

<p><i>Glendon College Papers</i> H.S. Harris</p>
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[These papers will demonstrate the care that their writer took for Glendon College where he was an educator for so many years. He was Academic Dean of Glendon from 1967 to 1969. His small paper on the *Institute for Philosophical Studies in Naples* relates the importance of St. Edmund Hall (Oxford) for him. The readers of *Hegel's Ladder* [1997] will recall that the second volume bears the following dedication:]

To the members of  
St. Edmund Hall  
where it was my good fortune  
to be taught;  
and of  
Glendon College  
where it has been my good fortune  
to teach.

<p><b><i>Flexibility in Glendon Curriculum</i></b></p>
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[Published in *Pro Tem*. The Student Weekly of Glendon College, York University 30 March 1967.]

It has been a basic principle of curriculum planning at York from the beginning, that students not be obliged to make definite decisions regarding their course of studies until they have been at the University for a year. The only limitation of this general principle is imposed not by the University but by the high schools that oblige most students to make choices that debar them from science programmes in the University.

In a small autonomous college within the University in which course offerings must inevitably be limited, it would be folly not to preserve as much flexibility of choice as possible. But at the same time such a College hardly would be viable if it did not set out to establish a distinctive identity; and it is by now well known that Glendon College has certain educational aims and ideals that are peculiarly its own. These ideals contribute to the central conception of a small, mainly residential college oriented toward the public service in Canada.

Neither 'Canada' nor the 'public service' is easy to define; and this is - for Glendon at least - a good thing because it obviates the risk of an overly narrow interpretation of this central conception. Canada has not one culture but two, and it will not begin to have one until the channels of communication between those two are made more effective and more general. Hence the emphasis on the two national languages of Canada at Glendon.

I hold that the essential function of all the institutions of 'liberal' education is to create and maintain systems of free communication; and the 'liberating' more 'Canadian' content in functions of any undergraduate curriculum can all be summed up in terms of the 'languages'. Every educated citizen ought to be able to understand the problems of his own society, and hence he needs some comprehension of the concepts and methods by which these problems are studied. Thus we have the compulsory fourth-year seminars that constitute the other major peculiarity of the Glendon curriculum.

It is easy enough to point to defects in the curriculum even when one is fully sympathetic to the central conception of the College. But a more constructive answer than budgetary limitations to many of the points made by those who have the strongest motivation for constructive criticism - the students in the College - is possible. It is reasonable to ask, for example, why there is not the first year of the programme, and why the required seminars are restricted to the fourth year, in view of the fact that many students may be expected to graduate after the third.

It seems some that these problems are connected. Experts in most aspects of 'Canadian studies' are not plentiful; but we can hope perhaps that the proposed seminar courses will prove a sufficiently attractive prospect to provide us with the staff to make possible not only the seminars themselves but also a 'Canadian' revision of the first year curriculum; and once the seminars have been developed my own expectation is that students in good standing will be able to take them in the third year of their course. I for one think that a fairly free intermixing of third and fourth year - like that which presently obtains between first and second year - would be especially good for the students at Glendon College.

There are many other ways, large and small, in which I expect that the curriculum that appears outwardly rigid will prove to be quite elastic. But before the programme can exhibit elasticity it must first exist.

Pioneering has many rewards, and no doubt in years to come the members of the first class at the College will rightly take pride in having been among the pioneers. But part of the cost of being a pioneer is that one can never enjoy what one creates. The Principal is seeking presently a motto for the College I believe. I have no suggestion to make for that, but to the pioneer class I will venture to offer the following from Statius [as quoted by Cicero]: *Serit arbores quae alteri saeculo prosint.*

### At Glendon College

[Published in **Behind The Headlines: Escott Reid — Issues and Causes**. Edited by Gale Fraser. Toronto, Canadian Institute of International Affairs, October 1992, pp. 13-16. Escott Reid had been a prominent Canadian (federall) public servant before he was appointed Principal of Glendon College.]

