Rooted Cosmopolitanism

Canada and the World
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Part 2: The Practice of Rooted Cosmopolitanism

   Scott Schaffer
One's native country forms the necessary initiation into the
universal country.

- Jules Michelet

**Quebec: Rooted or Unrooted?**

Viewed from a distance, Quebec and its French Canadian past appear to be the prototype of an anti-cosmopolitan identity. Francis Fukuyama (2007) recently said of Quebec that it was the political and theoretical source in Western democracy of an identity politicization that rendered the civic nature of liberal democracy problematic. In an earlier text, he even made of Quebec the ultimate test of the “end of history” hypothesis. Quebec, he said, an old liberal democracy – the British type of parliamentary institution had existed there since 1791 – located a few hundred kilometres from the most dynamic centre of capitalism in the past two centuries (New York) could well, by asserting its political independence, overturn the hypothesis wherein liberal democratic societies would prefer the comfort of global governance, which heralds the end of history, at the risk of a politics based on a “thymos” (Fukuyama 1992).

Although the 1995 referendum on Quebec independence almost replied in the negative to the “end of history” test – 49.6 percent of the electorate voted in favour of proposed sovereignty – almost reversing Fukuyama’s thesis, most observers close to Quebec’s political reality would contest that assertion of an anti-cosmopolitan Quebec. Rather, they would agree with the opposite statement made by, among others, Will Kymlicka (1998a), according to which Quebec today, the one arising from the Quiet Revolution of the 1960s, largely adheres to a civic and liberal conception of its identity. This would thus make Quebec’s political
identity an eloquent example of a cosmopolitan pluralism or rooted cosmopolitanism— that is, a society that adheres to the moderns' values of universalism while accommodating a cultural diversity within.

Kymlicka cites Quebec, like Scotland, or even Catalonia, as examples of national minorities— nations that are not nation-states and that, while claiming their identity from the standpoint of a cultural nationalism, still maintain that they are a political space for a civic integration of plurality. The interpretation could even be broadened to a larger group of other nations that have a state— nation-states— which, while including their nationalism in a societal culture, nevertheless follow a policy that recognizes diversity. I do not feel I am betraying Kymlicka's analysis by stating that the American style of integration model, the one to which Fukuyama refers, or even the one described by David Hollinger (1995) in Postethnic America and that makes of the United States of America a microcosm of universal cosmopolitanism— if it does not prove to be entirely false for the United States (as we will see afterward), the latter being somewhat exceptional— is widely unsuitable for describing the historical experience of most of the world's other societies (see Kymlicka 1998b). Liberal democracies can combine the principles of universalism, individualism, and freedom into specific forms of cultural integration representing one or more societal cultures. This is why liberal nationalism can usually be defined as a rooted cosmopolitanism.

These arguments fail to sway Hollinger, who, particularly in reference to Quebec, responds to Kymlicka with two counter-arguments. The first is that the effect of such a position is "to relax the tension between the tribe and the claims of the human, and to carve out a political space in which the tribe simply rules" (Hollinger 2002, 233). The tribal temptation would not be foreign to Quebec, where Hollinger tells of the refusal to name a bridge in honour of an Italian immigrant in order to preserve the name of two French families. Here is an example, he points out, of a "crude ethnic chauvinism" to which any insertion of a cultural or societal dimension into liberal nationalism would likely lead. The attentive observer of the Quebec scene will easily dismiss this as an example of a news item that is completely unrepresentative of Quebec's policy of managing pluralism.

The other refutation Hollinger offers to contest the rooted cosmopolitanism of Quebec liberal nationalism appears to be more serious. The argument here is reversed. It no longer involves finding in Quebec nationalism an ethnic chauvinism specific to every particularizing nationalist reference, but seeing in it the affirmation of a banal form of civic nationalism fully compatible with universal cosmopolitanism.
What I find remarkable about this account is its implication that Quebec is potentially a civic nation virtually identical to the United States of America, except that the official language is French instead of English. What, other than linguistic particularism, makes Quebec by Kymlicka’s description here any more a national minority in Canada than New Jersey or Colorado is a national minority in the United States of America? (Hollinger 2002, 234)

I will focus especially on this latter issue here. If, to open itself up to cosmopolitanism, every nationalism must rid itself of a substantial conception of the nation in favour of a purely civic conception, it makes impossible, on a national scale, the very existence of a rooted cosmopolitanism or, as Hollinger prefers to call it, cosmopolitan pluralism. Since the civic nation recognizes only universal values, any particularist conception of identity is then removed from politics and returned to an ethnic, or even tribal, dimension. Thus Hollinger’s double conclusion: either Quebec establishes itself as a civic nation, in which case it has no more legitimate claim to political recognition than New Jersey or Colorado, or it plunges into a “crude ethnic chauvinism,” as the story of the bridge-naming episode recalls. In either case, rooted cosmopolitanism is an impossibility, as in any liberal democracy.

