put Jimmy's penis on display in her museum is a complex move that acknowledges the symbolic castrating function of these threats while also calling attention to the masculinist basis of coal miner solidarity (a homosocial closeness that even prevents women from seeing their dead husbands or relatives until their bodies have been made 'presentable' again) and to the idea that it is Jimmy's emerging 'manhood' that is snuffed out in the film's final mining accident. More than just another explosion, this accident can also be read as an interruption of gendered identity-making in a particular setting. Having just begun the 'pit-hardening' process by which Steven Penfold says Cape Breton boys were gradually taught to develop the qualities of "'toughness, manhood and fatalism' associated with the collier,"[28] Jimmy never gets a chance to acquire this masculine identity or to transform his adolescent sexual fixations into a functioning relationship with the Protestant mine manager's daughter, Marilyn, whom he is secretly involved with at the time of the fatal explosion. His death, then, is a type of castration that calls for a literal recognition

of what has been stolen from him, and Margaret's unorthodox choice of souvenirs for her museum provides just that recognition.

There are similar indications throughout the film that a loss of virility (if not actual appendages) is a constant concern, but one scene makes this connection between marginality and symbolic castration explicit. About halfway through the film, the first time a mining accident sets off the chilling wail of the company alarm, Margaret abandons the hospital floor she's been scrubbing in order to help a nun tend to one of the victims. The man's name is Willy, and both of his legs have been cracked in the latest of many mine shaft collapses. In keeping with the unfailing stoicism that Penfold describes as a key component of coal miner masculinity, Willy maintains a grim hold on his sense of humour while the two women work on him. Joking that he "won't have to dance with the wife" at the ceilidh that evening, he then warns the nun who is cutting the pants away from his broken legs to "mind those scissors ... the wife'll be down there to inspect, [and] she won't be too happy if she finds anything missing."

This ability to make light of what may be a career-ending injury attests to the survival skills that sociologist John E. deRoche identifies as part of the complex cultural negotiations of working class 'folk,' who are never fully victims but who negotiate a viable sense of self within regional and class constraints.[29] As

such, Willy stands in for all of the wounded but stoic men whose bodies bear the traces of industrial capitalism's indifference to their safety, but who, if they survive, are capable of resistance through humour. Catharine Stimpson identifies this as a general characteristic of "the powerless," who have "a culture of resistance, which works through code ... and through the indirection of irony and parody."[30] Underlying the levity, though, is a barely suppressed fear that literal castration may somehow follow upon the symbolic, day-to-day humiliations endured by working class men on the periphery of the nation, as they descend to the pit in cages, eat alongside mice and see their pay whittled away to nothing after basic needs have been met (or not met) at the company store.

What is also interesting in light of Peter Lehman's work on male nudity in popular culture is that, in addition to evoking castration, *Margaret's Museum* also uses the spectre (and the spectacle) of male nudity to signal the discursive complexity of working class Cape Breton masculinity. The film's first line of narration, borrowed verbatim from Currie's story, for example, has Margaret recalling that when she first met Neil at the White Rose Café, she thought to herself: "If I were to meet him on the road, naked, with his feet apart, I could walk under him without a hair touching." One thing this unprompted verbal image of male nudity does is to establish Neil's massive size (an image that is in keeping

with stereotypes of the hardy, muscle-bound Nova Scotia male)[31] while at the same time highlighting his apparent vulnerability; his 'nakedness' or subordinate status as a man without social or economic power. Although Neil is so large that she could walk under him, her initial impression of him as "nothing but a goddamn miner" (albeit a handsome one who she will sit with for a while) coincides with an imagine of him stripped of his clothes and his defences. Finally, the notion that Margaret could walk under Neil "without a hair touching" also begs the question of whether there is anything there for her *to* touch -- whether, in fact, he might already be emasculated or marked by 'lack' at this point in the narrative.[32] In Judith Butler's terms, this might be said to signal the realization that "the phallus [is] already detachable, already elsewhere, already dispossessed."[33]

The clash of physical prowess and vulnerability that is communicated in this single, important line of dialogue (echoed later in the *Ballad of Charlie Dave*) also recalls McKay's discussion of Nova Scotian masculinity as a series of cultural negotiations between Folk Innocence and complex lived reality. For McKay, one key discourse on masculinity in Nova Scotia emerges out of the collision between notions of virility, purity and strength, on the one hand, and conditions of social, economic and geographical marginality, on the other. Writing about the interwar period when the myth-symbol complex of Folk Innocence was being vigorously

manufactured (by professional folklorists, 'craft capitalism' advocates and tourists boards, not to mention the provincial government) in response to regional economic crises, he notes that:

> Highly masculine imagery spoke to an international marketplace of cultural consumers, for whom Nova Scotia came to be seen as a place where the beleaguered men of modernity could recover their manliness through vigorous sports and a return to nature, and where they could delight in the availability and deference of attractive women. At the same time, as a modern province undergoing a twentieth-century transition to the service economy, and with less and less employment to offer men who had grown up working with their hands, Nova Scotian society itself was producing abundant materials for its own, home-grown 'crisis of masculinity.'[34]

Another, more veiled reference to the Maritime male as a site of contradictory strength and vulnerability (or crisis) follows when Neil takes out his bagpipes in the café, soon after his first meeting with Margaret, and begins to burst the place at the seams with his cherished ancestral music. Immediately thrown out onto the sidewalk by the restaurant's Chinese-Canadian owners, Neil winds up cradling the mess of pipes and cloth in his arms while he jokes with Margaret that if he weren't so drunk, he would "go back inside and get the shit kicked out of [him]." Since the film eventually goes on to draw an explicit link between

bagpipes and the penis, describing a moment in Neil's courtship of Margaret when his "bagpipe protuberances [were] sticking out, each inch a desirous mile," it seems reasonable to read this moment outside the café as one of the film's many instances of phallic disarray. Holding these disorganized and possibly broken "bagpipe protuberances" in his arms -- wearing, in a sense, this oddly androgynous contraption outside his clothing, where it can be viewed by all -- Neil is utterly without power (phallic or otherwise) at this moment, but is still capable of lifting the moment up with a bit of self-deprecating humour. While not actually nude in this scene, Neil is psychically exposed and copes with it by playing on a sense of his own peripheral masculine identity.

The film's most explicit use of male nudity to signal the complexity and consequences of working class Cape Breton masculinity, however, occurs during a shower scene in the mines. Margaret's Uncle Angus (Kenneth Welsh) has been trying to save money to send Jimmy to Toronto, where it is hoped that the boy will find a "good job" and escape the cycle of poverty and hard physical labour for which he is destined if he stays on the island. Angus has been working double and triple shifts for weeks in order to make good on a promise to his dead brother (Jimmy's father) and raise enough travel money for the boy, but when he opens his pay envelope he is stunned to find that it contains only three cents. His wife, it

turns out, has been to the company store and had all of his own children fitted for shoes. When Angus seems ready to complain about the shopping spree, a co-worker tells him to blame himself: "You live in a company house, you shop at the company store, and you don't even belong to the union." While all of this is happening, and while Angus is having a small meltdown over the fact that "the poor little fucker [Jimmy] is going to end up just like us," men's nude bodies are weaving in and out of frame as they shower together and dress themselves in the locker room. The scene is gently eroticised, with male bottoms appearing in medium shot and one man's penis clearly visible in soft focus from the side, while another man in the changing room peels off his flannel shirt to reveal a classically well-developed chest.

