

## Knowing Ourselves

By Ken Osborne

### The Emergence of "Canadian Studies"

The last fifteen years have seen the emergence of a new subject in Canadian schools and universities: Canadian Studies. There are Canadian Studies courses and programmes in schools and universities; directors, coordinators and centres of Canadian Studies in colleges and universities; there are institutes of Canadian Studies; there is a Canada Studies Foundation; and, of course, there is an Association and a Journal of Canadian Studies. Indeed, in the schools some people are now asking whether we are not overdoing Canadian Studies. In Ontario, for example, students study Canadian topics in their social studies courses in Grades 7, 8, and 9; in Manitoba in grades 9, 10 and 11. Not surprisingly, some eyebrows are being raised at what is seen as an overemphasis on things Canadian to the exclusion of the rest of the world — a world that includes Central America, the Middle East, South-East Asia and other regions about which no one can afford to be ill-informed.

In colleges and universities, there are more courses devoted to Canadian themes and topics than ever before. Most faculties include at least some Canadian courses in their calendars. In addition, of course, there are the traditional staples of Canadian history and geography, not to mention the distinguished Canadian tradition of political economy, although it is often submerged by its more positivist North American social science rivals. And, in recent years, a few universities and colleges have developed interdisciplinary courses with such titles as Canadian Identity; Culture in Canada; Land, Environment and Culture; the Canadian Experience.

As if all this were not enough, the federal government has also closely involved itself in Canadian Studies. The

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Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada has declared Canadian Studies to be an area of strategic grants, to the concern of some academics, who worry about the threat to university autonomy and scholarly independence posed by direct government sponsorship of research. The Department of the Secretary of State has also funded Canadian Studies activities, initiating in 1982 a \$1,500,000 programme of support to selected organizations and, in addition, being heavily involved in the support of language training in English and French and of multicultural activities and programmes. Less well known, the Department of External Affairs is also active in sponsoring Canadian Studies activities — seminars, conferences, displays, development of materials and so on — beyond the borders of Canada.

And, finally, various non-governmental organizations are actively involved in the promotion of Canadian Studies, the most conspicuous being the Canada Studies Foundation, the Association of Canadian Studies, the Association of Community Colleges of Canada, and the Association of Universities and Colleges. The first three of these are in fact subsidized by the Department of the Secretary of State, at least so far as their Canadian Studies activities are concerned. And, of course, the lower established scholarly organizations such as the Canadian Historical Association, the Humanities Association, and the rest, continue their interest and activities.

This catalogue could be extended, but it does illustrate a considerable growth of interest in the concern for Canadian Studies in Canada. In one sense, this is not new, for Canadians have long pondered their country's prospects. As Joseph Levitt has recently reminded us, "For at least a century thoughtful Canadians have reflected on their country's destiny. What would be the outcome of its political development? Would it remain a British colony, become part of the United States or somehow turn into an independent country?"<sup>1</sup> An English historian, reviewing the state of Canadian historiography in 1977, called upon Canadian historians "to write about Canadians without being constantly preoccupied with the mystery of what is Canada."<sup>2</sup> Nonetheless, despite this long tradition, there is something new about the attention being paid to Canadian Studies in the last fifteen or so years. In the first place, the term itself is new, at least as a more or less accepted academic designation. In the second, there is a greater attention paid to institutionalizing Canadian Studies in courses and programmes. In

the third, despite the problems faced by Canadian publishers, there is a greater output of Canadian writing, research and scholarship, if only because of the university expansion of the late 1960's.

### Key Events

The key events in the process, although it is a matter of personal judgement to select them, can be fairly easily established:

- 1965 The establishment of The Journal of Canadian Studies at Trent University
- 1968 The publication of *What Culture? What Heritage?*
- 1970 The creation of the Canada Studies Foundation
- 1973 The establishment of the Association for Canadian Studies
- 1975 The publication of the Symons Report, *To Know Ourselves*
- 1978 The publication of *Teaching Canada For the '80's* by the Canada Studies Foundation
- 1979 The publication, by the Science Council of Canada, of a position paper, *Science in a Canadian Context*
- 1982 The declaration by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council that Canadian Studies was a strategic grant area, and the establishment of a Canadian Studies programme by the Department of the Secretary of State.

