THE CREATION OF TELESAT: CANADIAN COMMUNICATION POLICY, BELL CANADA, AND THE ROLE OF MYTH (1960 TO 1974)

by

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ii

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is a discursive analysis and case study in Canadian communication mythology. The central argument is that the federal government and Bell Canada used myths connecting Canada's existence to its communication links to formulate and gain support for policies. This argument draws on the Canadian political economy of communication tradition that has argued that myths naturalize policies and legitimates the collaboration of the state with private enterprise. Following a discussion of the approach to myth, the thesis continues with a history of Bell Canada and the government's relationship based in primary sources. The main study, concerning Telesat's creation, examines myth in satellite policy during the 1960s and early 1970s. First, the documents calling for Telesat's creation reveal how mythology buttressed economic and scientific reports. Second, the legislative process demonstrates how myth sheltered the policy from political attack. Finally, the launch of Telesat's first satellite exposes how myth was a means to garner public support.

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To my parents, who have instilled in me a curiosity for all things Canadian.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF ACRONYMNS

ARPA	Advanced Research Projects Agency
AT&T	American Telephone and Telegraph
AWPPA	Arctic Waters Pollution Prevention Act
BBG	Board of Broadcast Governors
BCE	Bell Canada Enterprises
CANSAT	Canadian Satellite Corporation
CBC	Canadian Broadcasting Corporation
CNCP	Canadian National-Canadian Pacific
CPR	Canadian Pacific Railway
CRTC	Canadian Radio and Telecommunication Commission
CTC	Canadian Transport Commission
DEW	Distance Early Earning
DOC	Department of Communication
DOT	Department of Transport
DRTE	Defence Research Telecommunications Establishment
ISIS	International Satellites for Ionospheric Studies
NASA	National Aeronautics and Space Administration

NDP	New Democratic Party
NTV	National Television Network
STEM	Storable Tabular Extendible Member
TCTS	TransCanada Telephone System
VOIP	Voice-Over-Internet-Protocol

CHRONOLOGY

1945

Arthur C. Clarke published his famous article entitled "Extra-Terrestrial Relays" that envisioned a global satellite communication system.

1957

The Soviet Union launched Sputnik, the first artificial satellite, which spurred research and development by the US and other western countries including Canada.

1958

The Defence Research Telecommunications Establishment based outside of Ottawa submitted a proposal to NASA to build satellites for ionospheric experiments. This developed into the Alouette and ISIS programs.

1960

The first successful launch of the American DELTA Vehicle that would later be used for most major satellite launches including Telesat's Anik A series.

1961

The commencement of AT&T's Telstar and Hughes Aircraft's SYNCOM communication satellite programs.

1962 (August)

President Kennedy's Communications Satellite Act was passed by the US Congress and it created Comsat, the world's first communication satellite corporation.

1962 (September)

Canada became the third country to space with the launch of the experimental satellite, Alouette I.

1964

As stipulated by the Comsat Act, Intelsat was formed to service most non-Soviet countries with satellite communications. Canada was represented by the crown corporation, Canadian Overseas Telecommunication Corporation, which owned 3.5% of Intelsat.

1965	Comsat launched the first commercial communication satellite known as Early Bird.
1966 (October)	The Power Corporation and Niagara Television Ltd. applied to the BBG for a licence to establish a satellite television network.
1966 (May)	The Privy Council commissioned J.H. Chapman to lead a study of the scientific and technical aspects of space programs and communication satellites.
1967	J.H. Chapman released the study entitled *Upper Atmosphere and Space Programs in Canada* that called on Parliament to create a domestic commercial communication satellite system.
1968	The White Paper on A Domestic Satellite Communication System for Canada was published and concluded that a domestic communication satellite system was vital for the growth, prosperity, and unity of Canada.
1969 (September)	The American oil tanker, S.S. *Manhattan*, traversed the Northwest Passage from east to west. This action raised the issue of Arctic Sovereignty between Canada and the US.
1969 (January)	Quebec's Minister of Education, Jean-Guy Cardinal, signed an agreement with France to allow Quebec to participate in the Franco-German *Symphonie* communication satellite program.
1969 (March)	Bill C-184, the Telesat Bill, was introduced by the Minister of Communications Eric Kierans to the House of Commons. The Bill proposed the creation of a satellite communication corporation to be given a monopoly and be owned by three entities (the federal government, the telecommunication carriers and the general public through shares).
1969 (June)	The Telesat Act received royal assent without any major revisions or amendments despite some challenge by the NDP and Telesat Canada was incorporated. A national contest led to the naming

of Telesat's first satellite after the Inuit word for "little brother," Anik.

1970
Telesat selected the Hughes Aircraft Company of California to build the Anik series of communication satellites.

1971 (December)
Gerry Kenney's "Man in the North" study that consulted with Inuit leaders and elders concluded that exisiting and alternative communication technologies were preferred over communication satellites.

1971
The Department of Communication which was created in 1969 released its first comprehensive study entitled *Instant World: A Report on Telecommunications in Canada.*

1972
In front of a live television audience, Anik A1 was successfully launched by a DELTA rocket in Cape Kennedy, Florida. This marked the world's first launch of a commercial, domestic communication satellite.

1973
Start of commercial services on Anik A1. The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) was Telesat's first customer and provided live television to the Canadian North for the first time. Telesat's Anik A2 satellite was also launched by a Delta rocket in April.

1974
The first CRTC review of Telesat's Northern service where Inuit and Northern community leaders question Telesat's motivations and actions

"If my premises are correct, nationalism cannot provide the answer. Even if massive investments in flags, dignity, protectionism, and Canadian content of television managed to hold the country together a few more years, separatism would remain a recurrent phenomenon, and very soon again new generations of Canadians and Quebeckers would be expected to pour their intellectual energies down the drain of emotionalism... In the world of tomorrow...the state—if it is not to be outdistanced by its rivals—will need political instruments which are sharper, stronger, and more finely controlled than anything based on mere emotionalism: such tools will be made up of advanced technology and scientific investigation, as applied to the fields of law, economics, social psychology, international affairs, and other areas of human relations..."

❖ *Pierre Eliot Trudeau* **(Federalism, Nationalism and Reason, 1964)**

"Enormous improvements in communication have made understanding more difficult."

❖ *Harold Adams Innis* **(Minerva's Owl, 1947)**

"Canada, like other nation-states, suffers from a contradiction between its public mythologies and its reality. Perhaps we suffer more than most. Perhaps the explanation is that, while all countries are complex, the central characteristic of the Canadian state is its complexity."

❖ *John Ralston Saul* **(Reflection of a Siamese Twin, 1997)**

INTRODUCTION

Defining the Topic

Robertson Davies (1996) once stated that Canada is a country without a

mythology (p.43). According to Davies, mythology is a vital heuristic that helps explain

a people to itself. His argument was that while Canada has a rich mythology, it was only

during the last quarter of the twentieth century that Canadians have been on a quest to

discover this tradition. It is difficult to argue with his assessment of the importance of

myth to the soul of a nation, yet there is one question that emerges: does a myth benignly

explain an existing phenomenon to a nation or does the myth engender a reality that was

not present before the explanation? In the case of Canadian communication policy,

Canadian political economists of communications have observed that mythology has

been used not to explain but to manufacture a reality.

The idea that Canada exists because of communications is the core myth referred

to by policymakers, government officials and industry leaders. This myth is evident from

the earliest to the most recent policy documents. As for the most recent, the 2003

Standing Committee Report on Canadian Heritage entitled *Our Cultural Sovereignty*

concludes with a postscript by the chair, MP Clifford Lincoln:

> The broadcasting system is vital for our lives as Canadians... As a country
> of vast dimensions and distances, broadcasting is the key link among us,
> and our voice and ears... Not only must we preserve our broadcasting
> system, but we must strengthen it and enhance it, so as to ensure its long-
> term stability and future (Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage,
> 2003, p. 618).

1

The explicit conclusions that the strength of Canadian broadcasting determines the strength of Canada as a whole, and that the geographic features of Canada could only be overcome with a strong communication link were also evident seventy-four years earlier in the 1929 Aird Commission: "Canada has a comparatively small population, scattered over a vast tract of country... We believe that broadcasting should be considered of such importance in promoting the unity of the nation that as a subsidy by the Dominion Government should be regarded as an essential aid to the general advantage of Canada" (Royal Commission, 1929, p. 10).

The following logical statement summarizes the myth that has dominated the country for as long as it has existed: Since Canada is a massive country spanning approximately 4,500 kilometres from north to south and 6,400 kilometres from east to west with a majority of its population concentrated on its southern border, then communications is a core component to the nation's political viability and cultural vitality. The extent to which this belief is engrained into public consciousness makes the myth that much more difficult to refute. In fact, Canadian history is often read not as a sequence of revolts and battles like other nations, but as a sequence of newly devised communication technologies from the railway to the radio to the television and now to the Internet. However, some scholars have argued that Canada persists not *because of* but *despite* communications (Babe, 1990, p. 7). These scholars point to the tendency of communications to promote continental and even global integration as a direct repudiation of the myth that communications aids Canada's sovereignty and longevity.

The implication of such a critique is that Canadians need to think twice about the myths that they propagate. According to the American historian Peter Novick (1988),

myths and the societies that uphold them are at risk when "that which they prophesy fails to materialize" (p. 5). One might argue that Christianity has been strained by the indefinite postponement of the Second Coming and Marxism has been weakened by capitalism's continued existence. In the case of the Canadian communication myth, the persistent effort to frame new communication technologies as solutions to larger problems may soon come under disrepute. Therefore, to view these technologies in such a deterministic manner may be misguided and even irresponsible. Greater imagination is required to not view Canada as such an instable nation and its vast geographic features as a hindrance. In other words, there needs to be a reconsideration of Vincent Massey's observation that Canada has a "problem" of geography (Royal Commission, 1951, p. 11). One solution is to reassess the massive space not as a handicap inhibiting cultural and political growth, but as a positive feature that is available to only a few countries in the world. This is not to suggest that communications is not important; it does indeed play a necessary role connecting this country. With that said, it should not be viewed in such a deterministic manner. As Robert Babe suggests, there are also many examples of how communications has harmed the nation's vitality. The most pressing example is the contradiction between the belief that television can unite the country and the fear that television will increase the rate of Canada's Americanization. Since communications is not as deterministic as some presume and may indeed be a double-edged sword, there has to be more to the Canadian soul than just communications and technology.

In this thesis, I study how mythology has been utilized by both the federal government and private industry to formulate, influence and justify communication policies. Since this is a broad topic, a case study approach will examine how myth has

3

affected Canadian communication satellite policy. In particular, a study of the formation

of Telesat, Canada's commercial communication satellite corporation, will reveal how

both Bell Canada and Ottawa used myth to produce and enact a favourable policy. It is

necessary to note that the case study only examines the period that begins with the

inception of a Canadian communication satellite policy in the early 1960s and ends with

the 1974 CRTC hearings on Telesat's impact on Northern communities—the formative

years. The principal aim of this project is to ascertain whether myth is intentionally

perpetuated to play an active role in the formation of policy or whether the myth follows

the reality produced by a policy. In other words, does a myth benignly explain a

phenomenon or does the myth engender a phenomenon.

The first chapter provides the context. Since myth is a term that is widely used

both in academia and the popular press, I define exactly what I mean by myth and how I

intend to use the concept. I begin by placing this study in the tradition developed by

Canadian political economists of communications. The purpose is to situate the topic

into a larger field of scholarship stemming from the work of Dallas Smythe. Although

there is a strong tradition that is continued by Robert Babe and Vincent Mosco, the

scholarship lacks a specific historical and theoretical analysis of how myth operates in the

policy process on the microcosmic level. In other words, Smythe, Mosco and Babe have

all adeptly studied the link between mythmaking and the policy process as it operates in

larger themes of Canadian communications and telecommunications, but a case study of

the development of one particular institution has yet to be completed. A thorough study

of Telesat's inception and the various documents and cultural texts that supported its

creation—including the 1966 Chapman report, the White Paper on satellite

communications, and the CBC's coverage of the launch of Anik I—will help to enrich the scholarship that examines the larger trends related to the Internet (Mosco) and the history of telecommunications in Canada (Babe).

The subsequent portion of the first chapter examines the work of Roland Barthes and Claude Levi-Strauss to identify five characteristics of myth: (1) myth is both "historical and ahistorical;" (2) myth is composed of smaller units; (3) myth has a "buttonholing" character on an individual; (4) myth is depoliticized speech; (5) myth offers the appearance of resolved contradictions. The purpose is to use these characteristics to approach the various policy documents and media reports associated with Telesat's inception. Following this portion, the chapter outlines how myths are instilled into public consciousness through rituals and commemorative ceremonies. Using Paul Connerton's theory on rituals, I provide the context for how the federal government used public rituals to focus attention on the role of Inuit society in Canadian satellite communications. The key text for this portion is the CBC's coverage of the launch of Anik I.

Having provided a review of theory and methodology in chapter one, the second chapter introduces the founding myths that were to influence the myth associated with Telesat and satellite communications. Since Levi-Strauss argues that a myth is only understood when it is divided into its separate units, this thesis first examines the three founding myths. First, the most important myth is the notion that Canada is a communication state. According to this belief, Canadian political, economic, and social viability depends on a strong and modern communication technology infrastructure. Second, following World War II (WWII) and the development of radar installations in

the arctic, Canada's political and cultural imagination turned to the North. The ensuing

myth developed in the writings and speeches of Pierre Berton and John Diefenbaker

claims that Canada's destiny lies in its ability to exploit the North and bring it closer to

the body politic. Finally, beginning with the creation of Bell Canada in 1880 by a special

federal charter, the last myth concerns Bell's relationship to the federal government as a

"chosen instrument". This concept suggests that Bell Canada is an indigenous corporate

citizen whose central concern is to promote the country's national interest.

Chapter three examines the emergence of communication satellites and the forces

that caused Ottawa to create a domestic commercial communication satellite system. The

first part traces the history of communication satellites. Here the context for Telesat is

established by analyzing the American experience with the creation of their own

commercial satellite system, and Canada's early scientific satellites used to study the

earth's ionosphere. The second part examines three important historical events that

produced a state of urgency causing Ottawa to move quickly on satellites. These three

events allowed for the convergence of interests between Ottawa and Bell Canada. It is

necessary to note that each of these three events tested or challenged the core myths. The

Power Corporation's bid for a national satellite television network questioned Bell

Canada's leading role as a "chosen instrument"; Quebec's interest in the Franco-German

Symphonie communication satellite system questioned Ottawa's authority to control

communications and thus the state; the voyage of the American oil tanker, *Manhattan*,

through the Northwest Passage challenged Canada's ability to claim sovereignty and

exploit the North. It was in this state of urgency and uncertainty that I argue that myth

triumphed over these challenges to serve as a vital component to ensure a speedy and uncompromising execution of policy.

In the fifth chapter, I examine the policy documents that established the myths specific to Telesat. Each of these three documents extended one of the core myths to include communication satellites: (1) The Chapman Report extended the myth of Canada as a communication state; (2) The White Paper on a Domestic Satellite Communication System for Canada extended the myth of the North as a crucial frontier; (3) Instant World: A Report on Telecommunications in Canada extended the myth of Bell Canada as a "chosen instrument". Following this review, I move to the core section of my thesis. By studying the legislative process involved in passing the Telesat Act, I demonstrate how myth fulfilled its role as defined by Barthes in depoliticizing the Telesat Bill. Since the Liberal government did not have a majority, the passing of the legislation was not inevitable. As a result, the government highlighted the myths to reduce the political manoeuvrability of the opposition parties. The goal was to present the bill as an essential piece of legislation that if passed would ensure future Canadian prosperity and socio-political vitality. If either the New Democratic Party or the Progressive Conservative Party opposed the bill, they would appear to also oppose Canada's destiny. The result was that the Telesat Act was given royal assent on June 27, 1969 without any major revisions or amendments. Finally, although the myths ensured Parliamentary assent, the last portion examines how the Liberal government incorporated rituals and news spectacles to ensure public support for Telesat. In this part, I juxtapose the public rituals that incorporated Inuit culture and society with the lesser-known critiques of Telesat that

emerged in a few newspaper articles and the 1974 CRTC hearings on Telesat's impact on the North and Inuit society.

What is Telesat?

Created by an Act of Parliament in 1969, Telesat was a unique product of Canadian communication policy. There were two major policy studies that called for the creation of a commercial domestic communication satellite system: the Chapman report on the Upper Atmosphere and Space Programs in Canada and the White Paper on a Domestic Satellite Communication System for Canada. These documents highlighted three aims for the satellite system:

> 1. It should promote the financial sustainability of the domestic scientific and engineering industries.
>
> 2. It should promote the social integration of French and English Canada.
>
> 3. It should promote the economic, social and political integration of Canada's Northern communities into the larger body politic.

Whereas the government would normally establish either a completely private company such as Bell Canada (1880) or a completely public company such as the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (1932), Telesat was formed as a mixed private-public venture. It was to be owned by three entities: the federal government, the telecommunication carriers, and the general public through a share offering.[1] However, in reality, Ottawa and the telecommunication carriers, especially Bell Canada, controlled the company that was given a monopoly over satellite communications.

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[1] The general public would be denied ownership in Telesat when the public shares were never offered. Telesat's Board of Directors argued that the company had enough capital and these shares were unnecessary.

Between 1972 and 1976, Telesat launched three satellites. These satellites,

collectively known as Anik A, each had a capacity for twelve communication channels.

The decision to procure three satellites was marked by controversy. First, the award of

the contract to the Hughes Aircraft Company of California seemed to contradict the goal

of fostering the domestic industry. Second, the decision to award a $31 million contract

for three satellites was seen as unnecessarily ambitious and even superfluous. This

controversy was exacerbated by restrictions on Telesat to only operate as "carrier's

carrier."[2] As a result, Telesat's early years included financial difficulties since it was

only able to lease eight of the twenty-six channels (Babe, 1990, p. 226). By the mid

1970s, during the economic instability of that time, it became clear that the federal

government's position in Telesat was dependent on the private telecommunication

carriers. This situation was exploited by the carriers who usurped control of Telesat by

forcing the company to join the Bell-controlled TransCanada Telephone System (TCTS).

The late 1970s and early 1980s witnessed a struggle between the Canadian Radio-

Television and Telecommunication Commission (CRTC) and the TCTS. After the TCTS

signed an agreement with Telesat that effectively integrated the corporation into the

telecommunication consortium, the CRTC ruled against this action. According to Debra

Slaco (1979), the CRTC favoured consumer interests over those of Bell Canada in its

decision that the Telesat/TCTS agreement was against "the national interest." (p. 342).

Nonetheless, Bell's lobbying efforts led the Minister of Communications, Jeanne Sauvé,

to overturn the CRTC decision. By the mid 1980s, it was clear that the result of Telesat

joining the TCTS meant that the company would be financially devastated by

---

[2] This meant that Telesat can only sell to certain telecommunication corporations and not directly to the
public, which severely limited their ability to sell all the available channels.

underutilization. The subsequent history of Telesat witnessed the company increasingly

become a component of Bell Canada's empire. First, the federal government divested its

shares in the company in 1992.[3] Second, in 1998, Bell Canada Enterprises (BCE)

obtained complete financial control of Telesat. Currently, Telesat is a major component

of BCE's integrated media conglomerate with its more recent satellites operating direct-

to-home television and broadband Internet services. Despite being a completely private

corporation, Telesat still holds its federally mandated monopoly on satellite

communications in Canada.

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[3] The Telesat Canada Reorganization and Divesture Act (1991, c. 52) has yet to be studied by communication scholars. Its recommendations and procedures seem to anticipate further restructuring of Canada's telecommunication industry and regulatory regime that emerges in the early and mid-1990s.

CHAPTER ONE:
MYTH AS A CONCEPT:
THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF
COMMUNICATIONS, MYTH AND RITUAL

Introduction

Myth is a concept that arises in many disciplines. Whether studying economics,

cultural studies, psychology, history or political science, scholars are increasingly using

myth in their analyses of various topics. The purpose of this first chapter is to delineate

the theoretical and methodological framework that guides the thesis.

The first section reviews the link between the political economy of

communication and the study of myth. Although myth as a topic is usually associated

with the cultural studies approach to communications, it also emerges in the work of

Canadian political economy of communication scholars. In particular, this section will

review how Dallas Smythe influenced a future generation of scholars, including Robert

Babe and Vincent Mosco, to incorporate the study of myth in their analyses. The purpose

of this section is to justify the methodological approach and connect this thesis to a rich

but fading academic tradition. The end of this section includes a literature review of the

policy studies, government documents, media reports and cultural texts that influenced

the creation of Telesat and will therefore later be analyzed in the thesis.

