

CanadaWatch

PRACTICAL AND AUTHORITATIVE ANALYSIS OF KEY NATIONAL ISSUES

CANADIAN STUDIES: A FUTURE?

INTRODUCTION

Son of phase one

As many of the articles to this special issue of *Canada Watch* dedicated to Canadian Studies incorporate the personal histories of their authors, I am afraid that I will have to come clean with mine. I was in the process of completing my doctorate in a rather innovative media studies program at SUNY/Buffalo when, much to my surprise, I was hired to teach Film Studies at the University of Western Ontario. Yes, I had to find London, Ontario on a map.

BY SETH FELDMAN

Seth Feldman is the director of the Robarts Centre for Canadian Studies.

When I arrived in 1975 and took my place as a newly minted New Yorker/Canadian, I was in for a bit of a culture shock. My knowledge of Canada was largely limited to my field, though no small thing that. McLuhanism was in its heyday, the National Film Board and the CBC

Son of phase one, page 2

Canadian Studies: A victim of its own success?

CHALLENGES FACING CANADIAN STUDIES PROGRAMS IN CANADA

In theory, Canadian Studies should be a thriving academic pursuit across the country. Today, an unprecedented number of scholars focus on Canadian issues. We Canadians have good reasons to be interested in the issues we face as individuals and as a collectivity: because of the series of challenges facing the country as a whole, ongoing concerns about Quebec's place in the country, the historical inequalities experienced by Aboriginal peoples, women, ethnic and racial minorities, and the differently abled, and current fears about

BY COLIN COATES

Colin Coates is coordinator of the Canadian Studies program at Glendon College, York University and holds the Canada Research Chair in Canadian Cultural Landscapes.

economic and environmental change, Canadian concerns are very much as relevant and important as they are in any other country.

Yet Canadian Studies as an academic enterprise faces difficulties. In many programs, the number of students choosing to major in the "multidiscipline" remains low, even while demand for specific classes

A victim of its own success?, page 3

FEATURES

Son of phase one

by Seth Feldman, page 1

Canadian Studies: A victim of its own success?

by Colin Coates, page 1

What has changed? Three decades in Canadian Studies

by Janice Dickin, page 5

Les études canadiennes à la croisée des chemins ?

Pierre Anctil, page 8

"Your major is Canadian Studies? What's that?"

by Natalie Riggs, page 10

Canadian Studies at a small, undergraduate, Atlantic university: Looking to the future

by Della Stanley, page 11

The ongoing crisis of Canadian Studies

by Richard Nimjean, page 14

Has Canadian Studies had its day?

by Joan Sangster, page 17

The future of Canadian Studies: A Gen-Xer's perspective

by Peter Hodgins, page 20

Toward a recovery of social solidarity?

by Ian Angus, page 22

Letters from Denmark: Thoughts on Canadian Studies

by Claire Campbell, page 24

Too much of a good thing? The case for Canadian Studies in the 21st century

by Andrew Nurse, page 26

Les études québécoises à l'Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières: un programme d'études avancées et un centre de recherche

by Stéphane Castonguay, page 31

The Journal of Canadian Studies then and now

by Donald Wright, page 33

YORK
UNIVERSITÉ
UNIVERSITY



redefine THE POSSIBLE.

were flourishing and innovative institutions, and Canada was known internationally in that small circle of experimental film and video of which I was a part. During my five years in Buffalo, we became familiar with the CBC and often visited Toronto to see films, videos, and the many other cultural artifacts not available where we lived. We also suffered from chief executive envy—Nixon vs. Trudeau—and with the Vietnam War still beckoning, a quick dash to the Peace Bridge was always a possibility.

CANADIAN CONTENT?

It was only when I arrived at Western that I discovered a side to Canada that I could not have imagined. My new employers soon made it clear that they were less interested in Canadian film and Canada's contribution to the new media age than they were in my contribution to the departmental enrolment count with large Hollywood cinema classes. Surely, I thought, the lack of a Canadian Cinema course was an unfortunate oversight. When I proposed designing and teaching such a course, the curriculum committee wanted to see a list of critical literature that would support such a field. There was very little. So Joyce Nelson at Queen's and I, with the energetic support of Peter Medjuk at the University of Toronto, compiled an anthology and found a small publishing house willing to print it.

"And where will you get the films to show?" the curriculum committee asked; another good question. In addition to the National Film Board's rich and universally admired collection of documentary and animation, there were a small number of titles available from the experimental film co-ops and a thin blue catalogue from the Canadian Film Institute that contained most of Canada's surviving cinema heritage (our national film archive having burned to the ground in 1967). Few distributors of Canadian features bothered releasing prints for classroom use. In 1976, a dozen or so of us (an embarrassing number of whom were

Many a Canadian film and filmmaker has been grossly overvalued in an effort to build a national self-esteem.

newly arrived Americans and Brits) organized the Film Studies Association of Canada, in part to generate a demand that might get some films into distribution.

The last piece of the puzzle was the students. It seemed a safe assumption, in the Canada of Pierre Trudeau and the post-PQ national unity crusade, that students would swarm Canadian Cinema. They didn't. Enrolments were small and those students who did enrol grew impatient with the quality of the films. They discovered to their horror that the feature films didn't have the production values or big name talent of Hollywood features. Their comments on the course implied that we were being malicious holding back a parallel universe of film achievement when, in reality, Canada's feature film industry was, at that time, only about a decade old. Its productions were under-budgeted and the true talents of the day were still honing their skills.

Students did admit that the animations were funny—for five or ten minutes. But who cared about documentary? They had seen enough of that in high school. And experimental film, despite our best efforts, was a taste that most students lacked the patience to acquire.

CANADA IN THE SHADOW OF THE UNITED STATES

For a recently arrived immigrant from the self-proclaimed centre of the universe, this willingness to dismiss one's own culture was culture shock indeed.

GUEST EDITOR

Colin Coates, *Canadian Studies Program, Glendon College, York University*

MANAGING EDITOR

Laura Taman

COLUMNISTS THIS ISSUE

Seth Feldman	Colin Coates
Janice Dickin	Pierre Ancil
Natalie Riggs	Della Stanley
Richard Nimijean	Joan Sangster
Peter Hodgins	Ian Angus
Claire Campbell	Andrew Nurse
Stéphane Castonguay	Donald Wright

PRODUCTION

WordsWorth Communications

CONTACT FOR INFORMATION

Canada Watch
227 York Lanes, 4700 Keele St.
Toronto, Ontario M3J 1P3
Phone (416) 736-5499
Fax (416) 736-5739
www.robarts.yorku.ca

For information regarding future issues, contact Laura Taman, Project Manager, Robarts Centre. Please address comments to Seth Feldman, Director, Roberts Centre.

Canada Watch is produced by the Robarts Centre for Canadian Studies of York University.

Copyright © 2007
The Robarts Centre for Canadian Studies

Printed in Canada ISSN 1191-7733

In the years that followed, I have participated in the argument for Canada's importance, hoping all the while for a methodology that avoided the American hubris, allowing Canada to judge itself by its own standards. I'm not sure how successful that has been. Much of what I have experienced as Canadian Studies has been grounded in American-style identity politics as it was practised in the 1960s and 1970s. Many a Canadian film and filmmaker has been grossly overvalued in an effort to build a national


self-esteem. Perhaps too much time has been wasted in the struggle against the oppressor (something else the Americans supplied). Or perhaps it is only in Canadian Cinema that it has taken so long to arrive at the point where we may dismiss some of our work as unworthy and a few well-intentioned policies as really bad ideas.

Still, the end hasn't done badly in justifying the means. Canadian Cinema now has that rich critical literature once in such short supply. From time to time, we catch the notice of the world's top thinkers in our field. And for good reason. It would now be simple to program any Canadian Cinema course with feature films that have won prestigious prizes at international festivals—not that many of us would wish to deprive our students of the old and obscure works.

I can only guess at what, if any, correspondence my experience with Canadian Cinema has with the more general development of Canadian Studies. But I am certain that, ten years from now, Sesquicentennial Canada will celebrate an imagined community that Centennial

I am certain that, ten years from now,
Sesquicentennial Canada will celebrate
an imagined community that Centennial
Canada could barely imagine. Whether that
community is a true post-modern nation or a
hollowed-out brand will have to be settled by
a very different generation

Canada could barely imagine. Whether that community is a true post-modern nation or a hollowed-out brand will have to be settled by a very different generation—a generation shaped by the emergence of intellectual tools that, in the last half-century, have turned the humanities and social sciences inside out. The future of Canadian Studies as a victim of its own success or as a more subtle conscience for a mature (or post-mature) Canada will be up to the students we have seen come and go all these years.

The contributors to this issue of *Canada Watch* are a cross-section of scholars from the early, middle, and later moments of Phase One Canadian Studies. *Canada Watch* and the Robarts Centre are grateful for their thoughts about turning this historical page. We are especially grateful that Colin Coates, a tireless contributor to and organizer of such inquiries into Canadian Studies, has agreed to guest edit this issue for us. And we thank our readers in advance for the thoughtful responses they may wish to share. 

A victim of its own success? continued from page 1

remains high. Few institutions outside of Carleton University, the University of Calgary, Trent University, and Mount Allison University are willing to make designated appointments to Canadian Studies programs; most rely on more cost-effective individual faculty enthusiasms and cross-listings to cobble together a suite of courses. The majority of Canadian universities do not provide a program labelled “Canadian Studies.” Moreover, the first generation of Canadian Studies supporters has reached retirement age, leaving a new cohort to establish and enhance the programs, if they are indeed able to survive. We have arrived at an historical moment when reflection on the future of Canadian Studies is not just of passing interest, but is mandatory.

This Robarts Centre publication examines important issues related to the current state of Canadian Studies in

Canada, with a few glances abroad. In some lights, Canadian Studies is healthy; in others it is in difficulty—hence the differences of opinion expressed in these pages. Some of the contributors call for a return to the origins of the Canadian Studies project, while others celebrate the new directions that the field has taken of late.

CANADIAN STUDIES IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

As many of the writers indicate, there is no doubt that Canadian Studies receives weak institutional support in many parts of the country. In many universities and colleges, it depends on a small number of academic enthusiasts (and of course students!). Moreover, Canadian Studies does not really have a counterpart in francophone Quebec (even if the challenges facing the graduate program in

Études québécoises at the Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières will resonate with anglophone Canadian Studies administrators). Canadian Studies remains, at heart, an English-speaking Canadian endeavour. Even if Canadian Studies was never intended to be unremitting flag-waving patriotism, for some colleagues the future lies in a more critical and theoretical approach to Canadian issues, focusing on First Nations and multicultural critiques of the Canadian nation. For other contributors, institutions must provide better support for their Canadian Studies programs. A few writers point out the vital contributions of Canadianist scholars and students based outside the country, international reminders—borne of the necessity of providing a venue for a wide range of scholars—of the importance of interdisciplinary exchange.

A victim of its own success?, page 4

A victim of its own success? continued from page 3

As some of the contributions suggest, each of us involved in Canadian Studies has arrived through a unique route. I am a product of the English-Canadian response to the rise in Québécois nationalism in the 1970s. I undertook my undergraduate studies in Ottawa, far from my home in British Columbia. Although I had considered pursuing a Canadian Studies degree, at the MA level at least, in the end all my degrees were in History. Completing my PhD and entering the job market at an unfortunate point in the economic and academic cycle, my best prospects for a permanent position were outside the country. In 1994, I moved to Scotland, a country I first visited at the time of my job interview, where I was hired as a lecturer in the Centre of Canadian Studies of the University of Edinburgh, the oldest such unit in the United Kingdom.

The comparisons between area studies in Canada and in the United Kingdom are instructive. Students at Edinburgh asked the same questions that they ask in Canada—what is Canadian Studies? In our case, Canadian Studies provided an interdisciplinary introduction to key Canadian concepts and concerns: regionalism, multiculturalism, bilingualism, economic and environmental change, aboriginality, multilateralism, gender disparities, and so on. My colleague in the Centre, Ged Martin, and I were both historians, and our course tended to the social sciences, but similar courses at Birmingham and Nottingham taught by colleagues with backgrounds in English Literature covered precisely the same topics through more of a literary approach.

Since almost every Scot I met had a relative in Mississauga, Ontario, there were many personal links to the country. We had healthy enrolments in our courses, and we contributed to the broader American Studies degree, which included courses on Canada, Latin America, and of course the United States. In many British universities, American

In Canada, as in the United Kingdom, Canadian Studies courses and programs rise and fall depending on the presence of key individuals and their commitment to the topic.

Studies took the form of cultural or media studies, but in Edinburgh it was rooted firmly in the History and English Literature Departments. American Studies—a program built on cross-listings—had almost no institutional backing, only a portion of one secretary's time. Nonetheless, it always filled its available spaces for student enrolment.

At the University of Edinburgh, there was no British Studies degree—although a course with that title was developed for visiting students. Edinburgh students did not need such a course. In their first year, students chose from a limited number of fairly broad classes. They could choose, among others, British History I, Economic History I (essentially British), Social History I (entirely British), Politics I and Sociology I (largely British), Scottish History I and English Literature I (it proved difficult to introduce an American literature component to this course). The extent to which classes reflected Scottish perspectives was the subject of some debate—perhaps shown best in the fact that Scottish History was constituted as a separate department from History. I sometimes thought that outside of the Social Anthropology and foreign language courses, one of the few first-year courses that provided geographical breadth was the introductory Canadian Studies course. (I should note that this has changed somewhat in the last few years.) The concept of British Studies would not make sense to a British student—in the time I was in Edinburgh (and long before that), the whole curriculum pointed in that direction.

While Canadians—and the current federal government—sometimes express

concern about the resources invested in Canadian Studies overseas, when I arrived in Edinburgh in 1994, the university employed 33 percent of the complement of UK academics hired specifically because of their Canadianist expertise—that is, two out of six (the others being in Birmingham, Nottingham, Hull, and Sussex). Today, there are only four such appointments. There are many more Canadianists, of course, in the United Kingdom, but their involvement largely reflects personal enthusiasms and expertise, not university priorities. Some Canadian funding contributed to the salaries of this small number of six scholars, a key support but seldom the majority of the money—and most of it was not from the government itself.

In the United Kingdom and elsewhere, supporting the academic study of Canada abroad has provided Canada with a coterie of international experts, without the institutional costs of the Alliance Française, the Goethe Institute, or the British Council. As is the case in Canada as well, the Canadianist interests of individuals can develop and disappear as their careers develop. That is why centres for Canadian Studies, with some degree of investment and support, play an important role in the Canadian Studies enterprise abroad. But let's face it, Canadian Studies is not a route to academic prominence—it will always be a marginal topic in the United Kingdom and other countries, even if it is rather less prominent than Canada's world role would warrant. (In comparison, Australian Studies took a slightly different configuration in the United Kingdom

A victim of its own success?, page 7

What has changed? Three decades in Canadian Studies

THE STATE OF CANADIAN STUDIES, 1975–1996

When the Symons Report¹ came out in 1975, I was the student representative on the Canadian Historical Association committee charged with considering its implications for the profession. It was a pretty good time to be a beginning Canadianist: travel and accommodation costs were paid not just for anyone who had a paper accepted for the conference that is now called the Congress, but also for chairs and commentators; graduate students could get funding for original work, rather than settling for enforced cloning within their supervisors' targeted grants; and we did not yet know how scarce employment pickings were about to become.

By 1981, when James E. Page's *Reflections on the Symons Report*² came out, I had given birth to my first child, finished my PhD, and started a teaching career at Concordia in Montreal. Two years later, I had given birth to my second son and entered Calgary's law school, the young professor-to-be, without a position, turning her back on academe.

In 1996, David Cameron's *Taking Stock*³ reported that the University of Calgary's Canadian Studies program, through which I had been coaxed back into the teaching profession in 1988 with the aid of a Canada Research Fellowship, had 65 to 70 students in 1990-91 and so much outside interest that courses had to be capped. By 1996, most of my own attention was going into building a much younger interdisciplinary program, Law and Society (LWSO), already with an enrolment of 55 majors, compared with Canadian Studies (CNST) at 35. The most recent data I could get for these two programs are for February 2007: 154 majors for LWSO, 69 for CNST. It seems important to state that the overshadowing of Canadian Studies by Law and So-

BY JANICE DICKIN

Janice Dickin is a professor in the Faculty of Communication and Culture and chair of the Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board at the University of Calgary.

Symons put forth the view that "Canadian universities as a whole were devoting less attention to scholarly teaching, research and study about Canada than universities in most other countries were directing to the needs and conditions of their own societies."

ciety (and more so, by Communications Studies, by far the largest undergraduate and graduate programs in our uniquely interdisciplinary Faculty of Communication and Culture) was accomplished completely without internal drivers, entirely according to student demand.