It seemed that almost as soon as his appointment as first principal of the new college to be created on the Glendon campus of York University was confirmed, Escott arrived on campus brandishing his plan for a 'National College'. I knew nothing about

the appointment, and did not witness his advent, because I was in England enjoying my own first sabbatical. But I heard about the plan soon enough because everyone knew that I wanted to remain on the Glendon campus (and not to go to the ‘big campus’); and because the Reid plan did not include a Philosophy Department — only a social ethics course in the higher years of the BA programme. For Glendon College to be part of York University, Escott had to accept the York first year general education programme organized into its three divisions of Humanities, Social Science, and Natural Science. But social ethics was his own innovation in the field of general education. This course requirement did not survive - and the fault was partly mine - but I have always thought it was one of Escott’s best ideas. I have to admit, however, that I did not like much the idea of becoming simply the director of a general education programme, so I was pleased when the principal-designate was persuaded to add Philosophy to his list of six honours departments in Humanities and the Social Sciences.

My own attitude to the Reid plan was gently (but silently) sceptical and ironic. I came to York in 1962 at the beginning of its third year; and in that year I witnessed a relatively major upheaval in the small faculty, occasioned by the news that there was to be a big new campus, and not just a small university on the Glendon site, with high standards, high ideals, and a new model of integrated studies in its curriculum. It was the small college idea that had attracted me, but I never cherished the illusion that one could ‘create Swarthmore out of the ground’ - which was what the rhetoric of my earliest colleagues seemed to suggest. Now it appeared that a dream inspired by Robert Hutchins was to be replaced by a more distinctively Canadian vision. ‘We shall see what we shall see’, I thought.

What we saw in Escott’s time was academic teacup-storms within, and the looming threat of an economic hurricane from outside. The foundation-stone of the Reid plan was that all students should study both recognized national languages for two years and (ideally) be able thereafter to take specialized courses in their chosen field, given in their second language. For the tiny minority of French speakers, the idea worked well enough, because it was a practical necessity. Unless they mastered English at the level of being functionally bilingual, they could never get enough courses to graduate; and learning English at that level was necessary to their lives in Toronto and one of the reasons many had come there. The problem for the francophones was precisely that there were so few of them that an effectively bilingual ambience could not be generated; I can remember well how one of our few functionally bilingual anglophones (she had been to school in Switzerland) told me sadly that at Glendon she was ‘going backwards’ in her French. In those days, we could only pray - and think of new schemes to attract francophone students.

If on the French front tragedy always impended, the English front was a perpetual comedy. Escott’s idea that every student should learn to write her own language properly, and that this should be the object of the required courses, was a sound one; but there is no tradition of teaching rhetoric at English universities, at least not those in Ontario. Only in the United States - where rhetoric is often a separate department - could faculty qualified with the right attitude have been found. The specialists in linguistics whom Escott did

find were dedicated observers of ‘English as she is spoken’ - outside the halls of Academe and the corridors of power. To take the living language in the mouths of their students, and impose the canons of those halls and corridors upon it, was almost a sin in their eyes. Moreover, for “English professors’ (not just the professional linguists) the very idea of ‘required course’ was an abomination. The formal ‘requirement’ may have been useful while the department was being recruited, but no sooner were the staff in place than they wanted the ‘requirement’ abolished. The Principal preached fire and brimstone, both in the Faculty Council and in meetings with the department. But the requirement had to go; and, surprisingly, the enrolment in the first-year English course was pretty well maintained. Also, the writing workshops were successful. I don’t know whether Glendon students write better than their peers at the University of Toronto; but I am sure they are a bit better on the average than their peers at the York campus (where I once taught a course). So, the clash of language philosophies did not matter after all - as we Hegelians know, actuality itself is rational.

The economic horizon was bleak. Ontario had only recently adopted a policy of funding all of its universities by applying a formula to enrolments; and liberal arts programmes received only one ‘basic income unit’ per student. Official wisdom claimed that the base required to make the formula work adequately was *three thousand* students. Universities could put their formula-income into privileged experiments if they liked; but who could suppose that a large Faculty of Arts would long be content to generate income for the maintenance of a small college that was completely independent of it? Three thousand students were out of the question, but we had to start thinking, at once, about how many we could actually take. The first estimate (arrived at while I was Academic Dean) was fourteen hundred. (We have since found that we can take as many as two thousand.)

But we could not attract even the small body of students that we were prepared to receive. In the first years we limped along, taking in the ‘overflow’ from the Faculty of Arts applications; then we established a unilingual stream in which the students were not obliged to meet the second language requirement. Pundits in the University administration spoke of moving the Glendon experiment to the big campus; and although rumours that Glendon was to be sold were always stoutly denied, there was one occasion when potential customers turned up to view the property! Whether we should survive, and for how long, was always in question.

