GOLDWIN'S MYTH

The Nonconformist as Mugwump

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IF GOLDWIN SMITH HAD NOT EXISTED, it would have been necessary for Canadian historians to invent him. Because he was at one time Regius Professor of History at Oxford and a leading light of British reform in the 1850's and 1860's, his residence in Canada from 1871 to 1911 provided us simultaneously with a "low-rent Voltaire in the intellectual backwater of late Victorian Toronto"[1] and an opportunity to exercise moral superiority on a very prestigious straw-man.

In the mock heroics of Canadian morality-play history, Smith has been assigned the pat role of promoting annexation to the United States. Taken as the epitome of hard-headed, cold-hearted logic and calculation, he is a perfect foil for those who paint Canadian history as a struggle to enact an impossible dream against all the odds of geography and economics. Cast as an unfeeling don inflexibly attached to the free trade dogmas of his British experience, he serves neatly as a counterpoint against whom the daring virtues of Canadian survival, such as our emotional ties to Britain and our duties to tariff-protected manufacturers, were rallied.

Smith can also be packaged conveniently for the purposes of reform historians. Standard Whig versions of social history focus on the welfare state as the culmination of social liberty and divide the world between humanists who favoured, and callous men who opposed, state intervention in the economy. Smith was too quotable an opponent of state intervention for such chroniclers of the welfare state to pass by. Finally, the dominant image of Victorians, a product of research methods which the English historian W. L. Burns has aptly termed "selective Victorianism,"[2] has denied the anxieties so central to Smith and his contemporaries. In Canada, the youthful generation that rebelled against Edwardian puritanism in the 1920's, together with handwringing elderly academics who had retreated "from the social critic to the reminiscent Victorian,"[3] left us glib generalizations about the optimism and complacency of Canadian social thought before World War I. Smith and his pithy epigrams can be fitted into this fabrication of Canadian history as well.

Because the standard portrayal of Goldwin Smith is woven into these versions of Canadian history, a reassessment of Smith necessarily implies a reassessment of our modes of structuring the key developments and problems in Canadian history and thought. This article will try to define Smith as a social rather than an economic thinker, to place Protestant evangelism and nonconformity, rather than liberal economics, at the core of his thought. In this context Smith's life becomes an unrequited search for a moral basis of community in a world where pre-capitalist props of hierarchy and cohesion had been obliterated. This search turned him into one of his generation's most active controversialists, pamphleteers and journalists, and in his later years brought him into frequent contact with leaders of Canadian farm and labour movements. As a figure in Canadian literature, he is important as an independent journalist; his contemporary, A. V. Dicey, characterized him as the last of the great pamphleteers. To see that Smith's concerns evolved while he was in Canada is, however, further to identify him: as a representative member of a transatlantic community of beleaguered liberals, rather than as a cocksure disciple of Manchester. These two reassessments of Smith require us to see him in light of the labour question, not the Canadian question: to situate his polemics on the *laissez-faire* state and annexation in the context of his concerns about social order. From this perspective, we can begin to grapple with some of the real ambiguities characteristic of both liberal and socialist thought in the pre-World War I era.

SMITH'S SECRETARY, ARNOLD HAULTAIN, exasperated with the ranting and raving that came from the aged scholar's study, regretted that "the dear old Professor is a don, was a don and remains a Don," and agreed with Disraeli's cutting characterization of Smith as "a wild man of the cloister."[4] There is truth to this judgment, though not in the sense that Smith brought to Canada the mindset of a privatized academic. Smith came to Canada as a politicized intellectual as a result of his experiences while teaching at Oxford during the 1860's. Smith's formative experiences at Oxford were shared by most university liberals of his generation, so much so that one critic lumped them together as "liberals of the Goldwin-Smith type."[5]

The liberalism of this academic generation gelled in the struggle against sectarian ecclesiastical privilege enforced by religious tests applied to university admission. Such was the power of Oxford's ecclesiastical faction that Smith saw no prospect for reform within the university. University reformers would have to seek an alliance with the reformers of Manchester, he projected. In this way, they could "liberalize the national legislature and the national legislature will liberalize Oxford."[6] As a result of Smith's strategy, the agitation over sectarian

religious tests "necessitated an appeal to national politics and reinforced an alignment with Nonconformist radicalism: for nine years it linked the universities, Liberal politics, Nonconformity and the intellectual world of London."[7] Links to the intellectual world of London were further strengthened by the upsurge of periodical literature, in which Smith and his colleagues actively participated. It was doubtless at this time that Smith acquired his lifelong commitment to an independent press, aimed at a general readership. The periodical, not just the academic journal or monograph, became a legitimate and necessary outlet for intellectual opinion.

Smith's writings against sectarian religious tests provide us with a clear understanding of his nonconformist evangelical Protestantism. These beliefs, not the economics of Manchester, laid the foundations of his inflexible individualism and consequent hostility toward legislative interference in social and moral issues. His nonconformity with regard to institutionalized religion was based on his belief that "human morality is identified with the divine."[8] Therefore, the "limits of human reason must be fixed not by clergy . . . but by the will of Providence."[9] Religion was not a dogma, but "the worship and service of a moral God and a God who is worshipped and served by virtue."[10] From this perspective, Smith cheered the struggle against rigid theological tests at Oxford as part of the belated renewal of the Reformation struggle against the false restraints that stood in the way of Christian conscience.[11] This religious renewal was interlocked with the social and political transformations of the age. The modern state, Smith considered, was confronted with the parallel tasks of "elevating the labouring class from their medieval position of serfdom to that of full and enfranchised members of a real community" and "the still more momentous problem of transferring the basis of religion, on which all society rests, from medieval authority to conviction, the result of free enquiry and of liberty of conscience."[12]

