STUDIES

"The selfsame welkin ringing": F. R. Scott and the Rewriting of "O Canada"

by Robert G. May

In his Throne Speech of 3 March 2010, Prime Minister Stephen Harper said that the Conservative government would ask Parliament to consider changing the lyrics of "O Canada" to eliminate the national anthem's reference to "all thy sons command" (2) in favour of a gender-neutral alternative (Galloway). When asked after the Throne Speech what motivated the government to make this controversial suggestion, Industry Minister Tony Clement said that "the Prime Minister had been getting complaints" (qtd. in Galloway) about what many people see as the "patriarchal" or "sexist" language contained in the national anthem's second line (Galloway). For example, Adèle Mercier, a professor of the philosophy of language at Queen's University, said that the lyric should be changed because "The national anthem should reflect its population and Canada consists of 51 per cent women" (qtd. in Galloway).

Opposition to the proposal came from many quarters, and especially from traditionalists who felt that historical institutions should not be changed merely out of a desire for political correctness. "You don't change Shakespeare or Shelley" (qtd. in Galloway), said Stephen William Weir Simpson, the grandson of Robert Stanley Weir, the Canadian lawyer who wrote the original English-language lyrics to "O Canada" in 1908. Weir's original rendering of the national anthem's second line, according to most official sources, is "True patriot love, thou dost in us command," though Weir subsequently changed the lyric to "True patriot love, in all thy sons command."[1] Harper's Throne-Speech suggestion amounted to little more than a return to Weir's original phraseology of the second line of "O Canada," which is more gender neutral, even if more archaic, than the newer rendition (Galloway). However, the unprecedented antagonism of Canadians from all walks of life, including and perhaps especially from Harper's own Conservative constituency, prompted the government to withdraw the proposal on 6 March 2010, only forty-eight hours after the Throne Speech

announcement (Chase). "Canadians have already spoken loud and clear. They overwhelmingly do not want to open the issue," said PMO Communications Director Dimitri Soudas, "The government will not proceed any further to change our national anthem" (qtd. in Chase). The matter then receded from the national spotlight.

What some of these traditionalists may fail to recognize, however, is that there is actually a long and noble tradition, not of Canadians who have insisted that the lyrics of "O Canada" are somehow sacrosanct and fixed in time, but of Canadians who have tinkered with and adjusted the lyrics to "O Canada" to suit their own particular set of national ideas and philosophies. Canadians, and especially English-speaking Canadians, have drawn much inspiration from "O Canada," and they have experimented widely in revising its words, often even applying entirely new sets of lyrics to the melody composed by Calixa Lavaleé. It was actually to a poem in French by Adolphe-Basile Routhier, the Quebec judge, that Lavaleé composed the musical accompaniment that would become the melody to "O Canada" in recognition of St Jean-Baptiste Day celebrations in 1880. Then, Thomas Bedford Richardson, a Toronto doctor, wrote an English translation of Routhier's poem in 1906. Two years later, *Collier's Weekly* magazine launched its first Canadian number with an "O Canada" lyrics-writing competition, won by a Mercy E. Powell McCulloch ("National"). The 1948 edition of the *Encyclopedia of Canada* goes on to list no fewer than eighteen different people who have translated or otherwise adapted Routhier's lyrics into English, including Confederation poet William Wilfred Campbell and Canon F. G. Scott (Wallace 383). Weir himself published a revised version of his own lyrics in 1927, and these words were modified in 1968 following special joint committee deliberations between the Senate and the House of Commons, and again in 1980 when the Trudeau government proclaimed the National Anthem Act ("National").[2]

This ambivalence in the lyrics of "O Canada" calls attention to the larger ambivalence in the idea of the nation itself. "Nations," Timothy Brennan writes, "are imaginary constructs that depend for their existence on an apparatus of cultural fictions in which imaginative literature plays a decisive role" (49). A national anthem is but one example of a work of imaginative literature that imposes this fictionalization of the nation. Brennan cites Eric Hobsbawm's *The Invention of Tradition*:

> It is clear that plenty of political institutions, ideological movements, and groups—not least in nationalism—were so unprecedented that even historic continuity had to be invented, for example by creating an ancient past beyond effective historical continuity either by semi-fiction…or by forgery…. It is

> also clear that entirely new symbols and devices came into existence…such as the national anthem…the national flag…or the personification of "the nation" in symbol of image. (qtd. in Brennan 49).

