Lamentation And Speculation: George Grant, James Doull And The Possibility Of Canada

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In 1965 George Grant created a national debate when he published his classic text, *Lament for a Nation*. The central thesis of this book was captured in its subtitle, "The Defeat of Canadian Nationalism." While Grant sees the defeat of Diefenbaker's government in 1963 as emblematic of the inability of Canadians to sustain their independence from the United States, he argues that the causes of this defeat lay deeper than any particular political event. For Grant, the sources of Canada's demise lay in the philosophical and political spirit of modernity and in the technological domination it asserts. He saw in Canadian Nationalism the noble belief that a more stable, conservative society could exist on the borders of the United States, the nation which, on his view, more than any other embodied this technological modernity. In 1963, Grant argued, the folly, the impossibility of this belief had finally exposed itself.

In April 1965 James Doull, George Grant's friend and former colleague, wrote to him about the newly published work: "Your book is as exasperating as it is brilliant. The worst is that you, incapable as any could be of inaction and mere lament, encourage Canadians to give up the battle before it has been fought."[1] Three years later Doull wrote again to Grant, now expressing how some of their difference over Canada had affected their friendship: "Sometimes I have spoken or written harshly about your attachment to Upper Canadian conservatism, not evidently without giving offence I had not intended. What moved my comments was that you know young Canadians, can speak to them as no other: that this being so, you did not speak a little more hopefully to them - did not prepare them to resist a little more strongly absorption into the American Empire. For my part, I can only act as though resistance makes some sense."[2] Doull would continue to engage Grant's *Lament for a Nation*, throughout his political writings and reflections on Canada, for example, in Naturalistic Individualism: Quebec Independence and an

[1] Letter on file with the Doull Archive, Sir Wilfred Grenfell College, Memorial University of Newfoundland.
[2] Letter on file with the Doull Archive, Sir Wilfred Grenfell College

Independent Canada, published in a *festschrift* for Grant (1983) and in his most important political writing "The Philosophical Basis of Constitutional Discussion in Canada" (1997).

While Grant and Doull articulate their reactions to the Canada of the second-half of the twentieth-century in the contrasting emotional terms of lamentation and hope, these reactions should not be understood to be simply subjective or personal. This disagreement between Doull and Grant is of more than merely biographical interest, it reflects more than a dispute between friends. In both cases the personal responses reflect deeply considered philosophical principles. For both Grant and Doull, the right understanding of Canada's historical lot must be placed within a deeper reflection of what history is and whether through it there is accomplished a relation between the human and the divine. Both Grant and Doull were uncommon among political philosophers in that they wrote not in the context of concepts borrowed from the social sciences (economics, sociology, psychology, historiography) but within the expanded horizon of the long history of western philosophy and culture, from the Ancient world to their own twentieth century.[3] At home in the world of Plato and that of Rawls alike, they represent peculiarly complex accounts of their own contemporaneity animated by an extraordinary historical resonance and perspective. An investigation of their conflict then involves quite instructive questions about the history of western philosophy and represents a significant moment in Canada's own philosophical history. This essay hopes to serve as an introduction to their conflict through an analysis of some of its essential components. The leading question is why Grant believed Canada impossible and Doull believed in the possibility of Canada. To address this question we first consider key differences in their philosophies of history (and histories of philosophy), then we address their varying conceptions of technology (a central concept in each of their views) and finally by this circuitous route we arrive at a consideration of their diverse approaches to Canadian sovereignty.

History, Necessity And Philosophy

Grant tells us that the context of his lament for the demise of Canadian nationhood rested in an understanding of history fundamentally opposed to the liberal conception of history as the development of freedom and equality. Grant, by the time he wrote *Lament for a Nation*, had broken with the doctrine of progress in which he had been raised and to which in his first book, *Philosophy in the Mass Age*(1959) he subscribed, in what he believed was the form articulated by Hegel. In 1966 - the year after *Lament for a Nation* was published, Grant described his earlier attachment to Hegel's account: "At the theoretical level, I considered Hegel the greatest of all philosophers. He had partaken of all that was true and beautiful and good in the Greek world and was able to synthesize it with Christianity and with the freedom of the Enlightenment and modern science. It

[3] M. Darrol Bryant, makes this point re. Grant in his, "The Barren Twilight: History and Faith in Grant's Lament" in *George Grant in Process*, ed. Larry Schmidt, (Toronto: Anansi Press, 1978) 110.

cannot be insisted too often how hard it is for anyone who believes the western Christian doctrine of providence to avoid reaching the conclusion that Hegel has understood the implications of that doctrine better than any other thinker. I therefore attempted to write down in non-professional language the substance of the vision that the age of reason was beginning to dawn and first in North America."[4] By the early 1960s, due both to reading figures such as Leo Strauss, Jacques Ellul and Simone Weil and his experience of the deepening modernization of Canada, Grant came to reject Hegel's "claim to have taken the truth of antique thought and synthesized it with the modern to produce a higher (and perhaps highest) truth."[5]

In the concluding chapter of *Lament for a Nation*, Grant turned explicitly against what he found most disturbing in the Hegelian doctrine of progress, namely the claim that "*Die Weltgeschichte ist da Weltgericht*". Here Grant argued that "the doctrines of progress and providence have been brought together."[6] Historical development was both development toward higher forms of human life and at the same time made God's will scrutable as being accomplished in these higher forms. This doctrine of progress was connected to Grant's account of Canada because he saw in its hold upon Canadians a source of their blindness to what was being lost in the passing away of what was specifically Canadian through ever greater integration with the United States and its dynamic modernity. In this doctrine, Canadians could see this integration not as loss, but rather, as part of the beneficent, liberating movement of history, a stage in the fuller realization of freedom. In portraying the future as a necessarily higher stage than the past, the doctrine of progress, in Grant's eyes, reconfigures evil, loss, destruction and the whole suffering of historical life, as good, as redeemed through its role in the higher achievement of future development: "But if history is the final court of appeal, force is the final argument. Is it possible to look at history and deny that within its dimension force is the supreme ruler? To take a progressive view of providence is to come close to worshiping force. Does this not make us cavalier about evil? The screams of the tortured child can be justified by the achievements of history. How pleasant for the achievers, but how meaningless for the child. As a believer, I must then reject these Western interpretations of providence. Belief is blasphemy if it rests on any easy identification of necessity and good."[7]

Grant saw in the doctrine of progress, and most fully in the Hegelian expression of it, a confusion between what he referred to as the order of necessity and the order of the good. Grant argued that Plato, and the ancients generally, preserved a distinction between the eternal or the Good and necessity, a realm of becoming which participates in the eternal, but remains as other to it. It was only by so distinguishing the historical and the eternal that the distinction of good and evil could be retained. Grant found the same distinction in Christianity that he found in Platonism in the notion that for Christianity God's will, Providence, is not scrutable and so we are called not to look to human history but to Christ, and most fully, his crucifixion, for our theology. Using Luther's terms, Grant

[4] George Grant, *Philosophy in the Mass Age* (Toronto: Coop Clark, 1959, 1966) vii.
[5] Grant, *Mass Age*, viii.
[6] George Grant, *Lament For a Nation: The Defeat of Canadian Nationalism*, (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1997) 99.
[7] Grant, *Lament*, 100.

distinguished a theology of glory - above all embodied in the doctrine of progress - from a theology of the cross. In the one, Grant saw a triumphalism where human will or subjectivity was seen as an agent of divine activity in the world; in the other, he saw a deep humiliation of Christ not asserting his will, but rather giving it away both to his Father and, in forgiveness and love, to those who had persecuted him. For Grant, Christ's greatness lay in his giving his will away toward the eternal order and, even in the face of extreme affliction, in the very abandonment of God, not conforming to the willfulness of the realm of necessity and historical life.

Grant saw in the Hegelian uniting of progress and providence a radical reduction of all otherness to human historical life, ultimately to human subjectivity and will. Grant saw otherness - both the otherness of God and of other beings - as preservable only in the recognition of an order of the good, an order of justice, that precedes human willing and activity. Grant here saw two levels of recognition: 1) a Platonic recognition that affirmed justice as the love of the beautiful in otherness and so the limitation of one's will through virtue made possible by the illumination of one's intelligence by the Good; 2) the still more radical Christian form of love of otherness in the giving away of one's self for the sake of otherness in the face of radical affliction or the experience of the absence of the Good. In spite of these distinctions between what Grant took to be the platonic and Christian accounts of the Good what they together affirmed was a relation of the human to the good as receptive or participatory and not as generative or determining. For Grant, religion, art and philosophy are all forms of participation and so, in a broader sense they are all religious. There is certainly a human activity in each, but only as responsive to and within a "gift" from the eternal source. It is only this standpoint of receptivity or openness, as Strauss and a number of other contemporary thinkers also suggest, that makes possible an apprehension of the eternal as eternal and not simply a moment of human self-activity.

