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From Ugly American to Critical Sociologist
– in Five Decades*William K. Carroll*

In *Social Thought from Lore to Science*, Howard P. Becker and Harry E. Barnes (1961, 141) argue that social science's secular-cosmopolitan outlook has been facilitated, both in history and in the biography of individuals, by "mental mobility": intercultural experiences (often arising out of actual migration) that unsettle local traditions, exposing their constructed character. As I reflect on my own career, this idea resonates, along with a parallel insight from Dorothy Smith: that the world we experience can be *problematized*, revealing how it has been made while suggesting how it might be remade. In "Remaking a Life, Remaking Sociology," Smith (1992, 125) explains how, in the early 1970s, her engagement with the Canadianization and women's movements problematized the mainstream sociology she had learned in the 1960s at Berkeley. She underwent "a major personal and intellectual transformation," out of which flowed her distinctive approach to sociology. In this chapter, I focus on my own personal and intellectual reconstruction beginning in the 1960s and extending into the 1980s, and briefly trace the ramifications in the sociological practice I have since pursued.

BEGINNINGS

I was born in 1952 in Washington, DC, but my formative years were lived in the northeastern United States: on suburban Long Island, until the age of twelve; then in rural Pennsylvania, north of Philadel-

phia, until my family moved in 1968 to London, Ontario. In these settings I became a white, cis-male, middle-class teenager and, to invoke one more key identity marker, an American.

My mother was an educator, having earned a master's of education at Penn State in the late 1940s, but, within the ideological code of our Standard North American Family (Smith 1993, 50), her possibilities were confined to childrearing and housework as she grappled unsuccessfully with what Betty Friedan (1963) called "the problem that has no name." Yet she did take great pleasure in encouraging academic excellence in her children. My father was managing editor of *Electronics* magazine and author of several books on electrical engineering. He earned a PhD in industrial engineering in 1964 and became an academic in the emerging field of computer science at Lehigh University, his alma mater. The product of a strict upbringing followed by service in the navy during the Second World War, he was an emotionally distant workaholic.

These influences led me to become a good though by no means brilliant student, with an interest in reading beyond the set curriculum. In this setting of material and cultural advantage, I took in the cognitive and moral templates of Americanism and Fordism (Gramsci 1971) at the high tide of American hegemony and consumer capitalism. Our neighbourhood was lily white, except for the African American live-in maids, who were part of an ongoing migration stream from the Deep South. Outside of the domestic master-servant relation (in which our household participated), racialized minorities were nowhere to be found. Part of the Americanism I absorbed early on was a belief in white supremacy. Another part was an abiding faith in the American dream – and thus in capital and state as institutions of freedom and democracy arrayed against the ever-present threat of Soviet totalitarianism. I recall reading, as core curriculum, *What You Should Know about Communism and Why* (Mestrovic 1962), touring a military base on a field trip, marvelling at the nuclear-tipped Minuteman ICBMs that could be launched against the enemy at a moment's notice, and planning a family fallout shelter (which never got built). This was the era of the Protestant Establishment (Baltzell 1964), so among WASPs the othering practices of everyday life also targeted the Jews and Catholics among us. Coincidentally, my two best friends in the early 1960s happened to be Jewish and Catholic, respectively. My close relationships with them began to sow seeds of doubt in the

ethnocentric narrative that my mother would occasionally champion while driving me to playovers.

This was also the formative era of televisual popular culture and celebrity. Although I watched my share of cartoons, sitcoms, and old B movies, what stands out retrospectively are a couple of unsettling mediatised events. In 1962, my socially conservative Aunt Sally (a Daughter of the American Revolution) took me to see *West Side Story*. Stunningly directed and choreographed, the film addressed big urban and racial issues. On our leaving the cinema, Sally apologized for intruding on my blissful childhood. For me, the film was exhilarating and deeply affecting in its tragic but even-handed portrayal of ethnically based gangs a rather short distance away from my own neighbourhood. I identified strongly with characters entirely removed from my affluent WASP lifeworld.

More unsettling still was the meteoric rise of Cassius Clay (Muhammad Ali), who became “heavyweight champion of the world” in 1964, a few months before my family moved to Buck’s County, Pennsylvania. Clay/Ali was a media sensation – full of wit, bravado, and athletic prowess. He became and stayed a hero of mine, through our respective political evolutions, as Ali, refusing the draft in 1966, famously declared: “I ain’t got nothing against no Viet Cong; no Viet Cong never called me nigger.” The investment in white supremacy I had unwittingly made from an early age was further subverted. I began to question received points of view and prejudices.

While all this was happening, my parents’ marriage fell apart, unsettling the notion of family as a natural unit. In the contentious process, my mother, vulnerable through economic dependence and social isolation, suffered a nervous breakdown, leading to my father’s custody of my siblings (two brothers) and me. In this difficult circumstance, I identified and empathized with my mother, yet felt an overwhelming impotence. This was an early brush with social power centred in the gendered division of labour and backstopped by law and psychiatry. I think my identification with the underdog left a trace, an incipient structure of feeling, and set up an elective affinity for underdog sociology, and for feminism, which I came to embrace years later.

My four years in rural Pennsylvania coincided with adolescence and with the ferment of the mid- to late 1960s – an urban-centred convergence of social movements and progressive cultural currents that was again conveyed to me televisually. I identified strongly with the youth culture of the time, taught myself guitar, and began to write the

odd very forgettable song. It was a time when a lot of conservative traditions were under attack and the New Left was in full flower. At the same time, the move to rural Pennsylvania pushed me beyond the bubble of affluent Long Island and into a world of farmers and Mennonite communities.