More nuanced in his words, Jürgen Habermas (1995, 107-48) was nevertheless not far from making such a proposal when, in response to Charles Taylor’s argument according to which Quebec’s desire for political recognition, though based on a hypergood, is compatible with the ideas of liberal democracy, he replied: yes, but under those conditions a sovereign Quebec will still have to submit those conceptions of the good to the court of the universal. In other words, every liberal democracy must give priority to a form of civic nationalism, “constitutional patriotism,” over every substantive, cultural, or societal nationalism. Such an obligation would in the end only slightly differentiate the state that Quebec nationalists covet from other liberal democracies.

Paradoxically, Fukuyama’s affirmations, Hollinger’s conclusions, and, by extension, Habermas’s predictions do not fall very far from the most influential currents prevalent among Quebec intellectuals in the past few years. Indeed, most Quebec intellectuals and political leaders who support sovereignty now reject the idea that the sovereigntist project is based on ethnic nationalism, or even on any particular societal culture. This position has been evident since the defeat of the first referendum on Quebec sovereignty (1980) and especially exacerbated following the second one (1995), where, on the evening of the defeat, the leader of
the sovereigntist camp, Jacques Parizeau, Quebec’s premier at the time, blamed the defeat on “money and the ethnic vote.” The very next day, he was forced to resign, and the sovereignty sphere of influence attempted then to shift the nationalist discourse to one that would be seen as more in step with the prevalent hegemonic discourse about the basic civic nature of what links people together in the modern world. From then on, it insisted on the essentially civic culture of the new Quebec nationalism, its zero-ethnicity character, its total submission to universal values, its promotion of an internal pluralism, and its adherence to the values of “interculturalism” – the term preferred over “multiculturalism” to express the recognition of the cultural contribution made by immigrants. In short, the idea of a Quebec oddly resembling post-ethnic American cosmopolitanism, as described by Hollinger – which, from an identity perspective, would effectively distinguish it little from New Jersey – became the template by which Quebec nationalist intellectuals read their situation.

An eloquent example of this can be found in the popularity of the idea of Americanity in 1980s Quebec. This term, little used in the Anglo-American world, means, for Quebec intellectuals, a belonging to America, not adhesion to the American societal culture (Americanization). It is something deeper, upstream of societal culture, a kind of essence that American societies would have because of their status as New World societies, societies arising from recent immigration, societies without long memories, based, consequently, on the imaginary of a radical newness. By thus dissociating the US societal culture, that born of the United States’ specific historical experience, from the culture arising from membership in America as the experience of newness, one arrived at the description of Americanity – a culture that Quebecers and Americans would share. Americanity then designated a reality where every societal culture would disappear to make way for the networked society, the autopoiesis of systems, the cold world of machines, identity as a simple individualized “bricolage.”

Through such a conception of Americanity, Quebec and the United States would represent a kind of unrooted cosmopolitanism. These “new” societies would never have been, strictly speaking, national realities, at least not like the nation as a place of fixing identity boundaries, as those would have been established in the Old World. Although, for thinkers of Americanity, the nation as a place of fixing identity was the case in traditional Quebec, that of French Canada before the 1960s, it was in the form of an elite discourse with a false awareness of its true essence.
Aside from that exception, the historical period of the French Canadian nationalist, which was fleeting and regrettable according to the thinkers of Americanity, Quebec and the United States, since their foundation, during the very process of building a people through migration and the frontier experience, drafted the open, postnational, universalist, cosmopolitan nature of their societies. Recognizable here is the thesis of the American exceptionalism of Manifest Destiny, according to which, from its earliest beginnings, America would either support a project of universal emancipation or, as Hardt and Negri (2000) more recently think, proclaim a form of globalized, postnational governance – the Empire. Through Americanity, Quebec’s dream would participate in such an exceptionalism; it too would proclaim an unrooted cosmopolitan pluralism.