Doull, by contrast with Grant, defends the Hegelian account of history as not only compatible with the Christian religion, but as inherent in it. Doull agrees with Grant that religion has within it a passivity, a received character. Doull, following Hegel, argues that religion is to be understood primarily under the concept of representation or image, what Hegel called *Vorstellung*. Hegel conceives religion as: "[T]he consciousness of absolute truth in the way that it occurs for all human beings."[8] While the inward feeling of this union with God is the subjective component - what Hegel calls certainty - the content of the feeling is its objective side - and this for Hegel is representation.[9] This inward certainty of a given content does not for Doull any more than for Grant represent a demonstration of the truth but rather an immediate experience of God. Where Doull and Grant will part ways, however, is in their conceptions of the relationship between the rationality of the finite thinker and his intuition of God. Doull, by contrast with Grant, will insist that revelation in its religious form is not authoritative for philosophy. He will contend that the experience especially of the Christian representation calls forth in the human subject a free rationality comprehensive of its intuited content. But it is as Idea

[8] Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, (Trs.) Brown, Hodgson, and Stewart (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988) 144.
[9] Hegel, *Philosophy of Religion,* 144.

and not as representation that the truth of the Christian religion, for Doull, is most adequately articulated or revealed. Philosophy, on this Hegelian account, is comprehensive of religion through a twofold transformation of representations into concepts. On the one hand, thought brings to representation the category of necessity, while on the other, thought, beyond the immediacy of representation, exhibits the mediation and contradiction involved in simple images.[10]

However, it is important to recognize that this transformation of religion, and specifically the Christian religion, at the hands of philosophy is, according to Doull, neither simply religion's dissolution into philosophy nor an external imposition. In a number of articles Doull defended Hegel's claim that philosophy could comprehend religion and specifically the Christian religion in thought and yet in doing so preserve it in its distinctness as religion. According to Doull, the Hegelian standpoint is, in one sense, beyond religion, but as well also secularity: "The ladder to the philosophical science seems unscalable to Christian and atheist alike. It is indeed unscalable to whoever adheres to any form of experience as ultimately authoritative."[11] But this "dissolution" of experience that Hegel accomplishes in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* is only a stage necessary to establish the beginning point of philosophy. As Doull puts it: "It does not fall within the argument of the *Phenomenology* to show how religion and philosophy are related to each other in the Hegelian philosophy."[12] While, for Hegel, philosophy as the highest and most complete form of spirit is comprehensive of religion, this by no means entails that religion (and art) is not to remain an autonomous expression of spirit. Rather, according to Doull's reading of Hegel: "Philosophy of religion has for its purpose, not to replace religion, but to save it from confusion with other forms of spirit."[13] Furthermore, Doull argues that an *intellectus fidei* is an inner demand of the Christian revelation itself: that it is inherent to that revelation that it "be for thought, as well as for the *Vorstellung* of the apostolic faith."[14] The Hegelian philosophy of religion arises from this demand and as such belongs to the whole history of Christian theology.

Hegel's philosophy of religion everywhere informs Doull's own account, which contrasts so strongly with Grant's, of the relation of Christianity to historical existence. It is useful, therefore, briefly to consider some of the detail of Hegel's account of the Christian *Vorstellung*. Hegel contends that it belongs to the inner content of the Christian revelation that the rational believer knows what is revealed in scripture not only in the abstraction of an otherworldly ideal (whether mythologically or metaphysically expressed) but also concretely as active in human history. Indeed on the Hegelian view, the term "representation" refers not only to the realm of religious analogy, simile and image but also to history itself. Hegel's consideration of the historical Jesus is instructive here. He states: "This story does not merely count as a myth in the mode of images. Instead it involves sensible occurrences - the nativity, passion and death of Christ as

[10] Hegel, *Philosophy of Religion*, 154.
[11] Doull, "Would Hegel Today be a Hegelian?", *Dialogue* 228.
[12] Doull, "Comment on Quentin Lauer" in D. E. Christian, ed., *Hegel and the Philosophy of Religion* (The Hague: Martinus Nighott, 1970) 279.
[13] Doull, "Comment on Lauer", 278.
[14] Doull, "The Chritian Origin of Contemporary Institutions Part II" *Dionysius* VIII (1984) 79.

something completely historical. Of course it therefore exists for representation and in the mode of representation, but it also has another intrinsic aspect. The story of Jesus is something twofold, a divine history. Not only is there this outward history, which should only be taken as the ordinary story of a human being, but it also has the divine as its content: a divine happening, a divine deed, an absolutely divine action. This absolute divine action is the inward - the genuine, the substantive dimension of this history."[15] Thus for Hegel scripture, by virtue of its historical dimension, is beyond the indeterminacy of myth; the divine Idea is the substance equally of scriptural representation and of the historical dimension of revelation.

But, for Hegel, to conceive the 'revelation' of the Divine Idea as belonging to the historical life of Jesus alone and not as the substance of human history itself, is to confine oneself to the immediate and hence representative consciousness characteristic of the limited perspective of the first Christians. To speak in religious terms, to hold in a hardened way to the empirical side of revelation's *Vorstellung* is radically to historicize the Incarnation, consigning the revelation to the externality of the life Jesus. The result of such an externalizing of revelation is to treat Jesus's death as simply the loss of the unity between God and humanity and thus to make the Holy Spirit into a ghost. This approach conceives Jesus at best as an image for humans: like Socrates a great teacher, like Mohammed a messenger, like Isaiah a prophet. There is in this consciousness a polemical attitude to worldly things. Loosely quoting and drawing together passages from Scripture, Hegel states, "Thus Christ says: 'Who is my mother, [my] sister, and [my] brother.' Or: 'Follow me! Leave the dead to bury the dead. Go forth and proclaim the kingdom of God.' 'I have not come to bring peace on earth, but rather children will leave their parents and follow me.'"[16] Hegel's interpretation of these passages is of interest: "We see here a polemical attitude expressed against the ethical relationships that have hitherto prevailed. These are all teachings and characteristics that belong to its first appearance, when the new religion constitutes the sole interest [of its adherents], which they were bound to believe they were still in danger of losing." On Hegel's account this expresses a desire for immediate reconciliation with the Kingdom of God. However, what is lacking in this impulse is a recognition of the "mediation through which this elevation [of soul] may come to pass for humanity."[17]

For Hegel this mediation and the full meaning of the Incarnation demands that the externality of the life and death of Jesus be converted into its inner spiritual truth. Beyond Grant's sense that the death of Christ shows the path for humans in the sacrifice of subjectivity and will, Hegel argues that death is not only the "stripping away of the human and the negative". He states: "At the same time death itself is this negative, the furthest extreme to which humanity as natural existence is exposed; God himself is [involved in] this."[18] As argued above it is this radical identification of God with finite otherness to which Grant most vigorously objects. It is this divinization of the finite that

[15] Hegel, *Philosophy of Religion*, 147.
[16] Hegel, *Philosophy of Religion*, 460.
[17] Hegel, *Philosophy of Religion*, 461. This insight informs the beginning of Doull's "The Christian Origins of Contemporary Institutions" *Dionysius* VI (1982) 111.
[18] Hegel, *Philosophy of Religion*, 468.

Grant sees as the determining hubris of modernity and against which his whole standpoint is defined. Hegel (and Doull) would agree with Grant that any direct identification of human and divine is destructive of ethical and spiritual life and he is clear that this is a limitation of modern consciousness.[19] However, Grant's view is nonetheless, from a Hegelian perspective, one-sided: Grant, in seeking to preserve God from identification with the finitude and violence of human history, simply separates God from history. For Hegel, by contrast, it belongs to the Christian *Vorstellung* that: "God has shown himself to be reconciled with the world, … even the human is not something alien to him, but rather … this otherness, this self-distinguishing, finitude as it is expressed, is a moment of God himself, although to be sure, it is a disappearing moment."[20] For Hegel, then, the unity of God with finite otherness is eternal, but eternally disappearing as well. God is eternally beyond the negativity and evil of human finitude but not as from the standpoint of the understanding because he is simply separate from it, but because he is eternally the activity of revealing himself as the redemption of suffering and evil, as in principle comprehensive of all difference. The unity of God and human history is not then in itself absolute but rather an eternally passing moment of spirit. That the immediacy of the relation between God and history is in important ways transitional, as expressed for example, in Hegel's image of history as the "slaughterbench of nations", suggests that it is inadequate directly to identify his view of history with the modern notion of progress and further that along with the immanence of God in historical life, he maintains the transcendence of God beyond historical existence.[21]

For Hegel, Christianity is revelatory of God's relation to historical life: "Christians, then, are initiated into the mysteries of God, and this also supplies us with the key to world history. For we have here a definite knowledge of providence and its plan. It is one of the central doctrines of Christianity that providence has ruled and continues to rule the world, and that everything that happens in the world is determined by and commensurate with divine government."[22] This revealed knowledge of the positive relation of God to human historical existence, while at first religiously received, becomes the foundation, according to Hegel, of a new confidence in human historical agency a confidence that underlies modern secularity. It is the appearance of modern secularity and the need to relate it to the Christian *Vorstellung*, that according to both Hegel and Doull, is what generates a philosophy of religion freed of the form of *Vorstellung*, but in agreement with its content. As Doull puts it: "This [Hegelian] philosophy gives adequate form to what is believed in the Christian religion and is the true *intellectus fidei*; a thinking neither extraneous to its content nor mediated only through the subject, as in the Augustinianism become modern philosophy."[23] Or as Hegel says of the simply religious representation of God's relation to historical life: "Religion does not go beyond this general representation;

[19] See Hegel, *The Philosophy of Right*, (Tr) T.M. Knox (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967) sections 139-140, for a consideration of the limits of too immediate an identification of the human will and the absolute good.
[20] Hegel, *Philosophy of Religion*, 469.
[21] This standpoint forms the background of Doull's position in his debate with Emil Fackenheim in "Would Hegel Today be a Hegelian".
[22] Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of World HistoryIntroduction: Reason in History*, (Tr) H.B. Nisbett, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989) 41.
[23] Doull, "Hegel's *Phenomenology* and Postmodern Thought." *Animus* 5, (2000) <http://www.swgc.mun.ca/animus/2000vol5/doull5a.htm>

it remains on the level of generality. But we must proceed from this general faith firstly to philosophy and then to the philosophy of world history."[24]