The complexity of this scene evolves from its use of male nudity in a particular narrative context to signal *both* the masculinist ideals of solidarity at work in coal mining communities[35] and the 'nakedness' of the marginalized, working class, neo-colonial male. As Penfold points out, masculinity in Cape Breton coal towns of the 1920s was a practice (rather than a rigid category) that often involved conflicting and contradictory ideas, making it important to examine how various definitions of manhood could "collide and overlap" in specific situations.[36] Miners saw themselves as semi-autonomous producers and family

breadwinners, gaining a sense of self-esteem from both roles, for instance, but struggled with an outside perception of their work as menial and with the fact that their salaries were often less than adequate to meet all of their families' needs. To this I would add that the mine itself was also a fundamentally ambiguous site where men's bodies could come together in solidarity -- even intimacy -- or literally be torn apart. Mining operations were the unofficial headquarters for the "secret world of men" where men showered together, sang together, plotted labour action together, and, when necessary, carried the limp bodies of fallen co-workers to the surface like brides over a threshold.

Given this complex mingling of masculinist solidarity and homosocial intimacy, the presence of nude male bodies during the shower scene seems highly appropriate. Not only do they signal the intense closeness that can result from a shared experience of dangerous working conditions, but they convey a sense of the physical and psychical vulnerability of the Cape Breton coal miner. If Lehman and Bordo and others are correct to point out that the phallus has trouble functioning when the penis has been unveiled, then the spectacle of the penis in this scene may signal Angus' lack of access to a phallic, or in this case, paternal, role. Unable to fulfill his responsbilities as Jimmy's Godfather or carry out the promise he made to the boy's father years earlier, Angus rages against his inability to affect the

outcome of situations. The fleshy bodies in the background are a physical reminder of how difficult it is for him -- or any other working class man on the periphery of the nation -- to maintain a sense of phallic authority.

The origins of this dilemma are widened out to a 200-year history not long after this scene, as Angus seeks a way out of his depression by re-acquainting himself with the bottle for the first time in years. When Margaret and Neil find him slumped in a corner of the family home, he greets them with a standard Scots-Canadian lament about the humiliations of colonial rule: "Seventeen hundred and forty five, hardly half of us left alive; nineteen hundred and forty four, half in the pit, half in the fucking war ... They killed us, Margaret. Since the Battle of Culloden, and one way or another, they're still killing us." 'They,' of course, are the British Crown and its (overwhelmingly Protestant) emmisaries who settled into positions of power after emigrating to Canada, carrying the old social hierarchies and power structures with them to the new world.[37] When Angus goes on to burn down the company store later the same night, he clarifies the consequences of such a (doubled) colonial predicament with a joke about the King of England. Egged on by a spectator's cry of "Fuck the King!," Angus -- whose own body is in danger of being burned up unless he jumps from the second floor of the building -- replies good-naturedly that "you can't do that to the King; the Queen might get jealous."

Once again, as in *Un Zoo, la nuit*, colonialism raises the spectre of sodomy, but in this community such topics are the source of dark and edgy humour rather than intense anxiety. The working class Cape Breton man is, arguably, more concerned about explosions than invasions -- more concerned about the sudden collapse of a mine shaft than about unwanted assimilation with the surrounding Anglo hordes -- and these distinctions work their way into the cultural frameworks through which men's bodies are represented and through which a lack of phallic power is analysed.

Having said this, though, it is important to point out that the film does not necessarily view such a lack of masculine authority as a problem. The social and economic conditions that place men in constant physical danger are generally viewed as more of a problem than the lack of masculine authority itself. In fact, the expectation that men should be able to wield authority -- or "carry on the family name," to take one specific instance of phallic entitlement -- is explictly interrogated throughout the film as Margaret (who seems a little ahead of her time, but not totally anachronistic, in this regard) tries to renogotiate the terms of gender identity in the community. While she admires Neil's attempts to preserve the Gaelic language through his regular meetings with other native speakers, for example, she complains bitterly about the lack of consideration he shows by

"fill[ing] the [family] house up with old men" without consulting Margaret's somewhat too stern mother, Catherine (Kate Nelligan). And in a world without indoor plumbing, Margaret also makes it abundently clear how unfair it is that miners (i.e., men) are the only people in Glace Bay with access to showers. Weaving the issue together seamlessly with her other, more serious demand that Neil begin using a condom when they have sex, she taunts him when he tries to get her to put the primitive rubber device away:

> You don't like me touching these things, do you? It's alright for Jimmy to have it. Secret world of men. I never even had a shower. The only showers in Glace Bay are down in the mine. Charlie Dave used to come home and I'd smell him and wonder what it's like to get hit in the face with all that water ... If you're going to make love to me, I want you wearing one of these. I'm not having any kids I can't feed.

Although Neil answers her first wish by sneaking Margaret into the mine for a shower one night while management is not around, he won't agree to the second request, and his sudden realization of how poor they are serves as the wake-up call that justifies his return to the mine, with tragic results.

After the explosion that kills Jimmy and Neil, Margaret's attacks on the community's masculinist notions of solidarity intensify. Faced with a wall of mute opposition from other miners when she tries to retrieve the bodies of her brother

and her husband, she pushes past the men, insisting on her right to look, and takes the matter of cleaning and preparing the bodies into her own hands. "I'll wash 'em, and wherever they go, they'll go clean and in a regular ambulance, not in your half broken down goddamn truck!", she says to a miner who starts out obstructing her but finally agrees to deliver the bodies to her mother's house. When they arrive, she discovers that her grandfather, who suffers from black lung disease and who must be thumped on the back regularly or he'll "choke up and die," has indeed died during the chaos. With the sudden realization that every last man in her life is now dead (except for Angus, who seems to survive every blast but who is now mute and quite probably insane), a dazed but focused looking Margaret launches into her unorthodox campaign of revenge against the company and its larcenous underground death trap. Using an anatomy textbook to help guide her as she surgically removes only the parts of each man's body that she needs for her museum, Margaret methodically gathers the only "souvenirs" (memories) that she considers worth putting on display in this community: the bits and pieces of peripheral male bodies sacrificed to the requirements of foreign and Central Canadian capital.

It is crucial to note that Margaret builds her museum in the house of the 'non-father,' the one whose *desire* to take up his place in the patriarchy ironically

leads to his death and dismemberment. Neil built the house and naively thought they would be able to fill it up with sons who "believe that working underground is only for ants, and who will say so in their own language [that being Scots Gaelic]," but in the end the house contains only parts of his body floating in formaldehyde. Margaret had forced him to a crisis over his own paternity, and the jolt of reality about their finances (a mystery to him until this point, since Margaret is obviously in charge of the books) brought on a crisis of masculinity. Leaving their bedroom, Neil spends all night playing his "bagpipe protuberances" in the rain outside their patched-together house, nursing what were earlier put into circulation as symbols of phallic disarray. By morning he has decided to go back into the mines. "I wasn't a part of life," he explains to Margaret, who becomes enraged and leaves him, temporarily, when she realizes that he has decided to go back into the pit. A paternalistic desire to carry on his family name drives Neil back underground, but ironically it is this desire that steals any chance of producing future generations of Curries.

