

Singular Universalities:

Québécois articulations of *le culturel*¹

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“... en dernière analyse, la culture, c’est un mot qui est à peu près impossible à définir. Ça échappe comme du vif argent aux définitions. Au fond la culture, c’est toute la vie collective, c’est tout ce que nous sommes et ce que ça contient, pour le meilleur ou pour le pire.”

René Lévesque (1977, 2)



L'anti-can



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1.1 Québec and the Production of *le culturel*.

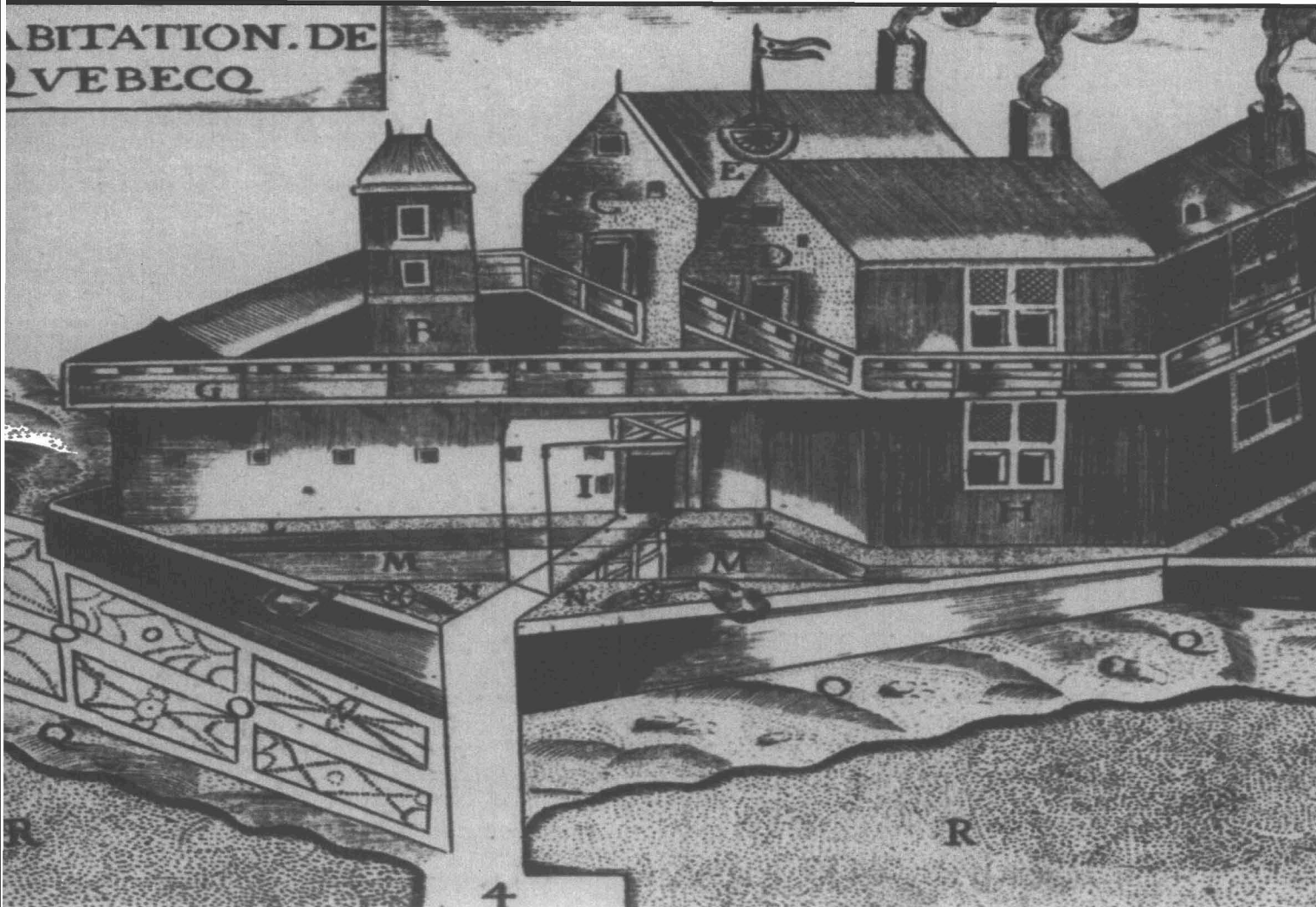
It is within the common sense of public life in Québec to frame the Quiet Revolution as a cultural revolution leading to the interlaced development of new formations of sociality: secularization and educational reform; democratization and reconstruction of the state apparatus; the formation of a “national” business class. In other words, both erudite knowledges and popular memory frame the Quiet Revolution as both a process of modernization and the emergence of Québec into modernity. (Létourneau, 1992) The cultural character of this interlaced development is most often viewed as a structuring shift in and between institutions, practices and *mentalités*. Thanks to this shift, the ratio between private and public action as well as between the ‘people’ and the public institutions of state and economy are understood as having been transformed.

At the same time, less attention has been paid to the concomitant elaboration of a complex field of governmental action centred on the domains of culture: ‘elite’ culture and the arts, popular culture and the cultural industries, heritage and museums, the cultural geography of the regions, language policy, immigration and the ‘cultural’ communities. In addition, while the successive ministries of culture have acted as a central agency in this action, its interventions have extended into the actions of the majority of ministries. The most recent Cultural Policy, for example, lists fourteen ministries directly involved in intervention in the cultural field. Just as important are the relations between these domains state action and the elaboration, inside and outside of the state, of a public discourse of québécois identity subtending the more general claims to sovereign action of the Québec state. We want to argue that the key cultural significance of the social changes inaugurated by the Quiet Revolution has been nothing less than the production of the ‘Cultural’ field itself as both the central legitimating agency of government and as an emergent regime of social power (cf. Donzelot, 1984).