The basis for such a "real community" was the nub of the problem. The search haunted and inspired Smith for the rest of his life. The free trade campaign of the 1840's, focussed on duty-free imports of cheap American foodstuffs, managed to evade the problem by posing an identity of interest among consumers, neglecting the conflict of interest between workers and capitalists.[13] Smith had been an ardent supporter of free trade, which he saw as the manifesttation of human brotherhood, not just as cost-cutting economics. The laws of free trade, Smith believed, were "the most beautiful and wonderful of the natural laws of God," since they provided a world-wide exchange of needed goods and made "one heart as well as one harvest for the world." Alas, he also recognized that the unrestricted laws governing the production and distribution of wealth were not based on affection or duty.[14] It was an urgent matter to find the maxims of community in such a situation. Smith's Christianity could not brook recent developments in political economy which erected "hardness of heart into a social

virtue."[15] On the other hand, he suffered no illusions in the poor meekly accepting charity, and saw in them "the sans-culottes who butchered with Robespierre."[16] It was perhaps this fear that led Smith to define his opposition to the construction of a railway carriage factory at Oxford in 1865 as "the greatest fight of my life."[17] His dread of social convulsion from below demarked him irretrievably from radicalism but spurred on his efforts to reform the morality of the upper class and instil a moral basis for community.

Once again, religion was central to Smith's conceptions. Because obedience to the laws of political economy did not coincide with the duties of social obligation, a high sense of religious obligation was necessary. Religion was the "only lasting spring of the unselfish affections and actions which bind men into a community, and save that community from dissolution."[18] Oxford had a special role to play here, to nerve itself to do its "duty to the poor . . . in coercing firmly the vices of the rich."[19] Non-sectarian religion could "introduce united education among the upper classes" and allow Oxford to train them in their social duty.[20] Guidance would be especially necessary for the less obvious duties of accumulated manufacturing, as distinct from inherited, landed wealth.[21] Britain's modern gentry must serve the people, "own its duty to those by whose labour they are fed. They must be resident, they must be well educated, they must be able and willing to act as the social and moral educators of those below them."[22]

Goldwin Smith tried to pattern his own life after these maxims. This accounts for the support he frequently offered to plebeian movements, support which included direct financial subsidies to such Canadian projects as the farm-oriented *Sun* after 1896, and a Toronto union-sponsored social centre in 1905. Similarly, his belief in these maxims accounts for his lifelong frustration with an amoral and socially removed ruling class, and his despair that a rising working class movement was drawing militant conclusions from the hostile indifference of the ruling class. In Toronto, the seat of his mature years, where he occupied the munificent residence on which the Toronto Art Gallery now stands, he became not so much the Sage of the Grange, a phrase used by many contemporaries to allude to his detached scholarly life; he became the Squire of the Grange.

The rhetoric of religious injunction and the fear of untutored plebeian upheaval were also clear in Smith's first serious examination of Canada and Empire relations in 1863. Characteristically, his book was not a monograph but a compilation of news articles written to influence public opinion. Assuredly, the anti-colonial policy of Smith and his co-workers was part of a campaign for the cheap administration of British government but Smith was convinced that "a truly great policy is generally cheap, because it has the moral forces on its side."[23] Moreover, he charged, the enforced political infancy of colonial status prevented Canada from developing "the independent character . . . of a nation."[24] This was a serious accusation indeed, since Smith believed that "nations, like men, are intended to

form their own character by self-exertion and self-control."[25] Prolonged infancy had resulted in the undue caution of a people which "has learned to scan her future without learning to face it";[26] Canada would miss its destiny by "clinging, like frightened children, to the skirts of the Old World."[27] Already it was insensibly drifting under the American impress, "like a mass of unfashioned clay, having no distinct figure of her own."[28] The task of creating a real community in rough-hewn and barbarous Canada would be arduous, but "it was as a scene for such efforts, apparently, that the world was made,"[29] Smith reasoned.

Canada's problems were aggravated by its imitative and colonial ways. There were motes in Canada's eyes, he well recognized, "but none so much to be taken away as the beam in ours."[30] As a New World country, Canada had to create community on a new foundation. "We by long and hard effort have made the will of kings subject to the law. It is her task to make the will of the people subject to the law of reason."[31] Britain's monarchical and aristocratic precedents were both irrelevant and harmful. The monarchy, which in Britain "binds the unenfranchised, ignorant and indigent masses of the people by a tie of personal loyalty to the constitution," had no roots in Canada.[32] The Canadian aristocracy was as much different from American democracy, he later wrote, "as the Irishman's ride in a sedan chair with the bottom out differed from common walking."[33] Aristocratic pretensions and monarchical lavishness in government expediencies gave a sense of false security which dangerously masked "the want of a conservative element in their institutions, and makes them feel free to plunge with impunity into all the excesses of universal suffrage."[34] In the absence of a leisure class devoted to public service, only strictly limited and simple government could hold demagogy and sordid ambition at bay. This was also a test of Canada as a community. Since government is essentially "a remedy for the bad passions of mankind the less of it a nation requires, the greater is the dignity of that nation."[35]