But the bigger shift came in 1968, as my father became an associate professor at the University of Western Ontario. To a well-socialized American, at first this did not appear to be much of a shift at all. Notwithstanding the comparatively small differences between the American northeast and southwestern Ontario (Baer et al. 1993, 13), my initial experience of Canada was that of an Ugly American. In the Cold War political novel that bears that name (Burdick and Lederer 1958), the reference is to Americans living abroad who are insensitive to local culture and refuse to integrate. This phenomenon is structurally rooted in the dominant position that, since the mid-twentieth century, the United States has held in the transnational circuitry of capital, in popular culture, and in geopolitical relations – to wit, American imperialism. But it is conditioned by class selectivities regarding who gets to travel and live abroad: middle- and upper-class Americans, who take their affluence for granted and view the rest of the world through a lens that exalts the United States as the greatest society in history. Life in suburban London was comfortable and similar to suburban life in the American northeast but not quite “up to speed,” and all the “important” events of interest to me – youth culture, the student movement – seemed to be centred south of the border.

By the time I (barely) made it through Ontario’s weird rite of passage – grade thirteen (an international outlier only abolished in 2003) – I had absorbed many of the ideas circulating in Canadian popular and political culture: a critical take on American imperialism, a late-1960s scepticism towards corporate power, and a do-your-own-thing libertarianism – which meant shedding aspects of my American nationalism while gravitating towards New Left critiques of authority and establishment. This process, which continued throughout my undergraduate education and then intensified as I turned to Marxism and socialist feminism in graduate school, involved a deeper “remaking of self.”

Shedding nationalism is a different process from that involved with primary socialization into a national culture. In the latter case, nationalism becomes doxic – part of one’s habitus – and not easily problematized. For me, abandoning American nationalism was a

process that coincided with my becoming a sociologist. As ideology, nationalism constructs a privileged, imagined community and positions us to support one state and segment of humanity against others. If one grasps this, as I did through my study of sociology, it is only through self-deception that one could trade one national identity for another. Instead, shedding one national identity points in a cosmopolitan direction, and in this I took counsel from Marx's famous declaration: "I am a citizen of the world; I am active wherever I am" (Lafargue 1890).

BECOMING A SOCIOLOGIST

When I arrived at Brock University in September of 1971, I had no idea what sociology was, and certainly no intention of making its study my life work. Parental influence was pushing towards law, management, or natural science. I had little interest in these, but in my first term I took a biology course for non-majors that, to my good fortune, focused on a topic that had gained profile since the publication of *Silent Spring* (Carson 1962) – ecology and living systems. Among the lessons I took from that class, which also provided a rigorous account of the natural origins of life, was a final and irrevocable escape from deism. In disenchanting the world, as Weber put it, full-fledged atheism tears away a comforting set of illusions and leaves one without any preordained purpose. Meaning, including what matters and what is worth fighting for, has to be crafted.

In the same few weeks of my first term at Brock, I began my sociological journey by happenstance and process of elimination. I had originally enrolled in business administration, but the first couple of lightweight lectures on marketing left me cold. I dropped the course and picked up a full-year, introductory sociology course, Sociology 190, "Man and Society," co-taught by Morris Berkowitz and Brian Betley. There was no textbook but tons of reading: original works in sociology, emphasizing the Chicago School. I remember tackling Durkheim's doctoral dissertation, *The Division of Labor in Society*, and writing a term paper on Harvey Zorbaugh's *The Gold Coast and the Slum* in first term. Intellectually challenging, the course obliged students to engage and produce from the start. That course drew me into sociology. Part of the attraction was the challenge, but most of it was the subject matter. Today, across North America, introductory sociology classes tend to be well subscribed, as eighteen- and nineteen-year-

olds grapple with the identity issues that are so salient to them. The same was true in 1971. Unlike anything else on offer (including psychology, which at Brock hewed mainly to the positivism of rats and stats), sociology presented a dazzling array of perspectives from which I could locate my life in the stream of history – as in C. Wright Mills’s conception of the sociological imagination.

The course was not only demanding, it was deeply unpopular; hence, sociology attracted few majors. The self-selected few were showered with attention from professors, and honours students (three in my graduating class) were treated like graduate students in a small program. Morris Berkowitz became my mentor and got me a summer job after my second year as a research assistant on Project Plan, a survey of local attitudes and practices around recreation in nearby Niagara Falls.

The sociology on offer at Brock was mainstream, but, as Steven Buechler (2008) has argued, all sociology offers an evidence-based critique, rooted in the Enlightenment, which debunks authoritarian claims to knowledge and power while questioning the self-proclaimed reasons for any social arrangement. These ideas resonated powerfully with my own sensibilities. It was in my second year at Brock that I really dug into sociological theory, mainly of a social constructivist sort. Our guide was Lloyd Gordon Ward, an assistant professor with an encyclopaedic grasp of symbolic interactionism and related formulations, and a dialogical pedagogy. I had been attracted to Brock for its small class sizes (total enrolment in 1971 stood at about twenty-two hundred), which meant that I learned theory in a seminar context. Ward taught the course without any formal lectures and without the standard potted-theory texts. Each student was required to read three original theory books and to prepare from each a “condensation by excerption only” – typing out the key passages into a new document that would be photocopied for each student in the class. All students were responsible for reading all the condensed works, which were discussed in clusters as they became available. Students were rewarded with a point towards the final grade each time they made an insightful remark based on the readings. The final, take-home exam consisted of such searching questions as: “What is it to be human?”