What has changed? One suggestion could be the same one that is used to justify proposed dismantling of Women's Studies programs: you won! you made your point! Symons put forth the view that "Canadian universities as a whole were devoting less attention to scholarly teaching, research and study about Canada than universities in most other

countries were directing to the needs and conditions of their own societies."⁴ That certainly cannot be said today, across the majority of disciplines and programs, even in some parts of medicine and engineering. My students may be confused about what is law in Canada, formed as they are by media accessibility to the markedly different—in so many ways, not the least of all being terminology—American legal system, but they truly want to learn about their own society and its laws. They do not question the worth of the Canadian experience, no matter how ignorant they might be of it, and we teach it.

THE ROLE OF CANADIAN UNIVERSITIES IN THINKING ABOUT CANADA

Something else that has changed is the location of Canadian intellectuals within society and the conception that our neo-liberal governments have about the role our universities are supposed to play. Northrop Frye lamented that Canada "has passed from a pre-national to a post-national phase without ever having become a nation." His whipping boy for what he obviously regarded as a "bad thing" is Pierre Trudeau, whose alleged adoption of Marshall McLuhan as one of his advisers triggered reversion of the country into "tribalism."⁵ Jack Granatstein has also raised the hue and cry for the necessity of Canadians acting as a "nation." In his *Who Killed Canadian History?*⁶ he argues contradictorily that immigrants must become Canadians but then denigrates the attempts of scholars who are trying to figure out just what being "Canadian" might mean. He seems to believe that is a no-brainer and, given the last part of his pamphlet, has something to do with dying for one's country's "na-

What has changed?, page 6

What has changed?

continued from page 5

tional” interests. Collapsing culture, society, human existence, whatever, into the idea of nation is just too facile. The fact that we have been unable to come up with an answer that will replace this obsolete—and disingenuous—concept does not mean that Father necessarily knew best.

In *Globalization and the Meaning of Canadian Life*, William Watson starts his chapter “Virtually Canadian” with a wink: “The end of the nation-state is the most chronically foretold death of the 1990s.”⁷ I’ll get back to the virtual part in a minute. The point I want to make here is one that returns to my slatternly bandying about of the concept of neo-liberalism. (I can’t help imagining myself dancing around some boiling tribal pot here, in which I have immersed at last my clearly identified enemy.) The “Canadian government,” I am told in a letter over the signature of Jean Labrie, Deputy Director, International Education and Youth Division (PCE) of DFAIT, has set Priority Issues for allocating resources through the Canadian Studies Program, born in a “need for a more focused and results-oriented approach.” I will address these, rather than list them, since they are available elsewhere.

If one were trying to ward away the Grim Reaper from the door of the Canadian nation-state (assuming there is such a thing), surely some of these long-bows would be in your arsenal. They address a variety of requirements for the uneventful preservation of status quo in a society (read economy) based on corporate control and human passivation, starting with Peace and Security and ending with that newly discovered darling of those who would save the world from capitalism, the Environment. Nowhere in the list is Health Care, the Canadian cultural icon. Nor is there any mention of surely what human life is supposed to be about and which any organization created for the good of humankind should take as its first priority: spiritual and psychological well-being.

Satisfying someone else’s priorities did not provide the energy that drove Tom Symons and the Canadianists he represented. They wanted to find out who we were as people and as a people and they wanted that to inform our lives.

When Morgan and Burpee published *Canadian Life in Town and Country* at the beginning of the last century, they ended their assessment of Canadian attributes with a hope for the future:

In these and other respects Canada has contributed at least something toward the strengthening and defence of Imperial interests, and when she assumes her rightful place, as a co-partner, on equal terms with England, in the common Empire, she will be found taking no niggardly share in the burdens of that Empire.⁸

A lot of what they have to say is jejune, but I’m now sufficiently old and established to no longer take umbrage with the sappiness of sentimental men. In fact, I find them rather endearing. At least they knew that women exist, having dedicated an entire precious chapter (out of 13, also including separate chapters on “The Militia” and “The Indians”) to “The Canadian Woman.” By contrast, William Metcalfe’s 1982 collection *Understanding Canada*⁹ includes not one woman author, addresses women only three times (references to Mazo de la Roche, Gabrielle Roy, and Dorothy Livesay) in “164 Questions for Discussion and Study,” and specifically warns readers not to confuse Eileen Jenness with her husband, Diamond, whose work has more “richness of detail,” no doubt due to Eileen’s note-taking and secretarial

skills, assuming they ran true to form as a couple of their era.

VIRTUAL POSSIBILITIES

But then there aren’t really any men—other than individual authors—in Metcalfe’s book either. There aren’t really any people. And that brings me back to the virtual world and finally to where Canadian Studies would do best to look to for the future. Young people, and Canadians are no different, are interested in people. Just look at the World Wide Web. There are blogs, there are fansites (not just for those who are known for being known but for the sorts of personalities that would pass the Granatstein test of historical importance), and there is no shortage of people who contribute to Wikipedia! True, some of this material is inaccurate but the point is that there is an intellectual revolution going on in the world and it is fuelled by completely free labour! True, students want to have jobs at the end of expensive education careers, and they should have them. But it doesn’t mean Canadian Studies need submit meekly to wearing the DFAIT straitjacket.

And this brings me to the last issue I identify as having introduced and not addressed and that is the role that universities are supposed to play within the current aspirations of those who would have Canada be a nation-state, and that role is to produce worker bees dedicated to maintaining a concrete hive of activity

dedicated to Priority Issues. Satisfying someone else's priorities did not provide the energy that drove Tom Symons and the Canadianists he represented. They wanted to find out who we were as people and as a people and they wanted that to inform our lives. We need to get back on track. The same students who want jobs also insist on leisure time to an extent we never dreamed of. I am personally connected with two young men who work day jobs in order to "do Canadian culture," one as a jazz musician, the other as a writer who self-publishes and runs an online literary magazine. They're leaving us all behind. 🍁

Note:

1. T.H.B. Symons, *To Know Ourselves: The Report of the Commission on Canadian Studies* (Ottawa: Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada, 1975).
2. James E. Page, *Reflections on the Symons Report: The State of Canadian Studies in 1980* (Ottawa: Ministry of Supply and Services, Canada, 1981).
3. David Cameron, *Taking Stock: Canadian Studies in the Nineties* (Montreal: Association for Canadian Studies, 1996), p. 79.
4. Symons, *To Know Ourselves*, p. 2.
5. Northrop Frye, *Divisions on a Ground: Essays on Canadian Culture* (Toronto: Anansi, 1982), pp. 5-6.
6. Jack Granatstein, *Who killed Canadian History?* (Toronto: HarperCollins, 1998). See particularly the chapter "Multicultural Mania," pp. 81-108. I actually agree that many of the things Granatstein identifies as problems are indeed problems. I just can't tell the good guys from the bad guys with his sense of accuracy.
7. William Watson, *Globalization and the Meaning of Canadian Life* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), p. 214.
8. Henry J. Morgan and Lawrence J. Burpee, *Canadian Life in Town and Country* (London: George Newnes Limited, 1905), p. 247.
9. William Metcalfe, ed., *Understanding Canada: A Multidisciplinary Introduction to Canadian Studies* (New York and London: New York University Press, 1982), at p. 596.

A victim of its own success? continued from page 4

We may be too quick to assume that the battles of the 1960s and 1970s have been won. Ruth Sandwell's research (Ontario Institute for Studies in Education) has shown that no undergraduate History programs in Canada require students to take even one Canadian History course.

though the country has the advantage of appearing a bit more exotic than Canada; New Zealand Studies has no institutional focus whatsoever.)

THE FRAGILITY OF THE CANADIANIZATION OF OUR UNIVERSITIES

Returning to Canada, I have found the comparison between Canadian Studies at the University of Edinburgh and at Glendon College to be striking: similar levels of student interest particularly in the broad first-year course, institutional reliance on one full-time academic (but at Glendon also a number of very dedicated and experienced part-time instructors), and a fairly small program. Canadian Studies has disappeared from the much larger Faculty of Arts at York University, because it had no dedicated appointments and depended on faculty and student interest—and this, despite the fact that York University has a larger concentration of Canadianist researchers than most other universities in the country. In Canada, as in the United Kingdom, Canadian Studies courses and programs rise and fall depending on the presence of key individuals and their commitment to the topic.

The largest single program at Glendon College is International Studies, and the degree to which our students are passionate about world issues is to be celebrated. But it is entirely possible for social sciences and humanities students

at Glendon and in most Canadian institutions to pursue their academic careers without taking a single course related to the country in which they live. This is a key difference to the conception of the role of the university in the United Kingdom and in Canada. Still, in the early 21st century, we are graduating many students without a critical and deep understanding of their country. We may be too quick to assume that the battles of the 1960s and 1970s have been won. Ruth Sandwell's research (Ontario Institute for Studies in Education) has shown that no undergraduate History programs in Canada require students to take even one Canadian History course. It is difficult to imagine many other countries where this would be the case.

As the contributors to this issue argue, there are many potential paths to a vibrant future for Canadian Studies—and there are some possible dead ends. Does the success of the Canadianization of Canadian universities justify the withering of Canadian Studies? Surely the answer is "no." Canadian Studies programs provide an institutional focus for the study of the country, and we must do a better job at selling the importance of the enterprise to administrators, colleagues, and students. There is still much to do to fulfill the goal of expanding the presence of Canadian issues in our university curricula. Canadian Studies, despite its many successes over the last three decades, remains a fragile enterprise. 🍁

Les études canadiennes à la croisée des chemins ?

LE CONTEXTE UNIVERSITAIRE

Les milieux universitaires canadiens, autant anglophones que francophones ont longtemps défendu, chacun à leur manière, un positionnement intellectuel essentiellement classiciste et eurocentrique. Dans un contexte où l'État n'a commencé à investir massivement dans les productions culturelles canadiennes qu'à partir des années soixante, il a longtemps semblé que le Canada ne constituait par sa situation coloniale qu'un pâle reflet de l'Ancien monde. Puis les pressions politiques et économiques américaines au moment de la guerre du Viêt-Nam d'une part, et la Révolution tranquille au Québec de l'autre, ont grandement contribué à faire passer l'idée à l'époque de Lester Pearson que le Canada incarnait un ensemble de valeurs qui lui étaient propres et qui méritaient d'être analysés. Dès 1957, l'Université Carleton créait un premier programme d'études proprement canadiennes au pays, geste qui fut peu à peu imité par quelques autres grandes institutions d'enseignement supérieur. L'initiative eut du succès, d'autant plus que Davidson Dunton, un des canadianistes les plus en vue de Carleton, fut nommé en 1963 coprésident avec André Laurendeau de la Commission royale d'enquête sur le bilinguisme et le biculturalisme. Une époque faste de recherche et de réflexion s'ouvrait qui allait mener à une redéfinition, sous la gouverne de Pierre Trudeau, des fondements juridiques, politiques, linguistiques et culturels de la société canadienne. Au cours de ces années sont aussi apparues, sous la forme de disciplines autonomes, des centres de recherche tournés spécifiquement vers le Québec, les Acadiens, les Autochtones et d'autres peuples et régions du Canada.

Au cours des années quatre-vingt-

PIERRE ANCTIL

Pierre Anctil est directeur de l'Institut des études canadiennes à l'Université d'Ottawa.

Il ne fait aucun doute dans mon esprit que l'apport des universitaires basés outre frontière est devenu décisif dans notre champ d'intérêt, autant par sa qualité intellectuelle que par la pertinence de ses publications.

dix toutefois les études canadiennes ont semblé attirer moins de financement et ont reçu un accueil en général plus tiède de la part des administrations universitaires. À tout le moins il y a eu plafonnement depuis une quinzaine d'années, entre autres dans le nombre d'étudiants inscrits au sein des programmes à contenu canadien déclaré et dans la diversité des cours offerts sous ce label. Cette situation est attribuable à plusieurs causes, dont certaines positives comme le fait que les universités canadiennes ont finalement emboîté le pas après les grands débats des années soixante et soixante-dix, puis ont consenti à offrir des contenus canadiens importants dans la plupart des champs disciplinaires en sciences

humaines, mais sans nécessairement créer des programmes d'études portant le vocable « canadiennes ». Il y a aussi que les embauches de professeurs étrangers ont diminué dans les institutions d'enseignement supérieur canadiennes lorsque de nouvelles cohortes de diplômés se sont présentées sur le marché du travail. Pour quelqu'un ayant été formé au Canada, la désignation même « d'études canadiennes » pouvaient parfois sembler dans un tel contexte redondante. Qui négligerait d'enseigner aujourd'hui dans le domaine juridique les principes de la Charte canadienne des droits et libertés ou en sciences politiques les conséquences du multiculturalisme et des grands débats autour des lois linguistiques.

On le voit bien, plusieurs universitaires font aujourd'hui presque entièrement carrière dans le domaine des études canadiennes, mais sans le déclarer ouvertement, discipline oblige, et peut-être même sans jamais avoir participé à une rencontre de canadianistes déclarés. Faut-il leur en vouloir ? À mon avis, contre toute attente, il convient de voir dans cette tendance qui s'affirme de plus en plus une des grandes victoires des dernières années. Les professeurs appartenant à différents champs de recherche et spécialisations n'ont guère été encouragés à dialoguer entre eux, si bien que parfois il se dégage de ces pratiques un sentiment d'éparpillement et de manque de concertation qui nuit ultimement aux espoirs des canadianistes au sein des institutions de haut savoir. Pourtant, quand on y regarde de plus près, la liste de chercheurs intéressés au Canada d'une façon ou d'une autre est souvent longue dans les grandes universités canadiennes, incluant ceux

qui se déclarent plus portés à prime abord à analyser la société québécoise, acadienne, autochtone, etc. On ne compte plus le nombre de revues universitaires au pays qui portent le titre de « canadiennes », tout en réunissant parfois un nombre très restreint de spécialistes dans un champ précis. De la même manière, les colloques et les conférences qui étudient un aspect ou l'autre de la société ou de la culture canadienne abondent dans le calendrier des sociétés savantes, dont les grands rendez-vous annuels de la Fédération canadienne des sciences sociales (CFHSS) et de l'Association francophone pour le savoir (ACFAS). Simplement le concert des voix qui s'expriment dans ce domaine très diffus est devenu si vaste, que les canadianistes dans le sens plus restreint du terme, soit ceux qui dirigent nommément des programmes d'études canadiennes, ou qui y enseignent, ne réussissent plus à se faire entendre comme un groupe à part.

L'INTERDISCIPLINARITÉ

Quand les canadianistes ont senti que le tapis leur glissait de sous les pieds, ils ont évoqué pour se distinguer la notion d'interdisciplinarité ou de multidisciplinarité. En somme, et ce que nul ne peut contester par ailleurs, l'étude d'un pays aussi complexe et immense que le Canada requerrait un arsenal de disciplines diverses oeuvrant en commun et partageant un même objet. Or l'ensemble des sciences humaines et sociales, se dirige déjà allègrement vers un carrefour global où convergent un grand nombre de disciplines. Bien que les structures de gestion universitaires reconnues, comme les facultés et les départements, résistent dans la plupart des cas pour des raisons historiques à suivre le courant, il ne fait aucun doute que l'interdisciplinarité s'apprête à submerger les dernières résistances. Une fois de plus, les canadianistes ont vu juste, mais ils sont maintenant

Simplement le concert des voix qui s'expriment dans ce domaine très diffus est devenu si vaste, que les canadianistes dans le sens plus restreint du terme, soit ceux qui dirigent nommément des programmes d'études canadiennes, ou qui y enseignent, ne réussissent plus à se faire entendre comme un groupe à part.

emportés par la cohue qui court dans le même sens qu'eux. Ce n'est toutefois pas là à mon avis que le bât blesse. Il est de notoriété publique que partout au pays les cours d'études canadiennes attirent beaucoup d'étudiants au premier cycle. Les programmes de mineure et de majeure dans le même domaine demeurent cependant très peu fréquentés. Les administrations universitaires, qui font des décomptes financiers, prennent souvent prétexte de ces données pour couper les vivres aux programmes d'études canadiennes ou carrément les abolir, lorsqu'il suffirait de leur donner des moyens pratiques, efficaces et peu coûteux d'attirer de nouvelles clientèles. Des formules novatrices comme les affectations multiples pour les professeurs, les cours donnés conjointement par différents départements, les chaires intra universitaires et différentes formules de libération sabbatique, devraient contribuer à renverser la tendance que l'on note depuis plusieurs années. On peut aussi imaginer le recours à des campagnes de publicité inter universitaires mieux adaptées à leur objet et mieux ciblées.

