

CANADIAN ISSUES THÈMES CANADIENS

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à Hull

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Communication
and the Shaping of Canada

La communication
et le façonnement du Canada





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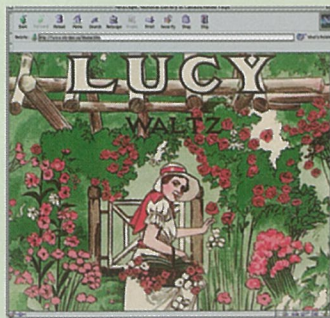
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COMMUNICATION and the Shaping of Canada

However we define a national community, there can be little doubt that its existence and, ultimately, its success, will hinge on a social process of communication. This process allows for the exchange of ideas about the nature of the nation and deepens a sense of its norms, values, cultural markers and symbols. This edition of Canadian Issues contains a wide range of papers on this important subject and provides readers with a wealth of information and scholarship about the world of communication in the shaping of our nation.

We are delighted that Robert Rabinovitch, President and Chief Executive Officer of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, has taken the time to offer his thoughts on the past, present and future of the CBC. The national public broadcaster is at a critical time in its history and Mr. Rabinovitch delves into many of the industry's 'hot' issues such as Canadian content regulations and the consolidation of ownership in the national media.

Michel Filion begins our look at the field of communication with his views on the historic accommodation of broadcasting's two objectives, namely the pursuit of a national identity and as an instrument of profit. Richard Sutherland then explores the always heated subject of Canadian content regulation, asking and answering pointed questions about what it is, what it has accomplished and whether it needs to be maintained.

Communication extends beyond the microphone in timely articles from Rowland Lorimer and Enn Raudsepp. Lorimer examines the troubling plight of Canada's book and magazine industries while Raudsepp tackles the trend toward greater concentration of ownership in the newspaper industry.

Magda Fusaro leads us into the world of mobile communication, exploring its tremendous growth and wondering what effect this will have on the life, and liberty, of Canadians. Graham Longford moves us further into the digital age with a critical assessment of whether e-government is serving its purpose of expanding democracy. Marco Adria contrasts the thoughts of Maurice Charland and Bruce Powe in a look at new media and the Canadian identity. Leslie Regan Shade then makes her case for community networks in today's globalized world.

Colin Hoskins, Stuart McFadyen and Adam Finn take us back to the CBC and ask a most provocative question: if no CBC existed today, would we endeavour to create one? Mary Vipond bravely examines the cultural dimension to Canada-US relations and exposes concerns for our culture's future. Tracy Summerville proposes a most unique hypothesis - that our advertisers are responding to a growing desire for authenticity by offering Canadians a 'home away from home'. Finally, Alexandre Sévigny shares some personal experiences of growing up within multicultural spaces where communication was meaningful. He leaves us with a cautious optimism about where we are headed as a national community.

These papers provide a wonderful introduction to the ACS conference *Broadcasting the Nation: Communication and the Shaping of Canada* in June 2002. The distinguished authors whose words, thoughts and opinions follow continue to make a significant contribution to a field that touches all Canadians.

LA COMMUNICATION

et le façonnement du Canada

Peu importe la définition que l'on donne à la communauté nationale, il y a peu de doutes que son existence, et éventuellement son succès, dépendent d'un processus social de communication. Ce processus permet l'échange d'idées sur la nature de la nation et approfondit la signification de ses normes, de ses valeurs, de ses marqueurs culturels et de ses symboles. Cette édition de *Thèmes canadiens* contient une grande variété de communications sur ce sujet très important et fournit aux lecteurs une quantité d'information (savante) de qualité sur le monde de la communication et de son influence dans le façonnement de notre nation.

Nous sommes ravis que Robert Rabinovitch, Président et Directeur général de la CBC, ait pris le temps de nous livrer ses pensées sur le passé, le présent et l'avenir de la CBC. Le diffuseur public national est à un moment critique de son histoire et M. Rabinovitch prend à bras le corps des questions importantes telles que les règlements sur le contenu canadien et la consolidation de propriété dans les médias nationaux.