*What Culture? What Heritage?*, which appeared in 1968, was a report on the teaching of Canadian history in schools across the country. It was a devastating indictment. It found the content of history curricula to be outmoded, dull and even dangerous. The textbooks were worse but even they were better than the atrocious teaching that was found to exist in the great majority of Canadian history classrooms. The report, however, dealt with more than just history teaching and, as a result, had an impact on many people besides teachers. For one thing, it blamed a wide range of institutions for the depressing state of affairs it described: faculties of arts, teacher training institutions, departments of education, school boards, publishers — all took their lumps. In other words, if the schools were bad, it was not their fault alone. For another, the report linked the state of history teaching to questions of citizenship, to the "quality of civic life" in the phrase of its author, Birnie Hodgetts. In his words: "The majority of English-speaking high school graduates leave the Canadian Studies classroom without the

intellectual skills, the knowledge and the attitudes they should have to play an effective role as citizens in the present-day Canada."<sup>3</sup>

These findings and the alarm created led directly to the creation of the Canada Studies Foundation in 1970, an organization which devoted itself — and continues to do so — to the production of better Canadian Studies materials and curricula in schools and which has sought to involve university scholars working co-operatively with teachers to this end. This is not the place to review the role and record of the Foundation but its influence has been profound in putting Canadian Studies on the agenda of discussions about schools and curriculum reform.

*What Culture? What Heritage?* did for the schools, the Symons Report, *To Know Ourselves*, did for colleges and universities. Symons was commissioned by the Association of Universities and Colleges in Canada to investigate what was and was not being done in Canadian Studies in post-secondary institutions, though more diplomatically worded, his report was just as devastating. He concluded, more in sorrow than in anger, that Canadian universities and colleges were simply not devoting enough time and energy to the study of the society that sustained them. In brief: "the result of the Commission's examination of about fifty areas of academic work, teaching and research is that there is no area . . . in which a reasonable balance is being given to Canadian matters."<sup>4</sup> Even more disturbing, "there was a tremendous doubt about whether it was academically appropriate or worthwhile or legitimate or dignified for scholars and teachers to pay attention to Canadian questions. Also there was downright hostility or disdain . . ."<sup>5</sup> Since 1975 there has been a tremendous change of attitude, due in large part to the impact of the Report itself and the discussion that ensued. Equally important were two of Symons' other arguments. First, he insisted that Canadian Studies was more than a Faculty of Arts responsibility, that is concerned all faculties and schools in the university. Thus, he reported on Home Economics, Architecture, Social Work, Engineering, Law — in fact, every part of the modern university. Second, and this promises to be perhaps the most enduring influence of the Report, Symons offered a justification of and a rationale for Canadian Studies which has been widely, though not universally, accepted. His fundamental argument rested on the importance of

self-knowledge:

. . . the most valid rationale for Canadian Studies is not any relationship that such studies have to the preservation or the promotion of national identity, or national unity, or national sovereignty, or anything of the kind. The most valid and compelling argument for Canadian Studies is the importance of self-knowledge, the need to know and to understand ourselves.<sup>6</sup>

This formulation has its problems but it did and does offer a convincing, reasoned and reasonable argument for the necessity of Canadian Studies.

Reference should also be made to a third report which has not received the attention which it should have, although it has been influential with the Department of the Secretary of State which has largely accepted it as the framework for its programme of support for Canadian Studies. The report is entitled *Teaching Canada for the '80's*, and one of its authors is the same Birnie Hodgetts who earlier wrote *What Culture? What Heritage?* In that book he indicated what was wrong; in *Teaching Canada* he (and his co-author Paul Gallagher) suggests what should be done to put it right. It suggested an overall framework for a Canadian Studies curriculum designed to enhance what it described as "pan-Canadian understanding" and to produce "the skilled and sensitive public opinion needed to resolve deep-seated difference in the Canadian political community before tension levels became dangerously high."<sup>7</sup>

And lastly, to indicate how seriously Canadian Studies is being taken at least by some people, it is worth noticing a 1979 position paper issued by the Science Council of Canada and called, interestingly enough, *Science in a Canadian Context*. Even the allegedly international, or at least a national sphere of science has to be to some extent redirected, for, in the words of the Science Council, "adequate recognition of a Canadian context for science education ought to be a basic educational objective."<sup>8</sup>

