

Colonial Subjectivity and Canadian Media: Exploring Talk Radio

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The political issue of colonialism in Canada is often viewed through the lens of Aboriginal politics, which in turn most often takes relations between Aboriginal communities or organizations and the Canadian state as its focus. Indeed, the study of Aboriginal politics is often the study of the interpretation of Aboriginal rights in the Canadian Constitution (Asch, 1988; Coates, 2000; Borrows, 2002). Beyond the preponderance of such approaches to the continuing political problem of colonialism, political theory is also often most interested in Aboriginal-state relations, or more broadly the model of citizenship which would enable Canada to move beyond the problem of colonialism (Tully, 1995; Turner, 2006; Cairns, 2000; Flanagan, 2000). These approaches all share one thing in common: they reduce the political problem of colonialism to the state and its relationship with Aboriginal peoples in Canada. They are thus hard pressed to give an explanation of how definitely colonial practices can persist beyond the demise of colonialism as an official ideology of the state. I hold that the study of colonial politics in Canada should not limit itself to the study of Aboriginal-state relations; nor should colonialism be defined in these terms. Rather, colonialism is something far more widespread, functioning at all levels of the Canadian social and political edifice. This paper is an attempt to look at one instance of how colonialism reproduces itself outside of the state in the popular media format of talk radio. Through an analysis of two shows, CBC's *Sounds Like Canada* and Corus Radio Network's *Adler Online*, I will argue that talk radio in Canada works to reproduce colonialism at the level of subjectivity, and particularly the (re)production of the white, anglophone male as the dominant subject position in Canada.

I: Colonialism and Subjectivity

Much of the scholarship on the radio in the social sciences (see section II below) takes a view of the subject that is definitely modern: the subject is singular, reflexive, self-legislating, capable of deliberating ideas and coming to a rational conclusion. I hold this view of subjectivity as problematic; it ignores much of what makes up subjectivity, including the now commonplace acceptance of the existence of an unconscious. Here I will flesh out a theory of subjectivity that works against the modern conception of the rational subject utilizing concepts from the philosophy of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari (1983; 1987).

Deleuze and Guattari's is a process-oriented philosophy, one that privileges becoming over being. In *Anti-Oedipus* (1983) and *A Thousand Plateaus* (1987), they work to describe and theorize contemporary social and political processes in a language that does not fall back on humanist tropes. Two important concepts for this philosophy of social processes are the flow and the machine. Flows occur everywhere, whether they are flows of biological material

(“flowing hair; a flow of spittle, a flow of sperm, shit, or urine” (1983: 5), flows of energy (oil in a pipeline, the sun’s rays, a river’s flow), flows of commodities, or flows of people (commuters, immigrants, tourists). Machines are coupled to these flows: everywhere there is a flow, there is a machine, each machine a “system of interruptions, or breaks” (ibid.: 36), cutting flows, redirecting them, transforming them, holding them back and unleashing them. The individual, the body, the animal, organs – whether they are biological or social, as in the organs of the state – act as valves, or series of valves, for the energy, matter, or social norms that flow through them.

Subjectivity also works through a process of management of flows, primarily flows of desire. For D&G, desire is a productive force; desire engenders the connection between machines, allowing flows to traverse beyond the bounds of the machines that work to govern them. The classic example is the nipple-mouth machine of the mother and infant. Here, the coupling is produced through innumerable other flows of desire, from hunger and instinct in the child to socially and instinctively produced maternal sentiment in the mother; the coupling itself is thus not only about the material flow of nutrients from one discrete organism to another, but numerous other flows that work through their energy to instantiate cycles of machinic couplings (including nipple-mouth, eye-eye, mutual affective attachment, flows of maternal social norms, etc.). Desire proceeds to effect innumerable and diverse couplings, responsible for all sorts of affects, emotions, and states. It is through this production of flows that desire eventually produces subjectivity.

D&G refer to these flows as assemblages of “fuzzy aggregates” (1987: 507). The imagery here is important: subjectivity can be thought of as being constituted by a number of aggregates, each of them produced by flows of desire, and all of them difficult to define through their capacity to shift shape, trajectories, and to flow into one another, creating new aggregates. Also, subjectivity (and subjecthood) should not be construed as *subjectivist* – they should not be seen as divorced or separate from their environment. Brian Massumi points to this when he claims that subjectivity “is a transpersonal abstract machine, a set of strategies operating in nature and spread throughout the social field” (Massumi, 1992: 26). The constitution of the assemblages of fuzzy aggregates that make up subjectivity is a process that is both natural and social, occurring at all levels of society and of the individual, from pre-personal and ‘gut’ responses through to ‘higher reasoning,’ from intimate interactions between lovers, family members and friends through to impersonal interactions between state organs, in interpellations at work and by the media. The “transpersonal abstract machine” that is subjectivity directs assemblages of fuzzy aggregates along certain trajectories, with channels gradually wearing into the social fabric where these trajectories are pushed. We can speak of these channels at the individual, subjective level and at the larger level of the interpersonal level; the flows follow the same channels, and reinforce each other through their resonating together.