Doull argues on the basis of Hegel's philosophy of religion that Grant's account of the separation of God and history, or necessity, is neither true nor Christian. On Hegel's account it belongs to the full philosophical articulation of the Christian *Vorstellung* that the human relation to God is mediated by the activity of the thinking subject and by the development of history. The contemplation of God, from an initial withdrawal from the world in early Christianity, is inwardly transformed so as to bring forth a recognition of the *logos* present in human activity, both in its contemplative and practical dimensions. History is not conceived then as a merely external necessity or Fate but as the activity of an infinite actuality, a necessity that has as its *telos* the Good conceived as self-conscious freedom, what Hegel calls spirit. It belongs to the Hegelian philosophy to know that the Trinitarian God revealed in Christianity is at the same time the ground of historical, worldly existence. Doull makes this point relative to the Hegelian position: "The movement of this thought, as in the *Vorstellung*, is to a relation of equal 'persons' within which are contained all subjective and objective concepts. On this foundation rests a *Sittlichkeit* in which 'life' or the immediate existence of spirit, and its relation of individuals in their particularity, are comprehended in a self-governing community wherein the unity of freedom and nature in family, society and state is equally the unfolding of an objective end, and, from the side of individuals, the realizing of that end is their concrete good."[25]

It is the state, and above all the modern state, that is, according to both Doull and Hegel, the focus of God's relation to historical life and is, as such, the precise object of world history in general and so also the substance of Hegel's theodicy.[26] In the *Philosophy of Right* Hegel contends: "The march of God in the world, that is what the state is. The basis of the state is the power of reason actualizing itself as will."[27] What constitutes the divinity of the state for Hegel is that it is the finite completion of the spiritual life of individuals, the fullest expression of their practical freedom: "The state is the actuality of concrete freedom. But concrete freedom consists in this, that personal individuality and its particular interests not only achieve their complete development and gain explicit recognition for their right (as they do in the sphere of the family and civil society) but for one thing they pass over of their own accord into the interest of the universal, and for another they know and will the universal; they even recognize it as their own substantive mind; they take it as their end and are active in its pursuit." And further: "The principle of the modern states has prodigious strength and depth because it allows the principle of subjectivity to progress to its culmination in the extreme of self-subsistent personal particularity, and yet at the same time brings it back to the substantive unity and so

[24] Hegel, *Reason in History*, 41.
[25] Doull, "Postmodern Thought", 6.
[26] Hegel, *Reason in History*, 43 and 97.
[27] It is important to see that, contrary to persistent caricature, Hegel does not identify the Idea of the state with any particular state: "In considering the Idea of the state we must not have our eyes on particular states or on particular institutions. Instead we must consider the Idea, this actual God by itself"(*Philosophy of Right*, 258-A).

maintains this unity in the principle of subjectivity itself."[28] Doull argues, from this Hegelian account, that the state in its full development surpasses and comprehends modern freedom so that this freedom is not corrupting of pre-modern virtue, but is rather the fulfilling of the promise of the ancient world: "In Plato's polities the ruling power was freed from the special interests of classes. The difficulty then occurred how the ruling part could be in the state. How this uncorrupted independence of the ruler could move effectively the classes to the realization of the good is shown in Hegel's concept of the state."[29]

But this is just what George Grant denies. Fundamental to Grant's denial of the Hegelian account of history is his claim that modernity is fundamentally corruptive of virtue and the human participation in Justice and thus rather than fulfilling the platonic philosophy is its ruination. For Grant, the synthesis of ancient and modern, of Christian and secular that Hegel took himself to have effected is seen to be impossible. The ancient account that preserves the distinction between the necessary and the good cannot, with integrity, be united with an account that dissolves this distinction. In the doctrine of progress and its turn to human historical activity, Grant sees not a realization of the divine, but rather an obscuring of the divine and of genuine otherness - their reduction to moments of the will. For Grant otherness is preserved as otherness by being seen as grounded in the Good as its source and so as having a being apart from human willing. The destruction of otherness, however much it belongs to the order of necessity to bring this about, is therefore secured as irreducibly evil. In the doctrine of progress both the realm of natural and human otherness and divine otherness or the order of the Good, are drawn into human will and subjectivity and so obscured. From this perspective Hegel's understanding of history must be seen, if not in intention, at least in result, to involve the dissolution not only of religion, but of every relation, philosophic, artistic, civic or moral, of the human to an order transcending and defining the human Grant sees built into the modern conception of the state, not as Doull and Hegel would have it a fulfilling of the ancient, but its dissolution.

Grant agrees with Leo Strauss that the articulation of that modern break occurs through a set of stages or "waves" beginning with Machiavelli and Hobbes who reduce the order of justice to a set of natural rights based on given human needs - no longer purposes given to humanity. [30]The next wave is that expounded by Rousseau, Hegel and Marx which finds justice or right as having no basis even in the givenness of natural need, but is the result of historical development. It is this stage of modernity that gives rise to the doctrine of progress. However, this wave is replaced by the still more radical modernity of Nietzsche and Heidegger, that grounds justice and right in the pure becoming of a historicity understood as without rational ground - beyond good and evil and beyond providence. In this account, which Grant borrows from Strauss, the modern state is revealed to be more and more an instrument of a nihilistic, secular will that has lost all contact with an eternal order of Justice and the Good. For Grant, this account of modern

[28] Hegel, *Philosophy of Right, 260.*
[29] Doull, "Hegel's Critique of Hellenic Virtue" *Dionysius* IX (1985) 14.
[30] According to Grant, in contrast to Strauss, the origins of modernity do not lie in modernity but in medieval and ultimately Augustinian Christianity and the primacy of will and personality found there.

political thought describes much of what is at work in modernity and the kind of obscuring of the eternal effected at a political and moral level; but what interests Grant is not so much this articulation of nihilistic willing in the thought of the great modern political philosophers, but a more deep seated historical shaping - symbiotically related to the development of modern political thought - which Grant describes as "technology."

From Grant's perspective it is the coming to be of "technology" in the modern world that most powerfully undermines both the Hegelian account of history that Doull upholds and the confidence of Doull and other Canadians that Canada has an independent sovereignty. Grant's argument that the orders of good and necessity are separate, that God's providence is and must be inscrutable, rests on his effort to establish a standpoint free of the technological. Grant's claim that Canada is no longer sustainable rests on the understanding of technology as inherently destructive of particular societies and especially those sustained by a pre-modern understanding. Canada cannot both sustain its independence and participate in modern technology. Equally, Doull's claim that the Hegelian account of history is true and that Canada can, even while embracing modern technology, retain its independence, requires both that the Hegelian account of history be capable of comprehending the "technological" and that Canada be capable of sustaining itself in the context of modern technology. How technology is understood by Grant and Doull respectively is fundamental for seeing the connections between their accounts of the fate of Canada and their differing conceptions of how God relates to historical life, especially in and through the state. Whether 'technology' is destructive of the state as an ethical community or comprehensible within the state is the central question dividing Grant and Doull over the possibility of Canada.

The Question Concerning Technology

According to both Grant and Doull, the fundamental question of the contemporary is posed by the presence of technology. And according to both thinkers technology is not to be understood as simply the devices before us, nor the science that gave rise to those devices, nor even the various developments in moral, political and religious thought that made possible the coming to be of those sciences. Deeper than these levels is the characterization of technology as a mode of being, what Heidegger characterizes as an ontology. Doull and Grant agree that the standpoint of technology involves a break with the European tradition of contemplation and rise to the eternal. In technology is the assertion of a radical, this worldly mastering of nature and humanity that is essentially atheistic and destructive of the givenness of all traditional forms.

What principally distinguishes Doull's accounts from Grant's is that Grant takes technology so understood as a complete or comprehensive ontology, while Doull, though acknowledging the profound contemporary experience of technology as ontological, would question this status. That is, Doull fully accepts that the contemporary world encounters technology as the underlying standpoint that shapes all encounters with the world, that is, as an ontology. However, Doull also asserts that a deeper and historically informed analysis reveals this experience as, in fact, historically constructed or mediated.

What we contemporaries experience as an all-pervasive immediate ontology, is, in truth, a mediated relation. In short, Doull does not so much reject Grant's account of technology and its fundamental role in shaping the contemporary, as seek to place it in a larger context that frees our understanding of the contemporary of the apparent fatality of technology that Grant perceives. On Grant's view, Doull's claims fail adequately to grasp the inner nature of technology and assert an Hegelian standpoint that makes the impossible claim to mediate technological ontology and the ontology of ancient and Christian accounts. However, to assess the relative merits of Grant and Doull's claims it is necessary to consider in more detail their respective ennucleations of technology.

The experience of the society he lived in as "technological" was fundamental to Grant's thinking throughout his life. The titles of a number of his writings bear simple testimony to this fact. For the purposes of this brief exploration of Grant's account of technology it is useful to divide the development of his thinking, after his break with Hegel in the early 1960s, into two stages. The first stage comprises most of the 1960s when his thinking about technology was principally guided by Jacques Ellul and Leo Strauss. The second stage began with his encounter with the writings of Nietzsche and Heidegger. It should be said that underlying these developments there was a common structure to his thinking about technology and one that relates him to a set of contemporary thinkers. Like Heidegger, Nietzsche, and Strauss, but also figures such as Karl Lowith, Etienne Gilson, and Alisdair MacIntyre, Grant argues that technological modernity is nihilistic, and that this nihilism reveals a suppressed, forgotten or overlooked principle that we can now recover through a return to an older tradition or standpoint refused by modernity, but nonetheless presupposed by it. For Heidegger or Nietzsche this return was to the pre-Socratics: for Lowith, it was to the Stoics, for Strauss, to Plato and for Gilson and MacIntyre, to Aquinas. In Grant's case the return is to a Christian Platonism, especially as expounded in the writings of Simone Weil. This basic structure - the nihilism of technology and the corresponding return to a hidden Christian-Platonic standpoint - remains constant in Grant, once he broke with the thought of Hegel. What develops in his thinking is a deepening of the two sides: a deepening that involves a growing clarity about the irreconcilability of technology with Christian-platonism.