We read a rather select, even esoteric literature – Marx, Durkheim, and Weber were conspicuously absent; G.H. Mead’s *Mind, Self and Society* was a canonical text, along with works of William I. Thomas,

Charles Horton Cooley, Georg Simmel, Herbert Blumer, Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, John Dewey, Benjamin Whorf and Edward Sapir, Suzanne Langer, Ernst Cassirer, Lev Vygotsky, Muzafer Sherif (a pioneering social psychologist who had been Ward's mentor at Oklahoma State), and others. This literature reached beyond sociology proper and converged on a view of the social as an ongoing, practical, communicative accomplishment. It was not until graduate school that I recognized the paradigm's limitations – its predominantly micro-focus, its inattention to practice's materiality (nature, labour, and their appropriation), and to structures such as modes of production and states. In the meantime, the reflexive project of remaking self – enlarged to include recognizing my positionality and de-reifying conventions and traditions – gained coherence.

In their encouragement and generosity with time, my undergraduate mentors provided inspiration and set me on a clear course of intellectual development. They also found me work in social research. I spent the summer after my third undergraduate year working as Morris Berkowitz's research assistant in a study of the Addiction Research Foundation's (ARF) relations with the social-services community in Niagara Falls. This was my first experience with social network analysis. In our report, we mapped ARF's social circle and discussed its multifaceted relationships within the local social service community (Berkowitz et al. 1975). I continued, in my honours thesis, to conduct a network analysis of friendship formation in Brock's caves – the poured-concrete student residences that had been my home three years earlier. Indeed, I was personally aware of and intrigued by the relationship between physical propinquity and close relationships, having met my first spouse as we both resided in the caves. In this first stab at fieldwork, I interviewed residents in their dormitory rooms, early in the academic year and then a few months later, and made nonparticipant observations along the way. Lloyd Ward supervised the project and introduced me to advanced multivariate statistics in my fourth year. His approach was critical of what C. Wright Mills called abstracted empiricism – the “garbage in-garbage out” approach that correlated for the sake of correlation – and mathematically rigorous. We wrote code in Fortran to understand closely the algorithms that produce the factor loadings in canonical correlation and the like.

In my fourth year at Brock, I also took a reading course in cross-cultural psychology with Sidney H. Irvine, an expert in that field. I

had already taken several social-psychology courses, which complemented the micro-focus of the sociology department, and was well aware of psychology's narrow empirical base (with samples often restricted to undergraduate university students). The course probed the issue of universality and embedded particularity in cognition and personality, and led to an early publication, with Irvine as senior author, in *Handbook of Cross-Cultural Psychology* (Irvine and Carroll 1980, 2:181). Our chapter (I wrote perhaps a quarter of it) called into question many of the conventions of cross-cultural measurement, including intelligence testing, which was already a controversial topic, and called for more nuanced, open-ended approaches sensitive to the configurations of cognitive competencies that cohere as "intelligence" in specific cultural-material contexts. This advice has some relevance for how we work with cultural theorists, from Mead through Foucault to Bourdieu.

My collaboration with Sid Irvine whetted my appetite for scholarly writing and helped point me in the direction of graduate studies. Meanwhile, in sociology, Morris Berkowitz and Lloyd Ward helped guide some shifts in my political consciousness, though in quite different ways. Morris was inclined towards a Mannheimian approach to the social basis of knowledge and viewed Darwin, Marx, and Freud as having shaped modern social thought. Morris's sympathetic treatment of Marx help me break from the remaining traces of *What You Should Know about Communism and Why*. Lloyd Ward, who held a second appointment as director of Psychology Research at Queen Street Mental Health Centre in Toronto, subscribed to Harry Stack Sullivan's critical social psychiatry. Under Lloyd's libertarian influence, I keyed into the "politics of deviance," particularly of mental illness, as illuminated by labelling theory and related formulations (Schur 1971, 1980). Erving Goffman and Thomas Scheff were the key sociologists, but other, more political treatments, such as Thomas Szasz's libertarian tract *The Myth of Mental Illness* and R.D. Laing's New Left anti-psychiatry also received careful study.

In the spring of 1975, as I was finishing my BA, Lloyd offered me a summer job as a researcher in psychology at Queen Street Mental Health Centre. Lloyd's research shop was an island of social science in a sea of biomedical practice. Our research focused on making sense of a mass of intake data. Admitting nurses had interviewed patients and noted all the problems in living (Sullivan's phrase). They mentioned intrapsychic (delusions, hallucinations, etc.) problems, interpersonal

problems, economic problems, and so on. The goal was to create a “problem-oriented record keeping” system as a pragmatic alternative to psychiatry’s bible – the American Psychiatric Association’s *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM) (which, until 1973, categorized homosexuality as a mental illness). Revealingly, when people’s problems in living were catalogued and content-analyzed in this way, intrapsychic issues comprised a small though not insignificant minority of personal troubles. Much more profuse were interpersonal and practical problems – in conflictual close relationships, in housing and landlord-tenant relations, at work or regarding unemployment and poverty. Despite this knowledge, the practice at Queen Street, as elsewhere, was focused almost singularly on controlling intrapsychic “symptoms” through hefty doses of psychopharmaceuticals (see Gilandas 1973). My summer at Queen Street was an object lesson in the practical value of social-scientific inquiry and the power-infused, institutional barriers to creating change.

By the time I entered the graduate sociology program at York University in the fall of 1975, I was steeped in a range of research methods and practical research experience. I intended to work with James Moore, who ran sociology’s Small Groups Lab. York’s was one of the very few Canadian graduate sociology programs that included a social-psychology focus, and I had already used Brock’s similar lab in the sociology department in a study I conducted for a term paper in 1974. Moore was on sabbatical in 1975–76, so John Fox became my MA thesis supervisor and, eventually, my dissertation co-supervisor. A recently hired graduate of the University of Michigan (where he studied with William Gamson), Fox was running the Small Groups Lab and teaching social psychology and advanced statistics. I also took up an eight-month paid internship at York’s Institute for Behavioural Research (IBR, now the Institute for Social Research). The internship was centred on an interdisciplinary methods course taught by IBR associate director Michael Ornstein, a recent hire from sociology at Johns Hopkins.