Here I want to argue that subjectivity in Canada can continue to be described as colonial. The tracks on which the fuzzy aggregates travel, the

channels through which social energies flow, are those which were initially worn away through the work of colonization and colonialism. Changes at the macropolitical level (if there have in fact been changes) – the retraction of the White Paper, the BC Treaty Process, etc. – have not changed the structure of Canadian subjectivity. The fuzzy aggregates constituting subjectivity gravitate around colonialism's poles of hypermasculinity, white hegemony, and possessive individualism. These three aspects of colonialism resonate together, feeding off and strengthening each other, flowing into one another. The structuring of subjectivity through social processes in contemporary Canada works to secure the normality of the white, male, Anglophone subject position; thus the whitestream (Denis, 1997) overwhelms all other currents, turning alternate subject positions into mere tributaries, always in reference to the dominant subject position.

Of course colonialism is, first and foremost, a means of expropriation and economic exploitation of land through settlement, and a system of control over the prior population of that land; this follows most standard dictionary definitions. As Nandy (1983) argues, however, the economic factor of colonialism, while important, remains secondary to a psychological dimension and the change wrought in the psychology of both colonizer and colonized:

As folk wisdom would have it, the only sufferers of colonialism are the subject communities. Colonialism, according to this view, is the name of a political economy which ensures a one-way flow of benefits, the subjects being the perpetual losers in a zero-sum game and the rulers the beneficiaries. This is a view of human mind and history promoted by colonialism itself. This view has a vested interest in denying that the colonizers are at least as much affected by the ideology of colonialism, that their degradation, too, can sometimes be terrifying (Nandy, 1983: 30).

The three analytically separable categories defining colonialism - hypermasculinity, white hegemony and possessive individualism –constitute what Deleuze and Guattari (1987) term an assemblage. As an assemblage, they resonate together, are articulated through one another, and function both together and separately. As shown by a number of authors, these traits often attributed to Western civilization are informed by the West's collective colonial adventure, and in fact are better attributed to colonialism than to Western culture as such (a point, made convincingly by Nandy [1983], which works against homogenizing all of Western culture while acknowledging certain dominant trends). C.B Macpherson (1962) has famously argued that an undisclosed norm of possessive individualism underlies the classics of liberal political philosophy. We can link Macpherson's observations to colonialism by way of John Locke, whose work cannot be decoupled from an ideological justification of England's colonial endeavour (Arneil, 1994). This possessive individualism has come to be an ideological cornerstone of colonialism, and it continues to define perspectives on property and citizenship in Canada.

What I call white hegemony is itself a bundle of concepts attributable to colonialism. Primarily, it functions to place races in a hierarchy, with the white race at the apex of this hierarchy. Through this positioning, it works to define exactly what race is in social terms, which changes based on the specific context. Goldberg (2002) has shown that conceptions of race by political philosophers fall into two broad categories: naturalism and historicism. Naturalism, attributed to Hobbes and Kant, posits that the inferiority of non-white races is inherent and unchanging, while the historicism of philosophers such as Locke, Hegel and Marx holds that while non-white races are inferior to the European, the spread of European values through colonialism has the potential to elevate the colonized from their degraded position. These two positions continue to define much of the discourse on race in Canada, with the historicist position being most prevalent. Historicism is not often seen as a racist discourse, however. Given its saturation of the mentality of governments and citizens towards Aboriginal people, and what means are required to ameliorate social problems of Aboriginal communities, it is literally invisible. In many ways racial historicism also links in with possessive individualism; the two form the basis of the idea of universal human rights, the concept being based on individual rights which have their origin in the right to property, and the idea that, given the chance, the European value system would be chosen by all humanity. This presents itself in Auguste Comte's view of colonialism: although he recognized colonialism as destructive, he claimed that "non-Western peoples, liberated from the colonial yolk, [would] "spontaneously" recognize the superiority of Western" governmental technologies and socioeconomic models, and would emulate them (Goldberg, 2002: 52). Furthermore, the work of both Frantz Fanon (2002) and Homi Bhabha (1994) (among others) has shown how colonized peoples are defined in opposition to the attributes associated with the colonizer: while the European is hard working, the colonized is shiftless and lazy; while the European is honest, the colonized deceitful; while the European is sexually prudent, the colonized is insatiable. However, while the colonized must always remain below the white in the racial hierarchy, the attributes which put him there are constantly shifting:

It is recognizably true that the chain of stereotypical signification is curiously mixed and split, polymorphous and perverse, an articulation of multiple belief. The black is both savage (cannibal) and yet the most obedient and dignified of servants (the bearer of food); he is the embodiment of rampant sexuality and yet innocent as a child; he is mystical, primitive, simply-minded and yet the most worldly and accomplished liar, and manipulator of social forces (Bhabha, 1994: 118).