Smith rediscovered the New World in a more sympathetic light as a result of his partisanship for the anti-slavery North in the American Civil War. Smith came to America to embrace the northern cause in a conflict which he identified as more profound than that between Freedom and Slavery. "It was a struggle between Christianity and all that is most hostile to Christianity." He took heart in America, not because of its dubious and sometimes destructive democracy, but because of its pervasive Christianity, the one spirit "capable of animating and sustaining a real community."[36]

In his 1902 study of America's degeneration into a jingoist, plutocratic and imperialist state, Smith recalled his high hopes during the 1860's, and revealed something of the two lifestyles he had hoped Christianity could bridge in the New World: "Nowhere is English life better or more attractive than in a country parish, with a kind and conscientious squire, good ladies, an active pastor, a well-to-do tenantry and a contented peasantry," he mused. But arriving in

America, "an observer felt that he had come to something which had more of the true spirit of a community."[37] America projected "the essential unity of interest which underlies all class divisions, which in our onward progress towards the attainment of a real community, will survive all class distinctions . . . by establishing between them mutual good will. . . ."[38] He had also admired the relative absence of government in America, though not because he upheld a vision of the unrestrained market society. Since government is essentially compulsion, Smith reasoned, it decreases where social virtue and popular intelligence are high. "It is destined to decrease as Christianity increases, and as force is superseded by social affection, and spontaneous combination for the public good."[39]

The controversy which raged in Britain as a result of the government's support of the slave South also influenced Smith's social understanding. He received his first harsh lesson on the conscience of the British ruling class when he witnessed the treachery of Manchester manufacturers who aligned with the aristocracy in support of slave cotton. In 1864, Smith defined British national politics as "the balanced selfishness of the landowners and the commercial capitalists."[40] Smith had to collaborate with working class and popular reformers like Cobden and Bright, who worked "to convert the kingdom of the world into the Kingdom of Christ."[41] Smith also gained respect for the morality of working-men who defended the North, despite their reliance on Southern cotton for employment in the textile mills. Thus, Goldwin Smith and other engaged anti-slavery intellectuals came in contact with the working class world, which shared a common alienation from British politics. In a sense, this distorted Smith's appreciation of the working class movement, since, as Harvie explains, contact was made "not through the intimacy of shared perceptions and sympathies, but in a roundabout way . . . by shared enthusiasms and enmities in foreign politics."[42]

Be that as it may, the American Civil War seems to have confirmed Smith's acceptance of political democracy, expressed in the campaign for a broadened franchise. Although Smith always suspected mass suffrage and tried to establish restrictive age and educational requirements to provide "securities for reform,"[43] by 1862 he concluded that a broadened franchise was an "indispensible condition" of improvement and justice.[44] He spoke from both middle class and working class platforms to advance suffrage extension and favoured it for allowing government of the nation rather than a balance of classes. In 1863, Smith contributed to *Essays on Reform*, a compilation of leading reformers' writings designed to refute philosophical utilitarian objections to popular suffrage and to promote the incorporation of the working class into the life of the British nation.

Significantly, Smith wrote on the basis of his American experience. While conceding problems in America, like mindless party loyalty and Irish demagogues who flourished in the absence of well-established and refined cultural leaders, he

was confident that America was facing up to the challenge. He considered it an established fact that "Equality has created in America a nation great both in peace and war, wealthy, intelligent, united, capable of producing statesmen and soldiers," and "at least as loyal to the principle on which it was founded as any nation ever was to an hereditary sovereign or an oligarchy." In America, a step had been taken "towards the realization of that ideal community, ordered and bound together by affection instead of force, the desire of which is, in fact, the spring of human progress, though the worshippers of intellectual oligarchy may be unconscious of such an ideal in the mind of man." Evidently, this voluntary, informal community was especially satisfactory to a religious non-conformist. Smith also admired the tendency in American democracy which "aids Nature in the equal diffusion of wealth," fostered simplicity, and diminished the "seductive examples" of dangerous and idle wealth.[45]

Smith was still optimistic about the future when he moved to Toronto. In one of his first public functions, he spoke on *The European Crisis of 1870*, and the turmoil which was "casting humanity in a new mould." Beneath all the outbreaks and campaigns of the period, he sought the source "of all the other throes and convulsions of humanity — a religious movement more momentous . . . and more unlimited than the Reformation."[46] The theme was related to the stated purpose of the lecture — raising funds for a Newsboys' Home. This too was part of the movement that was uplifting humanity with "a common pulse of sympathy . . . making one heart and one intellect for the world." Amidst all the world's strife, "charity, with robe unstained by blood, pursues in confidence her gentle course."[47]

Shortly thereafter, he delivered a lecture on the labour movement. He reminded the Montreal Mechanics Institute that humanity was above all unions and combinations,[48] and that "the moral dangers of corporate selfishness are the same . . . in all classes."[49] He did not think unions could raise wages short of general technical advances, yet he welcomed the labour movement as emancipating the worker from feudal dependence, placing him on an equal footing with the employer. Above all, the labour movement had "opened our eyes to the fact that a nation, and humanity at large, is a community, the good things of which all are entitled to share."[50] Poor Smith even had to withstand public criticism for his attacks on the wasteful luxury of the rich. Smith upheld the Christian moral code: "We are every one members one of another."[51] His doctrine that the wealth of the world was a common store did not, however, subvert property rights. He looked to the day when property was modified by duty and "property and duty merged in affection."[52]

Smith could even be hopeful about Canadian nationality. He had urged intellectuals and professionals to let go of the ostentatious skirts of the wealthy so that they might live nobly.[53] In Canada First, he saw a group of talented native Canadians brought to the fore by the withdrawal of Old Country leaders and

military officers.[54] His financing of several periodicals in the 1870's and 1880's was probably part of an effort to sustain the influence of independent men like these against the forces of self-seeking and unthinking partyism.