Weir's "O Canada," with its references to Canada as a militarized colossus, kept "glorious and free" by the invisible ministrations of God himself and repeatedly personified as "thee" (a word that rung archaic even in 1908), enacts just such an invention of tradition. Canada is metamorphosed from a heterogeneous Native homeland of a diversity of First Nations societies to a homogeneous "home and native land" of monolithic European colonization. Routhier's French-language version is even more explicitly fictionalizing and homogenizing, with its references to Canada's "history [as] an epic / Of brilliant exploits" and the single-minded willingness of all its people to wield both "sword" and "cross" to defend the one true "faith."

Such anthems are outdated artefacts of an earlier era, betraying a conception of the nation as something that had long been defined strictly along racial, religious, or ethnographic lines, and as an entity emerging, as Brennan writes, from "an 'immemorial past' where its arbitrariness cannot be questioned" (45). What, then, would a modernist national anthem look like? In particular, what would constitute a modernist national anthem for a country such as Canada, with its plurality of languages, cultures, races, and creeds; with its ambivalent relationship with England, France, and the United States; with its vast, diverse, and seemingly ungovernable geography? In his introduction to *Nation and Narration*, Homi K. Bhabha poses the question this way: "If the ambivalent figure of the nation is a problem of its transitional history, its conceptual indeterminacy, its wavering between vocabularies, then what effect does this have on narratives and discourses that signify a sense of 'nationness'[?]" (2). He offers a provisional answer to this question by invoking Tom Nairn's work on the nation as "the modern Janus" (qtd. in Bhabha 2), a modernist conception of nationalism that takes into its purview nationalism's essential ambivalence, its structural hybridity. In national anthems and other "narratives of the nation," this ambivalence and hybridity manifests itself in their "performativity of language." Bhabha writes:

> …to explore the Janus-faced ambivalence of language…in the construction of the Janus-faced discourse of the nation…turns the familiar two-faced god into a figure of prodigious doubling that investigates the nation-space in the *process* of the articulation of elements: where meanings may be partial because they are *in medias res*; and history may be half-made because it is in the process of being made; and the image of cultural authority may be am-

> bivalent because it is caught, uncertainly, in the act of "composing" its powerful image. (3)

A modernist national anthem for Canada would thus have to use language in just such consciously ambivalent, "Janus-faced," and performative ways to express Canada's cultural, geographical, and linguistic multifacetedness.

F. R. Scott, the constitutional lawyer, socialist thinker, and Montreal poet, made a career out of studying and writing about Canada as just such a multifaceted modernist nation. As a founding member of the League for Social Reconstruction and the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation, Scott was influential in injecting modern economic and political theories into a Canada then languishing beneath the weight of the Great Depression, providing Canadians with a genuine choice in who would govern them beyond the two stale flavours of capitalism then espoused by the Liberal and Conservative parties. His fervent advocacy of the repatriation of the Canadian constitution and the protection of civil and minority rights, as well as his work on the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, helped to develop and to enshrine legally Canada's multilinguistic and multicultural identity. The Montreal poets in general are renowned for pulling Canadian poetry out of its Romantic-Victorian doldrums, and much of Scott's poetry and satire—in particular his two sequences of "Social Notes" poems—are well known for deconstructing the prevailing capitalist power structures of early-twentieth-century Canada and re-narrating them from the disparate points of view of the immigrants, minimum-wage workers, military veterans, and poverty-stricken children who were directly or indirectly victimized by them.[3]

It may not come as much of a surprise, then, that Scott also wrote his own version of "O Canada," using entirely new lyrics of his own devising rather than merely translating Routhier's French version or editing Weir's English versions:

> O Canada, our home from sea to sea,
> Proudly we build a country strong and free.
> With devoted hands and courageous hearts
> By mountain, lake and plain,
> We add to our so varied past
> New stature and new gain.
> O Canada, our northern land,
> O Canada for thee we take our stand,
> O Canada for thee we take our stand.

Scott never published these new lyrics to "O Canada," and it is unclear when he composed them because the lyrics exist only in four slightly different and all undated versions in the F. R. Scott fonds of the Lorne Pierce Collection of Canadiana at the Queen's University Archives in Kingston, Ontario.[4] Despite the fact that he decided to leave it unpublished, and despite the inability precisely to date it, Scott's version of "O Canada" represents an important part of his oeuvre because, in its shift away from the backwards-looking, "invented tradition" of Weir's and Routhier's originals, it offers a forwards-looking, modernist vision of Canada. In the brief space of its nine short lines, Scott's "O Canada" offers one of the most succinct articulations in any of his works of the three main issues that preoccupied him throughout his seven-decade career: the promotion of socialism in Canada, the strengthening of the Canadian constitution, and the protection of minority rights in Canada. Scott's "O Canada" can thus be seen as a distinctly modernist Canadian national anthem.

