(Post)Colonial Diplomacy in Canada

Andreas Krebs, Masters of Research student at the school of Politics, International Relations and the Environment, Keele University, Staffordshire UK
© 2004

ABSTRACT: *Although the colonial ideology often masks the fact, diplomacy has been a major part of the colonial encounter. In Canada, diplomacy in its many guises has been carried out between the colonizing Europeans and EuroCanadians since first contact between them. This diplomacy can be immediately broken up into at least two distinct periods: pre-colonial and colonial diplomacy. The first is marked by power relations that were often equitable, or dictated by the Aboriginal group in question; the second is marked by its reliance on colonial ideology for justification of domination and violence. The question of whether a post-colonial diplomacy that rejects the violence and domination of colonialism is emerging is addressed in this paper.*

Introduction

On March 8, 1991, after some 374 days of trial, Chief Justice Allan McEachern of the British Columbia Supreme Court, handed down a judgment in the Delgamuukw case. In reference to plaintiffs representing the majority of two Aboriginal nations of Northwestern British Columbia, the Gitksan and Wet'suwet'en, Chief Justice Allan McEachern wrote that:

> The Plaintiff's ancestors had no written language, no horses or wheeled vehicles, slavery and starvation was not uncommon, wars with neighbouring peoples were common, and there is not doubt, to quote Hobbs [*sic*], that aboriginal life in the territory was, at best, "nasty, brutish and short." (Delgamuukw v. B.C. [1991])

The Plaintiffs were attempting to declare sovereignty, ownership and jurisdiction over a large section of relatively unpopulated land which they claimed was their traditional territory, and that the coming of the colonial situation in Canada had not extinguished these rights. As should be expected from quote, the Chief Justice did not grant the plaintiffs a decision in their favour.

Six years later, after the appeal, the Canadian Supreme Court reversed Chief Justice McEachern's decision. The decision of December 11, 1997 set a precedent for Canadian and international jurisprudence regarding both indigenous land claims and the acceptance of oral history into legal hearings (Persky 1998). It entrenched the requirement for negotiations between Aboriginal representatives and the Federal Government, and made 'diplomacy' a guiding principle for relations between Aboriginal peoples within Canada and their non-Aboriginal neighbours (Tennant 2000, p. 146).

Diplomacy between the Aboriginal peoples of Canada and the EuroCanadian settler society has been a constant since each instance of first contact; however, the nature of this diplomacy has varied drastically between first contact and the present.[1] The Delgamuukw decisions represent two phases of this diplomacy, what will be termed colonial and postcolonial diplomacy, respectively. The third phase predates each of these, and will be termed precolonial diplomacy. This paper is an exploration of the multifarious engagements with, and representations of, the Aboriginal peoples of what is now the state of Canada by a largely ethnic European settler society.

Theoretically, this exploration is informed largely by James Der Derian's work, especially as found in *On Diplomacy*. The definition of diplomacy as the mediation of estrangement, with the requisites of both solidarity and alienation, as outlined by Der Derian will be examined, tested, and applied throughout the paper. Thus the interactions between Aboriginal peoples and EuroCanadians I will characterize as diplomacy will take on a number

---

[1] This paper necessarily makes generalizations concerning the diplomatic relationship between Aboriginal peoples and EuroCanadian colonizers in Canada. These generalizations are important in stressing the overarching aspects of this diplomacy; however, obviously there is an inevitable loss of specificity and difference in such a strategy.

of forms, from the traditional diplomatic engagement as defined by writers in the English school, to representations of Aboriginals in mainstream media. Other major theoretical influences include Edward Said's *Orientalism*, which has been influential in examining the colonizing of the representation of Aboriginal people by EuroCanadian society (see Francis 1992; Berkhofer 1978). Through a genealogical historiography and a critical engagement with these theoretical bases, I hope to trace the connections between the three phases of diplomacy in Canada and various historical trends, both national and international, which gave rise to their distinction.

The overarching aim of this paper is to re-present the representations made by the EuroCanadian settler society, through various media in education, politics and popular culture, of Aboriginal people.[2] I am thus ignoring or glossing over some issues which may be very important for a study of diplomacy between these groups in Canada, including that of self identity, especially self identity of Aboriginal people. I am also, where it is possible, attempting to refrain from generalizing about Aboriginal peoples in Canada; the aim of this paper is to make blatant the extent of the 'voice appropriation' inherent in the colonial situation, not re-appropriate the increasingly recognized Aboriginal voices in Canadian political and popular cultures.