The appropriateness of Margaret locating her museum in this house -- the house of the non-father -- stems from the fact that her exhibits are primarily meant to draw attention to the destruction of men's bodies in this peripheral, colonized setting. While Nova Scotia's museum culture has in many ways been complicit in

the construction of Folk Innocence, contributing to the myth-symbol complex that positions Nova Scotia as a pastoral haven populated by simple rural folk with simple needs, Margaret's museum pits itself in opposition to this sanitizing feat of cultural selection by preserving the bits and pieces of an *anti*-folklore. In Hutcheon's words, she "confronts the amnesia of colonialism through the memory of post-colonialism" by stocking her museum with distasteful but historically accurate and provocative memories rather than the usual pabulum that serves as the benign foundation of other mining museums.[38] Rejecting the nostalgic view of "men of the folk"[39] as products of a pure, antimodern form of masculinity, Margaret's museum reveals working class Cape Breton manhood as a precarious state of being that is always threatening to topple into non-being, into death and dismemberment. It is a wake-up call not only for tourists and outsiders who would construct Cape Breton identity according to their own desire for an idyllic Other, but for insiders who have taken part in building up the myth-symbol complex of Maritime purity, with its 'secret world of men.'

While we are never shown an image of the body parts in their jars, a close-up of Margaret's hand as she methodically fills out the labels for each exhibit ("Fingers -- Neil Currie," or "Penis -- Jimmy MacNeil") signals her desire to intervene in the signifying system of a paternalistic folk identity and to create new

signs from the point of view of a female survivor. Contradicting the nostalgia and romanticism of both an externally and an internally defined notion of Innocence, Margaret's new sign system not only speaks to the fact that male bodies at the periphery of the nation are regularly open to threats of destruction and dismemberment, but also serves as a crucial (and rare) reminder that such a situation directly penalizes women. It is primarily this point that *prevents* the film from finally seeming to reinscribe the patriarchal assumption that neo-colonialism's most scrutible effects are written on the male body and the male psyche. 'Driven sane' by her losses, Margaret ends up alone in her patchwork house made of stolen company wood, having failed to live out even the better parts of her mother's bleak prediction that by marrying Neil, she would "lose three sons to a shoe factory in Boston and two more to the pit." Widowed, childless and lacking even her mother's approval or company, Margaret is, on one level, a barely-functioning reminder of colonialism's devastating effect on women in this setting. However in the story she teams up with a female friend to set up her museum, and while this detail is absent from the film, Margaret is clearly a survivor in both versions who has found an unorthodox but effective way to disrupt the touristic gaze and all that goes with it. Given this combination of victimization and resourcefulness, she is the ideal curator of a museum dedicated

to deconstructing the myth-symbol complex of an idyllic Maritime essence.

Conclusion

The film's near-final images of a woman's hand slowly writing out the new terms for an anti-folklore prompt me to conclude this chapter with a comment about gender and authorship in Maritime culture. One of the unusual things about Currie's story, "The Glace Bay Miner's Museum," is that it is told so persuasively from the point of view of a young woman. Hugh Hood pointed to this when he called the story a "literary rarity," in that Currie's impersonation of a young woman's self-awareness avoids the common trap of seeming like a "fantasy masquerade springing from the writer's sexual uncertainties," and manages, instead, to be "delicate and generous and credible."[40] Mort Ransen preserves this aspect of the story as much as possible (despite what I've argued are problems at the level of production history and performance) by making *Margaret's Museum* revolve around Margaret's experience of events and by narrating parts of the film from within her consciousness. Halifax filmmaker Bill MacGillivray was able to do much the same thing in *Life Classes* by centering the narrative on another Cape Bretoner, Mary Cameron's, personal development as an artist, and although the presence of two similar narrative strategies hardly makes for a regional tendency, I want to suggest the possibility, at least, that Atlantic Canada's cultural milieu may

provide a receptive space for ambiguously gendered narratives.

If notions of 'manhood' in the region as a whole are as fluid and at times contradictory as I've tried to suggest they are in Cape Breton, and if marginality tends to produce the capacity to critique or inhabit other subjectivities, then it makes sense that male authors in Atlantic Canada should be willing and able to route their explorations of what it means to 'be a man' at the periphery of the nation through the subjectivities of female characters. (This capacity for transvestism also seems to work in reverse, as we see in Mary Walsh's hilarious impersonation of men's activist and social correspondent Dakey Dunn -- "I'm a man, goddamnit!"[41] -- on *This Hour Has 22 Minutes*). The fact that these explorations of gender and region so often lead back to the male body in one form or another -- whether dismembered (*Margaret's Museum*), disrobed (*Life Classes*)[42] or barely clothed and caught up in a panic about declining sperm counts[43] *(This Hour)* -- attests to the degree to which subordinate masculinity is often experienced (or represented and imagined) as a circuit of effects on the male body. As such, *Margaret's Museum* is only the latest, and perhaps the clearest, indication of a regional preoccupation with the corporeal consequences of 'being a man' on the periphery of the nation.

What is particularly interesting about the film, at least in the context of this

thesis, is its willingness to use 'the feminine' as a position from which to deconstruct patriarchal tendencies in the community's response to neo-colonialism. Once again, this can be viewed as a complicit critique. Internal colonialism is part of what historically drove Cape Breton miners and their families into chronic povery, since it allowed the island to become a dependent resource provider for Central Canada, and the ideology of Folk Innocence is, arguably, part of what justified poverty as the proper condition of 'simple folk.' By attacking the foundations of Folk Innocence through the contents of her museum, then, Margaret is indirectly staging her own protest against internal colonialism, and therefore occupying a position often associated with patriarchal politics and "discourse[s] of virilization".[44] What signals a difference, however, is Margaret's parallel attempt to deconstruct and fundamentally change the 'secret world of men' (the all-male Gaelic revival meetings; the showers in the pit; the assumption of a paternal role to play and the loose talk of filling houses up with sons instead of daughters) that she views as sustaining the patriarchal organization of her own community.

Endnotes

1. Sheldon Currie, *The Glace Bay Miner's Museum* (Quebec: Deluge Press, 1979), 18-19.

2. Catherine Waldby, "Destruction: Boundary Erotics and Reconfigurations of the Heterosexual Male Body," in *Sexy Bodies: The Strange Carnalities of Feminism*, eds. Elizabeth Grosz and Elspeth Probyn (London and New York: Routledge, 1995), 268.

3. Kenneth McRoberts, "Internal Colonialism: the Case of Quebec," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 2, 3 (July 1979): 299.

4. David Black, "The Cape Breton Coal Industry and the Rise and Fall of the British Steel Corporation," in *Cape Breton Historical Essays*, eds. Don MacGillivray and Brian Tennyson. (Sydney, N.S.: College of Cape Breton Press, 1980), 113.

5. See for example Celeste Sulliman MacPherson and Carol Corbin, "Cape Bretoners as Canadians," in *The Centre of the World at the Edge of a Continent: Cultural Studies of Cape Breton Island*, eds. Carol Corbin and Judith A. Rolls (Sydney, Nova Scotia: University of Cape Breton College Press, 1996), 239.

6. Silver Donald Cameron, "The World Which is At Us," in *The Centre of the World at the Edge of a Continent: Cultural Studies of Cape Breton Island*, eds. Carol Corbin and Judith A. Rolls (Sydney: University College of Cape Breton Press, 1996), 216.

7. Robert Schwartzwald, "Institution littéraire, modernité et question nationale au Québec (1940 à 1976)," Dissertation doctorat, Laval University, 1985, 215.

8. Chantal Nadeau, "Women in French-Quebec Cinema: The Space of Socio-Sexual (In)difference," *CineACTION* 28 (1992), 8.

9. Ian McKay, *The Quest of the Folk: Antimodernism and Cultural Selection in Twentieth-Century Nova Scotia* (Canada: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1994).