The following section examines myth as described by the structural

anthropologist , Claude Levi-Strauss, and the semiotician, Roland Barthes. The purpose

of this section is to derive from these theorists some key characteristics and qualities of

myth that will frame the subsequent study of myth and Telesat. Five notable characteristics of myth are relevant to my study, which derive from Levi-Strauss' 1955 article *The Structural Study of Myth* and Barthes' 1957 article *Myth Today*. First, a myth is a double structure that is both "historical and ahistorical." Second, a myth is not a single entity but is an amalgamation of several myths or *mythemes*. Third, a myth persuades individuals by causing an immediate impression that acts on the individual level. Fourth, a myth is effective because it depoliticizes a subject by purifying "the social relations and eliminating the tensions and conflicts that animate the political life of a community" (Mosco and Foster, 2001, p. 221). Finally, a myth has the quality of temporarily concealing the appearance of contradictions and complexities.

The last section examines myth in action: how myths operate in public consciousness. I argue that this process involves the use of rituals. Like the concept of myth, the concept of ritual is ambiguous and its exact definition has been under scholarly debate. In particular, sociologists and anthropologists have argued whether a ritual must be linked to religion or if it can also be linked to secular practices (Lukes, 1977, p. 53). The Oxford dictionary of the social sciences gives a general definition for ritual: "Repeatable patterns of behaviour that carry complex meanings, especially when shared within a group and related to basic themes of group culture (Calhoun, 2002, 'ritual')." My thesis follows the more open definition as expressed by Steven Lukes and Paul Connerton that a myth need not be religious and can be attached to cultural and political practices. In this case, I study how the spectacle of the launch of Anik I in 1972 and the CBC coverage of the event began a public ritual emphasizing the role of Inuit in satellite communications.

The Political Economy of Communication: How Myth Is Used to Study Trends in Communication Policy and Industry

Studying myth is not normally associated with the political economy of communication tradition. In terms of communication studies, most of the literature that incorporates myth tends to be focused on the analysis of the news media, advertising and cultural phenomena—not on policy, corporate reports and government documents. On the other hand, the political economy of communication is usually concerned with questions regarding ownership, regulation, and markets—not with semiotics, structural anthropology and social memory. However, Canadian scholars in the political economy tradition have long considered the study of myth as a component to their studies of government and corporate communication policy. Perhaps this link between myth and policy is more evident to Canadian scholars because the phenomenon is more prevalent in Canada. Arthur Kroker makes a similar argument in his essay *Technology and the Canadian Mind.* He claims that because technology is such an important part of the Canadian experience, it is not surprising that many leading Canadian intellectuals including Harold Innis, George Grant and Marshall McLuhan are concerned with technology (Kroker 1984, pp. 12-13). Likewise, since myth is such a vital component of Canada communication policy, then it is not surprising that the leading theorists on this phenomenon are also Canadian scholars. Regardless of these speculations, one clear reason for the concern about myth by Canadian scholars in the political economy of communication was Dallas Smythe's interest in the topic.

Smythe laid the foundation for the political economy of communication as a formal academic discipline. His 1960 article "On the Political Economy of Communications" in *Journalism Quarterly* was the first to delineate the approach's goals

and methods. The article's rationale was to distinguish this new tradition from the

administrative research that was taking place in communication departments in American

universities—in particular, his own University of Illinois at Champagne-Urbana.[4] This

article's most substantial contribution was its definition of the new discipline:

> The central purpose of the study of political economy of communication is
> to evaluate the effects of communication agencies in terms of the policies
> by which they are organized and operated. Our concern will therefore be
> with the structure and policies of these communication agencies in their
> social settings (Smythe, 1960, p. 564).

By establishing the importance of not just studying the structure and policies but also the

social settings in which communications operates, Smythe lays the groundwork for the

place of cultural analysis, such as myth, in the political economy of communication. In

particular, two papers specifically characterized the importance of the study of myth in a

political economy analysis.

In 1983, Smythe co-authored an article with Tran Van Dinh entitled *On Critical

and Administrative Research: A New Critical Analysis*. This paper along with his other

scholarship of the 1980s marked a point in Smythe's career when he was codifying his

legacy and the discipline for future scholars. In his review of the history of both critical

and administrative research, he notes how contemporary administrative research has

mystified technology "as the cure for the world's very real problems" (Smythe and Van

Dinh, 1983, p. 120). His analysis of administrative scholars such as Daniel Bell and

Wilson Dizard who celebrated the "information age" was twofold. First, such mystifying

scholarship must be criticized because its technological determinism obscures "the real

---

[4] See Thomas Gubacks's edited work *Counterclockwise* and Dallas Smythe's unpublished autobiography
found at the Simon Fraser University archives for more information on Smythe's awkward relationship
with his fellow faculty members at the University of Illinois in Champagne-Urbana

process of change." Although he does not cite Barthes, his critique echoes Barthes'

characterization of myth as depoliticized speech. Second, Smythe admits that the critical

communication scholar should study this type of scholarship because it provides insight

into the mechanics of the institutions that support such views:

> [A]nalysis of such work occasionally provides valuable information with
> which critical theorists can better understand the direction of monopoly
> capitalism and the tactics of its academic apologists" (Smythe & Van
> Dinh, 1983, p. 120).

In other words, critical scholars should not ignore the myths that surround relevant topics;

rather, studying these myths is a valuable entry points to larger political and economic

issues.

Smythe followed his own advice and specifically examined the role of myth in his

seminal 1986 lecture for a symposium at Queen's University entitled "Ideology, Culture

and 'Technology.'" As a pedagogical tool, he prefaced his remarks by recounting the

Hans Christian Andersen fable *The Emperor's New Clothes.* The fable tells the story of

two conniving tailors who deceive a vain emperor by requesting to design a set of

clothing that would be so finely woven that only intelligent people will appreciate its

beauty. In reality, the emperor was duped into wearing nothing at all. Nonetheless, the

unsuspecting emperor believed the tailors' claims and he paraded around his kingdom in

the nude. The sycophants of the court were too afraid to comment knowing that they

would then be considered dull for not appreciating the garments. However, the fable

concludes when an innocent child cries out, "the emperor has no clothes." For Smythe,

the fable was a pedagogical tool to cause his audience to start thinking critically about the

illusions that surround technology in the form of myths. He then identifies with the child in the fable:

> "Technology" is a new suit of clothes for the emperor. The hucksters of the economic system...loudly proclaim the glories of "technology" and its latest incarnation, "Information Technology." It should not be a secret: the notion of "Technology" is a pernicious myth. The thinness of the myth, as indeed in Andersen's fable, focuses on an idealist illusion. There is no materiality to it (Smythe, 1986, p. 14).

Again, without citing Barthes, Smythe has a clear theoretical understanding of why myths are so pernicious. Through a thin veil, the myths surrounding technology obscure the public from perceiving underlying political and economic forces. Those who support the myths such as administrative researchers like Daniel Bell are similar to the court sycophants. On the other hand, Smythe's critical approach is reminiscent of the daring, young child who is not afraid to expose a subject.

Smythe's deep interest in myth was inherited by the subsequent generation of Canadian scholars of the political economy of communication—namely, Robert Babe and Vincent Mosco. In fact, Robert Babe's most noteworthy book, *Telecommunications in Canada*, was directly influenced by Smythe's 1986 lecture at Queen's University. Babe admits his debt to this lecture in the book's preface (Babe, 1990, p. xiv). The book surveys the history of Canadian telecommunication under the backdrop of five reoccurring myths. His overall intention was to dispel "myths, past and present" (Babe, 1990, p. 5). Unlike Smythe, Babe connects his analysis to Barthes' work on myth. In particular, he is interested in Barthes' discussion of how myth deprives an object of history and politics (Babe, 1990, p. 4). Likewise, Vincent Mosco's book *The Digital Sublime* analyzes how the myths associated with cyberspace act as an end to politics,

geography and history. Mosco connects his work to Smythe's legacy placing his work as a bridge between cultural studies and political economy (Mosco, 2004, p. 7). Throughout his scholarship, Mosco has been interested in how myth and policy interact. In an article entitled "The Mythology of Telecommunication Deregulation," he addresses five myths that are promoted by policymakers and administrative research scholars (Mosco, 1990, p. 37).

A key aspect of method followed by Babe and Mosco is that their examination of myth involves the process of dissecting their subjects into smaller parts. This approach echoes Levi-Strauss' observation that myths are best understood when accounting for the smaller units or *mythemes* that work together. As a result, Babe's work does not analyze myth in Canada but several myths. Mosco also looks at multiple myths associated either with the Internet or with deregulation. Therefore, following in this tradition, this study of Telesat will divide the overall myth into its most basic units.

The unique aspect of this study in relation to previous studies on myth is the focus on a single policy. As opposed to Mosco's contemporary examination of the myths associated with the digital age that crosses national borders and Babe's broad historical examination of the myths associated with telecommunications in Canada, this work concentrates on a clearly demarcated period in history and on a specific phenomenon. The time frame begins with the launch of Sputnik in 1957 that sparked government involvement in satellite communications, traces the creation of Telesat during the late 1960s, and ends after the launch of Anik I and the subsequent CRTC hearings on Telesat's impact on the North in 1974. In order to access this period of history, a number of primary sources were consulted to reveal what myths were propagated and how these

myths developed over time. There are three core policy documents that enshrined mythology in Telesat: the 1967 Chapman Report by the Science Secretariat of the Privy Council, the 1968 White Paper on Domestic Satellite Communication System for Canada by the Department of Industry, and the 1971 *Instant World: A Report on Telecommunications in Canada* by the Department of Communications.

The study of how the myths translated into the political process was completed by accessing Hansard's publication of House of Commons records and a number of rare documents collected by the (now defunct) Simon Fraser University Telecommunication Research Group, which included my committee member Professor Peter Anderson. These documents include party memoranda concerning the Telesat Bill and press releases from the Department of Communications. Finally, sources for the study on the CBC's coverage of the Anik I launch were retrieved from the National Archives' Telesat Canada and David A. Golden[5] fonds. Other primary and secondary documents include pre-Confederation debates from British Columbia's legislature and nineteenth century public relations documents from the Canadian Pacific Railway, Supreme Court of Canada rulings on Bell Canada, CRTC rulings and interventions regarding Telesat, Telesat and Bell Canada shareholder's annual reports, and a number of newspaper articles on subjects related to Telesat and Bell Canada. The wide body of literature compiled for this study provides an interesting and an original insight into the discourses related to the creation of Telesat.

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[5] David A. Golden was the first President of Telesat.

Barthes and Levi-Strauss: 5 Characteristics of Myth

Claude Levi-Strauss and Roland Barthes established myth as a formal academic term in the 1950s. Previously, myth was normally associated with fictitious stories that contribute to the elaboration of a cosmological system and to a cohesive social identity. Even today, the Oxford Modern English Dictionary upholds the interpretation that myth must refer to a fictitious event where myth is defined as "a traditional narrative involving supernatural or imaginary persons and embodying popular ideas on natural or social phenomena" (Swanell, 1992, p. 705). Levi-Strauss and Barthes' contribution was to attribute myth to real, historical events and to associate the concept with phenomena in contemporary society.

Levi-Strauss (1979), the founder of structural anthropology, repudiated this conception of myths as a product of superstitious and primitive minds (p. v). He argued that because of this association to fiction, the study of myth has been erroneously reduced to either "idle play or a crude kind of philosophic speculation" (Levi-Strauss, 1963, p. 207). In his 1955 article "The Structural Study of Myth",[6] Levi-Strauss' stated that it does not matter whether a myth refers to an event that happened; instead, the importance of a myth is that it expresses the "fundamental feelings common to the whole of mankind" and "provide some kind of explanations for phenomena which they [mankind] cannot understand" (p. 207). Myths are not just present in all societies whether they are advanced, primitive, contemporary, or ancient, but there are similarities between the myths conveyed by each society. Three key characteristics of myth emerge in "The

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[6] In 1963, "The Structural Study of Myth" was republished in Levi-Strauss' seminal book *Structural Anthropology.*

Structural Study of Myth:" a myth comprises contradictory elements, a myth is both historical and ahistorical, and a myth is a narrative that includes multiple components.

Levi-Strauss' core argument is that myths are stories that act as a heuristic tool for societies to manage contradictions and paradoxes in social life. Although these contradictions can never be resolved, the myth gives the appearance of resolution or at the very least it makes these contradictions more manageable. His example is the Oedipus myth. This myth acted as a tool for the ancient Greeks to manage their contradicting views on the origins of humans. On the one hand, their cosmic view from their mythology stated that humans were autochthonous—originating from one. On the other hand, their experiential knowledge was that humans are born from the union of a man and a woman—originating from two. The role of the Oedipus myth was to meld these two paradoxical views into a single narrative. The result was that both views could be true: "Although experience contradicts theory, social life validates cosmology by its similarity of structure. Hence cosmology is true" (Levi-Strauss, 1963, p. 216).

A modern example of the role of myth in Canadian society is the contradiction between the notion that Canadians are a people that enjoy living in the wilderness and the reality that most Canadians live in urban or suburban environments. The myth that helps alleviate this contradiction is the notion of "cottage country" or "the cabin retreat." Mordechai Richler's novels of post World-War II Montreal, including *Solomon Gursky was Here* and *Barney's Version*, are emblematic of the common narrative in Canadian literature that unfolds in two settings: the city and the wilderness.[7] In the United States, a core contradiction in their political ideology is the desire for individuality coupled with

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[7] See Margaret Atwood's *Survival* for a more extensive review of myths and Canadian literature.

the will to participate in the collective (Mosco and Foster, 2001, p. 219). One myth that helps to resolve this paradox is their national motto *e pluribus unum* (out of many, one). Similar to the Oedipus myth, the power of these North American myths is the characteristic of not denying the contradiction but melding the opposing views into a single narrative. The result is that while humans cannot resolve these fundamental divisions, the myths make them manageable. Although most Canadians do not live close to nature, this idea of owning or visiting a cottage and escaping for the summer or the winter helps maintain this image of Canadians as a people who live in and enjoy the outdoors. Likewise, for the Americans, their national motto does not supplant one political ideology over the other; rather, by stating the contradiction in a manageable phrase, both are feasible (Levi Strauss, 1963, p. 229).

Stemming from this ability of myth to reconcile contradictions is Levi-Strauss' (1963) argument that myths comprise a "double structure, altogether historical and ahistorical" (p. 210). In other words, a myth refers to a historical event—either one that took place or not—and turns this event into an ahistorical or timeless narrative that explains the present, the past, and the future. The example was the French historian Jules Michelet's description of the French Revolution: "That day…everything was possible…Future became present…that is, no more time, a glimpse of eternity" (as cited in Levi-Strauss, 1963, p. 210). Michelet's description turned the contingent event that was only a product of a particular moment in time and a certain situation in French political culture into a "non-reversible series of events the remote consequences of which may still be felt at present" (p. 209). Furthermore, the event has become a myth that not only influences the present, but its interpretation allows for the inference of future events.

As a result, the "French Revolution" is a double structure that describes both France in the late eighteenth century and the eternal France.

Levi-Strauss' most important contribution to myth as a formal academic topic was his elucidation of how to properly study myth. Stemming from his structuralist approach, a myth "like the rest of language, is made up of constituent units" (Levi-Strauss, 1963, p. 210). These constituent units or *mythemes* concatenate to form a larger narrative. Therefore, when studying a myth it is necessary to dissect the narrative into these smaller units. The meaning of a myth comes from the relation between the *mythemes* (Johnson, 2003, p. 89). He compared his analysis of myth to the study of an orchestral composition. Both are comprised of a number of units that are produced by a number of instruments. The only way to efficiently study an orchestra and a myth is to dissect it into the units and instruments. Levi-Strauss incorporated this technique in his analysis of the Oedipus myth. Overall, his dissection of the Oedipus myth is rather difficult for the non-specialist to understand (Johnson, 2003, p. 91). However, the key lesson for the analyst is to examine the entire myth; even the *mythemes* that may seem minor at first glance could have a vital role.

Whereas Levi-Strauss' anthropological approach was more objective and neutral in its position to myth, Roland Barthes, the French semiologist and literary critic, described them as intentional and political. In his 1957 book of collected essays, *Mythologies*, Barthes analyzes texts and images of popular French culture. He describes how they acted as a legitimating force for the post-WWII French bourgeoisie and imperialist social order (Chandler, 2002, pp. 144-146). The most formative essay in the collection is "Myth Today" that specifically describes how myth operates. Throughout

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the essay, Barthes refers to the cover of the magazine *Paris Match* to didactically

demonstrate the characteristics of myth as a mode of communication. The cover includes

an image of a young black soldier dressed in French army fatigues. The soldier is

saluting the French flag. According to Saussurean semiotics, the image works on two

levels. On the denotative level, the literal interpretation is "a black soldier salutes the

French flag" (Barker, 2003, p. 92). On the connotative level, the cultural codes of post-

WWII France dictate a more ideological interpretation to the viewer including Barthes

(1972):

> I see very well what it signifies to me: that France is a great Empire, that
> all her sons, without any colour discrimination, faithfully serve under her
> flag, and that there is no better answer to the detractors of an alleged
> colonialism than the zeal shown by this Negro in serving his so-called
> oppressors (p. 116).

Barthes' description of the image of the French soldier demonstrates the characteristic of

myth as effectively operating on the individual level. This process is expressed by a

series of sentences that include pronouns where the "it" denotes the myth and the "I" or

"me" represent the individual that the myth acts upon:

> it is *I* whom it has come to seek... It is turned towards *me*...it comes and
> seeks *me* out in order to oblige *me* to acknowledge the body of intentions
> which have motivated it and arranged it there as the signal of an individual
> history (Barthes, 1972, pp. 124-125).

In the case of the image of the French soldier, the myth subjects the viewer through its

"buttonholing" character. The result is that there is little flexibility between the

designer's intentions and the viewer's interpretation. However, the effectiveness of this

process is that unlike propaganda, myth operates with little or even no trace. In other

words, myth is a system of communication that acts subconsciously. The power of myth

is its matter-of-fact tone that has the impression of "going without saying" and not appearing to need to be deciphered, interpreted or demystified (Chandler, 2002, pp. 145-146). Accordingly, Barthes (1972) contends that the most effective myths emerge in proverbs. The aphoristic nature of a proverb makes its meaning seem like "common sense" (p. 155).

The problem for Barthes is that the process whereby ideology is unconsciously inculcated and perpetuated eliminates political discussion of substantial issues. He labels this process where topics seem like "common sense" as depoliticized speech (Barthes, 1972, p. 142). This process works by turning a controversial, political topic into something outside of politics and therefore unworthy for debate. The distinction is clear: politics is dialectical, while a naturalized myth is immutable and singular. According to Hegelian dialectics, myth ensures that the thesis prevails without consideration for the antithesis let alone the need for synthesis. The power of myth is this ability to steer debate and public consciousness to a desired end without any criticism and compromise.

Similar to Levi-Strauss' characteristic that a myth alleviates contradictions, this depoliticizing process does not occur through denial (Barthes, 1972, p. 143). Instead, the contradictions or the critiques are assimilated into the myth in a manner that is non-threatening. Again, the example of the black French soldier is instructive. Imperialism and colonialism are not denied. Through a hegemonic process, the forces of colonialism include a black soldier to produce the desired end. In this case, since the black soldier shows allegiance to France, colonialism may not be such a pernicious endeavour. As a result, the black soldier becomes an integral part of empire and not its target.

The consequence of myth as depoliticized speech is the naturalization of a subject. Similar to Levi-Strauss' characteristic of myth as a double structure, Barthes contends that myth turns history into nature. Again, the distinction is clear: history is something that is contingent and reliant on political forces, while nature is beyond the realm of politics and is even providential. In nature, political intention "is somehow frozen, purified, eternalized, *made absent*" (Barthes, 1972, p. 124). The French Revolution epitomizes this process. The messy politics that witnessed various social classes unite to establish the French Republic is not understood in its historical context. Instead, the French Revolution became a timeless, ahistorical event that can be generalized. As a result, the status quo continues, the underlying sociopolitical forces are obscured, and what was historically contingent becomes natural.

Barthes' description of myth includes some room for the critique of myth or demystification. As he observes, "there is no fixity in mythical concepts: they can come into being, alter, disintegrate, disappear completely" (Barthes, 1972, p. 120). Herein lies the Achilles' heel. Since myths are diachronic, a historical study will expose the politics that underlie a myth. As a myth changes over time, the origins and reasons for the myths are revealed to show the sociopolitical factors that support its existence. However, there is a *catch-22* embedded in Barthes' observation. He argues,

> Myth essentially aims at causing an immediate impression—it does not matter if one is later allowed to see through the myth, its action is assumed to be stronger than the rational explanations which may later belie it (Barthes, 1972, p. 130).

Although one may later demystify a subject, the myth may have already served its purpose. For example, a myth is employed by a certain class to determine a particular

societal mindset. The reason for this mindset is obscured because it seems natural to the specific society. However, as the needs of this certain class changes, the myths will soon follow. Since the old mindset is obsolete, members of society may become cognizant to the myths that once supported this framework. Nonetheless, this recognition may be in vain because new myths may have emerged in the meantime.