### Forces Promoting Interest in Canadian Studies

The question arises: what lies behind these developments? Why the interest and concern on the part of educational institutions, government and some sections of the public? As with most phenomena, one can trace antecedents back almost indefinitely. There is a long Canadian tradition of seeing education in terms of

citizenship. In Quebec the issue has been one of "la survivance" and education is regarded as crucial to the preservation and enrichment of a living French culture, with its strong emphasis upon "notre maître, le passé." As Ramsay Cook has pointed out, however, survival is more than a Quebec preoccupation. It has obsessed English-speaking Canada also.<sup>9</sup> And it is no coincidence, after all, that Margaret Atwood called her study of the themes of Canadian literature, *Survival*. Survival, however, depends upon a committed citizenry and thus we return to education. As Vincent Massey put it in 1936: "To the schools we must look for the good Canadian"<sup>10</sup> However, the origins of Canadian Studies in their present form are to be found in the 1960's when a combination of problems focussed attention on questions of Canada's future — what it would be and even whether it had one.

The Quiet Revolution in Quebec obviously had this effect. In Anglophone Canada, the often-heard question was, "What does Quebec want?" and the standard Quebec response was to refuse to answer the question in those terms (beyond the slogan, "maîtres chez nous"), since to do so implied that English Canada was somehow in a position to grant or to refuse the "request." In any event, as is well known, there arose, not for the first time, the phenomenon of separatism or, at the very least, a revised federalism and the Pearson government set up the Royal Commission of Bilingualism and Biculturalism and embarked on its policy of cooperative federalism. To simplify a complex question: Whenever the dominion government was perceived to be doing something to "satisfy" Quebec, some other region of the country would embark on a me-too campaign. Out of the whole debate emerged a central question, or really two questions: What kind of country was Canada and what kind of country should it become?

One of the many effects of the Quiet Revolution was the rise to conscious political power of the "third force" — all those Canadians of neither English nor French descent, who objected to the implicit designation of Canada as a bilingual and bicultural country. Some argued for multilingualism and multiculturalism, but most settled for the latter without the former. And, indeed, the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism came out in favour of bilingualism and multiculturalism, a policy which was written into statute in 1971 when parliament accepted the Prime Minister's state-

ment that Canada was pledged to a policy of multiculturalism within a bilingual framework . . . National unity, if it is to mean anything in the deeply personal sense, must be founded on confidence in one's own individual identity: out of this can grow respect for that of others and a willingness to share ideas, attitudes and assumptions.<sup>11</sup>

One important aspect of the current interest in Canadian Studies is the urge to come to grips with implications of cultural pluralism.

The questions of what kind of country Canada was and could be were sharpened in the 1960s' by increasing concern over the extent of United States' control over the Canadian economy and of its cultural apparatus. It is, of course, obvious that World War II saw the end of Britain as a major world power and the emergence of the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. as super-powers. This posed problems for Canada, which was located between the two rivals and which had to accustom itself to a no-longer isolationist U.S.A. Concern over U.S. influence was not especially new, dating back at least to the Loyalists. As the Rev. A.W.H. Rose wrote in 1849:

Portraits of Her Majesty, Prince Albert and the royal children, Wellington and Nelson, views of Windsor Castle, the Houses of Parliament, our wooden walls and such like, are greatly wanted to be disseminated in Canada, to supplant, as far as possible, the influx

of tawdry sheets portraying "the signing of the Declaration of Independence," Washington, General Taylor, the Capitol, the Mexican battles, etc.<sup>12</sup>

There is something engaging about the prospect of Canadians being seduced into accepting Yankee republicanism by the portrait of General Taylor, but this concern about U.S. influence remains a vital part of Canadian life. In 1970 a Senate Committee on the Mass Media speculated that Canada might not be around ten years hence unless something was done about the media. 1980 has passed and we are still here, but the problems remain and the issues of Canadian content and regulation of the airwaves remain high on the political agenda, especially in the age of cable TV and satellite communications.