L'IMPORTANCE DU RÉSEAUTAGE

Si les universités canadiennes doutent parfois de la valeur des études canadiennes, il se trouve à l'étranger un bassin croissant de chercheurs et de professeurs qui souvent sans le moindre encouragement précis

découvrent un attrait particulier pour le Canada et en font le point d'orgue de leur carrière. Il ne fait aucun doute dans mon esprit que l'apport des universitaires basés outre frontière est devenu décisif dans notre champ d'intérêt, autant par sa qualité intellectuelle que par la pertinence de ses publications. Ces observateurs de l'extérieur du pays incarnent pour une bonne part l'avenir des études canadiennes et leur contribution a été d'une grande portée sous plus d'un rapport au cours des dernières années, ceci à une heure où certains ministères et organismes n'encouragent plus pour des raisons politiques une analyse critique de la réalité canadienne. Un vigoureux réseautage au niveau international et une participation plus soutenue à un ensemble de carrefours disciplinaires émergents dans le milieu universitaire, constituent sans aucun doute les deux stratégies les plus porteuses actuellement pour les études canadiennes. Une troisième voie mériterait aussi d'être explorée, qui n'a vraiment pas porté fruit jusqu'à maintenant, soit celle d'une meilleure concertation entre les différents programmes reconnus au Canada. L'heure est sans doute arrivée pour les canadianistes de faire preuve d'un peu plus d'audace et de détermination en cette ère de mondialisation et de décloisonnement disciplinaire. À mon avis toute croissance future dans notre domaine de recherche passe par ces trois nouveaux angles d'attaque. 

“Your major is Canadian Studies? What’s that?”

BY NATALIE RIGGS

Natalie Riggs finished her BA Honours in Canadian Studies at Glendon College, York University, in 2006 and her Master’s in Public Administration at Queen’s University in 2007.

When asked throughout my undergraduate career what my major was, this was a fairly typical response. It could also include some combination of a blank stare, a smile and nod, or a request for some type of explanation.

This response, while occasionally disappointing, was not wholly unexpected; I myself could not have explained what it was until I actually enrolled in the program after my first year at Glendon College, York University’s bilingual liberal arts campus. Yet this confusion about my major also provided the perfect opportunity to explain what exactly Canadian Studies is, what I have learned through my course of study, and why it should be promoted as a subject of interest in universities.

DISCOVERING CANADIAN STUDIES

I came to discover the realm of Canadian Studies completely by fluke. First, I took an Introduction to Canadian Studies course as an elective in my first year, which I thoroughly enjoyed. Then, as I was choosing courses for my second year, I realized that nearly all of my top picks counted as credits toward a major in Canadian Studies. These two discoveries took me to Glendon’s Office of Student Programs to get the paperwork to change my major, and I haven’t looked back since.

The second question asked of me is, “why did you choose that program?” There are many possible answers, but a major draw to a Canadian Studies program that I found was that it is very flexible, and it allows a student to choose an area of interest while also giving a broad overview of other potential specialties. This provides a very thorough and well-rounded study of Canada that can act as a natural complement to many different

Many students will have, at some point or another, taken one or more courses that can be considered a Canadian Studies course. This leads me to think that there is a greater interest in Canada than is evident from looking at the number of students enrolled in Canadian Studies programs.

fields once a university career is finished, and it is truly surprising how each different subject is applicable to another, be it politics, history, literature, etc.

The flexibility of the program did occasionally present a challenge in terms of getting to know other Canadian Studies students. While we were familiar with each other as acquaintances, students in the program had such varying interests

that we usually took only core courses as a group. Even then the core courses were often cross-listed and filled with students of other disciplines. This is an interesting point to note: many students will have, at some point or another, taken one or more courses that can be considered a Canadian Studies course. This leads me to think that there is a greater interest in Canada than is evident from looking at the number of students enrolled in Canadian Studies programs.

As such, language of instruction and differing interests meant that it was not until my fourth year that I really got to know the four others I would be graduating with. When I took the fourth-year seminar, it was composed of five graduating students, and we were able to share our knowledge of the different subject areas that we had been studying. Our research focuses for that class were quite different, from politics, gender issues, education, and economics; there was never argument over who got to study which issue. Canadian Studies gave us a subject, and from there we could pick whichever concentration we enjoyed most, and these differing interests gave us much to talk about and enriched our discussions, both within the classroom and without.

CAREER PROSPECTS

The next question would usually be, “what are you going to do with that?” It is often assumed that a degree such as this would lead to work in the federal government, and this could well be the case because students leave with a firm understanding of government, history, and cultural cleavages that are essential to policy- and decision-making. Furthermore, many students learn French as a part of their program (or in the case of

“Your major is Canadian Studies?”, page 13

Canadian Studies at a small, undergraduate, Atlantic university: Looking to the future

What are the prospects for undergraduate Canadian Studies (CS) programs? From my perspective the signals are mixed. Students and employers increasingly recognize the value of the skills and knowledge CS graduates possess. But universities, faced with mounting competition for students and resources, have been slow to recognize the benefits that students and employers have identified. As in so many areas of modern life, the most serious challenge is one of perception and packaging. CS needs an image make-over to bring home to university administrators and faculty the assets of a CS program.

CANADIAN STUDIES AT MOUNT SAINT VINCENT UNIVERSITY

In considering the present state and future of Canadian Studies, I confess to two biases. First, I remain an unrepentant believer in the relevance and value of Canadian Studies programs, particularly at the undergraduate level. I have been connected to this field of academic enquiry for almost 40 years, having graduated in 1973 from the first formal undergraduate CS program in Canada, set up at Mount Allison University in 1969 by my father, George Stanley. Eventually, I became a professor of CS at Mount Saint Vincent University (MSVU) where I am also the co-ordinator of the CS program. Second, MSVU is a small, primarily undergraduate university in Halifax. Therefore, my observations do not reflect experiences in larger university programs or graduate programs.

The MSVU program holds to its initial objectives: to examine Canada through a diversity of perspectives to gain understanding for and appreciation of her people, land, institutions, and cultures and to explore the place of Canada in the world by examining how Canadians see themselves and how others see them. In terms of structure, in addition to the three compulsory CS core courses

BY DELLA STANLEY

Della Stanley is the co-ordinator of the Canadian Studies program at Mount Saint Vincent University.

If larger and better-resourced institutions still treat CS as peripheral, what hope is there for the small university programs that are marginalized by financial constraints and a lack of administration commitment?

taught from an interdisciplinary perspective, students can develop a multi-discipline body of Canadian content courses drawn from across various departments and programs. Although French is highly recommended, it has never been a compulsory requirement.

In 1988, the first full-time CS co-ordinator was hired to promote the program, recruit students, act as academic adviser to majors, and teach the three core courses. In many ways, the resulting continuity in the program made it more attractive to students than previously. Even after it became part of the Department of Political and Canadian Studies, the separate administration and budgeting of the CS program meant that other programs and departments did not feel their own budgets and faculty resources threatened in any way.

The program has grown and devel-

oped over its 30-year history. When I arrived in the mid-1980s, a good-sized graduating class was two to four majors and there were about 10 majors annually. This past May, 21 majors graduated, the largest class of CANA (Canadian Studies) majors since 1974. Today the number of majors remains fairly steady at 50 to 55. As well, all core courses (which are also open to non-majors under some conditions) reach capped enrolment numbers, and the demand for directed studies exceeds what the university allows. Enrolment success has made it possible, in the last two years, to increase the number of interdisciplinary CANA core course offerings and to hire interdisciplinary part-time faculty for topics like "The North in Film" and "Atlantic Folk Art."

There is more evidence of success: the vitality of the CS Student Society, the recent production of multi-page coloured brochures and a website, the creation of financial awards for CS majors such as the one established by Andrea and Charles Bronfman, and access to funding from organizations such as the Association for Canadian Studies (ACS), which assists students to attend national CS student conferences. The number of Canadian content courses offered by the traditional disciplines has increased significantly. The co-ordinator and the CS Society are noted on campus for their university and community involvement: working with international students, raising money for students in financial need, participating in the Scholars Forum, serving on numerous university committees, organizing campus events such as Flag Day celebrations, participating in university recruiting activities, conducting research projects for local museums, including Pier 21, organizing Canada Theme Day Camps, and participating in employment partnerships to help recent immigrants. CS certainly has a profile on

Looking to the future, page 12

campus. The program produces a multi-paged annual newsletter. Last year the co-ordinator assembled a directory that lists faculty with international research interests and publications and put together an information booklet for new international students. Some course connections with other departments have been developed, particularly with Education and History, and discussions are under way with Tourism to introduce new cross-listed courses.

THE PROBLEM OF RESOURCES

Sadly, however, the MSVU program may well become a victim of its own success; not so much because traditional departments have introduced more Canadian content into their programs and hired more Canadianist faculty over the past 30 years, perhaps pre-empting the need for CS as it was identified by Thomas Symons in 1975; and not because more and more Canadianists, regardless of their discipline, are adopting some elements of interdisciplinarity in their research and analysis, thereby raising questions whether an interdisciplinary study of Canada needs to still be promoted under the umbrella of a CS program. There is some evidence of these developments at MSVU, but the more immediate threat is rooted in resourcing and university priorities. MSVU has very limited financial resources and does not foresee any significant increase in new full-time hiring for some time in spite of looming baby boomer retirements. The present demands of so many majors, minors, and students simply interested in CANA offerings cannot be met by one full-time faculty person in the position of program co-ordinator. Nor can they be met with an annual operating budget of \$500 and about a half day a week of secretarial time. The program has become too large for the limited human and financial resources it has been traditionally allotted and there does not appear to be the university will or colleague support to address that problem.

Canadian Studies teaches students to solve problems by examining the big picture, the relationships between the forces and ideas shaping the country in their regional, national, and international contexts.

Myka Burke's 2006 evaluation of CS programs noted that far too many were under-resourced, had limited university support, depended too much on the "volunteer" work of dedicated faculty, and continued to encounter problems over cross-listings and "teachable" designations. She could have been describing my program but, in fact, hers was a national report. If larger and better-resourced institutions still treat CS as peripheral, what hope is there for the small university programs that are marginalized by financial constraints and a lack of administration commitment? Enrolment predictions highlight the dilemma. If the number of Arts students continues to decline in Atlantic Canada, the competition among traditional disciplines to retain their student and faculty numbers will become more aggressive than in the past. Small programs, whether housed within traditional departments or standing alone, will not have sufficient resources or a strong enough voice to lobby for protection. Instead, they will increasingly be pressured to either disband or amalgamate with larger administrative units. As a result, CS will lose its identity, profile, and viability.

There are other challenges ahead at MSVU. The absence of an Honours program will continue to deter students planning to go on to graduate school. The large numbers of students taking Canadian Studies as a qualifying degree for entry into Bachelor of Education programs are dependent upon cross-listings and "cognate" course designations, which are always subject to possible

reversal. The present independent adjunct position of CS within the Department of Political and Canadian Studies is under review, as the university prefers fully integrated departments. Lastly, neighbouring Dalhousie University, convinced that Canadian Studies and Francophone Studies are enjoying a renaissance among students, is expanding its degree offerings in these areas. I doubt that there is room for two viable undergraduate Canadian Studies programs in such a small area.

POTENTIAL FOR GROWTH

Not everything is gloomy. The dean recently recommended creating a second full-time CS position when finances allow. There is now a body of young, motivated CS academics who have graduated from CS graduate programs and who are primed to instill new life into the next generation of CS programs. Perhaps most important of all, the successful employment record of CS alumni at MSVU provides evidence of the relevance and value of Canadian Studies in areas such as law, journalism, education, social work, heritage-related work, and public/social policy.

It is this last fact that convinces me that CS, in general, remains a relevant and valuable area of academic endeavour. A structured interdisciplinary and multi-disciplinary study of Canada not only gives graduates the anticipated oral, written, research, critical thinking, and analytical skills, but also teaches them to apply these skills to evaluating and synthesizing a variety of information


perspectives and formats. As John Wadland has said, CS “is the meeting ground for insights drawn from disciplines ... the points of intersection” that enable people to “understand, resolve and synthesize.” Canadian Studies teaches students to solve problems by examining the big picture, the relationships between the forces and ideas shaping the country in their regional, national, and international contexts. They learn to articulate Canada to Canadians and to the world using knowledge, skills, and multiple frameworks, which are so essential to diplomatic, business, foreign aid, constitutional, social and public policy decision-making. Sounds like an employer’s wish list to me.

MARKETING CANADIAN STUDIES

The challenge is that CS needs a major

At the undergraduate level, CS offers as much or more to the future leadership of Canada as a BA in English, History, Political Science, or any other traditional discipline. Crassly put, we have something valuable to sell.

PR overhaul. Graduates of Canadian Studies programs need to be encouraged to promote the program by showing their experiences. Employers need to hear more about CS and its graduates. This is not a new problem but it has never been addressed through a concerted, unified effort by those who administer CS programs or regard themselves as CS scholars. At the undergraduate level, CS offers

as much or more to the future leadership of Canada as a BA in English, History, Political Science, or any other traditional discipline. Crassly put, we have something valuable to sell. We need to figure out a way to package and market it better to our university administrators, academic colleagues, employers, and students. Otherwise, CS programs, like mine, will eventually become academic relics. 

Your major is Canadian Studies? continued from page 10

Glendon College, all of them learn French as a part of the program), a skill that I have since heard referred to by members of the federal public service as “essential if you want to advance in the federal government,” and otherwise certainly an important asset.

In terms of the job market, I do not think that there is one specific field that Canadian Studies students gravitate to more than another. Out of the five that I graduated with, our interests were vastly different and as a result so too have been our exploits in the past year—one having taken an internship in Parliament, one in teacher’s college, and one in a management position. It is such a versatile field of study that students are not really pointed in one direction over another; rather, many opportunities are available and encouraged. The multi-disciplinary skills that we are taught are applicable to many different types of employment.

While I myself am only now exploring whether or not this kind of background is useful in the great job hunt, I do believe it was a good one to have when it came to applying to various Master’s programs.


The next question would usually be, “what are you going to do with that?”

It has also certainly been of help to me as I have worked toward completing my Master of Public Administration, and not surprisingly I am the only Canadian Studies student of the 50 MPA candidates in my class. The multi-disciplinary skills that I gained as an undergraduate student in Canadian Studies are undoubtedly both an important advantage and asset in this particular program that is itself multi-disciplinary.

My experience in Canadian Studies was incredibly positive; the program is very flexible and offers students the opportunity to focus on personal interests. There are so many natural complements to the field and so many choices of where to go afterward. As such, I found that Canadian Studies taught me valuable problem-solving skills that span many different disciplines, which is a distinct

advantage and necessity when it comes to solving today’s problems.

NO LIMITS

My question about Canadian Studies is not a what or a why question, but rather a how question: if Canadian Studies was created to promote and encourage knowledge of our country, how can we (students past and present, universities and scholars, federal and provincial governments) garner more interest in the subject? Winston Churchill once said, “there are no limits to the majestic future which lies before the mighty expanse of Canada.” There is so much that many Canadians don’t know about this mighty expanse, and sparking interest is the key to instilling knowledge and understanding of our country and realizing the future that is laid out before us. 

The ongoing crisis of Canadian Studies

It is difficult to see Canadian Studies as a victim of its own success when one observer noted that most programs existed in an atmosphere of “unloved obscurity”¹ and the dean of Canadian Studies, T.H. Symons, described it as a discipline in a “holding pattern” and *de facto* decline.² Like the country it studies, the discipline has changed considerably over the years. However, change does not mean success. Not only does the discipline still need to address historic challenges: new threats are on the horizon.

CANADIAN STUDIES SUCCESSES

The most notable change since the seminal report *To Know Ourselves*³ is a much stronger sense of national identity, at least in English Canada. Young Canadians, the children of the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, are fiercely and confidently Canadian, do not want Canada to become more like the United States, and embrace and celebrate diversity.⁴ This occasionally (with the help of the courts) forces governments to go beyond the rhetorical celebration of a distinct Canada and implement changes that reflect the desires of Canadians. The long battle to achieve equal marriage rights for gay and lesbian Canadians is a prime example.

The ongoing success of several small but flourishing centres of Canadian Studies across the country reflects the fact that young Canadians want to know more about their country. The graduate program at the School of Canadian Studies at Carleton, which was the university’s first graduate program, is celebrating its 50th anniversary in 2007. The Carleton-Trent joint PhD program in Canadian Studies symbolizes the academic maturity of the discipline.

This is the major success of the Canadianization movement—a growing Canadian presence in our universities and a methodology for explaining an ever-

BY RICHARD NIMIJEAN

Richard Nimijejan teaches in the School of Canadian Studies at Carleton University and is the School’s undergraduate supervisor.

Young Canadians, the children of the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, are fiercely and confidently Canadian, do not want Canada to become more like the United States, and embrace and celebrate diversity.

changing country. The academic rigour of Canadianists, both in Canada and abroad, is impressive. Contemporary scholarship, in accordance with Symons’ view that Canadian Studies should help us understand—and not celebrate—Canada, is impressive. Canadianists have responded to the challenge laid out by Robert Campbell⁵ that the core mythologies that inform the Canadian identity must be examined critically, for they often do not reflect the Canadian reality.

MUST NATIONAL IDENTITY BE HOMOGENEOUS?

So why am I concerned? First, the strong sense of national identity, rooted in diversity, is too often conflated with a homogeneous national identity. While we *celebrate* diversity as a core Canadian value, governments and individuals display considerably less desire to *practise*

diversity. Polls show that official bilingualism is unpopular, and there are low levels of support for the institutional recognition of Québécois distinctiveness; despite official multiculturalism, there remains unease about immigration and the integration of immigrants into Canada; and despite recognition of historical wrongs, there is less appetite to address the concerns of Aboriginal peoples in Canada. The Leger Marketing report⁶ on racial intolerance is a sobering reminder that discrimination is an ongoing reality of Canada, challenging the core values of the Canadian identity.