Less radical, but involved nevertheless in the same effort to define Quebec nationalism in opposition to a particular societal culture, is the recent report from the Consultation Commission on Accommodation Practices Related to Cultural Differences (Bouchard and Taylor 2008). The two eminent intellectuals who co-chaired the commission, the philosopher Charles Taylor and the historian Gérard Bouchard, one being globally recognized for his philosophic defence of multiculturalism, the other for his rewriting of Quebec’s historical path through the prism of Americanity, were mandated to hold public consultations and advise the government of Quebec about the direction of policies governing plurality. The report sees the Quebec identity as a form of secular insecurity due mainly to the minority situation of the francophone group in North America. It encourages Québécois of French Canadian background to abandon such insecurity so they can see Quebec as a society open to plurality.

For the commissioners, such openness to plurality does not mean the abandonment of common values. When it comes to defining them, however, they are limited to the abstract values of a procedural liberalism: “democracy,” which includes the values of gender equality; a “religious neutrality” of the state open to publicly recognizing the practice of multiple religions, which the report calls open secularism; and a “common language,” which is French in this case.

Once again, except for French and not English being the common language of citizenship, nothing here would refute Hollinger’s argument, according to which a Quebec thus conceived would have no more characteristics and legitimate claim to political recognition than New Jersey or Colorado. Quebec under this definition does not have the features of
a “pluralism cosmopolitanism” or a rooted cosmopolitanism. Indeed, if Quebec’s nationalist affirmation is based only on the universalist ideals of liberal democracy, its “nationalism” is ultimately an unrooted cosmopolitanism, which Hollinger calls “universalism-cosmopolitanism.” In fact, for Hollinger, rooted cosmopolitanism could not exist; only the civic nation – a microcosm of universal cosmopolitanism on a national scale – can contain the sectarian excesses produced by the pathos of the tribes involved in any social reality.

The Nation: A Rooted Cosmopolitanism

I believe this paradox to be false. The tension between “the claims of the tribe” and the “claims of the human,” which is nothing less than the tension specific to the modern political world, is not resolved by the permanent victory of one of its poles, in Hollinger’s case the “claims of the human.” Indeed, even if politically modernity decrees that henceforth the human will take precedence over the tribe, this affirmation could never have been at the centre of the effective history of any modern society. This non-realization is not due to, as liberal progressive thought generally affirms, a kind of immaturity or unfinished project of modernity, a project that universal cosmopolitanism would finally realize (Habermas 1997, 38-55). It is due to the way that we have conceived and practised politics and democracy since the Enlightenment. The unfinished project of modernity is, so to speak, included in the very idea of modern democracy.

To back this thesis, I will use a socio-historical type of argument – democracy as process – rather than a philosophic one – democracy as a moral universal project. This brief recap of the effective history of modern democracies will better explain how rooted cosmopolitanism can be considered a response to the unfinished nature of political modernity and how it is in the nation that such a process can best be observed. Based on these considerations, I will then return to the presence of such a process in the history of Quebec (French Canadian) nationalism.

It is fair to say that the modern political project, the one born of the European Enlightenment, was clearly marked by the desire to base politics on the authority of universal moral norms. That is why Kant (1795), already taking stock of the Enlightenment, was able to make the universal cosmopolitan state the only perspective of political emancipation. Such a proposition has a very broad political scope; it now makes legitimate political authority depend not on the transcendence of gods, not on the tradition of ancestors, not on social relationships of power, but on a purely abstract principle: a reason of which all humans are said
to be capable of making public use. As Claude Lefort stated, since power thus uprooted is located in an “empty place,” it will be the source of endless dispute, of a penalty of decreed illegitimacy for all groups or opinions claiming a legitimacy to hold power. Thus can be described the origin of modern democracy. In its primary version, it effectively disrupts all “tribal affiliations” as the sources of political legitimacy; it could not construct them as an ultimate place of sovereignty (Lefort 1986, 1998).