Thus the colonized resides in a subordinate position to the colonizer in the racial hierarchy, but precisely what makes him inferior is always transforming.

Ashis Nandy (1983) has argued that British colonialism in India worked to redefine both Indian and British sexuality, promoting a hypermasculine sexuality at the expense of ambiguity in sexual and gender identifications. This

hypermasculinity, while evidently positioning itself as superior to femininity as a female trait, was most concerned with distancing itself from femininity residing in male subjects, or what Nandy calls androgeny. Thus alternate sexualities, in India as well as in Britain, were foreclosed through the workings of colonialism, and a “homology between sexual and political dominance” (4) pervaded the political and social sphere. Along similar lines, Stoler’s 1995 study of sexual governmentality in European colonies of Southeast Asia convincingly argues that the bourgeois sexual order found its first articulations in colonial contexts, and was subsequently introduced to Europe. Thus we can trace the patriarchy of Western culture to the common experience of colonialism. Hypermasculinity, always violently crushing alternative expressions of sexuality and only recognizing masculinist forays into public life, continues to mark Canadian society.

II: Talk Radio and the Production of Colonial Subjectivity

Much of the political science literature dealing with the medium of the radio uses a theory of communication that stresses the rational capacities of the subject to absorb information conveyed, deliberate about it, and come to a conclusion (this being the implicit or explicit model found in Page, 1996; Hartley, 2000; Buckley, 2000; Barker, 2002; and Dale and Naylor, 2005). In fact Dale and Naylor (2005) explicitly mention *Sounds Like Canada* in this regard, claiming that the program participates in the “tradition” of “significantly enhancing the ability to organize dialogues, or ‘free’ discussions, contributing to a ‘democratic’ way of (Canadian) life” (210). A problem with this approach is that it ignores the pragmatic aspect of language: language is not only about information communicated in the words making up language itself, but includes all manner of other signs, signals, and cues, both verbal and non-verbal, to effect change, both conscious and unconscious, in the listener’s mental and even physical states. Deleuze and Guattari’s (1987)¹ stress on the fact that language always communicates power in both what is spoken and what is left unspoken suits the present study’s purposes much better than a perspective that only focuses on the information conveyed through ‘bare words’.

Beyond bare words, and even beyond implicit meaning, there are a number of aspects of the medium of radio that have direct implications for how it functions at the level of the subjectivity. For instance, although in its early days, listening to the radio was often a group activity, with families huddled around the large machine dominating the living room, the advent of television and the increasing portability of radio technology means that now, radio is most often an individual activity (Crissell, 1994). The sense is often that the voice coming out of the radio is communicating directly to the listener; it interpellates each listener as an individual. Thus radio, particularly talk radio, maintains a subjective stance towards the world based on individualism. Additionally, there are the more obvious – but still often overlooked – aspects of radio communication that are beyond ‘bare words’: the tone of voice of the announcer; techniques used to

¹ See in particular chapter 4, “Postulates of Linguistics” and their discussion of the “order-word.”

place the announcer/interviewer geographically in order to ensure their 'reality' (ibid.); the use of repetition of previous segments, or of segments broadcast in the past, to give the listener a sense that a story has a history, or is linked to other stories; the crafting of questions by the journalist; and the control over the phone line exerted by hosts of call-in shows (i.e. their capacity to determine when to interject during a caller's comment, and when to hang up).

The analysis of *Sounds Like Canada* and *Adler Online* will include discussion of a number of these techniques, as well as other techniques used to lure the listener into the program, to bring about changes in perspective, mood, ideas, and visceral reactions. The analysis is a mixture of discourse analysis meant to draw out the colonial discourse of the shows, and interpretation of personal affective responses, allowing me to analyze how each show works at the level of subjectivity. I listened to and recorded each program for a period of four weeks in the month of February of 2008. In addition to these 20 programs from each show, I also listened to online recordings of the *Sounds Like Canada* series "Our Home and Native Land," which deals specifically with Aboriginal issues. In keeping with the Deleuzian theoretical framework outlined above, I attempted to not only analyze and code what I was listening to, but be aware of other thoughts that were brought up in my own consciousness, as well as affects or emotions that were played upon by the programs. Many of these affective states continued to alter my perspective long after I had finished listening to the program, particularly those from Charles Adler's program. In examining how the white male Anglophone continues to be constructed as the dominant subjectivity in Canadian society, I used my subject position as a white male Anglophone as a methodological lens. I was thus particularly attentive to aspects of the programs that drew me in, or may have been meant to do so, and those that repulsed me. Each show had its own 'flavour,' utilizing its own techniques to animate the stories. These techniques will be detailed below. Both the discourse and technical, affective work of each show was often working towards reproduction of a colonial subjectivity, even when they were not directly dealing with Aboriginal politics.