Myth in Action: The Ritual Prevails

The question stemming from both Barthes and Levi-Strauss is whether myths are as powerful as they suggest. In other words, do myths really engender a reality or do they follow an already established social belief —a "chicken or egg" dilemma. Referring back to Barthes' observation on the image of the French black soldier, did this image really instil a new sentiment in a person's consciousness or did it just mirror something that was already established? In this sense, the dilemma is similar to ascertaining whether commercial advertising is effective. If a person is determined to buy a brand of cornflakes, does it matter that they viewed a commercial for the product? Likewise, if a person is determined to view French colonialism as advantageous to those being colonized, does it matter that they viewed the cover of *Paris Match*? Perhaps this dilemma is answered by following scholars of advertising who contend that one clue for its effectiveness is that corporations continue to expend effort and large amounts of money into this endeavour (Schudson, 1984). Therefore, if a myth continues to be perpetuated, it is probable that it indeed has an operational value. Similar to advertising, the ubiquity of a myth is directly related to its success. The result of an enduring myth such as those concerning the French Revolution is that the myth eventually becomes a ritual.

According to the sociologist Steven Lukes (1977), a ritual is defined as a "rule-governed activity of a symbolic character which draws the attention of its participants to objects of thought and feeling which they hold to be of special significance" (p. 54). At first glance, there is little difference between the definitions of a myth and a ritual. They are both concerned with drawing the attention of a person to an object of thought. The one difference is the notion that a ritual is a "rule-governed activity." A myth becomes a ritual when a formal structure and order is established. Moreover, this practice is then repeated over time.

According to the critical sociologist Paul Connerton (1989), "to recite a myth is not necessarily to accept it" (p. 54). However, to enact a rite or a ritual is to "assent to its meaning" (Connerton, 1989, p. 46). The difference is that a ritual is habitual and reoccurring while a myth is noncommittal and intermittent. As an example of a ritual, Connerton notes the Jewish celebration of Passover, which is performed every year to remind Jews of their exodus from Egypt and into Israel. The reading of the Passover story (*haggadah*) differentiates from the reading of a novel or an article because it is read annually and is performed in a systematic order. In fact, the Hebrew word for Passover's evening ceremony, *seder*, translates to "order." Although Passover has variations over time and space, its essential components are consistent (Connerton, 1989, p. 57). The story of Passover is a myth but performing it every year over hundreds of years has made it a ritual.

The commemorative ceremony becomes the key conduit for the perpetuation of social memory and ideology over time (Connerton, 1989, pp. 70-71). These public ceremonies are effective because they are *performative* and require *formalism* in

language. By injecting performance and physical bodily practices into a ceremony, the participants engage in a process of enactment that tacitly implies consent to a certain ideology. It is difficult to attend a ceremony and not participate in the performance. For instance, everyone attending the Nuremberg rallies was required to perform the Nazi salute—the performance implied a person's assent to Nazi ideology (Connerton, 1989, p. 59). This may explain why performing this act in contemporary society mortifies some people. The reason is that the act is more than a random gesture but a sign of one's adherence to Nazism. One poignant example of the close relationship between performance and assent to an ideology came during the Christian Reformation. For Protestants, refusing to take part in the Eucharist was a vital step in the establishment of a new religious ideology.

Not only do ceremonies entail bodily practices, they also include formal or ritual language. The main characteristic of formal language is that during a ceremony there is a restricted vocabulary (Connerton, 1989, p. 60). Its purpose is to distinguish the ceremony from everyday life. As well, a restricted vocabulary ensures that the sequence of the ceremony draws to an intended conclusion. Again, Judaism offers a number of examples of ritual vocabulary including the Passover *seder*. The *seder* highlights the words of the ten plagues thematically throughout the ceremony and the participants are required to repeat these words at specified moments. Using a fixed vocabulary and repeating terms is another means for demonstrated assent.

CHAPTER TWO:
TELESAT'S FOUNDING MYTHEMES:
THE CANADIAN STATE, THE NORTH, AND BELL

Introduction

In the previous chapter, I summarized Claude Levi-Strauss and Roland Barthes'

theoretical understandings of myth as they apply to my approach. Five characteristics

were noted: (1) a myth is a double structure that is both historical and ahistorical; (2) a

myth causes an immediate impression on an individual; (3) a myth is *depoliticized*

speech; (4) a myth conceals the appearance of contradictions; (5) a myth is composed of

smaller units working together. Subsequently, I reviewed the work of Dallas Smythe,

Robert Babe and Vincent Mosco who have incorporated the study of myth in their

scholarship on the political economy of communication. The main methodological

feature of their work was to follow the fifth characteristic of myth—to divide a large

myth into its smaller units. In this chapter, I will commence my analysis by examining

the core *mythemes* that spawned the overall mythology associated with Telesat. The

chapter is divided into three sections with each exploring a particular *mytheme*.

The first section reviews the core myth that is the foundation for the overall

mythology of Telesat. This fundamental and indispensable *mytheme* is the notion that

Canada is a "communication state." Since Canada has a "large and untamed landmass"

that is sparsely populated along its southern border with the United States, its national

existence is indebted to its ability to facilitate east-west communications. In this section,

I will study the history of this myth and describe how it has been incorporated into a

general understanding of communication technology in Canada with respect to the railroad and the radio.

Stemming from this core *mytheme*, the second *mytheme* is the updated version that communication technology is a vital component for bringing the Northern regions of Canada into the state. This section traces the trends in political and popular culture following WWII. During the 1950s, John Diefenbaker and Pierre Berton helped to direct public consciousness to considering the North as the key to further national prosperity and sovereignty. Embedded in this myth are racially prejudiced notions of the Inuit as an inferior people who will eventually benefit from the development of the North.

Finally, the third *mytheme* concerns the role of Bell Canada in the Canadian state. In this section, I review how Bell has adeptly branded itself as an essential corporate citizen. Throughout its one hundred and twenty-five year history, Bell has managed to use this image to maintain dominance over the country's telecommunication industry. The aim of this section is to demonstrate how this myth has not only benefited the company, but it has also helped the federal government.

Canada as a Communication State

The foundation where every other myth rests is on the core belief that Canada is a society that exists *in* communication.[8] According to John Dewey (1966),

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[8] Maurice Charland's concept of Canada and "technological nationalism" is similar to the concept of Canada as a "communication state." Although his work was not consulted for this thesis, there is a similar approach. First, both works focus on the effects of Pierre Berton's popular histories. Second, both works consider Innis' examination of the CPR. Third, both works reveal the contradictions of Canada as a technological or communication state. However, one major methodological difference is that this thesis focuses on myth while Charland considers rhetoric. This is not a major difference but further work would be needed to bridge these two approaches (Charland, 1986).

> Society not only continues to exist *by* transmission, *by* communication, but it may fairly be said to exist *in* transmission, *in* communication. There is more than a verbal tie between the words common, community, and communication. Men live in a community in virtue of the things which they have in common; and communication is the way in which they come to possess things in common. What they have in common in order to form a community or society are aims, beliefs, aspirations, knowledge--a common understanding (p. 4).

Unlike some European societies, Canada has always feared the spectre of disunity. This fear is a logical result of the fact that some of the Canadians who established the country and continue to maintain it derive from distant and distinct lands. Whereas some nations have entrenched historic roots based on ties to the land and even bloodlines, Canada beyond the various indigenous populations is an amalgamation of different peoples—the descendants of old and new immigrants. As a result, it is not surprising that Canada's realization of its desire to be a cohesive nation has always been challenged by the "forces of geography" (Royal Commission, 1951, pp. 11-18) coupled with ethnic, religious and linguistic variety. The myth that emerges from this perception is that by strengthening the physical communication infrastructure, Canada can overcome its limitations. Robert Babe summarizes this myth of Technological Determinism by quoting a former Minister of Communications, Gerard Pelletier: "The existence of Canada as a political and social entity has always been heavily dependent upon effective systems of east/west communication" (as cited in Babe, 1990, p. 5). This myth has been present since the time of Confederation.

When Canadians learn about Confederation, one of the first topics discussed is the railroad. Building a railroad was John A. Macdonald's trump card. He used it to convince the leaders of the dispersed colonies that his "national dream" could be a reality. With historical hindsight and the aid of maps that clearly delineate fixed borders,

it is difficult for contemporary Canadians to imagine that the country's viability as a single political unit was once contestable. However, for those living before Confederation, an entire union of all of British North America was only one possibility. In fact, just a few years before Confederation, it appeared that the most feasible option was to create two British North Americas: one union of the Atlantic colonies and the continued union of Lower and Upper Canada (Quebec and Ontario). Even strong supporters of a single nation perceived the difficulties of uniting such a vast and sparsely populated land. In the words of James William Johnston, a member of Nova Scotia's legislature, "there are such difficulties in the way of this greater union as to render it impracticable for the present" (as cited in Ajzenstat, 1999, p. 262).

A railroad from the Atlantic to the Pacific was a means to help people perceive a country stretching the width of the entire continent. Perhaps the province whose place in Confederation hinged the most on a railroad was British Columbia. A debate in the BC legislature on March 16, 1870 reveals the anxiety of existing in a Canada that is not connected or *in* communication:

> J.S. Helmcken: We are a colony of England, and I don't know that many people object to being a colony of England; but I say that very many would object to becoming a colony of Canada. As a colony of England we have the right to legislate ourselves; if we become a colony of Canada, that power is taken away.

> De Cosmos: No, no.

> John Robson: It will give us more power.

> J.S. Helmcken: I say that the power of regulating our own commerce is taken away and the only power left to us is that of raising taxes for municipal purposes. That is the difference between being a colony of Canada and a colony of England. **The distance is so great between this colony and Ottawa, without any railway and without any telegraphic**

communication, that laws might be passed there which would ruin British Columbia, without our having any notice of them (as cited in Ajzenstat, 1999, p. 217; my emphasis).

Just over a year after this debate, BC joined Confederation following Macdonald's promise to complete a railroad in ten years (Innis, 1971, p. 72). The Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) embodied the perfect myth since it resolved two core issues.

First, by stretching from east to west, it helped to refute the arguments of those who either openly supported integration with the United States or viewed the north-south flow as inevitable. In other words, the CPR materialized the east-west vision. This is not to suggest that the north-south concept has any more connection to nature. They are both artificial interpretations. Although some historians have demonstrated that the country's river system dictates an east-west flow, this argument cannot explain all of Canada. Donald Creighton's St Lawrence River thesis initiated this interpretation. He argued that the flow of the St Lawrence from the Atlantic into the continent determined Canada's political and economic culture. Navigating the tributary rivers that flowed westward into what is now Quebec and Ontario was not an easy task, but once European settlers conquered these systems, they reaped the financial rewards and laid the groundwork for Canada:

> It was the one great river which led from Eastern shore into the heart of the continent. It possessed a geographical monopoly and it shouted its uniqueness to adventurers. The river meant mobility and distance; it invited journeyings; it promised immense expanses, unfolding, flowing away into remote and changing horizons. The whole west, with all its riches, was the dominion of the river. To the unfettered and ambitious, it offered a pathway to the central mysteries of the continent (Creighton, 1956, p. 6).

It is conceivable that Creighton's argument supports the unity of Eastern Canada, yet

Lake Champlain does not flow west but south into Vermont. However, the thesis falls

under disrepute when expanded to include all of Canada. Certainly there are major east-

west rivers such as the Saskatchewan, Churchill, and Athabaska, but how do the major

north-south rivers such as the Columbia and Red River fit into the equation? The answer

is that hindsight lends support to the expansion of Creighton's thesis.[9]

The construction of the CPR was intentionally publicized as an expansion of the

river system. This myth was perpetuated in literature disseminated to the public by the

Canadian Pacific Railway Corporation. One of its earliest documents was a pamphlet

entitled *The New Highway to the Orient: Across the Mountains, Prairies and Rivers of*

Canada:

> But finally a change came. The appearance of steam navigation in the
> inland waters accelerated the settlement of the fertile country at the west,
> towns and cities sprang up about the old outposts of the missionaries and
> fur traders, the Indians receded and disappeared, and agricultural products
> took the place of furs...Then came the railways penetrating the interior in
> every direction, bringing greater changes and giving a wonderful impetus
> to the western country (Canadian Pacific Railway, 1891, p.13).

The CPR helped the east-west, *a mari usque ad mare* (from sea to sea) vision of

Canadian nationalists to triumph over those who criticized the concept of a single and

united British North America. Now that the myth is engrained into public consciousness,

it is almost impossible to not conceive of such a Canada. As a result, it is easy for

Creighton and other scholars to notice the east-west rivers and ignore those that veer

southwards. The myth has naturalized the historic process of the struggle to construct an

east-west axis so that it is impossible to conceive of Canada in any other fashion.

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[9] See Hugh MacLennan's *Seven Rivers of Canada* for an interesting and insightful examination of the
connection between Canada's river system and socio-political themes.

In *Reflections of a Siamese Twin*, John Ralston Saul (1997) epitomizes the

sentiments of these nationalists when he states in a matter-of-fact tone, "the natural flow

in Canada is east-west" (p. 154). He supports this claim by not appealing to nature but to

history:

> In fact you can see the whole east-west story unfold, as in a prophecy understood by none of the participants, when Champlain on his first visit in 1603, without knowing where he really was or what lay ahead, allied himself with the Etchemins, Montagnais, and Algonquins at Tadoussac. The Hurons were in turn their allies, and so on... The shape of Canada was decided that first summer (Saul, 1997, p. 161).

Similar to Michelet description of the French Revolution, the day that Champlain allied

with the Huron and thereby became enemies with the Iroquois who lived to the south in

what is now New York state was the day that "everything was possible...Future became

present..." The railway only formalized what was natural and even "prophetic." What

gets lost in this historical hindsight are all the battles, political manoeuvres, trade

agreements, treaties, and other occurrences that could have possibly ended differently and

shaped a different continent. For instance, would we still conceive of an east-west axis if

the French had never been defeated in the Seven Years' War, if there had been no

American Revolution, or if the British had lost the War of 1812?

The second core issue to be resolved was that by passing through the Canadian

Shield and the Rocky Mountains, the CPR gave the impression that the country's harsh

terrain was not impervious. Canada's "problem of geography" appeared to be solved.

As a result, the scattered and isolated colonies, communities, forts and trading posts that

made up British North America were finally connected. This desire to solve the problem

of geography is evident in the CPR's route. Contrary to the route surveyed by Sir

Sanford Fleming that was longer but a lot easier to construct with only one major

mountain pass, the federal government preferred a more southerly route that would

connect more communities and reduce the route's length (Innis, 1971, pp. 102-103). The

railway's ability to transform nature into a liveable and viable country was perpetuated

by Canada's most popular historian, Pierre Berton. In his book *The National Dream*, the

narrative is set:

> [I]t was Macdonald's intention to defy nature and fashion a nation in the
> process. His tool, to this end, would be the Canadian Pacific. It would be
> a rare example of a nation created through the construction of a
> railway...The granite shield of Canada had to be cracked open to let the
> railway through. The mountain barrier must be breasted and broken
> (Berton, 1970, p. 389).

Berton emphasizes his argument by using the metaphor of Canada before the railroad as a

"corpse" that was transfused or vitalized by the CPR.

These two myths seem contradictory but that is a feature of myths. When put

under a lens, contradictions and absurdities emerge. On the one hand, the geography of

Canada dictates an east-west bias. Ostensibly, the railway is a natural extension to the

geographic feature of the river system. On the other hand, the land poses an inaccessible

frontier based on its vastness and geological features. Regardless of this paradox, the

railway and Confederation established the myth that Canada's natural destiny lies from

east to west but this hinges on the ability to construct appropriate communication

technology. Geography is a problem, but it is not insurmountable to those Donald

Creighton considers the "ambitious" and the "unfettered." Another feature of myth that

emerges is the absence of certain historical characters and the emphasis on the roles of

other characters. In the case of the CPR, the role of certain heroes such as Sir Sanford

Fleming have historically been emphasized while the labour of indentured Chinese labourers were left out of the grand narrative. It is only recently that Canadians have learned through the aid of Heritage Minutes of the role of Chinese labour in constructing this great communication link.

Following the CPR, every new communication medium has been considered a solution to Canada's "problem of geography." This is an interesting characteristic of myths. They never solve what they intend to fix but only give the impression of a resolution. According to Mosco, a myth is "a captivating fiction, a promise not fulfilled or simply unfulfillable" (Mosco and Foster, 2001, p. 219). Regardless of this tendency, Canadians continued and continue to this day to see new communication technologies as solutions to the "problem of geography." The radio is a good example as it highlights the fickleness of communication technology in causing more problems than solutions. The east-west axis was challenged by the development of a north-south radio broadcasting industry. In 1928, because of a radio broadcasting industry in Canada that was subservient to the American networks, Prime Minister Mackenzie King formed the Aird Commission to examine the current state of radio and recommend policy initiatives. This time the "problem of geography" was the proximity of the majority of Canada's population to American cities and their radio waves that entered Canada without regard to international boundaries (Hindley, Martin and McNulty, 1977, p. 44). On the one hand, the radio was a threat as it could disrupt Canada's east-west flow. On the other hand, the Aird Commission argued, "In a country of the vast geographical dimension of Canada, broadcasting will undoubtedly become a great force in fostering a national spirit and interpreting national citizenship" (Royal Commission, 1929, p.6).

The North as the Final Frontier

The Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and

Sciences (The Massey Commission) continued the tradition beginning with the railway

and followed by the Aird Commission. In the section on radio broadcasting, this tradition

was summarized:

> The historically-minded remembered that half a century earlier, Canadians
> had resisted the temptation to take the cheap way from Montreal to
> Winnipeg via Chicago, and had insisted on an all-Canadian railway. This
> apparently impossible feat was carried through by a remarkable
> combination of private enterprise and of public support and control. The
> policy was sharply criticized both then and later, but it has since been
> generally accepted that Canada's complex and costly railway system is the
> essential material basis of national existence. Many Canadians in the
> 1920's, recalling these facts, began to fear that cultural annexation would
> follow our absorption into the American radio system just as surely as
> economic and even political annexation would have followed absorption
> into the American railway system fifty years earlier (Royal Commission,
> 1951, pp. 23-24).

The Massey Commission, which deliberated from 1949 to 1951, updated the tradition of

viewing communication technology as "the essential material basis of national existence"

to fit the Cold War era. In the chapter "The Forces of Geography", Vincent Massey

recapitulates the dominant myth but adds another frontier. Once again, there are two

reoccurring forces: the "natural" east-west axis and the inhibiting geographic features.

First, Canada's "natural" east-west flow is susceptible to the "unnatural" cultural and

economic pull from the United States. Only through a concerted public-private venture

under government supervision in the realm of cultural expression will the "unnatural"

flow be reversed. Second, the geography of Canada presents a substantial challenge but

once solved it will reap great rewards:

The vast resources of our country are obviously a material advantage although a somewhat perilous one in this age. The intangible qualities of our sprawling mass of territory also have their consequences. Canada's scattered regions are dominated by the mysterious expanses of the Canadian Shield, with the still more serious Arctic beyond, pressing down and hemming in the areas of civilized life. No feeling person could be unaffected by the stark beauty of our hinterland. It has moved the artist as well as the prospector... Canadians have a quiet pride in what even in this overcrowded twentieth century world is still "the great lone land" (Royal Commission, 1951, p. 11).

The importance of this quotation must not be underestimated. A new frontier is introduced into the overall mythology of communication technology—the North.

Similar to the railroad and radio, the desire to extend Canada's dominion over the North has its roots in the fear that inaction will result in American annexation. It is not a coincidence that the spark of the Cold War between the West and the Soviet Union initiates a new curiosity for conquering and developing the North in Canada. Following the Soviet Union's successful test of an atomic bomb in 1949 and the rise of East-West tensions, there was an increasing amount of pressure on Ottawa to develop an early-warning radar system. This system was intended to detect Soviet bombers that would attack North America by flying over the North Pole. During the 1950s, Canada, with American assistance and financing, built three separate radar systems: the McGill Fence, Pinetree Line and the Distant Early Warning (DEW) Line. Each line was built farther north with the DEW Line stretching from the most northern parts of Alaska to the rim of the continental Northwest Territories through the belly of Baffin Island and over to Greenland. These projects helped direct Canada's attention to the North as both a strategic asset and a place for economic development.

Concurrent to this militarization of the North, Pierre Berton helped propagate the idea of the North as the next frontier with the release of *The Mysterious North* in 1956. Recounting his early childhood growing up in the Yukon during 1920s and his visits to different parts of the North in the 1950s, the book considers this vast region of Canada as a riddle that is waiting to be solved: "The North remains a country of unanswered questions, of geological puzzles and scientific mysteries" (Berton, 1964, p. 9). Furthermore, the North is described as a "fabric of mythology" with its stories of Arctic monsters, tropical oases, lost gold mines, stranded explorers, and the Northwest Passage. The main characters of the book and a majority of Berton's books on the North are the explorers, miners, labourers and industrialists. What is striking is the disregard shown to the Inuit. Although there is a quiet respect for the Inuit's ability to survive and navigate through their land, Berton can only judge them based on his own biases:

> [T]he Athapascans have roamed the river country like gypsies, migrating with the caribou by snowshoe or sled or by birch-bark canoe, living in hastily contrived skin tents, pursuing the game with spears and flint-tipped arrows... They have no art, no history, no religion—only a haunting fear of ghosts flitting unseen through the forest...except for the trapline, there is no work anywhere for the Indian, nor will there be until he has adapted himself to the white man's ways (Berton, 1964, pp. 265-267).