DESPITE THIS INITIAL OPTIMISM, the intellectual basis of Smith's optimism was too fragile to be sustained in the world taking shape after the 1870's, a world which would bear the imprints of monopoly capitalism, imperialism and rising class conflict. Goldwin Smith lived long enough to gaze back on his childhood as on antiquity.[55] By the end of his life, he wondered where events were rushing in the modern "age of express trains, ocean greyhounds, electricity, bicycles, globe-trotting, Evolution, the Higher Criticism and general excitement and restlessness. . . ."[56] He had grown morose over the many "little Edens" his liberal agitation had helped topple.[57] When he revisited England and watched a village militia drill under the command of the local gentleman, he realized that the doom of the old rural parish would end "not a few ties and relations which had their value and their charms as long as people did their duty." It made him remember "that movement is not progress, unless it tends to happiness."[58] His old-fashioned liberalism was as doomed as the rural parish of old. Ideologically, Smith came to recognize himself as a "non-descript," as "a political and social mastodon."[59]

The outlook had indeed become grim by the twentieth century. Social cohesion was threatened on every side, especially once Toronto passed from a residential to a factory city at the turn of the century.[60] By then, Smith saw labour's alienation as virtually complete.

> Machinery has added vastly to the wealth, would we could say to the happiness, of the world. Factory hands are human hammers and spindles; they can feel no interest in their work; they do not even see it in its finished state; their abodes are dismal; their lives are monotonous. They can hardly be blamed either for addiction to sensual enjoyments or for readiness to listen to any Karl Marx who tells them that they ought to have more pay. Socially they are quite cut off from their employers, whose mansions, perhaps, in their Sunday stroll in the suburbs, they see with no friendly eye. Anything that could create a feeling of partnership between employer and employed would be the greatest of blessings, but nothing in that way as yet seems to have had much success.[61]

The crisis was rendered more acute by the spread of popular disbelief in orthodox Christianity, which he saw as the storm centre of the age, the "most momentous revolution in history."[62] A man for whom Humanity was "connected with the Christian view of the relations of men to their common Father"[63] saw conscience dethroned and philanthropy undermined by new revelations of Evolu-

tion and Higher Criticism. How could we have the brotherhood of man without the paternity of God?[64] By the 1880's, he saw society "in danger of an anarchy of self-interest, compressed for the purpose of political order, by a despotism of force."[65] The crisis of faith had immediate repercussions for popular social expectations leading to every manner of false hopes. This soon became his agonized refrain:

> Classes which have hitherto acquiesced in their lot, believing that it was a divine ordinance and that there would be redress and recompense in a future state, are now demanding that conditions shall be levelled here. The nations quake with fear of change. The leaders of humanity, some think, may even find it necessary to make up by an increase in the powers of government for the lost influence of religion.[66]

In discussing the great reformation associated with the European crisis of 1870, Smith made reference to a conservative process whereby nations and individuals recoiled from uncertainty. This process profoundly affected Smith, along with the whole transatlantic liberal community. In the United States, Radicals of a previous generation became liberal mugwumps, forming clubs for "the best men," in reaction to the political debauchery and social turbulence that followed the Civil War. They developed a programme based on pure government against spoils, free trade against tariffs, economic orthodoxy against reform, civil service reform against ward bosses and hostility to woman suffrage.[67] In Britain, disenchanted moderns were grouping around highbrow journals that featured anonymous writers striving to raise culture above anarchy.[68] Philanthropists collaborated in the Charities Organization Society to beat back welfare bums with the professional expertise of "a new urban squirearchy."[69] By 1886, the university liberalism of the 1850's and 1860's was a spent force; its dialogue with democratic institutions had broken down, and its proponents were alienated, pessimistic, and dogmatic.

Smith was attuned to these developments. He joined American liberals in repudiating Reconstruction.[70] His political programme mirrored theirs more than it did Manchester liberalism. He funded journals of high culture where he wrote as a quasi-anonymous "Bystander." He watched the enfranchised British poor "furnish Reaction with auxiliaries in the shape of political Lazzaroni" capable of being organized by wealth in opposition to the higher order of workmen and the middle class.[71] He set up a Canadian Associated Charities modelled on the British organization.

James Mavor, a close friend of Smith's in the 1890's and after, never heard him laugh and rarely saw more than a faint smile cross his lips.[72] As Smith saw it, the world was in the grips of an evil trinity of plutocracy, militarism, and imperialism. No force had arisen to counter-balance this thrust.[73] The world was being "painted red, dominated by bogus Anglo-Saxonism, subjected to a benevo-

lent feudalism of multi-millionaires, jingoized, Morganeered, turned into a white man's burden and a field of philanthropic rapine."[74] America, once the hope of labour, a land of freedom, self-help and self development, was now under the thumb of de-Americanized, inherited, and irresponsible wealth.[75]

In Canada, there were no forces to restrain Smith's backlash. In his effort to actualize some bond between the well-to-do and poor through charity and philanthropy, he was continually frustrated by the irresponsibility of colonial wealth. Smith was unable to prompt the Canadian elite's sense of social duty without resorting to dire threats that flaunting luxury was the anarchistic "dynamiter's best ally." The rich were a "dangerous class in their own right," he charged.[76] He saw this irresponsibility as a problem of new communities, "where the atoms of society are very shifting, where there are no strong family or local ties, or even old firms."[77] Men made their fortunes and left, sometimes returning to England. Smith hoped that charity committees would offset this tendency, giving men of wealth and leisure "an opportunity of doing something for the good of the community. Our rich men must do their social duty if they mean to escape a crash."[78] He came to realize, however, that there was "no use in applying for help to men of wealth."[79] For all his goading, it "was from people of small or moderate means, whose souls were not enslaved by money, that most of the support came."[80]