Sounds Like Canada (SLC) and *Adler Online* (AO) are in many respects very different radio programs. SLC, hosted by Shelagh Rogers, is broadcast on the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation network, a public broadcaster relying on governmental funding; AO is broadcast by the Corus Radio Network, and airs in 15 cities, including all major Western Canadian cities, a number in Ontario including Toronto, London, and Hamilton, and Montreal in Quebec. Both shows utilize the interview format heavily: for SLC, the objective is literally to gather sounds from Canada, and in order to do so they interview a wide range of Canadians. AO also uses the interview format, but often focused on more politically current topics. Adler's interviewees are also often either other journalists or political pundits. Adler includes short segments of call-in in his show, something that SLC seems to aspire to (see the example of the call-in of May 7th, 2008 below). Politically, neither show is extreme, but they represent different sides of the left-right spectrum: SLC is broadly liberal in tone and content. Adler's show represents a conservative political perspective, though his

conservatism is more focused on fiscal restraint rather than social issues. Although any comments about the programs' audiences would be entirely speculative, I think it would be safe to say that Adler's program is catering to largely white listeners with a conservative political perspective. Rogers' audience is likely to follow the trend in CBC radio and appeal to educated Canadians of a liberal persuasion. Finally, the tone of the two programs as set by their hosts is markedly different. Rogers voice bubbles out of the radio, her vowels are rounded, and her tone is most often light. She often utilizes wry humour. Adler has a gravelly voice, which is frequently raised; his tenor is many times aggressive, but his humour is very open – he often lets out high-energy belly laughs. The running time of each program is similar, with *SLC* running from 10:00am to 11:30am in all time zones (a half hour later in Newfoundland, as the CBC saying goes) with breaks at the half hour and hour for news. The national version of Adler's program runs from 3:00 to 5:00pm, central time (the broadcast originates in Winnipeg), with regular breaks for commercials and news every half hour, and is broadcast live.

To begin my discussion of these two shows and how they work to reproduce colonial subjectivity in Canada, I will introduce an example from *SLC* that includes a number of the themes central to colonial subjectivity. On May 7th, 2008, as part of their series on Aboriginal issues titled "Our Home and Native Land," *Sounds Like Canada* aired a five part call-in show, one for each time zone in the country, asking a single question: "Are reserves working against the best interests of Canada's First Nations?" It is not accidental that the series is titled "Our Home and Native Land" – this is not just a clever play-on-words. In referencing the national anthem, a song that is meant to have symbolic and affective significance for Canadians, the title of the series brings these affects to bear in discussions about issues facing Canada's Aboriginal populations. Listening to (and singing along with) the national anthem is often a collective experience, bringing people together; the anthem is meant to invoke a heartswelling patriotic response in its listeners. Following the CBC's multicultural line, *SLC* is attempting to link these affects to thinking about Aboriginal people, to make them out to be the same as all Canadians. Although seemingly noble and progressive, this move works to efface Aboriginal difference and equate Aboriginal people with all other Canadians. Thus the history of colonialism can be forgotten in favour of a 'constructive' approach to fixing what would have been referred to in decades past as the "Indian Problem."

In Rogers' opening segment for the May 7th call-in show (which was the same for each time zone), she mentioned this phrase again in reference to residential schools, claiming that taking children away from their families, their language and culture, their "home and native land" was "simply wrong". This example points to *SLC*'s view of history, which reproduces what Goldberg (2002) terms 'racial historicism.' In claiming that residential schools were "simply wrong," Rogers is making a clear separation between the past, where there have often been harmful and detrimental mistakes made, and the present, where we have learned from these mistakes and are now in the process of fixing them. The dramatic delivery of this introduction creates a sympathetic resonance between

the listener and the plight of the reserve-bound Aboriginal; the listener sympathizes with the victim of past injustice to the extent that the listener does not identify with the institutions responsible for committing such injustices. In stressing the break with the past, this discourse in effect effaces the past's impact on the present, turning issues related to colonialism (such as residential schools) into discrete problems that are not structurally linked to contemporary Canadian social and political institutions, or the lives of the listeners themselves. The issue is that these institutions carry colonialism through, beyond its supposed extinguishment with multiculturalism and the *Charter of Rights*. The very model that we rely upon to fix these problems from the past is the model that produced them in the first place: a colonial ideology informed by possessive individualism and racial historicism.