10. The title story, "The Glace Bay Miner's Museum," is the primary source. Jimmy's character comes from "Pomp and Circumstances." Currie, *Glace Bay Miner's Museum*, 7-22 and 89-118.

11. A scene in which Uncle Angus burns down the company story was adapted from the novel, with some changes. Sheldon Currie, *The Company Store* (Canada: Oberon Press, 1988), 88-91.

12. Colleen Putt, Review of *Margaret's Museum*, Metro-Halifax Movie Guide, < http:/www.animax.com/mm/movieguide/reviews/margaret.html.> (Accessed July 4, 1997).

13. Àine O'Brien, "Review Essay: Postcolonial Discourses of Nation," *Quarterly Review of Film and Video* 14, 3 (1993): 125.

14. Donald E. Pease , "National Narratives, Postnational Narration," *Modern Fiction Studies* 43, 1 (Spring 1997): 6.

15. Systematic mining of coal in Cape Breton began in the 1820s, and until the industry was made public in 1968 most mining activity was controlled by outside interests (largely British and American, often with Central Canadian involvement). During the difficult 1920s, an increasingly militant work force managed to offset many of the rollbacks, but it is sometimes argued that they paid the price in mining accidents that have claimed hundreds of lives over the years. As one historian of the period, David Black, concluded, "The growth of the coal industry in Cape Breton expressed above all the financial opportunism of its successive owners, rather than any commitment to principles of regional economic welfare." Black, "The Cape Breton Coal Industry," 128. While McKay's book, *Quest of the Folk*, notes that coal miners were not viewed as part of the category of Folk Innocence in the same way as 'purer' products of an essential Nova Scotian identity, it seems plausible to me that the category of Folk Innocence may have 'bled' into policy discussions about the mines and allowed decision-makers to tolerate questionable business and labour practices, on the basis that coal miners, like other Nova Scotians, were basic folk with basic needs.

16. One that implicitly critiques the idea that all Nova Scotian films should reflect the innocent purity of Nova Scotian folk culture. Atlantic media producers often get the sense that "the outside world is interested in their productions only if they present 'Atlantic' kinds of motifs and stories -- lighthouses, lobster traps, grizzled fishermen, schooners, sou'westers, highland flings ..." Tom McSorley, "À l'Est ... une nouvelle vague maritime," in *Les Cinémas du Canada*, eds. Sylvain Garel and André Paquet (Paris: Éditions du Centre Pompidou, 1992), 209. The quotation is from the original English manuscript and not the published French version.

17. It's unclear exactly when the film's main action is supposed to take place. The radio play by Wendy Lill specifies it as 1947 when Margaret and Neil first meet. If we accept this as the approximate date of the film's action, that would date the childhood flashback to about 1935.

18. Based on their accents, they could be New Englanders. In a talk about the film, Erin Manning identified the couple as American. Erin Manning, "Nation as Myth? *Margaret's Museum* and *Khora*," Learned Societies Conference, June 5, 1997, St. John's, Newfoundland.

19. The film draws quite a bit of attention to this gleaming porcelein invention -- a fact which may speak to a concern with scatology and the survival of a threatened community, in the terms set out by Mary Douglas and applied in Chapter One to *Un Zoo, la nuit*. Whereas excrement and abjection are central to understanding Lauzon's film, however, *Margaret's Museum* takes a gentler approach to the topic, alluding to but never showing the toilet, let alone anyone using it,

as *Un Zoo* does. Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (New York, Washington: Prager Publishers, 1966).

20. The role of the tourist (or professional folklorist) is made even clearer in Sheldon Currie's story, which ends by revealing that the whole narrative has been told to an outsider who has brought a tape recorder into the community to record Margaret's story. "Perhaps you could give us a copy of your tape when you get it done. That might make a nice item. It's hard to get real good things and you hate to fill up with junk just to have something." (Currie, "Cape Breton Miner's Museum," 22). It is possible to miss the significance of the reference without an awareness of recent scholarship and creative literary work on the problematic role of tourists and professional folklorists in Nova Scotia. A number of recent stories from the province refer to the presence of tapes -- like the ones used by Helen Creighton and others -- with great ambivalence, sometimes suggesting that the presence of the recording device obligates the Nova Scotian to fall into a role (of the tipsy but gregarious singer/storyteller/entertainer) that glosses over the complexity of Nova Scotian life. See, for example, Alistair McLeod's story, "The Boat," in MacLeod, Alistair, *The Lost Salt Gift of Blood* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart 1976), 139-40.

21. McKay, *Quest of the Folk*, 308.

22. Ibid.

23. Ibid, 30-31.

24. Not all capital came "from away," but David Frank reports that even those islanders like D.H. McDougall and W.D. Ross were "capitalists foremost and proved no more loyal to the region's welfare than" Central Canadian, American or British investors. (Frank, "The Cape Breton Coal Industry," 128). Overall, he concludes that national policies encouraged Cape Breton's dependency and scuttled any chance of prosperity for the hinterland resource area: "The creation of national markets led to a division of labour ... which established the Cape Breton coal industry as a source of industrial energy filling the needs of the central Canadian market." (Ibid, 113).

25. Jonathan Culler, "Semiotics of Tourism," *American Journal of Semiotics* 1 (1981): 127-8.

26. See Steven Penfold, "'Have You No Manhood in You?': Gender and Class in the Cape Breton Coal Towns, 1920-1926," *Acadiensis* XXIII, 2 (Spring 1994): 32.

27. Ibid, 24.

28. Penfold notes that in the 1920s, the mines contained boy labourers who were socialized into manhood as they moved through the hierarchy of jobs: "It was not just skills that were taught ... but manhood -- which in the case of the miner included courage and stoicism in the face of constant danger and a sense of independence derived from being a tradesman. Completing the

process of moving up through this gender hierarchy meant reaching 'a man's estate'." Ibid, 24.

29. John E. deRoche, "Class Politics of Management and Technology in Cape Breton Mines," in *"Rock in a Stream": Living with the Political Economy of Underdevelopment in Cape Breton*, eds. Constance P. deRoche and John E. deRoche (St. John's, Newfoundland: Institute of Social & Economic Research, 1987), 111.

30. Catharine R. Stimpson, "Nancy Reagan Wears a hat: Feminism and its Cultural Consensus," *Critical Inquiry* 14, 2 (1988), 227.

31. McKay, *The Quest of the Folk*, 252-253.

32. Blaine Allan suggested this idea after reading an earlier draft of this chapter.

33. Judith Butler, *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of 'Sex'* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 101.

34. Ibid, 252.

35. Ibid.

36. Ibid, 28.

37. The first part of the rhyme refers to 1754, when the Scots invaded England under Bonnie Prince Charlie, only to be crushed the next summer at the Battle of Culloden. The second part refers to World War One, when hundreds of conscripted Cape Bretoners lost their lives. A. A. MacKenzie, *The Irish in Cape Breton* (Antigonish, Nova Scotia: Formac Publishing Company Limited, 1979), 18-19. See also Silver Donald Cameron, "The World Which is At Us," 216.

38. Linda Hutcheon, *Splitting Images: Contemporary Canadian Ironies* (Toronto, Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 89.