Precolonial Diplomacy: Survival and Trade

Although early European explorations of Canada, such as Jacques Cartier's, were often in search of the mythical Northwest Passage through to India, the main motivation driving European expansion into Canada was trade. It was the abundance of fish off the Atlantic coast that brought Europeans to Northern North America in the first place, and their lack of salt which required them to land and make initial contact with the inhabitants (Miller 2000, p18), but it was the beaver pelt which was to cement European interest in what became Canada. This interest required a close relationship with the Aboriginal inhabitants; Canada is an inhospitable place, and without the knowledge and technology which the Aboriginals had gained, such as the canoe, snowshoe, and traditional medicines, Europeans would not have been able to trap the beavers that their fashion required. In fact, the beaver pelts which Aboriginals were trading for prized European goods, such as blankets and iron kettles, were used clothing. The top layer of beaver fur was not used in the making of felt; thus, when the pelt was of no appreciable use as clothing to the Aboriginal, it was of most value to the European (Miller 2000, p.42).

This trade was not an incidental and uncomplicated result of contact. For Aboriginals of Eastern Canada, trade relations were governed by a strict protocol, which Europeans were expected to follow. Since the Europeans lacked the skills and means of finding the beaver themselves, and, especially early on, of even surviving in the harsh and variable climate, all trade was on Aboriginal terms. These terms often gave a monopoly to a particular family, and included the trading of people as a sign of good relations. Incidentally, this trading of people was often the means by which the exploring and trading vessels sent from France were able to unload their obligatory cargo of missionaries onto Aboriginal nations (Miller 2000, p. 34). Since many Aboriginal peoples in the early days of European trade and exploration believed learning French to be below them, these diplomatic trade negotiations and rituals were often conducted solely in the language of the Aboriginal nation.

What were originally trade relations became, relatively quickly, important military alliances. The War of the Spanish Succession put the English and French into conflict; once the French were defeated in North America, it was not long until wars resumed, first the American War of Independence, then the American expansionist War of 1812-1814. These military alliances with Aboriginal nations were important to all European powers involved, and without them perhaps North America would be a far different place today (see below).

Classifying these early trade and military relationships as diplomacy seems unproblematic, and they have received some attention in recent years in the international relations literature (see Crawford 1994; Bedford and Workman 1997; Shaw 2002). However, applying Der Derian's definition presents some problems. The mediation of estrangement seems to be occurring, with estrangement obvious in both the incommensurable cultural

---

[2] Here I am following Said (1978, pp. 25-28), who stresses the importance of enumerating the personal investment in works of 'critical engagement.'

experiences of the parties, and their mutual and conflicting interests in trade. The required solidarity is not as obvious. The Europeans and Aboriginals have no basis for common quasi-institutionalized responses to conflict, which are part of what more stringently English School theorists seem to mean by diplomacy (see Bull and Watson 1985). However, the ontologies and political realities of the Aboriginal people may provide some clues as to why the Europeans were treated as if solidarity existed; likewise, the attitudes and politico-economic exigencies of the Europeans may provide reasons for their readiness to ignore and ultimately forgo diplomatic relations with the Aboriginal peoples of Canada.

Although each of the thousands of Aboriginal nations in Canada has its own unique culture, history, and often language, there are some threads which connect what has been referred to as an 'Indian civilization' (Churchill 2003, p. 278; see also Erdoes and Ortiz 1984). One of these, and the most important in evaluating early diplomacy in terms of Der Derian's definition, is a universal ontology; one expression of this is the view of humans as fitting within a natural system, as opposed to the hierarchical dualism of man/nature as evinced in European thought. This universalism also made some Aboriginal nations very accepting of outsiders. Early treaty making between Aboriginals and Europeans stressed the belief that there was enough space to share the land; the relatively famous Iroquois or Haudenosaunee Confederacy accepted a sixth nation into their fold, demonstrating very flexible 'citizenship' rules (Bedford and Workman 1997). Thus it may be that this universalism common to many if not all Aboriginal ontologies leant itself well to immediate application of specific political norms to the totally alien Europeans.