Even early in his career, Scott seemed to be aware of the artistic possibilities of "O Canada." His well-known "Social Notes" sequence of poems from 1932 begins with a "Prologue" that rearranges the English lyrics to "O Canada" for satirical effect: "*We see thee rise, O Canada, / The true North, strong and free, / (Tralala-lala, tralala-lala, etc….)*." Scott's rearrangement of the third, fourth, and fifth lines of "O Canada" throws the reader off. Something is wrong with these lyrics he or she knows so well, Scott suggests, just as there may be something wrong with the country the reader thinks he or she knows so well. Of particular interest is the omission in Scott's "Prologue" of Weir's phrase, "With glowing hearts," as if to suggest that the hearts of Canadians are not really glowing with the generosity of spirit Weir supposes (that generosity is little more than an "invented tradition," in other words), but rather, they have been extinguished by a heartless capitalistic system that dehumanizes Canadians in the name of rapacious acquisitiveness. Many of the poems that follow in this first sequence of "Social Notes" develop this theme by providing snapshots of the capitalist system at work, enriching the one percent of owners and shareholders while impoverishing the ninety-nine percent of workers (a complaint that still resonates today).[5] The flat, plainspoken, matter-of-fact tone of Scott's "Social Notes" casts not a mythologizing soft glow upon the abuses of capitalistic society in 1930s Canada, but it shines a harsh spotlight upon them, illuminating them for all to see clearly. They are poems without a glowing heart that satirize a system without a glowing heart. With the "Prologue," they show how Canadians seem to have forgotten about Canada's cooperative past—its history of flourishing trade union-

ism, the ideas advanced by the League for Social Reconstruction, the policies championed by the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation—in much the same way that the speaker of Scott's "Prologue" seems to forget the lyrics to "O Canada" only three lines in, replacing them with "*(Tralala-lala, tralala-lala, etc….)*" (3) in a half-hearted effort to cover for the lapse. Notice as well that Scott places the "*Tralala-lala, tralala-lala*" in parentheses and follows them with an "*etc.*" and some ellipsis points, as if to suggest the national anthem, and mixing up and forgetting the lyrics thereof, seems to be of little consequence in a country that has also so thoroughly mixed up and forgotten its social priorities.

Metaphorically speaking, at precisely the time when Canadians should be untangling their confused version of the national anthem to reveal a more progressive version such as Scott's, they fail to do so, replacing the mixed-up and incomplete version articulated in "Prologue" with the even more pernicious version articulated in "Epilogue," the closing poem of the 1932 sequence of "Social Notes":

> "I believe in Canada.
> I love her as my home.
> I honour her institutions.
> I rejoice in the abundance of her resources…
>
> To her products I pledge my patronage,
> And to the cause of her producers
> I pledge my devotion."

The footnote accompanying "Epilogue" indicates that these words come from a pamphlet called *My Creed* by Henry Herbert Stevens, Minister of Trade and Commerce from 1930 to 1934 in Prime Minister Bennett's Conservative government (Cameron 2254). Issued on New Year's Day 1931, *My Creed* seems to pledge official and "unqualified support of Canada's ['products' and] 'producers,'" right in the midst of the Great Depression (Djwa, "F. R. Scott" 5), at precisely the time when someone in Stevens's position should, at the very least, be soft-pedalling such paeans of materialistic "patronage" and "devotion." By ending the 1931 "Social Notes" sequence in this way, Scott expresses his pessimism that Canadians would ever manage to straighten out their social, political, and economic priorities and be able to sing Scott's socially progressive version of "O Canada," literally or figuratively. Two decades later, Scott would go on to write his own "Creed":

> The world is my country
> The human race is my race
> The spirit of man is my God
> The future of man is my heaven

Even by 1952, however, Scott's hopes for a Canada that was organized along cooperative, socialistic principles to promote Canadians' political and economic well-being, remained largely unfulfilled. "The spirit of man" continued broken in Canada, in Scott's view, and its "future" remained anything but certain.