39. McKay, *Quest of the Folk*, 47-8, 113, 252-60.

40. Hood, Hugh, quoted on the back cover of Currie, *Glace Bay Miner's Museum.*

41. Strachan, Alex, untitled wire story from *The Vancouver Sun*, distributed by the SouthamStar Network, 1:22 Eastern Standard Time, Dec. 4, 1995.

42. In this film the supporting lead, Earl (who is a Cape Bretoner), agrees to pose nude for a series of drawings by his former girlfriend, Mary. I would argue that Earl's nudity during the life drawing sessions in Mary's apartment, and his quick acceptance of the fact that it is *his* detumescent penis gracing every wall of her resulting "One Man Show," seems related to a

capacity for self-exposure that may be in some ways tied to regional experience and identity. Having known poverty all his life, and having lived on the socio-economic periphery of the nation, Earl is well-positioned to extend his role as a marginalized Canadian male into the realm of the life drawing studio. For another view, see Robin Wood, "Towards a Canadian (Inter)national Cinema (part 2: *Loyalties* and *Life Classes*)," *CineAction!* (Summer 1989): 34.

43. One memorable sketch has him in his boxers, ranting about a scientific study showing there's been a drop in the quality and quantity of men's sperm. "We're shootin' blanks, boys!"

44. Schwartzwald, "Institution littéraire," 215.

Conclusion

A political cartoon that appeared in *The Globe and Mail* in 1996 conveys in a nutshell (so to speak) one of the main assumptions underlying the relationship between anti-colonial nationalism, masculinity and representations of the male body that has been my main concern throughout this thesis.[1] Two uniformed officers from Quebec's Bill 101 enforcement squad have just strip-searched a male detainee and are busy rifling through the contents of his briefcase, in search of violations to the language law. Their prisoner in completely nude, apart from a tie and pants that hang over one arm so as to conveniently hide his private parts. With their absurdly oversized epaulettes, goose step boots and square hats, the policemen look a bit like (our Western idea of) revolutionary guards borrowed from a Cuban brigade. One of them holds a magnifying glass up to a piece of paper from the man's briefcase, apparently scanning for *anglicizations*, while the other explains to him that all this is necessary ".... because we feel humiliated."

Along with its slightly xenophobic tendency to simplify complex language issues in Quebec, the cartoon also tends to reinforce (or at least bear out) the view that nationalist identities are fundamentally rooted in injured masculinity, and that humiliation at the national level amounts in metaphorical terms to a kind of

nakedness, vulnerability to bodily invasions or unwelcome exposure for the colonial male subject. In this thesis, I have tried to foreground some of the ways this assumption plays itself out across a range of texts, and in doing so I have been led back to a notion of difference. While a colonial obsession with "victimization" has often been theorized in broad strokes as a universal, almost undifferentiated characteristic of Canadian narratives,[2] this study suggests the need to think through at least one important instance of such victimization -- beleaguered colonial masculinity -- in ways that highlight distinctions at the level of gender, region, class and sub-state national identity.

The films considered here trace out a cartography of difference, and suggest that even the notion of a pan-Canadian 'crisis of masculinity,' or a meta-narrative of male vulnerability, inadequacy and victimization, is shot through with contradiction. The 'problem' of the colonial male body is not the same for a young male director in post-Quiet Revolution, post-referendum Quebec; an English Canadian woman coming into her own as a critical nationalist in New York during the mid-1960s; a different woman struggling to assert her own voice at the dawn of first-phase feminism in Quebec; or a Vancouver-based former documentarian adapting a tale of economic desperation in the coal fields of Cape Breton.

Whereas a Catholic sense of the ritualistic destruction and resurrection of

the male body pervades both *Un Zoo, la nuit* and *Margaret's Museum*, for example, both films mark and represent that body in ways that evoke their very different socio-economic and political contexts. In *Un Zoo,* I've tried to suggest, fear of unwanted assimilation and a sense of dislocation between the generations of pre- and post-Quiet Revolution Quebec combine with Lauzon's own narrative preoccupations and aesthetic sensibilities to generate an intensely troubled portrait of the male body as a site of violent sexual invasions, 'feminising' influences and overall abjection. Revenge against a sodomizing/colonizing *père diabolique* (who happens to be an Anglo authority figure) drives the narrative towards a qualified sense of reconciliation between two generations of *pure laine* Québécois men, but this union of father and son is purchased at the cost of separations and exclusions that are as rigid as any Levitical law. Of the five films considered at any length in this thesis, it must be said that this one comes closest to embedding the male protagonist firmly in a vortex of anxiety about lost national origins and nostalgia for a pre-lapsarian (pre-colonial) past. What keeps the film from doing nothing other than reinforcing a sisyphian search for the lost patriarch of Quebec, however, is its tendency to embrace its own excesses, to 'spill' out in ways that subtly eroticise the very law that in most other respects the film seems to embrace.

Margaret's Museum, as we've seen, understands peripheral male

embodiment in ways that relate to the specific configurations of coal mining culture in Cape Breton, with its charged imagery of male homosocial bonding and threats of destruction. Fear of sodomy is not an issue here, beyond providing fodder for a joke about the King of England, but the working class male body is beset by other types of invasions: Anxiety about the effects of power on the body takes the form of a fear of dismemberment -- a fear of the suffering male body literally coming apart under pressure from capital and the stresses of regional inequality. And while this might seem to place the film in a category with *Un Zoo, la nuit*, I have argued that Ransen's film winds up detaching its narrative of male bodily destruction from any sense of overt nostalgia for a pre-colonial past. On the contrary, *Margaret's Museum* actually sets out to use 'the feminine' as a site from which to launch a critique of patriarchal tendencies in the community's response to its own, geographically and historically specific version of internal colonialism.

But while Ransen can only occupy this position by proxy in ways that approximate a feminist approach to colonial masculinities (within a narrative that is sometimes at odds with its own critiques), Joyce Wieland and Mireille Dansereau ventured into parodic and experimental forms in the mid-1960s and early 70s that allowed for a more integrated revision of the terms of loss and humiliation shaping discourses on colonial masculinity. Wieland's work in both

Patriotism films seems to suggest the possibility that colonial masculinity might involve a kind of semi-willing submission to American imperialism, one that confuses the terms of pleasure and oppression by positioning the colonial male body as the explicit object of desire for a flirtatious (and at times rapacious) nation-state. Such a move not only reinforces Wieland's own emerging Canadian nationalism in opposition to the U.S. but also opens up a feminist space for grasping what Sinha, in a 19th century Bengali context, calls the "mutual implication" of colonial and imperial masculinities.[3] Dansereau, meanwhile, launched her own complicitous critique from the split position of a feminist nationalist in early 1970s Quebec, when the discourses of nationalism and feminism were beginning to look mutually incompatible. By emphasizing the dangers posed to Quebec society by North American consumer culture but by focusing her attention on the specific threats posed to women within that system, Dansereau affected a broadening out of the often narrow political agendas set out for Quebec nationalists by groups such as the *Parti Pris*. And like Wieland, she relied in part on a miniaturization of the male body and an aggressive de-territorializing of penis and phallus (in the final scenes with JJ, for example) to carve out a space for feminist re-articulations of anti-colonial nationalisms.