Growing up in the post-Charter idealized Canada, it can be difficult for young Canadians to appreciate how the country has changed and the issues that continue to challenge the country. Too often, issues like racism or gender inequality are simply seen as part of the past. My experiences in the classroom reveal that there is a thirst for knowledge about Canada. However, while some students are surprised to discover that Canada often does not live up to its ideals, they are uncomfortable with a critical analysis of Canada, equating it with negative criticism.

UNCRITICAL PATRIOTISM

The rise of Canadian Studies, and the work of groups like the Dominion Institute, has not increased the self-knowledge of Canadians; indeed, Canadians appear to know less about their country than Americans do about theirs.⁷ Despite higher levels of education, low levels of civic literacy are moving youth away from traditional forms of nationalism and making them more conservative.⁸ There is no doubt a connection to a disengagement from politics and lower rates of participation,⁹ as politics becomes less of an avenue for addressing social change. Some young Canadians, like a significant minority of American students, appear to be “uncritical patriots”

who accept articulated senses of identity and refuse to question or to accept criticism of their country. This is linked to a lack of political involvement and low levels of political knowledge.¹⁰

This uncritical patriotism lets our politicians off the hook. It becomes easier to articulate Canadian distinctiveness rather than invest in those public policies and programs, reflective of the desire of Canadians, that make Canada distinct. “Brand politics” celebrating Canada thus contributes to the paradoxical nature of the Canadian identity: the need to proclaim difference while Canadian society becomes less distinctive. Consequently, Canada experiences numerous rhetoric–reality gaps between articulated ideals and actual experiences.¹¹ It suggests that one of the driving characteristics of the Canadian Studies enterprise, namely, its activist nature, has not been fully realized.

This points to the need for a strengthened Canadian Studies enterprise; however, the discipline remains under attack in universities and poorly supported in the kindergarten, primary, and secondary school systems. This makes it more difficult to increase young Canadians’ knowledge of Canada. In Ontario, for example, Canadian Studies is not a “teachable” subject for students attending teacher’s college. We are therefore directly undermining our efforts to have young people learn more about Canada, as students interested in teaching shy away from Canadian Studies. This reduces the number of people who can teach Canada in a complex manner to young people and promotes uncritical patriotism.

SCARCE RESOURCES

Meanwhile, Canadian Studies university programs are small, lack dedicated faculty and resources, and, in the battle for scarce resources, remain under threat. Administrators must choose between yielding to fiscal pressures and supporting an important yet increasingly marginalized discipline. Universities historically supported programs despite small numbers because they accepted the argu-

My experiences in the classroom reveal that there is a thirst for knowledge about Canada. However, while some students are surprised to discover that Canada often does not live up to its ideals, they are uncomfortable with a critical analysis of Canada, equating it with negative criticism.

ment that a unique discipline was needed to explain Canada. However, will this continue in an era of tight budgets? For example, when the University of Alberta proposed closing its Canadian Studies program in 2001, this reasoning was turned on its head, as the dean of Arts noted that students could learn about Canada in many other disciplines.¹²

And what about students? Will graduates of the Carleton-Trent doctoral program, a success story to be sure, be able to secure academic employment? With few Canadian Studies positions in Canadian universities, academic job prospects are bleak. Will university departments organized along traditional disciplinary lines be willing to hire those with newly minted doctorates in an interdisciplinary field?

Given the lack of a national learned association for Canadian Studies, Canadianists (mostly trained in the traditional disciplines) still need to work in their old fields if they wish to do academic work in Canada.¹³ This absence has increased the importance of the international Canadian Studies community. The federal Canadian Studies program stimulated the international blossoming of the discipline and has been a salvation for Canadianists in Canada.¹⁴

LINKING CANADIAN STUDIES RESEARCH TO GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES

However, this program is now undergoing a review, with a proposal that funding for Canadian Studies activities abroad be

more closely linked to government priorities.¹⁵ While the program review states that non-strategic areas relating to culture should not feel threatened, one may ask why it is necessary to prioritize areas of study that correlate to government priorities. Perhaps this is a battle of bureaucratic self-preservation, sending signals to government decision makers that the program is a worthy investment.

If implemented, the proposal would disrupt the delicate balance between academic freedom and government support for broad public diplomacy efforts. This makes international scholars and their associations an unwilling tool of Canadian foreign policy, as their work would be funded according to criteria aimed at promoting Canadian interests first, not advancing scholarship. Indeed, the South African Association of Canadian Studies (2007) stated that “the detailed policy priorities, as described, would tie us to Canadian foreign policy in a way that would be unacceptable; endanger our position as an independent academic body; and implicitly compel us to adopt priorities which we do not share.”¹⁶

International Canadian Studies associations are quite dependent on Canadian federal government support. The proposal jeopardizes programs and risks diminishing interest from scholars outside of the strategic areas, since many international Canadianists study arts and culture. Moreover, many scholars interested in Canada lack institutional support

The ongoing crisis of Canadian Studies, page 16

and if funding from Canada is less readily available, then such scholars may stop studying or teaching Canada. The reorientation could actually undermine the government's efforts to create a positive image of Canada.

So where does this leave Canadian Studies? There is little domestic support from the federal and provincial governments. Universities are at best indifferent. Internationally, the discipline will suffer a major blow if the strategic orientation is adopted. Can a renewed sense of national pride and identity and a rhetoric of distinctiveness supplant the ongoing precarious support for a discipline that explores and explains a constantly changing country? Unfortunately, the prognosis does not look good, unless action is taken. ❁

Notes:

1. David Cameron, *Taking Stock: Canadian Studies in the Nineties* (Montreal: Association for Canadian Studies, 1996).
2. T.H.B. Symons, "The State of Canadian Studies at the Year 2000: Some Observations," *Journal of Canadian Studies*, 35:1 (2000), pp. 27-51, especially p. 28.
3. T.H.B. Symons, *To Know Ourselves: The Report of the Commission on Canadian Studies* (Ottawa: Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada, 1975).
4. See Erin Anderssen and Michael Valpy, *The New Canada: A Globe and Mail Report on the Next Generation* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 2004); Andrew Parkin and Matthew Mendelsohn, *A New Canada: An Identity Shaped by Diversity* (Montreal: Centre for Research and Information on Canada, 2003).
5. Robert Campbell, "Canadian Studies at the Millennium: The Journey Continues," *Journal of Canadian Studies*, 35:1 (2000), pp. 5-26.
6. Leger Marketing, *Sun Media Racial Intolerance Report*. Available from www.leger-marketing.com/documents/spclm/070119ENG.pdf (accessed 27 April 2007).
7. Darrell Bricker and John Wright, *What Canadians Think About Almost Every-*

Can a renewed sense of national pride and identity and a rhetoric of distinctiveness supplant the ongoing precarious support for a discipline that explores and explains a constantly changing country? Unfortunately, the prognosis does not look good, unless action is taken.

thing (Toronto: Doubleday Canada, 2005), pp. 306-308.

8. Robert Wright, *Virtual Sovereignty: Nationalism, Culture and the Canadian Question* (Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press, 2004), especially chapters 6 and 7.
9. Elections Canada, *Electoral Insight*, 5:2 (2003) (special issue on "Youth Participation in Elections"); Frank Graves, *Identity, Globalization and North American Integration: Canada at the Crossroads* (Address to the Canadian Club, 16 January 2001). Available from www.ekos.com/admin/articles/cdnclub.pdf (accessed 27 April 2007).
10. Leonie Huddy and Nadia Khatib, "American Patriotism, National Identity, and Political Involvement," *American Journal of Political Science*, 51:1 (2007), pp. 63-77.
11. Richard Nimijean, "The Paradoxical Nature of the Canadian Identity," *Teaching Canada*, 23 (2005), pp. 25-31; "Brand Canada: The Brand State and the Decline of the Liberal Party," *Inroads*, 19 (2006), pp. 84-93; "The Politics of Branding Canada: The International-Domestic Nexus and the Rethinking of Canada's Place in the World," *Mexican Journal of Canadian Studies*, 11 (2006), pp. 67-85; "Articulating the 'Canadian Way': Canada™ and the Political Manipulation of the Canadian Identity," *British Journal of Canadian Studies* (forthcoming).
12. Geoff McMaster, "The Demise of Canadian Studies," *Expressnews*, 26 March 2001. Available from www.ualberta.ca (accessed 18 May 2007).
13. There will be a national Canadian Studies conference in the fall of 2007, but it remains to be seen if it will become a regular event or if a national academic association will be formed.
14. The Canadian Studies program directly and indirectly allows Canadianists (myself included) to work with international Canadianists. This increases scholarship on Canada from a variety of perspectives and reinforces Canada's democratic credentials when critics of government policy are supported.
15. Details of the program review are available from the International Council for Canadian Studies website at www.iccs-ciec.ca/forum/index.htm (accessed 11 September 2007).
16. South African Association of Canadian Studies, submission to the review of the Canadian Studies Program, 2007. Available from the International Council for Canadian Studies website at www.iccs-ciec.ca/forum/SAACS%20letter%20to%20ICCS.pdf (accessed 21 May 2007).

For more information on *Canada Watch* and the Robarts Centre for Canadian Studies, visit www.robarts.yorku.ca

Has Canadian Studies had its day?

THE PURSUIT OF SELF-KNOWLEDGE

In the 1970s, Tom Symons' important report on Canadian Studies documented the serious neglect of teaching and research concerning Canada in our universities and called for a more "balanced" curriculum. The "most compelling argument" for Canadian Studies was the pursuit of "self knowledge": every society, he argued persuasively, needs to "know itself through academically rigorous study, research and reflection."¹ Never a clarion call for nationalist, self-congratulatory, or xenophobic exclusions, the report made a strong case for simply rectifying imbalances in post-secondary education without jettisoning or denigrating other areas of study and without abandoning our commitment to critical research and writing.

The impact of the report, as measured by changes in university curricula, research foci, new research infrastructures, and the establishment of Canadian Studies programs, could all be measured positively. Not all Canadian Studies programs survived to the millennium, it is true, but many did, along with other markers of a vibrant academic milieu: a Canadian Studies journal founded and still funded by Trent University continues to publish, some research centres dedicated to Canadian Studies thrive, and graduate programs have emerged. Moreover, the absence of Canadian subjects, themes, and research so noticeable in the curricula of some disciplines up until the 1960s has been rectified: there has been a profusion of excellent research in CanLit, history, and political economy, to name only a few areas. There has been, then, some integration of the early goals of Canadian Studies advocates into post-secondary education. Even the early emphasis on the *interdisciplinary* nature of Canadian Studies, at one time the focus of disciplinary fretting that this was "watering down"

BY JOAN SANGSTER

Joan Sangster teaches Canadian working class and women's history and is the former director of the Frost Centre for Canadian Studies and Native Studies at Trent University.

Should we now
relegate Canadian
Studies to this
particular historical
moment, saying
it is passé, an
anachronism that has
"had its day"?

standards, has been reformulated as a positive principle in academic life. One now routinely hears calls for more interdisciplinarity in our research and teaching, including from funding bodies like the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, and from university presidents who are laying claim to interdisciplinarity as the "new" academic innovation on their campuses. In the same way that Women's Studies led to more attention to gender across the academic spectrum, and new paradigms of interpretation, Canadian Studies has created positive and productive dialogue and change in post-secondary education.

Canadian Studies, one might argue, was a product of a particular historical moment when the nation appeared fragile, when things Canadian were understudied, and when some areas of academe still operated in a near-colonial manner vis-à-vis Britain and the United States. Should we now relegate Canadian

Studies to this particular historical moment, saying it is passé, an anachronism that has "had its day"? Or, on the contrary, will Canadian Studies continue to thrive in new ways, transforming itself over time, in a productive (if sometimes painful) manner, continuing to situate Canadianist research on the cutting edge of scholarship? I hope it is the latter, but we face a number of challenges as scholars in Canadian Studies and as *Canadianist* scholars—and I think both are crucial to the project.²

One irony is that some of the early Canadian Studies scholars were in search of what the nation, or two nations meant, culturally, politically, and economically; now, however, many academics are busy deconstructing the notion of the "nation" itself. Can we deconstruct the nation and still develop an academic project articulated around nation? I think so. Many of the academic challenges to idealized notions of the Canadian nation, emerging from queer studies, feminism, and critical race theory to name only three areas, provide means by which Canadian Studies can be kept vibrant as a scholarly area.

KEEPING THE ACADEMIC EDGE

All of us teaching Canadian Studies have encountered the view that it is uncritical and nationalist, that it is a "rah rah" view of Canada, or that it is a child of the state, kept alive through funding and promotion efforts. The former is simply a caricature. There is an element of truth to the latter claim, since some state funds are made available to Canadian Studies. Ironically, these are not *primarily* directed at Canadian Studies scholarship, programs, and institutes in universities in Canada. The Association for Canadian Studies (ACS), which now sees its mandate as public education in the broadest sense, does not simply represent university programs.

Has Canadian Studies had its day?, page 18

There are also monies directed at Canadian Studies abroad; some of these funds make productive contributions to academic scholarship, some less so. When I was director of a graduate program in Canadian Studies, one of the ironies I found irritating (or amusing depending on the day) was the “Canadian Studies international junket”: we all know many academics who are happy to travel to Spain, Australia, Italy, or other areas with sun and nice wine, subsidized by some form of Canadian Studies funds. When they return, however, they care little about supporting Canadian Studies programs here, and some even advise their students not to pursue graduate work in Canadian Studies.

What we need is a redirection of funds, competitively applied for, to develop projects here in Canada. Even very small amounts for academic workshops, exchanges, graduate student conferences,³ and other projects would be helpful. We also need a functioning network for the university-based Canadian Studies programs so that they can discuss university curricula, funding, the encouragement of scholarship, and so on. A start was made in 2005, when a founding meeting was held at Trent University for a new Canadian Studies Coordinators Network/la Conférence des coordonnateurs d'études canadiennes. Building this network will help re-invigorate our discussions about university teaching and research in Canadianist and Canadian Studies areas.

MAKING INTERDISCIPLINARITY A REALITY

It may seem ridiculous, given my comments above about the popularity of interdisciplinarity, to even have this heading. But one problem persists with Canadian Studies programs as with some other interdisciplinary areas: the embrace of interdisciplinarity is sometimes more rhetorical than it is a reality. One example of this comes from my experiences with our MA and PhD programs

All of us teaching Canadian Studies have encountered the view that it is uncritical and nationalist, that it is a “rah rah” view of Canada, or that it is a child of the state, kept alive through funding and promotion efforts.

at Trent. Incoming students are still warned by advisers that interdisciplinary means “less”: that is, less rigorous, no method, less marketable, and so on. Our joint PhD program with Carleton, the only interdisciplinary Canadian Studies doctoral program in the country, encourages interdisciplinarity, but it has also evolved as a multidisciplinary program in practice. In other words, some students plant their feet in two areas, one interdisciplinary, and the other disciplinary, the second learned through research methods, thesis supervision, and their teaching. One reason is simply the job market our students face. Even if times have changed, some academics still rail against the “less” of interdisciplinarity, ignoring the way in which many disciplines (like my own, History) have become more interdisciplinary, and ignoring the stimulating, rich, and diverse background that interdisciplinarity offers in the education of new teachers and researchers.

LISTENING TO CRITICISM/KEEPING A CRITICAL EDGE

As I mentioned, in Canadian research, there have been a multitude of academic challenges that have emerged to idealized notions of the nation, emanating from critical race studies, queer studies, Native Studies, and perhaps that forgotten approach in these times, class analysis. These are paradigms that stress fragmentation, diversity, particularity, inequality, difference, and conflict. Some might see these as incompatible with Canadian Studies, assuming a certain

commonality behind the notion of “Canada.” These new critiques and theoretical paradigms, however, are absolutely essential to the health and longevity of Canadian Studies. They must be addressed, discussed, and integrated into Canadian Studies, in order to keep it vibrant and relevant, even if many of these critiques are unhappy with the way scholars have taught Canada up until now, or what they have written. We will not survive as a strong academic area by hunkering down with tested recipes; we have to embrace intellectual and academic critiques and productive dialogue. Nor does this mean simply embracing a liberal pluralism that seems very popular in some disciplines, calling (once again) for diversity and tolerance. Indeed, it is precisely this liberal pluralism, as Himani Bannerji argues, that acts *as ideology* in Canada, masking old-fashioned structural inequities such as exploitation and racism, presenting them as things which can be “overcome,” willed away with more tolerant ideas.⁴ In an earlier period, key texts and debates in Canadian Studies challenged taken-for-granted ideas; this was, in part, the nature of its vibrancy. The same process of challenge and contention has to be encouraged, even if we are no longer discussing the “comprador economy” or two solitudes.