This production of the “cultural” involves the elaboration of new forms of knowledge about *le peuple québécois* and hence new articulations of social difference within the population. *L’identitaire québécois* is thus articulated across a *dispositif* which links temporal (language and ethnicity as the historical grounds of the people), spatial (the regions as the figuration of cultural difference within *l’identitaire*) and administrative (the structuring perspective of cultural development) logics in the formation of emergent state practices. At the same time, it involves the production of the field of *la citoyenneté culturelle*; a field of distinction of the citizen as both social subject, sovereign subject of a nation, and as object of new forms of political power linking the distinctive traits of the citizen with those of the cultural producer and consumer.

Within this line of analysis, the cultural field is seen as both the specific interventions of the state into the production, circulation and consumption of cultural materials (cinema, television, music, books, magazines, theatre, museums), and as the broader public space of the formations of specific intellectuals contesting the stakes and outcomes of cultural development. The agencies at work in the cultural field thus include both particular state instruments: SOGIC, SODEP, l’Institut québécois du cinéma, Radio-Québec, l’Institut québécois de recherche sur la culture; and, the formations of intellectuals implicated in the cultural field: le Mouvement national des québécois, la Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste, l’Union des artistes, l’Association québécoise des réalisateurs et réalisatrices de cinéma et de télévision.

More importantly, over the last thirty years Québec has developed a public discursive space centred around the articulation of the aesthetic, social and political questions surrounding cultural development. This public space of discourse is centred in specialized journals and



revues: i.e., *Liberté*, *L'Action nationale*, *Possibles*, *Lumières*, *24 Images*, *Lettres québécoises*, *Vice-Versa*, *Spirales*. But, it has come to extend to the more general organs of journalism and opinion formation: not only in the pages of *Le Devoir* or *Actualité*, or on Radio-Canada, but across all the key sectors of public media.

From this broader perspective, the production of the cultural field cannot be conceived simply as a development within the state apparatus. Both the agencies of its instigation and development, and the sites of its effects are located inside and outside of the institutions of government. The cultural field in Québec operates across the divide between the state and civil society. Any attempt to understand the complexity of its development and action must therefore move beyond the rigid analytic framework of the state-civil society distinction. Furthermore, any attempt to map the trajectory of cultural politics must move beyond an internal history of the formation of ministries, crown corporations and laws to a conjunctural analysis of the transactional relations between political formations inside and outside the state apparatus. Such a project necessitates a reevaluation of the relations between discursive and non-discursive relations of power.

1.2 Governmentality

In work begun in his seminar at le Collège de France in the late nineteen-seventies, Michel Foucault inaugurated a line of inquiry focused on the development of liberal forms of governance and on the forms of power-knowledge relations inherent in these emergent forms of sovereignty and rule. This tradition of work on governmentality focuses precisely on the relations between the arts of governance, the administrative apparatus of the state, and the elaboration of knowledge formations productive of the distinctions within the people or the citizenry. This approach, then, is not a general theory of the state but an analysis of practices of government, of the actions within the state (laws, ministries, regulations) and at a distance from it (the organized and disorganized fields of government interventions; the formations of organic intellectuals). To pose the question of the state and governance conjuncturally thus necessitates a move away from an internal analysis of ministries, or laws, or of the instrumental relations between ministries and lobbyists. Rather, it necessitates an historically located analysis of the rationalities of governance. This in turn necessitates the analysis of agencies inside and outside of the state, drawing attention to interrelations between institutional and discursive levels of determination

Foucault's own analysis of the development of liberal forms of governmentality in Europe in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries focuses on the field of determinations between new levels or domains of governmental action (the economy, security and territory) and emergent intellectual technologies which elaborated new vocabularies and analyses of public spaces (political economy, statistics). His history of governmentality is thus an analysis of the emergence of a *dispositif* of power-knowledge relations which reconstructed the shape of the social field at the same time that it produced contingent responses to forces impinging on the actions of the state. Thus, for example, the extension of the model of the economy to the society at large, and the deployment of the intellectual technology of statistics are seen as producing a new figure of the people, population, which allows both new instruments of governmental intervention and new cultural images of the citizen. The *dispositif* operating within the intellectual technologies mobilizing the population thus acted to open up the social field in a way that linked the questions of the legitimacy of government, the control of the people, and the efficient management of the economy. For Foucault, the birth of liberal government is nothing less than the articulation of the series sovereignty-discipline-government. Foucault clarifies the significance of this series in the following way:

"... (it) has as its primary target the population and its essential mechanism apparatuses of security. In any case, I wanted to demonstrate the deep historical link between the movement that overturns the constants of sovereignty in consequence of the problem of the choice of government; the movement that brings about the emergence of population as datum, as a field of intervention, and as an objective of government techniques; and that which focuses on the economy as a specific sector of reality, and on political economy as the science and the technique of intervention of the government on that field of reality. Three movements: government, population, political economy, which constitute from the 18th century onwards a solid series, which even today is assuredly not dissolved."²