To the reader it is clear that the North will only prosper through industrialization. Berton compares two trips to Baffin Island—one before the construction of the DEW Line and one after. Before the construction of the DEW Line, the island was described as "bleak" and "primitive." Afterwards, "the great island had come alive with planes, machines, and men... Bulldozers had replaced Eskimo komatiks, and Coca-Cola flowed like ice water" (Berton, 1964, p. 205). Not only will prosperity come from military installations, but geologists and surveyors were paving the way for oil fields and mines.

Finally, bureaucrats were going to turn Frobisher Bay (now known as Iqualuit) into an

administrative centre with over one thousand people that would be "the hub of the great

frozen wilderness" (Berton, 1964, p. 212).

With the rise in industry and the descriptions of the North as a riddle that is ready

to be solved, it is not surprising that the North became a topic for political discourse. In

fact, when John Diefenbaker won the 1958 federal election with the largest margin of

victory up to that point in election history, one of the core agendas in his platform was the

"Northern Vision." First delivered in a speech in Winnipeg, the "Northern Vision" was

an extensions of Macdonald's "national dream." However, instead of the west, the next

frontier was the North:

> This national development policy will create a new sense of national
> purpose and national destiny. One Canada. One Canada, wherein
> Canadians will have preserved to them the control of their own economic
> and political destiny, Sir John A. Macdonald gave his life to this party. He
> opened the West. He saw Canada from East to West. I see a new
> Canada—a Canada of the North (as cited in Newman, 1963, pp. 217-218).

Similar to Macdonald, the "Northern Vision" hinged on " improving

transportation and communication." Unfortunately for Diefenbaker, his seven-year plan

stopped after his defeat in 1962. As well, capitulation to American presidents over

military matters weakened his all-Canadian vision—the integration with US forces

following the creation of NORAD and the BOMARC missile crisis. However, the myth

was established. Canada's political and economic destiny lay in its ability to solve the

mystery of the North. Transportation and communication were the natural choices to

realize this new national purpose. Nonetheless, there is a question that remains unasked:

would Canada be interested in the North if there was no Cold War and no desire by the

Americans to pay Canadian firms and native labourers to construct the DEW Line? This question is left for the historian to answer. What is clear is that the cultural, political, military and economic interest in the North that emerged during the 1950s helped to establish a myth that would flourish with the invention of the artificial satellite.

Bell as the "Chosen Instrument"

Considering the anxiety behind the first *mytheme* of Canada as a communication state, it is not surprising that several businesses have exploited this predisposition. Arguably, no company has been more successful at this than Bell Canada. Not only has Bell profited, but it has also reshaped the myth. The following syllogism best describes this dynamic process:

> 1. An effective communication system is essential to Canada's existence as a political and social entity.

> 2. Bell Canada provides an effective communication system.

> 3. Therefore, Bell Canada is essential to Canada's very existence as a political and social entity.

Using a syllogism is an appropriate tool. Within a syllogism, the layers are dependent on one another; the conclusion is only possible if the first two statements are true (Alexander, 1999). Therefore, there is a mutuality where the strength of Bell Canada's place in the overall myth is dependent on the strength of the myth of Canada as a communication state. In summary, the myth purports that Bell is a Canadian company that dutifully serves Canada's interests.

One of the most crucial myths that support Bell is Canada's peculiar connection to the inventor that gave the company its brand name—Alexander Graham Bell.

42

Canadians are inculcated with the belief that Alexander Graham Bell was a Canadian and the telephone is a Canadian invention. Unfortunately, the reality is less patriotic. In his book *How Societies Remember*, Paul Connerton (1989) argues that control of a society's memory conditions the hierarchy of power (p. 1). The originality of Connerton's work does not lie in his recapitulation of George Orwell's dictum: who controls the past controls the future; who controls the present controls the past. His contribution is his theories on how these memories manifest and are sustained through rituals. Although reciting a myth does not obligate a person to a certain disposition, performing a ritual necessitates one to "assent to its meaning" (Connerton, 1989, p. 44). Commemorative ceremonies are an example of rituals that transcend the generations to mystify and naturalize certain ideals into society through a participatory process. Such commemorative ceremonies continue to perpetuate the memory of Alexander Graham Bell as a Canadian. Most recently, the CBC's contest to elect *The Greatest Canadian* considered the inventor one place behind John A. Macdonald as the ninth "Greatest Canadian." The message for the public was that "every time Canadians make a telephone call, they can afford to feel a little national pride" (www.cbc.ca/greatest).

The reality of Alexander Graham Bell's connection to Canada and the telephone as a Canadian invention is more equivocal. What is clear is that Bell was born in Edinburgh, Scotland in 1847. Although he moved with his family to Brantford, Ontario at age 23, he only stayed in Canada from August 1870 to April 1871. Afterwards, he worked in Boston while still spending the summers until 1876 in Brantford. However, he never developed a Canadian identity. Instead, "he saw himself as a Scotsman living in the United States *en route* to American naturalization" (Rens, 2001, p. 53). Although he

lived in his country estate Beinn Breagh (Gaelic for "beautiful mountain") on the Cape

Breton coastline from 1890 until his death in 1922, he chose the locale for its particular

beauty and not some patriotic allegiance. It is undeniable that Bell's body is buried under

Canadian soil at his estate, but this does not mean that he considered himself as a

Canadian. In fact, the epitaph on his gravestone unequivocally states: Died a Citizen of

the United States.

While it is clear that Bell was not a Canadian, there is still an argument that the

telephone was a Canadian invention. Those that take this position contend that Bell

conceived of the telephone over his 1874 summer vacation in Brantford. However, this

argument is suspect for two reasons. First, Bell's reference to the "Brantford Invention"

may have derived from legal advice to prove that his invention preceded his

competitors—there were a multiple number of competing patents for telephony including

ones from Thomas Edison and Elisha Gray (Rens, 2001, p. 54). Second, even if the idea

emerged while on vacation, the telephone as a concrete invention was created and

patented in Boston in 1876. When put under a historic lens it seems absurd to remember

Alexander Graham Bell as a Canadian and the telephone as a Canadian invention.

Moreover, the idea that the CBC and a significant number of Canadians believe that Bell

is one of the ten greatest Canadians is myopic and even juvenile. However, the myth of

Canada's east-west flow would be undermined if Alexander Graham Bell was perceived

as a Scotsman who invented the telephone in Boston with the help of American

financing. Instead, by glorifying Bell as a Canadian, the impression is that the telephone

and telecommunications are in Canada's bloodline.

An equally preposterous claim to the notion that Alexander Graham Bell was Canadian is the belief that the company Bell has always been Canadian. Although Bell Canada celebrates 125 years of existence in 2005, only the most recent 48 years was as a wholly owned Canadian company. Similar to the reasons for remembering Bell the person as Canadian, perceiving Bell Canada as a Canadian institution is necessary to eschew the notion of a north-south continental axis. Forgotten in the myth is the real history of Bell Canada. First, a majority of its 125 years was as a branch plant for AT&T. Second, when it finally gained its independence in 1957, this was not a natural occurrence but a result of historical contingencies emerging from the United States.

The establishment of the Bell Telephone Company of Canada in 1880 came as result of decisions made in the United States by AT&T. Although Alexander Graham Bell's father had the Canadian patent right to the telephone, he had little ambition to run a business. As a result, he contacted Dominion Telegraph who could have used the telephone in their price war with Montreal Telegraph. However, Dominion believed that the $100,000 price was inflated. When no other Canadian company surfaced, his only option was National Bell—the forerunner to AT&T and the business established with the American patent rights. AT&T's interest in a Canadian business was "strategic rather than financial" (Rens, 2001, p. 61). It feared that a telephone price war would have drastic effects on public opinion and that AT&T's competitor, Western Union, might try to influence the Canadian market.

When the Bell Telephone Company of Canada finally gained independence in 1957, it was also a result of decisions made in the United States. Up until 1957, Bell Canada was essentially a branch plant of AT&T. According to Dallas Smythe (1981), the

means of control was based on stock ownership and a triangular structure of dependency whereby patents, manufacturing and supplies were all American (p. 141). The crux of this relationship was the connection between Bell Canada's manufacturer (Northern Electric) and AT&T's manufacturer (Western Electric). An American anti-trust inquiry into the connections and price fixing between AT&T and Western Electric led to the 1956 Consent Decree. One stipulation of this agreement between AT&T and the US government was for Western Electric to break its relationship with other manufacturers including its Canadian cousin Northern Electric. Following the schism between Western Electric and Northern Electric, "AT&T began to question the efficacy of maintaining its equity position in Bell Canada" (Surtees, 1992, p. 101). After a stock buy-back of Bell Canada's shares, the Canadian telephone company was finally independent. However, if there was never a consent decree between AT&T and the US federal government, Bell Canada might still to this day be an American branch plant.

The myths that Alexander Graham Bell and Bell Canada are Canadian help naturalize the overarching myth that Bell serves the national public interest. Perhaps more than any other business, Bell Canada must be perceived as serving the public because its economic viability stems from commandeering a public good. This myth is associated with the belief that the telephone is—or at least, was at one time—a "natural monopoly." Recently, the onslaught of Voice-Over-Internet-Protocol (VOIP) telephony and the CRTC's decisions to accept more competition has placed this belief under disrepute. However, for a majority of Bell's existence, the company dominated the industry based on the impression that competition was either unsustainable or undesirable (Babe, 1990, p. 137).

The national monopoly myth mutually supported both Bell and the federal government. Connected to this myth is what political economists have considered the "chosen instrument" (Smythe, 1994, p. 192). This concept implies that private corporations can enjoy the status of quasi-crown corporations including access to monopolies and large public subsidies. Since the "chosen instrument" supports the "national interest," it is therefore not unreasonable for the public to accept that the government must support these private companies. In Canada, the original beneficiaries of this policy were CPR and Bell.

The case of the CPR as a "chosen instrument" is emblematic of the arguments for such a policy and also the problems inherent in its structure. The argument's logic was that party politics embedded in the federal system would "block" or "retard" Canada from carrying this important endeavour due to "political jealousies and party strife" (Canadian Pacific Railway, 1891, p. 1). As a result, it was in the "national interest" to surrender the construction and operation of the railway to a private business. However, the problem that arose with the CPR was the issue of the mechanics by which the federal government made its choice. Specifically, the Pacific Scandal of the early 1870s where Sir Hugh Allen contributed $360,000 to the Conservative party's election campaign and later received the CPR contract highlights the problems of the "chosen instrument" system.

The *quid pro quo* that is inherent in this economic relationship is a hindrance to Canada's democracy. Currently, the Gomery inquiry is investigating whether public money used to support public events and celebrations in Quebec to instil national pride has flowed into the Liberal Party's coffers. The advertising agencies that were hired by

the federal government appear to be the reincarnations of Sir Hugh Allan's CPR and the

contemporary Liberal Party is the reincarnation of the nineteenth century Conservative

Party. Former Prime Minister Jean Chretien's remarks at the Gomery inquiry reveals the

belief by some that because of "national interest," the "chosen instrument" policy may be

exonerated for any form of corruption or mismanagement:

> The single most important priority of every prime minister since 1867 has
> been to preserve the unity of the country. We all may have been criticized
> at some time or another for our approach to national unity. But in the case
> of the unity of Canada every prime minister from Sir John A Macdonald
> to myself has always put country ahead of anything else (National Post,
> 2005, A7).

In the case of Bell Canada as a "chosen instrument", the *quid pro quo* was that

Ottawa wanted a national telephone company and Bell wanted a large market (Slaco,

1979, p. 331). This arrangement traces back to Bell's inception in 1880. Canada's birth

was marked by Prime Minister Macdonald's "national policy" that sought to unite the

country through economic nationalism. This policy dictated the need to expedite the

incorporation of companies involved in finance, transportation and communication

(Surtees, 1992, p. 67). With Ottawa embroiled in debt over funding for such projects as

the CPR and underwriting the debts of the new provinces, the time was ripe for

opportunity. During this era, William Forbes and Theodore Vail of National Bell hired

Charles F. Sise to run its Canadian subsidiary. Sise's first task was to petition the

Canadian Parliament for a special charter. The charter's chief aim was to allow the

company to erect lines and poles under any public highway, waterway, street or bridge.

On April 29, 1880, the Bell Canada Special Act received royal assent after only seven

weeks of discussion (Babe, 1990, p. 68). However, the most enduring and mythological

section of the special charter was the seemingly innocuous amendment to the declaration

regarding works that came in 1882: "The works of the Company are hereby declared to be works for the general advantage of Canada" (Bell Canada Act, 1987, Section 5). This section of the charter, which remains in the most recent version that was updated in 1987, enshrines the myth that Bell Canada is a national institution that is deserving of a national monopoly.

Notwithstanding Bell's domination of the long distance market, it is and it has always been incorrect to suggest that Bell has had a monopoly over the Canadian telephone industry. Contrary to popular belief, the company "has never been granted an exclusive monopoly" (Surtees, 1992, p. 68). The fact that most Canadians have the impression that Bell has a monopoly only demonstrates the power of Bell to perpetuate myth. What can be argued is that Bell has had a "partial monopoly." However, since the Mulock Committee of 1905 that investigated the state of the telephone industry, Bell has never had a significant position in Western Canada and has only recently through its control of Aliant dominated all of Atlantic Canada. What has always been a priority is Bell's supremacy in Canada's most lucrative markets—Quebec and Ontario. In particular, it dominates service in the Windsor-Quebec City corridor which currently contains 60% of Canada's population in only 2.2% of the country's land area (Statistics Canada, 1999). In fact, Robert Babe notes that Bell's capitulation of certain Canadian markets to local and regional utilities was part of conscious "tactical withdrawals" beginning as early as 1885 when Bell could not afford to operate nationally as it needed to focus on the infrastructure and competition in the key Toronto and Montreal markets (Babe, 1990, pp. 74-90). It is necessary to explicitly note that 1885 was only three years after the House of Commons bestowed Bell with a nation-wide mandate.

An explanation for the myth that Bell has had a national monopoly may be due to the disproportionate number of Canadians that live in the Windsor-Quebec City corridor and also that this region is the hub to most Canadian media outlets. Following the criticisms of the Mulock Committee, Bell began to relinquish certain territories and accept greater regulation in "return for the continuation of its monopolies in urban and rural areas it chose to serve" (Surtees, 1992, p. 86). According to Dwayne Winseck (1998), this initiated Bell's long history of cream skimming—only serving the most profitable and lucrative markets (p. 128). Therefore, Winseck suggests that this behaviour should disqualify the company from serving "the general advantage of Canada."

If it is clear that Bell only serves the most lucrative Canadian markets, then why does this qualification of serving "the general advantage of Canada" remain in their charter? The answer to this question is complicated. First, it must be noted that Bell did not exactly gain free rein over these profitable markets in Quebec and Ontario. The price for these markets was a commitment to serve the rural and northern areas of these provinces as well as the Northwest Territories. However, the logical explanation for the maintenance of this stipulation is that it serves the interest of both Bell and those that provide Bell their favourable market: the federal government.

In 1907, Bell learnt that its dominance over the lucrative markets in Ontario and Quebec was not necessarily irrevocable. After Bell implemented Taylorist[10] policies to

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[10] These policies refer to Fredrick Winslow Taylor's suggestion that workplace activities should be broken down into their most efficient constituent parts. Taylor's observations as a foreman in the Midvale Steel Company during the 1880s led to this management policy that was described in *Principles of Scientific Management* (1911). When applied to the management of telephone operators in North America, the female workforce was given a more rigid workplace environment and reduced hours.

increase the efficiency of their Toronto telephone operators, the largely female workforce

went on strike. The mayor of Toronto convened a mediation process to solve the labour

dispute. During this process, the mediator, William Lyon Mackenzie King[11], proclaimed

an ominous warning regarding Bell's monopolistic practices. Since Bell had a special

status to operate in Toronto without competition, the public could not choose another

utility provider if it thought that Bell had poor business practices—in this case the

maltreatment of its female operators. Due to its monopoly, Bell was held to a higher

standard not just to its treatment of employees but also to the public:

> To the extent to which the citizens of Toronto have parted...with their right to their patronage in the direction in which they believe the interests of justice and fair play may be served... to insist upon a company... treating its employees in a manner which is equitable and fair..., whether they be men or women...To the extent to which the Bell Telephone Company... secured services at a rate which would have not enabled those who rendered them to have lived, but for the support received from members of their own families, or in ways other than those provided by the company... the profits of the company have been derived by a species of sweating, or by the levying of a tax upon homes and individuals for which no compensation had been made (as cited in Winseck, 1998, p. 143).

The lesson that their patronage does not come without responsibilities resurfaced

in the late 1960s. In 1969, Bell Canada clashed with its regulator, the Canadian

Transport Commission (CTC), over a rate increase. Although the CTC's conceded to

some rate increases, it was not sufficient for Bell to fund further expansion into the

emerging telecommunication fields. The result of this financial shortfall could have led

Bell's management towards increased cream skimming practices and neglect of less

profitable rural areas. However, Bell's President, R.C. Scrivener admitted that "it would

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[11] The leading labour expert and future Prime Minister of Canada. See W.L. Mackenzie King's *Industry and Humanity: A Study in the Principles Underlying Industrial Reconstruction* for a detailed elaboration of his philosophical framework that will later shape post-WWII Canada.

be fatal to get into the frame of mind that we're going to show the public how lousy the

service is going to be because we didn't get all we asked for. That would just be cutting

our throat for the future" (as cited in Surtees, 1992, p. 142). Jean de Grandpre, Bell's

future CEO, rephrased this sentiment in a more theatrical manner. He admitted that Bell

would never garner the necessary public and political support to enter the satellite and

computer industry if it "can't provide plain service for Chibougamau" (as cited in

Surtees, 1992, p. 142).

The persistence of the section regarding "the general advantage of Canada"

coupled with the federal government's resolve over Bell's responsibilities in northern and

rural areas highlights the *quid pro quo* between the government and the telephone

company. On the one hand, Bell depended on Ottawa to control its lucrative markets.

On the other hand, Ottawa also depended on Bell to maintain regulatory supremacy over

the provinces in political and legal proceeding. The first case that cited this section of

Bell's charter was in 1905. The City of Toronto launched a suit against Bell regarding

the company's right to erect poles on sidewalks without a municipal permit. The case

was sent to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, which at that time was in the

British Parliament.

Lord Justice Edward Macnaghten made his ruling from an inference based on the

1882 amendment that stated that Bell was "to be for the general advantage of Canada."

Due to this amendment, the City of Toronto lost its case. While the city could "counsel"

Bell on the construction of telephone lines, it had no jurisdiction "to refuse the company

access to streets" (Toronto v. Bell Telephone Co. of Canada [1905] A.C. 60). Not only

would this decision aid Bell in future scuffles with municipalities and provinces, it was

the precedent that upheld the federal government's exclusive powers over radio, aeronautics and cable television (Hogg, 1997, part 22-8).

The most interesting political examples of Bell and Ottawa's mutual relationship have occurred in Quebec. First, in 1966, Bell ingeniously challenged a provincial minimum wage law that would have applied to its Quebec employees. Echoing the 1905 *City of Toronto v. Bell Canada* case, Canadian Supreme Court Justice Ronald Martland made the following ruling:

> In my opinion all matters which are a vital part of the operation of an interprovincial undertaking as a going concern are matters which are subject to the exclusive legislative control of the federal parliament (Commission du Salaire Minimum v. Bell Telephone Co. of Canada [1966] S.C.R. 772).

This 1966 decision clearly demonstrated how Bell benefited from its position as a federally regulated company especially when one considers that a federal minimum wage law did not yet exist. As well, this legal decision demonstrates how the myth of Bell's place as a national institution may not necessarily serve the public interest considering that it places Bell's corporate interest over the interests of its large workforce.

The second case emerged during the rise of Quebec nationalism in the late 1960s and early 1970s when Robert Bourassa's provincial government attempted to strip communication regulation away from Ottawa (Raboy, 1990, p. 196). One of Bell's competitors, Quebec-Telephone, tried to take advantage of this intergovernmental battle over jurisdictions. In 1968, a CTC ruling compelled Quebec-Telephone to lower its rates for long-distance calls made between the company's and Bell's territories. Since this would have meant losses for Quebec-Telephone, "the small utility refused to adjust its rates on the grounds that its provincial regulator, the Quebec Public Service Board, had

not approved of the changes" (Surtees, 1992, p. 164). After a lengthy legal battle in the Quebec Superior Court, the lower court ruled that it could not interfere with a federal regulator. The decision supported Ottawa's jurisdiction in spite of Quebec's increasing attempts to develop its own communication policies and regulations.