For example, there is no doubt that writing on “race” in the Canadian context—by scholars such as Sherene Razack, Radha Jhappan, Yasmin Jawani, Daiva Stasilius, Vic Satzewich, Renaldo Walcott, Nandita Sharma, George Elliott Clarke, to name only a few—has provided

important critical challenges to existing research on Canada, and especially to idealized, popular images of the nation. This writing exists in tandem with and as a challenge to some older Canadian Studies publishing that still embraces the notion of the “peaceable kingdom,” the kinder, gentler, more tolerant society (the peaceable kingdom ironically replicated by American Michael Moore in his documentary *Bowling for Columbine*⁵). Welcoming the critiques that have emerged from this diverse array of writing on race and allowing the taken-for-granted views of Canada to be thoroughly challenged will keep Canadian Studies from falling into irrelevance.

TWO NATIONS—AND MORE

When Canadian Studies emerged, the project was to understand the “nation” better, though there was also an investment in two founding nations, and an intense sense of urgency with the political question of Quebec given the growth of a sovereignty movement. Unfortunately, students seem far less interested in Quebec now, as if it has already separated (though amicably), and they are more concerned with issues such as identity politics, Aboriginal issues, and the environment. These latter concerns are, of course, crucial issues, though one sometimes wishes that understanding Quebec was not abandoned quite so easily. We also have to face the reality, however, that Canadian Studies has been more an English Canadian project than a Quebec project, even if that has not been its intention. Perhaps it is time to recognize this, by establishing some links of solidarity with Quebec Studies programs, and facilitating as much academic debate as possible between the two nations.

For my colleagues in Native Studies, a two-nation approach is not enough. Those writing Native history have understandably challenged the old idea of two “founding nations” in Canada. The concept of nation is still important to my First Nations colleagues, who list themselves in our calendar by their nation—Onedia, Cree, Métis, Algonkian—but not in the

‘older’ colonialist sense of two white settler societies/nations. The challenges offered by Native Studies to Canadian Studies curricula must also be addressed. In some programs Native Studies is integrated as part of Canadian Studies, in some cases, there are separate Native/Indigenous Studies programs, and, in our case at the graduate level, the MA program combines the two, and the PhD program separates the two areas. Whatever approach is assumed, we have to be conscious that “Canadian” is not a label that all Native Studies scholars necessarily embrace. Again, a conversation across difference and the ability to debate this dilemma openly and honestly are perhaps the best we can hope for.

THE CHALLENGE OF GLOBALIZATION

One of the earlier concerns of Canadian political economy, a handmaiden of Canadian Studies in some universities, was the question of Canada’s economic relationship to other nations, particularly the United States. Canadian Studies has always welcomed research that situates Canada within the world and uses comparative and transnational approaches. However, there is even more concern now in universities with globalization, as both a teaching and research area, a concern replicated in funding agencies that extol the need to situate our research internationally. Of course, some of this concern with globalization has a decidedly unpleasant neo-liberal cast to it, but other efforts to think internationally have resulted in the welcome diversification of our curriculum in the universities: many universities, for example, have expanded their offerings in areas like international/global/development studies. An overwhelming emphasis in many humanities departments on North American and European topics has been altered (not transformed, as critics rightly point out) to include other areas of the globe. There is no reason that this emphasis on internationalization should negate the need for Canadian Studies, but economic exigencies and competition for resources, as well as persisting

“colonial” views of Canadian research by some academics do sometimes result in an either/or approach, and in the claims that the study of Canada is too particular, too local, a narrow nationalist endeavour, while global studies (meaning any other country or even piece of it) provides students with critical knowledge, with a more expansive, valuable view of the world.

I have heard all of these comments, and they are disturbing because of the false hierarchy they establish between research areas, because of the implicit notion that we no longer need the navel-gazing localisms of Canadian Studies, because of the unnecessary antagonism established between two important areas within the university. The idea of “less” has thus reappeared once again despite the fact that Canadianist/Canadian Studies research draws on transnational debates, international theory, and engages actively with writing from other nations. One is reminded of Australian Ann Curthoys’ clever title for a recent article, “We’ve Just Started Making National Histories and Now You Want Us to Stop Already?”⁶ As Curthoys points out, nations *or groups* whose history was somewhat marginalized in the past have found that soon after they begin to find a voice, they are told that it is “not enough” or too partial.

We should resist a false dichotomy between teaching about Canada or the world, urging instead the expansion, not contraction, of curricular options in post-secondary institutions and exploring the myriad of ways in which these areas intersect in the study of diasporas, comparative colonial studies, migration, and more. The solution to understanding the world is not to abandon “understanding ourselves” since that always involved a relational, expansive, and critical understanding of research. 🌱

NOTES

1. Thomas H.B. Symons and James E. Page, *Some Questions of Balance: Human Resources, Higher Education and Canadian Studies* (Ottawa: Association of Universities **Has Canadian Studies had its day?, page 30**

The future of Canadian Studies: A Gen-Xer's perspective

When I was invited to write on the future of Canadian Studies from the perspective of a scholar new to the field, I immediately jumped at the opportunity. Then the panic set in. I quickly realized that I really did not know that much about the history of the field and that published historical reflections on Canadian Studies were relatively scarce. What follows, therefore, is a brief autobiographical account of how I came to find myself in a Canadian Studies department and, on the basis of that limited vantage point, an attempt to offer some of my reflections on the future of Canadian Studies.

ECONOMIC CYCLES AND CAREER CHOICES

As befitting the worst nightmares of Robin Matthews, I completed my BA in philosophy in 1993 at an institution that nowadays brands itself as “Canada’s University” without ever taking a Canadian-focused course. To no one’s surprise, my freshly minted BA failed to open any career opportunities, and I continued to work as a waiter in an art café in Ottawa’s Byward Market. Canada was in a prolonged recession for the first 10 years or so of my adult life. Other Gen-Xers and I listened as the newly regnant baby boomers called upon us to sacrifice for the benefit of the national economy’s long-term health. The irony of the boomers calling upon us to sacrifice our futures in the name of the nation was not lost on me. It seemed to many of us that in their youth, the boomers had championed left-nationalism in order to ensure that they benefited from a strong economy and generous social programs. The moment that they achieved financial security, however, the “social safety net” was deemed unnecessary, and they began to demand tax cuts and massive reductions to government programs in order to be able to upgrade from a Toyota to an Audi.

BY PETER HODGINS

Peter Hodgins is an assistant professor in Canadian Studies at Carleton University.

Canada is a discursive and material construction that is always contested, contradictory, and complex and must be studied using tools of analysis that are critical and radically contextual.

This bleak economic reality and the generally dispiriting character of a Canadian public culture dominated by the likes of Mulroney, Chrétien, Martin, Harris, and Parizeau forced a renegotiation of my relationship to the Canadian state and to Canadian nationalism. As I watched the standoffs at Oka and Ipperwash, the Somalia Inquiry, Chrétien throttling a protestor, and RCMP officers pepper-spraying demonstrators in Vancouver, it became quite clear to me that the Canadian state had shed whatever utopian potential it might have once had in the 1960s and 1970s. Instead, it had revealed itself to be yet another liberal capitalist institution whose main role was to protect and expand ensconced interests by any means necessary.

In spite of my anxiety about the very real prospect of downward mobility, my loss of faith in the Canadian state, and my growing annoyance toward my baby-

boomer customers, working in a busy tourist district did come with the unexpected benefit of forcing me to try to explain Canada to tourists. They asked me many questions to which I could provide no clear answers. It gradually became clear to me that, as an aspiring intellectual, I would have to come to grips with the country in which I lived.

CULTURAL STUDIES AS A WINDOW INTO CANADA

In order to pursue this growing curiosity about Canada and to hopefully improve my economic prospects, I enrolled in Carleton’s MA program in Mass Communication. One reason for my attraction to the program was that I, like many people who know little about their country and its history, was probably still a cultural nationalist. From the outside looking in, the program looked like a nationalist paradise: courses in the political economy of communication, international communication, cultural policy, and the relationships among media, capitalism, and democracy. Little did I know that I would come under the influence of scholars like Michael Dorland, Paul Attallah, and Kevin Dowler. They were part of a larger movement in Canadian media studies that was engaged in a wholesale rethinking of the intellectual and political legacy of Canadian left-nationalism. Challenging the received wisdom of “the state or the United States,” they painted a vision of “official” Canadian culture and nationalism as a WASPish, resentful, and fearful construction of a paternalist and almost Stalinist Canadian state that, in league with various Canadian media companies and rent-seeking culturecrats and university researchers, used the rhetoric of “cultural protection” to legitimate their existence as heroic defenders of the always weak and embattled Canadian nation.

For these scholars, the most interest-

ing examples of Canadian culture came from intellectuals and cultural producers who resisted the attempt by the Canadian nation-building apparatus to co-opt them for its own legitimation/nation-building projects. Like them, I was always struck by the fact that while the study of Canada should be fascinating because all of the complexities and contradictions of modernity could be found in one place—colonization, imperialism, nationalism, industrialization, globalization, democratization, mass immigration, and so on—the reality (especially before the 1990s) was generally disappointing, boring, and uninsightful. Because Canadian writers seemed obsessed with defining the Canadian identity or reading the Canadian past as a prefiguration of their preferred model of the Canadian or Québécois nation-state, they often overlooked the object of their study in their rush to secure their own political projects. In my MA research on New France, for example, I was struck primarily by, quite frankly, the weirdness of the French colonial project (canoe-licensing systems, missionaries teaching Aboriginal men the need to beat their children and wives, etc.) but the majority of the historians skirted around such details in order to prove how the colony's history does or does not support the claims of Quebec secessionists. What I learned quickly from all of this was that the best place to learn about Canada was from the writings of British, European, or American writers on Canada or Canadian writers who were positioned at the margins of the traditionally defined Canadian nation. Presumably because neither was part of the Canadian garrison to begin with, they had a certain freedom to see and say things that the "official" or would-be "official" voices of the "national soul" would or could not.

This increased scepticism toward Canadian nationalism, the Canadian state, and the received tradition of writing about Canada was exacerbated by my master's and doctoral thesis research, which familiarized me with the growing body of research in the areas of Canadian aboriginal studies, gender studies,

Analogous to Michel de Certeau's description of the difference between experiencing the streets of Manhattan from the top of the (now destroyed) World Trade Center or from the teeming and chaotic sidewalks, the result of the shift in optics that has taken place at Carleton is the discovery of a Canada that is confusing, complex, and conflictual.

cultural studies, and cultural memory studies. As a result, it came as a surprise to many who knew me that I accepted a position at Carleton's School of Canadian Studies. To me, however, it made perfect sense. Having worked there as a sessional during my PhD, I knew that, under the leadership of directors like Jill Vickers, Pat Armstrong, Natalie Luckyj, François Rocher, and now Pauline Rankin, the School of Canadian Studies had been actively working to take up Vickers' call in 1994 to develop a Canadian Studies program that rejected "the sexism, the racism, and the Anglo-Canadian ethnic chauvinism ... [and] the emphasis on passivity, dependence and despair" that characterized "much of the underlying thought in Canadian studies."¹

In getting the job at Carleton, I thus had the very good fortune of joining a department in which the faculty members and the students were committed to a project of developing new ways of reading and writing Canada. If I had to brand our approach to Canadian Studies, it would have to be the 6 Cs: "Canada is a discursive and material construction that is always contested, contradictory, and complex and must be studied using tools of analysis that are critical and radically contextual."

TRADITION OF INTERDISCIPLINARITY

In studying Canada in this way, we are helped greatly by the long-standing tradition of interdisciplinarity within Canad-

ian Studies. While it is true that most of the other disciplines in the arts and social sciences have begun to embrace interdisciplinarity in limited ways, the fact of the matter is that Canadian Studies departments have an existing organizational capacity to facilitate the sharing of intellectual resources by scholars from diverse disciplinary backgrounds on an everyday basis. In such a space, interdisciplinary collaboration becomes second nature. Testifying to the intellectual fertility of this atmosphere is the fact that our student numbers, at both the undergraduate and graduate levels, have been growing of late and the frequency with which my Canadianist colleagues in traditional disciplinary departments tell me that "I'd like to be more involved in Canadian Studies."

Along with its interdisciplinary character, much of our success can be attributed to the strong influence of feminism, critical race theory, and Native Studies in forming the curriculum and intellectual agenda of the School. While I suspect that traditionally defined Canadian Studies programs tended to replicate the discourse of the Canadian State in their mapping of the field (the "problem" of regionalism, the "national unity" issue, etc.) and tended to focus on the activities of "leaders and nations," we tend to focus on the experience of Canada "from below." In other words, we study Canada from the vantage point of those who are the objects of the proj-

A Gen-Xer's perspective, page 23

Toward a recovery of social solidarity?

THE SOCIAL PROJECT OF CANADIAN STUDIES

The current state of Canadian Studies certainly needs to be addressed. It is both moribund and fragmented. The most important symptom is that these days one rarely hears anyone talk about *why* Canadian Studies is important, what social project it represents. Unlike many other interdisciplinary innovations, though like Women's Studies and Labour Studies, Canadian Studies began in relation to a public project of social criticism and counter-hegemony. It is questionable whether it has any meaning outside that context.

Canadian Studies was inaugurated by a problematic relationship between Canada and its international situation—a certain configuration between inside and outside. Inside, we were woefully ignorant of ourselves; outside, we were woefully compliant with US hegemony. Canadian Studies was one of a number of initiatives whose strengthening of our self-knowledge was intended to contribute to independence both at home and in international affairs. What independence could afford was perhaps less clear, but it was never too far from a critique of *laissez-faire* capitalism and the recovery of community. That project may still make sense, but the inside-outside configuration that gave rise to it has considerably altered.

About 10 years ago, I suggested that Canadian Studies was a consequence of the left-nationalist discourse that arose in the early 1970s.¹ Particular studies by individual researchers were fitted into a larger public context in relation to a theory of dependent industrialization associated with Harold Innis and a lament for the failure of cultural autonomy associated with George Grant. However, the mainstream of Canadian Studies, and other cultural consequences such as the cultural policy discourse, took off by separating itself from this public context, arguing that Canadian Studies had no necessary relation to “nationalism” or

BY IAN ANGUS

Ian Angus teaches in the Humanities department at Simon Fraser University and is the director of the Centre for Canadian Studies.

Perhaps most important, the defence of community in Canadian thought needs to be radicalized into a political and philosophical inquiry into the grounds of human solidarity—for it is this that the neo-liberal economy and the national security state most threatens.

any other public project. Thus, the “successes” of Canadian Studies have not been part of the formation of a national-popular will as left-nationalism expected but have occurred within established university structures. This is clearly not a matter of individual failures but a social and economic trend that has not been swayed from its course, despite some important attempts to situate individual studies within a national project.

THE LACK OF KNOWLEDGE ABOUT CANADA

Even here, I would be cautious about speaking straightforwardly of “success.” My experience in teaching is that Canadians are still surprised to find that a

serious tradition of social and political thought exists in English Canada. It is still an uphill struggle to get Canadians to pay attention to their own context and history. Moreover, Canadian Studies still remains a poor cousin in most university structures. In the present context, we cannot help but be aware that ignorance of one's own history is a general problem in the world due to the commodification of culture and its centralized production. Our problem has not been resolved but has become a common condition.

The separation from a public project has been exacerbated by further trends. Subsequent economic developments, notably the free trade agreements, but also the concentration of capital and new technological innovations, have undermined the theory of dependent industrialization. Similarly, the successes of Canadian cultural products on the international scene—notably novels written in English and theories of multiculturalism—have undermined the assertion of cultural dependency. Moreover, we cannot underplay the role played by Canadian corporations and political institutions in maintaining economic and cultural dependency elsewhere. As a consequence, most thinkers have simply abandoned the framework that gave meaning to individual studies, and the choice of Canadian themes has once again become simply a matter of individual research programs.

With the disintegration of the national project, there have arisen a number of assertions generally associated with the name of postmodernism: whenever identity is mentioned, it is suggested that identity is always plural and contested; whenever dependency is mentioned, it is pointed out that there are Canadian success stories in the international economy; whenever oppression is mentioned, only the most extreme cases receive attention, thus concealing the multiple layers of domination and their extension throughout society. These as-

sertions work to obscure the important heritage of left-nationalism through a caricature that it was supposedly homogenizing, special pleading, and itself oppressive because of its orientation toward the national state. Neither of these positions is adequate. The task is to continue the critique of dependency and frustrated identity in a more plural context; neither abandon social criticism and a public project on the one hand, nor assert it unchanged on the other.

CANADIAN STUDIES AS COUNTER-HEGEMONY

But how can one do this? What is the public project that can unify individual studies in the present climate? What is first needed is some clarity about the current situation: the combination of neo-liberal political-economic hegemony with the intensification of the national security state. The renewal of public scepticism toward the American agenda is, in this context, important. The international interest in Canada as another paradigm of English-speaking politics and culture is a good sign. Social critics can use these as public entry points into more critical discourses: dependency

The hope for community and social solidarity expressed through the creation of Canadian Studies requires renewal.

has not disappeared; it is evident in the relations between regions and classes in Canada, as well as internationally. The plurality of nations within the Canadian nation-state requires analysis of internal imperialism, which runs parallel with international inequalities. The critique of empire needs to be turned against the history and pretensions of the British Empire and the Canadian state as well as turned outward toward the United States. Perhaps most important, the defence of community in Canadian thought needs to be radicalized into a political and philosophical inquiry into the grounds of human solidarity—for it is this that the neo-liberal economy and the national security state most threatens.