Notions of solidarity on the part of the Europeans are far more difficult to gauge. Even once what has been described as the 'partnership in fur' was firmly entrenched, Aboriginals were expected to remain savage (McNab et al. 2001, p. 249). One of the most famous instances of Aboriginal-European diplomacy was dubbed the Covenant Chain of Silver, extended between the English and the Iroquois Confederacy, Abenaki, Malecite, and Mi'kmaq Confederacies, and the Western Confederacy of Algonquian speakers. This diplomatic relationship was cemented by yearly gifts by the English to the various partner Aboriginal nations, in return for a number of services including military alliance. However, once the French had been defeated in 1760, the annual gifts were unilaterally stopped (Ibid. p. 270). This demonstrates a lack of solidarity on the part of the European parties. As soon as the utility of sincere diplomatic relations came into question, the imperial/colonial ideology began to determine the actions of the colonizer. In this particular instance, it was fortunate for the English that the Aboriginal nations in question staged a very effective uprising and regained their gifts, as well as formal recognition of their rights in the *Royal Proclamation, 1763* (i.e. written, thereby formal in the European perspective). If the English/Aboriginal treaty system had broken down completely, it is unlikely that the English would have won the War of 1812-1814, which relied heavily on Aboriginal military involvement (see Ibid.; Miller 2000; Trigger 1988).

After this final war between the colonizers on the North American continent, diplomatic relations between Aboriginal peoples and EuroCanadians changed dramatically. As intimated above, although there existed in many cases cordial engagement between the groups, these were often superficial, with the familiar view of Aboriginals as animalistic beings hidden barely below the surface. The following section is an exploration of the imperial/colonial ideology which came to the fore in the early nineteenth century, and has only recently begun to be challenged seriously in mainstream EuroCanadian society.

Colonial Diplomacy: Ideology and Imagination

It would seem that in coming to North America, Europeans have been victims of their own imaginations; as recounted in Todorov (1984), Columbus saw indications that he had reached Asia in every physical manifestation and every story told by the 'Indians' he met. This was much the same for Jacques Cartier, whose firm belief that he had found the Northwest Passage through to Asia is reified in the name of the Lachine River in Quebec (see Miller 2000, p. 30).[3] Much later, in the early twentieth century, a photographer named Edward Sheriff Curtis set out to preserve for posterity what was widely believed to be a vanishing 'race.' His preconceptions of the noble Indian in buckskin breeches and feathered headdress

---

[3] La Chine meaning China in French.

were dashed when he was confronted by people whose material lives had adapted to the centuries of contact with settlers. Not to be thwarted, Curtis simply had his subjects shave their facial hair, wear wigs, and don 'real' Indian garb (See Francis 1992, pp. 39-43; King 2003, 32-34). Curtis was not unique; however, most of his predecessors had been using media slightly more susceptible to the artist's romantic perspective (Francis 1992). Such preconceptions have dictated the nature of relations between Europeans and EuroCanadians and Aboriginal peoples from first contact. This section is an exploration of these representations, especially regarding their relation to the imperial/colonial ideology which pervaded European and EuroCanadian engagement with Aboriginal peoples and the topic of 'the Indian' from first contact until, in many cases, the present. Diplomacy during this period is, I will argue, a function of these representations; also, even when the vast majority of representations of Aboriginal people were by EuroCanadians, and through a variety of means Aboriginal voices were muffled, there definitely existed covert and illegal actions of representation by Aboriginals.

Prior to about 1840, histories of Canada usually included respectful reference to Aboriginal peoples (Trigger 1988, pp. 19-20). This was largely a function of the mutually beneficial and stable relationship which the European colonizers had with Aboriginal people, as illustrated above. However, this began to drastically change in early the nineteenth century. The imperial/colonial ideology began to increasingly inform engagement between EuroCanadians and Aboriginal peoples. There are a number of reasons for this shift: the displacement of the system of trade between Aboriginal people and EuroCanadian representatives in far-flung outposts with an increasing demand for agricultural settlement; a final peace on the continent after centuries of conflict, first between European powers, and then between England and the emerging United States; and an increasing understanding by the Europeans of the requirements for survival in the hostile climate. There was also an increasing isolation of Aboriginals on reserves after the War of 1812-1814, and fewer Aboriginals in the more populated areas of Southern Ontario and Quebec. This dearth of human contact between colonizer and colonized meant that representations of Aboriginal peoples to the broader EuroCanadian society were through other avenues, including Indian Agents, anthropologists, and romantic artists (Cairns 2000, p. 23). Thus literary, fictive, imaginary accounts of the 'Indian' became the basis for historical 'fact,' and the public opinion of generations of colonizers (Trigger 1988, pp. 21-22; see also Churchill 1996).