In summary, the notion that Bell Canada is a Canadian company that serves the public national interest is only a façade but one that has a clear purpose. However, as Barthes argues, "there is no fixity in mythical concepts" (Barthes, 1972, p. 120). Just because a myth exists does not mean that it will exist in perpetuity. Bell has actively worked to enshrine its supporting myth deeper into law and public consciousness. The most recent example of the lengths that Bell goes through to perpetuate itself as a national institution occurred when Bell outbid Telus to be the official telecommunication sponsor of the 2010 Olympic Winter Games in Vancouver. Telus was clearly the more sensible since it has a larger communications infrastructure in the region and being the official telecommunication sponsor requires the company to service the Olympic games. Nonetheless, Bell Canada's $200 million bid helped convince the Olympic committee of who was the "natural" selection. Michael Sabia, Bell's current CEO, sums up the purpose of the marketing coup: "It is the perfect platform to enhance Bell's brand as the leading national provider of communication services" (Globe and Mail, 2004, B1).

The interplay between the myth that Canada is a state that exists only because of communication technology and the myth that Bell serves the national interest can be interpreted in the following manner. First, the federal government encourages the myth that Canada's national unity is dependent on the strength of its communication infrastructure. This notion hides the reality that Canada's national sovereignty—either

with respect to the United States or to manage separatist provinces—is dependent on a federally mandated communication system. However, Ottawa has rarely shown the political will to put a sustained financial effort to maintain this infrastructure as a crown corporation. In this vacuum, Bell Canada has positioned itself as a loyal corporate citizen that has always in the past and will always continue to help provide communication services to rural and northern communities in order to integrate them into the polity. In return for serving these areas of Canada, Bell is allowed to dominate the urban markets and it profits from government patronage. Absent from this logical sequence are the interests of both the rural and Northern communities as well as the Bell's workforce.

CHAPTER THREE:
THE HISTORICAL FORCES:
THE EVENTS INFLUENCING TELESAT'S CREATION

Introduction

In the previous chapter, I reviewed the three myths or *mythemes* that laid the

foundation for the overall mythology that emerged during the creation of Telesat. The

main theme of the last chapter was the mutual dependence in which the myths operate.

Before I examine the mythology surrounding Telesat, I will first highlight the historical

factors that led to its creation. Since mythology has an ahistorical and depoliticizing

effect, the purpose of this chapter is to revive the political and historical factors that led to

the corporation's establishment. This chapter is divided into parts with four sections in

total.

The first part reviews the historical emergence of communication satellites. I

trace the development of satellites as a feasible communication technology beginning

with the rocketry of Nazi Germany and the imagination of Arthur C. Clarke. One key

concern during the early days of communication satellites was the issue of the

ionosphere. In particular, the question was whether this little-known portion of the

atmosphere could properly conduct communication signals. Due to this uncertainty, a

curious relationship formed between governments and private corporations whereby both

parties shared the risk in this precarious but potentially lucrative endeavour.

The remainder of the first part examines how this special relationship developed in the United States and Canada. On the one hand, in the US, the government moved quickly in the early 1960s to create an entirely private communication satellite corporation, Comsat, which was owned by the leading telecommunication carriers. On the other hand, since the Canadian telecommunication industry was not as robust, the move to communication satellites was a lengthy process that was led by government agencies through scientific experimental satellite programs such as the Alouette and ISIS. Both of these experiences influenced the creation of a domestic communication satellite corporation in Canada during the late 1960s.

In the second part, I examine three historical events that added urgency to the creation of Telesat: (1); The Power Corporation's bid for a national satellite television network (2) Quebec's interest in the Franco-German Symphonie communication satellite system; (3) The voyage of the American oil tanker, *Manhattan*, through the Northwest Passage. The purpose of this part is to raise political issues that arise during the creation of Telesat. In particular, these events reveal the underlying forces that compelled the federal government and Bell Canada to work together in the satellite communications. For Bell, their interest was to limit satellites as a threat to their established network by enveloping the new technology within its corporate structure. For the federal government, their interest was to both restrain Quebec's sovereignty over communications and to entrench its claim over the Arctic. Referring back to the question whether a myth explains a phenomenon or does the explanation engender a phenomenon, the key observation of this part is that the political and historical forces emerged before the formation of the mythology associated with Telesat. This fact will support my claim

that myth was a vital component for Bell and Ottawa to actualize their plans. Moreover,

during this state of urgency especially considering issues of national sovereignty, myth

would be that much more convincing to the Canadian public and political establishment.

Part One: The Feasibility of a Communication Satellite System

From the Depths of War and the Pages of Science Fiction to Government and Corporate Labs: The Conception of Communication Satellites

As is the case for many technologies, the communication satellite traces its roots

to war. The German V-2 rockets that fell on London during World War II (WWII) were

the first rockets that could feasibly deliver a payload into space. Following the defeat of

the Nazi regime, German aeronautic scientists and engineers were pressed into American

and Soviet research and development agencies. The space and communication satellite

programs of both countries are indebted to these German scientists. In fact, Sputnik, the

world's first artificial satellite, was launched by the Soviet Union in 1957 with the help of

the same V-2 rocket that was used during WWII (Winston, 1998, p. 277). As well, the

American space program relied heavily on the infamous Werner Von Braun who also

played a key role in Hitler's V-1 rocket program (Miller, 1998, p. 97). This connection

between satellites and warfare continues to persist. Furthermore, communication

scholars have not overlooked this symbiosis between communication satellites and the

military. Both Herbert Schiller and Dallas Smythe have argued that the promotion and

innovation of communication satellites as "civilian" devices paid for on public expense

masked the connections to military Cold War usages (Smythe, 1981, p. 84; Schiller,

1992, p. 76).

In conjunction with its military roots, the realization of communication satellites

was also indebted to the imagination of Arthur C. Clarke, the science fiction author. His

article in the October 1945 edition of *Wireless World* was the first conceptualization of a

satellite system that could receive and transmit signals—in essence, an orbiting relay

station. His article, "Extra-Terrestrial Relays: Can Rocket Stations Give World Wide

Radio Coverage?," envisioned an arrangement of three geosynchronous satellites that

would give the world complete telecommunications coverage (Elbert, 1999, p. 42).

Regardless of this early articulation and the rudimentary rocket technology, a

communication satellite system had to overcome a number of technical difficulties. One

in particular was the uncertainty over whether the ionosphere, the highest level of the

earth's atmosphere, would conduct radio waves (Winston, 1998, p. 279). It was this

uncertainty that fostered the curious relationship between governments and private

telecommunication companies. On the one hand, governments did not want to absorb all

the costs and responsibilities for developing and then maintaining a satellite

communication system that might eventually be deemed technically unfeasible. On the

other hand, the private corporations did not want to be responsible for all the fiscal

liability of a project that might not procure a return on investment.

The convergence of government and private interests in Canada led to the

emergence of mythology as a crucial factor in policy formation and execution. Similar to

the construction of the CPR almost one hundred years before, communication satellites

were risky and expensive but deemed vital to the "national interest." Furthermore,

neither the private nor public sector wanted to be solely responsible for its fiscal

management. As a result, just as Prime Minister Macdonald capitulated to Sir Hugh

Allen, the contemporary government would surrender authority to the telecommunication companies—namely Bell Canada—so that the private sector would boost investment. The interests of these two parties, although ostensibly congruent with the same goals of actually creating the infrastructure and its economic benefits, diverged over the social and political nature of the technology. Myth was then a critical factor in directing attention away from any apparent contradictions and ensuring that the proposed system would not face serious obstacles. If the federal government was to use public money to fund research and development in the private sector, the venture had to appear as part of a larger public good that would benefit all of Canada. Likewise, if Bell were to receive a monopoly, it would have to appear as a magnanimous party that intends to dutifully fulfil its responsibility.

Forerunners to Telesat: The American Experience

Appreciating the American experience in communication satellites is a useful context for understanding Telesat since this experience served as an example for the proponents of a Canadian communication satellite system. With that stated, it is important to acknowledge the major differences between the two countries. Namely, the fiscal and scientific strength of the American telecommunication industry was unmatched by its northern neighbour. The need for public money was even more pressing in Canada. Therefore, the need to alleviate the contradicting interests and present the project in a favourable fashion was also even more necessary in Canada than the United States.

The launch of Sputnik by the Soviet Union in 1957 was a blow to American pride. Their sense of scientific superiority over the rest of the world was shattered. The result

was a heavy financial investment by the American and other Western governments in space and advanced scientific research (Smythe, 1994, p. 176). In 1958, President Eisenhower established two important institutions that not only spurred the development of satellite communication but also other communication technologies such as the Internet: the Advanced Research Projects Agency (ARPA) and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). However, the figure that most influenced the future of communication satellites was Eisenhower's successor, John Fitzgerald Kennedy.

President Kennedy's eloquent speeches provided a vision and a framework. His State of the Union Address on January 30, 1961 called on "all nations—including the Soviet Union—to join...in developing...a new communications satellite program" (as cited in Musolf, 1968, p. 20). This vision was echoed shortly after in his now famous speech to a joint-session of Congress, which was entitled "Our Urgent Tasks." Although this speech is recognized for publicizing the goal of landing a man on the moon by the end of the 1960s, a lesser-known but equally important component was the provision asking Congress to accelerate the development of satellites for global communications (Hudson, 1997, p. 359). The goal of these speeches was to garner public and Congressional support for the creation of the Communication Satellite Corporation (Comsat) in 1962. However, before a review of Comsat, it is first necessary to discuss what steps were made by private industry before Kennedy's concerted effort.

The feasibility of domestic commercial communication satellites emerged in the labs of two American corporations: Hughes Aircraft and AT&T. Under the guidance of Dr. John Pierce, the Bell Telephone Laboratories (the research division of AT&T) worked on the development of Telstar. This rudimentary communication satellite had

many drawbacks—mainly the fact that it was not geosynchronous and would therefore require more satellites in space—but it did prove the feasibility of a satellite system that could compete with terrestrial radio, buried cable and transoceanic cable (Elbert, 1999, p. 43). What was notable about this endeavour were the motives that spurred AT&T to finance the research and development. According to the communication scholar Brian Winston (1998), contrary to the claim that satellites were developed to improve television service or compete with the Soviets: "Telestar's essential function was to allow AT&T to defeat its American rivals and bring the free world's transoceanic cable system to its knees" (p. 282). However, although the American government wanted to promote satellite communications, they also feared an extension to the telephone company's monopoly—a monopoly it was in the middle of trying to mollify with the 1957 Consent Decree. As a result, the American government promoted another option.

Under the guidance of Dr. Harold Rosen, Hughes Aircraft convinced NASA and the Department of Defence to launch Syncom—the Synchronous Orbit Communication Satellite. This ingenious invention made satellite communication much less complicated and expensive than previous conceptions and led to the feasibility of a reliable international communication network (Elbert, 1999, p. 43). With the technology now in place, all that was needed was a regulatory framework.

President Kennedy provided the structure for a global commercial communication satellite system with the 1962 Communication Satellite Act. The purpose of the act was clearly stated:

> [I]t is the policy of the United States to establish, in conjunction and in cooperation with other countries, as expeditiously as practicable a commercial communications satellite system, as part of an improved

global communications network, which will be responsive to public needs and objectives, which will serve the communication needs of the United States and other countries and which will contribute to world peace and understanding (Communication Satellite Act, 1962, Section 102a).

This act followed the United States' historic pattern of "eschewing 'Post Office arrangements' in favour of private exploitation" (Winston, 1998, p. 283). Instead of a state-run enterprise, the Comsat act created a private corporation (Comsat) to represent the United States in an international communication satellite consortium that would later be established. What is interesting for the future of a Canadian satellite corporation are two characteristics that also appeared during the creation of Telesat: Comsat's corporate structure and the urgency of Comsat's realization.

The Communication Satellite Act was saturated with language that encouraged haste and urgency. For example, words such as "expeditiously," "promptly," and "timely" preceded many proposed policy initiatives. By making it appear to be a pressing matter, the language of the Act predisposed the Congressional sessions to an atmosphere that was inimical to proper debate. Nevertheless, with the help of Dallas Smythe and Herbert Schiller, Senator Russell Long who opposed Comsat tried to mire the act with a fourteen-day filibuster. Senator Long was in the minority. The majority of Congressmen were influenced by the urgency for the creation of an American and international commercial satellite company as a response to the immediate need for "world peace and understanding." In Canada, this urgency would again emerge, but with another reason for haste. The other characteristic that would later arise in Canada was Comsat's corporate structure.

As Smythe (1981) argued, the United States' experience with Comsat influenced the corporate structure of Telesat (p. 148). First, Comsat was financed by an initial public offering of common shares to both the public and the telecommunication corporations with fifty percent offered to each group—AT&T obtained 45.4% of the total issue (Schiller, 1992, p. 130). Second, Comsat was designated as a "carrier's carrier." In other words, it could not sell circuits directly to broadcasters or individual customers but only to the communication carriers that would resell them. This stipulation ensured that satellite communications would not compete or threaten the established telecommunication corporations that incidentally also owned a substantial part of Comsat. Although there was a heated Congressional debate that was led by a few senators and academic interveners including Smythe and Schiller, the act was approved in August of 1962.

In summary, five features of the American experience with Comsat foreshadow the creation of Telesat. First, the intimate and early involvement in the development of communication satellites by the telecommunication corporations—in particular, AT&T— as a means to mitigate satellites as a commercial threat did not go unnoticed by Bell Canada. Second, President Kennedy's articulation of communication satellites as a mythic tool that could bring "world peace" and help develop third-world nations influenced how Telesat would be presented to Canadians. Third, the corporate structure with a share offering to both the telecommunication companies and the public influenced how Ottawa financed its own endeavour. Fourth, the contradictions in interests between the investors, telecommunication carriers, and the federal government that was expressed in the Congressional debates would later emerge in Canada. According to Schiller

(1992), "the social nature of these policy requirements, juxtaposed with the private character of the basic organizational structure, constitutes the chief source of the incompatibilities imbedded in satellite communications development" (p. 129). Finally, the haste in which the American government and industry acted so that they could profit from their advantageous position with respect to technology and capability resulted in a poorly conceived institution. Likewise, an atmosphere of urgency and impetuosity marked Telesat's creation.

The reason for the urgency driving the creation of Comsat became apparent on August 20, 1964. On this date in Washington, DC, the United States joined with 18 other countries to establish Intelsat, the international communication satellite consortium. This organization was established to promote the benefits of satellite technology. Comsat acted as the American delegate that provided technical and managerial expertise (Hudson, 1997, p. 359). However, critics claimed that the consortium did not share technology or information but was a means for the US to increase its global dominance in the field and marginalize the Soviet Union. Furthermore, critics also highlighted the unique position of Comsat, a private corporation, acting as a direct representative of the American government in an international agreement.

The one assessment that was not only apparent to staunch critics but even the most objective observer was the obvious fact that Comsat owned 61% of Intelsat—in comparison, the Canadian crown corporation, the Canadian Overseas Telecommunication Corporation, owned 3.5%. Provisions that stipulated that American ownership could never fall below 50.6% clearly demonstrated that Intelsat was a tool to increase American global hegemony (Schiller, 1992, p. 136). Since the Americans dominated the

consortium, "US companies built and launched most of the early satellites...a direct reflection of their virtual monopoly" (Handberg, 2003, p. 30). As a result, it was clear to smaller countries like Canada that Intelsat might not serve their interests and objectives.

Canada Enters the Space Race: Alouette and ISIS

One rallying point for patriotism in Canada is the claim that Canada was the third nation to have a satellite in space. This claim is ostensibly an assertion of independence and superiority. However, similar to other nationalistic claims such as those surrounding Alexander Graham Bell, it is eroded on a deeper observation. The launch of Alouette I in September of 1962 was only made possible with the help of American financing and launching capability. In this respect, the launch of Alouette can equally be perceived as an act of dependency. Regardless of this dubious patriotism, Alouette and similar endeavours reveal two features that influenced the creation of Telesat: Ottawa's investment in satellite research and Ottawa's close relationship with the United States.

Canada's initial involvement in satellites began in the late 1950s with the Defence Research Board's Defence Research Telecommunications Establishment (DRTE). This "establishment" was located at Shirley Bay in Ottawa's western outskirts.[12] Similar to the American space program, the DRTE's research in space was given a boost following the launch of Sputnik. However, budget realities would place Ottawa in a precarious position, as it faced the dilemma of collaborating with the United States. On the one hand, the US government was already investing heavily in telecommunication research under the auspices of defence procurements, which was increasing the "technology gap"

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[12] The DRTE would later be transferred to the Department of Communications' Communication Research Centre (CRC). This institution and its various contractors located in Kanata would lay the foundation for Canada's cable, computer, and Internet industries that would reach their zenith during the mid-1990s (Mosco and Mazepa, 2003, p. 95).

between Canada and the US (Handberg, 2003, p. 28). The fear was that if this continued to occur, Canada would be even more dependent on the US economy and scientific community. In 1959, this fear reached its apogee when Prime Minister Diefenbaker cancelled the Avro Arrow fighter-jet program. As a result, Canada witnessed a "brain drain" with hundreds of skilled engineers and scientists leaving for jobs with American companies. On the other hand, the 1960s was an era when Canada was trying to assert national sovereignty through symbols such as a new flag and foreign policy issues such as the decision to stay out of the Vietnam War. If Ottawa increased ties with the American telecommunication and military industries, not only would the economies be more closely linked but the issue of an independent foreign policy might also be suspect.

In the end, Ottawa opted for the practical solution of closer cooperation with the US. This decision sparked an inherent contradiction in Canadian satellite policy: it is articulated as an assertion of national independence, but it is rooted on a very real reliance on the Americans. Due to this contradiction, myth would become an important feature to minimize the appearance of American dependency and maximize the symbol of national sovereignty. Nevertheless, it is undeniable that the underlying decision to increase Canada's satellite and space capabilities did not emerge as an answer to any social question or national unity issue but to address economics. This claim does not diminish the importance of economics, yet it is necessary to acknowledge that these other matters will only come into play as a means to expedite the economic issue. The results of this cooperation with the United States were two research satellite programs: ISIS and Alouette.

The main scientific interest of the Alouette and ISIS (International Satellites for Ionospheric Studies) programs was the upper region of the ionosphere. In particular, experiments using radio waves attempted to study this unknown part of the earth's atmosphere. Canada was interested in "carefully characterizing the radio spectrum in order to improve communication links to the isolated North from the rest of Canada" (Handberg, 2003, p. 31). Therefore, it was clear from the beginning that communication with the North would drive space and satellite research. However, it is necessary to note that the Americans through NASA subsidized a majority of these projects' costs. Although Canada paid for the construction of Alouette I and Alouette II at $3,100,000 and $3,932,400 respectively, the Americans financed the launch of the satellites at $9.5 million for the former and $10.5 million for the latter (Schreyer, 1969, pp. 4816-4817). Therefore, it is not surprising that the US had its own interests in these projects. In particular, these experimental satellites gave the US military a greater understanding of the arctic, which was a strategic Cold War region because it was through this area that the Soviet Union was expected to attack the US (Handberg, 2003, p. 31).

In summary, three key features that would also arise in future policy decisions marked Canada's early experience with satellites. First, the Alouette and ISIS programs cemented the close financial and scientific relationship between Canada and the US. Second, stemming from this first feature, there were a number of contradictions resulting from this relationship. There was a divergence between the military, economic and social goals of satellite research. As well, there was the contradictory position of Canada claiming independence while also heavily depending on the US—a contradiction that led the need to perpetuate myth. Finally, it was clear that Ottawa's primary and initial

interest in communication satellites was not socially but economically motivated. To be more precise since one cannot easily separate the social and economic spheres, it was clear that Ottawa's concern was with southern Canadians and not the Northern indigenous inhabitants. It is important to note that it was an economic boost to companies and facilities that were based in Ottawa, Montreal and Toronto. Those that benefited from Alouette and ISIS during the 1960s would also benefit from Telesat in the 1970s. These companies include RCA Victor of Montreal, DeHavilland Aircraft Ltd. of Toronto, SPAR Aerospace Products Limited of Toronto, and Northern Electric of Belleville and Ottawa.

The experience of SPAR reveals the motivation behind the policy to establish government run satellite projects as a means of propping up the scientific and telecommunication industries. When SPAR constructed the Storable Tabular Extendible Member (STEM) as the antennae system for Alouette I, it not only profited from this initial usage but its success on Alouette helped to sell the product to foreign countries and companies. Between 1962 and 1972, $12 million worth of STEM products were exported that created 60 jobs for Canadian scientists, engineers and other skilled workers (Singh and McDaniel, 1997, p. 26). The government policy regarding communication satellites was best articulated by the Minister of Communication Eric Kierans:

> Because we need such a system, and because we possess the means to build it,...it represents the same kind of confidence in the future which Canada demonstrated shortly after World War II by her decision to develop a nuclear-fuelled power system. As hon. members know, our national scientific and industrial resources are limited. We can succeed only by concentrating our resources in areas where there is a direct national need and a definable prospect of financial and technological return on investment. We can afford neither to bite off more than we can chew, nor, by being too timid, to totally lose our taste for competition. Communication satellites fulfil these qualifications. They represent an

opportunity to be grasped and a challenge to be met (Kierans, 1969, p. 7493).

This elusive connection between a "direct national need" and "a definable prospect of financial and technological return on investment" would become fertile ground for myth making.