It is for precisely this reason that the opening few lines of Scott's version of "O Canada" have a distinctively socialist flavour. Scott shifts attention away from Weir's rather heavy-handed militarism, with its references to "patriot love" (2), its "command" (2) to "stand on guard" (6), and the celebration of a personified nation's ability to "rise" (3) up against its foes, and he replaces it with references to Canada as "a country" (Scott, "O" 2) that Canadians have proudly built up from nothing (2) with little more than their "devoted hands" and their "courageous hearts" (3) to assist them. Scott retains Weir's references to Canada as "our home" (Scott, "O" 1; Weir 1) that is "strong and free" (Scott "O" 2; Weir 4), but it has become all of these things not because it has triumphed bellicosely over its foes (à la Francis Scott Key's "bombs bursting in air" (5), an anthem replete with its own "invented traditions"), but because its citizens have banded together as one to create a nation whose abundant natural resources stretching "from sea to sea" (Scott, "O" 1) in its every "mountain, lake, and plain" (4) will supply its collective needs for years to come. It is a modernist conception of the nation in that it articulates the nation not as a singular, monolithic entity imposed arbitrarily by a homogenizing, totalizing force, but as a heterogeneous product of a plurality of efforts to create and to go on creating the nation creatively and organically. The Canada Scott depicts in his version of "O Canada" is, as Bhabha might say, *in medias res*, looking Janus-faced both to the past and to the future for its identity. It is to this aspect of the nation that Canadians should be singing anthems, Scott suggests, and not to the aspect that recognizes strength only in the power of its corporations and the extent to which they can concentrate its wealth in the hands of an irresponsible few shareholders.

Scott was also influential in promoting the principles of bilingualism and biculturalism in Canada in the late 1960s and early 1970s. By the early 1960s, Scott had made a name for himself as an articulate promoter of civil liberties in Canada and a passionate defender of minority rights. As the Dean of Law at McGill University in Montreal, he was also a recognized

authority on Canadian constitutional issues.[6] It was only appropriate, then, that Scott was asked to participate in the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, which was established in 1963 by the Pearson government to ensure the preservation of Canada's unique cultural dualism and to address concerns among the increasingly restive Québécois that their French language and culture were eroding and in dire need of legal protection before "the Federal Parliament, courts, and administration" (Scott, "Language" 250). The Trudeau government would go on to implement many of the Royal Commission's recommendations in the Official Languages Act of 1969, which made both English and French Canada's official languages with equal status in government and law. In "Language Rights and Language Policy in Canada," published in 1971 in the respected *Manitoba Law Journal*, right after the Royal Commission had finished publishing its findings, Scott reflects on the political, cultural, and moral value of protecting and promoting Canadian bilingualism and biculturalism:

> To accept bilingualism [and biculturalism] means a greater respect for human rights, a greater domestic tranquility, and, above all, the development within our country of the richness and creative ability that have made England and France two of the great centers of western civilization. That it will give Canada a national identity unique in the Americas goes without saying. (256)

Scott asserts here that Canada's ability to develop a coherent national identity depended on the ability of the federal government to foster a convivial relationship between the two founding cultures and to institute the use of both English and French throughout all parts of the country, to look Janus-faced upon both English and French culture rather than to stare myopically towards a totalizing, monolithic "melting-pot" conception of national identity like that in the United States. The Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism published its findings between 1967 and 1970 in six "massive" volumes (Scott, "Language" 250),[7] which Scott boils down to barely fourteen pages of succinct commentary and analysis in "Language Rights and Language Policy in Canada." In the fifth and sixth lines of his version of "O Canada," Scott distils even further—to a mere twelve words—his conception of the political, cultural, and moral importance of promoting official bilingualism and biculturalism in Canada: "We add to our so varied past / New stature and new gain." Canada will be able to develop into the future as an independent nation and "gain… New stature" on the world stage only when it enshrines and celebrates the diversity of its "so varied past," which for Scott mainly meant recognizing the con-

tributions of the two founding cultures of English and French in the development of Canadian federalism. Scott replaces Weir's repetitive and static lines, "And stand on guard, O Canada, / We stand on guard for thee," with lines that depict the Canadian nation as in continuous "process" (Bhabha 3) and flux, constantly adding to and re-"composing" (Bhabha 3) itself, always making new strides, achieving ever-higher levels of stature, but without ever reaching a totalizing or centralizing pinnacle.