Michel Filion débute notre exploration du domaine des communications en portant son regard sur l'accommodation historique des deux objectifs de la radiodiffusion, soit la poursuite d'une

identité nationale et son rôle en tant qu'instrument de profit. Richard Sutherland explore ensuite le sujet, toujours chaud, des règlements touchant le contenu, posant et répondant à des questions pointues au sujet de leur nature, de leur influence et de si l'on devrait les maintenir.

La communication s'étend au delà de l'image du microphone dans les articles, fort à propos, de Rowland Lorimer et de Enn Raudsepp. Lorimer examine la situation troublante de l'industrie canadienne du livre et du magazine tandis que Raudsepp s'attaque aux tendances de concentration de propriété dans le domaine de la presse.

Magda Fusaro nous introduit au monde de la communication mobile, explorant son immense croissance et se demandant quels effets elle aura sur la vie et la liberté des Canadiens et Canadiennes. Graham Longford nous entraîne encore plus profondément dans l'ère digitale à l'aide d'une évaluation critique du gouvernement électronique et de son objectif d'étendre la démocratie. Marco Adria fait la distinction entre les idées de Maurice Charland et de Bruce Powe au sujet des nouveaux médias et de l'identité canadienne. Leslie Regan Shade fait quant à elle un plaidoyer en faveur d'un réseautage des communautés dans le monde globalisé d'aujourd'hui.

Colin Hoskin, Stuart McFadyen et Adam Finn nous ramènent à la CBC et demande une question très provocante: si la CBC n'existait pas aujourd'hui, essayerions-nous d'en créer une? Mary Vipond examine de manière courageuse les dimensions culturelles des relations Canada-É.U. et expose ses inquiétudes au sujet de l'avenir de notre culture. Tracy Summerhill propose une hypothèse unique: que nos annonceurs répondent au désir grandissant d'authenticité en offrant au Canadiens et Canadiennes une « maison ailleurs qu'à la maison ». Finalement, Alexandre Sévigny partage ses expériences personnelles d'avoir grandi dans un environnement multiculturel où la communication était importante. Il nous laisse avec un optimisme prudent au sujet de où nous nous dirigeons en tant que communauté nationale.

Ses communications nous procurent une merveilleuse introduction à la conférence de l'AEC *Diffuser la nation: la communication et le façonnement du Canada* qui aura lieu en juin 2002. Les mots, idées et opinions qui suivent grâce à ces auteurs distingués continuent de contribuer de manière significative à un domaine qui touchent tous les Canadiens et Canadiennes.

LETTERS

Comments on this edition of *Canadian Issues*?

We want to hear from you.

Write to *Canadian Issues* – Letters, ACS, a/s UQAM, V-5140, P.O. Box 8888, succ. Centre-ville, Montreal (Quebec) Canada, H3C 3P8. Or e-mail us at <robert.israel@acs-aec.ca> Your letters may be edited for length and clarity.

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INTERVIEW WITH ROBERT RABINOVITCH

President and CEO, CBC/Radio-Canada

Robert Rabinovitch was appointed President and Chief Executive Officer of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation on November 15, 1999. Immediately prior to his arrival at CBC/Radio-Canada, Mr. Rabinovitch was Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer of Claridge Inc., a private corporation he joined in 1987.

From 1968 to 1986, Mr. Rabinovitch held various positions in the Federal Government. More specifically, he served as Under Secretary of State from January 1985 to September 1986 and as Deputy Minister of Communications from 1982 to 1985. He has also held several positions within the Privy Council Office, including Deputy Secretary to the Cabinet and Senior Assistant Secretary to the Cabinet for Priorities and Planning.

Mr. Rabinovitch has also been active in cultural and philanthropic endeavours, including: the Canadian Executive Service Organization (CESO), the CRB Foundation, the Samuel and Saidye Bronfman Family Foundation and the Canadian Film Centre. He was Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Canadian Jewish Congress (Quebec), until his appointment to the CBC.

Mr. Rabinovitch is a graduate of McGill University and the University of Pennsylvania, where he earned an M.A. and a Ph.D. in Economics and Finance. Since 1996, he has been a member of the Board of Governors of McGill University and was appointed Chair of the Board in July 1999.