These issues represent a new emphasis in Canadian Studies. The turn inward toward self-discovery never involved the parochialism that the caricature suggests, but the interplay between domestic and international concerns is now more intense than ever. The hope for community and social solidarity expressed through the creation of Canadian Studies requires renewal. Recovery of social solidarity within Canada can motivate international involvement and steer it away from liberal guilt toward an analysis of the sources of exploitation. Social criticism aware of its tradition in Canada has a certain style and emphasis that can contribute meaningfully to new international debates. For this, we still need to know our history, because human solidarity finds its grounds in particular histories. The turn inward also opens outward. We must now explore the terms of the new configuration that is being set into place.

Note

1. Ian Angus, *A Border Within: National Identity, Cultural Plurality and Wilderness* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1997), pp. 27-40.

A Gen-Xer's perspective continued from page 21

ect of national subject-formation and their negotiations with and resistance to that project. Analogous to Michel de Certeau's description of the difference between experiencing the streets of Manhattan from the top of the (now destroyed) World Trade Center or from the teeming and chaotic sidewalks, the result of the shift in optics that has taken place at Carleton is the discovery of a Canada that is confusing, complex, and conflictual. Ultimately, I would argue, it is also more interesting and more in tune with our experience of Canadian post-modernity.

LINKAGES BETWEEN PROGRAMS

While this shift has rejuvenated Canadian-focused research here at Carleton, it seems to have come with a certain price:

a growing cleavage between the way that Canadian Studies is being reconceptualized in university departments and the way in which the Canadian Studies project has been conceptualized and institutionalized by the Canadian state. As a result, Pauline Rankin of Carleton University, Pierre Anctil of the University of Ottawa, and Jim Struthers of Trent University have been working with the chairs and directors of other domestic Canadian Studies programs to create a university-based scholarly association. This association has tentatively been named the "Canadian Studies Coordinators Network," and it plans to hold a national workshop in Ottawa in November 2007 with the aim of strengthening linkages between Canadian Studies programs and faculty in Canada and to begin the pro-

cess of creating a national organization of Canadianists at the university level. Such an association, I would argue, marks the future of Canadian Studies in Canada: its emergence as an inclusive, mature, and fully autonomous field of study. 🍁

Note

1. Jill Vickers, "Liberating Theory in Canadian Studies," in *Canada: Theoretical Discourse/discours théoriques*, ed. Terry Goldie et al. (Montreal: Association for Canadian Studies, 1994), p. 364.

**ROBARTS CENTRE FOR
CANADIAN STUDIES**
www.robarts.yorku.ca

Letters from Denmark: Thoughts on Canadian Studies

TAKING CANADIAN STUDIES ABROAD

My experience with Canadian Studies began with Bryan Adams.

In January 2002, I arrived in Aarhus, Denmark, as the new visiting lecturer in Canadian Studies. This was odd for a couple of reasons: I had just received my PhD from the University of Western Ontario, in *History*, and, to be frank, couldn't have located Denmark on a map. In other words, this was less about seeing the world or flying the flag than a junior scholar needing a job. In the department of English, which hosts the only Centre for Canadian Studies in Scandinavia (as well as centres for American and Irish studies), I was to teach two courses: a first-year survey of Canadian literature, and an upper-year course on Canadian culture. On the first day I asked the senior class what they thought of when they thought of Canada.

The first three answers: wilderness, hockey, and Bryan Adams. Oh boy, I thought.

By the end of the semester, the first-year class had read everything from David Thompson's *Narrative of His Explorations in Western America*¹ to Alistair MacLeod's short stories. (Astonishingly, these 19-year olds often read a novel a *week*—something I have yet to see my students in Canada do—and in their second or third language!) The senior students, for their part, began with the imperial language of "The Maple Leaf Forever" and ended up wrestling with the logic of CanCon legislation. It was, in retrospect, a fantastic teaching experience.

Sometimes I felt a little like a school-teacher in a one-room schoolhouse. They were all very bright and beautifully fluent in English, but I couldn't assume any prior knowledge of Canada. Indeed, this was precisely *why* Canadian Studies

BY CLAIRE CAMPBELL

Claire Campbell teaches Canadian Studies and History at Dalhousie University.

Molson Joe
notwithstanding, our
national insecurity
over our international
influence is at best
naive, and at worst,
dangerously limiting.

appealed to them: like kids around the world, they were inundated with American popular culture, but Canada remained essentially a blank slate. So each class was in part about the text, but more about the context: the reading served as an entree to the political, economic, and social climate of the day. How to teach *The Backwoods of Canada*,² for example, without explaining the Loyalist migration, the formation of Upper Canada, the experience of pioneering? How to talk about the value of the CBC without a sense of the living conditions of the Great Depression on the prairie?

STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF THE CANADIAN STUDIES PROJECT

By the time I left Denmark to travel on a Eurail Pass—could there be any more "Canadian" thing to do?—I had come to several conclusions about Canadian Studies. My subsequent experiences—joining the faculty at Dalhousie University, for example—have only reinforced these.

- One of its greatest strengths is its multidisciplinary. Teaching history through literature was, in part, a young historian's way of coping with material outside her ken (I had only minored in English as an undergraduate, for Pete's sake). But, I believe, it is actually a better way of understanding place. When writing my book on Georgian Bay—ostensibly an environmental history of a particular part of Ontario—I didn't just bury myself in archival land-use records; I wanted to incorporate poetry and art alongside sessional papers or park memos, because each kind of source reflected a different way in which people had seen or used the landscape. Their reactions could be imaginative and romantic at times, pragmatic and utilitarian at others. This also meant drawing on the spatial interests of geographers and planners, the concepts of place in folklore, ideas of representation in literature and art history. Integrating different disciplines into a single story rewards us with a much more complete image of the past and a better reflection of actual historical experience.
- I think Canadian Studies operates in much the same way. We can circle the subject from different angles, because we can't understand Canada or its workings through only its political structure, or its ecozones, or its literature. We are affected by many of its qualities simultaneously. I think of Douglas LePan's description of Shield country, where "angels alone would see it whole and one"; stepping out of disciplinary corridors allows us to see the whole. At Dalhousie most

Canadianists at home seek out locality and difference—regional, ethnic, class; Canadianists abroad try to distill singular national qualities.

of the courses in “Canadian Studies” are simply those cross-listed with other departments, from comparative religion to theatre. But I think this results in the very best kind of Arts degree, for its breadth and diversity.

- I was reminded of this in August 2006 when Dalhousie played host to the week-long summer seminar for the International Council for Canadian Studies (ICCS). Participants from Bosnia, Belgium, Mexico, Israel, Russia, and elsewhere listened to Lesley Choyce and Herménégilde Chiasson; visited Lunenburg and Grand Pré; attended sessions on media at the CBC, on federalism at Province House, and defence on HMCS *Fredericton* (a thrill more for the hosts, I think, since civilians are rarely allowed on the base). An historian’s take on “Atlantic Canada” would have been too limiting, probably would have talked too much about fish, and would have underestimated the role Canada plays on the world stage today.
- While interdisciplinary research has become the norm (très fashionable in grant applications), other programs—like Atlantic Canadian Studies or Acadian Studies, for example, here in Nova Scotia—are defined by cultural realities rather than political ones. They have not made the study of the nation-state redundant. As Philip Buckner once argued in *Acadiensis*, we hold multiple identities, and belong to these different groups, simultaneously. Still, I suspect, Canadian Studies thrives best in the old Laurentian heartland, less troubled by contradictory regionalisms.
- The usual refrain in this country—trotted out for November 11 or July 1—is that nobody knows or cares about Canadian history. Somebody tell that to the Danes. And to the network of Canadian Studies centres throughout Europe. I couldn’t believe the depth of interest in Canada *outside* of Canada. The

usual reaction when I told other Canadians I went to Aarhus (besides “Where?”) was “Why on earth would Danes care?” Molson Joe notwithstanding, our national insecurity over our international influence is at best naïve, and at worst, dangerously limiting. Even the network of international scholarship is a terrific resource. For example, I’m part of a research team studying tourism on the North American seaboard: a collaboration of Danes, Canadians, and Americans.

- It sounds trite, but an external perspective makes you think about things differently. Immigration had only ever been an abstract concept to me; as a fourth-generation Canadian, multiculturalism meant a fifth-grade report on “The Scots in Canada” or colourful posters from the federal government. Danes, however, kept asking me, “Where are you from?” As an *emigrant* nation—and one whose monarchy can trace its lineage to the 10th century—residence from 1904 didn’t count as ethnic identity. (In fact, my great-great-grandmother was born in Nykobing, not two hours from Aarhus, in 1866.) More generally, studying Canada in isolation—from the inside, well, in—prevents us from drawing on other experiences. Denmark, for example, borders a much larger country (one that, in the past two centuries, has been by turns hostile and acquisitive) and, now, the polyglot European Union. This proximity has heightened anxieties about the survival of Danish language and culture. As my Danish students

were quick to point out, the parallels between Canada and the United States, and between Quebec and English Canada, aren’t that far off the mark.

- The field isn’t without its limitations. As the “expert” Canadianist, I fielded questions on everything from free trade to Inuit land claims, and my answers were often oversimplified and probably ill-informed. When Danes asked me what Canadians thought about our presence in Afghanistan, I couldn’t believe I was supposed to answer for my entire country. I noticed this again last summer, in the questions posed by the ICCS participants. Canadianists at home seek out locality and difference—regional, ethnic, class; Canadianists abroad try to distill singular national qualities.

ENTHUSIASM FOR CANADA

And yet, this may turn out to be Canadian Studies’ secret weapon. To the question “Has it won the battles it set out to do in the 1960s and 1970s?": has it resolved endemic questions of identity and unity? No—but working with Canadianists from abroad ignites my latent patriotism. I blush to admit this; after all, patriotism is one of those sentiments that, as academics, we are supposed to dissect or suppress. But their enthusiasm for *my* country, for the whole, and for its potential, is truly infectious.

As a relative newcomer to the field, I think it needs some advertising. The Canadian academy is experiencing a remarkable turnover. (This was the situation in Denmark, too; I was hired to bridge the year between the retirement

Letters from Denmark, page 30

Too much of a good thing? The case for Canadian Studies in the 21st century

Is Canadian Studies a victim of its own success? The question is politically charged because it implies several things: that the objectives originally set for Canadian Studies have been accomplished, that the study of Canada is overextended, and that overextension impedes a scholarly or educational focus on other matters that are of supposedly greater import than Canada. These assumptions are not new. The idea that Canada is important enough to merit scholarly attention has always been contested.¹ More recently, proponents of “North American Studies” have argued that Canadian Studies programs need to broaden their focus to take account of a wider political-economic framework² while the discourse of “globalization” suggests that a similarly broader framework and international focus are needed in the contemporary academy.

The simple question about the scope and focus of Canadian Studies as part of a post-secondary environment is, in this sense, more complicated than it first appears because the “Canadianization” of the academy carried with it more than one objective. It was about scholarly, cultural, and educational issues. A consideration of the status of Canadian Studies needs to look at these diverse aims. It also needs to avoid a “balance sheet” approach to the study of Canada. Such an approach might conclude that some objectives have been met while others retain their relevance. I want to suggest a different way of looking at Canadian Studies. My goal is to suggest two different but interrelated points. First, what constitutes Canadian Studies today is something different than its foundational documents forecast. The study of Canada has shifted ground markedly over the last generation; Canadianists³ are not, by and large, working to accomplish the aims of a previous generation but have established new goals. Second, the further development of Canadian

BY ANDREW NURSE

Andrew Nurse is director and program co-ordinator of the Centre for Canadian Studies at Mount Allison University.

Retold, the story of Canada is less the story of the evolution of a Canadian nation than the story of a particular project of nation, realized through a process of conflict involving subject social groups, marginalized communities, and “historic nations.”

Studies is hampered by a discourse that sets it apart from other possible subjects of scholarly attention, such as globalization or North American Studies. The study of Canada is not a zero sum game. Consideration of the practical and actual context of, say, globalization enriches Canadian Studies, and the study of Canada can enrich a consideration of globalization. Canada is part of the globe (or, part of North America) and to proceed as if it were not is to make an odd counterfactual assumption. It is to assert that the Canadian experience can tell us nothing about globalization. Such an assumption obscures the degree to which a consideration of Canada is actually of use to a range of other peoples

concerned with a supposedly new and global environment.

THE OBJECTIVES OF CANADIAN STUDIES

The development of Canadian Studies was part of a longer historical process through which Canadians narrated—and hence constructed—the ideal of a Canadian nation-state with its own history, demographics, culture, and political processes. The foundational ideals of Canadian Studies were overtly political. As Tom Symons noted in his influential report on Canadian Studies, a core objective of a Canada-centric curriculum was to enhance self-knowledge.⁴ At Mount Allison University, the ideal of self-knowledge animated the organization of one of Canada’s first interdisciplinary Canadian Studies programs in 1969.⁵ Established through a combination of faculty interest and philanthropy, Canada-centric courses began to develop in increased numbers at Mount Allison University in the late 1960s and 1970s. Initially, the program involved using a combination of discipline-based Canada-centric courses. Among the first interdisciplinary courses offered was an intermediate-level course that traced the “[c]ultural and intellectual development of Canada from the Ancient Regime to the present.”⁶ The same approach had been earlier highlighted by Dr. G.F.G. Stanley, the first director of Mount Allison’s Centre for Canadian Studies. Among his intermediate-level history courses was a third-year course called Canadian Civilization, which examined the political as well as intellectual and cultural development of Canada.⁷ In these courses, self-knowledge was equated with historical knowledge, an understanding of the events, processes, patterns, and peoples that formed Canada. While the approaches of individual instructors undoubtedly varied, the ideal

of teaching Canadian Studies as history focused on foundational “moments,” events, patterns, and key national characteristics and attributes remained current through the 1990s.⁸ It encapsulated a generational approach to the study and teaching of Canada.

Over the last decade, Canadian historians, media commentators, and other intellectuals continued to argue for the importance of this educational objective. At times, as in the work of historian J.L. Granatstein, this focus was linked directly to national political life. Canadian history education, in Granatstein’s view, could—and should—be tied directly to the development of a stronger sense of Canadian identity in that it stood to provide a common narrative that bound citizens together in a cohesive national community.⁹ Self-knowledge is an important educational objective. Studies of Canadian political knowledge, for example, indicate that there is a significant disjuncture between the ways in which Canadians understand their country and what is actually going on in it. This disjuncture is particularly pronounced with regard to Native issues and has a definite effect on voting patterns and the degree to which Canadians are receptive to social reform measures.¹⁰ The problem with this approach is that it can subject scholarship and education to the politics of patriotism. Moreover, national narratives are never ideologically neutral. They carry with them an often implicit but potentially powerful political message that serves to both rationalize and justify specific conceptions of Canada.¹¹

I suspect that it is this political conception of the scholarly and educational enterprise that draws the concern of those interested in establishing a wider context for Canadian Studies. The patriotic manipulation of scholarship can turn Canadian Studies into a narrowly focused pursuit that appears overly concerned with traditional issues. What is important to note, however, is that this politically oriented conception of Canadian Studies is a minority position among Canadianists. At the same time that Canadian academics, such as Tom

Borders are not shields that deflect the world and force introspection.

Symons and others, rationalized Canadian Studies in terms of self-knowledge, scholars in a wide range of disciplines began a series of critical studies focused on the multiple dynamics of inequality in Canada’s past and present. Often organized through new journals—such as *Labour/Le Travail* (which looked at processes of class formation, material inequality, and social conflict), *Studies in Political Economy* (which published studies exploring how processes of state formation bolstered capitalist political economy), *Acadiensis* (whose studies provided a critical reflection on processes of regionalism and stereotypes of regional culture), and *Canadian Woman Studies* (which offered a feminist critique of Canadian society, culture, and political economy)—university-based scholars developed a new conception of Canada’s national development.¹²

RECONSTRUCTING THE NATIONAL NARRATIVE

What is this conception? Answers to this question are difficult because no single narrative emerged from the re-orientation of Canadianist scholarship that took place from the 1970s to the 1990s. In brief, however, the ideal of Canada as a unique nation conditioned by its own history and defined by a series of characteristics gave way before a conception of Canada in which the Canadian nation-state was viewed as a particular project defined by socio-economic, political, ethnic, and cultural inequalities. Retold, the story of Canada is less the story of the evolution of a Canadian nation than the story of a particular project of nation, realized through a process of conflict involving subject social groups, marginalized communities, and “historic nations.”¹³ What was important to learn about Canada was not just how the country evolved as a nation-state but the processes of political and economic marginalization, the resis-

tance of marginalized communities that made space for themselves in a racist society, the ways in which women challenged sexism, and how the Canadian political-economic system reinforced socio-economic inequalities across time. This narrative moved away from explaining foundations and defining Canadian characteristics as part of a process of self-knowledge to looking at Canada as an unfulfilled national project.