But Escott never wavered in his faith; and for my part, I learned something about the relevance of a dream to political reality. In those early Trudeau years it was our commitment to bilingualism that saved us. Having served its turn as the launching pad for a big university that marvellous little campus at Glendon could, subject to testamentary restrictions, have been sold for a great price; or it might have become the University’s Law School, or any of half a dozen other things. Any *other* kind of ‘educational experiment’ could have been moved to the larger campus where it could be left to sink or swim. But this bilingual experiment *needed* its isolation, in a way so obvious that it could not be denied; and the accusation of deliberate murder was politically too embarrassing to

be risked. 'Escott's folly' had to die by itself; and it certainly came close to doing that. For in his time it was always more dream than reality, more hope than experiment.

'Social ethics' died a year or so after Escott left us because we could not staff it; and by then there was no money to increase staff. Indeed, our teacher-student ratio is still the focus of some envy and bitter feeling - and if we ever do become a 'superior' place, it will be because we have those extra teachers and so many small classrooms. But the idea of having 'advanced' courses in the general education programme is a valuable legacy that the social ethics seminar left with us. Since Escott's time, we have added a Department of Psychology (with an honours programme); Spanish has arrived among our language programmes; and computer science and even some mathematics courses are now offered. The important thing, however, has not been additions and novelties but the gradual emergence of the original project into reality. The 'unilingual stream' has now been wound up; the francophone intake - though not as large as we would like - is fairly steady (321 of a total of 2093 students in 1991-2). All departments now offer a respectable proportion of courses in French. Some of the original faculty have moved from the status of 'passive bilingualism' to active teaching in French; and no one is hired now who is not functionally bilingual. We shall probably not become quite the national college that our first designated principal hoped for. But we are well on the way to becoming an image of the nation and - what is politically more important - of the province. More than anyone else, Escott Reid is responsible for this. In the long list of his noteworthy achievements, Glendon College may be almost the last. But it is by no means the least; and I hope it may prove to have the longest life of them all.

### *Farewell to thirty years at Glendon College*

*Alteri Saeculo*

[Published in *Pro Tem*. Le journal bilingue de Glendon / Glendon's bilingual newspaper, 25 March 1996. It was reprinted 7 April 2004. A few mistakes in the published texts have been corrected silently.]

I first saw the Glendon Campus just thirty-four years ago [1962] (at about this time of year). I came to be interviewed by the President, Dr. Murray Ross, for the post of Chairman of the Department of Philosophy. York University was completing the second year of its existence (and the first on its own site). Everyone was then teaching the General Degree programme of the University of Toronto, while planning the curriculum for the new university.

Dr. Ross told me that it had just been decided that York University would have a large campus (with an appropriately massive enrolment) on the north-western edge of the City. I told him that I was not interested in moving from a large University that was well

established (the University of Illinois in Urbana-Champaign) to a new institution of the mammoth variety. What attracted me, I said, was the small College that would exist on the Glendon Campus when the ‘main’ campus was established. So he knew from the first that I wanted to stay here; and after he offered me the post, and I accepted it, I went to work at once to find a good chairman for the main Department. John Yolton was hired only a few months after me; and I was “Chairman of Philosophy at York” for only one year.

When Escott Reid arrived with his plan for a small “National College” at Glendon, he was persuaded to include a Philosophy Department, and I became the first Chairman of Philosophy at Glendon. Two years later, he asked me to be “Academic Dean”; and I took on that post for a strictly limited term of two years. That was an exciting period, because on the side of the students the Paris revolution of 1968 inspired an attempt to replace the curriculum with a programme of “Student-generated courses”; and on the side of the University Administration, an offer was made to buy the Glendon Campus for a Civil Service College. Luckily almost all students preferred the established programmes, and the sale of the Glendon site foundered on legal difficulties. (We thought that our protests made a difference, but I am now convinced that they were foreseen and discounted.)

After 1972 I retired from College and Departmental administration. Being a senior faculty member in a small college, I have been able to do very much what I like. Thus, for some years I taught Medieval Philosophy (first to myself, and then to my students). I would never have been able to do that in a larger department. In my own eyes the most important teaching I have done has been on the boundaries of philosophy and literature. If I have opened a few minds to the intellectual adventures offered by Dante and Goethe I can look back with satisfaction on my decision to accept the offer that Murray Ross made to me.