In the 1960's this concern about Canada's increasing dependence on the U.S.A. took several forms. One was an increasing awareness of the extent to which Canada's economy was not only tied to but dominated by U.S. based multinational corporations, as documented for example in the Watkins Report on **Foreign Ownership and the Structure of Canadian Industry**. A second was the realization that the Canadian media were becoming too American in their content and control. As a result, new legislation was enacted stipulating Canadian ownership and content regulations for both print and non-print media. The National Broadcasting Act of 1968, which included both private and public systems in

its definition of the broadcasting system, declared that

the Canadian broadcasting system should be effectively owned and controlled by Canadians so as to safeguard, enrich and strengthen the cultural, political, social and economic fabric of Canada

with the aim not only of providing "a balanced service of information, enlightenment and entertainment" but also of contributing to "the development of national unity and provid[ing] for a continuing expression of Canadian identity."<sup>13</sup> A third form of the general concern appeared in the criticism, in some circles, of what was regarded as the Americanization of the Canadian university system as the university expansion of the 1960's led to the hiring of U.S. trained graduates and the use of U.S.-oriented materials.

The 1967 centennial of Confederation also played a part in the emerging Canadian awareness of the 1960's, inevitably giving rise to countless speeches, articles and books celebrating Canada's past and speculating on Canada's future. Perhaps Laurier's prediction that the 20th century would be Canada's century would come true at last. Alternatively, as Donald Creighton suggested, perhaps Canada's first 100 years would also be her last. If nothing else, the centennial provided a seemingly never-ending occasion for displaying the new Canadian flag, created in 1965, amid considerable controversy. The flag debate of 1964-65 was itself a prolonged teach-in on the nature of Canada, since all the different designs, colours, symbols and insignia that were suggested reflected different conceptions of the country.

And, as if all this were not enough, the 1960's also played their part in the endemic debate over the nature of Canadian federalism. With the end of the second world war, the provinces began to re-assert themselves and the economic boom of the 1950's and 1960's greatly increased the sources of wealth available to the provinces. The Pearson government responded to this with a policy of "cooperative federalism" but the whole issue raised questions of the division of powers between federal and provincial governments and, more fundamentally, of the kind of society that Canada was to be. The question is, of course, very much alive, as defined in the debate between Pierre Trudeau's insistence that Canada is more than the sum of its parts and that the federal government speaks for a national interest that no collection of provinces can, and Joe Clark's definition of Canada as a community of communities.

These questions of the 1960's have not gone away. If anything, they have become more intense. And, of course, they antedated the sixties. They are the defining questions of Canada's existence. But they did create a sense of uncertainty

about the future. Despite the economic growth, the large-scale immigration, the sweeping changes that occurred in Canadian life between 1945 and the early 1970's, taking the period as a whole, many Canadians were unsure what the future held.

In any event, the study of Canada became a matter of some importance: either to investigate where we were and where we might be going; or to hold on to what we had and prevent erosion; or to promote some particular vision. Some conservative intellectuals felt that it was already too late: in this spirit George Grant wrote his **Lament for a Nation** and Donald Creighton pointed to **The Forked Road**, arguing that we had taken the wrong turning. Others felt there was still a chance: "For the members of a country or a culture, shared knowledge of their place, their home, is not a luxury but a necessity."<sup>14</sup> On this, everyone agreed; Canadians simply did not know enough about themselves and "without that knowledge we will not survive."<sup>15</sup>

#### The Purpose of Canadian Studies

There are some, though only a few, who argue that Canadian Studies is or should be directed to the pursuit of Canadian unity. One suspects, for example, that one reason why the federal government supports Canadian Studies arises from its understandable commitment to Canadian unity. At the time of the Quebec referendum debate it established an Office of National Unity. The National Broadcasting Act speaks of it explicitly. The problem is, of course, that to speak of unity smacks of uniformity and, given the strength of regionalism in Canadian society and given the historical tensions, implies an assimilating homogenizing impulse. As Cole Harris has put it: "Canada is sustained by nationalism based on experience and destroyed by nationalism based on cultural belief."<sup>16</sup>

In any case, for those involved in educational work to commit themselves to national unity is to commit themselves not to education but to propaganda, not to opening minds but to closing them. As Symons put it, "The function of the university is to train the critical intellect not to inculcate belief."<sup>17</sup> Indeed, this holds true at all levels of education: "Patriotic appeals to preserve and develop Canadian identity do not constitute, in practice or in principle, an adequate rationale for Canadian Studies at any level of education."<sup>18</sup>

Nonetheless, it is clearly not quite this simple. There exists in most Canadianists a commitment to the continued existence of Canada. For them Canadian Studies is not simply an academic interest to which they can devote dispassionate scholarly commitment. There is also a feeling there, a sense of urgency. With the important exception of the native peoples, after all,

Canada is a land of immigrants, there more or less by choice and not compelled to stay. Having chosen to live there, it is not surprising if they wish to see their chosen land sustained.