The imperial/colonial ideology which gained ascendancy during this period had always been present in European thought. However, due probably to the requirement of peaceful co-existence for survival, and the close personal relationships that this engendered, it had been muted in the minds of the colonists. As Fisher (1977, pp. 78) notes, the early land based traders had a much more amiable view of Aboriginal people than sea based explorers and traders. There is also a qualitative difference between a colonizer who makes his living from trading and/or trapping, and a colonizer who requires land for agriculture and is therefore in competition with previous occupants. It is these agricultural settlers that were required for the nation-building exercise that came to fruition in the mid to late nineteenth century:

> At Confederation [1867], the place we now know as Canada was but a dream of politicians, and this dream could only be realized by claiming the unexploited Western lands and finding immigrants willing to settle there. (Neu and Therrien 2003, p. 69)

Although imperial/colonial ideology has had numerous justifications, from Christian cosmology to social Darwinism (Berkhofer 1978), the basic tenet is rather simple: civilizations are ranked hierarchically (Francis 1992, p. 54). Europeans are arranged at the top, followed by the civilizations of the 'Orient.' Layered at the bottom are the non-civilizations of tribal peoples, including the Aboriginal peoples of the Americas. This is not a unique part of European thought, but rather a symptom of a totalizing epistemology, where it is believed that if Europe did not 'know it all,' it was at least possible to do so, and a hierarchical dualist ontology, represented by such oppositions as man/nature, reason/passion, and of course civilized/savage. In this process of 'othering,' the European colonizers were in fact strengthening their own identity through a projection of their own perceived inadequacies or self-hatreds onto the savage (Volkan 1999), which also served as means for the justification of the genocidal practices carried out in the name of progress (Francis 1992, p. 47).

The concept of the Aboriginal (or more accurately, the 'Indian') which stems from this ideology is not one which can be uniformly described. It varies, with the extremes of brutal cannibal to noble savage being expressed at the same place and the same time, sometimes by the same individual (see Churchill 1996). For instance, among early missionaries, the Recollets believed that all traces of aboriginality had to be abandoned, while the Jesuits believed that Christianity could be fit within the extant Aboriginal culture (Miller 2000, p. 40).

These ideas about the 'Indian', as representative of imperial/colonial ideology, stem from various mistakes in translation, and the powerful sway of the European and EuroCanadian imagination in cases where previous ideas are denied validity. For instance, a great influence on the English idea of the 'Indian' necessarily came from the early French accounts, which often described them as *sauvage*, meaning living in or alongside nature. Of course, this was translated to the English 'savage,' with all its attendant notions of barbarism and violence (Miller 2000, p. 32). Thus it was that Hobbes, who had never been to North America, declared that

> 'the savage people in many places of America, except the government of small families, the concord whereof dependeth on natural lust, have not government at all; and live at this day in that brutish manner, as I said before [solitary, nasty, brutish and short]' (Hobbes 1996, p. 85).

Through misinterpretations and arrogant convictions, the imperial/colonial ideology was strengthened and informed many of the colonial encounters in Canada.

Although in this period, diplomacy between the colonizers and colonized was for the most part through representations made by EuroCanadians for a EuroCanadian audience, there was still an active process of treaty making, which helped legitimate the gross dispossession of Aboriginal land. Whereas the early trade and military agreements were for the most part on Aboriginal terms, these more recent treaties, whose sole function was to smooth the way for the inevitable flood of colonizers, were hastily made by representatives of the Crown, often involving terms which the Aboriginal representatives misunderstood. The government has also been active in unilaterally re-evaluating the terms of treaties, against the protest of Aboriginal groups, whose records were not recognized, having been held in oral history and collective memory (Neu and Therrien 2003, pp. 70-71). This is not to say that treaty making was solely at the behest of the Crown; there were numerous instances of demands made by Aboriginal nations to treat prior to increased settlement, or after the incursion of geological survey members or Canadian military troops (Miller 2000, pp. 209-210). South of the 49th Parallel, the United States had declared war on Aboriginal nations, rather than treating with them. This was not lost on the Aboriginal nations of Canada, nor the Canadian government; rather than fight battles which they felt they would lose, Aboriginal nations settled treaties and agreed to move to tiny parcels of land. The Canadian Government had no other option than treaty making, since warfare was beyond its means: 'In the 1870s, when the United States was spending $20 million a year on Indian wars, Ottawa's entire budget was only $19 million' (Ibid., p. 210).