Since the year that Escott Reid appeared (when I was away enjoying York’s first Sabbatical Leave) my own research has been concentrated on the early work of Hegel. In this connection I have been very lucky to be in a city with **two** large universities having Graduate Programmes in Philosophy. No ordinary liberal arts college could have given me the research opportunities and advantages that I have enjoyed here.

In March 1967 I wrote a short piece for *Pro Tem* out of which the College motto was born: *alteri saeculo*. As I pass from the scene, I know that the academic tree that Escott Reid planted will reach ‘another generation’. But unlike the farmer of Cicero’s tag [quoted by him from Statius] “who sows trees for another generation”, I fear that I may live to see the tree cut down before “another century” dawns (and that is an alternative meaning of the motto). The shadow of death has brooded over the College ever since 1968. There has not been much reason to fear the actual sale of the site since then. But always the problem has been “the basic income unit”. Escott dreamed of an “elite” college with 1,000 students; already when I was Dean we began to think of 1,500. Now we have reached 2,000. But we have found that we cannot reach the enrolment targets that we set. With a full-time faculty of nearly a hundred, and a government that is

determined to cut its budget (particularly the higher education budget) we **must** attract enough students to justify our existence. Otherwise Escott Reid's tree will be cut down.

At present there is a lot of controversy about a new "vision" of Glendon. Not surprisingly I am wedded myself to the older "vision". But all arguments about that are wastes of breath in the present crisis. Whether we are to have a "national" College, or a provincial "Ontarian" College is an academic question - and the encouragement of discussion on this question is a smokescreen - until we have shown that we deserve to have a liberal arts college at all; and there is only one way in which we can do that. We must begin once more to admit good students who want to come here, but who do not want to become bilingual. We have had a "unilingual" stream in the past, as a solution for our enrolment problem; so we do know that there is a constituency for it. But now we must look at it differently, and examine the problem of how to attract students with an open mind.

There are many intelligent students who can recognize the educational advantages of a small college (just as I did in my own education, and in my teaching decision thirty-four years ago); and it is difficult to imagine a more attractive setting (in a metropolis) than the Glendon Campus. We must always continue to give preference to qualified applicants who want to enter our official "bilingual" programme. That is what constitutes our distinctive identity; and after our thirty years of devoted work there is no reason to doubt that the college will steadily continue to be -- as it is now -- an effectively bilingual community and environment. We may even hope that some who enter the alternative stream will be "converted", and will seek to become bilingual. But we should never close down the alternative programme once it is in place. Even when we can fill our enrolment targets with well qualified applicants for our main curriculum we should continue to accept a small number of the best applicants for the open degree. (When the bilingual programme prospers as we hope and expect that it will this group will become naturally very small.)

The College will have heavier teaching loads and less release time for administrative work. If we survive at all into the next century, that is a certainty. But we must strive to increase the range of options available to students in every way possible. Cuts there obviously must be; but some of the cuts made this year have been rather dangerous from this point of view. We must have more programmes; and they must be recognizable to students as traditional "subjects" within the range of the liberal arts. How is this to be achieved in a time of universal downsizing? I cannot presume to answer that question: but I know that the problem must be solved somehow.

I shall be teaching my last class on my seventieth birthday. I shall not be here to see what happens. Indeed I can only hope that I shall **not** see what happens; and that the College as I have known it will outlast both my "generation" and my century. But the community will need to be united about this. If we are **not** united, the tree will be cut down; and it will be partly our own fault.

**H.S. Harris**  
**Spring Convocation Address**  
**York University**  
**Glendon College**  
**9 June 2001**

[The Senate of York University conferred on H.S. Harris an honorary Doctor of Letters degree at the Convocation of Glendon College on 9 June 2001. Here is an excerpt from the letter dated 20 March 2001 to H.S. Harris from Dr. Lorna R. Marsden, President and Vice-Chancellor of York University: "In conferring this additional honour on one of our own Distinguished Research Professors and Member of the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Founders Society, the Senate of York University wishes to recognize your remarkable contributions to the academic development of Glendon College during its formative years and to pay tribute to your internationally renowned reputation as a Hegel scholar. You are invited to give a brief Convocation Address (approximately five to ten minutes). ..."]

Je veux avant tout remercier très sincèrement l'Université York. I came to York at the invitation of Murray Ross in 1962 and I first saw the Glendon campus that spring. York University was completing the second year of its own existence (and the first year on its own campus).

