

INTRODUCTION

The concept of power and place within hydroelectricity in Canada can be analyzed through the course material that has been explored this term. Specifically following the theme of this course, Indigenous Stories of Hydro Power in Quebec and BC, this zine will explore two hydroelectric powers in respective areas: the James Bay Project in Quebec and the Site C Dam in British Columbia. This zine will analyze four sources explored in this course, including:

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1. "The Nexus of Hydroelectricity in Quebec" by Caroline Desbien

2. "Wrestling with Colonialism on Steroids" by Zebedee Nungak

> The two sources above specifically focus on the James Bay Project in Quebec. The other two focusing on Site C Dam in BC include:

1. Wochiigii Io: End of Peace Documentary directed by Heather Hatch

2. Rendering Technical, Rendering Sacred: The Politics of Hydroelectric Development on British Columbia's Saaghii Naachii/Peace River." by Caleb Behn and Karen Bakker

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ways.

After analyzing the four sources, I have concluded that the similarities and differences between these these two situations can be categorized into four

> The James Bay Project can be analyzed through a cultural, economic, and political lens in Quebec. The Site C Dam can be analyzed through an environmental, economic, and political lens for

BC.

The most apparent difference is that Quebec focuses on cultural representation for its hydroelectricity project, whereas, in BC, the environmental factor was highlighted. The consensus is that the First Nations in these communities got their rights infringed. Ending this zine will be a collage representing everything the First Nations have fought for and how, through these four sources, it is very telling that the hydroelectric projects must be analyzed through different categories and perspectives to understand the full history and impact behind them. POINT 1: CULTURAL ASPECT OF THE JAMES BAY PROJECT – THE LANGUAGE BILL ACT FROM BOTH PERSPECTIVES

According to Desbien (25), the Language Act (Bill 22) was one of Quebec's main cornerstones of cultural sovereignty. While this may have been a liberation moment for the people of Quebec, we can compare this to Nungak's perspective (1047), where the bill was seen entirely differently. According to Nungak, creating this bill (although in his memoir, he was referring to Bill 101 in 1977) is erasing the existence of Inuit culture. These two different perspectives give a very telling picture of the cultural significance of the James Bay project. POINT 1: CULTURAL ASPECT OF THE JAMES BAY PROJECT - THE LANGUAGE BILL ACT FROM BOTH PERSPECTIVES

First, this allows us to recognize that the Quebec people cared very much about their identity, to the point that even with the risk of affecting business (Desbien 25), they wanted this language to be the core of their identity, as the premier at the time also believed that cultural sovereignty is what will bring prosperity to the land of Quebec (Desbien 25). Second, Nungak's perspective is that Quebec's version of pride is a version of Separatism (Nungak 1043) and filled with greed. Had they agreed and followed through with initial land agreements from the past, then this insecurity and need would not have been required in the first place (Nungak 217). Overall, this gives contrasting perspectives to the cultural fight about the James Bay Project from both sides, and it is very telling how Quebec, while trying to fight for its own sovereignty, forgot the multicultural nature of the land. (Desbien 28)

POINT 2: ENVIRONMENTAL ASPECT OF SITE C DAM - THE MEANING OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

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IN BEHN AND BAKKER'S ARTICLE, THEY CRITICIZE THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY, SAYING THAT IT DEPENDS HIGHLY ON THE SPECIFIC SITUATIONS RATHER THAN HAVING A 🙋 STREAMLINED STANDARD APPROACH (99). FURTHERMORE, THEY ARGUE THAT AFTER CONDUCTING AN ASSESSMENT UNDER THE CEAA, THE IMPACT OF THE SITE C DAM IS SO SIGNIFICANT THAT IT CANNOT BE IGNORED (BEHN AND BAKKER 106). THIS INDICATES THAT WHILE THE QUEBEC DAM FOCUSES MORE ON THE CULTURAL IMPLICATIONS - AND RECEIVED CRITICISM FROM PARTIES THAT SUPPORTED THE RIGHTS OF THE FIRST NATIONS, THE SITE C DAM WAS HIGHLIGHTED DUE TO ENVIRONMENTAL CRITICISMS ON TOP OF INDIGENOUS RELATIONS (BEHN 🏽 & BAKKER 100).

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POINT 2: ENVIRONMENTAL ASPECT OF SITE C DAM - THE MEANING OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

THIS MAKES SITE C AN INTERESTING POWER ANALYSIS DUE TO DIFFERENT PARTIES FIGHTING BACK TOWARDS THE CROWN CORPORATIONS. SITE C WAS NOT IN THE "PUBLIC INTEREST" (HATCH, OO:12:30). THEREFORE, IT WAS NOT JUST THE INDIGENOUS PEOPLE FIGHTING BACK FOR THEIR LAND RIGHTS; IT WAS ALSO THE ACADEMICS WHO WERE CRITICIZING THE NATURE OF THIS PROJECT (HATCH). AS CRITICIZED BY BEHN AND BAKKER (100), THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT ALSO ARGUES THAT THE METHODOLOGY SHOULD INCLUDE FIRST NATIONS PERSPECTIVES ON UNDERSTANDING THE ACTUAL IMPACT ON THEIR HOMES (BEHN AND BAKKER 110). BY INCLUDING METHODOLOGIES FROM WESTERN AND INDIGENOUS CULTURES, WE CAN UNDERSTAND WHAT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT TRULY MEANS, ESPECIALLY **REGARDING HYDROELECTRIC PROJECTS.**