Aboriginal people were also actively engaged in self-representation in two ways: official envoys and documents sent to provincial capitols, Ottawa, and London, and through invitations to perform at summer festivals across the country (see Francis 1992; Nisga'a 2004). The Department of Indian Affairs made a concerted effort to counter such activities, prohibiting the participation of Aboriginals in such festivals, making important cultural and political practices illegal, and disallowing legal action against the Federal Government by Aboriginal people (Nisga'a 2004). These prohibitions were part of the assimilation policy of the Government of Canada, which had been official since the *Indian Act* was first promulgated in 1876. As Neu and Therrien (2003, p. 123) characterize it, 'the Hollywood cliché, "the only good Indian is a dead Indian,"[4] could be translated north of the border as, "the only good Indian is a white Indian."' The smug reassurances of the old guard of Canadian historians (such as Miller 2000, especially pp. 209-213) that 'we' treated 'our' Indians with humanity, whereas 'they' (the Americans) were cruel and barbarous ignore the many and varied strategies, including forced separation of children from parents and attempts at extinguishing Aboriginal languages, which were meant to implement the policy of assimilation. The final

[4] This phrase is actually a quote from an American general in 1869 (Miller 2000, p. 211).

overtly assimilationist policy paper, ironically titled the White Paper of 1969, was an attempt to counter growing concerns over the horrendous living conditions of Aboriginal people under Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau's 'just society' rhetoric. This policy paper attempted to do away with the *Indian Act*, affirming the rights of Aboriginal people as citizens of Canada (Neu and Therrien 2003, p. 129). This shift from paternalism and prohibition to the encouragement of liberal freedom and equality was ironically the definite point where the Aboriginal political movement in Canada coalesced and was able, over the next thirty years, to reclaim representation from the Canadian state.

Postcolonial Diplomacy?

Although Thomas Hobbes had never been to the Americas, and had likely never met an Aboriginal person, his views are still representative of the thought of many EuroCanadians. They are even shared by (former) Chief Justice McEachern, who made many excursions onto Indian Reserves and heard hundreds of days of testimony relating to Aboriginal life in the area before the coming of colonialism. However, his judgment parallels the thoughts and actions of Columbus, Cartier and Curtis before him: his preconceptions precluded any acceptance of oral history, especially that which couched the Gitksan and Wet'suwet'en's lives in the language of civilization. McEachern seems an exception to the current prevailing EuroCanadian legal, political and cultural mainstream, which has over the last few decades gradually recognized the fact that Aboriginal people did not go away, and in fact have the capacity to represent themselves. This is evinced by the Supreme Court of Canada's appeal to McEachern's original decision, which made an official space in law for oral history, an important recognition considering the long held belief in the coincidence between literacy and civilization. This section is a brief exploration of how a postcolonial diplomacy may be forming in Canada. Such a diplomacy is distinguished from its colonial counterpart by the re-appropriation of representation deemed legitimate by the EuroCanadian society at large. Note that this section is not attempting to determine whether such representation is 'actually' legitimate; claims against the official Aboriginal leadership by Aboriginals in Canada abound. However, it is apparent that colonial representation, with a near monopoly being held by EuroCanadian establishments, was not legitimate.

There have been a number of streams moving towards a postcolonial diplomacy. Of most political importance has obviously been the steady work of Aboriginal political activists, such as the Nisga'a who petitioned the British Privy Council regarding the appropriation of their land in 1913 (Nisga'a 2004). The broader EuroCanadian population also began to realize the terrible conditions in which Aboriginals had been living, especially after World War II (Neu and Therrien 2003, p. 129). This was partially the result of the increasing urbanization of the Aboriginal population, which brought the hitherto relatively cloistered EuroCanadian population into contact with more and more Aboriginal people. Thus the expectation that the 'Indian' was disappearing was proven false (Francis 1992, p. 54; Cairns 2000, p. 40). Academically, there was a reversal in previously received truths about Aboriginal peoples in general, starting in anthropology with Franz Boas (Trigger 1988, p. 25). However, not until the 1960s would Boas's cultural relativism become generally accepted in the social studies; this coincided with decolonization of non-settler European imperial holdings, which also had a major effect in the shift. Much as Aboriginals had, through their role in the fur trade, become locked into an increasingly globalized economic and political system, their situation as colonial subjects was made untenable through the international move towards decolonization after World War II (Cairns 2000, p. 40). The Government of Canada was forced to do something to abate the attainment of pariah status at the United Nations, and so in true Canadian fashion, a report was commissioned.