Towards the end of my internship, Ornstein recommended me to IBR director Bernard Blishen, who hired me for the summer as an RA. With his close friend John Porter, Bernard was one of a few highly prominent figures in Canadian sociology’s early postwar era, having published the first comprehensive socio-economic index based on census data in 1958 – beating Otis Dudley Duncan by three years (Blishen 1958, 519; Duncan 1961, 109). In 1976, he was interested in

introducing gender directly into the analysis of socio-economic status. I crunched the numbers and prepared a detailed report, which became the main body of our 1978 research note – my first refereed publication and my first foray into macrosociology (Blishen and Carroll 1978, 352). Bernard soon joined my supervisory committee, co-chaired by John Fox and Mike Ornstein, as I moved into York's doctoral program.

In the fall of 1976, I defended my MA thesis, a social-psychological study of cognitive structure and social networks. York at the time was still aglow from the progressive political ferment of the 1960s. Its social science division was very large and tilted to the left. York sociology was sprawling and chronically factionalized between a small, well-organized group of radical phenomenologists and a disorganized, heterogeneous mass of everyone else (for a very different pattern of departmental factions, see Riggins, chapter 19, this volume). In the latter, I found a lot of space for combining my research expertise with careful theorization. Courses I took in 1976–77 – in social stratification, imperialism, and Canadian society – spurred my shift from microsociology. Paul Grayson, a left nationalist with strong Marxist inclinations, introduced me to Canadian political economy. In his Canadian society seminar, we read Innis, Creighton, Levitt, Watkins, Naylor, and the lot. In the process, I realized the importance of taking the historical *specificity* of Canada seriously and avoiding overly abstract theoretical formulations, whether Parsonian or Marxian. Looking backward, I realized that Brock sociology had been an American “branch plant”: virtually every professor was American, trained in the United States and not particularly knowledgeable about Canada.

Concerns about branch plants – whether corporate or cultural – were salient at York. The mid-to late 1970s marked the high tide of the Canadianization movement. Within academe, Canadianization sought to undo the effects (some of them rather ugly) of the migration of American academics, particularly into the humanities and social sciences, and to develop scholarly venues and curricula centred in Canadian issues. Grayson's Canadian society course was pivotal in sensitizing me to the historical specificity of Canada (though the issue of settler colonialism was obscured through Innis's own strongly Eurocentric lens). Other courses were more international in content. In Gordon Darroch's seminar on social stratification, I was introduced to modern Marxist classics – E.P. Thompson's *The Making of the English Working Class* and Harry Braverman's *Labour and Monopoly*

Capital. Mark Goodman's seminar on the sociology of imperialism featured critical frameworks on colonization and the development of global capitalism. By the close of my second year at York, I was ready to take up historical materialism as a perspective within which these issues and others could be integrated.

John Fox and Mike Ornstein were ideal mentors in this journey. First-rate empirical sociologists, they were also well-read Marxists who had been active in the New Left and were involved in Toronto's Marxist Institute (MI), a community-based educational collective that connected graduate students and faculty with various activists and concerned citizens interested in Marxism. Through Fox and Ornstein, I joined the MI community, initially in study groups and eventually as a member of the collective, which offered a dialogical space among the various factions of the left, from social democracy to Maoism and Trotskyism. With an active membership numbering two to three dozen, the MI offered evening courses on a range of topics at a local elementary school in fall, winter, and summer terms, and public events that included film series, debates on the left, and such visiting speakers as Ernesto Laclau, Perry Anderson, and Ralph Miliband. For several years, the book review section of *Critical Sociology* (known until 1988 as the *Insurgent Sociologist*) was produced within the MI, and John Fox's helpful guides to *Capital* were developed from MI study groups (Fox and Johnston 1978; Fox 1985).

In the late 1970s, second-wave feminism was in full flower; and, in Canada, socialist feminism was a strong current within it and within the MI. As I worked my way through the three volumes of *Capital* and other classics, I also took up the socialist-feminist debates on class and gender, production and reproduction, capitalism and patriarchy. Among the socialist feminists associated with the MI were Bonnie Fox, Meg Luxton, Susan Archer Mann, Roxana Ng, Ester Reiter, Brenda Roman and Dorothy Smith. (Dorothy and I were in a study group on capitalist crises.) I was inspired by both their intellectual acuity and their deep radicalness, which took to heart the adage (not yet transmogrified into a lifestyle politics of identity) that the personal is political. In this setting, I became a self-identified Marxist and a feminist simultaneously. This meant recognizing gender and other subjective moorings as not just socially but also politically constructed, and it also spurred a curiosity as to how different relations of domination intersect and how distinct yet related political projects might be articulated together.

It was in this context that my continuing interest in the social organization of corporate power emerged. I had already written, in 1976, a paper that extended my interest in network analysis to a new domain – interlocking directorates among the largest Canadian corporations. This was my major paper at the Institute for Behavioural Research Internship, for which I used data provided by Mike Ornstein (1976) and followed the lead of his article in the *Canadian Journal of Sociology*. Fox, Ornstein, and I retooled this paper into my first conference presentation, which was at the Western Anthropological and Sociological Association (Carroll et al. 1982). In the summer of 1977, I began researching a paper on class and the modern corporation, which would satisfy part of York sociology's candidacy requirement, with an eye towards developing a doctoral dissertation on corporate power in post-Second World War Canada. That paper led to a detailed research proposal for a study that would track the one hundred largest corporations and their interlocks on a yearly basis, from 1946 through 1977, along with a host of state and civil-society organizations. The research would require extensive funding, far beyond my resources as a graduate student. Fox offered to adapt the proposal and to submit it to SSHRC under his name. The funding came through, and we assembled a team of research assistants who, over several months, meticulously coded data from corporate annual reports housed mostly at the Toronto Public Library's business department. Typists at the Institute of Behavioural Research then transferred the data to thousands of Hollerith cards, which I read into York's mainframe computer in a single batch (with fingers crossed that they would all be shuffled through).