The racial historicist discourse is prevalent in both *SLC* and *AO*: it is a current underlying topics relating to Canadians abroad and the immigrant experience in Canada for *SLC*, and, in a slightly different way, Adler's rallying against the perceived abuse of liberal state institutions, often by minorities. Although *SLC* works mostly on the register of racial historicism, the program also participates in the reproduction of the 'shifting fixity' discourse, outlined above, where racialized subjects are defined against the perceived norms of the colonial society. For instance, on a few occasions during my listening, Rogers interviewed Canadians working abroad improving the lives of people in developing countries: on February 15th, Rogers interviewed Tom Boisvin, a Canadian working in Vietnam dealing with the health effects of Agent Orange; on February 29th, Cathy Knowles was interviewed regarding her work building libraries in Ghana. Beyond the potential for such work to be construed as neocolonial in itself, the interviews give the listener the sense that the local people in these areas where Canadians are doing 'good work' have no means of helping themselves with these problems. In the case of Cathy Knowles, there is far more to the story: here, we see an excellent example of what can be characterized as a 'social work' discourse. The modern practice of social work has its roots in the work undertaken by wives of the wealthy bourgeoisie in Victorian England, who argued that charity instilled dependency in the poor; the poor must instead be made to work for their betterment (Cruikshank, 1999). Knowles is the wife of a Canadian mining executive who was working in Ghana; as with the wives of the bourgeois in Victorian England, Knowles is helping the disadvantaged to help themselves. This infantilizes the colonized, assuming that they cannot help themselves, and in fact do not know what is best for them. Only the bourgeoisie knows best, representing the pinnacle of human development.

Rogers' function as the host of *SLC* also fits into the social work discourse; particularly in terms of Aboriginal issues, it is clear that Rogers sees herself as having a role to play in bringing the stories of suffering of Aboriginal people to mainstream Canadians. On February 4th, Rogers began her show with a segment on the children found frozen to death on the Yellowquill Reserve in Saskatchewan. In ending this segment, during which she interviewed another journalist who had gone there and put together a series of edited clips of his talks with community members, the journalist said, in a solemn tone "I hope this helps"

to which Rogers replied, equally solemnly, “Me too.” *SLC*’s self-imposed task of relaying the tragic existence of Canada’s Aboriginal population represents Aboriginal people as helpless and lacking agency; Rogers’ coverage of such tragic events works as a call for help for those who can neither help nor express themselves.

SLC’s series “Our Home and Native Land” focuses most of its energy on the tragic lives of Aboriginal peoples in Canada; substance abuse was a constant theme in both the series and other segments on Aboriginal issues not officially part of the series (such as the segment on the Yellowquill reserve mentioned above). On February 20th, Rogers addressed what she labeled the ‘alcohol epidemic’ on-reserve. The segment began with a recording of a tearful youth talking about his struggle with alcohol, while a flute playing a melancholy Aboriginal motif. The segment concerned a group of high school students in Winnipeg who took part in a challenge to stay sober for the length of the school year. Of 72 students, 19 made it through to the end. The first point about this segment, which is also true of many other segments relating to Aboriginal issues, is that it works to strengthen stereotypes already embedded in the minds of listeners; previous connections between concepts of ‘Aboriginal’ and ‘alcohol’ are strengthened, their channels intermingling and becoming indissociable. Even while the segment on teenage alcohol focused on a program meant to help teens with their drinking problem, there are constant cues reinforcing the ‘drunken Indian’ stereotype. First, and most obviously, the segment is on Aboriginal youth who have drinking problems, immediately reifying the stereotype. Even though many of the youth portrayed in the segment were working to extricate themselves from the grip of addiction, once they succeed they become dry-drunken Indians: in this way the perception that all Indians are drunks – even if they are sober – is reinforced.

Furthermore, the segment – and *SLC* in general – holds the whitestream perspective; the Aboriginal people in the segment are objects of this perspective. Other than interviews with Aboriginal leaders or professionals, *SLC*’s coverage of Aboriginal issues is almost always mediated by a second journalist who acts as the spokesperson for the Aboriginal people in question; in the Yellowquill segment, and in this segment on alcohol abuse among Aboriginal teens, a journalist went out to the field to piece together a number of clips and brought them back to the studio. This is in contrast to the way that non-Aboriginal people, including non-professionals, are interviewed personally by Rogers, and thus allowed to speak for themselves. Thus the very way in which *SLC* presents Aboriginal issues reproduces a colonial perspective: it holds the colonized up as an object for the white gaze; it denies the colonized a voice through their being represented by a journalist; it reinforces the colonizer’s subjective stance towards the colonized in presenting them as a group and not as individuals: only their leaders, those who have come to inhabit positions recognized by Canadian institutions as legitimate, are capable of speaking to the Canadian public, and of course when they do they are almost always speaking as representatives of their people, again performatively homogenizing the Aboriginal in the minds of the dominant. In only allowing Aboriginal leaders to speak, it becomes clear that

only certain Aboriginals actually have an individual character: all others can be grouped together and be spoken for either by a journalist, or in reference to statistics.