Part Two: Three Events That Added Urgency for a Domestic Communication Satellite System

Before an analysis of how mythology was formulated and executed by those that supported Telesat, it is necessary to review the historical events that caused a sense of urgency and the convergence of interests. By the late 1960s, it was evident that Ottawa's scientific initiatives were effective. The ISIS and Alouette programs successfully served the goal of enhancing the telecommunication and "high tech" industries by financially subsidizing and helping to keep skilled workers in Canada (Hartz and Paghis, 1982, p. 13). Although the initiation of a domestic communication satellite program seemed like the next step, the urgency for its creation was a result of external pressures on Ottawa. In other words, why was a system so hastily created? Three events impelled Ottawa to move quickly but also impetuously: (1) the application by Power Corporation for a national television satellite licence; (2) Quebec's decision to enter the Franco-German *Symphonie* communication satellite system; (3) The voyage of the American oil tanker, *Manhattan*, through the Northwest Passage.

The Power Corporation's Bid: Challenging Bell's Grip on Canadian Telecommunications

The first impetus for a domestic commercial communication satellite system came in October of 1966. The federal government was taken by surprise when the Power Corporation and Niagara Television Ltd. applied to the Board of Broadcast Governors (BBG) for a licence to establish a third national television service. This proposal called for the creation of two corporations: the National Television Network (NTV) that would operate the nationwide service and the Canadian Satellite Corporation (CANSAT) that would construct, launch and maintain the satellite system for NTV—the total estimated cost was $75 million (Globe and Mail, 1966, p. 27). After a one-day hearing, the BBG ruled that only the Department of Transport (DOT) had the authority to accept or deny the proposal (Surtees 155-156). In the end, a lack of federal policy direction effectively ended what would have been an interesting turning point in the Canadian media and telecommunication industries if Paul Desmarais' Power Corporation had obtained a national satellite television service.

Even though the Power Corporation's bid fizzled, the proposal was a wake-up call for the telecommunications industry. The reaction by Bell and the other carriers was peculiar. Their immediate response was to lobby the DOT "that existing terrestrial facilities were more than adequate to meet all present and emerging demand" (Babe, 1990, p. 222). However, when the Science Council of Canada was about to release its report entitled *A Space Program for Canada* in July of 1967 that highlighted a need for communication satellites, the companies performed a sudden about face. The Bell controlled consortium, TCTS, put aside its rivalry with its competitor CNCP (Canadian National-Canadian Pacific) and submitted its own proposal to the DOT. Contradicting

their earlier stance, this consortium of consortia argued that existing landlines were not adequate and that the government should hastily act to establish a satellite program. However, since such a program would be both expensive and risky, the carriers proposed that the public should not be burdened and that they would chivalrously assume the start-up, ownership and maintenance of the endeavour (Babe, 1990, p. 223).

The joint CNCP-TCTS report conveniently failed to mention that the telephone carriers' primary interest was to mollify the threat posed by a rival technology. The TCTS had just finished its coast-to-coast microwave system eight years earlier and the CNCP had a similar technology constructed east of Manitoba (Babe, 1990, p. 129). In fact, more than just being a rival technology, satellite communication threatened the economic viability of the entire telephone system by eliminating the costs of distance. The distance-insensitivity of the new technology meant that it would cost the "same to send a message across the street by satellite as it does to call Inuvik from Halifax" (Surtees, 1992, p. 156). If satellites were allowed to compete, the phone companies—mainly Bell Canada—would lose their lucrative long distance operation. As a result, it was not a surprise that similar to COMSAT, the proposed satellite carrier would not sell directly to customers but only as a wholesaler controlled by the carriers. Later in the summer of 1967, the pressure on the government was intensified when both RCA and Hughes with Northern Electric began to lobby the DOT with their own studies.

The Symphonie Communication Satellite System: Challenging Ottawa's Constitutional Authority

The second impetus for a domestic commercial communication satellite system emerged during a protracted public dispute between Ottawa and Quebec. Beginning in

the mid-1960s, there were reports that Quebec was quietly negotiating with France to construct earth stations to receive programming from the Franco-German Symphonie communication satellite system. These rumours were verified in January of 1969 when Quebec's Minister of Education, Jean-Guy Cardinal, went to Paris to conclude an agreement with France to allow Quebec to participate in the satellite program.

As Marc Raboy argues, it was ironic that Quebec's sentiments behind their urgency over satellite communications mirrored Ottawa's own position. In particular, Quebec had to act quickly to prevent the saturation of non-francophone programming and American content by foreign satellites (Raboy, 1990, p. 191). Likewise, Ottawa's prerogatives also stemmed from the fear of further Americanization of the Canadian media landscape. Regardless of the irony, Quebec's defiance of Ottawa's constitutional authority to negotiate international agreements in the area of communications was seen publicly as a political attack. The leaders of both the New Democratic Party (NDP) and the Progressive Conservative Party pressed the Liberal government and the Minister of External Affairs, Mitchell Sharp, into action. Opposition Leader Robert Stanfield of the Conservative Party commented that "the essential authority of the government of Canada in connection with foreign policy and diplomatic relations must be preserved" (as quoted in Globe and Mail, 1969, p. 2). Meanwhile, NDP MP David Lewis viewed this act as part of a larger conspiracy led by French President Charles de Gaulle:

> Perhaps since I am not a member of the Government, I can say that as one
> Canadian that I am beginning to be rather irritated by the way in which the
> mischievous old man in Paris seeks to add to our difficulties (as quoted in
> the Globe and Mail, 1969, p. 2).

Minister's Sharp's reaction to this political controversy was subdued since

Quebec was not only negotiating on a satellite agreement but also on educational and

cultural exchanges with France. According to a 1965 agreement between France and

Canada, Quebec was indeed authorized to negotiate with France on cultural, educational,

technical and scientific exchanges. The issue of jurisdiction over satellite communication

was debatable as Quebec saw the technology as a cultural and educational tool. With that

stated, Quebec Premier Daniel Johnson publicly implied that satellites were part of a

broader struggle with Ottawa: "Quebec, the main homeland of the French-Canadian

nation, should be able to freely establish necessary communications with the outside for

the full exercise of its internal jurisdictions" (as quoted in Globe and Mail, 1968, p. 6).

In the midst of this constitutional uncertainty and Minister Sharp's hesitancy, a

Bill was tabled in the House of Commons that would ultimately settle the issue. Bill C-

184 proposed the creation of a Canadian corporation for telecommunication by satellite.

This Bill would later receive royal assent on June 27, 1969 and be known as the Telesat

Act. Arguably, without the pressure that resulted from Quebec's desire to be part of the

Franco-German *Symphonie* system, the government and the opposition would have been

be less willing to accept Telesat. Even before the debate over the Telesat Act, it was

clear that parliamentarians on all sides of the House of Commons wanted a domestic

satellite system to stop Quebec from moving closer to France. In one debate over the

construction of a second Intelsat ground station for eastern Canada, NDP MP Ed

Schreyer admitted,

> Quebec seems to be determined to build such a ground receiving station
> with or without federal assistance. There is a rumour that direct assistance
> will be given to the province of Quebec by the government of France. I
> would not attempt to go into the constitutional aspect of such an action,

but I do say to the minister that the only possible justification for the construction of a second ground receiving station on the Atlantic coast would be that it might help to remove the necessity of Quebec building the ground receiving station. In that event, I suppose one could go along with that idea (Schreyer, 1969, p. 5293).

The *S.S. Manhattan*: Challenging Ottawa's Arctic Sovereignty

Although the third event that added urgency for the creation of a domestic communication satellite system took place just two months after the Telesat Act was passed, its occurrence was a result of already established circumstances. This event was the voyage of an American oil tanker, *Manhattan*, through the Northwest Passage. The larger issue was the state of Canada's sovereignty over its Northern territorial waters surrounding the Arctic archipelago and the broader position of Trudeau's foreign policy *vis-à-vis* the US. After WWII and the onslaught of the Cold War, tensions rose between Canada and the US over the status of these waters. While Canada maintained *de jure* sovereignty over this region, its *de facto* sovereignty was more tenuous (Elliot-Meisel, 1998, p. 2). Since Canada could not physically occupy parts of these territorial waters, the US explicitly denied Canadian sovereignty.[13]

In 1968, the American company Humble Oil discovered large oil deposits in Prudhoe Bay, Alaska (Elliot-Meisel, 1998, p. 141). This caused the company to ascertain the feasibility of commercial use of the Northwest Passage. By converting the super tanker, *Manhattan*, into an icebreaker, the company hoped to open up this seemingly impervious route that had frustrated seamen since Martin Frobisher in 1576. At first, the Canadian government supported these efforts. To help the *Manhattan* through this dangerous route, the Canadian Coast Guard dispatched the *John A. Macdonald* icebreaker

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[13] Although in 1988 Canada and the US reached an agreement on icebreakers access to the Arctic waters, the larger issue of Northern sovereignty is not yet settled.

to escort the oil tanker. Prime Minister Trudeau publicly supported these efforts in the

House of Commons:

> Needless to say the trials of the *Manhattan* may be considerable significance for the development of Arctic navigation. Such development is consistent with both Canadian and international interests, and I do not see that any conflict need arise between Canada's national policy and international responsibilities in this connection. Arctic navigation will be an important factor in the general development of northern Canada and as such it will, of course, be encouraged rather than restricted by Canada (Trudeau, 1969, pp. 8720-8721).

Trudeau would later reverse his position. When the Canadian media learnt of the

successful passage and the Canadian government's compliance with the Americans,

public indignation ensued that surprised Trudeau and his government (Elliot-Meisel,

1998, p. 143). Following this media frenzy, Minister of External Affairs, Mitchell Sharp,

responded by explaining the government's position in a letter to the Globe and Mail.

However, Trudeau was still embarrassed by the public outcry and sought legislation that

would challenge American transit through the passage. In 1970, his government enacted

the Arctic Waters Pollution Prevention Act (AWPPA) that created a 100 mile zone

around the Arctic archipelago. Although this act helped Trudeau to save face, President

Nixon protested by cutting Canadian oil imports to the US (Elliot-Meisel, 1998, p. 143).

This defiance to the Americans during the *Manhattan* incident revealed Trudeau's

broader position on foreign policy. His views on foreign policy were influenced by the

post-Pearson generation of civil servants that called for a new policy of enlightened

national self-interest (Gwyn, 1980, p. 300). The leader of this young and well-educated

group was Allan Gotlieb. Gotlieb was one of Trudeau's most trusted advisors. He was

appointed the first deputy minister of the Department of Communications in 1969. In

this position, Gotlieb saw communications as a means to extend this national self-interest foreign policy. Three roles for communications were noted: (1) it could extend national sovereignty both over the North and as a barrier to American cultural domination; (2) it could foster economic and regional development in isolated parts of the country; (3) it could promote Trudeau's notion of federalism and unity for Canada's dual cultures (Surtees, 1992, p. 144). Gotlieb would consider Telesat as a tool to connect Canadian communications policy and foreign policy.

CHAPTER FOUR:
THE FORMATION AND USE OF MYTH:
HOW MYTH EXPEDITED THE CREATION OF TELESAT

Introduction

In the previous chapter, I highlighted three historical events that emerged in the late 1960s. These events had a powerful effect on Canadian satellite communication policy that was previously satisfied with the scientific experiments of ISIS and Alouette. The *Manhattan*'s voyage through the Northwest passage, the Power Corporation's bid for a national satellite television network, and Quebec's interest in the Franco-German *Symphonie* system resulted in two consequences. First, they added the equation of time. If the federal government did not act quickly, then it would not be in a position to counteract Quebec's satellite link to France or claim sovereignty over the North. Second, in this state of urgency, these three events led to the convergence of Bell and Ottawa's interests that resulted in a peculiar policy.

The two entities that were to lose from this policy were the Power Corporation and the Quebec government (Babe, 1990, p. 224). The two entities that gained were the federal government and Bell Canada. For Bell, a technology that might have ultimately ended their dominant position was co-opted to further their monopoly. For Ottawa, the proposed communication satellite corporation fulfilled a number of practical goals: (1) it outmanoeuvred Quebec's attempt to gain constitutional authority by establishing a federally chartered monopoly; (2) it deferred much of the cost of a national communication satellite system to private industry; (3) it used satellites as a tool to

increase Ottawa's *de facto* sovereignty over the North. Finally, because of these two

factors—the issue of time and the convergence of public-private interests—mythology

would become a vital component to expedite the process and present the proposal in a

favourable fashion.

This chapter is divided into two parts. First, I review the depoliticizing process of

myth that was intentionally embedded into the formation of Telesat. The clear aim was

to naturalize the policy so that both of its proponents, the Liberal government and Bell

Canada, would not need to concede any alterations. I trace this process from the policy's

first articulation in the Chapman Report to the White Paper on a Domestic Satellite

Communication System for Canada and to the Department of Communication's *Instant*

World that laid the institutional framework for Telesat. Connected to the three historical

events that added the state of urgency, these three documents each contributed three

mythemes that formed the overall myth: (1) Canada's viability is dependent on a national

communication satellite system; (2) The inclusion of the North into the body politic is

only possible with such a system; (3) Bell Canada and private industry have a vital role in

this system.

Finally, the second part examines how the established mythology aided the

legislative process. Since the Liberals had a minority government, the Telesat Bill's

enactment was not predestined. I argue that mythology made the policy seem predestined

and therefore accepted by the opposition parties. Although both main opposition parties

attacked some of the *mythemes*, they were still credulous of the core *mytheme*—namely,

Canada's viability is dependent on satellite communications. The part concludes by

examining how the consent for Telesat was retrieved from the Canadian people by the perpetuation of myths and rituals associated with the Inuit and Telesat.

Part One

The Chapman Report: Upper Atmosphere and Space Programs in Canada

In May of 1966, the Science Secretariat of the Privy Council appointed a four-person study group to investigate the *Upper Atmosphere and Space Programmes in Canada*. Led by Dr. John Chapman, who was the most experienced expert in the field based on his work for the Defence Research Board's development of the Alouette program, the final report was released in February of 1967. The Chapman report, as it was referred to, was primarily interested in the scientific and technical aspects of space and communication satellites (Slaco, 1979, p. 104). Its main recommendation encouraged Ottawa to immediately establish a domestic communication satellite system. In particular, the report cited "a risk that ultimate control over...the space segment of a communication satellite system may not reside in Canada" (Chapman, 1967, p. 111). If Ottawa did not move quickly to put satellites in the necessary orbital slots to cover all of the country, other North and South American countries might beat Canada to these limited spots. Headlines such as those found in the Financial Post that read "Canada Should Take Her Place in Space" and "We Must Move Fast to Claim Space Spots" helped to prioritize the issue in the public sphere.

Not surprisingly, the report emphasized the scientific, economic and industrial benefits of a satellite program. The economic spin-offs and the promotion of scientific research in Canada were detailed to convince any government official that would have

read the report. However, the financial numbers proposed for creating a system, funding

university research and even establishing a small launch facility were staggering. The

maintenance cost of the launch facility alone was estimated at $15 million per annum

(Chapman, 1967, p. 98). Acknowledging the necessity for large infusions of public

money, the commission that included engineers, scientists and economists proposed

something outside of their area of expertise to enhance their case for a domestic

communication satellite system—social implications. These social motivations would

help the bureaucrats and parliamentarians to muster their political capital and agree to the

massive financial investment. This brief but cogent section would be the blueprint for the

myth associated with the Canadian communication satellite system.

As a clever rhetorical technique, the social implications section is situated in

chapter nine of the report, which follows the chapter that estimates the cost of the total

system at $60 million per annum and precedes the final sections that state the

recommendations for implementation. Its place in the argument is clear: to enhance the

persuasiveness and urgency of the subsequent sections and to mitigate concern caused by

the preceding section. Paralleling legal jargon, the chapter is appropriately titled "The

Case for a Canadian Program." The section epitomizes both Levi-Strauss and Barthes'

characteristics of myth. First, as Barthes suggests, myth has an imperative that acts

directly on the individual. Barthes considers this process through a series of sentences

that include pronouns where the "it" denotes the myth and the "I" or "me" represent the

individual that the myth influences. The social implications have a similar effect on a

reader especially if this reader is a bureaucrat or politician whose job is to create and

enforce laws and policies that will benefit Canada. Second, as Barthes argues, myth is

not a single entity but is composed of *mythemes.* In other words, a myth is in fact many

myths that concatenate to form a larger narrative. Likewise, the social implications

section does not include one but a series of implications that build on each other to make

the final case.

Due to the intricate narrative, it is necessary to examine this section by following

the argument in a sequential manner. The narrative commences with the nebulous claim

that "man has always been confronted by frontiers." In typical myth building fashion, the

authors begin by forcing the reader to associate with the "everyman." Like the man, the

reader should assume that he or she is also faced with frontiers. The sentence may well

have read: "*you* have always been confronted by frontiers." Following the characteristics

laid out by both Levi-Strauss and Barthes, this universal claim is naturalized by attaching

itself to the immutability of history. The myth is given credence by the subsequent

assertion that "in early historical times the desert and the sea were the barriers to his

further expansion..." The image is etched into the reader's mind: man has always faced

frontiers that have inhibited his expansion. What this new frontier is or where this

expansion leads is not yet important. What is important is the immediate impression the

myth makes on the reader as an individual and how the myth attaches itself to history.

The reader is promptly informed that the answer to barriers has always been

technology. The domestication of the camel "opened up" the desert and the construction

of seaworthy ships "opened up" the continents. Furthermore, "opening up" lines of

communication was not accomplished for its own sake, but to access the "rich lands

beyond." It is then argued that North American and Canadian history supports this

truism. In typical technological deterministic fashion, it was not the "mammalian one,"

the settlers, but "the iron horse," the railroad, that conquered the prairies. Finally,

echoing Pierre Berton's assertion, the railway fulfilled the "promise of Confederation."

In summary, the opening paragraph concatenates the following *mythemes*:

1. Man has always faced frontiers.

2. These frontiers are found throughout history and include the sea and the desert.

3. The frontiers prevent man from obtaining riches.

4. Only technology is capable of "opening up" these frontiers and allowing man to realize the riches.

5. The "opening up" of the prairies by the railway was the primary factor allowing Canada to realize its statehood.

With this last *mytheme* in mind, the authors propose Canada's new frontier—outer space.

The obvious implication is that just like the railway, the "opening up" of outer space is

inexorable to Canada's development and prosperity. The subsequent *mythemes* highlight

the urgency of the matter and emphasize the unique characteristics of this new frontier

and technology.

Canada is placed in between two giant superpowers, the Soviets and the

Americans, who are competing in the largest "non-military enterprise" since the

pyramids, Stonehenge, and the colossi of Easter Island. The claim "non-military

enterprise" by the authors some of whom worked directly for the Canadian Department

of Defence is too absurd to even criticize. Regardless of this tenuous comparison to other

"non-military" projects, the authors are persistent in their desire to differentiate satellites

from these ancient technological feats by claiming that satellites will "put new power into

the hands of men at all levels of society." The authors claim that unlike the pyramids that

were built to satiate the pharaohs' megalomania, satellites are magnanimously offered to democratically benefit all people: "The influence of space technology will be felt in every home in Canada."

As any democratic right, the right to modern telecommunications is not just a right for some but for all Canadians. The authors highlight the point that telecommunications should be made available to "even those who live in remote areas" such as the arctic or the northern parts of the provinces. Whether one lives in Toronto, Churchill or in Resolute (Qasuittuq), everyone has an equal right to "speak to any other person in Canada for personal or business reasons" and to "see the Grey Cup game or the Stanley Cup playoffs in colour."

As is common for myths, this one intentionally confounds what is a complicated matter. There are two notable assumptions. First, the authors assert that society demands telecommunications but which society is not clearly stated. The assumption is that everyone living in Resolute or in Churchill demands telecommunications, but these communities are vastly different. Most of the northern communities in resource and administrative centres such as Yellowknife are populated with temporary workers that are from southern Canada (Hindley, Martin and McNulty, 1977, p. 161). On the other hand, the Inuit make up a majority of the population in the high and eastern arctic centres. The assumption is that these communities equally demand telecommunications and for the same purposes. Second, the authors assert that space technology is the only means for providing these vital links. The assumption made is that before satellites there was not any broadcasting or telecommunications in the North. This assertion is simply false. Although it is true that "live" television from southern Canada was not available, there

84

were a number of television options for communities who received the CBC's Frontier Coverage Package (Feaver, 1976, p. 14). The question that emerges from these two assumptions is which segment of the Northern community will serve to benefit from the proposed satellite communication system. Furthermore, if the answer to this question is the non-aboriginal inhabitants, then why does the Chapman report obscure the reality by mentioning Inuit communities such as Resolute?

The authors claim that while the immediate benefits may not be known, "in the second century of Confederation the fabric of Canadian society will be held together by strands of space just as strongly as the railway and telegraph held together the scattered provinces in the last century." As Levi-Strauss observed, myth making thrives on subjects that are unknowable and difficult to prove. In this particular instance, the authors shelter their case by arguing that its effects would not be known for over thirty years. How is one to disprove the reason for spending large sums of public money? This problem is exacerbated if one also assumes the claim that Canada's past is indebted to the railway and telegraph.