My dissertation was not the only research product to emerge from these painstaking empirical efforts. The database we assembled was mined by Mike Ornstein in a pioneering study of how the corporate network is reproduced as directors disappear (due to retirement or death) and others take their place. John and Mike also published a detailed longitudinal analysis of elite ties between the corporate and state sectors (Ornstein 1984, 210; Fox and Ornstein 1986, 481). For my part, I completed a dissertation that followed in the tracks of Wallace Clement's studies of the Canadian corporate elite (reading the elite's composition and organization as indicative of the nature of capitalism in Canada; see Clement, chapter 9, this volume), but it broke from Clement in the mode of analysis and the substantive interpretation. A student of John Porter, Clement had pulled Porter's sociology-of-elites

analysis towards Marx, reinterpreting the corporate elite as the top tier of a capitalist class, and had wedded this conception to the left-nationalist political economy of R.T. Naylor, who posited that a commercial fraction of capital had been hegemonic in shaping Canada into a staples-based economy, dependent upon a succession of imperial powers, from France through Britain to the United States. Clement viewed Canada's corporate elite as an assemblage of class fractions, dominated domestically by bankers and merchants but allied continentally with the US-based transnational corporations that owned the branch plants and resource companies comprising Canada's industrial sector. My dissertation presented a Marxist critique of Clement's work and, more broadly, of the thesis of Canadian dependency in which it was ensconced (Carroll 1981).

My by-then long-standing scepticism towards nationalism as a progressive strand in the Global North no doubt motivated this work. More salient still was a scientific concern: I was struck by the almost total disconnect between the substance of Marxist political economy and the claims of the Canadian dependency school. Naylor's argument carried a profound misinterpretation of the distinction between industrial capital and financial-commercial capital, which was carried over into Clement's and others' analyses. For Marx, industrial capital refers to the expansion of exchange value through the production of new use-value – whether the process involves manufacturing, resource extraction, or transport/communication. For Naylor, only manufacturing counted as industrial, and Canada's manufacturing sector had developed “by invitation,” as National Policy tariffs of the 1870s to the 1920s had induced American capitalists to establish miniature replica branch plants in Canada. Canada's own capitalists were incurably commercial – interested only in reaping the profit and interest of merchants and bankers, obliging them to enter into a dependent alliance with the more powerful imperial capitalist fractions that developed the industrial sector.

This last claim put Naylor at odds with another basic insight of Marxist political economy: in a capitalist economy, there is no deep division between industrial and commercial capital. The surplus value that issues from production (in the broad sense) is distributed competitively across all economic sectors. With the rise of corporate capital at the turn of the twentieth century, Marxists like Hilferding and Bukharin observed a close symbiosis emerging between industrial corporations and big banks (a.k.a. “finance capital”) as the former's

funding needs in mounting massive capital-intensive projects (like railways) dovetailed with the latter's needs to valorize massive pools of money-capital. Set against a classic Marxist interpretation, Naylor's narrative lacked credibility. It posited an exceptional divide between Canadian business and other, normal, business classes who were not adverse to industrial accumulation. Clement's attempts to document a configuration of contemporary elite relations consistent with the Naylor thesis were highly influential at the time, yet the issue of fractional alliances and divisions begged for a more systematic, network-analytic treatment.

Beyond supplying that, my dissertation, published as a book in 1986, advanced a conceptual and empirical critique of the thesis of Canadian dependency (leaning heavily on the international literature, which had been skewering dependency theory since the mid-1970s) and an interpretation of Canada as an advanced capitalist middle power in an era of rising and then declining US hegemony. I argued that the Canadian capitalist class is unexceptional in its structure and composition. In the three decades after 1946, the Canadian corporate network remained focused around extensive interlocking between industrial companies and financial institutions controlled domestically. Canadian capitalist development had followed in the grooves of profit-seeking capitalist rationality, not dependency. Canadian industry's continuing skew towards resource extraction is the result of high sectoral profit rates owing to a rich natural-resource endowment and high demand for resource-based industrial goods. Moreover, I showed that capital based in Canada was internationalizing at least as quickly as Canadian firms were being incorporated into transnational empires based abroad. The trajectory was not towards what Levitt (1970) had called a "harvest of lengthening dependency" but towards a cross-penetration of capital among the advanced countries.

Although the book was awarded the John Porter Prize in 1988, its lessons were absorbed slowly, across decades (Gordon 2015; Kellogg 2015; Klassen 2014; Carroll and Klassen 2010). For me, this debate on the character of Canada's capitalist class had an important political implication. The left-nationalist concern with dependency and foreign domination was misplaced: struggles around Canadian capitalism need to focus on democratizing control of economic life, from the shop floor to overall investment decision making, which also entails a critique of the imperialist role that Canadian business and the state have played abroad.

Two days after I defended my dissertation in September 1981, I moved to Victoria, where I began a limited-term assistant professorship, which was quickly converted to tenure-track. I had a SSHRC post-doctoral fellowship arranged and was not even looking for work. However, Bernard Blishen had given some lectures at the University of Victoria in April and had talked me up as his collaborator. As it happened, UVic sociology was deadlocked in a recruitment process. Rick Ogmundson, who had recently relocated to UVic from the University of Manitoba, heard Bernard's pitch and alerted the department to my existence. I was hastily invited to apply for the position, flown out for a job talk in May, and immediately offered the job.