The effort to guide Canadian society in the absence of a rooted Canadian social leadership gave unity to Smith's various reform and philanthropic projects. His search for a substitute gentry led to his call for businesslike administration of municipalities by appointed commissions rather than elected officials. In the villages of old, "the leading men kept the power in their own hands, lived among the people, and directed them." By the 1890's, however, as a result of the upper class exodus to the suburbs and the time-consuming demands of business, the elite was removed from influence.[81] For this reason, non-partisan and high-minded men were required as proxies. Although Smith often used business metaphors and allied with businessmen in his campaign for commission government,[82] he was trying to fill a social breach, not his own pocket. Moreover, he included the working class as beneficiaries of his campaign. "None have a greater interest in an improvement of the system than the working class, whose well-being depends more on things common to the whole city, while that of the wealthier class depends more on things belonging to themselves."[83] Not without insight, Smith unwittingly pin-pointed the reasons for the abysmal record of business-inspired municipal reform.

Smith's philanthropic activity was also an exercise in substituting institutions for the spontaneous charity of society's natural leaders. Soon after his 1870 speech, Smith discovered that charity could not pursue its gentle course unstained by social tension. During the Civil War, Smith believed that Christianity "abhors

... the hideous extremes of wealth and destitution," and he hoped that philanthropic Christianity would triumph over punishment of the poor.[84] By the 1890's, he was lamenting working class resistance to supposedly model communities like those established by the U.S. capitalist Pullman, and fulminated at the "stiff-necked independence, by which the patience of philanthropy is apt to be very sorely tried."[85]

His increasingly uncharitable view of the poor led him to initiate the Associated Charities in the 1880's, when he discovered that the proportion of people on relief in Toronto was larger than that in London, England.[86] A co-ordinating committee was needed, a philanthropic equivalent of Dun and Bradstreet, to investigate the moral credit rating of the poor. This became Smith's first principle of modern charity. It would rationalize the welfare system and avoid overlap of services while safeguarding the lower class from aspiring to the lazy lifestyle of paupers. Because a certain amount of coercion was necessary here, Smith argued for government intervention and, in fact, even paid the salary of Toronto's Relief Officer out of his own pocket.[87]

For Smith, charity in the strict sense became a matter of relieving the "accidental distress" of old age and sickness.[88] Here, his second principle of modern charity, adjustment of relief to need, came into play. In the context of Toronto, this principle was quite humanistic, and involved him in heated controversies with the House of Industry and the Toronto magistrate. Smith was moved to reactivate the Associated Charities in the 1890's by the case of Edward Winch, an unemployed widower with four children who was charged with theft for picking up some fallen bits of coal. The magistrate told Winch to place his children in an orphanage and turn himself into jail as a vagrant.[89] Smith abhorred this vindictive and institutional approach, because he believed that charity had to be sustained by "the feelings that unite, not ... the passions that divide us."[90] Shortly before his death, Smith authored his final Christmas appeal for the Children's Aid Society, urging sponsors to join the Parliament of Pity and bring promise to slumdom with love and help.[91]

Of all Smith's causes during the 1880's and 1890's, he is most famous for his support of annexation between Canada and the United States. Smith's commitment to annexation, however, should be understood primarily in terms of his views on Canada's social crisis. It was Smith's frustration with the Canadian ruling classes' inability to provide social leadership capable of creating a high-minded and cohesive community in Canada that led him to favour annexation to the U.S.A. Smith became a continentalist because he was a mugwump reformer, not because he was a Manchester liberal devoted to the free play of the market.

Smith himself was partly to blame for the frequent misconception of his motives here, since he frequently polemicized about the natural thrust of geography and

economics in a north-south, rather than east-west, direction. His famous statement — "Few have fought against geography and prevailed"[92] — was more a tribute to the glib Victorian art of epigram than a rounded expression of his views. Smith was no geographical determinist: race and religion were singularly more important to him. Still less was he a philosopher schooled in the radical-republican appeal to the first principles of nature. In his more serious comments, Smith wrote of "the moral which the map . . . enforces."[93] While he parried with, in his words, "paper tiger" imperialism, by ridiculing the possibility that the Atlantic could be dried up by jingoism, in dealing with reasonable people Smith juxtaposed sentiment and the interests of the people. "Sentiment is the flower, but the plant on which the flower grows is the public welfare."[94]

The heart of the matter for Smith was the building of "a strong, stable, enlightened, and impartial government"[95] in a New World democracy. As in his earlier writings on the Empire, Smith continued to dismiss the colonial connection with British aristocracy as a bulwark against demagoguism "and the other pests of democratic institutions." Aristocratic pretensions only added the sins of flunkeyism to demagoguism. Moreover, the lack of binding ties in a colonial dependency simply could not prevail against the centrifugal loyalties of province, sect or fraternal order. "So it must be while the only antidote to sectionalism . . . is the sentiment of allegiance to a distant throne."[96] Dependency led to a low level of political self-respect and party behaviour, in the "absence of all that is bracing ennobling and elevating in the political influences which are bound up with the name of nation."[97] Finally, the colonial mentality removed leaders from their true post of duty. Some of the country's political problems were the result of absentee leaders, because "our social chiefs are apt to be almost as much citizens of London as of Toronto."[98]