The research literature that has followed in this line of inquiry has further specified the interrelations of emergent intellectual technologies and the contingent interventions of governmental action in regions of public and private life. This work traces the impacts and influences of the human sciences in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries on such domains of governmental



interventions as insurance and risk management (Ewald, 1986), social welfare (Donzelot, 1984), and state school systems (Hunter, 1994). Foucault's perspective has thus been revised to the extent that developments within the intellectual technologies of economics, psychology, sociology, and political theory have been seen to complicate and contest knowledges about the population and the links between elements in the series: government, population, political economy. The key epistemological commitments linking this work to that of Foucault lie in a focus on conjunctural historical study and in the analysis of the relations between discursive and institutional levels of social power. This conjunctural focus bears on questions concerning the links between emergent problems and domains of governmental action and the rarity of available intellectual technologies. In other words, it leads to detailed analyses of both the existing interventions and apparatuses of governance, and of the new discursive forms of analysis of domains of intervention, along with new figures of the population and the citizenry. This epistemological focus is conjunctural in a broader political sense in that it refuses to see the development of specific practices of government as the teleological outcomes of either the progress of liberal rationality or the power relations of capital and class.

In this sense, the particular task facing the analysis of systems of governmentality is to make the approach actual. That is, to bring the questions and levels of analysis to bear on local and specific formations of governance. Necessarily, this involves the revision and adaptation of analytic tools developed in the study of European social formations and earlier historical moments. But what is striking about the common sense understanding of the changes in Québec over the last thirty years is that it tends to locate the birth of liberal government, and hence our modernity, at the moment of the Quiet Revolution. In our attempt to map the development of the cultural field and its relations to the public relations of state and citizenry in Québec, we need to then confront the contingency of the historical period of its emergence. Thus, the relative lateness of processes of educational secularization, state democratization and economic nationalization in Québec means that the available intellectual technologies and models of democratic interventions were multiple and varied. That is to say that this period, more than a simple transition to democracy or sovereignty, has to be seen as an extended struggle over the forms of state action and legitimation (as a state or a nation-state), the rationalities of state interventions into the economy (neo-liberal versus social democratic), and over new articulations of collective identity (*le peuple québécois*).

We want to argue that the cultural field functions precisely as the domain of governmental rationality that allows for the contingent and temporary resolution of the contradictions facing the development of sovereign actions of the Québec state. It is in this sense that we want to argue that the production of the cultural field entails both the specific agencies of cultural creation, circulation and consumption, and the general logics of the state's claims to represent and act in the name of *le peuple québécois*. The social changes inaugurated during the Quiet Revolution signal a shift in the ratio of our system of governmentality away from religious and secular forms of disciplinary power-knowledge relations and towards a new form of articulation of the continuities of government. The public discourses rearticulating the canadien-français into the québécois and the neo-corporatist programme of "maîtres chez nous" both inaugurated new forms of collective representation in the public space outside of government before they effected shifts in state agencies and programmes. In view of this event, we can amend and localize Foucault's historical series (sovereignty-discipline-government) replacing it with a conjunctural variant specific to the historical situation of Québec: sovereignty-discipline-government. Incorporation, the middle term of this series, signals the interpenetration of versions of economic corporatism with both public discourses of *l'identitaire québécois* and the rationality of

governmental action. The analytic of governmentality allows us to begin to map the complexity of the cultural field as the terrain of struggle where the registration of political-economic actions (Québec, Inc.) and the domain of *l'identitaire* — the actions proper to the elaboration of a *peuple québécois* and the development of their state — are disputed. In our historical context then, “population” is no longer the dominant model of citizenry. Rather it is the more recent cultural and communicational sciences that provide the intellectual technologies which elaborate the series linking language, ethnicity, heritage and cultural creation in the articulation of *l'identitaire* as warrant for a nation and the project of a sovereignty as an immemorial state of becoming. These same intellectual technologies (marketing research, focus groups, etc.) facilitate the increasing interpenetration of communicational and economic logics in the practices of public power: cultural management, corporate *commanditaires*, the regions as both heritage and resource, artists as entrepreneurs, the “nationalization” of corporate advertising.

Our analysis of corporatist logic of collective identity aims to account for both the continuities and regularities of public discourse and state interventions in the cultural field as well as the conflicts and contradictions contained in attempts to articulate the specificity of cultural forms to the general claims to sovereignty for Québec. In this way, we want to demonstrate both the links and breaks between Liberal and Péquiste state interventions; further, we want to position these interventions within the broader public space productive of the cultural field. The aim, then, of our discursive genealogy is to map the public archive of the cultural field in order to specify the costs and benefits of this emergent regime of social power in Québec. Following Foucault, we aim to “establish a historical knowledge of struggles and make use of this knowledge tactically today.”

2.1 Discourse analysis

Discourse analysis then provides the most appropriate research programme for the analysis of the development of the cultural field. In part, this is because it begins from the assumption that the domain of culture is mediated by a range of institutional sites and discursive formations. More importantly, discourse analysis of the field can make visible the virtual system of regularities and productivities in the statements and texts which articulate the cultural domain. Such a broad discourse analysis can focus precisely on the emergent power-knowledge relations which work to overdetermine the terms of particular debates and governmental actions. As Tom O'Regan has argued, this is to turn cultural policy analysis to:

“an emphasis on how ‘ideas’ (which could be partly interchangeable) behave, how they become the basis for holding together diverse and even antagonistic projects, how they become contested, and how they help clear the way for a field of possibilities not given in the policymakers intentions.”³

Discourse analysis therefore repositions the effectivity of structures of knowing (intellectual machineries) within the institutional levels of a social formation. We see discursive formations, therefore, to be relatively autonomous agencies within the social formation.