Finally, to add urgency to their cause, the authors suggest that this technology is going to come to Canada whether Ottawa likes it or not. The authors warn that technology "is subject to commercial secrecy, to patents procedures, to control of key materials or devices." If satellite service comes to Canada from American, French or other foreign companies, Ottawa will lack the jurisdiction to control or regulate the technology. This claim cements their case by baiting Ottawa to become immediately involved. The conclusion is clear:

[T]he crucial issue is the extent to which Canadians will control this vital element of their national fabric. Railways and communications have since 1867 been under the ultimate jurisdiction of the Canadian Parliament... Space technology is so directly related to the needs of a large, sparsely populated country, that it cannot be ignored. In a free society, it will be used, and the role of the Government is to see that space technology is used in the best interests of Canada. It is therefore an inescapable conclusion that the elements of space technology vital to Canada must be under Canadian control (Chapman, 1967, p. 95).

This one quotation is emblematic of Barthes' characteristics of myth. First, the premise of the railway's role in Canadian history naturalizes the subsequent claim that space technology solves the problems caused by geography. This claim parallels Barthes' assertion that "in passing from history to nature, myth acts economically, it abolishes the complexity of human acts, it gives them the simplicity of essences, it does away with all dialectics" (Barthes, 1972, p. 143). By placing satellites in a teleological framework that contends that Canadian unity and prosperity have always been inexorable to the development of communication technologies, the Chapman report effectively negates any antithetical arguments—the thesis stands alone because history stands alone.

Second, the direct claim that all Canadians desire this new technology obscures the reality that different communities have their own needs and demands. This is an example of Barthes' observation that myth "organizes a world which is without contradictions because it is without depth, a world wide open and wallowing in the evident, it establishes a blissful clarity: things appear to mean something by themselves" (Barthes, 1972, p. 143). In other words, the contradictions in interests between a Torontonian working on contract for a mining company in Uranium City and an Inuit person living in Resolute are intentionally blurred.

Finally, the unequivocal conclusion that Canada must control this vital technology exemplifies Barthes' claim that myth does "not deny things... it makes them innocent, gives them a natural and eternal justification, it gives them a clarity which is not that of an explanation but that of a statement of fact" (Barthes, 1972, p. 143). When it came time to debate the matter in the House of Commons, even those opposed to the legislation did not refute this core myth. All that was debateable was the structure. No one had the gall to challenge the belief that a domestic communication satellite system was not as essential to Canada's future as the railroad was to the past. However, as Barthes also contends, the final paragraph reveals a glimpse at the underlying political and economic motivations.

Although the authors present a convincing case for Ottawa's participation in space technology, they seem to face a peculiar quandary. After presenting their cogent argument, they insert a warning that weakens their previous claims: "Clearly, this argument cannot be carried to the limit to justify complete self-sufficiency in space technology in Canada." It is almost as if they fear that their case has been so persuasive that it might lead to a complete investment into a satellite program—something they do not desire. Therefore, they consider some of their recommendations that are not crucial such as a launch facility and worldwide tracking facilities. As a result, they circumscribe the possibility for a traditional crown corporation by opening up the communication satellite system to both the American government and Canadian corporations such Bell Canada.

Similar to an orchestral performance, the final myth that emerges from the Chapman report is both intricate and overwhelming. It is composed of several *mythemes*

that meld to form a powerful myth. First, technology has always been harnessed to allow

humankind to overcome frontiers and acquire new riches. Second, the railroad opened up

the west and allowed Canada to realize the "promise of Confederation." Third, Canada's

contemporary frontier is space and overcoming this obstacle will ensure future national

survival. Fourth, unlike previous technological feats, the communication satellite is a

democratic technology. Fifth, all Canadians no matter where they live, equally demand

and deserve their democratic right to telecommunication services provided by satellites.

Sixth, Ottawa should act urgently so that it does not lose control of this essential

technology to foreign elements. Finally, although it is inescapable for Ottawa to control

the technology, that control must be limited. The proposed system should not be self-

sufficient but reliant on the American government and Canadian corporations. The

overall myth is complicated and wrought with contradictions. However, it serves the

clear purpose of adding urgency to the project and providing an immediate impression

that will help Ottawa promote and fund the endeavour. The shallowness of the myth

would quickly be penetrated, but only after it had served its purpose.

The White Paper: A Domestic Satellite Communication System for Canada

With all the external pressures on Ottawa coupled with the urgings by the

Chapman report and a subsequent study by the Science Council of Canada, the

government commissioned a White Paper led by bureaucrats from the Science Council of

Canada and submitted to the Minister of Industry, C.M. Drury. Its mandate was to

outline the "factors involved in planning and establishing a domestic satellite

communication system" (Department of Industry, 1968, p. 18). The White Paper was

published in March of 1968. Its main conclusions would lay the foundation for the

Telesat Act:

> 1. The system established would involve the federal government as a major participant.

> 2. The system would be a commercial venture with the government as a shareholder.

> 3. Participation would be shared with the telecommunication common carriers.

> 4. The resulting corporation would be jointly owned by Ottawa, the common carriers, and the general public through equity shares.

> 5. Although the government will look into the creation of a local launch facility for future satellites, the first series of satellites will be launched from foreign countries.

As for mythology, the White Paper continued the myth regarding communication

satellites by repeating the claims formulated in the Chapman report. Namely, the

document perpetuated the belief that "the development of a nation is closely linked to the

development of its communication systems" (Department of Industry, 1968, p. 36).

However, the White Paper went further than the Chapman report in emphasizing two

aspects of the satellite system. First, such a system would introduce television services in

English and French to areas not previously served. As a result, major steps would be

taken "in protecting and strengthening Canada's cultural heritage" (Department of

Industry, 1968, p. 36). Second, the system would not only strengthen the links of a

population stretched "across the width," but also far into the North. In particular,

television would provide entertainment to the people in the north and "also serve the

important function of maintaining a well-informed public" (Department of Industry,

1968, p. 34).

As opposed to the ambiguity of the Chapman report, it is clear which "public" the

White Paper had in mind: "The reduced sense of isolation that this would achieve could

have a marked beneficial influence in attracting personnel to Government and industrial

projects in remote areas" (Department of Industry, 1968, p. 34). In other words, the

satellite would help realize Diefenbaker's "Northern Vision" of developing the North.

This isolated region would now be attractive to southern Canadians by bringing the south

to the North (Hindley, Martin, and McNulty, 1977, pp. 158-159). The obvious group that

was missing from both documents was the indigenous population. The demands and

needs of this group were consolidated with non-aboriginal communities.

Instant World: A Report on Telecommunications in Canada

The proliferation of new telecommunication technologies such as computers and

satellites during the 1960s had an overwhelming effect on the federal government's

regulatory bureaucracies. Events such as the Power Corporation's bid for a national

satellite television network confirmed that the institutions in place, namely the Board of

Broadcasting Governors and the Department of Transport, were not sufficiently

structured and organized to deal with the emerging technologies. As a result, in 1969, the

government enacted the Department of Communications Act. The established

Department of Communications (DOC) was responsible for the operation and

development of communications and cultural policy. What was interesting about the

DOC was that its structure and responsibilities created fertile ground for myth. In

particular, its dyadic mandate to promote both culture and industry would lead to many

contradictions in interests. The priorities of the telecommunication corporations and

cultural groups were not always analogous and often competed over policy directions.

Shortly after the DOC was established, its Minister, Eric Kierans, announced a comprehensive study, a Telecommission, on the current state and future prospects of telecommunications in Canada. The Deputy Minister, Alan Gotlieb, led the study, which was published under the title *Instant World: A Report on Telecommunications in Canada*. Although this report was completed after the Telesat Act was passed, its findings reveal the ideology of Gotlieb's DOC, which had a direct impact on the domestic communication satellite corporation.

Unlike the more technical studies on telecommunications like the Chapman report, *Instant World* focuses on political and even philosophical concerns. As such, the report is certainly deserving of a deeper analysis. In particular, the report is marked by disingenuous interpretations of scholars such as Marshall McLuhan and Jacques Ellul. Most dramatic of them is an erroneous interpretation of McLuhan used to support the Telecommission's technological nationalism despite his position that communication technologies such as satellites would make such attempts futile in a new "global village." McLuhan's aphorism "the medium is the message" influenced Gotlieb and Kierans, but in a way that could be considered harmful to some Canadians. McLuhan supported their faith that the importance of institutions and technologies transcended content—a belief that would have drastic effects on the Inuit. Therefore, the DOC made it its mandate to strengthen these institutions. One of the institutions that benefited the most from this ideology was Bell Canada.

Instant World was not original in terms of perpetuating myths associated with telecommunications and satellites. The standard narrative set out in previous policy documents was followed:

One predominant theme emerges... The technologies of telecommunications and computers, effectively used in combination, could make a striking contribution to economic prosperity and the general quality of life in Canada; to the development of remote and sparsely populated regions of the country; to the extension of French and English broadcasting services from coast to coast; to the ability of individuals and groups in Canada to express themselves and communicate their views in the language of their choice; and to Canadian acceptance of responsibility for participation in the achievement of international objectives, especially the social and economic development of less fortunate countries in many parts of the world (Department of Communications, 1971, p. 8).

What makes *Instant World* unique is its focus on the role of Canada's business community and Bell Canada in particular. Although their role was insinuated in the Chapman report and the White Paper, *Instant World* unequivocally converged the interests of Ottawa with Bell Canada. The logic was simple: Ottawa wanted to promote telecommunications in Canada but it did not desire nor could it afford to pay for the entire system. However, Ottawa did not want to open up this system to American companies because this would both diminish the nationalistic claims of the system and limit Ottawa's control. As a result, *Instant World* argued:

Canada is only one relatively unimportant segment of the global market for computers and computer-services, which is almost totally captive to United States interests. Against them Canada has only one high card to play—the existence of a telecommunications industry that is largely Canadian-owned and has, in one instance, a corporate tie with a Canadian manufacturing undertaking sufficiently large and diversified to benefit from economies of scale in production, research, and development (Department of Communications, 1971, 199).

This excerpt was a clear signal to Bell that they would be the "high card." Although Bell was not explicitly named, the "corporate tie" with a Canadian manufacturer was an obvious hint considering Bell's relationship with Northern Electric. Bell would be granted a monopoly in some of these emerging telecommunication fields

but they would be forced to submit to further regulation. According to Gotlieb, "it was the price they had to pay for being the chosen instrument" (Gotlieb quoted in Surtees, 1992, p. 145). However, what the DOC did not consider was the issue of "who chose whom." The subsequent history of the DOC reveals that the more leverage it proffered to Bell, the less control it was able to assert. As a result, it became increasingly difficult for the DOC to balance its mandate to advance both the social and economic benefits of communications. This inability was a prime factor in the demise of the DOC in 1993 with its cultural and social mandate conferred onto the new Department of Heritage and the economic portfolio to the Department of Industry.

In summary, other than repeating the standard myths regarding telecommunications and Canada, *Instant World* had the distinctive role of linking Bell Canada to the narrative. The creation of Bell in 1880 was extolled as one of the two most important events in Canadian telecommunications history (Department of Communications, 1971, p. 60). The report commented on Bell's service to the North as "praiseworthy efforts to provide at least some kind of service in extremely difficult conditions" (Department of Communications, 1971, p. 145). Most importantly, *Instant World* laid the foundation for the belief that Bell could act as a corporate citizen in a broad national policy. By perpetuating this myth, the DOC also laid the foundation for its own demise by exacerbating the precarious balance of their mandate to promote social/cultural factors and economic factors.

Part Two

The Role of Myth in the Legislative Process

On March 24, 1969, one year after the White Paper was published, Bill C-184 was introduced by the Minister of Communications Eric Kierans. The legislation followed all of the White Paper's key recommendations. Unlike previous documents, the Bill did not embellish the goals of a domestic communication satellite system in a manner that can be called mythic. Instead, this formal document proposed: "the objectives of the company are to establish satellite telecommunication systems providing on a commercial basis, telecommunication services between locations in Canada" (Telesat Canada Act, 1968, Section 5(1)). However, the mythology that was created in the preceding official documents was a critical component for getting the Bill accepted by the House of Commons.

It is necessary to note that the Liberal government that introduced the Bill did not have a majority. In fact, it relied on the Social Credit Party and the New Democratic Party (NDP) to effectively govern. Therefore, it is not surprising that the social and cultural benefits were purported to emphasize the system's benefits in political rather than economic terms. As a result, "the emotional appeal of the political arguments used to promote the system considerably reduced the manoeuvrability of the political opposition" (Slaco, 1979, p. 144). The results of the myth closely followed Barthes' definition of depoliticized speech:

> In passing from history to nature, myth acts economically: it abolishes the complexity of essences, it does away with all dialectics, with any going back beyond what is immediately visible, it organizes a world which is without contradictions because it is without depth, it establishes a blissful

clarity: things appear to mean something by themselves (Barthes, 1972, p. 143).

Myth ensured that no one questioned whether Canada "needed" a system. This was done by highlighting two myths: (1) satellites were a natural extension of the railway; (2) satellites would help develop the North. Even before the Telesat Bill was introduced, Eric Kierans prepared the House of Commons by relaying the myths formulated in the preceding policy documents. Kierans' February 28, 1969 opening remarks to the House set the tone for future debate:

> Our largest single current project, as everyone knows, is the development of a domestic communications satellite system to go into operation by 1971-1972. Legislation to set up a mixed, public-private, satellite corporation will shortly come before this house... We intend to use it to bring the North and the under-developed parts of this country closer to the mainstream of Canadian life by means of instant telecommunications and by live television—**a northern vision of the 1970's, and I deliberately use that phrase in acknowledgement of the foresight of the great parliamentarian who first coined it.** (Kierans, 1969, p. 6079; my emphasis)

Of course, this "great parliamentarian" who coined "the northern vision" was Prime Minister Diefenbaker. Kierans consciously introduced the bill by attaching it to this larger trend in Canadian history. By rehashing the northern vision, Kierans implicitly called on support from Diefenbaker's party, the Progressive Conservatives—support that would prove critical in the legislative process.

The subsequent parliamentary debate would refer back to Kierans' precursory remarks. Members of the NDP were especially interested in extending the "northern vision." Max Saltsman, the NDP MP for Waterloo, constantly defended this vision as a worthy endeavour against those who did not support the financial commitments:

The minister has told us we need Telesat; that it has a social purporse. We
need it for the development of the north. Some in this house will argue
that there are very few people living in the north of Canada, that this is an
expensive project and that it might not be wise to spend so much money
just to please a few trappers, a few hunters, a few workers on the oil rigs, a
few mounties. But I think it is important that we show some vision with
regard to the possibilities of the north. It will not always be a wasteland
with only a few people living there (Saltsman, 1969, p. 9810).

Saltsman adhered to the myth emerging from the Chapman report and the White Paper

by again conflating the interests of the many communities living in the North.

Furthermore, his concept of the North as a wasteland was reminiscent of Pierre Berton's

vision of the North. Through industrial and economic development brought on by

technology and Southern workers, the North and the Inuit will be ushered into

modernity—the wasteland that is filled with perils becomes a garden that is filled with

gifts.

However, the one aspect of the myth that was criticized by both the Progressive

Conservative opposition and the NDP was the effectiveness of a system that integrates

private business with public works. On the one hand, some Conservative members

abhorred the extension of a monopoly and Ottawa's direct involvement in the program.

On the other hand, some NDP members showed similar dissatisfaction but their

contention was that Ottawa should have greater involvement.

The June 13, 1969 House of Commons debate over the Telesat Act reveals that

although marginal aspects of the myth were criticized, nobody disputed the main tenets as

outlined in the Chapman report. In particular, the belief that Canada was built on

communications and its future development especially in the North hinges on satellites.

Stan Schumacher, an MP from Alberta, summarized the Progressive Conservative stance

that Ottawa should leave the creation of the system to private enterprise. His argument in the House refuted the Liberals' analogy of the creation of Telesat to the Canadian Pacific Railroad. However, he never disputed the claim that Canadian nationhood is indebted to the CPR. Instead, he argued that circumstances were different and that the government at the time of the CPR did not intend to maintain ownership:

> Mr. Speaker, I should like to take this opportunity to say that this bill does not have the unanimous support of all members of the house. I am not prepared to support this legislation for the following reasons...The minister has on several occasions used the completely spurious argument that this bill is necessary for the completion of the job of nation-building started by the CPR about a hundred years ago, and that this bill is only the present-day application of that policy. That is nonsense, Mr. Speaker. In the case of the CPR there was nobody available who was able to undertake the construction of that project and the government quite properly became involved in its financing, but not its ownership (Schumacher, 1969, p. 10099).

Schumacher never denied the role of the CPR and the future role of satellites as nation building tools. His and his party's criticism was that Ottawa should not be involved in this venture because the telecommunication companies, especially the Bell led TCTS, were willing to construct and maintain the system: "the government has an opportunity here to set an example to the private sector of industry by getting out of a field where it is not required and really has no business being in the first place" (Schumacher, 1969, p. 10100). In the end, the Conservatives, even Schumacher who vehemently opposed government involvement, supported the Liberals when the NDP tried to amend the Bill to turn Telesat into a crown corporation.

Meanwhile on the other side of the political spectrum, MP David Lewis expressed the NDP's shared faith in the myths of a communication satellite program:

> We agree with him that the considerations are political and social, as well as technological development for the country. We agree...that the satellite can play an important part in distributing encouragement for people of both official languages across Canada. We agree...that the satellite can be of great benefit to remote communities everywhere in Canada, particularly the north (Lewis, 1969, p. 10100).

However, what they disagreed with was the belief that the telecommunication corporations should play a role in the system. In fact, judging by their comments, it is arguable that the NDP had even more faith in the myth than the Liberals. This was evident in the premise of their critique of Telesat's corporate structure. They argued that out of "practicality" and not "ideology" should the government accept a crown corporation arrangement. In other words, they proposed that they did not want a crown corporation because of a socialist agenda; rather naively, they admitted a crown corporation was the only suitable arrangement to serve the nation's interest as stipulated by the Minister of Communications. They clearly stated that they were not universally against joint public-private ventures by repeating that they held this position with respect to the potash industry. Nevertheless, they thought that this arrangement was unfeasible for something as vital as communication satellites. They compared the principles that underlined the creation of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) to Telesat:

> I think it is generally felt throughout the country, that the CBC is ours. It belongs to the people of Canada. Whatever else may be said for it, it does operate in the public interest... Communications play a key role social and political role within the country as a whole...It is for that reason I feel the public interest can be best safeguarded as a crown operation of crown corporation (Burton, 1969, p. 9828).

The NDP was not convinced of the myth as advocated in *Instant World* that private telecommunication corporations could act as an instrument of government policy. David Lewis asked the Minister of Communications, "why are we giving this tremendous

power to Bell Telephone, RCA Victor, and Northern Electric that already have an

oligopolistic control of the communications industry in Canada?" (Lewis, 1969, p.

10101) Paralleling Schiller's argument regarding Comsat, they did not believe the myth

that the social and political implications of communication satellites could meld with the

economic imperatives of the corporations such as Bell. According to Max Saltsman,

> [I]t must be obvious that a very severe conflict of interest arises in trying
> to weld together the national interest as represented by the crown, the
> private interest as represented by investors, who after all are like other
> investors and interested only in the rate of return on their money, and the
> interest of common carriers who in the communications systems are very
> eager to protect and enlarge their activities. It became quite obvious
> during the committee hearings that these interests were in conflict... if the
> program is to be successful, this conflict must not take place (Saltsman,
> 1969, p. 9806).

Saltsman concluded his critique of the paradoxical interests by asking the

Minister of Communications why he "brings the jungle into the house and expects us to

accept it at face value." Although Saltsman and the NDP did not accept Telesat's

corporate arrangements, they showed a remarkable naivety in accepting the larger myth

at "face value." Their failure to direct fundamental criticism at the Bill was directly

rooted in their inability to see past the core myth that satellite communication, like the

railroad, was essential for national survival and development. Nevertheless, the urgency

in which the Bill was presented by the government had a decisive impact on how the

NDP considered the issue.

In an August 21, 1970 caucus memorandum entitled "Fiasco in Satellite

Communication Policy in Canada," the NDP repeated their criticism of Telesat's

corporate structure but also accepted the overall nationalistic goals. This memorandum

admitted that "time was important" (NDP Research Group, 1970, p. 4). The most urgent

matter was to counteract Quebec's plan to join the *Symphonie* system: "there was a psychological imperative in getting the Canadian satellite into space before the French one scheduled for the end of 1971" (NDP Research Group, 1970, p. 4).

In summary, the legislative process of the Telesat Act demonstrates the critical role of myth in Canadian communication policy. In this instance, the Liberal minority government led by Eric Kierans introduced and promoted Telesat by stressing the social and political implications. The necessity of satellite communications and its place as an extension to the goals of the CPR was agreed upon by a majority of Members of Parliament from all affiliations. Although the NDP did not believe that Bell could serve these social and political goals, their opposition was muted by their failure to perceive the myth in its entirety—all the *mythemes*. In the end, the myths associated with Telesat epitomized Barthes notion that "myth essentially aims at causing an immediate impression—it does not matter if one is later allowed to see through the myth, its action is assumed to be stronger than the rational explanations which may later belie it" (Barthes, 1972, p. 130). The immediate impression on the opposition parties was exacerbated by the concurrent issue of urgency stemming from the fear of Quebec joining the French satellite system and Canada losing the allocated "orbital parking spots."

