

understanding of modern France, but gives insights into the technocratic ethos of all modern societies.

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BLATTBERG, Charles — *Shall We Dance? A Patriotic Politics for Canada*. Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2003. Pp. 196.

Charles Blattberg begins from the premise that Canadians are homesick, that we are unable to feel at home in our own country (p. 6). From this premise he proceeds to outline the reasons behind our alienation and to propose a way of moving forward to a political culture rooted in a shared conversation and a common citizenship, "a citizenship of we" (p. 37).

Blattberg believes that Canadian political dialogue is flawed: it is either monarchist or polyarchist. "According to monarchists, justice demands that there be a single sovereign authority to which all those involved in the most important political conflicts must appeal, doing so by pleading their cases to that authority" (p. 10). Blattberg identifies this approach to conflict resolution with Pierre Trudeau and the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. According to Blattberg, it is misguided to think in terms of a single sovereign authority in a constitution based on the Crown and the people and in a society with competing values. Moreover, the act of pleading is not really dialogue at all: it is monologue at best, a shouting match at worst, and there is no promise of transformation on the part of participants. Meanwhile, the polyarchist approach to politics and political conflict has the advantage of recognizing that "there are just too many incompatible visions of justice in the world for any one of them to be granted absolute sovereign authority" (p. 16). In addition, negotiation is at the heart of the polyarchist approach to politics. If better than pleading, however, negotiation is adversarial in nature and "only confirms the divisions" in society when what is required is an acknowledgement of what values and goals citizens share (p. 34). Like pleading, negotiation fails to transform participants because it "only works when people's backs are up against the wall, and no one likes having his back up against the wall" (p. 85).

Between pleading on one hand and negotiation on the other, Blattberg proposes conversation as the best means to resolve political conflict. Unlike pleading, in which the winner takes all, and negotiation, in which both parties must put water in their wine, conversation assumes a willingness to listen and an openness to transformation. It promises reconciliation.

And just as good dancing is not a matter of two separate beings coordinating each other's independent movements, successful conversation does not arise from the exchange of information between wholly separate interlocutors, for the aim is always to express something meaningful *together*, which is to say, to be in harmony with, to share in common, something that matters, something that they believe is at least partly constitutive of

who they are. To achieve this commonality in dance the partners must be profoundly open to each other and to the music (which, it is to be hoped, they actually wish to dance to), as well as move in such a way that each can grasp the other's rhythm. (p. 28)

In effect, *Shall We Dance?* is an extended invitation to Canadians to participate in an ongoing conversation about the kind of society they want to live in at the same time as it is an invitation to imagine a different and better future in which real and profound reconciliation will replace reluctant accommodation. Perhaps Blattberg is right, but I doubt it. Even he suspects that his abiding faith in the possibilities of conversation is naïve (p. 144).

The real problem, though, is not Blattberg's invitation to dance but his starting premise. When he writes that "no Canadian, even those who think otherwise, ought to be feeling particularly at home in Canada today" (p. 10), I wonder if we are living on the same planet let alone in the same country. For all of its problems — high child poverty rates, unacceptable incarceration rates for Native peoples, a teetering health care system, and unbreathable air in its major urban and industrial centres — Canada remains the envy of the world. Because of its commitment to equality and justice and tolerance of difference — values embodied in the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* — Canada is a fundamentally decent place to live. Where Blattberg argues that tolerance is not enough because the tolerator only "endures the other" (p. 50), I would argue that living in a tolerant society is infinitely better than living in an intolerant society; where he sees the glass half empty, I see it half full. Precisely because Blattberg finds it tiring (p. 51), I will loudly trumpet Canada's high place on the United Nations Human Development Index. Shall we dance? It seems to me that Canadians are dancing and have been for a long time.

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BOUCHARD, Gérard — *Les Deux Chanoines. Contradiction et ambivalence dans la pensée de Lionel Groulx*, Montréal, Éditions du Boréal, 2003, 314 p.

Que Gérard Bouchard ait décidé de consacrer un livre à Lionel Groulx n'est pas aussi étonnant qu'on aurait pu le croire. Il était peut-être même inévitable que l'auteur de *Genèse des nations et cultures du Nouveau Monde* se penchât, tôt ou tard, sur l'œuvre du chanoine, dont le parcours ressemble étrangement au sien à plus d'un égard. Historiens, polémistes, penseurs de la nation canadienne-française ou québécoise, Groulx et Bouchard se sont hissés au sommet de leur univers intellectuel respectif sans que l'unanimité se soit faite autour d'eux. Si l'époque des « historiens nationaux » est peut-être révolue, celle des « intellectuels nationaux », manifestement, n'est pas encore chose du passé. Certains des débats que *Les Deux Chanoines* a déjà suscités ont été pour le moins mémorables. Encensé par les uns, critiqué vertement par les autres, il s'agit d'un livre controversé, à l'image, en cela, et de son auteur, et de son sujet.