Foucault's particular conception of the links between discourse and institutions provides a useful mapping of their relations of interdetermination. Thus, in contradistinction to a general theory of the state or of ideology, Foucault elaborates a theory of power-knowledge relations which focuses particularly on the mutual dependencies of the institutional and the discursive

levels of the social field. The central analytic concept that he develops is that of *dispositifs*. These are the historically contingent mechanisms linking discursive and non-discursive materials (institutions, representations, laws, formations of intellectuals, popular media, etc.) which articulate the relations of knowing and acting in particular relations of governance.

We believe that the cultural field is just such a *dispositif*. It includes under its aegis ministries and government agencies: for example, Radio-Québec, SOGIC (la Société générale des industries culturelles), IQC (l'Institut québécois du cinéma), CRC (Les Conseils régionaux de la culture), IQRC (l'Institut québécois de la recherche sur la culture); relevant laws and cultural policy documents; museal institutions and architectures; and ministerial speeches and government advertising. In addition, the *dispositif* encompasses the organizations and formations of specific intellectuals in the cultural field: for example, film directors, actors, critics, or researchers and lobbyists working on cultural objects. Moreover, the texts and para-texts of Québec public culture are also part of the elaboration of the cultural *dispositif*. Thus, for example, the novels of Michel Tremblay, or the films of Micheline Lanctôt, as well as their essays, interviews, and testimonial writings, are both "objects" of cultural analysis and agencies within the cultural field.

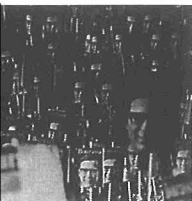
Our discourse analysis of the texts and programmes of the *dispositif* of culture aims to map out the regularities and distinctions which characterize the field in order to better analyze the power relations at play. The object of our analysis is the virtual system articulating the cultural singularity of Québec. We aim to discern the discursive formations which underpin particular statements, policy logics, and aesthetic criteria. We seek, therefore, to render visible the politics of truth which works to regularize the immanent rules for the production of statements in the domain: the characteristics of *le peuple québécois*, the historical ground and project of *la culture québécoise*, the linkage between the state and the being and becoming of the people.

2.2 The Archive, Statements

The archive for such an analysis is heterogeneous in its breadth and size. It encompasses a broadly dispersed set of written and audio-visual texts in public circulation since the Quiet Revolution. In mapping out the discursive formations of the cultural field we have analyzed governmental texts produced both within the agencies of the state and at a distance from it.

The analysis focuses on two levels in the organization of the power knowledge relations within the cultural field: the statement (*énoncé*), and the discursive formation. Statements are the 'events' of discourse; they accomplish the elaboration of positions within the systems of regularities of the discursive field. Following Foucault, we consider that their effectivity is precisely located in their articulation of different orders of "ideas, projects and possibilities" (O'Regan) about the social world. Thus, as objects of inquiry they are already discursive and praxical in character. Statements are neither simple semiotic entities nor regular rhetorical figures. They are the traces of practices, the accomplishment of projects, as, for example, in the many articulations of Québec culture and the social being of the people. Thus, our method of discourse analysis is not a depth hermeneutic. It doesn't search for authorial intentions behind or beneath texts. Nor does it attempt to adjudicate the truth or falsity of statements. Rather, it is a diagnostic analysis of the formation of particular objects and political projects (the politics of truth) in the domain.

Statements (*énoncés*) are organized in fields of regularity and tension as the articulation of common and competing linkages of states of affairs in the social world. They build upon and





rearticulate existing discursive materials which are already organized in formations of knowledge. The cultural field is therefore organized across an intersecting group of intellectual technologies and discursive formations: political theories and practices of government; sociological and anthropological models of culture; neo-liberal and social democratic economic theories; communicational models of media power; aesthetic and literary *parti pris*; narrations of the history and becoming of le peuple québécois; and, more recently, narrations of the Quiet Revolution itself.

The second level, our analysis presents the discursive formations which subtend, organize and influence the production of statements. These formations function as regularized sub-domains which structure the political field of the cultural. If statements are the events of discourse, formations are systems of regularities which organize the singularity of statements into particular power-knowledge relations. The discursive formations that we identify map both the extensions of the *dispositif* of the cultural and the tensions and contradictions within the field. Our analysis aims to diagnose the politics of truth articulated across this archive of singular statements and regularized formation. Again, following Foucault, this is to focus on both intradiscursive dependencies (between the objects, articulations, and terms of a single formation) and interdiscursive dependencies (the contradictions and accords between different formations.) Between these two levels, our analysis accounts for the productivity of the cultural field as a central governmental *dispositif* in Québec.

2.3 Genealogy

The organization of our analysis is genealogical rather than historical. Genealogy is not a simple narrative history of institutions or statements; rather it is organized by a politics of the present. Our analysis is motivated by a concern to understand the actual field of cultural politics in Québec within the larger questions of the relations between the state, national distinctions, and the linked projects of individual and collective autonomy. The periodization of the analysis is therefore motivated by a politics of the present. We begin with the 1960s in order to map out the politics which framed both the initial institutionalizations of the state's governance of the cultural and the transition from the collective identity of *Canadiens Français* to the *peuple québécois*. At the same time, we focus on the period following the 1991 Arpin Report and the latest cultural policy precisely in order to provide a more detailed analysis of the agencies and positions at play in the current conjuncture.