At Mount Allison University, this new approach to a consideration of Canada developed on two interrelated fronts. First, it developed through an expansion of interdisciplinary inquiry that interrogated “the Canadian experience” from a range of different directions and that asked questions about the ethics of contemporary Canadian life. Second, it developed through an expansion of specialized courses that explored historically marginalized peoples in Canada, including First Nations, ethno-cultural communities, and women.¹⁴

It is this particular line of inquiry that merits the attention of those who wonder about “overextension” as it provides the basis for a reconsideration of what Canadian Studies is all about. On this level, the study of Canada provides important grounds for research into global issues. There are, of course, a broad range of issues that could be considered from a global perspective.¹⁵ Some examples might include migration, the politics of difference, regional development in the service of increased socio-economic equality, and the politics of state formation. In each of these instances, experiences in Canada provide an important basis for research into processes affecting different parts of the globe. Consider, for example, the issue of migration. Increased international migration from developing to developed countries has produced rising ethnic conflict in a range

Too much of a good thing?, page 28

Too much of a good thing?

continued from page 27

of different locations.¹⁶ As a 2001 International Labour Office/United Nations report noted in its introduction:

The twenty-first century promises to be a new age of migration. Intensifying international migration pressures present many societies with major policy dilemmas; most countries of the world are becoming more multicultural, multi-ethnic, multi-religious and multi-lingual. These changes challenge governments and civil society to accommodate and gain from this diversity in ways which promote peace and respect for human rights.¹⁷

From this perspective, what is interesting about Canada is the relatively peaceful and effective process of political-economic integration of ethno-cultural difference (without a concomitant state-sponsored assimilation campaign) compared with other societies. There are, to be sure, problems with Canadian multiculturalism.¹⁸ Nevertheless, as Will Kymlicka has pointed out, the creation of multiculturalism marked a different and inventive policy response to racism in Canada that, when measured against its objectives, can be considered more than a qualified success.¹⁹ Both the successes and failures of Canadian multiculturalism can, then, be instructive to countries addressing increased ethnic tensions as a result of migration, or other, issues.

Other aspects of Canada's diverse experiences can be instructive too. Canadianists have appreciable experience with issues relating to federalism in multinational societies, international trade, multilateralism on the global stage, ecological mismanagement, and the complex dynamics of accommodation for indigenous peoples within the nation-state. All of these issues are important to a consideration of what globalization actually means in practice. In theory, globalization can mean a wide variety of

things. It can signify new technologies of communication, a "global consciousness," the development of a "global civil society," or expanding patterns of trade.²⁰ In reality, globalization has been a messy process involving unequal relations between states, manipulated patterns of trade, and—perhaps most importantly—a need to address the realities of American power in the world.²¹ Here, the Canadian experience can be particularly instructive. Studies of the effects of continental free trade agreements on the Canadian economy show the remarkably uneven impacts of these economic treaties.²² Canada's high volume of trade and interaction with the United States illustrates the dilemmas confronted by states looking to access the American market and take account of US homeland security policy.

Perhaps most importantly, the Canadian example has a particular salience for cultural issues. Among the different possible effects of globalization is an expanded prevalence of American cultural products. Canadians have, perhaps, a longer experience with American cultural power than any other nation.²³ The dramatic international diffusion of American culture through both new and old communications technologies raises questions about national cultural autonomy and the abilities of smaller countries to preserve, develop, and maintain control of their own cultures.²⁴ Canada's complicated and often fragmented cultural policy is far from perfect. There is good reason to raise questions about the ways in which domestic music industries have been developed, media convergence, the dynamics of federal Internet access policy, and a host of other matters.²⁵ Even with this in mind, Canadian cultural policy provides a series of important case studies in creative and often constructive responses to a globalized media. For all its problems and for all its limitations, Canadian cultural policy and the artistic, literary, musical, cinematographic, etc., developments

that have emerged out of it are impressive and illustrate how smaller countries can enhance, promote, and protect domestic cultures under conditions of an increasingly globalized media and consumerism. The Canadian experience points to, and provides examples of, a range of policies that are important to the "wider context," such as content regulation, non-market media sectors, state support for Internet diffusion, and ownership and distribution regulations.²⁶ With regard to all these points, Canada's record is mixed. Precisely for this reason, they should command wider attention.

THE RELEVANCE OF CANADA

In *Borderlands*, W.H. New reminds us that borders are complex things. The discourses of North American integration and globalization suggest that national borders are becoming less important. This may be the wrong way to look at borders and at the nation-state. New suggests that borders serve as points of negotiation through which national communities debate their own modes of interaction with the wider world.²⁷ If this is true, the Canadian experience is instructive to a wider context in terms of people, material goods, culture, and political processes. Borders are not shields that deflect the world and force introspection. They are a way in which parameters of difference are determined in the 21st century. In this regard, Canada should be thought of not as a nation per se, but as a national project, the aim of which, on its most basic level, is to develop a different type of North American society. Said differently, the Canadian national project is built around the organization of a society that does not reject Americanism, American values, and globalization, but through its border negotiates the degree to which these are accepted, modified, reformed, or rejected. The Canadian national project is, in this sense, intended to preserve the ability of Canadians as a national community to build a society organized

around values different from those of the United States.²⁸

The implications of this for Canadian Studies are multiple. First, it illustrates the ways in which the study of Canada has changed over the last generation and how new approaches to Canadianist research and teaching can be of value in a time of “broader” contexts. Where Canadian Studies formerly focused on defining the key attributes of Canada and charting its evolution as a nation-state, the current focus is to explore the ideas and values that animate Canada as a national project. There is now a generation of scholarly literature pointing to the different ways in which “the Canadian experience” has “played out” for different Canadians. Questions relating to discrimination, marginalization, power, and diversity are core elements of Canadian Studies. In addition, critical attention is directed to whether or not Canada lives up to its ideals.²⁹ Second, it illustrates how the experiences of Canada and Canadians are not secondary to a consideration of a wider context. Nor should they be displaced by consideration of other issues. The reverse is true. Consideration of Canada can illustrate important dynamics associated with globalization, for example, and the ways in which public policy has responded to new socio-economic, demographic, and international contexts. Canada should be an important consideration for anyone interested in population movements, citizenship in diverse polities, multinational federalism, indigenous peoples, and cultural autonomy under conditions of advanced communications technologies.

It is, of course, important that people who live and work in Canada know more about the country. This is not a nationalist idea, but a pragmatic and common sense contention. Increased formal education, studies suggest, promotes higher levels of citizenship engagement, which (in turn) enhances democracy and expands popular agency. For this reason alone, knowing more about Canada will remain important to people living here, whether or not they self-identify as Canadians. And, for this reason alone, it is

difficult to believe that Canadian Studies provides “too much of a good thing.” Even if one rejects this argument, the idea that the Canadian academy should focus on other issues (North America or globalization) does not necessarily follow. The idea that one can or should assess the one (say, globalization) without a consideration of the other (Canada) is built around a faulty either/or premise. I’ve tried to show precisely the opposite: a consideration of important, say, global, issues should involve a consideration of Canada.

The either/or approach to Canadian versus some other studies is underscored, I think, by a particularly problematic trend in Canadian Studies: the political conscription of scholarship and education into the service of patriotism. This potential danger is best addressed, however, not by shifting the focus of our work away from Canada but by bringing a critical lens to bear on the Canadian experience. Canadian Studies was once concerned with the nationalist question and there are Canadian intellectuals and public figures who are still concerned about it. Happily, this is not the general case. Canadian Studies has already made the transition to critical scholarship and is already ready for the 21st century.

Notes

1. For a narrative of the development of Canadian Studies, see Jeffrey Cormier, *The Canadianization Movement: Emergence, Survival, Success* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004).
2. Raymond Blake, “The Future of Canadian Studies in ‘La Gran Familia,’” *Canadian Issues* (March/April 2001), p. 40.
3. I will use the term “Canadianist” to signify both discipline-based scholars working on Canada-centric or Canada-comparative subjects and interdisciplinary scholars who are based on an identification with Canadian Studies programs proper.
4. T.H.B. Symons, *To Know Ourselves: The Report of the Commission on Canadian Studies* (Ottawa: Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada, 1975).
5. Canadian Studies “Fact Sheet” (Mount Allison University, n.d.).

6. Mount Allison University, *Calendar 1976-77* ([1976]), p. 49.
7. Mount Allison University, *Calendar 1969-70* ([1969]), p. 101.
8. For example, see John Ralston Saul, *Reflections of a Siamese Twin: Canada at the End of the Twentieth Century* (Toronto: Penguin, 1998) and Philip Resnick, *The European Roots of Canadian Identity* (Peterborough: Broadview, 2005).
9. J.L. Granatstein, *Who Killed Canadian History?* (Toronto: HarperCollins, 1998).
10. Elizabeth Gidengil et al., *Citizens* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2004). To state my point bluntly: the fact that a sizable percentage of Canadians are misinformed about issues, such as Aboriginal standards of living, has clear implications for the degree to which they are receptive to policies designed to improve the lives of First Peoples.
11. Katarzyna Rokszto, “Up for Sale: The Commodification of Canadian Culture,” in *Canadian Communications: Issues in Contemporary Media and Culture*, eds. Bohdan Szuchewycz and Jeannette Sloniowski, 2nd ed. (Toronto: Prentice Hall, 2002), pp. 391-396.
12. Other important new journals that evolved in this period include *BC Studies*, *Prairie Forum*, *Atlantis*, *Histoire sociale/Social History*, and *Canadian Ethnic Studies*. While often containing a high percentage of historical work, a significant number of these journals (for example, *Labour/Le Travail*, *Atlantis*, *Prairie Forum*, *BC Studies*, *Studies in Political Economy*) were overtly designed as interdisciplinary forums.
13. On the concept of “historic nation,” see Will Kymlicka, *Finding Our Way: Rethinking Ethno-Cultural Relations in Canada* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1998).
14. What is, of course, equally important is that current Canadianist scholarship approaches the consideration of diversity and its political-economic and power dynamics from a non-essentialist position that explores processes through which particular people and communities become, for example, racialized.

Too much of a good thing? continued from page 29

15. Denis Stairs, "Canada and the New World Order" in *Canada and the New World Order: Facing the New Millennium*, eds. Michael J. Tucker, Raymond B. Blake, and P.E. Bryden (Toronto: Irwin, 2000), pp. 1-15.
16. Thomas F. Pettigrew, "Reactions Toward the New Minorities of Western Europe" *American Review of Sociology*, 24 (1998), pp. 77-103.
17. International Labour Office, International Organization for Migration, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, *International Migration, Racism, Discrimination and Xenophobia* (Geneva: International Labour Office, 2001), p. [I].
18. Yaseem Abu Laban, "For Export: Multiculturalism and Globalization," in *Profiles of Canada*, eds. K.G. Pryke and W.C. Soderlund, 3rd ed. (Toronto: CSPI, 2003), pp. 249-277.
19. Kymlicka, supra note 13, *Finding Our Way*.
20. Stairs, supra note 15, "Canada and the New World Order."
21. Daniel Drache, *Borders Matter: Homeland Security and the Search for North America* (Halifax: Fernwood, 2004).
22. George J. De Benedetti, "Reflections on the Tenth Anniversary of the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement," in Tucker, Blake, and Bryden, *Canada and the New World Order*, supra note 15, pp. 151-62.
23. Mary Vipond, *The Mass Media in Canada* 3rd ed. (Toronto: Lorimer, 2000), pp. 24-29.
24. Naomi Klein, *No Logo: Taking Aim at the Brand Bullies* (Toronto: Vintage Canada, 2000), especially chapter 5.
25. For an overview, see the essays in David Taras, Frits Pannekoek, and Maria Bakardjieva, eds., *How Canadians Communicate* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2003).
26. For case studies, see Taris, Pannekoek, Bakardjieva, *How Canadians Communicate*, *ibid.* A nuanced treatment of one Canadian cultural sector is Ted Madger, *Canada's Hollywood: The Canadian State and Feature Films* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993).
27. W.H. New, *Borderlands: How We Talk About Canada* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1998).
28. Michael Adams, *Fire and Ice: The United States, Canada and the Myth of Converging Values* (Toronto: Penguin, 2004).
29. The Canadian Democratic Audit, for example, organized by the Centre for Canadian Studies at Mount Allison under the direction of Dr. Bill Cross, explored the degree to which the ideal of democracy was realized in Canadian political practice. For further information on the Canadian Democratic Audit, see Centre for Canadian Studies, Mount Allison University, "The Canadian Democratic Audit," http://www.mta.ca/faculty/arts-letters/canadian_studies/cda/index.html (accessed 13 September 2007).

Letters from Denmark continued from page 25

of the program's founder and the hiring of its new director.) Just like undergraduates, young academics need to be reassured that it is a teachable and a recognized field of study. The dramatic opposition to the proposed cuts to funding for Canadian Studies abroad in the summer of 2006 was an encouraging

sign: scholars at all stages of their careers recognize its importance. An artifact of third-pillar internationalism, perhaps, but this is one thing from the 1970s that hasn't gone out of style. 🌟

Notes

1. J.B. Tyrell, ed., *David Thompson's Narra-*

tive of His Explorations in Western America 1784-1812 (Toronto: Champlain Society, 1916).

2. Catharine Parr Traill, *The Backwoods of Canada: Being Letters from an Emigrant Officer, Illustrative of the Domestic Economy of British America* (London: C. Knight, 1836).

Has Canadian Studies had its day? continued from page 19

- ties and Colleges of Canada, 1984), p. 3. See also the abridged version of *To Know Ourselves*, T.H.B. Symons, *The Symons Report* (Toronto, Book and Periodical Development Council: distributed by McClelland & Stewart, 1978).
2. I see two parallel and overlapping projects: Canadian Studies as an interdisciplinary area of study, with its own programs, projects, and publications and Canadianist research focusing on Canada and on

- Canada in comparative and global perspective. The latter may be consciously disciplinary, but it still contributes to the Canadian Studies project.
3. Very small amounts exist now. For example, the ACS currently has \$5,000 a year for student conferences, to be shared across the nation.
4. Himani Bannerji, "On the Dark Side of Nation: The Politics of Multiculturalism and the State of Canada," *Journal of Can-*

adian Studies, 31:1 (1996), pp. 103-28.

5. *Bowling for Columbine* (dir. Michael Moore, Alliance Atlantis Communications, 2002).
6. Ann Curthoys, "We've Just Started Making National Histories and Now You Want Us to Stop Already?" in *After the Imperial Turn: Thinking With and Through the Nation*, ed. Antoinette Burton (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003), pp. 70-90.

Les études québécoises à l'Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières: un programme d'études avancées et un centre de recherche

LA FONDATION DU PROGRAMME DES ÉTUDES QUÉBÉCOISES

L'expérience des programmes de maîtrise et de doctorat à l'Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières (UQTR) peut-elle nourrir la réflexion sur le devenir des études canadiennes? Pour répondre à cette question nous retracerons le développement des études québécoises à l'UQTR et dégagerons les spécificités de notre démarche.

Le programme de maîtrise en études québécoises débute en 1977 à l'UQTR, grâce à des professeurs qui oeuvrent au sein du groupe de recherche sur la Mauricie, notamment Normand Séguin et René Hardy, et qui, à la même époque, mettent en place le Centre d'études québécoises (CÉDEQ). Le programme de maîtrise en études québécoises — comme la programmation scientifique du CÉDEQ — se fonde sur la participation de chercheurs versés en histoire culturelle, en géographie historique, en histoire socio-économique, mais aussi en littérature, en théologie et en philosophie. L'interdisciplinarité caractérise ce programme dès ses débuts pour des raisons intellectuelles et institutionnelles. Sur le plan intellectuel, il s'agit d'une démarche qui s'apparente à ce qui est pratiqué ailleurs dans les *area studies*, où les projets autour des aires culturelles reposent sur des perspectives disciplinaires croisées. Si des frontières géopolitiques déterminent a priori ce sur quoi travaillent les étudiants — et les chercheurs, — ils demeurent que tous reconnaissent qu'il s'agit là d'un objet d'étude et de recherche en construction qui bénéficierait d'une telle approche. Sur le plan

STÉPHANE CASTONGUAY

Stéphane Castonguay détient la Chaire de recherche du Canada en histoire environnementale du Québec à l'Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières.