But this is only half the effective history of modern democracies. Democratic reality quickly challenged the absolute postulate of the sovereignty of reason. Men and women who were supposedly depositaries of such reason turned out to be more complex than the philosophers of modern reason had assumed. They had to navigate through social relationships – of class, sex, and so on – religious feelings, feelings of ethnic, national, and other affiliations, and all kinds of ideologies, which sociology was to confirm in the early nineteenth century. A little later, Sigmund Freud would teach that those citizens, new depositaries, as beings of reason, of modern sovereignty, actually carried a subconscious that was largely inaccessible to reason and yet explained part of human action. In fact, what sociology, like psychoanalysis, taught us was that what was excluded from the abstract thought of the Enlightenment, declared irrelevant for guiding humanity, had largely survived it. And, that it did not involve remnants, traditions as yet unexhausted, but actually a kind of permanence related to the anthropological – cultural – nature of political man, who could not be reduced to a being of reason (Gauchet 1999, 162-207).

These are the cultural dimensions, in the broad sense, that include the relationships of power, the identities, and the affects that survive the declaration of the abstract man of the Enlightenment, that will form the other half of democracy. Even more, these substantial dimensions of togetherness are as if revived, stimulated by the very effect of the declaration that power is now found in an empty place. Every individual, faction, group, and class can, in a world where power is said to belong to nobody and thus can be owned by everybody, legitimately claim to be an equal stakeholder in such ownership. Democratic reason will in the end prove to be a source of endless dispute because of the plurality of the subjects populating the political space, all claiming to be stakeholders of the empty place of power.

The nation must be included in this historical dynamic of modern democracy, which, by legitimizing power in the abstract human, stimulates the awakening of a concrete humanity. The nation is absent from
the theorizing of the thinkers of the modern social contract. The merging of citizens into a particular * demos* is, among the latter, purely contingent, related to the functional nature of old monarchical boundaries that were essentially non-democratic. The political horizon of liberal democracy is the humanity and the cosmopolitanism of the moderns. From a civilizational, even cosmopolitical, perspective, democracy is reduced to the moral universalism of human rights and the procedural-technocratic management of humanity. The realization of these principles does not necessitate the division of humanity into nations. The other, non-political dimensions of modern civilization, the marketplace and science, are also foreign elements on all national fronts (Gauchet 2004). This is how modern civilization has come to have this totally original characteristic of the history of humanity – that is, being based on asocial, literally inhuman principles, inhuman because they are not cultural. Other known civilizations, the Christian world, the Muslim civilization, and Hinduism, for example, were based on the representation of a concrete cultural humanity. The civilizational horizon and cultural dimension of humanity coincided in the latter, with the consequence that the deployment of humanity (civilization) and identity (culture) were joined.

Modernity severs this link between civilization and culture (Gauchet 2004). By seeking the culture of the civilizational place, the modern world is preventing humanity from being a place of meaning, which is literally impossible given, as I pointed out, the cultural dimension of human nature. This impossibility of cosmopolitanism did not escape Kant, who, seeing that nature had bestowed on men different languages and religions, concluded that the Universal Republic would have to be limited to being a federation of republics.

Politically speaking, democracy is what opens this gap between civilization and culture. It is also through democracy that the gap thus created will be closed again. Indeed, although modern democracy is based on the abstract human – power as an empty place – it is in the name of power to the people, as opposed to power to factions, that such a regime establishes itself. And the reference to the people is still somewhat concrete, included in a context, referring to a substantive *We – We the People*. The unexpected creation of the nation, here in the sense of a reality not conceived of by the thinkers of modern democracy, plays a key role in this process that rearticulates what political modernity disarticulates – the abstract human and the concrete people. This introduction of the concrete human into democracy took place in the early nineteenth century, along with the consolidation of the democratic era. In effect,
though the nation was absent from the theorizing of Enlightenment thinkers, though it was also absent from the first democratic revolutions, particularly the American Revolution and the French Revolution, it would be affirmed everywhere in the early nineteenth century, to the extent that it became possible to say, afterwards, that although not all nations were democratic, all modern democracies were national (Manent 2001, 85-99).