A number of these themes were also present in the first hour, broadcast in the Atlantic time zone, of SLC's May 7th call-in show. Recall that the question driving the show was "Are reserves working against the best interests of Canada's First Nations?"² Rogers' first two guests were Patrick Brazeau, the National Chief of the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples³ and Rick Simon, the Assembly of First Nations Vice Chief and regional Chief for Newfoundland and Nova Scotia. Brazeau was given a first chance to speak, and in fact much more time to respond to questions and make his arguments than Simon. Brazeau was arguing for the abolition of the *Indian Act* and, secondarily, a change in the way reserves function if not their dissolution. He was very articulate, an achieved public speaker. A number of the aspects of his argument worked to reinforce colonial subjectivity: first, he played upon the common concern that Canadians have that their tax dollars are being wasted by Aboriginal people. He brought up numerous statistics in order to make the point that Indian Bands are wasteful institutions preying upon the goodwill of the Canadian citizenry, claiming that over 200 of the 600 Indian Bands in the country are in some kind of financial difficulty, and that over half of the eleven billion dollars spent by Indian Affairs each year goes to support reserves. A number of his claims worked to both undermine what Flanagan (2000) has famously called the 'Aboriginal Orthodoxy' and strengthen conceptions of Aboriginal people as ignorant, corrupt and lazy. First Nations governments, particularly chiefs, were the target of much of Brazeau's argument, claiming that Indian Affairs worked only to their benefit, and that instead of being accountable to members of their Bands, chiefs were accountable to the Department of Indian Affairs. Brazeau called for integration of Aboriginal people into Canadian society, claiming that duplication of services on-reserve when such services were readily available in cities was wasteful of public money; integration, according to Brazeau, differs from assimilation in that it does not imply the loss of culture and language. However, again reproducing an individualist discourse, he claimed that to keep one's language and culture is an "individual choice." This ignores the history of assimilationist policy by the Canadian government, and the communal nature of language and culture. His argument also utilized a number of catchwords popular in contemporary management circles, such as "accountability" and "transparency": for Brazeau, First Nations must "be accountable, open and transparent with our decisions, and be honest with the Canadian public."

In addition to interpellating listeners as concerned taxpayers who are loathe to see their money wasted, and giving credence to the popular opinion that First Nations governments as corrupt and wasteful, the structure of the segment, as well Rick Simon's demeanor, reinforced certain stereotypes about Aboriginal people. As mentioned, Brazeau was exceptionally well spoken; given

² The question itself, and the Brazeau's argument, echo the project of the White Paper nearly forty years earlier.

³ An organization representing non-Status Indians and Status Indians living off-reserve.

his message and the eloquence with which it was delivered, he fits very well into the whitestream conception of the 'good Indian.' The good Indian does not complain about the past, is not on welfare, is not a drunk, is educated, has a job – in essence, the good Indian goes against the dominant stereotypes of Aboriginal people, but must, due to the racial chauvinism inherent in colonial society, remain marked *primarily* as an Indian. The demeanor and discourse of Brazeau's interlocutor, Chief Rick Simon, played to a number of negative aspects of Aboriginal stereotypes, reinforcing the conception in the listener that First Nations leaders have an insatiable appetite for public money, are corrupt, and do not themselves understand accountability. Simon's position was in defense of reserves. However, his argument was made entirely in reference to Brazeau's claims; when Brazeau brought out statistics to defend his argument, Simon clumsily claimed that statistics could be manipulated to support any argument whatsoever; in attempting to counter Brazeau's claim that many First Nations were in financial difficulty, he could do nothing more than blame the federal government's lack of spending. Simon's delivery was also far from eloquent, with the constant interjection of "um" and "uh"; and in responding to questions from Rogers or from callers to the program, he frequently did little more than return to Brazeau's arguments and attempt to ridicule them. In placing Simon in contrast to Brazeau, there is an obvious disparity in their capacity to communicate. Brazeau's charisma amplified the resonance that his statements already had with the dominant colonial subjectivity; Simon's incapacity to make coherent arguments, and his point that First Nations continue to need more funding, worked to portray his position and the subject position that he represents as retrograde in contrast to the competence of Brazeau. At a conscious level, I could understand a listener asking himself "why should my tax dollars continue going to support people like Simon, who clearly have a limited understanding of the issues?" And in representing his people, Simon reifies common stereotypes of Aboriginal people as shiftless and lazy, always looking for a handout.