Grant began his account of this division through the work of Ellul and Strauss. What they taught Grant, was to see the contemporary world, especially North America, as fundamentally given over to a civilizational order incompatible with ancient or Christian accounts of virtue or piety. Grant has learned from Strauss that built into all forms of modernity is a certain dynamic leading to the "universal and homogeneous state." Grant agreed with Strauss that the universal and homogeneous state, that both liberalism and Marxism pursued, would result not in a liberated humanity released from all former limits and structures of oppression, but in a total tyranny inherently obstructive of all forms of higher life - religion, philosophy and so on. Grant, however, disagreed with Strauss's assertion that the most completely modern forms were to be found in the second and third waves - those he associated with communism and national socialism respectively. Strauss made fundamental the level of the political order and the ideology underlying that order. At that level Grant agreed that communism and national socialism represented more "advanced" forms of modernity. But for Grant, and here he drew on Ellul, the actual

dynamic of modernity, what underlay and informed its civilizational hold upon the world, was not at the level of political thought so much as at the level of "technology". The best way, in Grant's eyes, to characterize the contemporary was, in Ellul's phrase, as a "technological society." The principle articulated in this society is "the conquest of human and non-human nature."[31]

When the dynamic of modernity is understood in terms of the conquest of human and non-human nature, the analysis of the contemporary world is importantly reconfigured. According to Strauss, but also Marxist analysis, communist regimes informed by the more developed thinking of figures from Rousseau to Marx, are more modern than a regime such as the United States, informed by the earlier thought of Hobbes and Locke that emphasized natural rights. However, Grant, in pointing to the deeper role of technology, suggests that in fact American liberalism is the more modern form - not because it is a more advanced form politically, but because it is less developed and more pragmatic at the level of political thought and is thus, ironically, more permissive of the unconstrained unfolding of technological dynamism: "Liberalism is, then, the faith that can understand progress as an extension into the unlimited possibility of the future. It does this much better than Marxism, which still blocks progress by its old-fashioned ideas of the perfectibility of man."[32] In liberalism the dynamic modern account of man's essence as freedom is allowed untrammeled development.[33]

The implication of this analysis of the role of technology as the dynamo of modernity, is the recognition of the United States as the centre of modernity. This is obviously going to be a vital point when we turn to Grant's account of the impossibility of Canada. But here what is worth noting is that Grant sees that the U.S. is inherently imperialistic precisely because of its technological character. American imperialism, however, while sharing many similarities with traditional European imperialism is distinctive in its fundamentally technological character. American imperialism is not primarily realized through conquest and colonial expansion, as were the older European empires, rather it is accomplished by the willing or coerced accession of other peoples and civilizations to the expansion of technological civilization. For Grant, in the 1960s, the clearest expression of American technological imperialism was the Vietnam War. As Grant put it, there the Americans were willing to commit genocide rather than allow the Vietnamese to stand apart from the American liberal technological empire.

What the reading of Nietzsche and Heidegger brought to Grant was not so much a revision of his earlier conception of technology, as a deepening of that conception. One way to refer to the account Grant held of technology while he was writing *Lament for a Nation* was that it was fundamentally a "civilizational" account. Technology was, centrally, a certain civilizational form given over to the mastery of human and non-human nature. The reading of Nietzsche and Heidegger, following *Lament*, allowed Grant to see the ground of this civilization as "ontological". What makes technology so enveloping and fateful is that it enfolds the very fundamental ways of our thinking and

[31] Grant, *Lament*, 70.
[32] Grant, *Lament*, 71.
[33] Grant, *Lament*, 71.

being: "To put the matter crudely; when we represent technology to ourselves through its common sense we think of ourselves as picking and choosing in a supermarket, rather than within the analogy of a package deal. We have bought a package deal of far more fundamental novelness than simply a set of instruments under our control. It is a destiny which enfolds us in its own conceptions of instrumentality, neutrality and purposiveness. It is in this sense that it has been truthfully said: technology is the ontology of the age. Western peoples (and perhaps soon all peoples) take themselves as subjects confronting otherness as objects - objects lying as raw material at the disposal of knowing and making subjects. Unless we comprehend the package deal we obscure from ourselves the central difficulty in our present destiny: we apprehend our destiny by forms of thought which are themselves the very core of the destiny."[34]

How this ontology of technology came to be is a real question for Grant. Precisely because it is nihilistic and historically specific, it can not be seen as belonging simply to the nature of things, but neither can it as ontological be attributed to a self-conscious human agency. The ontology of technology arises specifically out of the historical development of the West, but not as willed or consciously constructed. In this sense the origins of technology are inherently obscure. Certainly modernity is, for Grant, through and through technological. But the roots of technology lie deeper than modernity, which Grant argues, with Heidegger, presupposes technological ontology rather than initiates it. Grant points to these deeper roots in a late essay: "I do not mean by 'technology' the sum of all modern techniques, but that unique co-penetration of knowing and making, of the arts and sciences which originated in Western Europe and has now become worldwide. Behind such descriptions lies the fact that 'technology' is an affirmation concerning what is; it remains unfathomed, but is very closely interwoven with that primal affirmation made by medieval Westerners as they accepted their Christianity in a new set of apperceptions. That affirmation had something to do with a new content given by Western people to the activity of 'willing.' 'Technology' is the closest, yet inadequate word for what that new affirmation has become as it is now worked out i, n us and around us."[35]

What Grant learned chiefly from reading Nietzsche was that the heart of technological ontology was what Nietzsche characterized as the will-to-power: a will to mastery, a will to more free and creative willing in which all otherness or givenness is reduced to being but a moment of the will. As the above quotation suggests, Grant saw the roots of this pure willing in the Western Augustinian turn to the will. It is in reaction to this development of the Western tradition that Grant turns to a Christian Platonism more consonant - in his eyes- with the Eastern development of Christianity.[36] What this non-Western tradition preserved was a sense of the Good or God as participatively, but not willfully, present in the world. God and the order of creation, especially the order of

[34] George Grant, *Technology and Justice* (Toronto: Anansi, 1986) 32.
[35] William Christian and Sheila Grant, eds., *The George Grant Reader* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1998) 435-6.
[36] On Grant's relation to Eastern Christianity, especially through the work of Phillip Sherard see Harris Athanasiadis, *George Grant and the Theology of the Cross* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 2001) 134-7 and 168-71.

justice were present in the very being of the world, not through a self-active will - whether divine or human. All of this is clearly related to Grant's break with the Hegelian account of history as God's activity.

The centrality of the will in the West, Grant suggests, is ultimately generative of the standpoint of technology, of an ontology of the will to power that necessarily, as Grant puts it "has meant for all of us a very dimming of our ability to think justice lucidly."[37] What Nietzsche clarified, above all, for Grant was that the ontology of technology was inherently incompatible with the ancient accounts of justice and the Good: "Nietzsche's writings may be singled out as a Rubicon, because more than a hundred years ago he laid down with incomparable lucidity that which is now publicly open: what is given about the whole in technological science cannot be thought together with what is given us concerning justice and truth, reverence and beauty, from our tradition."[38] In the older account there is an order "we do not measure and define, but by which we are measured and defined."[39] The standpoint of technology necessarily must elide this order: the very possibility of a self-active will requires a break from the given order. The very being of technology, of modernity, of a self-contained secularity can only be ontologically established by a negating or occluding of the order of what is. For Grant the very nihilism that is manifested in pure technological willing brings to light the negativity present in the very being of technology.

A crucial implication of the ontological character of technology is that it cannot be itself mastered or taken-in hand or subordinated to higher human ends. All such efforts to get control of technology are themselves technological, not only in the obvious sense that one cannot master mastery, but in the more deep-seated sense that for the contemporary person the viable forms of moral and political thought that are supposed to give direction and purpose to technology, are themselves implicated in technological modernity: "The result of this is that when we are deliberating in any practical situation our judgement acts rather like a mirror, which throws back the very metaphysics of the technology which we are supposed to be deliberating about in detail."[40] For Grant, the only possibility for getting "beyond" technology is, on the one hand, through the recollection of a pre-technological ethic evoked by those remnants of pre-modernity still present, this is Grant's conservatism, and, on the other hand, by the self-destruction of technological civilization as it collapses under its own nihilism, this is Grant's radicalism. What is crucial in this prognosis is that Grant's account of technology allows no mediation of technology and a humanly livable order. As ontological, technology is corruptive of all efforts to humanize it by relating it to human ends. Technology must rather be allowed to fulfill its self-dissolution, purging the western tradition of all voluntarism and opening us to a participatory and receptive relation to the divine.

For James Doull, Grant is right in characterizing technology as ontological - but only in a relative and conditional sense. Doull argues that technology in the ontological sense

[37] *Grant Reader*, 437.
[38] George Grant, *English-Speaking Justice* (Toronto: Anansi, 1974,1985) 77.
[39] David Caley, *George Grant in Conversation* (Toronto: Anansi, 1995) 82.
[40] Grant, *Technology and Justice*, 33.

is not to be seen as modern or pre-modern in its origins though he would certainly concede it is not possible without the whole development of modernity. Rather, Doull argues that "technology" in the sense Grant intends is a nineteenth- and twentieth-century phenomenon. According to Doull technology arises out of the corruption and later collapse of the nineteenth-century nation state. He argues that technology is in fact one aspect of a two-sided corruption of the nation state: the other side Doull speaks of as nationalism, existentialism or fascism. Doull contends that technology is in truth an element of the nation state, but an element that takes itself to be self-complete and immediately actual. The other element suffers the same immediacy. In the nineteenth-century these two elements had their radical and revolutionary theorists: the most developed of whom were Marx and Nietzsche. Doull suggests the twentieth-century is where these elements take on a life of their own as the European nation state is destroyed in the trenches of the First World War. The history of twentieth-century Europe is a gradual development from the two elements assuming themselves to be self-constituted wholes in the forms of communism and fascism to the dissolution of this assumption to the point of the present European Union in which the two sides remain as irresolvable but restrained aspects of European life.