The nation thus gave modern democracy the cultural weight it was missing. But let there be no mistake. It was not the return of the tribe in a democratic world that had been seeking it. The nation was everywhere, in the liberal democracy, an intermediary between the particular and the universal, between the shuttered, closed world of family, clan, tribe, village, and such affiliations and the unrooted world, abstract subject of modern civilization. Consequently, contrary to the rigidity of traditional affiliations, the nation sought to be a historical agent, a vehicle of modern civilization: all nations affirmed that they had singularly conducted the modern civilizational project, that they were agents of progress (Gauchet 2004). If this is obvious in the first national narratives of dominant democracies (Michelet in France, Bancroft in the United States), it is also true, as will be seen, for a small nation without a state such as French Canada. The nation will be defined everywhere as a place that is large enough and far enough away from tribal affiliations to accommodate within itself a diversity particular to modern societies but sufficiently historical to be the political community that is the vector of modern civilization and sufficiently aware of itself to transform the sharing of a common law into citizen solidarity. In short, the nation is established in history as a project of rooted cosmopolitanism or, in other words, unfinished modernity.

Of course, this framework deserves to be historicized. The nations of the nineteenth century defined this cultural substrate in a kind of historical essence of peoples. At the least, it was the task of nascent history to try to confirm the continuity of the national spirit in an ancient past. Contemporary nationalism insists, however, on the constructed nature of the national bond, thus on a more fluid national fact that is more open to diversity. But whether the origin of the nation is sought in an essence of peoples or in the social relationships inherent in the contemporary world, the nation is established everywhere as the vehicle that gives meaning to the progress of modern society. This is why, moreover, although the ties between nation and liberal democracies were largely unthought in modern political history, today's questioning
of the nation, especially by unrooted cosmopolitanism, leads to a questioning of the political community likely to give meaning to civilizational progress in a postnational world (Kymlicka and Straehle 1999, 65-88).

If the preceding analysis is fair, from the perspective of the effective history of democracy, a civic nationalism – a kind of microcosm at the scale of a people of a universal republic or an unrooted cosmopolitanism – never existed. Hollinger is wrong to see the United States as the incarnation of such a reality. He greatly minimizes the historical experience and cultural requirements – above all the language – shaping the American national identity. His blindness is partly excusable. The American national imaginary, as was pointed out above, is exceptional because of the fact that the American nation, more than any other, merged into a civilization. It claims to alone represent civilization, progress, and democracy. Such a claim was plausible because of the diverse origins of the American population, the country’s continental nature, and the status of dominant power quickly acquired by America. It is nevertheless an ideology, in the sense of a false awareness of reality: like other modern nations, the United States is a cultural version of modern civilization, not civilizational universality.

Such a claim of alone personifying the universal is not permitted for most nations. Because of the non-hegemonic nature of their presence in the world, such a claim is not really credible. They cannot claim their national narrative in the name of the universal. Having to satisfy the integration requirements of modern societies without being able to rely on such a claim to represent the universal, they had to eradicate from history a rich past, sometimes at the cost of a certain amount of historical truth. This is even truer of what would be called small nations, such as Quebec. In other words, although the great powers – colonial, France, England; imperial Russia; and now the United States – can mask the cultural dressing they operated on modern civilization, these small cultures have had to emphasize it. By thus making visible – too visible – such a cultural dressing, the small nations have opened themselves up to the accusation of turning their backs on the universal. Consequently, they must continually respond to the demand made of them by the great powers to justify how this surplus of history they are exhibiting is not tribal.10

Return to Quebec
I will now return to the question of Quebec. Here Hollinger will be proved right: it is not by affirming its civic character that Quebec nationalism confirms its rooted cosmopolitanism, where it acts by imitating
large societies that alone can claim to embody the universal in themselves. By the same token, it makes illegitimate any reference to culture to establish its claim of political autonomy. Paradoxically, recalling the old French Canadian nationalist, the one before the Quebec nationalism that arose from the Quiet Revolution of the 1960s, will better explain how Quebec nationalism participates in a rooted cosmopolitanism. Aside from an actual claim to civic nationalism, such rooted cosmopolitanism remains present in today’s Quebec nationalism.