Même si les organismes subventionnaires insistent sur l'importance d'une formation et d'une recherche interdisciplinaires, les universités qui relaient volontiers ces discours demeurent encore réfractaires à embaucher des titulaires de doctorat formés à l'interdisciplinarité.

institutionnel, il s'agit du premier programme d'études avancées en sciences humaines et sociales à l'UQTR (depuis, des programmes en philosophie et en littérature sont offerts, mais pas en histoire). À cette époque, les professeurs désireux

d'encadrer des étudiants aux cycles supérieurs ne pouvaient compter sur un bassin suffisamment large pour mettre en place un programme d'études avancées dans une seule discipline. Il fallait proposer aux instances de l'Université et du ministère de l'Éducation du Québec un programme novateur, absent de la programmation offerte dans les autres universités. La présence d'un fort contingent de professeurs spécialisés dans l'étude du Québec dans différents départements de sciences humaines à l'UQTR favorisa la mise en forme d'un programme de maîtrise, puis de doctorat (1988), en études québécoises. Elle facilita également l'émergence d'une unité de recherche regroupant ces professeurs actifs aux études avancées et offrant un lieu d'encadrement et de formation. Reconnu officiellement en 1986 par l'UQTR, le CÉDEQ permet aux étudiants d'acquérir une expérience de recherche dans un environnement interdisciplinaire. Attachés à des équipes à titre d'assistants de recherche, des étudiants participent aux grands chantiers qui animent — la vie du centre depuis près de quinze ans, comme les synthèses d'histoire régionale sur la Mauricie, le Centre du Québec ou Lanaudière, ou encore les Atlas historique du Québec sur l'axe laurentien. — Pour certains étudiants, la participation à un de ces chantiers offre la possibilité d'inscrire son projet de maîtrise ou de doctorat dans la programmation scientifique du CÉDEQ.

La proximité d'une unité de recherche et l'interdisciplinarité

Les études québécoises, page 32

marquent donc le développement du programme études québécoises depuis ses débuts. Ce programme se donne comme objet « la saisie du Québec contemporain comme objet d'étude » et « l'étude du changement socioculturel dans ses diverses manifestations ». Si, dans leur contenu, les cours abordent évidemment une historiographie et des enjeux propres au Québec, il faut que la première préoccupation soit problématique avant d'être thématique. En ce sens, l'offre de cours peut se transposer à toute autre aire culturelle, en encourageant les étudiants à réfléchir sur les rapports à l'espace, les représentations collectives, le changement culturel ou les structures sociales. Si nous pouvons associer ces quatre cours aux disciplines fondatrices des études québécoises (soit, respectivement, géographie, philosophie, littérature et histoire), il faut surtout noter l'absence de périodisation et de thématique propres à l'histoire du Québec (par exemple, la Nouvelle-France, les Rébellions, la Révolution tranquille) dans l'intitulé des cours pour précisément couvrir plusieurs périodes et thèmes aux travers d'une problématique. Ce programme, qui s'est maintenu sous cette forme depuis ses débuts, s'ajuste depuis peu aux questions émergentes avec des cours thématiques portant sur la société comme débat politique, les dynamiques sociales, ou les rapports sociaux à la nature.

INSTABILITÉ DANS LE RECRUTEMENT D'ÉTUDIANTS

Depuis sa création, l'UQTR a diplômé 109 candidats à la maîtrise et 13 candidats au doctorat; plusieurs thèses de doctorat sont parues, notamment dans la collection « Géographie historique » publiée aux Presses de l'Université Laval. Toutefois, on remarque depuis quelques années non pas un essoufflement mais une

Il faut reconnaître le dynamisme du champ des études québécoises avec la parution prochaine du dixième volume de *Globe. La Revue internationale d'études québécoises*, publié par l'Association internationale d'études québécoises, ainsi que le quinzième anniversaire du Centre interuniversitaire d'études québécoises, formé par le CÉDEQ et le Laboratoire de géographie historique de l'Université Laval en 1993.

instabilité dans le recrutement d'étudiants. Cette situation serait attribuable à un intérêt de plus en plus marqué pour les questions internationales chez les étudiants qui délaissent le Québec comme objet d'étude. Le programme de maîtrise qui, comme dans tout autre université, s'alimente surtout à partir de programmes de premier cycle, perd des étudiants qui se dirigent vers les autres universités pour étudier un autre sujet que le Québec, ou pour étudier dans une discipline reconnue. À cet égard, une des difficultés touchant le recrutement concerne le placement des diplômés en études québécoises. — Les institutions d'enseignement universitaire ou collégial sont généralement peu enclines à reconnaître et embaucher les détenteurs d'un diplôme pluridisciplinaire. Même si les organismes subventionnaires insistent sur l'importance d'une formation et d'une recherche interdisciplinaires, les universités qui relaient volontiers ces discours demeurent encore réfractaires à embaucher des titulaires de doctorat formés à l'interdisciplinarité. Ce problème touche également les

étudiants désireux de décrocher un poste dans un CÉGEP qui optent alors pour entreprendre un programme de maîtrise mono-disciplinaire. Dans la même veine, une fois levées les réticences qui empêchaient initialement la création de programmes d'études avancées disciplinaires à l'UQTR, le démarrage de programmes en lettres et en philosophie a quelque peu détourné une partie de la clientèle naturelle des programmes d'études québécoises, soit celle provenant des programmes de premier cycle où enseignent les professeurs en études québécoises.

Enfin, si la présence du CÉDEQ a eu un effet bénéfique, en favorisant l'embauche d'étudiants et leur intégration dans des équipes de recherche, cette proximité entre les programmes d'études avancées et l'unité de recherche peut toutefois nourrir des revers. Pour supporter le développement du CÉDEQ, le profil des professeurs recrutés doit correspondre en partie aux principaux axes de recherche du centre. Ce faisant, le programme d'études avancées s'est tenu à l'écart de

The *Journal of Canadian Studies* then and now

FOUNDING THE JOURNAL

Forty-one years ago the *Journal of Canadian Studies* was launched. Proudly featured on its cover was Champlain's astrolabe, which in 1966 was part of the New York Historical Society's collection. The editors didn't explain the astrolabe. Perhaps they felt they didn't have to. Its symbolism was obvious: as a navigation device, the astrolabe helped Champlain explore unknown worlds; as an academic journal, the *Journal of Canadian Studies* has helped Canadians navigate familiar and unfamiliar worlds, past and present, in both English and French.

It was a different time and a different place. The Quiet Revolution was unfolding at a staggering and bewildering rate; once the domain of dreamers and radicals, separatism had become fashionable and respectable, if not yet mainstream. The "Other Quiet Revolution," this one in English Canada, saw English Canadians re-imagine themselves in part through a new flag while the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism criss-crossed the country en route to its bleak assessment in February 1965: Canada, the commissioners warned, "is passing through the greatest crisis in its history." Meanwhile, the war in Vietnam raged on and on and talk of the Americanization of English-Canadian universities grew louder and more anxious.

The appearance of a new journal is, by definition, an optimistic statement: we have something important to say and we are going to say it. In his inaugural editorial, Denis Smith noted that Canada must contend with the challenges posed by the "creative explosion of French-Canadian ambition" and by living "always in the shadow of the neighbouring superpower." If something is not done, he warned, well, let's just say, "there are limits to what the collective national

BY DONALD WRIGHT

Donald Wright teaches in the Political Science department at the University of New Brunswick, Fredericton, and is co-editor of the *Journal of Canadian Studies*.

It has evolved from a magazine-format journal of opinion and ideas into one of the very best academic journals in the country and into the leading journal of Canadian Studies in the world.

spirit can endure." As part of doing something in these inauspicious times, the *Journal of Canadian Studies* "has been founded." It is hoped, Smith explained, that "the country will achieve greater self-understanding and a more tolerable national consensus, and that the *Journal* may contribute something to these ends."

Has the *Journal of Canadian Studies* contributed to a "greater self-understanding and a more tolerable national consensus"? The answer is mixed.

Certainly, through the publication of outstanding scholarship and critical reviews, the *Journal of Canadian Studies* has added immeasurably to our understanding of Canada and, ultimately, of ourselves. It is now contributing to our

understanding of 1960s Canada, the very context in which the *Journal* was founded. Volume 40, number 3, contains three articles—one written by a professor of English, another by an historian, and yet another by a doctoral candidate in Comparative Literature. The issue examines the historical imperative to imagine a nation through the Centennial Voyageur Canoe Pageant, the new flag, and the CBC television series *Adventures in Rainbow Country*. Chris Champion's brilliant essay on the flag debate even adds to our understanding of Tom Symons, one of the *Journal's* founders.

FRANCOPHONES AND CANADIAN STUDIES

But has the *Journal* contributed to a national consensus between French and English Canada? In 1966, the *Journal of Canadian Studies* published 12 articles, 9 in English and 3 in French. It did not publish another French-language article until 1972 when it published one French-language article and eighteen English-language articles. And so it went. Since 1966 the JCS has published 1,367 articles. Only 92 have been in published in French, or less than 7 per cent. Of course, these figures are imperfect. They do not take into account French-speaking authors who choose to write in English because they know that the *Journal's* audience is, for the most part, English-speaking, and they obscure the *Journal's* honest efforts to create a scholarly dialogue across the two solitudes through editorial board membership, direct invitation, and thematic issues.

Still, these figures point to the ongoing challenges of publishing a bilingual journal and to the elusive goal of contributing to "a more tolerable national consensus." The *Journal* Denis Smith introduced

Journal of Canadian Studies, page 34

in 1966 is not the journal of today. It has evolved from a magazine-format journal of opinion and ideas into one of the very best academic journals in the country and into the leading journal of Canadian Studies in the world. Its mandate—to publish the best scholarship about Canadian history, culture, and society from both junior and senior scholars—is clear. And its mission—“to track the great transformation of the Canada project and to contribute to the development of ‘Canadian Studies’ with appropriate interdisciplinary tools and approaches”—is ambitious.

NEW CONTEXTS

But like other journals its age, and indeed some much younger, the Journal must face the demand for open access publishing and all that it entails. In addition, the Journal operates in a very different academic environment than the one in which it was founded. For example, the Americanization of English-Canadian universities, of the professoriate and of undergraduate and graduate curricula, is a non-issue. The study of Canada—as distinct from Canadian Studies—is thriving. There are over 200 academic journals in Canada today, many of which are dedicated to some aspect of the Canadian experience and some of which are

Knowing ourselves
is not a destination;
it is a journey.

dedicated to interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary scholarship. The Journal must compete in an academic environment in which there are only so many subscribers and only so many high-quality submissions to go around.

Yet, given the Journal’s outstanding track record of publishing the very best scholarship on Canadian history, culture, science, and society in a timely fashion, there is every reason to be optimistic.

As Tom Symons observed in his 1975 report for the Commission on Canadian Studies, the “soundest justification for Canadian studies” is the “need for self-knowledge.” He was right then and he is right now. Knowing ourselves is not a destination; it is a journey. I like to think that with a little luck, a lot of hard work, and a commitment to academic excellence, the Journal of Canadian Studies will remain part of that journey—with Champlain’s astrolabe now housed at the Canadian Museum of Civilization, not far from where it was lost nearly 400 years ago. ❁

Les études québécoises

 continued from page 32

certaines tendances qui ont marqué le développement du champ des études québécoises comme l’histoire politique, les études amérindiennes ou l’anthropologie culturelle. — Pour les mêmes raisons, le programme n’a pu attirer une clientèle intéressée par une histoire américaine ou canadienne (hors Québec) susceptible d’apporter un regard continental sur l’expérience québécoise. Néanmoins, il faut reconnaître le dynamisme du champ des études québécoises avec la parution prochaine du dixième volume de *Globe. La Revue internationale*

d’études québécoises, publié par l’Association internationale d’études québécoises, ainsi que le quinzième anniversaire du Centre interuniversitaire d’études québécoises, formé par le CÉDEQ et le Laboratoire de géographie historique de l’Université Laval en 1993. — C’est d’ailleurs cette vitalité qui encourage peut-être un nombre de plus en plus grand d’étudiants étrangers (Canada, France, États-Unis, Roumanie, Japon) à s’inscrire aux programmes de maîtrise et de doctorat en études québécoises à l’UQTR. ❁

Robarts Centre Mandate

The Robarts Centre for Canadian Studies supports interdisciplinary and discipline-specific research pertinent to the study of Canada and “Canada in the World.” In practice, this has meant an orientation toward broader Canadian and international scholarly and policy-making communities, inquiries into comparative perspectives on the Canadian mosaic, and assistance to York scholars in working with their counterparts in other countries.

Faculty at the Robarts Centre, including the Director, the Robarts Chair and other Robarts researchers, regularly teach courses and contribute to curriculum development in areas pertaining Canadian and North American as well as comparative studies. The Robarts Centre also provides supervised research and writing opportunities for graduate students from a wide range of York graduate programs.

The Robarts Centre offers a strong program of high-level seminars, workshops, and conferences on major issues focusing on Canadian perspectives on Communications, Culture, the Fine Arts, History, Political Economy, Public Policy, and International Relation. Participants include York faculty and students, Canadian and international scholars as well as the larger community of Metropolitan Toronto.

At the present time, ongoing work at the Centre includes research initiatives on the public domains and international standards, Canadian cinema, and issues pertaining to media perspectives on Canada. The Centre acts as a research arm for the Joint Program in Communication and Culture and its work on the Canadian Internet Project. It also houses the Toronto offices of the Great Unsolved Mysteries in Canadian History project. ❁

What happened to Tom Thomson?

New mystery coming for student sleuths

Research and development on one of the final three mysteries of the University of Victoria-based Great Unsolved Mysteries in Canadian History Project is nearing completion at the Roberts Centre.

“Death on a Painted Lake: The Tom Thomson Tragedy,” revolves around the great Canadian painter who went out alone for a fishing trip on a lake in Algonquin Park on July 8, 1917, and never returned. His empty canoe was sighted on the lake that afternoon, and his body was found afloat in the lake eight days later.

What happened to Thompson? Was it an accident caused by bad luck? Or did he meet a more sinister end as a result of

debt, his support of the First World War or a love interest?

The research director for this mystery is Gregory Klages, PhD candidate in Communication and Culture at York University in Toronto. Klages has provided investigators with a wealth of on-line information about Tom Thompson and the circumstances surrounding his demise (see www.canadianmysteries.ca).

The Great Unsolved Mysteries in Canadian History projects have been selected by a national competition. Student sleuths will soon have a total of 12 whodunits with which to hone their historical and detective skills.



www.canadianmysteries.ca

To date, the project includes these nine mysteries:

- Where Is Vinland?
- Torture and the Truth: Angélique and the Burning of Montreal
- Jerome: The Mystery Man of Baie Sainte-Marie
- We Do Not Know His Name: Klatsassin and the Chilcotin War
- Who Killed William Robinson? Race, Justice and Settling the Land
- Who Discovered Klondike Gold?
- Aurore! The Mystery of the Martyred Child
- Heaven and Hell on Earth: The Massacre of the “Black” Donnellys
- Explosion on the Kettle Valley Line:

Visit the Robarts Centre's website at www.yorku.ca/robarths for past issues of *Canada Watch*

Recent issues include:

- “The Chrétien Era: A Red Book Audit”
FEB 2004, VOL 9, NOS 3–4
- “From Doha to Kananaskis: The Future of the World Trading System and the Crisis of Governance.”
SEPT 2002, VOL 9, NOS 1–2
- “The New Mexico Under Fox: Is It Happening?”
JUL 2001, VOL 8, NO 6
- “Canada–U.S. Relations in the New Millennium”
NOV–DEC 2000, VOL 8, NOS 4–5

Also available on the website, the Robarts lecture series:

- “English Canada and Quebec: Avoiding the Issue” by Kenneth McRoberts –Sixth Annual Robarts Lecture 1991
- “1492 and All That: Making a Garden out of a Wilderness” by Ramsay Cook – Seventh Annual Robarts Lecture 1992
- “Politics on the Boundaries: Restructuring and the Canadian Women’s Movement” by Janine Brodie –Eighth Annual Robarts Lecture 1994
- “In our own Image: The Child, Canadian Culture and our Future” by Carole H. Carpenter –Ninth Annual Robarts Lecture 1995
- “Where is Here? Canadian Cultural Policy in a Globalized World” by Joyce Zemans –Tenth Annual Robarts Lecture 1996
- “Queer Nation?” by Terry Goldie –Eleventh Annual Robarts Lecture 1997
- “Defining Aboriginal Title in the 90’s: Has the Supreme Court Finally Got it Right?” by Kent McNeil –Twelfth Annual Robarts Lecture 1998
- “Theatre and Transformation in Contemporary Canada” by Robert Wallace – Thirteenth Annual Robarts Lecture 1999
- “The Writer’s Conscience: or why reports of the death of the author have been greatly exaggerated” speaking notes by Susan Swan – Fourteenth Annual Robarts Lecture 2000
- “Canadian Movies, eh?” by Seth Feldman –Fifteenth Annual Robarts Lecture 2001
- “Rethinking Feminization: Gendered Precariousness in the Labour Market and the Crisis in Social Reproduction” by Leah F. Vosko –Distinguished Robarts Lecture Series 2002
- “Citizenship After Orientalism” by Engin F. Isin –Distinguished Robarts Lecture Series 2002
- “The Digitalization of Knowledge: Tribal Ignorance and the African Diaspora” by Paul E. Lovejoy FRSC –Distinguished Robarts Lecture Series 2002