More widely acceptable, and in fact more generally accepted, than national unity as a goal of Canadian Studies, is the concept of national identity, a phrase which is much used by Canadians. The problem is, of course, that there is nothing beyond the most general agreement concerning what the Canadian identity is or should be. Many are concerned about it, but there is no agreement as to what it is. Further, it is not completely clear what it means to have an identity anyway. Armour distinguishes between two meanings. On the one hand are those common beliefs, traditions, assumptions, conventions (often not consciously thought about) shared by people in a given society. On the other, are those things which people think about when they think of themselves as Canadian, for instance flags, constitutions, anthems.<sup>19</sup> Proponents of Canadian identity have usually thought in terms of the second rather than the first.

Without pursuing this further, it is obvious that there are many contenders for the title of Canadian identity. There are still those, for example, who think in terms of a unitary and probably unilingual nation-state in the classic nineteenth century sense. There are also those who favor the existing bilingual and multicultural society, or some variation of it. There are those who prefer the vision, once derided by Lord Durham, of two nations within a single state and there are those who want not only two nations but two states also, with whatever association may be created between them. And there is the vexed and complex question of the extent, implications and desirability of regional identities in Canadian society. There occurred a revealing episode at one recent federal-provincial conference when, opening the meeting, Prime Minister Trudeau looked at all the provincial Premiers sitting around the table and asked, "Who speaks for Canada?" His question was presumably meant to be rhetorical, implying the answer that only the federal government could. He did not bargain upon Premier Lougheed of Alberta, however, who quickly leaned forward and, on behalf of his fellow Premiers, replied, "We all do, Mr. Prime Minister, we all do."

The importance of local and regional identities in Canada can hardly be denied. Canada, after all, is "a multicultural, three-party, two-language federal state of ten provinces, two territories and three major aboriginal groups."<sup>20</sup> Northrop Frye has put it the most eloquently:

It is not often realized that unity and identity are quite different things to be promoting, and that in Canada they are perhaps more dif-

ferent than anywhere else. Identity is local and regional, rooted in the imagination and in works of culture; unity is national in reference, international in perspective, and rooted in a political feeling. . . .

The tension between this political sense of unity and the imaginative sense of locality is the essence of whatever the word "Canadian" means. Once the tension is given up and the two elements of unity are confused or assimilated to each other, we get the two endemic diseases of Canadian life. Assimilating identity to unity produces the empty gestures of cultural nationalism; assimilating unity to identity produces the kind of provincial isolation which is now called separatism.<sup>21</sup>

Maurice Careless made a similar point when he drew attention to the salience of "limited identities" in the Canadian experience. As he put it, "the nation-building approach to Canadian history neglects and obscures even while it explains and illuminates, and may tell us less about the Canada that now is, than the Canada that should have been — but has not come to pass."<sup>22</sup> In the same vein, the geographer Cole Harris, pointed out that Canada is really a series of "islands," settled at different times, in different geographical contexts and with different cultural traditions.<sup>23</sup>

Whether one thinks of identity or identities, however, there are certain common, shared conditions which have also to be taken into account. Northrop Frye has often shown how the sparsely populated vastness of Canada has affected its cultural expression. W.L. Morton argued for the centrality of the north: "The Canadian Shield is as central in Canadian history as it is in Canadian geography and to all understanding of Canada."<sup>24</sup> The Canadian Studies Foundation has defined certain "basic features" of Canada. Leslie Armour has drawn attention to a common tradition of an organic society, although it is now being eroded.

One could go on, but the point is clear. If Canadian Studies is concerned with questions of identity and, above all, with self-knowledge, the question arises: what is it that is to be known? Or is it simply too late? George Grant implies this. George Woodcock makes no bones about it, having concluded that Canadian federalism no longer has anything to offer: "There is no point in Canadians becoming late arriving nationalists in a world where the nation-state . . . is already obsolete."<sup>25</sup> Whatever the answers, they raise considerable problems of definition, for if one question is, what are Canadian Studies for?, another is, what is it that they are?; and it is a question which has caused a good deal of puzzlement for

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those developing curricula and programmes of study.

### What Are Canadian Studies?

It is generally agreed that the call for Canadian Studies is not simply a call for more Canadian content in the curriculum. The lack of such content was a problem in the 1960's and early 1970's and remains a problem in a few topic-areas, but by and large it has been overcome.