For all of their shared interest in re-investigating the politics of male sexual

representation in this context, however, it would be wrong to collapse Wieland and Dansereau's work into the terms of a homogeneous 'feminine/feminist' response to nation, empire and colonial masculinity. The differences in their approach and in the specific targets of their complicitous critiques are a reminder that women's relation to the "double optic" of nationalist politics is defined along the diverse lines of class, religion, ethnicity, political affiliation, sexuality, region and locale. As Àine O'Brien has suggested,

> The recognition that these positions confront and overlap at specific historical intervals and political conjunctures demands a more inclusive investigation of what living the dialectic of nation means to women who take up varied positions to the nation state and to the systems of colonial and post-colonial hegemony."[4]

Despite the three-part structure and relative bulk of this thesis, I am aware of having only made a modest beginning and am interested in pursuing some of the same questions (as well the broader implications of male sexual representation) in other Canadian film contexts. There were many times when I considered centering the thesis on one of the three 'analytic examples' dealt with here. At one point, the project was to have been entirely about feminist strategies for representing the male body in various part of Canada and across several decades. I persisted in

dealing with three different cultural moments, however, because I felt that there were connections between them that needed to be drawn out, as well as important differences that could only be foregrounded by taking a comparative approach. The relationship that finally did emerge revolved around various approaches to a patriarchal sense of loss in the response to neo-colonialism, but other patterns and areas of concern could become important in a longer study of these issues.

In particular, it would seem crucial to talk about at least four additional areas: Prairie and Western Canadian approaches to neo-colonialism and the male body in films such as *Careful* (1992), *The Dead Father* (1985), and, from Alberta, *The Suburbanators* (1995); more recent feminist strategies for representing the male in such films as *Kissed* (1996), *off Key* (1994) and *Bubbles Galore* (1997); gay self-representation in the context of nationalist issues and diasporic cinema by immigrant directors and ethnic minorities involved in negotiating new gender (and potentially also national) identities in a Canadian setting. In fact, it seems to me that until this project has grasped in a more comprehensive way the interrelationships between gender, sexuality, race, and responses to neo-colonialism, it will remain incomplete. This requirement will not be satisfied by the simple addition of new chapters about such films as Srivinas Krishna's *Masala* (1991), Deepa Mehta's *Sam and Me* (1990), Clement Virgo's *Rude* (1995),

Stephen Williams's *Soul Survivor* (1995) or, in the case of gay self-representation, Lepage's *Le Confessional* (1995), Bruce LaBruce's *Super 8 ½* (1994), Thom Fitzgerald's *The Hanging Garden* (1997) or John Greyson's *Zero Patience* (1993) and *Lilies* (1996), although this would provide a modest start.

A more comprehensive and critical synthesis of such categories of identity in relation to anti-colonial nationalisms would necessarily have to take account of the questions asked by Judith Butler in a section of *Bodies That Matter* that directly influenced this project, but perhaps not to the full extent it should have. Pointing out that "what appear within ... an enumerative framework [of identity] as separate categories are, rather, the conditions of articulations for each other," Butler asks:

> How is race lived in the modality of sexuality? How is gender lived in the modality of race. How do colonial and neo-colonial nation-states rehearse gender relations in the consolidation of state power? How have the humiliations of colonial rule been figured as emasculation (in Fanon) or racist violence as sodomizing (Jan Mohammed); and where and how is 'homosexuality' at once the imputed sexuality of the colonized, and the incipient sign of Western imperialism (Walter Williams)?[5]

Underlying this typically interrogative passage is a prescription for approaching questions of identity not as stable or pre-established but "as part of a

dynamic map of power."[6] I could do no better than to reproduce that paragraph as a synopsis for a future version of this project, since the inclusion of race and sexual orientation would make it possible to grasp how categories of identity function as relations of articulation for each other within an overall map of difference. Without a firmer sense of how "homosexuality is ... the imputed sexuality of the colonized," or of how "race is lived in the modality of sexuality," this project remains incomplete.

What I do think I have accomplished here is a modest shifting of the terms of debate about colonial masculinity as it has been manifested at different cultural moments and by different authors within Canadian cinema. I have always seen this project as a response and a contribution to the work that was begun by Peter Morris and Christine Ramsay in the early 1990s to loosen the firmament of received thinking about male "victims and losers" in Canadian cinema. Whereas Morris called attention to the possibility for new types of thematic readings of maleness (those grounded in the picaresque, for example)[7] and Ramsay argued for a metonymic approach to marginal masculinities in English-Canadian film,[8] I have followed my own, somewhat idiosyncratic, path between the two approaches and pursued a separate focus on representations of the male body as a locus of contested responses to colonial discourses on masculine loss and humiliation.

If I have managed to call attention to the way in which such a sense of loss is often readable within representations of the male body, and if I have managed to disrupt the idea that colonial masculinity functions in a 'smooth' or undifferentiated way across regions, time periods and authors, I have accomplished part of what I set out to achieve.

Another, less obvious, contribution this thesis makes is to offer an alternative to the overwhelmingly Hollywood-centred theoretical work that has appeared since about 1993 on masculinities and representations of the male body in the cinema.[9] While such work did help to shape this thesis, most of it was finally of limited value in addressing the specific cultural and representational issues arising in a Canadian setting. Without an action genre of our own, for example, it was difficult to know what to do with Yvonne Tasker's work on "muscularity" in the American action cinema, or, to a large extent, even Steve Neale's early argument about the displacement of homoerotic potential onto ritualized scenes of violence in scenes of male spectacle. It should not be surprising that much of the work done so far in the field of 'on-screen masculinities' relates to dominant U.S. cinema, since the groundwork for such discussions was laid by Laura Mulvey's early and influential assertion that the male body cannot or does not serve as an erotic object of the gaze in classic

narrative film.[10] Tackling this assumption in their 1993 anthology *Screening the Male*, Steve Cohan and Ina Rae Hark argue that most feminist film theory based on Mulvey's analysis of visual pleasure has

> minimized or taken for granted the complex and considerable cultural investment which classical Hollywood cinema has historically expended in the display of the male, especially as his figure on screen calls into question the stability and unity equated with 'masculinity' and epitomized in the diegesis by the gaze of the male actor.[11]

While such insights are invaluable to any study of masculinity and the male body in cinema and do inform this one, I was finally able to make only limited use of the majority of work from this recent spate of attention to male spectacle. With a few exceptions,[12] the theories are built specifically to address the cracks and fissures in otherwise dominant or hegemonic masculinities, and although closer attention to this work might have led me into a productive engagement with film theoretical debates about the capacity for a spectatorial gaze at the male body, I felt it was a better use of my time to do original research on representations of the male in a Canadian context, from a starting point of localized debates about colonial masculinity and constructs of maleness in 'the cinema we have'.[13]

One of the obstacles I encountered in this project was a general lack of second-hand sources relating directly to colonial or neo-colonial masculinities in

Canada. In order to proceed much further with the ideas that have been set down in basic form in this project, it will be necessary to move beyond the somewhat random anecdotal evidence that I wound up gleaning from texts that seemed, in one way or another, to illuminate one small aspect of how colonial masculinities have functioned at various times and in various parts of Canada or Quebec.