The continentalist Smith and the Imperialists perhaps shared more than they knew, and this is why Principal Grant read Smith's classic *Canada and the Canadian Question*, which made the full case for annexation to the United States, with "mingled feelings." Smith found Imperial Federationist dissatisfaction with the petty localism and factionalism of Canada's lowly political life "well-founded and generous."[99] His criticisms of schemes for imperial federation were incidental and technical rather than fundamental; after all, continentalism for Smith was a prelude to a world-wide Anglo-Saxon moral federation. Like the imperialists, Smith saw Canada's colonial status as an urgent problem from which we could "afford to drift no longer."[100] Smith, too, preferred a society based on primary industries. Grant's allegation that Smith was preoccupied with the ignoble economic benefits of continental integration had already been anticipated: "that would be a weak nationality indeed which should depend on a Customs line,"[101] Smith countered. Smith did differ from the imperialists in several core assumptions. Most important probably, since Smith had once entertained such

high hopes for America, hopes which the Imperialists never shared, he was prepared to act on its behalf. It was a priority for him that the "native American element in which the tradition of self-government resides is hard pressed by the foreign element . . . and stands in need of reinforcement."[102] The priorities of imperialist racism were different. On most points, however, Smith's views on continentalism represented a tactical difference with imperial federationists, who shared his fundamental "mugwump" critique of Canada.

With the rise of Anglo-American imperialist expansion in the 1890's, Smith's disillusionment with ruling circles on a world scale deepened, perhaps accounting for his renewal of relations with certain popular movements. For this reason, the last decades of his life were not uneventful, as his chief biographer claims,[103] but revealed the full dimensions of his intellectual crisis. Noting French Canada's solid opposition to imperialism, he strove to build an English-French Canadian political alliance based on peace, economy, free trade, and political purity. This led to his prolonged correspondence with French Canadian nationalist Henri Bourassa, who, Smith hoped, would not leave such a party leaderless.[104] As for the relic of sheepish French-Canadian nationality which he had once hoped to crush through annexation with Anglo-Saxon Protestant America, he now found "its simplicity, its courtesy, its domesticity, its freedom from American push" quite attractive. "Above all, I look to French Canada as a conservative power saving us from being swept away by the tide of imperialism and jingoism,"[105] he wrote. Like many of his latterday writings, this hankering for a simple past revealed his fundamental ambivalence about capitalist social relations.

Smith also turned his hopes toward Canadian farmers, who had been most receptive to his annexationist appeals in the 1880's and 1890's. By 1894, Smith counted on Canada's husky farmers to "lift the wagon" of factional partyism "out of the slough" of political life.[106] Smith also envisioned farm life as offering a more human and cohesive community, and feared the drift of farm boys toward the excitement of the city, where they would overcrowd the professions with disastrous results. "The growth of an educated class of unemployed, with the sensitiveness that education gives, would be the source of much unhappiness, and might be the source of danger to the state,"[107] he projected.

In 1896, Smith purchased the *Canada Farmers Sun*, which until his tenure as publisher was drifting toward a Christian socialist and politically independent line quite out of keeping with the limited reform aims of Patrons of Industry parliamentary leaders.

Although Smith retained his connection with the *Farmers Sun* until his death, it was the labour question that disturbed and engaged him more than any other. In his later years, Smith spoke and wrote frequently on behalf of the labour movement. A major benefactor of the popular Labor Temple, designed to serve as a social and office centre for Toronto unionists, he was invited to give the sole speech at its grand opening.[108] He promoted and contributed financially to several independent labour candidates. To some extent, he saw parliament as one avenue of social reconciliation. Parliament should be the council of a united nation, he believed. "Still, there are special interests each of which is entitled to a voice. . . . The capitalist is abundantly heard: let the producer . . . be heard also. . . . a class can hardly be expected to look up with respect and confidence to a governing assembly in which none of its members had a place."[109] Exclusion from the legislature would only aggravate labour's bitterness. It was "in everyone's interest that this exclusion end."[110] In offering support to a 1908 Independent Labor Party campaign, he urged members to "ever remember that we as a community and that our wealth and happiness depend upon our being a community indeed."[111]

The homilies of community — not, as Carl Berger has argued, the homilies of self-help[112] — prevented him from identifying with most proposals of the union movement. Commenting on the 1896 Labour Day Parade, Smith pleaded for workers to view manual and mental labour equally, for both were "necessary to the community and belong to the same fellowship. The anniversary would be an evil if it served in any degree to draw or perpetuate a hard class line."[113] He hoped somehow that simple truths would prevail: that labour would see the capitalist as mere paymaster, and the community as the true employer.[114] However, because of his conception of the iron laws of capitalism and the inevitability of inequality, he could not bring himself to support such elementary reformist legislation as minimum pay laws. Thus, he found himself at odds with labour on most concrete issues affecting the economy.