In addition to its bilingualism and biculturalism, however, Scott was also fully cognizant of Canada's burgeoning multilingualism and multiculturalism, of how a vast array of languages and cultures from all over the world were creating an increasingly diverse cultural mosaic (Scott, "Language" 247). Scott's sensitivity to this shift comes out in the various revisions he performed on his version of "O Canada," in particular to this central section of the set of lyrics. In the first version of Scott's "O Canada," line five reads, "We bring to our historic past." Scott, perhaps seeing the redundancy of the phrase "historic past," changed the line in the second version to read, "We add to our bilingual past," thus emphasizing Canada's bilingual and bicultural makeup. It is the bilingual and bicultural foundations Canada laid in the past, this version suggests, that will enable it to gain new stature in the future. However, in the third version, Scott changed the line yet again to read, "We add to our so varied past," and this reading stayed in place into the fourth and final revision of the lyrics (see Appendix). Inasmuch as Canada as a modern nation is constantly in revision, variation, and flux, it is only appropriate that a modernist national anthem also be in constant revision, variation, and flux. The performativity and provisionality of Scott's language reflects the performativity and provisionality of the Canadian identity, continually expanding to take its ever-growing diversity into its purview. Rather than moving centripetally towards a totalizing centre, Scott's successive revisions move centrifugally, outwards from the past ("historic"), to the present ("bilingual"), and then to the future ("so varied"). Because Scott never published any of these versions of "O Canada," he could have, theoretically, continued to revise and modify them at will, never settling on a final, definitive, limiting, or totalizing version. Scott's "O Canada" is, in other words, "*in medias res*"; it is only "half-made" because it is always already "in the process of being made" (Bhabha 3), just like the Canadian nation itself.

Scott also articulates this conception of the Canadian nation as a continuous upward and outward expansion in "Open House, McGill," written on the occasion of McGill University's 150th anniversary celebrations in 1971, the same year he wrote "Language Rights and Language Policy in

Canada. Seeing "the thousands of students…of all races and creeds" (2-4) congregating "upon a small patch of campus grass" (15), Scott is inspired by their simultaneous diversity of identity and singleness of purpose. Despite the fact that none of these students or their ancestors had stood on guard "on the Plains of Abraham / or at the Battle of Hastings" (5-6), and that "no two [of them were] dressed alike" (7), they are able to come together as one to watch the McGill parachute team perform their celebratory stunt. "As they floated down," Scott writes, "we were all lifted / Up" (21-23). Scott's implication is that Canada's linguistic and cultural diversity can be a unifying force and give Canada a coherent national identity amid the alienating and fragmenting modern world. Notice as well that everyone's eyes are fixed not upon the historic "Redpath Library" (1) or "McGill's 150-year-old House" (3)—singular, monolithic, finite structures planted firmly in the historic ground—but they are "all gazing upward / into the cool blue sky" (9-10)—an intangible abstraction that expands infinitely into space—as if to suggest that multilingualism and multiculturalism will enable Canada to proceed boldly into the "so varied" future rather to remain fixed stubbornly in the "historic past." It is "to our so varied past," Scott's version of "O Canada" reads, that a multilingual and multicultural Canada may "add…New stature and new gain" (5-6). The Trudeau government enacted the Multiculturalism Act in 1971, the same year Scott published this poem, enshrining in law from that point forward a respect and recognition of Canada's diversity of languages, religions, and cultures.

For Scott, nation writing, just like poetry writing, was an organic and creative process. In his 1978 interview with Vincent Tovell, Scott says:

> …man's creativity can come out in his politics and be expressed in his constitution…. You can create a constitution which will make one kind of a country like…Communist Russia, or you can make one as the Americans did when they started, with a very great contribution towards the notion of a form of participatory democracy. You can choose these constitutions and by choosing them you are aiming at a certain kind of society you're trying to build…. I find that a very creative thought, and that's why I think politics is one of the greatest activities of man because that's where he makes his terrific choices. It's a constant choosing. (38)

Canada did not have to mimic passively the constitutional choices of Great Britain or the United States, despite its historical ties with the former and its geographical ties with the latter. Rather, Canada should seize the opportunity and the responsibility to take an active role in its own constitutional future. "We must leave the hand rails and the Ariadne-threads," Scott

writes in "À l'Ange Avant-gardien," a poem from 1950, "The psychiatrists and all the apron strings / And take a whole new country for our own" (1-3). Neither Great Britain nor the United States is going to give Canada a coherent and autonomous constitutional identity as it waits idly and passively by, so Canada must actively take it for itself. Scott expresses the same sentiment in the closing lines of his version of the national anthem: "O Canada, our northern land, / O Canada for thee we take our stand, / O Canada for thee we take our stand" (7-9). Scott replaces the appeal in the current version of "O Canada" to an external, totalizing body—that is, "God"—to "keep our land glorious and free" (7),[8] and he replaces it with the affirmation that Canada belongs to all Canadians, that it is "our northern land." Canadians are the ones who will take responsibility internally for ensuring Canada's gloriousness and freedom, and not Great Britain, the United States, or even the Almighty in heaven. Scott's closing two lines are similar to the current version's lyrics, "O Canada we stand on guard for thee. / O Canada we stand on guard for thee" (8-9), but with an important shift in emphasis. Instead of passively standing and guarding Canada's mythological and "invented" past, Canadians will take an active stand in organically and creatively building Canada's diverse and continuously evolving future.