There are those who differentiate between Canadian Studies and the study of Canada. The latter includes anything and everything dealing with things Canadian, be it history, literature, geography, botany or whatever. It therefore includes all approaches based upon a single discipline. The former term Canadian Studies, on the other hand, is reserved, in this view, for an interdisciplinary, integrated attempt to see Canada whole. It is an attempt to come to terms with the totality of the Canadian experience, arguing that reality is multi-faceted and complex and that no single academic discipline can do more than present one slice of it. There is, in reality, no one royal road. The goal is that the curriculum, at all levels of education, should "help Canadians in some way to understand the physical and social environment that they live and work in, that affects so profoundly their daily lives, and that in turn is affected by their actions."<sup>26</sup> Given this goal, there are obviously many ways of attaining it.

The particular difficulty is to do justice to all facets of the Canadian environment in a reasonably comprehensive way, while at the same time striking a reasonable balance between the regional and the national. In regard to the former, there are still gaps. Symons not long ago pointed to important areas that remain inadequately studied.<sup>27</sup> They included the north ("an academic desert"); broadcasting, especially its historical records ("obscured by decades of inertia and neglect"); science and technology ("Canadians have little knowledge of their notable engineering heritage and of the considerable contributions which have been made by our engineers to science and technology"); and education ("the most neglected Canadian Study.") In addition, in areas which have long paid a good deal of attention to Canadian concerns, new methodologies are being applied and new discoveries made.

As for the regional-national balance, the Canada Studies Foundation has made distinction between Canada Studies and Canadian Studies. The former are defined as those which are of national ("pan-Canadian" is the Foundation's term) application and import; the latter deal only with local or regional concerns. Since the priority is that Canadians see their country whole, in all its diversity, and in its in-

ternational setting, the emphasis, argues the Foundation, must be placed on Canada Studies.

### Educational Technology

In all of this, educational technology obviously has an important part to play. One of the fundamental goals of Canada, or Canadian Studies, after all is to explain Canadians to one another and this is no easy task in a country which is so large and so diverse. It is a commonplace that Canada is a country of regions and that these regions are not well-informed about each other. In any given place in Canada, for example, the flow of news is usually national, in the sense that it deals with federal politics, and local, in the sense that it deals with events of immediate interest in that particular place. What is lacking is any sustained account of other regions and their particular concerns and outlooks. This can be demonstrated by an elementary analysis of almost any newspaper, radio or television programme despite the commitment to "national unity" described in the National Broadcasting Act. Educational technology can play a major role in remedying this state of affairs. Educational television, satellite communications, locally produced programmes made available for national distribution, films, radio hook-ups — the possibilities are endless. Beyond these more or less commonplace technologies lie the mind-boggling possibilities of the communications revolution. If the Canadian Studies movement is to achieve its full potential of informing Canadians about themselves and each other in order to produce a richer and more rewarding sense of community, then the potential of educational technology cannot be ignored, as the articles in this special issue of *Canadian Journal of Educational Communication* all in their different ways suggest.

### NOTES

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### Media News

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sophisticated space research applications center at Ahmedabad. They also visited the community science center which provides laboratory facilities and experiments in elementary science to young students in a model similar to Canada's Ontario Science Center. The tour concluded with visits to the Department of Communication at Poona and a brief wrap-up in Bombay.

### AMTEC Media Festival Awards

The results of the 1983 Media Festival Awards were not available for publication at press time for this issue. AMTEC members should be interested to know

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# "Canadian Eh!" Technological Change and Canadian Studies

By T.R. Morrison

We are currently living in a world in which the products of our own human genius are simultaneously the source of both our most pressing problems and enlivening opportunities. The world we have created, and particularly the maps we have drawn to guide us through the resultant maze, has now become the obsession of our lives. To an extent heretofore rare in history, the ways in which the human mind *invents* reality, *acts upon* this invention and analyses the relation between each, is the central problematique of society. We have not only become conscious, but conscious of our consciousness. Indeed, the new science of artificial intelligence is founded on efforts to "model" this awareness.<sup>1</sup> The result is a world of increasing complexity, much of it human-generated.

Let me provide you with a "concrete abstraction" of what I am talking about. Today, the most dominant focus in social discourse concerns the deplorable state of the economy. Undoubtedly, this is a disturbing situation, one filled with human tragedy. That being said, what can this discourse reveal to us. How does it relate to the theme of human-generated complexity?