This was indeed a stroke of luck. The academic labour market was terrible (and about to get much worse, as the Volcker shock south of the border triggered a global recession). Within the demographic categories of this collection, I am betwixt and between the generation of Canadian sociologists who emerged from graduate school during the great expansion of universities (and thus of professorial opportunities) and the less fortunate generation that followed in a period of seemingly endless austerity. Austerity and precarity are often thought of as twenty-first-century problems, but their origins came earlier. As an undergraduate at Brock in the early to mid-1970s, I participated in student protests against budget-driven proposals to close that university. My years at York were marked by occasionally intense labour strife spurred in part by policies of austerity.

A TWO-TRACK RESEARCH PROGRAM: THE 1980S

UVic's sociology department felt to me like a return to Brock. I brought the full-time equivalent complement to eleven, most of whom were US-trained and some distance behind the cutting edge of sociological inquiry. Not surprisingly, positivism held sway against more critical and reflexive sociologies. I gravitated to the department's sole Marxist, Rennie Warburton. Trained as a sociologist of religion at the London School of Economics, with Anthony Giddens in his cohort, Rennie had taken a radical turn in the 1960s. We became close, sharing space on the department's margins and also sharing an emergent interest in critical realism as a post-positivist philosophical alternative to Parisian poststructuralism. We were particularly inspired by *Method in Social Science* (Sayer 1984), which remains one

of the best sources on critical realism as a post-disciplinary approach. Victoria presented a sharp contrast to Toronto, intensified in my own experience by my move from Kensington Market (perhaps the most multicultural neighbourhood in the country at the time) to Oak Bay, which fashioned itself as the last outpost of colonial England. My experience of culture shock, without crossing national borders, hammered home the remarkable regionalization of Canada.

Another sharp difference was in the field of class politics. In the postwar era, Ontario became the keystone of class compromise as vigorous accumulation enabled a moderately pragmatic labour movement to extract concessions from capital while a succession of centrist governments provided what Premier Bill Davis once called “sound conservative management” of the economy and society. In British Columbia, a militant and highly mobilized labour movement, strongly aligned with the social democratic New Democratic Party (NDP), posed a continuing challenge to the governing Social Credit Party. The Socreds, an anti-NDP alliance of Liberals and Conservatives, had held power since 1952 except for a three-year interruption in the early 1970s, during which an NDP government had introduced a wide range of progressive reforms. By 1982, the global recession had brought Depression-level unemployment to British Columbia, and upon its re-election the following year, the Socred government introduced an austerity program aimed at reducing the state deficit on the backs of workers. With attacks on trade union and human rights and public provisioning, the “restraint program” was directly inspired by Thatcherism, which by that point had cohered as a post-Keynesian hegemonic project that posited “two nations”: fine upstanding citizens who respect the authority of capital and state, and the otherized rabble of unions, leftists, and welfare cheats (Jessop et al. 1988). The popular response in British Columbia was the Solidarity Coalition, a massive social movement made up of unions and a wide range of progressive movements, intent on stopping the “restraint program” in its tracks. I soon joined the local Victoria group, and even became the Uvic Faculty Association’s representative, as the sole faculty member who participated in the coalition.

By November 1983, the conflict had intensified into an escalating political strike that threatened to shut down the province. As an activist academic, I experienced a sharp bifurcation of the sort that Dorothy Smith (1987) has described. I had divided the previous summer between political work within the Solidarity Coalition and writ-

ing a paper on dependency, imperialism and the capitalist class in Canada for a conference Bob Brym was organizing on the structure of the Canadian capitalist class. Career-wise, this presentation was important. I had poured enormous effort into a longish paper that, in my humble view, demolished the reigning dependency perspective, and Bob had positioned my presentation prominently in the flow of sessions. So it was that I flew to Toronto just as a massive confrontation was coming to a head to participate in academic debates that paled in comparison with my own visceral experience as an activist. My feelings of having betrayed the cause were ultimately assuaged by the larger betrayal spear-headed by IWA-Canada president Jack Munro – the so-called Kelowna Accord of 18 November 1983, which protected the existing rights of provincial employees but sacrificed the coalition’s social goals concerning human rights, thereby creating a rift between labour and other movements.

In the aftermath, a group of concerned Uvic academics formed the Committee on Alternatives for British Columbia (CABC). Led by political scientist Warren Magnusson, our group was interdisciplinary and resolutely critical of the “new reality” of what was then called neo-conservatism. We quickly mobilized an on-campus network of colleagues willing to write chapters for a public-facing book that would explain and critique the new right project that Social Credit “restraint” represented. Core members of CABC edited sections of the book, with Warren taking the lead for the introductory chapter and conclusion. We hot-housed the collection and got Vancouver-based New Star Books to publish it in September 1984, and *The New Reality: The Politics of Restraint in British Columbia* was soon a BC bestseller (Magnusson et al. 1984, 1986).

Besides my editorial responsibilities, as an insider to the Solidarity Coalition I was tasked with writing a chapter on it. This was my entry point into social movement analysis and into what we now call public sociology. It opened a new research interest, which soon led me to Gramsci and to the two-track research program I have maintained since the mid-1980s. Also, it was my entry point into writing and thinking about neoliberalism (see, e.g., Bruff 2014). In that respect, my move to British Columbia was fortuitous not only as another experience of mental mobility. It also placed me in the middle of a political transformation that would eventually sweep across Canada, culminating, one could say, in the “Common Sense Revolution” of Ontario’s Conservative government in the mid- to late 1990s. In

British Columbia, I could be a participant-observer of the contested transitions that would reshape Canadian society. Leaving Toronto in September of 1981, I had seen Victoria as a distant, marginal place, yet it turned out to be in the vanguard of what was to come. Three years on, I had been drawn into the whirlwind of regional class politics, both as activist and academic, with major consequences for my research program and, indeed, for my approach to sociology.