The Hawthorn Report of 1966 began the legislative process that would result in the White Paper of 1969, mentioned above. The White Paper was the result of a government elected under the slogan 'Just Society,' and a rhetoric of increased consultation with Aboriginal groups over policy that directly affected them. This consultation, however, meant literally nothing; the White Paper went directly against both the Hawthorn Report's conclusions that due to their special treaty status, Aboriginals were 'citizens plus,' and the Aboriginal demands heard over a year by then Minister of Indian Affairs, Jean Chrétien. The White Paper held that rather than the century and more of dispossession and maltreatment of the colonized by

the colonizer, it was in fact the special status that Aboriginals[5] received under the *Indian Act* that had caused their plight. Therefore, to remove their special status would ameliorate their social and economic problems; what's more, Prime Minister Trudeau held that past grievances and agreements could not hold in the 'just society,' a euphemism for perfect liberal individualism:

> It's inconceivable I think that in a given society, one section of the society have a treaty with the other section of the society. We must all be equal under the laws and we must not sign treaties amongst ourselves…We can't recognize aboriginal rights because no society can be built on historical "might-have-beens" (quoted in Miller 2000, p. 329).

The White Paper proved a rallying point for the relatively new national and provincial Aboriginal political organizations. Through heavy criticism by the groups, the White Paper was repealed in less than a year. By 1973, the Trudeau government would, after the recommendations of the *Calder* case, begin negotiations with Aboriginal groups that resulted in the ratification of the first modern treaty, with the Nisga'a of Northwestern British Columbia in 1999.[6] The same Prime Minister would also, after repatriating the constitution (from Britain) in 1982, entrench sweeping Aboriginal rights.

Thus a number of factors have brought about the possibility of a postcolonial diplomacy. Although in Canada this diplomacy is most recognizable by the prevalence, since the inclusion of Aboriginal rights in the Constitution, of Supreme Court cases such as *Delgamuukw* defining and delineating these rights, there are a number of other processes outlining a postcolonial diplomacy.

The first and most obvious of these non-juridical postcolonial diplomatic engagements is the modern treaty process in British Columbia. Virtually no treaties were made in the province, with colonization following the American model of a wave of settlers first, and relocation of Aboriginals onto reserves later. Perhaps this is a contributing reason to a number of important Supreme Court cases and political actions by Aboriginals originating from British Columbia. The modern treaty system has had, since 1992, a full time Treaty Commission which facilitates negotiations between 55 First Nations, and the Governments of Canada and British Columbia. These negotiations cover the Aboriginal government structures, jurisdiction over land, water and resources, and cash settlements (BC Treaty Commission 2003).

A second trend is related to juridical processes, especially *Delgamuukw*: the increasing awareness of the nature of Aboriginal cultures, and the acceptance of difference in EuroCanadian society at large. This is evidenced by the *Delgamuukw* appeal decision, which set the precedence of allowing oral historical testimony as evidence in Canadian courts. The 2003 Massey Lectures, an annual radio programme and book series co-sponsored by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation and the University of Toronto, was devoted to the topic of oral history, its place in Aboriginal culture, and how 'oralcity' compares with literacy (King 2003). Aboriginal issues are increasingly on the agenda in politics, media, and at universities. There now exists a television station wholly devoted to Aboriginal programming.[7] People such as Jon Borrows, professor of law at the University of British Columbia, make representations of Aboriginal law and oral history in language with which those versed in common law can engage and understand (see Borrows 2002).

These developments across the Canadian political and cultural landscape seem to fulfill Der Derian's solidarity requirement for diplomatic interaction. The estrangement condition is also obvious; Aboriginals have been systematically denied everything possible by EuroCanadian colonizers and their governments, and it is still possible to hear cries against the special treatment of 'Indians' on open line talk radio programmes. This estrangement is mediated through an increasingly common set of institutions; the commonality of these

---

[5] Actually, only so-called status Indians received these special rights. Non-status Indians, Inuit (Eskimo) and Métis (a culture originating from a mixture of French and Aboriginal people early in Canadian history) received no special status, and were ignored by government until well into the twentieth century (see Cairns 2000).