The origin of French Canadian nationalism is typical of the paradox, described above, between nation and democracy. Its formulation in the early nineteenth century is tied directly to the erection of institutions of modern democracy. In 1791, London granted Lower Canada a Legislative Assembly, the first institution of a representative democracy within Quebec’s existing boundaries, the first political affirmation of the existence of a people in that territory. Very early on, however, a question arose concerning the definition of the people to whom this right to legislate had been granted. Were the “Canadien” people thus what was called the old French people who made up the vast majority of the population of the territory? Were the people the English colonists, a minority but who claimed to represent the future, both demographically and politically, on this territory? As Lord Durham stated when asked by London in 1838 to formulate recommendations for putting an end to the troubles that had afflicted the colony in 1837 and 1838: “I expected to find a contest between a government and a people: I found two nations warring in the bosom of a single state” (Lampton 1912, 16). Two peoples, in other words, who claimed that their difference should be seen as a depository – a vehicle – of the institutions of modern democracy.

In this dispute, Durham sided with the “English” people, who, he felt, were more capable of handling the institutions of liberalism and better represented the cultural future of the continent, a future that was decidedly English. He said that the “French Canadian” people were a people without a history, that is, a people poorly suited to the enjoyment of modern freedoms because of the old, obsolete character of its culture inherited from France before the time of the Revolution. This explains why he forced the union of Lower and Upper Canada and proposed that the English government wait for the minorization of French Canadians, through assimilation and immigration, before granting the new colony a government that was fully responsible before the people’s parliament.

The French Canadian nationalism that then took shape and lasted until the 1960s was both a resigned acceptance of the Durham Report
(Lampton 1912) and a refutation of it; a resigned acceptance that put off, for more than a century, any real separatist political claim. That represented, to use Fernand Dumont's expression, a withdrawal to "the reserve," where, to compensate for the impossible political institutionalization, the focus was placed on its historical cultural boundaries, particularly those of its French and Catholic heritage.\[^{11}\]

For all that, such a withdrawal does not imply that the group became ethnicized. French Canadians have never represented themselves as immigrants on American soil. It is "French Canadian society" that has inherited the French and Catholic culture, not the individual as such whose identity is "Canadien." The representation of their identity is not the result of immigration; it is national. Guillaume Lévesque (1848, 292), on returning from exile following his sentencing for having taken part in the Rebellion of 1837-38, already expressed this distinction between the "country" - a nation, la patrie - to be defended and the identity we now refer to as "ethnic": "In all cases, native country [patrie] for us is not what home is for our English compatriots, and try as we might to bring with us our family and establish ourselves in a foreign country, we will never find our native country [patrie], while their home can follow them anywhere because that word does not seem to include the country."

Lévesque here is typical of the French Canadian elites, who presented the historical path of the group very differently from that of the legions of immigrants settling in Anglo-Saxon America in the nineteenth century. The latter immediately agreed to get involved in the civilizational Anglo-American world, to be ethnicized in the American melting pot, while they - the French Canadians - represented themselves as a separate nation that claimed to be, like the Anglo-American civilization, a vehicle of modern progress. Following in the footsteps of American Manifest Destiny, French Canadians were said to be bearers of a providential mission on American soil, and their national project would be defined as a civilizational project.\[^{12}\] This was their way of refuting Lord Durham's argument that they were a people "without a history," that is, a group incapable, like modern nations, of bringing about civilizational progress.

Many examples can be given of such a rooted cosmopolitanism found in a national narrative, which, because of its distance from politics, was often considered the prototype of the ethnic nation or even of an ethnic group. I will simply present two of them still extant in contemporary nationalism to recall how this old national reference was "modern" in
the sense of seeing the nation as being a cultural vehicle of universal civilization.

The first is that of François Xavier Garneau, who wrote the first major history of Canada (French Canada), the first volume of which was published in 1845. It has often been said of Garneau that his goal was to respond explicitly to Durham's argument stating that French Canadians have no history. He responds to it, in the literal sense, by writing their history, but also, in a more theoretical sense, by affirming that such a history shaped the French Canadian group into a national community, that is, into an agent of modern history. Compared with, he says, "the Germans, the Dutch, the Swedes [who] are established by groups in the United States, and who imperceptibly melted into the greater mass with no resistance, without even a word to reveal their existence in the world" (Garneau 1845, 25; author's translation), French groups sought to defend their nationality. Drawing on modern historiography, in the style of people like Vico and Michelet, "who see the nation as the source and the goal of all power," Garneau (1845, 13) thus seeks to show that the history of French Canada is only an application of a broader principle, that of modern progress being realized by and through the nation. That is the real goal of his historical quest – not to confirm the past but to show that such a past was a vehicle of progress. The historical experience he describes thus is really that of a rooted cosmopolitanism before the term existed.