I saw the two tracks as complementary, within a broadly historical-materialist approach. One track continued my research on the political economy of corporate capital with a top-down analysis of the structures of the ruling class and class domination; the other offered a bottom-up analysis of collective agencies of resistance and potential transformation. In 1985, I presented a paper at the Canadian Sociology and Anthropology Association (CSAA) conference that placed the Solidarity Coalition within a broad analysis of movements in contemporary capitalism. In 1989, Bob Ratner, a sociologist at UBC, and I published "Social Democracy, Neo-Conservatism and Hegemonic Crisis in British Columbia" in *Critical Sociology* (Carroll and Ratner 1989). That was really my first Gramscian piece. It read the Socred restraint program and subsequent initiatives as a developing hegemonic project, and it argued that the popular opposition had been a conjunctural assemblage of movements lacking both an alternative social vision and the organizational capacity to sustain itself over the long haul.

In 1987–88, I took my first sabbatical. When they immigrated to Canada in the 1950s, my partner Anne Preyde's Catholic Dutch parents had left behind a large family network within which we were happy to immerse ourselves. But what drew me professionally to the University of Amsterdam was its central location in the development of corporate network analysis. Meindert Fennema, who had published a path-breaking dissertation in 1982 on transnational corporate elite networks, was our host. A prominent, well-connected activist and scholar on the Dutch left, Meindert participated in the After the Crisis Group – an informal research network that was developing a Gramscian analysis of the crisis of the 1970s/1980s, with an eye towards discerning both the threats and opportunities it posed for emancipatory politics. I found its perspectives insightful, particularly regarding how to think about the issues of hegemony from a political economic perspective on capitalism that was open to theorizing collective agency and transformative practice. This network developed

into the Amsterdam International Political Economy Project, with which I have been loosely identified (Overbeek 2004, 113; Carroll 2018a, 2018b, 197–201). Urban Dutch society combined strong civil-libertarian and public-planning traditions, progressive movements were relatively robust, and anti-immigrant sentiment (mainly directed at Turks) was just in its infancy. As a newly minted Canadian, I was warmly welcomed by all, trading serendipitously on the role that Canadian troops played in liberating Holland at the close of the Second World War.

During that sabbatical year my two-pronged research program really became consolidated, with new work linking corporate power structure analysis with a neo-Gramscian political economy of neoliberal capitalism (Carroll 1989, 81). Back in Victoria, the Porter Award came with a 1989 CSAA plenary address, in which I drew on the Amsterdam Project in advocating neo-Gramscian political economy as a window onto Canada's specificity and location within global capitalism (Carroll 1990). New curricular innovations were also afoot. The CABC network morphed into an initiative to establish a graduate program in contemporary social and political thought (CSPT). Launched at the close of the 1980s, CSPT opened an interdisciplinary space for critical theorizing. In the program's first year, I led a course on the big changes under way in culture and political economy and the raging debates around postmodernism and postmodernity. Some of this engagement found its way into the theoretical paper Bob Ratner and I published in 1994, which presented a neo-Gramscian analysis of contemporary social movements as a synthesizing, middle course between Leninist and postmodernist interpretations (Carroll and Ratner 1994).

THE 1990S AND BEYOND

My sociological practice since the early 1990s has followed the two tracks of my research program, with an increasing focus on global issues (Carroll 1993), while opening, as a third, explorations of the relationship between sociology and social justice. Here again, a combination of intellectual interest and political activism has energized my initiatives. However, the arrival of our first son, Myles, in 1989 and our second, Wes, in 1992, tended to crowd out much of the activism during the intensive years of parenting through the 1990s. On the other hand, direct experience in the double day of academic work and

domestic labour offered fresh insights, as I assumed primary responsibility for cooking and childcare after Anne's brief maternity leaves. Flexible work hours allowed me to shift much of my academic work into the evening hours, but the upshot was a seemingly permanent blending of exhaustion and exhilaration.

Caring labour takes time and mindfulness. But, in addition to sensitizing me to the web of life in which we are all immersed, the years of intensive parenting helped me rediscover an aesthetic interest in music, which has enhanced my sociological practice. As a graduate student I had written quite a few songs, many of them political. In the early 1980s I performed some of them, such as "The Relative Surplus Population Blues," at such activist venues as the steps of the BC Legislature, where Victoria's Unemployed Workers' Union held a demonstration in 1983. In the 1990s I dusted off my guitar. During the long stretches of childcare I started playing, singing, and writing for the children, at first within the genre of lullabies. Before long, I found myself producing an annual birthday song for each of them, and as Myles and Wes matured so did the songs. By the early 2000s, as the Bush administration launched its War on Terror and as my sons became conscious of the wider world, political themes crept back into the music. On advice from a friend, I started to create the occasional music video on sociologically relevant issues. These productions, some of which have been published in the *Sociological Cinema*; *Class, Race and Corporate Power*; and the International Sociological Association's *The Futures We Want* and other internet platforms, are socio-poetic interventions in public sociology (Kaufman 2013). Communicating in a different register from the academic-discursive, these productions provoke the critical recognition of social issues and reflection upon them. The accessibility of these sociological music videos (several of them co-produced with my son, who in the meantime became a professional musician [Carroll and Carroll n.d.]) has made them useful as discussion-starters in various contexts, including film festivals, activist meetings, and classrooms.