The relations of continuity and rupture that are evident between the statements across this thirty year period underline the complexity of the temporality of discourse. As Foucault reminds us:

“A discursive formation, then, does not play the role of a figure that arrests time and freezes it for decades or centuries; it determines a regularity proper to temporal processes; it presents the principle of articulation between a series of discursive events and other series of events, transformations, mutations and processes. It is not an atemporal form, but a schema of correspondence between several temporal series.”⁴

Governmental discursive formations are particularly characterized by their tendency to articulate emergent questions, objects, and projects to the lines of force contained in existing formations and institutions. It is precisely the political implications of these continuities and ruptures within the power-knowledge relations of the cultural which serve as the basis of our diagnosis of the role of the culture in the current conjuncture. The formations that we articulate in the rest of this essay structure the regularities and tensions within the organized governmental knowledges, and the local memories and projections engaged in the production of the cultural as the central public model of sovereignty and citizenship in Québec since the Quiet Revolution.

3 Producing culture

In the preface to *Les mots et les choses*, Foucault defines the basis of this epistemology of contemporary Western culture as that of writing “L’histoire du Même.” The interest of this statement lies not only in the emphasis on inclusion distinct from the focus of exclusivity that characterizes his later work, but also in the relationship that is established between culture and identity. To define a culture becomes a process of rooting out that which is the same, of deciphering where similarities, correlations and consensual relationships have been founded between objects, ways and people and where convenience has been grounded between items, ideas and identities. In short, a culture is defined by a particular “ordering of things” which then structures the knowledge we have and hold about ourselves.

Insofar as it questions culture epistemologically rather than ontologically, this line of analysis posits culture as an object of knowledge that needs to be questioned in terms of its configuration and not in terms of its continuity. In line with what we’ve already said about Québec then, the next question to be addressed is how, precisely, *le culturel* has come to be the main source of legitimation for a political project of state sovereignty and the means of reconciliation for any and all of the contradictions inherent therein? It is only by looking at the knowledge produced, circulated and maintained about culture that we can begin to answer this query; only by drafting a sketch of the formation and ordering of objects, ways and people in Québec that this particular conjunction can be explained. With this in mind then, we’ve analyzed the discursive formations and statements of culture in government documents, related policy interventions, and the public statements of intellectuals, artists and other individuals associated with the field of cultural production.

Following from this emphasis on inclusion, our choice of incorporation as the key to the domestic variant of governmentality comes into play at another level. The discursive formations analyzed are not only meant to represent the regularities of knowledges held about

québécois culture, but also designed to signal the process of incorporation that folds disparate and related fields—the arts, economy, technology—into the cultural in such a manner as to create a contingency that supports or justifies broader political projects and appeases their paradoxes.

Further, our overall interest is in the particular play of specificity and universality as it occurs across the objects and figures being formed, associated and included in the cultural field. This is to make explicit the political costs of the condensation of the civic subject, the economic field and the field of collective identity. And, following the analysis of Etienne Balibar (1995), it is also to insist on the ambiguity of “national” figures of universality in late-capitalist democracy. In Québec these figures are as abstract as history, the province, the population, our national identity, the public interest and indeed the concept of culture itself. Alternatively, they may be as concrete as notions of the land, people, art, television, cinema and government. And it is the singularity of the play these figures receive—the negotiations and articulations of these objects and projects—that comes to bear on the emergence of the cultural as a regime of social power. From within that regime, these cultural formations work and waver in an unstable relationship with the state that depends on the continued legitimation of the one by the other.

3.1 A Convergence of Cultures

Starting from the assumption that the cultural field has developed as a social determinant that acts as both legitimation and resolution of sovereignty, we also assume that culture itself is a troubled concept. Above and beyond the more typical difficulties associated with the concept—its ability to refer to a certain type of knowledge, collective behaviour, and the customs of communities—this positioning of the cultural in Québec fills it with a whole set of contradictions proper to the province itself. For this reason, the first of the regularities that we have identified from the archive of statements is the almost incessant attempt to define québécois culture. Although these definitions vary widely in their details and their political commitments, the one feature that binds them is the attempt to “verify” this culture by establishing its authenticity, its longevity and its continuity in time and space.

In these attempts to establish origin—and sometimes even an originary moment—culture often gets rooted in things natural, that is, in things seemingly given and unquestionable like language, history, and geography. An ontology of our culture is thus produced, establishing the continuity of province and people necessary for the representation of sovereignty as accession to normalcy. The problems with this continuity are then of the order of abstraction. For our cultural longevity to be established, the Quiet Revolution itself either has to be abstracted as a rupture or posited, as we think it is, as part of a natural order of things. For *le fait français* to be rendered the essence of québécois culture, the linguistic divide has to be maintained—but now by the Québécois—and the fluency of other languages obviated, assimilated or exoticised as the practices proper to Québec’s “cultural communities” (c.f. Fontaine & Shiose, 1991). For geography to be more than mere topography, the province needs to be divided up into regions as a body is in parts, the whole forming a single entity not just seeking, but destined for another state of being (cf. Harvey, 1994).