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POINT 2: ENVIRONMENTAL ASPECT OF SITE C DAM - THE MEANING OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

INTERESTINGLY, WHILE THE JAMES BAY PROJECT MUST HAVE HAD ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS. ESPECIALLY ON THE INDIGENOUS LANDS, THESE WERE NOT HIGHLIGHTED IN NUNGAK'S MEMOIR OR DESBIEN'S ARTICLE ON THE JAMES BAY PROJECT. THIS IS LIKELY BECAUSE OF THE OLDER NATURE OF THE QUEBEC PROJECT, WHICH HAPPENED IN THE 1970S. IN CONTRAST, THE SITE C PROJECT IS VERY RECENT: THEREFORE, ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS WERE A BIGGER POINT ADDRESSED IN THE LATTER CASE. THIS TELLS US THAT TIMEFRAMES CAN MAKE A HUGE DIFFERENCE IN WHAT GETS EMPHASIZED WHEN IT COMES TO MAJOR HYDROELECTRIC DAMS AND THE

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POINT 3: ECONOMIC ASPECT OF JAMES BAY PROJECT AND SITE C DAM - STRONG VS WEAK BUSINESS CASE?

A common justification for both of the dam projects comes from economic motivations. While the Quebec project was seen as promising for the prosperity of the land, culture and people (Desbien 32), the reality is very different for the Site C Dam. For the Quebec dam, following the meaning behind the political slogan "Maitres Chez Nous" (Desbien 22) was the ambitious goal of the premier to give 100,000 jobs to the citizens of Quebec. This made it seem a very promising project. In reality, Nungak and his people fought for their rights only to be rejected due to the interests of many outweighing those of a few (Nungak 531). However, the Quebec project made much more economic sense when seen as a historical case than Site C. This brings the question of the real motivation behind the Site C project. POINT 3: ECONOMIC ASPECT OF JAMES BAY PROJECT AND SITE C DAM - STRONG VS WEAK BUSINESS CASE?

According to Hatch's documentary, Sarah Cox explains that the BC Utilities Commission report on the economic impacts of the Site C dam is "damn telling," indicating that there was no real need for this project (Ol:OO:21). On top of offering 1000 jobs approximately (Hatch), a small number compared to the Quebec Dam, the dam being significantly over budget, and also within an economy where most people were employed (Hatch), this project is considered "weak business case." (Behn and Bakker 99). When we see it from this lens, it can be infuriating and disappointing for the First Nations that their homes have to be threatened due to sheer greed. We will dive into understanding the motivations behind the dams in the next point; however, after analyzing the two dams based on economic motivations, it is clear that while it may have been a clear motive for James Bay, it was not the case for Site C.

ONE COMMON POINT DISCOVERED AFTER ANALYZING THE FOUR PRIMARY SOURCES FOR THIS PROJECT IS THE CRITICISM TOWARDS THE CANADIAN GOVERNMENT AND LEGAL STRUCTURE. SARAH COX, FROM HATCH'S DOCUMENTARY, EXPLAINS THE POLITICAL MOTIVATIONS PERFECTLY FOR BC AND QUEBEC'S DAM CASES (HATCH, 23:09)

"SITE C HAS BEEN A POLITICAL PROJECT. IT WAS APPROVED IN THE PROVINCIAL ELECTION IN THE OFFING. THEY BASICALLY CAMPAIGNED ON A JOBS, JOBS, JOBS FOR BC PLATFORM. POLITICIANS THINK SHORT TERM, NOT LONG TERM. THEY LIKE TO POSE IN FRONT OF MEGA PROJECTS WEARING HARD HATS. THEY LIKE THE PHOTO OPPORTUNITIES AND THE GLAMOUR THAT COMES WITH MEGA PROJECTS."

LOOKING AT THE BEHAVIOURS OF BOTH MAJOR DAMS, WE CAN SEE HOW TRUE THIS STATEMENT IS, EVEN IN TWO DIFFERENT

PERIODS.

They're doing their

- Martin Cale

CHIEF ROLAND WILLSON HAD ANOTHER PERSPECTIVE REGARDING THE LAW SYSTEM:

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T ALL PROPERTY

"OUR TWO LITTLE NATIONS ARE DOING EVERYTHING WE CAN TO STAY IN THE FIGHT. TO WIN THIS FIGHT WE HAVE TO STAY IN THE FIGHT. AND THAT'S THE FRUSTRATING PART OF THIS, BECAUSE WE'RE NOT GONNA LOSE BECAUSE WE ARE WRONG, WE ARE GOING TO LOSE BECAUSE WE CAN'T STAY IN THE FIGHT." (OO:38:54).