Robert Rabinovitch a été nommé au poste de président-directeur général de la Société Radio-Canada le 15 novembre 1999. Immédiatement avant son arrivée à Radio-Canada, il occupait le poste de vice-président exécutif et chef de la direction chez Claridge Inc., une entreprise privée à laquelle il s'était joint en 1987.

De 1968 à 1986, M. Rabinovitch a occupé divers postes dans la fonction publique fédérale. Notamment, il a été sous-secrétaire d'État de janvier 1985 à septembre 1986 et sous-ministre des Communications de 1982 à 1985. Il a également exercé les fonctions de sous-secrétaire du Cabinet et de premier secrétaire adjoint du Cabinet, Priorités et Planification, au Bureau du Conseil privé.

Il s'est également consacré à diverses entreprises culturelles et philanthropiques, telles que le Service d'assistance canadien aux entreprises (SACO), la Fondation CRB, la Fondation de la famille Samuel et Saidye Bronfman et le Centre canadien du film. Il a été président du comité exécutif du Congrès juif canadien (Québec) jusqu'à sa nomination à Radio-Canada.

M. Rabinovitch est diplômé de l'Université McGill et de l'Université de la Pennsylvanie, où il a obtenu une maîtrise et un doctorat en économie et en finance. En juillet 1999, M. Rabinovitch a été nommé président du conseil des gouverneurs de l'Université McGill, dont il était membre depuis 1996.

Q *What are the current and future challenges to “Canada’s national public broadcaster”?*

A Today, we live in an interactive, multi-channel, specialized broadcasting universe where foreign programming makes up a growing portion of what’s available to Canadians. This new reality raises a critically important question – how do we protect Canadian identity in the face of such a bombardment of foreign images and foreign perspectives?

Clearly, the answer lies in ensuring Canadians have a “Canadian public broadcasting space” – a space where culturally relevant information, entertainment and learning is possible. A strong and vibrant CBC/Radio-Canada can deliver just that.

Q *How has CBC/Radio-Canada responded to these challenges?*

A Two years ago, we began making changes across all media lines to further strengthen CBC/Radio-Canada’s capacity to produce distinct, high-quality Canadian programming.

First, we have reinforced regional presence and reflection across the board, by increasing our production activities in communities across Canada. Today, we’re spending about 40 per cent of our operating budget in the regions or in support of regional activities. Across all our media lines, regional production accounts for about 2,000 hours of programming, that’s 50 per cent of our total Canadian content.

Second, we continue to boost our support for Canadian arts and culture, by showcasing new voices and new faces on programs like *Opening Night* and *Les Beaux Dimanches*, and through our commissioning and production activities. Indeed, each year CBC/Radio-Canada makes about \$100 million in direct payments to Canada’s artists and independent producers.

Third, we are safeguarding our journalistic leadership with new public affairs and news programming. Recently, we added *CBC News: Sunday*, a two-hour, weekly current affairs and information magazine and *CBC News: Disclosure* which brings a contemporary edge and style to CBC’s proud tradition

of investigative journalism. French News has been similarly augmented with *L’Heure du Midi* and an innovative weekly magazine *5 sur 5*.

Fourth, we continue to deliver a safe, educational and entertaining viewing environment for Canada’s children and youth, building on last year’s achievement of adding 750 hours per week in new programming. This year we’ve added a wide range of programming for children and youth, including *Get Set for Life*, *CBC4Kids*, *CBC InfomatriX* on English Television and *Bric-à-Brac* and *Ayoye* on French Television.

Finally, our renewal work has also included significant change to our operations and management – again, to achieve savings to re-invest in programming. Last year, we created a real estate division to manage our five million square feet of property and generate revenue through selling or renting surplus space. We finalised major deals involving CBC’s Broadcasting Centres in Toronto and Regina that will yield \$6 million in annual cash flow to be re-invested in programming. We have identified another \$1 million in annual savings through an overall reduction of fleet size, clearer plans for acquisition, sale and maintenance and exchanges of vehicles between Corporation locations.