Thus, this collision of objects, places and people, organised as the essence of our culture, demands that similarity and homology be set up between these various characteristics and that

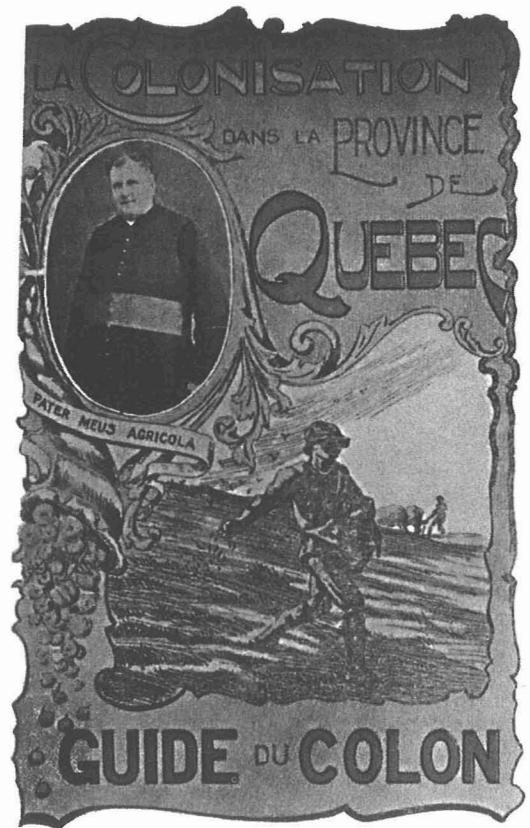
the differences within Québec — historical discontinuities, linguistic and ethnic divergences, and territorial diversity — be shifted, absorbed or, straight out obviated. Yet apart from these obviations and essentializations, the basic difficulty with these articulations of culture remains their emphasis on the similitude of things and their supposed cohesiveness and continuance — the local as universal.

These definitions of culture also work to pull diverse objects up to the level of the cultural as well as into it. For instance, cinema becomes a means of affirmation for culture in the 1982 working document, *Le cinéma. Une Question de survie et d'excellence*. Or, as is suggested throughout the 1978 White Paper on Cultural Development, almost every aspect of daily life can be associated with the cultural — and thus become a potential object of legislation — once this field is proposed as the basic constituent of society.⁵

3.2 A Precarious Equilibrium

The second set of regularities picks up this tendency in presenting culture as an aspect of social life. These statements represent a somewhat more pragmatic take on the field as they attempt to balance art and industry, individual creation and national identity, and the priorities of cultural production versus those of cultural protection. Culture is thus represented more tangibly than in the above attempts to create a *générique*, as the following set of statements propose this field as the sum of very specific items (art, music, folklore, technology), industries (publishing, recording, communications), and individuals (creators and entrepreneurs). These are then tied together in appeals for and about an interested public, in questions respecting access to cultural materials, and as part of debates over cultural belonging. Culture, in this formation, is therefore not so much a political matter as it is something that matters politically; that is, a matter of knowledge and education, a source of identity, and thus a focal point for broader questions of social development.

Just as these statements register culture's political content, they also reflect its economic importance. There is no hierarchy inscribed in culture here: cultural industries and cultural production are posited as typical of modern societies and thus typical of Québec and necessary to its development. Accordingly, many of these statements develop the economics of culture in light of the above concerns, suggesting a marriage of private and public funding to support what is deemed primarily of social significance. Given these priorities then, culture is here interpreted in terms of something of a *differentiated*



humanism, that is, a perspective that bridges questions of social welfare with those of entrepreneurial import and thus demands an equilibrium between state and market forces in matters of cultural development.

Interestingly, most of these statements come from individual and institutional policy interventions and from the public statements made by corporate, academic, and para-governmental agents. That is, this take on culture is very rarely endorsed or pronounced directly by government representatives or included in official policy papers, except perhaps as the qualifier that makes culture a matter of public interest. The perspectives included in this formation are then oppositional to the extent that they often seek to counter the suggestion that culture is primarily a ministerial mission or, more consumingly, a governmental responsibility.

3.3 The Cultural State

Here we diagnose the shift from an interested public to the public's interest in matters of culture. This third formation encompasses all those statements that interpret culture as equatable with nation, a relation which makes the former a matter of governmental responsibility and an object of its legislation and management. The perspective itself is influenced — and justified for that matter — by the adoption of a French model of cultural management which assumes culture as a national or public good and thus insists on a certain level of governmental direction, protection and intervention.

The *peuple* here become the *Québécois*, *la collectivité* or a conjunctural variation on the two, *la collectivité québécoise*. Suitably figured into a population of citizens, the government elect becomes their representative, a framing which then enables a back and forth movement between government and *collectivité* in matters of culture without there being a noticeable or essential shift in the operative subject of culture. That is, culture becomes a collective project led by the ministry of Cultural Affairs whose main responsibility then becomes "*le développement culturel des québécois*." Accordingly, the main emphases here are on cultural development and cultural protection, projects which contradict each other to the extent that the first demands openings and latitude while the second does little but close down possibilities.

3.4 Les affaires culturelles / Incorporation

The equivalences proposed in this formation are of a strictly different order than the last. Here, culture is seen as the product of industries, businesses and enterprises, as a form of stock oriented by research and development, competition and consumption, determined by national and international market forces, and geared to satisfy the needs and demands of these markets. Artists are professionals, their work, goods and services, and their success contingent on public taste. Yet, what is most interesting about this particular formation of culture is that, generally, the statements steer away from endorsing free market mechanisms and instead maintain the above-mentioned equation between cultural production and national identity. Culture is thus a resource to be developed and exploited for the sake of Québec's economic development and that of enhancing its international profile, improvements which then come to bear positively on our national identity and, eventually, on the likelihood of sovereignty.