However, beneath his hackneyed, reflex fulminations against schemes for social reconstruction, large or small, Smith harboured some fundamental dilemmas. He did not enjoy a principled rejection of government intervention in the economy. Voluntary co-operation was his real preference, as an amused James Mavor guessed on seeing how famously Smith got along with Kropotkin. Smith "never realized how near he was to philosophical anarchism," Mavor recalled.[115] Smith did not promote self-help in terms of the individualistic and competitive struggle for economic advance. "Self-help is mutual help," Smith enjoined, "because, constituted as we are, we all, at every moment of our lives, stand in need of each other's aid."[116] Nor did Smith believe that the government governs best which governs least, except in the religious sense. "The best form of government is that which doth actuate and inspire every part and member of a state to the common

good,"[117] he argued. How far the government should go was a matter not of theory but of the character and circumstances of a particular community.[118] He favoured "paternal" legislation for the helpless, and public ownership of certain facilities, but he did not confuse this with socialism.[119]

"To sympathize with the dream of the socialist is easy for anyone who meditates on the human lot," Smith conceded. "But dynamite bombs are not heralds of the socialist kingdom of universal love."[120] It was the appeal to class passion, and to some extent the fear of social convulsion,[121] that upset Smith. He defined grasping envy as "the main source of that extreme sort of Communism which may be called Satanism."[122] To this he preferred the social geniality of Dickens' *Christmas Carol.* It "has done more than sermons and dissertations to save the heart of society from being poisoned by social regenerators who philanthropically preach class hatred. . . ."[123] In an open letter attacking Jimmy Simpson and the strident socialist Board of Education manifesto, Smith wondered whether his fear of a collision between labour and the community "may be only because new lights do not easily dawn upon the vision of old age." He urged Simpson to preach sharply against inequality. "Bid us instead of rambling perpetually over the world in quest of pleasure, stay at home and do our duty to the community. . . . But do not treat the whole class as robbers to be exterminated."[124]

The labour movement felt as ambiguously toward Smith as he did toward it. Although rarely taking his advice seriously on points where they differed, labour leaders paid him the highest of respect. The 1905 Trades and Labor Congress convention chose him to deliver the welcoming address and thanked him with a standing ovation.[125] Following his death in 1910, labour leaders vied with one another in praise of "our beloved benefactor,"[126] whose "heartstrings vibrated in sympathy" with labour despite his "conservative Radicalism."[127] The Trades and Labor Congress even passed a formal resolution in honour of the "great and sincere friend of the toiler" who "always espoused the cause of the common people."[128]

What accounted for this ceremonial attachment? In part, labour leaders excused Smith for his age while respecting him for his earlier reputation as a reformer. In 1903, the Labor Council-sponsored *Toiler,* for which Smith occasionally wrote on foreign policy questions, handled him lightly in a matter of current dispute: "while a kindly and well-meaning old gentleman, Dr. Smith should have taken the late Prof. Huxley's advice, never to think of writing after sixty years of age."[129] In part, it was because union leaders appreciated a rebel who would stand up to the pretensions of Toronto's social elite and lampoon the flunkeyism of Canada's would-be aristocrats. Toronto labour spokesmen found the pretensions of the city's elite so grating that much of labour rhetoric sounded like a social text from the struggle against feudalism. In 1896, when an imperialist-sponsored campaign of denunciation forced Smith to decline an honorary

doctorate from the University of Toronto, the labour council buried any political differences and sided with him immediately.[130]

It is also worth noting that labour leaders spoke the same language as Smith. It was not difficult to interpret his statements to their liking. Most of them were nurtured in a strong tradition of community. Machinist Lou Gibbons welcomed Smith's support for the ILP and claimed that if there were more men like him, "we may have legislation for the whole of the community and not class legislation for the plutocracy as now enacted."[131] Labour columnist Tom Banton attacked Smith's view that the closed shop was hostile to the community, but followed up with an appeal to the community to establish fair conditions. Then, Banton hoped, neither labour nor capital would "vex the souls of Grange Philosophers in their old age."[132]

As well as sharing a common symbolic language, unionists and Smith respected some of the same codes. Independence from partyism was a point of honour for both. So was social independence and self-reliance. On two occasions, Smith made sizeable donations to a labor-council sponsored relief distress centre. While grateful for the money, unemployed workers left no doubt as to their humiliation in accepting charity. They knew that Smith would not find this ungracious, one labour reporter noted, because "no-one better understands their real sentiments in such matters than does the generous giver himself."[133]

It should be remembered that the thrust toward state intervention before 1914 was often associated with campaigns to institutionalize the feebleminded, set up labour camps for the unemployed, and prohibit a number of working class leisure activities defined as vice. The labour movement, bred on artisanal traditions of mutual self-help and spontaneous co-operation, was as uneasy about these directions as Smith, whose credo was summarized by one close associate as: "In liberty, enlightenment and justice lay the hope of human progress; and not — as many reformers would have it in these days — in extending the criminal code."[134] Thus, Smith joined labour in speaking against blue-law Sundays and prohibition, for he did not enjoy the prospect of falling under the "searching tyranny of crocheteers."[135] Some unsuspecting and barely literate working class residents who shared working people's initial reluctance to embrace the collectivist state as posed by moral and public health reformers, approached Smith as "a very liberal and broadminded man" who they thought would oppose the painful and dangerous introduction of compulsory smallpox vaccination.[136] Little did they know that on this issue Smith was a "collectivist," and wanted the vaccination controversy settled by trained science, not "elective ignorance."[137]

Socialists, who were perhaps more attuned to ideological distinctions than mainstream union leaders, were more incisive in their comments on Smith. The all-red *Western Clarion*, in one editorial, challenged Smith's baying against socialism, charging that it fostered class hatred. "Were the Bystander sincere, he

would indeed heartily endorse the socialist theory for it would make class hatred impossible by abolishing classes. But he is not sincere, except that he is sincerely a class conscious capitalist heeler, and to find a notorious jingoistic labor-hater such as he deploring class hatred is merely another case of 'Satan rebuking sin'."[138]