What is crucial to grasp in Doull's analysis of technology is that he places technology in a comprehensive context in which it can be seen not as the whole reality but as one element of a more comprehensive dialectic. There is alongside technology, to which it is necessarily related, the existential or nationalist aspect which, for lack of a better term, we will call the "communitarian" aspect. The communitarian side of the contemporary, like the technological, takes on a variety of forms. Some of the anti-technological positions are religious and traditionalist, others more radical and revolutionary. However, according to Doull they share a common logical and structural character informed through the relation to technology: to preserve a realm of being from the technological reduction, there is the need to uncover a principle whose being is beyond the technological. From Doull's perspective, then, Grant himself takes up just such an anti-technological account and so occupies a one-sided aspect of the contemporary. Grant thus dogmatically asserts the radical difference of technology from the standpoint that would recognize the Good and order of justice that informs the world. Now Doull would allow that this is a true perception so long as one leaves undisturbed the immediate distinction of the forms in which the contemporary experiences itself. But it is Doull's argument that this assumption is misplaced. These forms that take themselves to be directly what they claim to be - and this is what it is to speak of them as ontological - are in fact dialectically related to one another and in three senses.

First, according to Doull, the two sides of the contemporary are in truth historically derived forms arising from the nation state where, so long as the nation-state had life, they could be related and connected to one another. This took especially the form of the relation between civil society and the state, where universality and particularity were able to be concretely related and united. In the dissolved state of the twentieth-century there tends to be either the collapse of the state into civil society in communism, socialism or liberalism, later in a global economy, or the separation of the two in nationalism, fascism or Nazism and later in communitarianism. As Doull states: "In their time the thought of

Marx and Nietzsche was not of general interest. Both perceived the national political community in a partial and unbalanced way through one of its elements. With the decline of the national state their thought came into its own, since the decline is nothing else than that elements contained before in the whole came to have rather a life of their own. The assumption on which the independence and completion of the national state rested was that life and nature were capable of containing technology - that the concreteness of the Christian principle existed naturally in the state. The history of these communities has been rather the disintegration of these elements."[41]

Doull maintains that what each side of the contemporary takes as immediate, the free individuals of the technological society or the rooted individuals of the particular community, are, in truth, historical results which do not know themselves as such. Indeed, according to Doull, not only are the two sides results of the whole development of the nation state, but the very immediacy that hides this history is itself an historical result. On his view, it belongs to the inadequately self-conscious or free character of the nineteenth-century nation state that it should so readily collapse at the point that it is fully developed into opposed forms.

There is a second sense in which there is an undisclosed dialectic at work in the relation of technology to community. Doull's claim is not only that the two sides share a common origin, but, that even in their claim to be self-grounded, they are in fact defined negatively through one another. The technological defines its activity relative to an anti-technological standpoint that resists the freedom of technological universality by holding, for "superstitious" reasons, to a particularity that can only be understood as oppressive and limiting. Equally the communitarian standpoint is drawn to a principle that is defined precisely in its being beyond the technological - whether this be Heideggerian Being, Straussian nature or Gilsonian God. Further, the immediacy of the one side is precisely necessary to the self-grounding of the other side. Now in each case, the immediacy of the opposed standpoint turns out to be false: a false particularity or a false universality. For the technological will, the attachment to the particular is simply a negation of the universal and the attachment to what is in truth nothing. For the communitarian, the attachment to technology is a nihilism premised on negating rootedness and so is, in truth, the attachment to nothing. So long as these forms - the technological and the communitarian - stay in their distinction from one another they can at best - such as in the European Union - be alternately balanced, but not in truth related or reconciled.

This leads to the third form of dialectic that Doull points to: that precisely because of the two earlier forms of dialectic, there is both the possibility and need to move beyond the contemporary opposition of the sides of technology and community, to an actual relating and uniting of the two sides. Not technology simply, but the relation of technology to community through the institutional order of the state, Doull took to be the question before the contemporary era: "The practical interest of the present age is transparently that science and technology be brought under universal will, and that

[41] Doull, "Augustinian Trinitarianism and Existential Theology" *Dionysius* III (1979) 121.

individuals have their particular freedom explicitly and primarily therein - not through the blind conflict of aggressive wills."[42] By contrast with Grant, Doull contends that technology can and must be subordinated to human ends. He states: "In antiquity Prometheus could be subdued and taught to live under the power of Zeus. But now he has captured the citadel of Zeus and founded technology on the sovereign right of the individual. The principle of the modern age is the unity of theoretical and practical. A more dangerous principle there could not be. But Hegel would, as before, see no other course than to awaken in men a clearer knowledge of this principle. Danger he would see to lie exactly in a seeming modesty which left open to human passions and false certainties to seduce reason and science from their natural end of serving humanity."[43]

For Doull, the course of the twentieth-century in Europe, from the rise of fascism and communism where community and technology took themselves to be complete wholes and accrued to themselves the whole power of the state through to the unstable relation of global technology and community in the European Union, there has been a coming to clarity that the truth of both sides of the contemporary are in themselves nothing. This result is already known, in Doull's eyes, in postmodernity, where the instability of both universal and particular is known in an all-dissolving scepticism. Doull sees postmodernity as the philosophy proper to the European Union. Thus, the nothingness that each side of the contemporary took to be the truth of the other side is found to be their own truth. But this is to suggest a purely negative result.

For Doull, this negative postmodern result is one aspect of the contemporary - that it comes to nothing in its effort to establish itself in itself. But equally for Doull, the contemporary is the fullness of the whole historical development. What Doull takes to be at work in the period between the Hegelian nation state and a return to the fullness of the historical development is not simply revolt, corruption and denial. That is to say the return to the lost content of the European nation state is not simply a return. The old nation states are, in Doull's eyes, gone for good. What the collapse of the older European order has accomplished is the liberation from received forms that can readily lose their actuality as forms of spirit. The contemporary has been, according Doull, a painful education beyond the immediacies that the old Europeans fell prey to. Doull suggests, especially in his last political writings, that it belongs to North America, and its more directly universal and self-conscious forms of polity, to realize the returned dialectic that knows technology and community as aspects of one totality in a freer and more complete form than even the nation states that Hegel had before him.

But from Grant's perspective, Doull's claim can appear contradictory. On the one hand, Doull claims that the state - that is the Hegelian concept of the state - can comprehend the difference between technology and community and yet the historical realization of this in the nineteenth-century nation state was in fact unable to hold together these "elements" and suffered disintegration. Grant's argument - as of so many others - is that given the actually experienced division of technology and community, it is more compelling to see

[42] Doull, "Hegel and Contemporary Liberalism" 229.

[43] Doull ,"Would Hegel be a Hegelian?", 235.

in technology a principle destructive of community, virtue, religion and life, than to suppose that there can be a uniting of technology and community, freedom and virtue, secularity and religion. Doull insists that this is in fact the true experience of contemporary Europe and sees in Heidegger especially, the most powerful and profound articulation of this experience. But what undergirds Doull's whole account are two claims: 1) That even in the division of technology and community the Idea of the State is still effective. This is what allows Doull to articulate a threefold dialectic even in the very opposition of technology and community in contemporary life and; 2) That the nineteenth-century European state was only an immediate instantiation of the Idea. As we saw earlier, Doull and Grant divide over the relation of God to historical life: here is another form of the same argument. For Doull, what is at work in history is the Idea of the state, or God's presence, as comprehensive of technology and community, even in their contemporary opposition. Grant, by contrast, sees God as removed from history and denies the Idea in its Hegelian sense. From Grant's perspective the theology of the cross demands the renunciation of the will, so also in civilizational terms the life in community in accord with virtue and in relation to the Good demands the renunciation of the nihilistic technological will. On Grant's view, the darkness of contemporary experience, the obscuring of the eternal, is the most powerful testament to the falsity of all claims such as Doull and Hegel make that technology or modernity can be united with virtue, religion and community.

Doull throughout his career could defend his claims by referring to the Hegelian system, he could explicate more accurately than Grant the history of philosophy and of the West more generally and so display the historical reality of the Hegelian system and the inadequacy of accounts of that history that assumed one or another of the aspects of the contemporary standpoint. He could also point to the experience of the contemporary which seemed to undermine the Hegelian position as in fact confirming it. For while each side of the contemporary divide between technology and community recognized the divide, they could explain it only one-sidedly and in turn could not explain the ground of their own position or its relation to the whole history it none the less-presupposed. But, of course the claim to be able to rise to a standpoint, beyond the opposition of technology and community that can be "objective" and mediate in thought their division is precisely what Grant denies.[44] In the last decade and half of his life, and after Grant's death, Doull argues that the Idea of the state is not only available to a philosophical comprehension of the divisions of contemporary European culture, but is in fact actual and effective in the societies of the New World, especially the United States and somewhat more obscurely Canada. During Grant's life, Doull and Grant tended to agree that the United States was a technological empire as much given over to one-sided contemporary corruption and revolution as Europe in the disintegration of the nation state. In the period after Grant's death, however, Doull began to see in the United States an actual integration of technology and community.[45] Doull could, from this standpoint, point not only above

[44] Indeed, from Grant's position Doull is not beyond the division, but has rather sided with modernity.
[45] Doull did not of course see the United States as the most perfect form of this integration but nevertheless saw the integrity there achieved as real and as capable of further development. See James Doull, "The Philosophical Basis of Constitutional Discussion in Canada" (Animus 2, 1997) **http://www.swgc.mun.ca/animus/1997vol2/doull1.htm**.

contemporary life to the Idea as comprehensive of what was experienced dividedly, but argue that this division was being actually and effectively overcome not in Europe, but in the New World.