For Scott, this active stand meant, in part, that Canada's leaders should seize the responsibility for drafting Canada's own constitution rather than continue passively to rely on the external dictates of a collection of British Privy Council judges thousands of miles away in London. Scott certainly did his part. By being such a staunch and vociferous advocate for the repatriation of the Canadian constitution for so many years, Scott exercised a profound influence over Pierre Elliott Trudeau, who as prime minister made it one of his top priorities to bring to fruition Scott's vision of a Canadian constitution fully made in Canada with a fully embedded and legally enforceable Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Not usually one to share the spotlight, Trudeau nevertheless acknowledged Scott's contribution to the Canada Act of 1982 in the most public of ways. In a *Toronto Star* column commemorating the twentieth anniversary of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, Graham Fraser reflects:

> …the day before the Queen was to sign the new Constitution with its Charter of Rights and Freedoms, Trudeau spotted the 82-year-old Scott in a royal receiving line in Ottawa…. Defying protocol, the prime minister leapt in front of the Queen and, to everyone's astonishment, wept tears of joy…. "Madam, if we have a Charter of Rights in this country, we owe it to this one man,"

> Trudeau told the Queen. "Canada owes a lot to him, and I, for one, am in his debt." (H1)

Scott did not need to rewrite "O Canada" to make a lasting contribution to Canadian political and cultural history. His tireless work in promoting the principles of social justice and civil rights led to the eventual transformation of Canada from a relatively powerless Dominion to a fully independent and autonomous nation unto itself.

Throughout his lengthy career, Scott advanced the promotion of responsible economic planning to benefit all Canadians, the renovation and repatriation of the Canadian constitution, and the enhancement of minority rights especially for Canada's diverse ethnic and linguistic groups. He wrote extensively about these topics in his voluminous political, legal, and constitutional writings,[9] but they find their most forceful and creative expression in his poetical works, including his unpublished renditions of "O Canada." Even in the early collection, "An Anthology of Up-to-Date Canadian Poetry" (which later became an incarnation of "Social Notes"), Scott used his poetry to highlight the social ills that, in his view, were plaguing Canada, including the maldistribution of wealth and the plight of unemployed and underemployed Canadians. Scott's later poetry, especially his translations of French-language Canadian poets, engaged in large part with the protection of the bilingual and bicultural rights of French-speaking Canadians, in the hopes that it would open the lines of communication between Canada's two solitudes. Other of Scott's poems from this period hint at the need for a made-in-Canada constitutional document with a fully entrenched and legally enforceable Bill of Rights. Interestingly, "O Canada" is Scott's only poetical work that deals with all three of these issues, and it does so in a mere nine succinct lines. Scott never published his version of "O Canada," however, for reasons that he never makes clear. The four versions of the poem in the Scott papers are frustratingly devoid of any contextualizing commentary (it is impossible so much as to date the poem based on the scant documentation in the archive), and no Scott critic makes even the vaguest reference to the poem. Perhaps Scott thought that Canadians would react negatively towards the presumption that someone—even someone with Scott's impressive credentials—should play with and alter the lyrics of such an important and seemingly sacrosanct statement of Canadian identity, precisely as Canadians would go on to do when the Harper government floated the idea in March 2010. More likely, Scott recognized that Canada had needs more pressing than yet a further incarnation of "O Canada." Recall the closing lines of Scott's most famous poem, "The Canadian Authors Meet":

Shall we go round the mulberry bush, or shall
We gather at the river, or shall we
Appoint a Poet Laureate this fall,
Or shall we have another cup of tea?