In essence, we are changing to ensure that Canadians find greater value in our services and value in the way those services are delivered.

Q *How have your two and a half years at the helm of the CBC altered your understanding of the state of public broadcasting in Canada?*

A The past two and a half years have actually reinforced my belief that Canada needs a strong and vibrant public broadcaster. In a world where Canadians are bombarded by wave after wave of foreign sounds and images, the cultural imperative is more important today than ever before. Without a CBC/Radio-Canada to complement the private broadcasting industry, who will ensure Canadians have a distinctively Canadian choice for their news, entertainment, arts and culture, sports and youth programming?

Given Canada’s relatively small market, the potential audiences for Canadian programming are too small, from a private broadcaster’s perspective, to generate the advertising revenues necessary to recoup the production costs AND make a reasonable profit. Consider that an hour of high quality Canadian

Without a CBC/Radio-Canada to complement the private broadcasting industry, who will ensure Canadians have a distinctively Canadian choice for their news, entertainment, arts and culture, sports and youth programming?

drama costs about \$1 million to produce. Canadian broadcasters pay a licence fee of about \$250,000 for such programming. From this they can expect to generate ad revenues ranging from \$65,000 to \$90,000. In other words they’ll lose \$160,000 per hour of programming. In contrast, the simulcast rights for a popular, one-hour, American sitcom can be purchased for \$100,000 to \$125,000 – roughly half the price of the Canadian alternative – and will generate ad revenues of \$300,000 to \$400,000 – more than four times the Canadian hour. Who can blame a private broadcaster for choosing the simulcast option? It makes business sense for a firm that’s in business to make a profit.

As Canada’s public broadcaster, CBC/Radio-Canada is able to complement the private sector by taking risks, devoting resources and creating programs that the profit-seeking privates simply can’t afford to do. Consider some of CBC/Radio-Canada’s most recent successes in this regard. *Canada: A People’s History – Le Canada: Une histoire populaire* reached over 15 million Canadians with its 32 hours of programming. Our regional historical production *Random Passage* had an average of 1.2 million viewers per episode. *Le Dernier Chapitre / The Last Chapter* drew just under 1 million viewers per episode. *Music Hall* posted 1.7 million viewers in the Francophone market. While these numbers are not compelling enough to motivate a private broadcast-

er to undertake such risky, innovative ventures, they certainly highlight the value that Canada's public broadcaster brings to Canadians.

Q *The 1991 Broadcasting Act states that the programming provided by the Corporation should contribute to shared national consciousness and identity. How is this mandate approached?*

A Over time, the *Canadian Broadcasting Act* has evolved into an instrument that places restrictions on foreign ownership; requires the predominant use of

Just as our parent and grandparents gathered around their radio stations to hear wartime reports, many of us tuned-in or logged-on to witness the mettle of CBC/Radio-Canada journalists and technicians who provided national and international audiences with extraordinary coverage during the tragic events of September 11th.

Canadian creators and talent; confirms CBC/Radio-Canada's mandate as a national broadcaster; and reaffirms a vision of the broadcasting system that safeguards, enriches and strengthens the cultural, political, social and economic fabric of Canada.

With our full menu of Canadians services and delivery platforms, CBC/Radio-Canada is Canada's greatest guarantor of high quality, distinctively Canadian radio, television and new media content, as well as our nation's greatest supplier and promoter of Canadian culture. We convey Canadian stories, values and regional perspectives. Our programming reflects the strength of Canada's past and the promise of its future. We touch the lives of Canadians daily with distinctive, objective and impartial content.

Q *How has the communication of Canadian stories through CBC/Radio-Canada helped to shape the identity of Canada?*

A Since the beginning, Canada's geography, cultural diversity and widely dispersed population have set the tone for defining what it means to be Canadian. Over the past 65 years, first in radio and

then television, I believe CBC/Radio-Canada has played an instrumental role in binding Canadians together in what someone once called "this improbable nation." It has done so on many fronts.