[6] Note that the Nisga'a Treaty was outside the BC Treaty Process discussed below.

[7] APTN (Aboriginal Peoples Television Network)

institutions, however, has dubious origins. It should be obvious from the temporally located term 'postcolonial' that the situation it describes can only result from a prior 'colonial.' This colonial situation, which required the coercive appropriation of land, followed by insidious treatment of its former occupants, makes the basis for the emergent solidarity of postcolonial diplomacy. Although the cultural differences still exist between Aboriginal and EuroCanadian, they are to be taken into account by the political and legal institutions of Canada when mediating conflict between the two groups. Likewise at the more informal, societal level, the increasing awareness and appreciation of Aboriginal peoples' unique culture comes at a time when it is largely economically feasible, and increasingly easy. Canada's population no longer resides directly on land which may be threatened by Aboriginal legal action; the imperial/colonial ideology is no longer required to affirm their actions. Considering the fact that these new and gratifying postcolonial developments are inherently linked to the colonial situation of the past, how legitimate is this new solidarity? Trudeau's 'just society,' with its ahistorical denial of 'might-have-beens' and its affirmation of the fuzzy concept of multiculturalism may actually be the foundation for postcolonial diplomacy. As with the English school's notion of the expansion of international society, meaning a system of European-style states working under European style international legal structures, the character of postcolonial diplomacy in Canada still seems to have simply extended EuroCanadian rights and privileges to the recently civilized savage. To what extent these speculations hold is difficult to gauge; by no means has postcolonial diplomacy been fully accepted in mainstream EuroCanadian society, and by no means have Aboriginal people accepted that their grievances will be wholly dealt with through diplomatic means.

Conclusion: Purification and Gratification

Diplomacy between colonized and colonizer in Canada has moved from congenial relations, to attempts at total annihilation, and finally efforts towards reconciliation. Throughout this relationship, diplomacy of one sort or another has been present. Appropriation of voice, even if total, does not deny representation, and of course, the colonial governments of Canada were never able to totally deny Aboriginal people their ability to represent themselves. The move to a postcolonial diplomacy, where reconciliation is the driving rationale and recognition of the Aboriginal right to self-representation is the response can be viewed in terms of a purification ritual, as outlined by Volkan (1999). These rituals are often used in large groups, 'especially when they become independent from colonial masters or centralized empires' (Volkan 1999, p. 243). The concept of purification may be used in reference to the EuroCanadian realization that their previous engagement with the Aboriginal people, and the effects of this large scale disenfranchisement, was horribly unjust. Thus EuroCanadian society has been working to purify its identity of the imperial/colonial ideology; this purification may be linked to both cause and consequence of the repatriation of the Constitution in 1982, and the sweeping rights of Aboriginal peoples codified therein.

In Canada, this purification has given rise to a growing sense of EuroCanadian gratification, that the society is finally making up for past crimes against the Aboriginal population. The postcolonial diplomatic situation which provides the basis for this gratification has rationale which is not necessarily the most noble. Although the BC Treaty Commission was created ostensibly to redress past wrongs, it can also be framed as a response to multinational logging and other capitalist interests, which require a stable political situation, i.e. no problematic legal settlements or summer roadblocks, in order to do business. This purification process, and the attendant gratification, is also not desired by all EuroCanadians. Thus political backsliding is common, as when a government openly opposed to the treaty process was elected in British Columbia in the year 2000. These questions, and the problems they pose for the gratification demanded by EuroCanadian society for having engaged in the purification process of postcolonial diplomacy, may not, however, cast the process into total disrepute. Within the Canadian political imagination, postcolonial diplomacy may be the only means of reconciliation. As the Chief Justice of the *Delgamuukw* appeal decision stated:

> Ultimately, it is through negotiated settlements, with good faith and give and tae on all sides, reinforced by the judgments of this Court, that we will achieve…"the reconciliation of the pre-existence of aboriginal societies with

the sovereignty of the Crown". Let us face it, we are all here to stay. (Persky 1998, p. 122).

Bibliography

BC Treaty Commission (2003) 'Negotiations' (http://www.bctreaty.net/files_2/negotiations.html), Accessed May 18, 2004.