The State Of Canada

For Grant, Canada and, indeed, any sustained independence from the technological dynamism of the United States is impossible. The kind of hopes Doull wrote of in his letters to Grant are, in Grant's eyes, empty and deluded. They show a failure to come to grips with the nature of the age in which we live. For Doull, Canadians do not yet recognize their true statehood and Grant's lamentation is thus premature and arises from a misreading both as to what Canada is and as to the possibilities of contemporary freedom. Both accounts of Canada have a certain intuitive plausibility: both acknowledge the ambiguity of Canadian political identity, the allegiance to a state which is neither fully self-governing nor fully understood in its own terms. Is Canada in the last throes of an already lost existence or is it only now coming to be?

George Grant in *Lament for a Nation* argues that: "To be a Canadian was to build, along with the French, a more ordered and stable society than the liberal experiment in the United States."[46] Canada was, for Grant, an inherently conservative society and one built upon a rejection of the United States and its directly humanistic individualism. Through its relation to Britain and France, a connection was maintained with a culture that preceded what Grant called "the age of progress." This meant that English and French Canada sought to keep alive through their political and especially their educational institutions their sense of what the economy was for, and the place of religion in society. For Grant this embodied a connection to a pre-modern culture that saw human life in terms of purpose and goodness and not simply in terms of humanly enacted values and the individualistic pursuit of them. For Grant, a relation to the Good, a sense of one's creatureliness and fellow-creatureliness belonged to this older European tradition to which Canada sought to keep its relation.

The decision to build a nation more stable and less given to the illusions of modernity than the United States was noble but born for failure. The British connection (and in Quebec's case, the French connection) was vital not because of its specific ethnic characteristic but because it was the only living connection Canadians had with this older European conception of society. Thus for Grant, the failing of this connection, the decision of Liberal politicians to weaken rather than strengthen it, was equivalent to the end of Canada. Grant combines here a sense of *Fate* and a sense of *betrayal:* Canada could not hope to sustain this connection in the face of the dynamism and massiveness of American modernity. Also, specific politicians and specific social groups acted, even underhandedly and manipulatively, to break with this British connection.[47] For Grant

[46] Grant, *Lament*, 25.

[47] Grant made himself clear in his 1970 forward to a reissuing of *Lament for a Nation*, that he a) was not attached to the British connection ethnically - indeed he saw such unthinking attachment as part of the demise of that connection; b) nor as without ambiguity - especially given the British abasement before the

these two moments of fate and betrayal came together in the defeat of John Diefenbaker in 1963: the slick and ambitious in Canada's metropolitan centres turned against him, used his personal follies and weaknesses to ridicule his great and specifically Canadian virtue of loyalty, the attachment to the given, to one's own. When Canadians turned their backs on their own, their loyalty to the connection to an older European sense of stability, they gave up, except in name, all that distinguished them from the United States.[48]

But while Grant blamed various politicians and social groups for what he took to be Canada's demise, as he himself put it: "The confused strivings of politicians, businessmen, and civil servants cannot alone account for Canada's collapse. This stems from the very character of the modern era."[49] In *Lament for a Nation*, Grant emphasized the fate that encompassed Canada in seeking to be a nation apart from the United States in the age of progress. But it would be later, with his encountering the thought of Nietzsche and Heidegger, that Grant would come to purge his standpoint of a residual accidental quality - that if only Canadians and their ruling classes had acted differently, Canada's independence could have been retained. With the account of technology as an ontology, as the metaphysics of the age, the contradiction of Canada's being both a modern state and yet seeking to stand apart from technological absorption in the United States, is evident.

For Grant the failure of Canada, then, is not merely the failure of a small cultural experiment, but is the very vanishing of a relation to older, more sustaining forms: "The impossibility of conservatism in our age is the impossibility of Canada. As Canadians we attempted a ridiculous task in trying to build a conservative nation in the age of progress, on a continent we share with the most dynamic nation on earth."[50] For Grant we can speak of the state in two senses: On the one hand as the institutional life of a community that participates so far as it is able in the order of justice and makes justice, constraint, and a sense of public good primary. Grant describes Canada's conservative nationalism and difference from the United States in these terms. On the other hand, we can speak of the state as a set of institutions that serve as instruments toward the realization of a technological will. It cannot be both or, rather, it can be both only in the sense that over a long period there is a transition from the one to the other in which residual elements of virtue and constraint both mask the true character of technology and slowly give way to its inexorable unfolding.[51] The technological state where, as Grant states, "no appeal to

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United States in the twentieth century. As Grant states, "I emphasize this failure in irony because many simple people (particularly journalists and professors) took it to be a lament for the passing of a British dream of Canada. It was rather a lament for the romanticism of the original dream." *Lament*,13.

[48] "The argument that Canada, a local culture, must disappear can, therefore, be stated in three steps. First, men everywhere move ineluctably toward membership in the universal and homogeneous state. Second, Canadians live next to a society that is the heart of modernity. Third, nearly all Canadians think that modernity is good, so nothing essential distinguishes Canadians from Americans. When they oblate themselves before "the American way of life," they offer themselves on the altar of the reigning western goddess." Grant, *Lament*, 68.

[49] Grant, L*ament*, 67.

[50] Grant, *Lament*, 81.

[51] See here Grant's discussion of the role of residual Protestantism and its demise in North America in *Technology and Empire,* 39 and *English-Speaking Justice*, 60-8.

human good, now or in the future, must be allowed to limit [individuals'] freedom to make the world as they choose"[52] is clearly incompatible with the desire of Canada's founders to "build a society in which the right of the common good restrains the freedom of the individual."[53] Canada was caught between attachment to older forms through the British and French traditions received from Europe and participation in modernity both in terms of the overwhelming presence of the United States, but also the inherent corruption of the British and French traditions in so far as they were already modern. What Grant denied, by contrast with Doull, was that tradition and modernity, community and technology could be actually united. This impossibility meant that, in Grant's eyes, Canada was a contradiction waiting to unravel.

According to Doull, however, Canada is not established in its difference from the United States by an attachment to a conservative tradition. Doull doesn't deny that such a conservatism and attachment has been part of Canada's history and was vital to Canadian founders, both English and French. However, Doull argues that such a form of difference is passive and indefinite, making Canada's independence rest upon the external - and as it turned out unstable - realities of the British Empire and the Tridentine Catholic Church. Doull sees such forms of self-definition as Canadians used in the period before the quiet revolutions of Quebec and English Canada as "colonial". He agreed with Grant that this revolution destroyed the older forms of Canadian self-definition but he thought that this was a positive development. Doull argues that Canada's independence from the United States rests not upon certain qualitative measures, traditional or technological, but upon a substantial difference. He agrees with Grant that Canada is distinguished from the United States in its history and through its relation to a form of state that would order and restrain the passions and interests released under the American constitution but, on his view, this is not what fundamentally distinguishes Canada from the United States.

For Doull, what distinguishes Canada from the United States in the qualitative sense that Grant points to, that Canada is more stable and orderly, more given to the common good, is only a borrowed or received identity, simply British and French hand-me-downs. As Doull once put it: "The mere continuance of the old and customary has no power to educate, but can only impart an external order to the savagery of the natural will."[54] Thus for Doull, the demand for Canada is that it come to define itself not principally through either Europe or the United States, though these are undoubtedly elements of Canada's self-definition, but through itself and so bring these elements, and others, into a concrete relation.

On Doull's account, Canada is not a confusion or mixture of technology and tradition, but rather a certain form of the unity of the two. Clearly, in making such a claim Doull is assuming the reality of the Hegelian account of the state. On Doull's view Canada is in principle beyond the corruption of Europe that we considered in the section above. For

[52] Grant, *Lament*, 70.
[53] Grant, *Lament*, 87.
[54] Doull, "Naturalistic Individualism: Quebec independence and an independent Canada" in Eugene Coombs, ed., *Modernity and Responsibility: Essays for George Grant* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press) 44.

Doull, the Europe Union is just such a mixture and confusion of technology and tradition - though he argues that it is tending to move beyond this in postmodernism. Nonetheless, his belief throughout his intellectual career was that Canada need not be consigned to such a condition. What especially distinguishes his political thought in the last decade and a half of his life is a clarification of his grounds for upholding his confidence in Canada as a sovereign state. Central to this clarification was a reevaluation of the United States.

For a long time Doull shared Grant's view that the United States was a technological empire. In the 1960s, 70s and much of the 80s, Doull saw in the United States a technological naturalism liberated from the rationality and constraint of its older Enlightenment constitution: "In place of the older order one had come to assume in the later nineteenth century a naturalism and against it an abstract moralistic idealism. Marx and the socialists would draw these elements into one view: the free natural individuality they proposed combined these elements. Such in general is the technological culture of the present time, in the United States, where it occurs in its purest and simplest form, it is commonly assumed that technology and a free naturalistic individuality can sustain each other."[55] Certainly the New Deal and the emergence of the welfare state together with the rise of consumerism in America lead Doull, as well as Grant, to see in the United States the most complete embodiment of technology. So long as Doull held to this view, his account of Canada, as at least implicitly beyond the division of technology and tradition was hard to justify: why should Canada escape the corruption and revolution besetting the rest of the Western world? Grant's assessment that what remained of Canada's sense of its difference from the U.S. as resting on a residual traditionalism was at least as plausible.