Close historical and ethnographic work on the construction of masculinity in particular Canadian settings (like that done by Steven Penfold in a 1920s coal mining context) is rare, and I know of no full-length study that begins to do the work in a Canadian context that Mrinalini Sinha has carried out in relation to imperial discourses of the 'manly Englishman' and the 'effeminate Bengali' in nineteenth century colonial India. While numerous popular and scholarly books about Canada's neo-colonial relationship with the U.S. have focused on policy, political economy and trade disputes, little of this work has been 'gendered' in a way that calls attention to the construction of masculine identities within a neo-colonial setting or the complex role of nostalgia in the formation of patriarchal nationalisms, let alone the impact of such ideas on representations of the male body within film texts. Similarly, the work I'm aware of that deals with internal colonialism in Quebec is either written from within patriarchal nationalism's nostalgia for a pre-lapsarian past (Rioux engages in this to some extent, for

example) or is focused on policy matters and definitions of internal colonialism.[14]

Although it is certainly debatable whether work on ethnographic and historical dimensions of colonial masculinity can ever do more for film studies than contribute to (yet more) thematic and symptomatic readings, it would be helpful to have the opportunity, at least, to draw upon more nuanced and comprehensive work than currently exists in this relatively new area of study. As Butler points out, questions of gender identity and historical context can either be used in conventional ways or mobilized within a more "dynamic map of power in which identities are constituted and/or erased, deployed and/or paralyzed."[15] The point of drawing upon detailed histories of colonial masculinity in a film studies context would be to try and grasp their discursive role in English Canadian and Quebec cinema's view of the male -- not, hopefully, to produce more of the same kinds of symptomatic readings whose value both Peter Morris and Bart Testa have, in very different contexts, called into question.[16]

In fact, the availability of more detailed studies of colonial masculinity could help to advance the work begun by Morris and Ramsay (and furthered here, I hope) to break down the monolithic quality of thematic and symptomatic work on masculinity and victimization among Canadian film protagonists. With access to more historically nuanced work on the way in which masculinities have been

lived in relation to neo-colonialism across time periods and regions, it would be harder still to maintain the idea that, in Atwood's words, victimization (at least of the type analysed here) is "pure Canadian, from sea to sea."[17]

Endnotes

1. Gable cartoon, *The Globe and Mail*, June 12, 1996, opinion page.

2. For an influential critique of this approach in the work of Margaret Atwood, Robert Fothergill and subsequent commentators, see Peter Morris, "In Our Own Eyes: The Canonizing of Canadian Film," in *Responses: In Honour of Peter Harcourt*, eds. Blaine Allan, Michael Dorland and Zuzana M. Pick, 145-166. (Kingston, Montreal, Ottawa: The Responsibility Press, 1992).

3. Mrinalini Sinha, *Colonial Masculinity: The 'manly Englishman' and the 'effeminate Bengali' in the late nineteenth century* (Manchester, New York: Manchester University Press, 1995), 7.

4. Àine O'Brien, "Review Essay: Postcolonial Discourses of Nation," *Quarterly Review of Film & Video* 14, 3 (1993), 126. "Double optic" is a term from Terry Eagleton's contribution to Seamus Deane, ed., *Nationalism Colonialism and Literature* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1990).

5. Judith Butler, *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of 'Sex'* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 117.

6. Ibid.

7. Morris, "In Our Own Eyes," 145-166.

8. Christine Ramsay, "Canadian Narrative Cinema from the Margins: 'The Nation' and Masculinity in *Goin' Down the Road*," *Canadian Journal of Film Studies* 2, 2-3 (1993): 27-50.

9. See Steven Cohan and Ina Rae Hark, eds. *Screening the Male: Exploring Masculinities in Hollywood Cinema* (London and New York: Routledge, 1993); Paul Smith, "Action Movie Hysteria, or Eastwood Bound," *Differences* 1, 3 (1989): 88-107; Yvonne Tasker, *Spectacular Bodies: Gender, Genre and the Action Cinema* (London: Routledge, 1993); Constance Penley and Sharon Willis, eds., *Male Trouble* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993).

10. Laura Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," *Screen* 16, 3 (Autumn): 6-18.

11. Cohan and Hark, eds. *Screening the Male*, 1.

12. See, for example, Ashwani Sharma, "Blood Sweat and Tears: Amitabh Bachchan, Urban Demi-God," in *You Tarzan: Masculinity, Movies and Men*, eds. Pat Kirkham and Janet Thumim (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993), 167-180. Rey Chow, "Male Narcissism and National Culture: Subjectivity in Chen Kaige's *King of the Children*," in *Male Trouble*, eds. Constance

Penley and Sharon Willis (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), 87-117.

13. "The Debate on the Cinema We Need." *Cinema Canada,* 120/121 (July/August 1985), 26-38; reprinted in Douglas Fetherling, ed., *Documents in Canadian Film* (Peterborough: Broadview Press, 1988).

14. See for example Katherine O'Sullivan See, *First World Nationalisms: Class and Ethnic Politics in Northern Ireland and Quebec* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1986); and Kenneth McRoberts, "Internal Colonialism: the Case of Quebec," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 2, 3 (July 1979): 293-318.

15. Butler, *Bodies That Matter,* 117.

16. While Testa questions the value of symptomatic readings in almost any context and calls their overuse in Canadian film studies a major problem, Morris has revealed the limitations of a specific thematic assumption about Canadian protagonists: the victim-loser approach popularized after 1972 by Margaret Atwood, Robert Fothergill and taken for granted by a long line of subsequent commentators. In his (now virtually canonized) 1992 article about canon formation, Morris finds it significant that "Canadian film critics have not challenged the negative connotations of these seminal thematic analysis," and argues that"While at one time this approach to thematic criticism seemed to offer useful insights, it rapidly degenerated into a rote formula." It is significant to note that Morris doesn't advocate doing away with the thematic analysis of films altogether, but calls for a widening out of their underlying concerns. Morris, "In Our Own Eyes," 158; and Bart Testa, "Backroom Auteurism: Theory in the Service of Contemporary English-Canadian Films," paper delivered at the Learned Societies Congress, St. Catherines, Ontario, May 28, 1996.

17. Margaret Atwood, *Survival: A Thematic Guide To Canadian Literature,* First McClelland & Steward edition (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart Inc., 1996), 34.

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Appendix -- Filmography

Films viewed and cited:

Adjuster, The (d. Atom Egoyan, 1991)
Années de rêves, Les (The Years of Dreams and Revolt, d. Jean-Claude Lebrecque, 1984)
Artist on Fire (d. Kay Armatage, 1987)
Bons dèbarras, Les (Good Riddance, d. Francis Mankiewicz, 1980)
Careful (d. Guy Maddin, 1992)
Côté Obscure du Cœur, La (Dark Side of the Heart, d. Roger Frappier, 1992, Canadian-Argentianian co-production, 1992)
Confessional, Le (d. Robert Lepage, 1995)
Eclipse (d. Jeremy Podeswa, 1994)
Far Shore, The (d. Joyce Wieland, 1976)
Goin' Down the Road (d. Donald Shebib, 1970)
Highway of Heartache (d. Gregory Wild, 1994)
Highway 61 (d. Bruce McDonald, 1991)
Histoire inventèe, Une (d. Marc-Andrè Forcier, 1990)
I Love a Man in Uniform (d. David Wellington, 1993)
Jacques et novembre (d. Jean Beaudry and François Bouvier, 1984)
Kissed (d. Lynne Stopkewich, 1996)
Lèolo (d. Jean-Claude Lauzon, 1992)
Life Classes (d. William D. MacGillivray, 1987)
Lilies (d. John Greyson, 1996)
Live Bait (d. Bruce Sweeney, 1995)
Margaret's Museum (d. Mort Ransen, Canadian-British co-production, 1995)
Masala (d. Srivinas Krishna, 1991)
Mourir à tue-tête (d. Anne Claire Poirier, 1979)
Mustard Bath (d. Darrell Wasyk, 1992)
off Key (d. Karethe Linaae, 1994)
Octobre (d. Pierre Falardeau, 1994)
Palace of Pleasure (d. John Hofess; compilation of two films: *Redpath 25* [1966] and *Black Zero* [1967]).
Paris, France (d. Gerard Ciccoritti, 1993)
Party, Le (d. Pièrre Falardeau, 1990)
Patriotism, Part One (sometimes listed as *Patriotism I*, d. Joyce Wieland, 1965-1986)
Patriotism, Part Two (sometimes listed as *Patriotism II*, d. Joyce Wieland, 1965-