Bedford, David and Thom Workman (1997) 'The Great Law of Peace: Alternative Inter-Nation(al) practices and the Iroquoian Confederacy,' in *Alternatives* 22, pp. 87-111.

Berkhofer, Robert F. (1978) *The White Man's Indian: Images of the American Indian from Columbus to the Present*, New York: Knopf.

Borrows, John (2002) *Recovering Canada: The Resurgence of Indigenous Law*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Bull, Hedley and Adam Watson (1985) *The Expansion of International Society*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Cairns, Alan C. (2000) *Citizens Plus: Aboriginal Peoples and the Canadian State*, Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press.

Churchill, Ward (1996) 'Literature and the Colonization of American Indians,' in *From a Native Son: Selected Essays on Indigenism, 1985-1995*, Boston: South End Press, pp. 295-314.

_____ (2003) 'I Am Indigenist: Notes on the Ideology of the Fourth World,' in *Acts of Rebellion*, New York: Routledge, pp. 275-299.

Constantinou, Costas (1996) *On the Way to Diplomacy*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Crawford, Neta (1994) 'A Security Regime Among Democracies: Cooperation Among Iroquois Nations,' in *International Organization* 48(3), pp. 345-385.

Delgamuukw v. B.C. [1991] 5 C.N.L.R. xiii (http://www.usask.ca/nativelaw/factums/19915CNLR.html) Accessed May 17, 2004.

Der Derian, James (1987) *On Diplomacy: A Genealogy of Western Estrangement*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

Erdoes, Richard and Alfonso Ortiz, eds. (1984) *American Indian Myths and Legends*, London: Pimlico

Fisher, Robin (1977) *Contact and Conflict: Indian-European Relations in British Columbia, 1774-1890*, Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press.

Francis, Daniel (1992) *The Imaginary Indian: The Image of the Indian in Canadian Culture*, Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press.

Hardt, Michael and Antonio Negri (2000) *Empire*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Hobbes, Thomas (1996) *Leviathan*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

King, Thomas (2003) *The Truth About Stories: A Native Narrative*, Toronto: House of Anansi Press.

McNab, David, Bruce W. Hodgins, Dale S. Standen (2001) '"Black with Canoes". Aboriginal Resistance and the Canoe: Diplomacy, Trade and Warfare in the Meeting Grounds of Northeastern North America, 1600-1821,' in George Raudzens, ed., *Technology, Disease and Colonial Conquests, Sixteenth to Eighteenth Centuries: Essays Reappraising the Guns and Germs Theories*, Lieden: Brill, pp. 237-292.

Miller, James Roger (2000) *Skyscrapers Hide the Heavens: A History of Indian-White Relations in Canada*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Neu, Dean and Richard Therrien (2003) *Accounting for Genocide: Canada's Bureaucratic Assault on Aboriginal People*, Black Point, Nova Scotia: Fernwood Publishing

Nisga'a Nation (2004) '400 Year Timeline' (http://www.kermode.net/nisgaa/timeline/time.fr.html), accessed May 18, 2004.

Persky, Stan (1998) *Delgamuukw: The Supreme Court of Canada Decision on Aboriginal Title*, Vancouver: Greystone Books.

Said, Edward W. (2003) *Orientalism*, London: Penguin Books.

Shaw, Karena (2002) 'Indigeneity and the International,' in *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, 31(1), pp. 55-81.

Tennant, Paul (2000) '*Delgamuukw* and Diplomacy: First Nations and Municipalities in British Columbia,' in Owen Lippert, ed., *Beyond the Nass Valley: National Implications of the Supreme Court's Delgamuukw Decision*, Vancouver: Fraser Institute.

Todorov, Tzvetan (1984) Richard Howard, trans., *The Conquest of America: The Question of the Other*, New York: Harper and Row.

Trigger, Bruce G. (1988) 'The Historians' Indian: native Americans in Canadian Historical Writing from Charlevoix to the Present,' in Robin Fisher and Kenneth Coates, eds. *Out of the Background: Readings on Canadian Native History*, Toronto: Copp Clark Pitman, pp. 19-44.

Volkan, Vamik D. (1999) 'Psychoanalysis and Diplomacy Part II: Large-Group Rituals,' in *Journal of Applied Psychoanalytic Studies*, 1(3), pp. 223-247.