For many years, Canadians have relied on the CBC/Radio-Canada to reflect on our national history and identity. There are many examples that span decades. Over 33 years ago, CBC/Radio-Canada's *Man Alive* became the first broadcast to address matters of ethics and faith. For over 40 years we've learned about our natural history, biology, medicine, ecology and impact on our

environment from the *Nature of Things*. More recently, *Canada: A People's History / Le Canada: Une histoire populaire* and *Trudeau* treated viewers to hours of stunning broadcast about Canada's development as a nation.

CBC/Radio-Canada has long been an essential conduit for coverage and analysis of key Canadian and international events. Indeed, Canadians trust CBC/Radio-Canada to help them make sense of the world. Just as our parent and grandparents gathered around their radio stations to hear wartime reports, many of us tuned-in or logged-on to witness the mettle of CBC/Radio-Canada journalists and technicians who provided national and international audiences with extraordinary coverage during the tragic events of September 11th.

CBC/Radio-Canada also helps to build bridges and encourage understanding among Canadians. Our presence in communities all across Canada helps bind Canadians together. Indeed, for many Canadians, CBC/Radio-Canada is a cultural lifeline. We are the only broadcaster reaching all Canadians in English, French and eight Aboriginal languages of the North. Our recent broadcast of *Random Passage*, a historical drama depicting Newfoundland his-

tory, highlights our role in telling the story of different regions of Canada.

The bottom line is CBC/Radio-Canada is there to help us celebrate our shared Canadian experience ... together.

Q *How important is it for Canada to maintain a public institution in the medium of television?*

A Given Canadians increasingly rely on television for news, entertainment and even children's programming, having a "public broadcasting space" to deliver high-quality, distinctively Canadian television content is very important.

Q *A generation ago, television offered a mere handful of channels. Today, with cable packages and satellite dishes, many homes have access to hundreds of channels. Some say that the proliferation of channels and choices makes support for public broadcasting less tenable. How do you respond?*

A With all the new digital channels, one would think that the job is done. Yes we have access to 500 new channels – perhaps we don't need a public broadcaster. I contend the exact opposite is true. Despite the 500-channel universe, there's nothing to watch. Most digital channels simply air repeats and repackaged old programs – no new content.

As a public broadcaster, our motivation is to make quality programming by Canadians, about Canadians, for Canadians ... Canadians simply won't get this content otherwise.

Q *How are (i) the CBC and (ii) the industry as a whole affected by the growing industry consolidation in ownership?*

A Like many Canadians, I am wary about the potential for increased concentration of ownership to reduce the number and variety of Canadian voices participating in public discussion and debate about important issues facing our country.

As long as there's a strong and vibrant CBC/Radio-Canada specifically devoted to ensuring those voices can be heard, I think we'll be OK.

But, it is important to recognize what we must guard against complacen-

cy if we are to maintain and strengthen our cultural identity in the face of globalization and technological change.

Q *How is the CBC responding to today's digital revolution?*

A The introduction of digital technologies and the Internet is clearly changing the basis of "traditional" broadcasting. However, it's important to remember that the digital revolution is not at an end. Rather, it represents the beginning of a long evolution that will transform the way content will be produced, processed, transported, archived, protected, managed, delivered and consumed by our audiences.

As a public broadcaster, CBC/Radio-Canada much achieve its goals in a fiscally responsible manner – that dictates using the most cost-efficient technology available to us. Our technology team is focused on developing and implementing a coherent technology strategy to support the CBC's foremost objective, programming. They are seeking to provide optimal technology solutions, at a minimum cost, exploiting the benefits of technological evolution and innovation to add value to our production processes.

In the meantime, we've introduced new media platforms such as our award winning websites *www.cbc.ca* and *radio-canada.ca*. Through Radio Three, we've added interactive Internet-based programming for youth such as *120seconds.com*, *newmusiccanada.com* and *justconcerts.com* and, in French, *bandeapart.fm*. Galaxie, our digital pay audio service, offers 1.8 million subscribers 30 continuous music channels, 24 hours/day without talk or commercials. Our digital radio services now reach a potential audience of well over 10 million people and, having paved the way to deliver high-speed data using digital radio transmission, we opened the door for cross-industry ventures and new strategic alliances.