O Canada, O Canada, O can
A day go by without new authors springing
To paint the native maple, and to plan
More ways to set the selfsame welkin ringing?
(17-24)

Scott was, of course, referring to the poetasters of the Canadian Authors' Association, that tea-drinking, crumpet-nibbling bastion of conservatism that was, in Scott's view, killing Canadian poetry with its "earnest" and out-of-date paeans to "God and King" (12). His words apply equally well, however, to any writer who sets words to paper for no good or socially useful purpose (recall that Mercy E. Powell McCulloch wrote a version of "O Canada" merely to win a magazine contest ["National"]). Perhaps Scott thought that the last thing Canada needed was an empty and partisan debate about the content of "O Canada" when it still lacked meaningful economic reform, a repatriated constitution, and sufficiently robust minority rights protections. Scott saw all of his writing, including his poetry, as his creative effort to improve the lives of all Canadians. For Scott, Canada was a modernist nation, "*in medias res*," its history only "half-made because it is in the process of being made" (Bhabha 3). It seems fitting, then, that Scott's version of "O Canada" is a modernist national anthem, the performativity of its language and its various revisions articulating a vision of Canada as a nation under constant expansion, its diverse population coming together to take an active role in moulding and shaping its identity.

Notes

1 Interestingly, Weir's grandson recalls having seen among his grandfather's papers a manuscript in his grandfather's hand of a version of "O Canada" with the "in all thy sons command" lyric instead of the "thou dost in us command" lyric, prompting him to assert that the former rendering actually pre-dates what most official sources recognize to be the original version of the poem (Galloway; cf. "National").

2 Canadians over forty years of age may very well remember singing in school the version of "O Canada" in use before 1980:

O Canada! Our home and native land!
True patriot love in all thy sons command.
With glowing hearts we see thee rise,
The True North strong and free!
And stand on guard, O Canada,
We stand on guard for thee.
O Canada, glorious and free!
We stand on guard, we stand on guard for thee.
O Canada, we stand on guard for thee.

The slightly different version established by the Trudeau government in the National Anthem Act of 1980 is the official version still in use today:

O Canada! Our home and native land!
True patriot love in all thy sons command.
With glowing hearts we see thee rise,
The True North strong and free!
From far and wide, O Canada,
We stand on guard for thee.
God keep our land glorious and free!
O Canada, we stand on guard for thee.
O Canada, we stand on guard for thee.

3 For example, see, respectively, the "Social Notes" poems "Land of Opportunity," "Xmas Shopping," "Government Help," and "Summer Camp."

4 Please see the Appendix at the end of this paper for all four texts of Scott's "O Canada."

5 For example, see "Natural Resources," "The New Philanthropy," and "Treasure in Heaven."

6 It is worth pointing out that Scott's deanship had been delayed for years because of his controversial political involvements. "[T]he RCMP thought McGill was a hotbed of revolution" in the years following the Second World War, and "they frequently pressed university administrations to remove agitators" (Savage). It was "well known in Montreal in the forties and fifties," Sandra Djwa writes, "that [J. W.] McConnell had said that Scott would never be Dean of Law as long as he remained on the Board of Governors" (*Politics* 238).

7 Although the Commission had planned a seventh and final volume on the political and constitutional implications of bilingualism and biculturalism, its completion was prevented by lack of time and a lack of consensus among the commissioners as to what such a volume should contain. André Laurendeau, co-chair of the Royal Commission and prime conceiver of the proposed constitutional volume, died in 1968, well before any work had begun on considering the constitutional questions arising from official bilingualism and biculturalism in Canada (Laing 235).

8 Note, however, that the line "God keep our land glorious and free" comes from the later version of "O Canada," and does not appear in Weir's original lyrics (see note 2).

9 Perhaps the most accessible collection of such writings, for example, is Scott's *Essays on the Constitution*, which he collected himself in 1977.

Appendix
The Four Texts of F. R. Scott's "O Canada"

The four texts of "O Canada" have been arranged in chronological order to show the progression of Scott's revisions to the lyrics.

Version 1

Poetry Working Files / Notes for New Poems [28r] [QUA 5021.7 B3 F19] [TS1] (unannotated photocopy of QUA 5021.7 B3 F8)

O CANADA

O Canada, our home from sea to sea,
Proudly we build a country strong and free.
With loving hands and glowing hearts
By mountain, lake and plain,
We bring to our historic past
New glory and new gain.
O Canada, our northern land,
O Canada for thee we take our stand,
O Canada for thee we take our stand.

Version 2

Poetry Working Files / Drafts [91r] [QUA 5021.7 B3 F8] [TS2] (annotated original of QUA 5021.7 B3 F19)

O CANADA

O Canada, our home from sea to sea,
Proudly we build a country strong and free.
With <loving> devoted hands and <glowing> courageous hearts
By mountain, lake and plain,
We <bring> add to our <historic> bilingual past
New glory and new gain.
O Canada, our northern land,
O Canada for thee we take our stand,
O Canada for thee we take our stand.