Myth Becomes a Public Ritual and is Sold to the Public

Despite the myth's ability to expedite the legislative process, the Liberal government still had to convince Canadians. After Parliament was convinced to establish and infuse public funds into a private-public domestic communication satellite system, the Liberals transformed the myth to garner public consent. According to C.E.S. Franks, the Queen's University political scientist, the early Trudeau era was marked by this

struggle to gain public consent after legislation was passed. His argument is that the Trudeau government's legislative process differed from previous post-WWII governments. While the Diefenbaker and Pearson governments attracted some public consent in their policymaking process through public inquiries and Royal Commissions, Trudeau inhibited public participation by strengthening the role of cabinet and government agencies (Franks, 1985, p. 11). As a result, the government would often have to persuade a divided and unhappy electorate of the attractiveness of a certain policy:

> The process of creating these policies, however, because it is private and within government, neither educates the public nor encourages consent formation. This leaves the government with an extremely difficult selling job once it has decided upon and announced its policy intentions... The burden of mobilizing consent was placed on post-decision processes. Here, the government was in the unenviable situation of having to gain support from an uninformed public in the face of a hostile opposition in Parliament and critical interest groups in the country. Because of its secretive nature, the policy-creating processes had not led to understanding and support. One implement for winning consent is the techniques of mass communication, such as advertising and publicity campaigns (Franks, 1985, p. 12).

The case of the Telesat Act followed this larger trend in politics during the Trudeau era. After the Bill was passed, the Liberals mobilized the mass media to ensure public consent for Telesat. This necessity for public approval was exacerbated after the media reported on the controversial decision by the Liberal cabinet to award Hughes Aircraft of California the contract to construct the satellites (Slaco, 1979, p. 154). The controversy lay in the contradiction between the proposed goal of using Telesat to support Canadian industry and the decision to award an American company with only 12% of the money allocated to Canadian subcontracts. On the other hand, the competing

bid by RCA would have offered 65% Canadian content. Cabinet's decision was influenced by the substantially reduced cost of the Hughes bid.

The compromise between the stated goals and the financial realities humbled the politicians who previously praised the project as a boon for Canada. Reminiscent of Prime Minister Laurier's position during the "tea-pot Navy" controversy, Minister Kierans was quoted in the Victoria Daily Times that the cabinet's decision was "the price we are prepared to pay for being Canadians" (Victoria Daily Times, 1970, p.5). Furthermore, a Globe and Mail editorial suggested that the $90 million of public funds that went into Telesat and the Hughes bid could have been substantially less if Ottawa had the gumption to work with Russia on a cheaper and equally capable system: "Did we consider renting from Russia and were we talked out of it by the United States?" (Globe and Mail, 1972, p.8) Instead of using the satellite "parking spots" over the equator which Ottawa seemed anxious to reserve, a system could have connected to Russian satellites that looped over the North and South Poles.

In the face of this controversy and lack of public consent, the Liberals tried to direct the media in a favourable manner by reinvigorating the myths associated with Telesat and staging public rituals. As Barthes argues, "there is no fixity in mythical concepts: they can come into being, alter, disintegrate, disappear completely" (Barthes, 1972, p. 120). In the case of Telesat, the myths that were enshrined in the policy documents continued but the myth regarding the social benefits awarded to the North altered. Whereas the Chapman report and the White Paper equivocated over the issue of which Northern community was to be served, the public relations campaign during 1972-1973 highlighted the place of the Inuit. This campaign followed Connerton's concept of

the commemorative ceremony or ritual by incorporating Inuit language and performance. Referring back to Levi-Strauss, the contradiction of interests between which community was to be served was not reconciled by disregarding the Inuit; rather, through the hegemonic process, the Inuit were consciously brought into the overall myth.

The naming of Telesat's first series of communication satellites that were to be built by Hughes was a vital component of the Liberal government's plan to garner public consent. As a means to direct attention away from the secretive policy process associated with the Cabinet, the DOC organized a public contest to name the first satellite. Three of Canada's most influential and well-known celebrities were chosen to judge the contest that was open to all Canadians and organized through the Canadian postal service. Reporters were then invited to an "off-beat" press conference where Marshall McLuhan, Leonard Cohen, and Gratien Gelinas announced the winner.[14] Julie-Frances Czapla, a 24-year-old supermarket bookkeeper from Montreal, won with her name "Anik." The word translates from Inuktitut to mean "brother." According to Leonard Cohen, "the choice of Anik reflected a desire felt by many Canadians to pay homage to one of Canada's native peoples" (Globe and Mail, 1969, p. 8).

Telesat's President, David Golden, gladly accepted the judges decision to name the first series of satellites after an Inuktitut word. It served the purpose of drawing attention of both the Inuit and Canadians to the impression that Telesat's goal was to magnanimously serve the North and benefit the Inuit. Following Connerton's notion of ritual language, Telesat's subsequent series of satellites were also named using Inuktitut

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[14] Marshall McLuhan was the famous Canadian academic known for *Understanding Media* and *The Gutenberg Galaxy*. Leonard Cohen was Canada's most prominent writer and musician of the era. Finally, Gratien Gelinas was a leading actor and playwright for Quebec theatre and cinema.

words including the 1998 direct broadcast satellite that was named "Nimiq" (sister). For choosing the winning bid, Czapla was awarded a free trip to Cape Kennedy, Florida to witness the launch of Anik I in 1972. There she would again be involved in another ritual that would enshrine the place of the Inuit in Telesat's overall myth.

The launch of Anik I on November 9, 1973, was the main ritual that reinvigorated the myth and helped Ottawa garner public consent for satellite communications. The launch was organized to focus Canadian attention on this historic achievement and to highlight the role of the Inuit. In particular, the CBC's television coverage of the launch followed what James Compton considers "news as dramatic ritual." Adhering to James Carey's communications theory, Compton argues that most media events the are not concerned with the transmission of information but with the ritual that ensures society's existence in time (Compton, 2002, p. 26). The CBC coverage of the launch was an example of a ritual performance or media spectacle that was aimed at promoting social integration in terms of the Inuit and national unity in terms of public consent for satellite communications.

The special live coverage of the Anik I launch included a group of "young people of the North" who were flown along with Julie-Frances Czapla to Florida to witness and participate in this media spectacle. Rich Host anchored the event from Toronto and reporter Lloyd Robertson was live to conduct the performance. The "young people of the North" included both Inuit teenagers and non-Aboriginal youths. Before the youths were interviewed, the media coverage included interviews with politicians and scientists. Politicians, such as the Minister of Communications Robert Stanbury, highlighted the social and political goals: "from Anik's vantage point in space, distance is no

problem...all can be accessible to most isolated parts of Canada...secondly, it will help to

serve the interests of national unity and integrity" (CBC Television News Special, 1974).

Engineers and scientists from the Canadian subcontractors reminded the audience that

although Hughes is American, Anik is still composed of Canadian made parts.

Lloyd Robertson's interview with the Northern youths—especially the Inuit

teenagers—was the main feature of this news spectacle. Robertson's first question

summarized the myth that was being inculcated into public consciousness: "Do you

realize that that little bit of Canadian technology that is going up there now is going to

help connect you to the rest of Canada?" The Inuit teenage girl's response was that it

would make her life "much better." For any Canadian watching the live event, the

message was clear: Anik is a Canadian technology whose purpose is to promote the well

being of Canada's Inuit communities. However, despite the response by this Inuit

teenager who is depicted as a representative of her community although her objectivity is

never questioned considering she was awarded a free trip to Florida, previous

consultations with the Inuit revealed a different response. In particular, Gerry Kenney's

1971 "Man in the North" study that included formal consultations with Inuit leaders and

elders demonstrated:

> [I]n spite of promises of great social benefits for the North, the use of
> Anik as presently in reality would fail to provide communications for the
> people's needs...Indeed, the original reasons given by the Government of
> Canada for the Anik satellite program were shown to be in need of re-
> evaluation (Man in the North, 1971, p. 1).

What is interesting to note about the CBC's coverage is that it inverted the real

circumstances regarding satellite communication in the North. On the one hand, the Inuit

youth who did not have the authority to speak on behalf of their community were given a

national, public platform. On the other hand, the CBC ignored the real public

consultation with Inuit leaders. This inverted form of politics was also apparent in the

juxtaposition between the public naming of Anik and the secretive Cabinet decisions.

Nonetheless, the CBC's failure to highlight these realities and promote the myths

associated with Telesat reveals one of the central dilemmas inherent in this national

institution. According to David Taras, the CBC's most difficult assignments are those

that concern national unity and social integration. Although the public broadcaster was

created to counteract the power of media corporations and their commercial prerogatives,

they sometimes fail in their role as a viable alternative (Taras, 2001, p. 141). In

particular, reporting on issues associated with the current government may be constrained

by the bureaucratic structure in place. Coverage that is non-favourable to the government

may mean financial reprisals in the form of budget cuts. Moreover, not only was there a

philosophical bias in the CBC's position but their deep economic interest in Telesat calls

into question their objectivity.

This inverted communication satellite policy also affected the CBC's relations

with Telesat. Other than the TCTS, the CBC has been Telesat's most important, secure

and lucrative customer since the launch of Anik I. However, the extent to which the CBC

required a large number of Telesat's channels was questionable from the beginning. The

reason that the process can be considered inverted is that the CBC had to be convinced by

Telesat that it needed to expand its business with the communication satellite provider.

Evidence for this is found in Telesat's 1975 marketing plan. In this document, Telesat

admits that there were two major constraints of their relationship with the CBC. First,

"regional/provincial program requirements where terrestrial facilities are in use will

possibly hinder the growth of satellite service to some extent (Telesat Canada, 1975, CBC Section III)." In other words, contrary to the Chapman report and the White Paper, the non-satellite television services in Canada did sufficiently provide adequate service to the country. The second constraint was related to this first constraint: "Another constraint might be the lack of knowledge throughout the CBC of the satellite systems capability" (Telesat Canada, 1975, CBC Section III). Again, it was clear to Telesat that there was no real demand emanating from the CBC to use satellites on a mass scale. Programs such as the Frontier Package and more regionally based broadcasting were in fact not only of interest to the CBC but also to many of the rural and Northern communities as was stipulated in the *Man in the North* study.

Considering this tenuous interest by the CBC, it is not surprising that Telesat made it a priority to convince and persuade the CBC to deepen its relationship with the communication satellite company. This was done by pressure put on the CBC by the federal government and by placing high-level CBC bureaucrats as two out of the ten Telesat Board of Directors. It is necessary to note that not even Bell Canada had more than one Board of Director and that J. Alphonse Ouimet—a former President of the CBC—was the Chairman of the Board. In summary, not only was the CBC's coverage of the Anik I launch tainted by their habitual inability to cover national unity and social news events, but the CBC's economic relationship with Telesat had certainly an added effect in presenting the new satellite system in a favourable manner.

Only after the media-hype subsided, was it clear to journalists and the public that Telesat was misconceived. A seminal event for this shift occurred in 1974 when the CRTC first opened hearings on television service in the North. Several representatives of

Northern and Inuit communities made their opinions public. The largely Inuit population

of Frobisher Bay (Iqualuit) was represented by Atsainak Akeshoo and Nancy MacNeil.

Their intervention highlighted two points. First, they expressed anger over the inverted

policy process: "As Northerners we feel that the North is being used to support the

presence of Anik rather than that Anik is being used for the true good of the North"

(Akeshoo and MacNeil, 1974, Section 2). Second, they took a pragmatic stance by

realizing that Anik was not going to magically disappear. Therefore, they pressed the

CRTC to help provide services that would not impinge on the vitality of the Inuit culture

and even support this culture. They made three key recommendations:

1. There should be more programs in Inuktitut. In particular, they
   wanted news and current affairs in their own language.

2. There should be less verbal programs such as "Gilligan's Island" and
   more visual programs such as "The Nature of Things." In particular,
   they wanted programs that highlight the Northern environment.

3. Anik's multi-way communication links should be used so that the
   North does not just receive but also transmits communications to the
   South.

These CRTC interventions and the subsequent news coverage were successful in

changing CBC policy with respect to its Northern service. However, the effect on Inuit

society because of this misconceived and inverted policy process was drastic and

irreversible. According to one report in Time magazine,

> Not that television is really new to the Arctic. Since 1968, half a dozen of
> the largest settlements have been receiving the CBC's "frontier
> package"...Anik, with its live news and sports, is far more seductive. To
> the whites, it provides an escape from the long and bitter night of the
> Arctic winter. To the Indians and Eskimos and Metis, it is an engrossing
> new plaything that can be turned on and left on and will... Rather than
> encourage communication, moreover, it can be expected to dominate its

viewers' attention, thereby isolating them one from another (Time, 1973, p.14).

CHAPTER FIVE:
CONCLUSION: FROM SATELLEITES TO VOIP

The scholarly inspiration for this thesis began with my interest in studying Bell

Canada's place in Canadian communications history and Canadian history in general.

Since Bell has existed for 125 years, it is the perfect institution to study broader patterns

because its history traces the chronicles of communications in Canada from its earliest

beginnings to its most recent incarnations. During my readings of academic and popular

scholarship on Bell, I realized that one question was not posed. Although these scholars

adeptly surveyed Bell's history demonstrating "how" the company has survived for such

a long period, no one asked "why" it survived. This difference between "how" and

"why" may at first seem negligible considering that some may regard the "why" as

redundant if the "how" was properly answered. In other words, the only thing that

matters is knowing that Bell has survived through these various technological shifts and

detailing this knowledge in a sequential order. However, I argue that there is a

difference.

Understanding "how" something has happened is important for the sake of

knowing the past, but understanding "why" something happened can be useful for not

only understanding the past but the present and the future. The "why" becomes a more

pragmatic question because, as the historian E.H. Carr suggests, it enables the scholar to

probe the issue of causation. According to Carr (1961), causation is a form of

determinism that assumes that "everything that happens has a cause or causes, and could

not have happened differently unless something in the cause or causes had also been

different" (pp. 121-122). The "cause" is the crux to any thorough and critical study of a subject because it is a constant. Nonetheless, the problem of ascertaining this key determinant is exacerbated by the fact that the "cause" is often hidden and the fact that there is often more than one "cause."

This concern for the "cause" of Bell's longevity led me to Robert Babe's work on Canadian telecommunication history. In *Telecommunications in Canada*, Babe (1990) argues that this telecommunication history is best appreciated under the backdrop of five reoccurring myths—the core of which is the myth of technological nationalism that states Canada exists *because* of communication technology (p. 5). Babe's approach to the history is more than just a means of organizing a book on an extensive and complicated subject. Rather, it is a theoretical belief that connects Babe's understanding of communications to the forefathers of Canadian communication theory. In fact, the first subheading in the first chapter of *Telecommunications in Canada* is entitled "Pattern Recognition." This section reiterates McLuhan's recounting of Edgar Allen Poe's *Descent into the Maelstrom*. Although the great extent to which not just McLuhan but future generations of scholars have used this metaphor in their work has turned the concept into a cliché, it represents a core theoretical understanding in Canadian communication theory. The essence of which relates to Carr's understanding of "causation" and that only by knowing the core patterns or "causes" can one truly make sense of the world.

With this context and tradition laid out, it became immediately clear that one answer to "why" Bell has existed for so long was that it has ,been successful in attaching itself to the myths that guide telecommunications in Canada as described by Babe.

However, studying this process over Bell's entire history proved to be a difficult task. Only with a case study on a specific juncture in communication technology and Canadian history could I effectively and efficiently determine if myth is indeed a major "cause" in the company's longevity. The emergence of Telesat was chosen because not only was there a large body of information that was yet to be surveyed, but the introduction of satellites represented a major technological change that can be compared to similar innovations such as the introduction of the telephone, television and the Internet.

In this thesis, I have demonstrated how myth played a vital role in ensuring the creation of Telesat for the interests of both Bell and the federal government. The interests of both parties were clear. On the one hand, Bell feared the possible competition from satellite communications and wanted to amalgamate the technology into its larger system. On the other hand, Ottawa feared the possibility of Quebec linking to a non-Canadian system and wanted to create a domestic system with as little expense and as quickly as possible. Myth ensured that the policy would become a reality. This was achieved by effectively depoliticizing the political process involved in passing the Telesat Act. In other words, the propagation and perpetuation of the notion that satellite communications was essential to Canada's social, economic, and political vitality helped rally multi-party support and mitigate criticism of the policy.

The reason for the myth's success was twofold. First, the events leading up to the Telesat Act including the voyage of the *Manhattan*, the Power Corporation's bid for a national satellite network, and the possibility of Quebec joining the *Symphonie* satellite system instilled a state of urgency regarding Canada's role in communication satellites. This state of urgency caused a political milieu that was not conducive to reservations by

members of the opposition parties or deep consideration for the long-term effects. It was

only after this state of urgency that the reality set in for the NDP and other parties. In this

respect, the Telesat myth is characteristic of Barthes' comment that myths give an

immediate impression that produces an effect and only afterwards does the myth emerge.

Furthermore, these three historical events led to the convergence of interests between the

federal government and Bell Canada. The role of myth followed Levi-Strauss'

observation that myths manage contradictions and paradoxes. In this case, the

contradiction between the nationalistic socio-political benefits of satellites and the private

economic interests of Bell Canada were managed by directing attention away from the

economic and to the socio-political. For instance, when it came to promote Telesat to

parliamentarians and then to the public, the role of the Inuit was highlighted as opposed

to mentioning the importance satellites would have to mining and oil exploration in the

Canadian North.

The second reason for the myth's success was based on the structural nature of

myth. According to Levi-Strauss, a myth is not a single entity but is composed of

multiple units. In the case of Telesat, there were three myths that worked together to

produce the intended effect. However, the myth that Bell Canada and private business

could play a vital role in Telesat did not deceive members of both the NDP and the

Progressive Conservatives. Nonetheless, political opposition by these parties especially

the NDP was nullified by their failure to connect all three myths. The lesson is that if one

wants to criticize a policy and its myths, one should look at all the myths and not just one

in isolation. This is reminiscent of Babe's reiteration of *Descent into the Maelstrom*. In

other words, like the doomed sailor, one should study the larger patterns and not just the particularities.

The question remains whether this case study truly answers "why" Bell Canada persists. Admittedly, it is possible that the case of Telesat may be an anomaly or that it is simply misguided to generalize from just one instance. For the sake of academic integrity, the only certain conclusion is that from 1960 to 1974 Bell Canada in conjunction with the federal government incorporated myth to perpetuate Bell's grasp on Canada's communication industry and maintain Ottawa's jurisdictional authority over communications. Only by studying the complete history could I be certain of the place of myth as a cause for Bell's longevity. With that stated, the Telesat case has certain features that makes it a valuable context for other studies on Bell and any other Canadian communication institution.

The key feature of the Telesat Act emerging during a minority parliament is both a positive and a negative. On the one hand, the case may be rebuked considering that in a majority parliament scenario, the governing party may have less concern for how a piece of legislation is presented knowing that they have the votes to pass it despite any oppositional protests. In this scenario, myth may indeed be just window-dressing for a pre-determined policy. On the other hand, for cases where there are minority governments like the current Paul Martin Liberal government, scholars should place more attention on how legislation is presented to both the House of Commons and to the public. Furthermore, the minority government scenario may be seen as a better case since although myth may always be present to some extent, this scenario requires a greater need for myth. The reason being that during minority governments, the political

process intensifies as opposition and coalition parties vie for favourable positions. In other words, it is during this scenario where politics becomes even more important than during times of majority governments. Therefore, myth becomes even more necessary to depoliticize an extremely political situation.

A case that fits this mould and is now a prominent issue is the emergence of VOIP. This technology presents a similar challenge to Bell's empire as the communication satellite once did in the 1960s. It will be interesting to see how Bell meets this challenge in conjunction with its celebration of its 125-year anniversary and the CRTC's unwillingness to further deregulate this emerging market. There are added variables that may make this issue even more interesting including the state of the Liberal party in Quebec and Bell's continuous interest in that province. Whereas other historic institutions have departed the province such as the CPR's leaving Montreal for Calgary in 1996, Bell still maintains its position as an important Montreal-based corporation that is a strong economic and political force. The potential is certainly present for Bell and Paul Martin's minority, Liberal government to continue its reciprocal relationship. For Bell to maintain its role as a powerful player countering Quebec separatism and nationalism, Ottawa may be convinced to continue to aid Bell through favourable policies including the overturning of CRTC decisions. If this occurs and the interests of Bell are considered over that of Canadian citizens, mythology will again be a vital tool for both Bell and Ottawa. One notable difference between this scenario and the emergence of Telesat is

the current advantageous position to perpetuate myth considering Bell's grip over

Canada's media through BCE's ownership of CTV and the Globe and Mail.[15]

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[15] The Globe and Mail is the most circulated national newspaper and CTV News with Lloyd Robertson is the most watched nightly news show.

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