Murray Ross told me that York would soon have another (much larger) campus, with a massive enrolment. But I had then been teaching for two years at the University of Illinois in Urbana-Champaign; and I knew well what a big university with a massive enrolment was like. I was hardly likely to leave one of the world's great libraries for a Canadian version of that (with the library still to be built). I told Murray that I was not interested in mammoths, but only attracted to the small college of a properly human size. So he knew from the first that I wanted to stay here at Glendon; and when he offered me a post and I accepted it, I went to work at once to find a good chairman for the future York Department. John Yolton was hired soon after I was; and I myself was the Chairman of Philosophy at York for only one year.

When Escott Reid arrived to be the first Principal of the small college his plan for it did not include a Philosophy Department. At that point I was away in England on Sabbatical leave. Others (especially John Yolton I think) convinced him that he should include Philosophy in his short list of Honours subjects because of me. I was discreetly silent, and did not say that I would be willing to run the Social Ethics Seminar, which was all the philosophy that Escott really wanted. "Departments" were what counted (as poor Escott had to learn). The fact that I was no more of a department man than he, was something for me to keep quiet about. (The enormous Department at the University of Toronto spoke loudly enough in my interest.)

Escott's ideal of a small "National" college was inspired by his own educational philosophy. It was probably a good thing that a Philosophy *Department* was forced into it, because even in a small college there ought to be as much of a *variety* of philosophical opinion as possible. But even that variety is bound to be moderated and limited by the community within which it comes to birth. Escott's own educational theory brought him



into conflict with his own English Department; and he lost that battle. He also found that his dream of a College of 1000 students could not be achieved. Glendon became a community of twice that size.

Dans mon idée, ceci n'est pas - et n'a jamais été - très important. C'était le concept d'un "petit college" qui me plaisait, et il semble raisonnable de parier que Glendon sera toujours une petite faculté, vouée au concept des arts libéraux. C'est bien sur ce concept "d'arts libéraux" que nous devons nous concentrer. Nous nous devons d'enseigner - nos jeunes esprits les libertés mais aussi les limites que nous impose notre culture commune. Ils doivent apprendre ce que *l'on attend d'eux* mais aussi *ce qui n'est pas acceptable*. Even if they think that our norms are only worth *rebellling* against; they must know what is thought to be *right* and what *wrong*. Educational *discipline* is inevitable. But what is the *liberation* of the mind? This cannot be produced by discipline but only inculcated by example. We can *show* what it is to be freely happy. Everything we do should be an intellectual adventure. There is a moral here for the students, as well as their teachers. We should not let children escape from school in the earlier years because there is so much *discipline* that is an absolutely necessary preparation for modern life (and even for the discovery of what free happiness is possible). But when she comes to *college* the student should be *free*. No one should stay here (or even be encouraged to stay here) who does not find that it makes her happy (or at least more nearly happy than any other way of going on that she can discover presently).

In its liberating aspects education aims to establish and develop our humanity. The ideal of *Humanitas* comes to us from the Graeco-Roman Stoic Panaetius of Rhodes who 'flourished' about 150 years before Jesus was born. The experiences that give meaning to our lives are just about as many and various as the individuals who have to define themselves in the world; and no one can tell what experience might be crucial. We mostly want our education to enable us to become comfortably well off. But we should beware of losing our way to happiness in our efforts to accumulate the material resources that are to make happiness possible. A *liberal* education is an interval for vision. You can pause and *think* about what is worth doing and why; in a small liberal arts college, with teachers who are visibly happy (or sometimes unhappy) this opportunity comes to clear consciousness.

As a philosopher teaching in this ideal situation, I always sought to identify experiences that would be valuable to anyone with a life choice to make in this, the most privileged cultural community of our present world - and to present those experiences as vividly as I could. But, like Aristotle observing the lowly forms of life on the seashore, I have realized always that anything - even something insignificant or uninteresting in my own eyes -- might be the occasion of an epiphany for someone else. Also, a student who just wants to get through a course with a satisfactory grade may find her life lit up at some time in the future, by something she is taught here and now. Nothing is likely to be more effective for this than the memory of short years spent in a small college that was truly liberal.

It is our face to face interaction with other human persons - our fellow students as well as those who are officially our teachers -- that makes life happy for the great majority of us. Nothing can be more valuable therefore -- or more important - than the educational experience in a school of proper size for personal interaction of this kind. This is our first actual experience of what a happy life can be, is, and ought to be. And so finally, thank you very much, to all of *you*.