Version 3

Poetry / Miscellaneous Poems [21r] [QUA 5021.7 B2 F9] [TS3] (annotated original of QUA 5021.7 B1 F37)

O CANADA

O Canada, our home from sea to sea,
Proudly we build a country strong and free.
With devoted hands and courageous hearts
By mountain, lake and plain,
We add to our <bilingual> so varied past
New stature and new gain.
O Canada, our northern land,
O Canada for thee we take our stand,
O Canada for thee we take our stand.

Version 4

Poetry / [Miscellaneous Poems] [64r] [QUA 5021.7 B1 F37] [TS4]* (annotated carbon copy of QUA 5021.7 B2 F9)

O CANADA

O Canada, our home from sea to sea,
Proudly we build a country strong and free.
With devoted hands and courageous hearts
By mountain, lake and plain,
We add to our <bilingual> so varied past
New stature and new gain.
O Canada, our northern land,
O Canada for thee we take our stand,
O Canada for thee we take our stand.

Textual Notes

O CANADA

Poetry Working Files / Notes for New Poems [28r] [QUA 5021.7 B3 F19] [TS1]; Poetry Working Files / Drafts [91r] [QUA 5021.7 B3 F8] [TS2] (annotated original of QUA

5021.7 B3 F19); Poetry / Miscellaneous Poems [21r] [QUA 5021.7 B2 F9] [TS3]; Poetry / [Miscellaneous Poems] [64r] [QUA 5021.7 B1 F37] [TS4]*

3 devoted] loving TS1; <loving> [*altered to*] devoted TS2
3 courageous] glowing TS1; <glowing> [*altered to*] courageous TS2
5 add] bring TS1; <bring> [*altered to*] add TS2
5 <bilingual> [*altered to*] so varied] historic TS1; <historic> [*altered to*] bilingual TS2
6 stature] glory TS1, TS2

TS1 is an unannotated photocopy of TS2
TS2 is an annotated original of TS1
TS3 is the annotated original of TS4
TS4 is an annotated carbon copy of TS3

Works Cited

Bhabha, Homi K. "Introduction: Narrating the Nation." Homi Bhabha, ed. *Nation and Narration.* London: Routledge, 1990. 1-7.

Brennan, Timothy. "The National Longing for Form." Bhabha, ed. 44-70.

Cameron, Bill. "Stevens, Henry Herbert." James Marsh, ed. *The Canadian Encyclopedia.* Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 2000. 2254.

Chase, Steven. "Tories Quickly Change Tune on Anthem Rewrite." *Globe and* Mail, 6 Mar 2010. Web. 21 June 2010.

Djwa, Sandra. "F. R. Scott." *Canadian Poetry: Studies, Documents, Reviews*, 4 (1979): 1-16.

——. *The Politics of the Imagination: A Life of F. R. Scott*. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1987.

Fraser, Graham. "The Fight for Canada's Rights." *Toronto Star*, 14 Apr 2002: H1+.

Galloway, Gloria. "Ottawa Gives Voice to Anthem Controversy." *Globe and Mail*, 3 Mar 2010. Web. 21 June 2010.

Key, Francis Scott. "The Star-Spangled Banner." Traditional, 1814.

Laing, G. "Bilingualism and Biculturalism, Royal Commission on." Marsh, ed. 235.

"National Anthem: 'O Canada.'" *Canadian Heritage*, 11 Dec.2009. Web. 21 June 2010.

Routhier, Adolphe-Basile. "O Canada." Traditional, 1880.

Savage, Donald. E-mail to the author. 11 Oct 2002.

Scott, F. R. "An Anthology of Up-to-Date Canadian Poetry." *Canadian Forum*, May 1932. 290-91.

——. *The Collected Poems of F. R. Scott*. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1981.

——. *Essays on the Constitution: Aspects of Canadian Law and Politics*. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1977.

——. "Language Rights and Language Policy in Canada." *Manitoba Law Journal*, 4 (1971): 243-57.

Tovell, Vincent. “The World for a Country: An Edited Interview with Frank Scott.” Ed. D.M.R. Bentley and Michael *Canadian Poetry: Studies, Documents, Reviews* 2 (1978): 51-73.

Wallace, W. Stewart, ed. “National Songs.” *The Encyclopedia of Canada*. 6 vols. Toronto: University Associates of Canada, 1948. 4:382-84.

Weir, Robert Stanley. “O Canada.” Traditional, 1908.