Meanwhile, my growing interest in public sociology led to new curricular initiatives. At the close of the 1990s, colleagues and I successfully pushed for a new undergraduate "social justice" stream in sociology that would parallel a "social research" stream. Small curricular changes caused a big stir when it became clear that, given the choice, nearly all sociology students gravitated to the new stream. With the fate of statistics courses hanging in the balance, the positivists (still the

majority group) insisted on an end to the experiment and to social justice as a stream. In the meantime, however, I had developed a set of readings and workshops I parlayed into a reader that presented five critical research strategies (Carroll 2004).

Editing that book helped clarify my own epistemic, ontological, and political commitments. The collection was centred in sociology but quite open to the whole range of social sciences. The research strategies featured in it were not technical, empirical methods but broad approaches to producing solidly grounded knowledge in ways that help expose injustice, empower subaltern groups, and democratize social relations – from the dialectical analysis of classical Marxism through institutional ethnography to critical discourse analysis and participatory action research. Several pieces in the volume took up critical realism, “the attempt to steer between the Scylla of naive realism on the one hand, and the Charybdis of idealism and constructivism on the other” (Centre for Critical Realism n.d.). In the introductory chapter, I emphasized the distinctness of the social – that “‘social facts’ can never have the same ontological status as ‘facts’ pertaining to natural processes that are devoid of human agency” (Carroll 2004, 2) – and the impossibility of political neutrality in a world organized through relations of domination and ideological mystification.

The demise of UVic sociology’s social-justice stream brought a consequence unintended by the executors. Intense student interest in critical approaches led me to propose to a dozen progressive colleagues at UVic that we create an interdisciplinary program in social justice studies. I co-chaired the organizing committee, and, after considerable networking and dialogue across disciplines (to say nothing of paperwork), the program was approved in 2008, with me as founding director. Social justice studies (SJS) was designed as a *bridge*, fostering connections to build capacity for critical thinking and action pertaining to justice issues. Establishing the program also meant establishing a network bridging academe and activism. I worked closely with a community advisory council in setting up an SJS practicum that runs as a capstone course, enabling students to work with local activist groups as they keep a reflective journal and participate in biweekly seminars. By far the most successful of UVic’s interdisciplinary minor/diploma programs, its counter-hegemonic vision emphasizes the need for a radical politics of solidarity across movements, publics, and communities, drawing on feminist thinking on intersectionality,

left traditions of radical pedagogy, anti-oppressive social work, and decolonizing thought. SJS also bridges across social issues, disciplinary silos, age cohorts, and categories of experience (Carroll 2014).

Late in 2011, as I completed my term as SJS director and prepared for a year of round-the-world fieldwork on alternative policy groups (Carroll 2016b), I also looked forward to delivering a plenary address I had been asked to give to the CSA. My plan was to read extensively in the sociology of sociology, focusing on contemporary challenges, and from that to distil some insights on how we might practise sociology today. It was a difficult paper to write as it spoke to identity questions extending to the contested legitimacy of sociology and drew upon many strains of theory and practice. Eventually, I settled on a three-part presentation, which I worked into the title: “Discipline, Field, Nexus” (Carroll 2013). Leaning heavily on critical realism as a philosophy of science, and on C. Wright Mills’s notion of the sociological imagination, I problematized social science’s disciplinary divides and argued that the very features that worry many positivists – sociology’s permeability, its dense connectivity to other fields and critical transdisciplinarity – enhance sociology’s capacity to lead in the movement from siloed knowledge to more integrated and critical understandings of our troubled world. Clearly, this essay was shaped by a host of accumulated experiences in practising critical sociology, in activism, and in radical pedagogy. Indeed, I now notice that, in 2010, I described Uvic’s Social Justice Studies Program as “a really interesting nexus between a number of disciplines” (Coburn 2010, 82). My experience as SJS director had already led me to value, in the context of critical pedagogy, the mutual learning that stems from transdisciplinary knowledge integration. It was not much of a stretch to redeploy “nexus” as a root metaphor for sociology. “Discipline, Field, Nexus” was well received, but most heartening to me was the lively debate it provoked (Puddephatt and McLaughlin 2015; Misina 2015; Carroll 2016a). My work makes just a small contribution to this vast topic, and the discussion continues.

CURRENT EVENTS

My current, highly collaborative project moves along all three tracks. Mapping the Power of the Carbon-Extractive Corporate Resource Sector (i.e., the Corporate Mapping Project n.d.) is a six-year SSHRC partnership hosted by Uvic and involving five other university part-

ners and four community partners. Co-directed by Shannon Daub of the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, the partnership is balanced between research and public engagement. With a team of approximately one hundred co-investigators, collaborators, and community advisors, our partnership maps carbon capital's "regime of obstruction" (Carroll 2020), extending to political and civil society and to the transnational level, but it also attends to the counter-movements resisting that power and championing socially just alternatives to carbon capitalism. The partnership is a community of social scientists, policy researchers, and activists (environmental, labour, Indigenous, social justice, and public-interest), all of whom shape our research priorities and communication strategies. Functionally, it is balanced across the four genres Burawoy (2005) distinguishes – professional, critical, policy, and public sociology.

Our partnership brings together the various strands of sociology that I have been somewhat haphazardly braiding since I discovered this remarkable field in the early 1970s (cf. Armstrong, chapter 12, this volume). The entwined combination creates a strong analysis, demystifying ideology, learning from movements, and helping to guide progressive change. It would be difficult to overestimate the challenges we face ("we" being the entire human extended family) in an era of what Gramsci called organic crisis, as the old is dying and the new cannot be born (Gramsci 1971, 276). The most important lesson I take from my experience as a politically engaged, critical sociologist is that our field offers important resources for addressing those challenges in ways that support a just and ecologically healthy remaking of our world.

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