Yet another, perhaps more surprising, instance of such a rooted cosmopolitanism can be found in Henri Bourassa's famous reply to the words of Monsignor Bourne, the Archbishop of Westminster, in Notre Dame Cathedral in Montreal in 1910 (see Lacombe 2002). Surprising because the reply, which was to quickly be considered a kind of political manifesto of French Canada, originally had a basically religious goal, which attempted to confirm the closing of French Canadian nationalism, not its opening up to history.

A man of politics, Henri Bourassa was the leading proponent of the idea of Canada as a political pact between two cultural nations – the English Canadian and the French Canadian. To Monsignor Bourne's words stating that North American Catholicism, if it was to expand, had to leave its French localism and take on the dominant language of the American continent (English), Bourassa replied that history did not work that way. To spread, universal Catholicism had to fit into an earthly "moral order." History had ensured that the vehicle of Catholicism in North America was French Canadian society. That was the source of its
spread to the rest of America. Dismantling that vehicle by proposing the Anglicization of the Catholic Church, was, for Bourassa, to hinder the spread of universal Catholicism, to put an end to its expansion. What this argument teaches is that even from a religious viewpoint, what set French Canada apart as a nation was not its localism but actually the fact that such a localism was the historical vehicle of a universal culture.

The substantial contents of historical French Canadian nationalism that we have just seen appear to be a far cry from what we now consider acceptable as the core of a societal culture. Not open enough, too close to an essentialist vision of culture, too reliant on a religion. It would also be too closed in on itself, too tricoté serré, too tight-knit, to use a Quebec expression that defines the old French Canadian identity. Not open enough to either a global humanism or the presence within itself of diversity that will make it a kind of microcosm, on a national scale, of the universal. In other words, the rooted cosmopolitanism of the French Canadian nation, like nationalism in general, was clearly able to represent itself as a vehicle of modern progress, but might it not be at the cost of a certain identity closure that would make it more “rooted” than “cosmopolitan”? These kinds of statements would also be true for most Québécois, even among today’s proponents of a cultural nationalism, who effectively redefined, after the 1960s, in a more historical, more secularized manner, the values now at issue in such a societal culture.

That is partially true. It is fair to say that every nationalism exhibits a form of national egoism, a closure, that, when exacerbated, results in closing itself off to the other, whether the external or internal stranger. The history of nationalism has given us proof of this; the possibility of its degenerating into a confrontational closure is very real. Moreover, the negative dimension associated with nationalism since the Second World War is largely the result of such drifts, much as the emphasis on exchanges, migrations, and international communications today lends little credibility to a national narrative too tied to a descent community.

But this is not the natural gradient of the effective history of the modern nation; it is one of its risk lines, one of the possible ways it could drift, along with abandonment in a universalism without subjectivity. Those who wanted to close the nation off to the idea of universal humanity (Nazism) or, on the contrary, to make it the only place of the universal realization of humanity (Communism) had to quit democracy, and, by the same path, the modern idea of the nation. They had to quit it because the nation is primarily a modern construction, the main
strength of which is to connect cosmopolitan values to a societal culture. It is through the presence of such a connection that we associated French Canada with a rooted cosmopolitanism, without denying, however, that along this continuum it was closer to particularism than to the universal.

It is through such a process, through the work of the paradox of modern democracy, that the national experience is indissociable from the democratic experience. The plurality of nations falls under the heading of a universal civilization. A nation without a project of openness cannot be a rooted cosmopolitanism because it will not then be built around the impossible incompleteness – the unfinished nature of modernity – of a permanent link between the universal and the particular. Although such may have been the danger of nationalisms in the nineteenth century – the closure to openness – it does not appear to be the problem of either Quebec or contemporary nations. Their possible departure from rooted cosmopolitanism is more likely today through their dilution in universalism than their substantialization in a societal culture.

Furthermore, the substance of the modern nation does not reflect core values that a national narrative could simply list. This was no truer in the nineteenth century than it is today. The values of modern nations are the values of modernity. The societal culture reflects rather a tradition, a national conversation, fraught with both battle and consensus, where modern ideals and values have found a way. Although tradition feeds on and manufactures identity, it is not an identity but a historical group of institutions – from school, through a situated public space, to Parliament – that formed a human plurality into a political community, so the narrative of that voyage forms the narrative of a rooted cosmopolitanism. And there is the impasse of today’s Quebec nationalism, as I stated at the outset; both its detractors and its proponents are vainly seeking the values that would particularize it, when they should be seeking the political community – the historical institutions – that conveys them.