Accordingly, although the emphases herein are categorically different from those in the last

formation, they nonetheless compliment each other in transforming culture into an object of management. As a critical economic sector, culture represents an interest to the state: just as culture is made an issue of education in the last two series of statements, it is here positioned in terms of employment and professionalisation. It is at this level then, that the process of incorporation comes most directly into play, in all its literal and metaphoric senses. Not only does economic development become a factor in the production of *québécois* identity and, conversely, national identity a contingency of our products' saleability, but a whole series of corporatist and industrial references are folded into the cultural field, making it an object of legislation, a focal point for internationalisation and, most importantly, the answer to — but rarely reason for — Québec's own project of economic nationalisation.

3.5 Technological Culture

The logic of the statements in this formation runs alongside the market perspective in its condensation of cultural development and technological improvement. Culture is restricted to its technological production — radio, television, cinema, video, the Internet and multi-media. Accordingly, having and acquiring the means of this production — control of communications and cable monopolies — become criteria for gauging our culture's value. And though this interpretation applies a logic of consumption based on the importance of improvement and innovation to culture, it is a perspective that has an historical explanation.

Media of communication are deemed responsible for bringing cohesion to Québec's disparate communities, for granting a public voice to a largely private people and, most importantly, for providing this people with representations of themselves, that is, with the symbolic materials formative of national identities. Accordingly, technology here is understood as a means of progress, a route towards modernization, a source of *québécois* culture and thus a vital determinant of Québec's development and the completion of its modernity.

3.6 Cultural Creation

This sixth formation is most interesting precisely because it has only surfaced as a distinct regularity in policy papers and public statements over the course of the last five to ten years. This formation gives voice to a modernist conception of art which lends a purity to artistic creation that rids it of dependencies and all contingencies other than those emanating from the individual artist or creator. The immediate implications are that no demands or burdens — especially of the financial variety — should come to bear on the creative process.

Though this perspective is certainly nothing new to the international cultural field, what is important is its newness in Québec. Its entrenchment into a public language on and about culture sidelines the more recent interpenetration of corporatism and government action in matters of culture. If creation is made the starting point of culture, and culture an economic force and a governmental responsibility, then artists and creators are rendered essential to the social fabric and, more pointedly, essential as professionals. And it is precisely this logic that accounts for a public endorsement of recognition long-yearned for by *québécois* artists. But this endorsement doesn't come without cost, namely that of a corporatist professionalisation and the implications — questions of criteria, choice and representation — that flow therefrom.

3.7 Cultural Citizenship

This last formation meets up with the first in establishing the components and parameters of *l'identitaire québécois*. It is in this formation that the objects developed and ordered throughout and across the previous regularities become the conditions of culture, referential points by which to define the *Québécois*. This is where the *Canadien français* become the *Québécois* who, by virtue of this condensation and incorporation into a citizenry typical of pluralism, are figured as a political, modern, people belonging to and participating in a québécois culture defined by its language, traditions, institutions and geographical delimitations.

The logic followed here then begins to explain the fundamental tensions within *l'identitaire québécois*. This formation doesn't represent an identity per se but rather a process of identification with what we already are, and with what we aren't anymore: a referral to an already constituted reference. It is the discursive process through which the very elements invoked to define our culture and our collective identity — language, the land, traditions, institutions — are continually resignified and continually work to interpret each other. Accordingly, the discursive articulations of *l'identitaire québécois* are auto-referential in that they take language, history and citizenry as the defining elements of identity. *Québécois* identity is thus discursively maintained and elaborated by a continued identification with our re-identification.

The first and last formations (productive of a social ontology of the cultural and *l'identitaire*) function something like the discursive regulators of the total cultural field in that together they accomplish the registration of the space-time of the nation and the space-time of the citizen. In articulating the being and becoming of the state and the citizenry the cultural field accomplishes the linked production of the people as the “subjects” whose social being the state serves and as the “objects” of governmental power-knowledge relations. At the same time, the strategic essentialism enacted by these figures of the *citoyen culturel* regulate the manner in which disparate levels and regions of social life (economic, technological, aesthetic) are incorporated into a common *projet de société*. The interactions of these formations then account for the productivity of the cultural field as the terrain where the tensions and contradictions facing the sovereign actions of the Québec state are contested and contingently resolved.

This diagnostic of the *dispositif* of the cultural field makes visible the singularity of the system of governmentality active in Québec in the current conjuncture. From the standpoint of our analysis it becomes possible to account for the seemingly paradoxical links between a politics of culture and the cultural industries, the public articulations of the tensions between ethnic and territorial (or republican) versions of *québécois* citizenship, and the corporatist rationalities of state interventions into the economy. At the same time, it is clear to us that the ‘distinctiveness’ of Québec within the Canadian confederation at the current moment is not, in any way, simply due to the effects of nostalgic narrations of the two “founding peoples.” Rather, this differentiation is a complex result of a conjunctural rearticulation of the relations between the state and ‘civil society’ in Québec which has installed this elaborated cultural field as the productive centre of social life.