By the late 1980s, however, Doull broke with this account of the United States, and in doing so , reconfigured his account of Canada and of the possibilities of the contemporary period. In a lecture Doull gave in 1992, he contrasted this new account with Grant's position in *Lament for a Nation*: "Some years ago George Grant in a well-known book lamented the demise of Canada; a Canadian nation, betrayed by politicians, had fallen prey to the great technological empire to the south. But in truth neither was Canada a nation nor…is the United States rightly defined as a centre of 'global technology.' What then were we to lament? George Grant grew up in the ruins of Victorian culture in Ontario and Heidegger was for him a principal interpreter of the culture which took its place. *Amicus plato, sed magis amica veritas*. The effect on Canadians of this twofold relation to the Old World has been to make possible the question, what are we as a North American people, whose freedom and its political articulation has a different basis than for Europeans."[56]

Doull's reconsideration of the United States and re-grounding of his hopes for Canada lay in his recognition of what he came to call "North American freedom." This freedom belongs to and defines the character of the "post-national," federal states of North

[55] Doull, "Naturalistic Individualism", 39.
[56] Doull, "Heidegger and the State" in David Peddle and Neil Robertson, eds., *Philosophy and Freedom: The Legacy of James Doull* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003 forthcoming) 375.

America. It is necessary to the understanding of his fully developed account of Canada and its contrast to Grant's to see more clearly his conception of North American freedom. Doull's claim is that while Canada and the United States are each species of the genus North American freedom, and so provide different articulations of this freedom, because Canada remains immature and underdeveloped in its articulation, it is best to turn to the United States to capture the character of this freedom.

Doull defines the nation state as an uneasy symbiosis of the Enlightenment sense of universal freedom and equality with an adherence to the particularities of the language, culture and history of a given state: England, France, etc. On his view the United States, then, is not a nation state, as such: "The United States is the first post-national state, the first state based not on national particularity but on rational principles, whose history is essentially the development of those principles. Americans were from the first conscious that they attempted something new, and of consequence for the human race: there began with their independence a *novus ordo saeclorum*.[57]

Thus for Doull: "The American Union is not derivative from particular communities in the manner of the European Union, but is directly the common state of all Americans."[58] It is this rational or universal origin that secures, in principle, the inviolability of the Union. Doull states: "The Union as the common state of all Americans and that which defined their relations with other states, had a priority over the particular states. As the States were not prior to the Union, once founded, so were they not subordinate but shared a coincident sovereignty distinguished by the powers appropriated to each."[59] On Doull's account, the constitution as the historical and philosophical foundation of the political and social institutions of the American people is thus a presupposition of the rights of individuals in the world, the concrete reality of their lived freedom. Thus he will argue: "The Union is the ultimate support of 'government of the people, by the people and for the people'. Political power derives from the people who made and can amend their institutions. But the constitution on which the self-government of free individuals depends, so far as it expresses and gives objective form to their freedom, is in a proper consideration only amendable in its essentials if the amendment is thought to be more adequate to that freedom. The individuals who constitute for themselves a state are 'created equal' and have rights in virtue of that equality, among others, to 'life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness'. Government exists to support and make room for these 'inalienable rights' and has thus a corresponding stability in its primary structure not subject to arbitrary amendment."[60]

In the case of the United States civil war was required to cement the sense of the precedence of the Union to the rights of states. For Doull there is an immanent logic afoot in this development. He states: "The war between these immovable forces made evident what lay in the doctrine that there was not right of secession from the Union as directly the state of all Americans. In that relation the society of free individuals had the objective

[57] Doull, "The Philosophical Basis".
[58] Doull, "The Philosophical Basis".
[59] Doull, "The Philosophical Basis".
[60] Doull, "The Philosophical Basis".

constitutional structure in which democratic government - government of the people by their own agency and for the common well-being and the reality of their freedom - was possible. Through the primary concurrence of individual freedom with the operation of the federal state the Union was indivisible. Individuals might again find themselves unfree in the free society, but from that time with the sense of themselves as one nation - not as an association only of sovereign communities."[61]

In short, for Doull the Union was not, in the first place, based on a contract of atomic individuals, rather it was founded by individuals already involved in civil society, already educated to political life in their particular states. In the second place, the secessionist movement, concretely the slave states, could not uphold the principle of freedom which animated the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution itself. The Union was the only actual historical institution, among the meaningful options, which could continue the principles of the U.S. constitution; its dissolution by the actions of the slave states would be irrational, against the current of western history, and a destruction of the very freedom it would seek to defend. In the Gettysburg Address, Lincoln gives voice to this standpoint. Describing the United States as a "nation, conceived in Liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal", he conceives the Civil War as "testing whether that nation or any nation so conceived and so dedicated can long endure".[62] Doull thus conceives the Civil War as the complete ratification of the U.S. constitution, as the point at which: "the loyalties of individuals to the whole and to a sovereign part coincide and are articulated according to the division of powers."[63]

For Doull, then, the United States is to be differentiated from the European nation states because founded explicitly on rational principles and not suffering in itself a division between the Enlightenment principles of universal freedom and equality and attachment to a particular culture and language. As a result, whereas the European nation states suffered in World War Two the virtual destruction of independent sovereignty and required a European Union to secure political life in the global technological economy, the United States is in principle beyond the nation state and not subject to its history. The United States is for Doull, in his most recent political thought, the clearest instantiation of North American freedom; a freedom that retains the concreteness that Hegel saw to belong to the nineteenth-century nation state, but now realized in a more adequately universal and self-conscious form. This freedom can hold together as one reality what contemporary Europe assumes only in a divided form: technology and tradition, the particularity of community and the universality of rights and liberties.

It is this North American freedom that Doull suggests Grant does not sufficiently recognize. From Doull's perspective, Grant is still thinking in a European context when he puts on one side the "nation" of British North America and on the other side the technological "empire" of the United States. Put in these terms, Doull would certainly allow that Grant's analysis is correct. Canada has experienced the dissolution of British

[61] Doull, "The Philosophical Basis".
[62] Abraham Lincoln, *Speeches and Writings 1859-1865* (ed) Don E. Fehrenbacher (New York: Library of America, 1989) 536.
[63] Doull, "The Philosophical Basis"

North America - and equally of French Catholic Quebec. But Doull's argument is that these terms are insufficient to the reality of Canada as a form of North American freedom. To get hold of Doull's argument it is not enough to say that North American states, in contrast to the European nation states escaped the direct destruction of institutions and culture wrought by the World Wars - this is largely true of Great Britain also - especially if one finds, as Doull does, the imperial expansion of nineteenth-century Europe to be a corruption and not an essential aspect of those states. But, Britain, as much as the other nations of the European Union, has found itself incapable of holding together technology and tradition. What is distinctive about North American forms is that they are post-nation states and, as such, are not technological empires that dissolve and destroy particularity and tradition. Rather, the federal structure of these states, their capacity to promote and uphold local differences, that are not at the same time simply frozen into external givenness of pure custom, points to a concreteness, a holding together of technology and community, that is beyond and yet comprehensive of the divideness that contemporary Europe experiences.

This distinctive character of North American freedom is crucial to understand Doull's critique of Grant's account of Canada. Grant sees Canada's distinctiveness to lie in its determination to conserve the presence of English and French culture in Canada and so to have access to a tradition of contemplation, virtue and political stability. The role of Canada is to act as a means to defend the institutions and ways of being that sustain these cultures. These cultures are received by Canadians who then participate in them and, as Grant understands the heart of these cultures to be a participation in the Good, there is a coherence here. Doull disagrees with Grant, not only as to the content of these cultures, but also as to the Canadian relation to them. Doull outlines a history of Canada whose purpose is to question the claim that English and French Canadian culture was ever simply participatory and conservative. Rather Doull wants to argue that from its beginning Canadians appropriated and transformed their received cultural forms in the new context of North America.

An implication of the more self-active account of Canadian history sketched by Doull is the claim that Canada's history cannot be understood as the histories of two distinct "nations" - British and French - that out of a shared determination to avoid assimilation into the United States have formed a marriage of convenience. As Doull puts this, "were the history of the 'two nations' such as nationalists recount, they would already have separated painlessly enough, seeing mutual benefit and little loss in their separation."[64] Doull's criticism of Grant is that he in fact leaves Canada as just such a compact, without real unity. However, Grant argues that what unites Canadians, whether French or English, is an attachment to the universality of the pre-modern tradition that is instantiated in differing forms in Quebec and in English Canada - a shared standpoint deeper than the differences of culture and equally opposed to American modernity. Doull, in one sense doesn't disagree with this, but says that if it is this universal culture that is the truth of Canada, then the national forms become secondary and this is what the history of Canada has been.

[64] Doull, "The Philosophical Basis".

For Doull, then: "There is not only a separate history of Quebec and another of a British 'nation'; there is also a common Canadian history more basic than either of these abstractions."[65] In a brief discussion of the history of Canada, Doull explores both the way in which French and English Canada were already beyond the European culture they brought with them in their free appropriation of it and as such were open to and involved in a history shared and informed by the difference of the two peoples. So, for instance, by contrast with Grant's portrayal, Doull finds in the French people from the beginning that which is beyond a merely ancient virtue. Doull portrays the French as both subordinating the individual to monarch and religion but in the context of an emergent Cartesian sense of freedom. In North America., he argues, the feudal forms of land tenure tended to be merely formal arrangements.

Further the relation to the Monarch for North Americans was less direct than it was for the citizens of France, mediated as it was by the representatives of the French king. Thus Doull states: "In New France the will of the monarch is executed by the divided authority of the military Governor and the Intendant. But the relation of the country people to this system is different almost from the first in New France. There is not a half-servile peasantry, but the 'habitant' with a strengthened sense of his independence and equality."[66]

Doull thus concludes with a radical claim about the basis of English and French unity in eighteenth century Canada: "The disappearance of the old order can appear in a nationalist perspective as an immense shock from which to this day French Quebecers have hardly recovered. It is also said that they were already a 'people' or a 'nation', in which case they would have in themselves a political order to replace that from which they were severed. It would be better said that the Conquest stabilized their relation to the culture earlier imposed from above, that French culture from that point took root in North America and was capable of an intrinsic development. The conquered were not in a later nationalist sense a 'nation' or 'people', but the bearers of French culture of the 'old regime', towards which they must find a freer relation."