Adler Online's racial discourse is slightly different than that of *SLC*, though the two are not without their similarities. An issue that Adler discussed often during my listening was the perceived abuse of human rights tribunals by minorities. His claim is that the *Human Rights Act* is suppressing freedom of speech, arguing that a "tyranny of politeness" (February 5th) is allowing taxpayer's money to be used against ordinary citizens that have offended a person or group. Actual examples of abuses of the human rights tribunals were scarce, but one was the complaint by Syed Soharwardy, president of the Islamic Supreme Council of Canada, against Ezra Levant for publishing the infamous Danish cartoons of Mohamed in his magazine the *Western Standard*. On February 13th, Adler interviewed Levant on this issue, and as with other segments dealing with the human rights tribunal, freedom of speech was central. Free speech is often used as a thin veneer for disguising overt racism: in fact, one caller denouncing human rights tribunals on the February 13th show claimed that he himself was the subject of a human rights complaint and made to pay \$10,000 for hate comments on his 'white nationalist' website. The discourse

defending freedom of speech against governmental intervention in the case of inciting hatred is an example of both white hegemonic discourse and possessive individualism. One of the main issues that Adler and his guests and callers have with human rights tribunals is that they 'waste' taxpayers' money. He is interpellating his listeners as concerned citizens insofar as they pay taxes, but more importantly insofar as they distrust what the government does with their tax money; they are *possessive* of their property to the point of distrusting the very institutions that are theoretically meant to protect it. In terms of white hegemony, this discourse works to delegitimize claims of racism against individuals and institutions, and to legitimize overtly racist claims and actions as consonant with one of the most fundamental rights enjoyed by those in democratic nations, that of freedom of speech.

Adler's discourse on human rights tribunals also reinforces another common claim, that whites, and particularly white males, are the victims of denigration. A caller during his February 5th segment on human rights claimed that if a comment offensive to whites is made, there is nothing to be done; she had attempted to put in a complaint against an Aboriginal co-worker for making a comment about killing white people, but her claim was rejected. These kinds of claims work in a similar way to Rogers' affirmation that wrongs have all been committed in the past, and now all that remains is to work on the problems those wrongs have left us: it effaces the significance of these past wrongs. In Adler's case, racism is no longer of any political or social significance; there may be racism in the world, but it has not been politically significant for decades. Therefore equal opportunity programs, human rights tribunals, and other institutions meant to bring racism into the public sphere are in fact spurious remnants of the problems of previous generations, and function only to the detriment of the white male, the real victim of chauvinism.

As mentioned, the tone of voice used in the two programs is very different, with Rogers tending towards an effusive bubbling, and Adler an irreverent irritability. The tones of the hosts' voices resonate with the themes dealt with in the respective shows: outrage over perceived transgressions against the rule of law, particularly 'double standards,' dominates the perspective on the issues aired on Adler's program; this is interspersed with the occasional 'puff piece' of little import, and segments of presumed interest to the listenership on subjects such as cars, dogs, and history. However, even the relatively non-political segments are most often tinged with a sense of righteous indignation against those who are perceived to be transgressing some commonly held set of rules or values (driving a car that is deemed unmanly or lacking style [February 8th, 2008], or the attitude of those who quit smoking [February 29th, 2008]). The aggressive tone that Adler constantly uses has a definite effect on his listeners; I myself became aware of an increase in irritability after listening to his program. This irritability was even noticed by my partner, and it seemed to increase as my listening continued. In my own case, I did not find myself identifying with the political positions of either Adler or most of his guests or callers; however, it is clear that in cases where the listener is invested in a similar discourse as Adler's, the aggressive tone works to amplify this investment. The tone is also one which

corresponds directly with the hypermasculine aspects of colonial society, working to legitimate a terse, adversarial communicative style associated with masculine approaches to the public sphere (see Goldberg's [1999] discussion of sports talk radio for more on radio communication and masculinity). At one point in my listening (February 27, 2008), a caller attempted to quell Adler's inflammatory rhetoric. The caller was cut off, effectively emasculated by being forced from the 'public space' of the program, and his perspective delegitimized by being equated with the CBC's.