Other socialists who collaborated with Smith were more subtle in their evaluation of the distance between them. Jimmy Simpson, the leading Toronto socialist of the period and a devotee of Christian socialism and community welfare, responded to one of Smith's pamphlets on labour with this comment: "while we cannot agree on fundamentals, we are one in purpose."[139] Phillips Thompson, Canada's first Marxist and a writer who had known Smith since the 1870's, wrote an obituary of Smith which tried to grapple with Thompson's own "conflicting emotions" toward this "not over scrupulous" and superficial critic of socialism. Thompson readily agreed that Smith was "actuated . . . by the best motives" and showed the courage of his convictions on many occasions. His flailings against corruption, partyism and the like, however, never penetrated to an analysis of these banes as "an incident of capitalist rule. But Goldwin Smith, with all his wisdom, was one of the numerous class that tries to have omelettes without the breaking of eggs." Moreover, Thompson doubted "whether Canadians would ever have found out his ability if he had not come here with a ready made reputation and a good social position." Had Smith been poor or unknown, "he couldn't have held down a $2 a week job in any one of the Toronto papers that are now shedding hypocritical tears over his coffin." Thompson, who had experienced just such a fate, held this advantage of Smith to account for his ultimate limitations. "Such an experience would have completed his education and given him an insight into the social problem that he failed to get from books and had he survived the ordeal he would probably have made a first-class Socialist."[140]

How then do we take the measure of this man in Canadian history? As a promoter of the independent press, he has left us with a variety of journals which we can study profitably. But he was not addicted to thought, as his friend Mavor noted. Although he probably deserves recognition as a founder of Canadian scientific philanthropy, which eventually led to the creation of professional social work, he made no useful contribution to Canadian social thought. Although he could not make up his mind about the legitimacy of the capitalist social order, he would not break from its economic premises; nor did this tory touch stimulate a creative dialectic, just verbose platitudes. As a critic of Canada's colonial status, he had some shrewd observations, but there is little in his quips that can be developed into profound analysis.

Nevertheless, a re-examination of Smith in terms of his social thought does allow us to be more sensitive to several intellectual developments of his time. He should help us recognize the pre-World War I roots of the intellectual's alienation

from the crass materialism and narrow political vision of Canada. He should also help us avoid wooden schemas of "individualism versus collectivism" as applied to the rise of the welfare state, and "materialist rationalism versus high-minded idealism" as applied to controversies over Canadian nationality. Thankfully, Canada's history was more complicated than this. Goldwin Smith would be doing well if he helped us appreciate that.

NOTES

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[12] Ibid., p. 102.
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[19] *The Reorganization of the University of Oxford* (Oxford: Parker, 1868), p. 47.
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[22] Ibid., pp. 17, 15.
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[25] Ibid., p. 36.
[26] Ibid., p. 136.
[27] Ibid., p. 96.
[28] Ibid., pp. 134-35.
[29] Ibid., p. 136.

[30] Ibid., p. 138.
[31] Ibid., p. 136.
[32] Ibid., p. 142.
[33] Cited in J. M. Bumsted, ed. *Documentary Problems in Canadian History: Post-Confederation* (Georgetown: Irwin Dorsey, 1969), p. 285.
[34] *The Empire*, p. 3.
[35] Ibid., p. 57.
[36] *The Civil War in America* (London: Simkin, 1866), 4, 28.
[37] *Commonwealth or Empire, A Bystander's View of the Question* (New York: Macmillan, 1902), p. 4.
[38] *England and America* (Manchester: n.p., 1865), p. 13.
[39] *Civil War*, p. 27.
[40] Harvie, p. 111.
[41] Smith, *Civil War*, pp. 4-5.
[42] Harvie, p. 103.
[43] Ibid., p. 139.
[44] Ibid., p. 120.
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[50] Ibid., p. 134.
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[52] Ibid., p. 159.
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[55] *Reminiscences* (New York: Macmillan, 1910), p. 11.
[56] Ibid., p. 4.
[57] Ibid., pp. 73-74.
[58] *A Trip to England* (Toronto: Williamson, 1891), p. 80.
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[60] See "Toronto: A Turning Point in its History," *Canadian Magazine*, 28 (April 1907), 523-25.
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[63] "The Proposed Substitutes for Religion," *Lectures and Essays*, p. 116.
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[66] *No Refuge But In Truth* (Toronto: Tyrrell, 1908), p. 3.

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[68] See C. Kent, "Higher Journalism and the Mid-Victorian Clerisy," *Victorian Studies*, 13 (Dec. 1969), 181-98.

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[114] "Simple Truths Needed," *51st Annual Convention of the International Typographical Union held at Toronto, Canada, August 14 to 20th, 1905.*

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[134] G. Waldron, "Goldwin Smith," *University Monthly*, 12 (March 1912), 221.

[135] E. Wallace, *Smith*, p. 168. See also *Telegram* (May 30, 1895), *Star* (August 24, 1901), G. Smith, *Prohibition in Canada and the United States* (London: Macmillan, 1899), passim.

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CEZANNE'S LAST YEARS

Douglas Barbour

& he moved he
moved thru paint
& canvas stretcht after canvas
towards a simplicity

so complex that
it simply takes our eyes
out
& then in there

sketches the
sketches of a place
a world he knew
& renewd
on the canvas
of what he saw
how he saw it

blocks of colour of
light of
the bare canvas the bare
page

fewer gestures
say more
he says
in his language

& i repeat
repeat it
in mine

Paris summer 1978