They're doing their

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THROUGH THIS PATTERN, I REALIZED THE UNJUST PATTERNS BEHIND DAM PROJECTS. FOR ONE, THE FIRST NATIONS MUST CONSTANTLY FIGHT ON THE GROUNDS OF THE WESTERN GOVERNMENT. NUNGAK AND HIS TEAM HAD TO LEARN LAW LINGO TO FIGHT FOR THEMSELVES QUICKLY (NUNGAK, SOURCE). AT THE SAME TIME, IN HATCH'S DOCUMENTARY, THE INJUNCTION HEARING TO PUT AN END TO THE DAM IS "VERY COSTLY." (00:08:30). FURTHERMORE, NUNGAK AND HIS TEAM DESIRED A GOVERNMENT THAT SOLELY MANAGED THEIR SOVEREIGNTY, ONLY FOR THIS PROPOSAL TO BE RIDICULED BY THE QUEBEC GOVERNMENT (NUNGAK 626). THIS RAISES THE QUESTION OF WHETHER THE WESTERN GOVERNMENT IS THE RIGHT WAY TO HANDLE AND MANAGE THE SOCIAL STRUCTURE, EVENTUALLY LEADING TO NUNGAK'S STRAIGHTFORWARD CRITICISM OF THE BRITISH LEGAL SYSTEM AS INDICATED IN THE PREVIOUS PAGE. C ALL PROPERTY AND

THE QUESTION REMAINS: WHAT WAS THE PSYCHOLOGY BEHIND THE ACTIONS? HARRY SWAIN, A MEMBER OF THE FEDERAL ADVISORY PANEL FOR SITE C, SAYS, "I

THINK THAT IT IS ALMOST A CULTURAL, INSTITUTIONAL MINDSET. I DO NOT THINK IT IS THE GUILTY PEOPLE. I DO NOT THINK IT IS EVIL PEOPLE, IT'S JUST PEOPLE." (HATCH O1:02:41) INDICATING THAT HUMAN NATURE IS JUST HOW IT IS. HOWEVER, THE ANSWER BECOMES DIFFERENT WHEN WE CONSIDER THE FIRST NATIONS ASPECT. IN DESBIEN'S ARTICLE, THE FIRST NATIONS BELIEVE THAT THE DEATH OF A PREMIER WAS DESERVED AS HE CLOGGED THE RIVERS; THEREFORE, DYING OF A HEART ATTACK CLOGGING THE ARTERIES IS JUSTIFIED AS A PUNISHMENT FROM

NATURE (37).

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FURTHERMORE, THE FIRST NATIONS HAVE ALWAYS MAINTAINED THEIR DIGNITY TOWARDS THE FIGHT AGAINST THEIR LANDS AND RIGHTS. IN BEHN AND BAKKER'S ARTICLE WHEN THE STORY OF THE SITE C DAM WAS TOLD FROM THE FIRST NATIONS PERSPECTIVE, THIS WAS SPOKEN AS A LESSON, "DO NOT TREAT THEM THE WAY THE WHITE PEOPLE TREAT US, WITH THEIR SAWS AND MACHINES AND HOLES IN THE EARTH AND THEIR DAMS THAT DESTROY THE SACRED WATER," (BEHN AND BAKKER 112). THIS IDEOLOGY IS ALSO SHOWN IN HATCH'S DOCUMENTARY WHEN A MAN MENTIONS THE PRESENCE OF THE RCMP, SAYING, "WE DO NOT QUARREL WITH THEM; WE ARE JUST DOING OUR JOB, AND THEY ARE DOING THEIRS"

(HATCH).

I'm going to Ottawa and stand up for the Peace River people.

02:42/1:23:44

I don't think it's evil

· Martin

people, it's just p

THIS BEGS THE QUESTION FROM HARRY'S STATEMENT: IS IT REALLY JUST PEOPLE, NO EVIL PEOPLE? THE FIRST NATIONS HAVE BENT THEIR BACKS TO FIGHT FOR WHAT BELONGS TO THEM IN A CIVIL WAY THAT FOLLOWS THE WESTERN GOVERNMENT'S IDEOLOGIES. THE FIRST NATIONS HAVE ONLY EVER FELT DISAPPOINTMENT AND ANGER TOWARDS THEIR GOVERNMENT BUT STILL MAINTAIN THEIR VALUES AND DIGNITY ALONG THE WAY.

to put an end to this

dam is very costly.

CONCLUSION

We can understand patterns through the two events after looking at the four sources and synthesizing an analysis by categorizing the two hydroelectric dam projects into environmental, cultural, economic, and political stances. Overall, there is a sad truth to the two projects: that the First Nations have been wronged and that voices need to be louder and more assertive. As long as awareness spreads, there will be change, and the fight that the First Nations have been fighting for will always be worth it.

Throughout this zine is a collection of all the findings of the four sources, as well as any symbolic numbers and cultural meanings. I have decided that with my recent emergence of findings, my initial project proposal of creating one's slogans and symbols does not do justice to what the First Nations have gone through; these sources, although a start, represent the true work of spreading the injustice the First Nations have gone through, and embracing this is the first step of change.



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