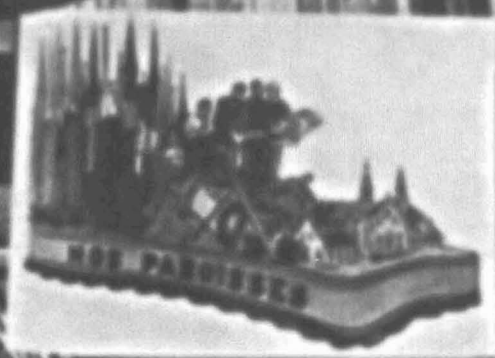
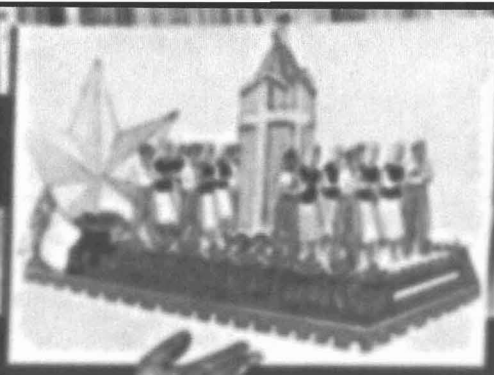
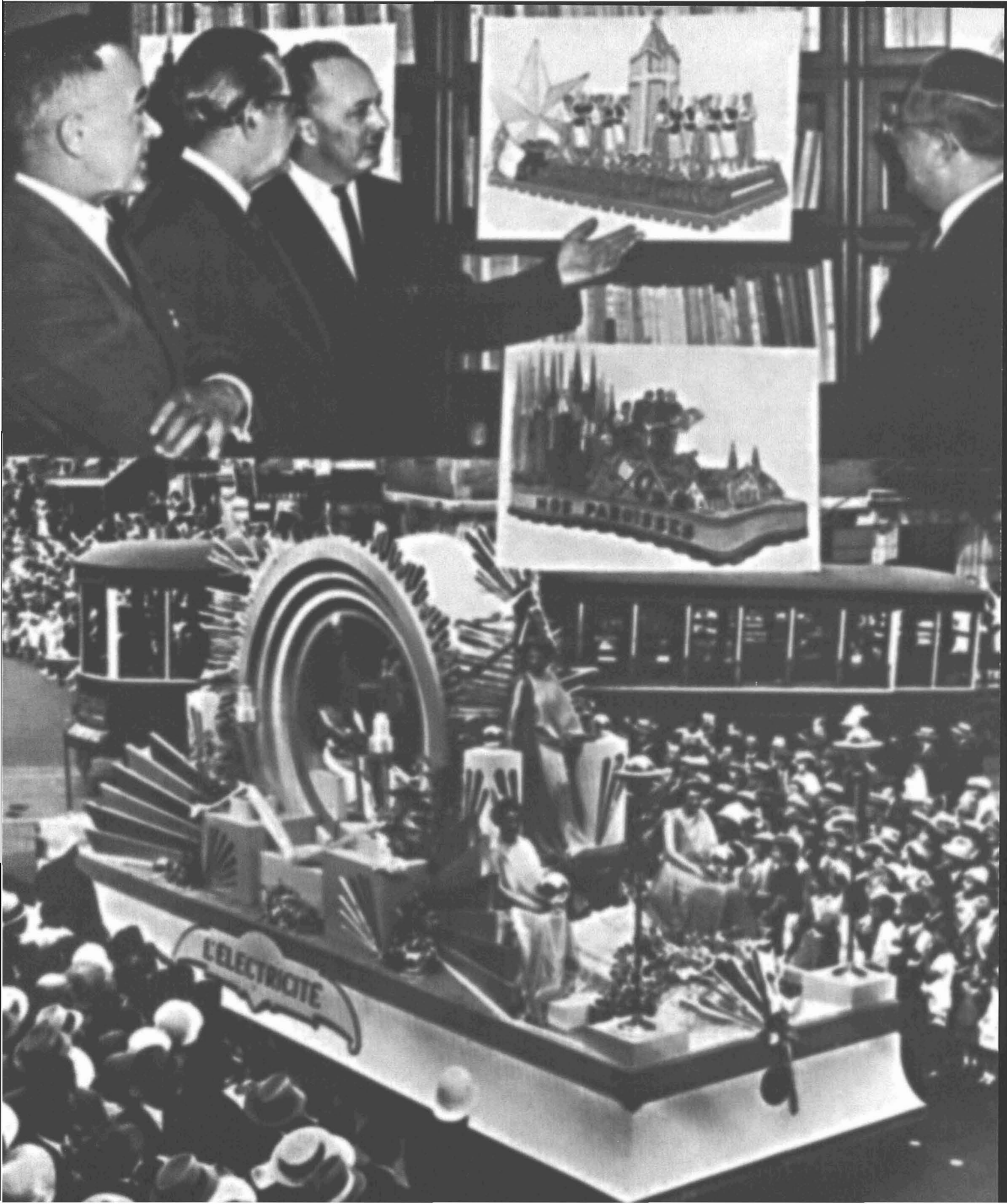
Notes

- 1 This essay is derived from one of the projects of the Groupe de recherche sur la citoyenneté culturelle (GRECC) based at Concordia University and the Université de Montréal. The research benefited from support from SSHRC and FCAR. The complete version of the discourse analysis is published as *L'État de Culture: généalogie discursive des politiques culturelles québécoises* (Montréal: GRECC, 1994), available from GRECC - Concordia University, BR-415, 7141 Sherbrooke ouest, Montréal, Québec, H4B 1R6.
- 2 Michel Foucault, "On Governmentality," 18C no. 6 (Autumn, 1979), p. 19.
- 3 Tom O'Reagan, "Some Reflection on the policy movement," *Meanjin*, vol. 51, no. 2, pp. 517-32.
- 4 Michel Foucault, *The Archeology of Knowledge* (London: Tavistock Press, 1972), p. 74.
- 5 Québec. Le ministère d'État au développement culturel, *White Paper on Cultural Development*, vol. 1, 1978, 2-3.

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