1986)
Perfectly Normal (d. Yves Simoneau, 1991)
Pierre Vallières (d. Joyce Wieland, 1972)
Pink Komkommer (d. Craig Bartless, Janet Perlman, Stoyan, Sara Petty, Alison Snowden, David Fine, Paul Dreissen, Marv Newland, Chris Hinton)
Piwi (d. Jean-Claude Lauzon, 1982)
Rude (d. Clement Virgo, 1995)
Sam and Me (d. Deepa Mehta, 1990)
Soul Survivor (d. Stephen Williams, 1994)
Suburbanators, The (d. Gary Burns, 1995)
Super 8 ½ (d. Bruce LaBruce, 1994)
Trois pomme à côté du sommeil (d. Jacques Leduc, 1989)
Understanding Bliss (d. William D. MacGillivray, 1990)
Vie rêvée, La (d. Mireille Dansereau, 1972)
Whale Music (d. Richard J. Lewis, 1994)
Zero Patience (d. John Greyson, 1993)
Zoo, la nuit, Un (d. Jean-Claude Lauzon, 1987)

Films cited but not viewed
Bubbles Galore (d. Cynthia Roberts, 1996)
Dead Father, The (d. Guy Maddin, 1985)
L'homme renversé (d. Yves Dion, 1986)
Ordres, Les (d. Michel Brault, 1974)

Films viewed but not cited:
Adventure of Faustus Bidgood, The (d. Michael Jones, Andy Jones, 1986)
And Then You Die (d. Frances Mankiewicz, 1987)
Anne Trister (d. Lèa Pool, 1986)
Archangel (d. Guy Maddin, 1990)
Ascent (d. Don Shebib,
Back to God's Country (d. Nell and Ernest Shipman, 1919)
Bay Boy, The (d. Daniel Petrie, 1984)
Being at Home With Claude (d. Jean Beaudin, 1991)
Black Robe (d. Bruce Beresford, 1991)
Blue (d. Don McKellar, 1992)
Buried on Sunday (d. Paul Donovan, 1992)
Bye Bye Blues (d. Anne Wheeler, 1989)
Calendar (d. Atom Egoyan, 1993)

Cold Comfort (d. Vic Sarin, 1989)
Crash (d. David Cronenberg, 1996)
Curtis's Charm (d. John L'Ecuyer, 1995)
Dance Me Outside (d. Bruce McDonald, 1994)
Dancing in the Dark (d. Leon Marr, 1986)
Dans le ventre du dragon (d. Yves Simoneau, 1989)
Dead Ringers (d. David Cronenberg, 1988)
Dèclin de l'empire Américain, Le (Decline of the American Empire, d. Denys Arcand, 1986)
Demoiselle sauvage, La (d. Lèa Pool, 1991)
Double Happiness (d. Mina Shum, 1994)
Escorte, L' (d. Denis Langlois, 1996)
Events Leading Up to My Death, The (d. Bill Robertson, 1991)
Exotica (d. Atom Egoyan, 1994)
Family Viewing (d. Atom Egoyan, 1987)
Femme de l'hôtel (d. Lèa Pool, 1984)
Fly, The (d. David Cronenberg, 1986)
Great Canadian Film Caper (Parts I and II, Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, host John Gould, 1965)
Grey Fox, The (d. Phillip Borsos, 1983)
Grocer's Wife, The (d. John Pozer, 1991)
H (d. Darrell Wasyk, 1990)
Isabel (d. Paul Almond, 1968)
I've Heard the Mermaids Singing (d. Patricia Rozema, 1987)
Jèsus de Montréal (d. Denys Arcand, 1989)
Liste noir (Black List, d. Jean-Marc Vallée, 1995)
Lotus Eaters, The (d. Paul Shapiro, 1993)
Love and Human Remains (d. Denys Arcand, 1993)
Loyalties (d. Anne Wheeler, 1985)
M. Butterfly (d. David Cronenberg, 1993)
Masculine Mystique, The (d. Giles Walker, John N. Smith, 1984)
Matins infidèles, Les (d. François Bouvier, 1989)
Michelle Apartments, The (d. John Pozer, 1995)
Mon Oncle Antoine (d. Claude Jutra, 1971)
Montrèal vu par... (Montreal Sextet, d. Patricia Rozema, Jacques Leduc, Michel Brault, Atom Egoyan, Lèa Pool, Denys Arcand, 1991)
Mouvements du dèsir (d. Lèa Pool, 1994)
Myth of the Male Orgasm, The (d. John Hamilton, 1993)

Naked and the Nude, The (d. Carleen Kyle and Robin Schlaht, 1991)
Naked Lunch (d. David Cronenberg, 1991)
Next of Kin (d. Atom Egoyan, 1984)
90 Days (d. Giles Walker, 1985)
Noces de papier, Les (Paper Wedding, d. Michel Brault, 1989-90)
Paint Cans (d. Paul Donovan, 1994)
Porcaria (d. Filipe Paulo, 1994)
Postière, La (The Postmistress, d. Gilles Carles, 1992)
Pouvoire intime (Blind Trust, d. Yves Simoneau, 1986)
Reconstruction (d. Laurence Green, 1995)
Requiem pour un beau sans-cœur (d. Robert Morin, 1992)
Roadkill (d. Bruce McDonald, 1989)
Salt in the Park, A (d. Joyce Wieland, Mike Snow, Bob Cowan, Warren Collins, 1954)
Secret Nation (d. Mike Jones, 1992)
Sonatine (d. Micheline Lanctôt, 1984)
Speaking Parts (d. Atom Egoyan, 1989)
Sexe des ètoiles, Le (d. Paule Baillargeon, 1993)
Something About Love (d. Tom Berry, 1988)
Sonatine (d. Micheline Lanctôt, 1984)
Sourd dans la ville (Deaf to the City, d. Mireille Dansereau, 1987)
Sweet Movie (d. Dusan Makavejev, 1974-75)
Termini Station (d. Allan King, 1989)
True Confections (d. Gail Singer, 1991)
Urinal (d. John Greyson, 1988)
Vent du Wyoming, Le (A Wind From Wyoming, d. Andrè Forcier, 1994)
Videodrome (d. David Cronenberg, 1982)
Vie d'un hèros, La (A Hero's Life, d. Micheline Lanctôt, 1994)
Voleur de camèra (The Camera Thief, d. Claude Fortin, 1992)
Vraie nature de Bernadette, La (d. Gilles Carle, 1972)
We're Talking Vulva (Shawna Dempsey, Tracey Traeger, Lorri Millan, 1990)
Warm (d. Wrik Mead, 1992)
White Room (d. Patricia Rozema, 1990)
Winter Kept Us Warm (d. David Secter, 1965)
Winter's Tan, A (d. Jackie Burroughs, Louise Clark, John Frizzell, John Walker, Aerlyn Weissman, 1987)
Wisecracks (d. Gail Singer, 1991)
Zigrail (d. Andrè Turpin, 1995)