This visceral investment is further embedded in the listener's subjectivity through the technique of repetition. Adler's show uses repetition often, repeating clips of segments from previous days in the week, and returning to the same issues frequently. This repetition triggers the listener's memory, priming him for the same visceral reaction to the topic that was instilled during previous segments. Two examples from my listening underline this point. The first, the perceived abuse of human rights tribunals, was already mentioned above. The second stemmed from a discussion on February 5th 2008 (Super Tuesday) with a panel of political pundits on the topic of the US presidential primaries (a recurring topic on the show). When asked whom she would vote for on the Republican side, Lesley Primeau, a host of an Edmonton based political talk show also on the Corus Radio Network, claimed that she could not see herself voting for any of the candidates because they are all "old, white [...] men" with no creative ideas. Adler immediately (in a jovial tone) exclaimed "You female chauvinist!" Although in the initial instance Adler seemed to take Primeau's comments lightly, in following days he continued to replay her response, inveighing against such female chauvinism and asking callers to respond. In this light, on February 6th he claimed that "it's open season on white males" and that if, for example, Lesley Primeau had said that she wasn't going to vote for Obama because his father was a Muslim, she would have been censored. Later on in the show, he continued in this vein, claiming that if you say the wrong thing about anyone but "the white man," you will be "slapped with a human rights case." He thus brings the two topics together, making it clear that the white male is the victim of constant discrimination in this era where the "tyranny of politeness" reigns. The repetition of Primeau's remarks, and the accompanying commentary by Adler work to cement this discourse of victimhood in the listener, fueling resentment against those whom he may perceive as his oppressor. This technique feeds directly into the predisposal to entitlement of white males in colonial society; the reaction to anything which threatens their privileged position as the dominant subjects in society is resentment, frustration, and vitriol. Adler's program functions as both transceiver and amplifier for these sentiments, ordering his listeners to feel threatened by institutional responses to hegemonic masculinity and racial chauvinism such as human rights tribunals, and then demanding that they repeat his discourse. Callers to his show almost invariably agree with him; on the topic of the white male victim, one caller claimed that men have been "taking it in the teeth" so often that they have become habituated to it.

Finally, in their various techniques of interpellation, each show is bringing its listeners together as a group; this is a common technique in talk radio (Barker,

2002). Rogers's imagined community is in fact all of Canada, though it is obviously a Canada that does not include Quebec sovereigntists, radical Aboriginal politicians, or many conservatives. Adler is not usually directly interpellating his listeners in terms of Canadian nationality, but in opposition to political perspective and "rhetoric" represented by leftist institutions such as the CBC (February 4th and 27th, 2008); the program refers to its listeners as the 'Adler Nation' and encourages them to join the 'Broadcast Revolution.' These techniques in turn make for a better identification of the individual listener with the discourse of the program.⁴ Given the colonial nature of much of this discourse, and the resonance between the discourse and the affective hooks and other techniques utilized by the programs, these programs work towards reproducing a colonial subjectivity in their audience, reinforcing hypermasculinity, white hegemony, and possessive individualism.

Conclusion

In this paper I have attempted to show how one important branch of a Canadian institution works to produce and reproduce colonialism through subjectivity. Colonialism is not limited to Aboriginal-state relations, but permeates Canadian society; the Canadian subject, whether dominant or subordinate, is a subject defined by colonialism. Another important point I have tried to make in the preceding discussion is that despite many preconceptions, particularly among the liberal left, that conservatives are racist, misogynist etc, and that the left discourse (represented here by *SLC*) is working against these retrograde sentiments, each works to reify colonial subjective positions in its own way, and oftentimes in the same way. Both *SLC* and *AO* are participating in an elision of the past and the production of a 'palimpsest'⁵ in the public sphere: Adler uses the 'double standard' argument to make so-called reverse racism the same as white hegemonic ideology which informs his show. Rogers constructs a Canada that has broken with its past and cleaned its slate, allowing us to revel in the way our institutions allow others to attain the same goals as 'us'. Even with the work of such programs and other media of subjectivation to erase the past, a public space is created that still has markings of the past on it. Claims of difference and calls for 'special treatment,' decried explicitly by Adler and undermined implicitly by Rogers continue to be made. The constant attempts cover over the claims of others against 'our' own are never totally successful; the claims against racial historicism's single formula of human development, work towards respect for difference, show through the attempts to erase the past, and thus infect colonial discourses with a hysteria that tells us to always look away, do not attempt to feel what lies below the surface.

⁴ Barker (2002) shows how talk radio primes listeners who already have an inclination towards the discourse of the program to become more politically engaged.

⁵ A palimpsest is a parchment that has had its writing erased in order to be written over; the first text leaves indentations which show through the overwritten text. Michael Shapiro (2004) uses this concept in terms of the effacement of the spatial reference points of a colonized culture, including names and land uses. Notwithstanding the force with which colonial powers attempt to erase colonized cultural practices, traces always manage to show through.

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