Yet in the face of the intentions of the Durham report (1838) and the Act of Union (1840) it remains to be asked why, in light of such a common spirit, the French were not assimilated to English Canada. Doull's central point here is that the nature of Enlightenment principles of government in their North American context did not require assimilation. Within England an assumed unity of culture and language was present, and thus opposed to other nations who likewise assumed their own culture and language. They could find themselves at odds with these nations on nationalistic grounds but not in terms of universal principles of rights and freedoms. In Canada, however, there was not the division of one nation state over and against another but neither was there an assumed unity. In the context of the Enlightenment toleration of religion, language and civil law these differences among French and English were not impediments to a common state. Thus while the British might want assimilation in this new context they were not

[65] Doull, "The Philosophical Basis".
[66] Doull, "The Philosophical Basis".

prepared to coerce it. Assimilation might be assumed but it could not be enforced in a way consistent with the freedom of individuals who shared a common European heritage.

As a result the British found themselves moving in opposed directions. While they desired assimilation, The Quebec Act of 1774 recognized the right of the French community to its religion and law. The Constitutional Act of 1791 granted to English and French equally the beginnings of representative government. Likewise, Lord Durhams recommendations of responsible government made co-existence and not assimilation irreversible. The Act of Union 1840, according to Doull, actually made the sense of the differences among the two communities more visible.[67]

The BNA act was inadequate to the subsequent dialectic of Canadian political life and thus was modified in spirit and practice by the developing notion of provincial rights. In this way Canada begins its own home grown constitutional development. But still within the rubric of a presupposed unity of political ends within the Commonwealth or the Roman Catholic Church, for English and French Canada respectively.

For Doull the participation in the Great Wars drew Canada directly into an experience of the breakdown of the nation state. But the experience of the Second World War in Europe and in North America is substantively distinct and in ways beyond the obvious geographical realities of the conflict. According to Doull, in the wake of the First World War there arose in individuals a sense of the destructive quality of imperialism and the search for nationalist glory. Individuals thus enlightened as to the evils of the nation state retreat from allegiance to the modern conception of political institutions and find themselves able to be inspired by only one side of what the modern nation state was able to hold together, that is, either intuitive attachment to one's fatherland or rationalistic adherence to technological control. Thus the First World War on Doull's account dissolves the unity of reason and nature that had been accomplished in the nation state. But the nation still remained though now upholding primarily only one aspect of what had previously been held together in a mediated whole. The Second World War on Doull's account makes the destructive quality of both nationalized technocracy and nationalized naturalism evident to the former European nation states. What has occurred is an historical demonstration of the impossibility of holding together technology and nature in the nation state and likewise the impossibility of clinging variously to one side or the other of this dichotomy within a single nation. The independence of the nation state is thus dissolved and sovereignty can be maintained only through a union whose intention it is to retain the specifics of culture while protecting individual freedom and drawing member states into the global economy.[68]

Canada in its own way experienced the corruption of the modern nation state but because it was not structured in terms of the precise division of rights and culture characteristic of Europe it did not experience the twentieth century as a corruption of its sovereignty. Rather for Doull the experience of the Great Wars deepened the relationship

[67] Doull, "The Philosophical Basis".
[68] Doull, "The Philosophical Basis".

of Canadians to their own state and on the basis of this more unqualified allegiance made possible a strengthening of citizen's attachments to their own localized culture and provincial sovereignty.

In this context emerged the Quiet Revolution. While for Grant, this event in Quebec corresponded to and shared something of the collapse of loyalty to the British connection, Doull argues that these parallel developments must be seen not only in the negative light with which Grant portrays them, but also positively as a shift in Canada generally as to the ends of government and the rights and reasonable expectations of individuals in relation to the state. A network of social programs was established which are an important element in Canadians' allegiance to their common government. Doull states: "In Quebec the revolution began at a different point than in the other Canada, out of the aversion of a church-oriented society to the seductions of a modern industrial economy." However, on his view: "The result was generally the same in both cases, if one allows for cultural differences in the attitude of individuals to government."[69]

But, according to Doull, the strengthened sovereignty which emerges in Canada in the twentieth century, which we might see to give credence to Prime Minister Laurier's claim that the twentieth century will be the Canadian century, has yet to be fully appropriated by the public political culture of Canada. On his view, for example, the inadequacy of our self-consciousness and the borrowed self-image of Europe soon fragmented the Quiet Revolution into the opposed moments of Quebec nationalism represented by Levesque and French Power, represented in Trudeau's centralist federalism. But this opposition which the constitutional challenge present by Quebec brings to the fore for all Canadians is not true to Canadian history or constitutional forms but rather is borrowed. In this opposition, according to Doull, Canada still remains within a "post-colonial colonialism" - articulating its constitutional difficulties through the logic of the European Union, Europe in its collapse into opposed form of technology and community. From this standpoint, nationalists argue that the true sovereignty of Quebec can only be expressed in relation to Canada if Confederation is replaced by sovereignty association on the European model. However, such a position fails to realize that the nations which take part in the European Union do so on the basis of a loss of nationhood, that the European Union involves a surrender of important elements of sovereignty to the larger association. To conceive the relation of Quebec to Canada on the basis of the European Union, as do separatists, is thus to lose the very sovereignty they wish to assert. For Doull a properly Canadian account of these matters will, in truth, allow a deeper maintenance of sovereignty than is available on the sovereigntist account.

Thus Doull states in dramatic form: "The conclusion that separation is the only course remaining rests on personal feeling and a misreading of certain events. It has no general cogency. The well-founded conclusion from recent Canadian history is rather, as indicated, that the reconciliation of the two peoples, implied and demanded in patriation, is to be found neither in nationalism nor in economic individualism, as conceived in the European model. There is not only a separate history of Quebec and another of a British

[69] Doull, "The Philosophical Basis".

'nation'; there is also a common Canadian history more basic than either of these abstractions."[70] Here Doull's position poses a serious question to Grant's account. While upholding an Hegelian conception of history and of the state as an institutional comprehension of both an ancient and modern ethic, he does not resolve the question of sovereignty into the domineering subjectivity and will of the technocratic consumer. There is that in our history which can be shown as the rational basis of an institutional life which can draw the individual into a common good.

But for Grant, the cultural particularity of the nation state is essential to the possibility of retaining a relation to the older European tradition, as he puts it, we must begin with what is our "own" in order to rise to the Good. And Grant's history of Canada is, of course, quite different from that of Doull. Grant's history was of two peoples joined by mutual antagonism to the United States and mutual respect for a pre-modern European tradition, two peoples joined by shared but also distinctive loyalties. This history was for Grant a mixed affair. Partially it was a history of positive accomplishment that was part of the work of preserving Canada from absorption by the United States: here Grant speaks of the national projects of the railways, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, distinctive economic and foreign policies. Grant admired as well the articulateness of various French nationalists, especially those who sought to preserve the Catholic culture of Quebec - though he also admired separatists and Quebec nationalists of his own time so far as they still retained a sense of what a nation is. Partially also, Grant saw in Canadian history a series of misunderstandings and ineptitude in the relations of English to French Canada: Grant saw this as a case of confusing what was important, the larger culture of premodernity, with what was secondary, the particular and differing forms of English and French Canada. So Grant lamented stupidities, such as the conscription crisis, by which English Canada alienated and did harm to French Canada out of a sense of loyalty to what was specifically English. Along these lines Grant also bemoaned, in *Lament for a Nation*, Diefenbaker's self-destructive relation to Quebec. But for Grant's history of Canada, deeper than both the various triumphs of Canadian nationalism and the missteps between the two founding peoples, was the irresistible modernizing and technologizing of Canada. The Canadian tradition as received from both Britain and France was already a mixed legacy, a confusion of the modern and the pre-modern, the presence of the United States made the outcome of this confusion inevitable. So what for Doull is the period in which Canada begins to come into its own as a sovereign state, the last-half of the twentieth-century, is for Grant exactly when Canada relinquishes its independence. And so we return to Grant's lamentation and Doull's speculative hope.

For both Doull and Grant, contemporary Canadians live in ambiguous times: we are either a state unable to articulate the sovereignty we in fact possesses (Doull) or we are people without sovereignty and independence and yet still think ourselves a state (Grant). For both there is a problem of articulation or recognition. For both what is required for an articulation adequate to our situation is not only a recollection of the whole history of Canada, nor only an understanding of its constitutional order, but also a reflection on the character of the contemporary as a whole - on the nature of technology and its relation to

[70] Doull, "The Philosophical Basis".

the sovereignty of political institutions in this era. This latter reflection, in turn, requires a consideration of how higher ends and human freedom and self-activity relate: how God can be present or absent in historical life. It is a testimony to the depth of both thinkers that they are opposed to one another consistently and at the same points. To put the matter in its simplest form, Grant argues that there is a fundamental divide at each level, Doull acknowledges this division at every point but argues that it is overcome. Beyond the division of the British/French connection and American technology, Doull argues for the possibility of a sovereign, post-national Canada. Beyond the division of community and technology, of tradition and modernity, Doull argues for the possibility of a sovereignty in the state capable of uniting these aspects. Beyond the division of God and human historical life, Doull argues for the possibility of their effective and scrutable unity. Grant denies such possibilities on the basis of both an experience of their total division and a philosophical analysis that argues for the irreconcilability of these divisions. Doull, in his turn, allows that short of the absolute standpoint of the Hegelian philosophy, there can be no known overcoming of these opposed aspects. There is in the revolution of recent times a negativity which dissolves the givenness of received traditions and in this there is lost a world and its vision of the good, the true and the beautiful. There is, however, in the freedom from that which is past, a new world whose history requires philosophical form. In the engagement of George Grant and James Doull we find a vivid dialectic of these moments.