**Conclusion**
The goal of this discussion of French Canada’s case was not to confirm a substantial aspect of the common culture as a kind of permanent trait of what would have to be called national. On the contrary, I wanted to show how national culture is only a kind of mediation between the contextualized, constantly changing nature of human culture and the moderns’ ideal of a universal standard of justice. It is as a vehicle of universal progress that French Canada has represented itself as a nation.
This process of mediation is a characteristic of the effective history of democracy, a kind of rooted cosmopolitanism. Today’s Quebec, like most liberal democracies, is defining itself less and less as a singular way of realizing the universal by insisting on the civic dimension of its identity. To remain there, however, to reiterate just the values of civic nationalism, means that nationalism becomes merely a universal cosmopolitanism. It becomes rooted cosmopolitanism when it is defined less by its values than by the vehicle – the political community – that conveys those values in a national tradition.

Seeking to put an end to this mediation by resolutely choosing the human over the substantive dimension of humanity – the “tribe,” in Hollinger’s words – would be to break with what has been at the centre of democracy as process for two centuries. Democracy would thus lose the collective subjects – the vehicles – by which it would realize itself.

I do not want to make Quebec a sort of anti-test of the end of history. Its inability to assume a rooted cosmopolitanism, in the trail of what was the national intention of French Canada, is not in itself a major issue for contemporary democracy. In such a case, Quebec as a particular vehicle for realizing universal democracy would be removed for the benefit of democratic societies – Canadian or American. But we can see Quebec as a generic case for the cosmopolitanization of democracy. The Quebec question, then, is the same as the question asked of universal cosmopolitanism by rooted cosmopolitanism: Who are the people to whom democracy must give power: concrete or abstract?

Notes
1 Hollinger refers here to “On the Ethnic Battlefield, the French Retake a Bridge,” New York Times, 23 February 2004, A4. This event does not seem to have had any public resonance in Quebec, where, however, linguistic issues are widely discussed.
2 For an overview of such recent civic definitions of Quebec’s political culture, see Bariteau 1998; Bouchard 2000; Maclure 1998.
3 For a more detailed description of the meaning of Americanity in Quebec’s recent intellectual history, see Thériault 2005.
4 One of the rare references in Anglo-American literature is that of Quijano and Wallerstein (1992). Americanity as the “deification and reification of newness” is here associated with the idea that America would have introduced the idea of a world perpetually announcing the World-system.
5 For further reading on American exceptionalism, see Lipset 1997.
6 Taylor 1995.
7 Bouchard 2000.
8 For a more in-depth analysis of the commission’s issues concerning this question, see Thériault 2010.
9 For a socio-historical analysis of how this distinction began in modernity, especially in Germany, see Elias 1982.
10 For a longer discussion on this issue, see Finkielkraut 1999; and Boucher and Thériault 2005.
11 Dumont 1993. This text is still the best introduction to the history of Quebec (French Canadian) nationalism in the nineteenth century.
12 In 1953, the great French Canadian national historian, Lionel Groulx, inaugurated a Chair of “French-Canadian Civilization” at Université de Montréal.

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Canadians take pride in being good citizens of the world, yet our failure to meet commitments on the global stage raises questions. Do Canadians need to transcend local attachments and national loyalties to become full global citizens? Is the very idea of rooted cosmopolitanism simply a myth that encourages complacency about Canada’s place in the world?

This volume brings together leading scholars to assess the concept of rooted cosmopolitanism, both in theory and practice. In Part 1, authors examine the nature, complexity, and relevance of the concept itself and show how local identities such as patriotism and Quebec nationalism can, but need not, conflict with cosmopolitan values and principles. In Part 2, they reveal how local ties and identities in practice enable and impede Canada’s global responsibilities in areas such as multiculturalism, climate change, immigration and refugee policy, and humanitarian intervention.

By examining how Canada has negotiated its relations to “the world” both within and beyond its own borders, Rooted Cosmopolitanism evaluates the possibility of reconciling local ties and nationalism with commitments to human rights, global justice, and international law.

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