When we discuss the economy today, a number of patterns can be noticed. Firstly, we talk of the "economy" as if it existed apart from the invention of man. The economy can be anything we want it to be. Within it, for example, we can raise GNP, by conventional counting methods, by adding and valuing the work in the so-called informal economy, particularly the household.<sup>2</sup> Secondly, when we discuss our economic problems, we do so within abstract models, that is, intellectual inventions of them. We talk of inflation rates, price, interest rates, demand, consumer confidence through the use of models we have created. We also reify these models. We invent them, forget that they are not reality but representations of it, and discuss economic reality as if the models were reality.

Our problems today, economic or what have you, have increasingly less to do with reality, than with our minds' representation of them. This is exacer-

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bated by the fact that the time gap between representation of an image of reality and having others share and think through it, has narrowed immensely. This has been brought about primarily by the rapid impact of "communications technology" (CT) in our society.<sup>3</sup>

The word communications may strike one as rather strange. Let me briefly elaborate upon its meaning and significance. The concept deals essentially with a fundamental process currently at work in society: the merging of hard and soft technologies. Throughout the nineteenth and up to the mid-twentieth century, communication could be divided, roughly, into two distinct realms. One was mail, newspapers, books and magazines, printed on paper and delivered by physical transport or stored in libraries. The other realm was the telephone, radio telegraph and television. Coded message image or voice sent by radio signals or through cables from person to person.

Technology, which once made for separate industries, is now erasing these distinctions, so that a variety of new alternatives are now available to information users. Consider the following:

1. The meshing of telephone and computer systems, of telecommunications and teleprocessing, into a single mode.
2. The substitution of electronic media for paper processing. This includes such developments as electronic banking, electronic mail, facsimile delivery of newspapers and magazines.
3. The expansion of television through cable systems, to allow for multiple channels and specialized services and the linkage to home terminals to direct response to customer or home from local or central stations.
4. The reorganization of information storage and retrieval systems based on the computer to allow for interactive network communication in team research and direct retrieval from data bank to home or library terminals.
5. The expansion of computer-managed and mediated instruction.

Technologically, then, telecommunications and teleprocessing are merging into a new mode called "communications." The distinction between processing and communicating is becoming increasingly indistinguishable. This technological merging, moreover, is leading to the development of integrated human and social technologies: management information and strategic planning systems are prime examples.<sup>4</sup> These integrative soft systems, as the communications technologies which underpin them, are

generic innovations, since they are intended to be used and applied at a system-wide level. Strategic planning systems, in other words, are applied to the corporate, voluntary and public sectors alike. The lesson is clear: the model is more important than that to which one applies it. This new era of the "triumph of the model" can, as will be discussed later, either liberate or entrap mankind. In any event, any serious discussion of Canadian Studies must, if it is to have any relevance, address the origins and consequences of this emerging "mind set" of a new society.<sup>5</sup>

A young baby today faces a world in which images of reality are rapidly created, codified, modelled, analyzed, acted upon, evaluated, altered, or dispensed with, and linked increasingly to other such images. And, this is an increasingly intentional and deliberate process. Moreover, we have emergent labels for the sciences which propel the process: systems analysis, information science, decision-theory, operations research, artificial intelligence and cognitive science.<sup>6</sup> For educators, people who presumably are the most future-focused of all — that is, they help prepare people to understand, adapt to, and change the world they live in — a perennial question emerges anew: what is it that people should be encouraged to learn and how should that learning occur?

In approaching this question, a fundamental principle must be grasped: There is no meaning apart from context. One's hand has meaning in context of one's body. Education, and similarly schools, have no meaning apart from context. Grasp the context and the assignment of meaning of those things within it is a simple matter. In the following pages, an effort will be made to sketch briefly a particular context within which the meaning of education, and hence any approach to Canadian Studies, might be understood.

Of the various forces which are likely to alter the context of education in the future, two are of vital importance. These are, firstly, the social impacts to be generated by the application of increasing sophisticated innovational technology to the world around us and secondly the interpretation given by man to these processes and developments. Both factors are critical and integrative: technological change and man's interpretation of it each determine action if any. Education, it follows, must attend to both. Let me turn first to technological change.

Technological innovation proceeds in roughly three stages. Currently, we are