As evidence of our innovativeness, we recently received a U.S. National Association of Broadcasters Award for implementing an advanced national satellite distribution Digital Video Compression project with Telesat Canada and TANDBERG Television.

This successful project – a first in North America – has allowed us to put all English TV Network feeds on a single Telesat satellite channel and resulted in substantial savings. With it, we were able to help hundreds of cable companies and community-owned stations across Canada to convert from analog to digital systems.

We're committed to putting the digital revolution to work to reach more Canadians, through more mediums and more efficiently than ever thought possible.

Q *How does the CBC balance a national mandate with regional realities?*

A Under the *Broadcasting Act*, CBC/Radio-Canada is specifically mandated to reflect Canada and its regions to national and regional audiences, while serving the special needs of those regions.

We meet this obligation in a number of ways. We are the only broadcaster in Canada that provides programming to all Canadians in English, French and eight Aboriginal languages of the North.

We have a presence in close to 100 large and small communities across Canada.

We ensure that local and regional stories, talents and issues reach both regional and national audiences. This happens through all our program genres, across all parts of our programming schedule. A good example of our efforts to continuously enhance our regional reflections is *CANADA NOW*, a news program introduced in 2000 integrating a half-hour national supper hour newscast, produced in Vancouver, with half-hour local/regional newscasts produced at owned-and-operated stations across the country.

We also invest in a significant amount of network programming in various regions of Canada. Today, the national portion of *CBC News: Canada Now* is produced in Vancouver. *CBC News: Disclosure* originates from Winnipeg and Toronto. The new drama, *Tom Stone* is based in Calgary. *This Hour Has 22 Minutes* comes to us from Halifax. The new late-night show, *ZeD*, is produced in Vancouver. As well, a number of new French Television programs – *Asbestos*, *Rivière-des-Jérémie*,

L'Or – are produced outside Montreal in such locations as Abitibi, the Outaouais and Vancouver.

Q *How have Canadian content regulations enhanced the security of Canadian culture? Do you envision stronger or weaker content regulations in the future?*

It's important to remember that the digital revolution is not at an end. Rather, it represents the beginning of a long evolution that will transform the way content will be produced, processed, transported, archived, protected, managed, delivered and consumed by our audiences.

A As part of the cost of a broadcasting license in Canada, the Canadian content rules have been quite successful in increasing the amount of Canadian content – we call it tonnage – on our Canadian airwaves. However, rather than a minimum content rule, they have effectively become a maximum level attained by private broadcasters.

It's important to remember that the content rules do not work in isolation. They are supplemented by an array of regulations, policies and instruments, including the Canadian Television Fund (CTF) and CBC/Radio-Canada.

With the continuing trend toward globalization and increased competitiveness in the Canadian marketplace, all of these tools will come under greater pressure. Ensuring they remain effectively equipped to complement the activities of private broadcasters in boosting Canadian culture is very important.

Q *What will the CBC look like a generation from now?*

A As President and CEO of CBC/Radio-Canada, I am asked that question a lot, particularly as we prepare for celebrations this Fall of CBC/Radio-Canada's 50th Anniversary of Television. The best answer I can provide is distilled in one phrase – even more distinctively Canadian.

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ENTRE LE RÊVE D'UNE RADIODIFFUSION CANADIENNE ET SA RÉALITÉ :

l'évolution des politiques publiques
et des pratiques culturelles

Par Michel Filion

AU CANADA, LA RADIODIFFUSION FUT CONSTAMMENT PARTAGÉE ENTRE DEUX CONCEPTIONS : UN MOYEN POLITIQUE ET CULTUREL CONSACRÉ À L'ÉCLOSION D'UNE IDENTITÉ NATIONALE OU UN INSTRUMENT DE PROFIT ASSERVI À DES FINS COMMERCIALES. CES CONSIDÉRATIONS PARTICIPENT D'AILLEURS À UNE DYNAMIQUE COMMUNE SELON LE DISCOURS OFFICIEL : LA COMMERCIALISATION DES ONDES – GÉNÉRALEMENT ASSOCIÉE À L'AMÉRICANISATION – JUSTIFIE L'INTERVENTION DE L'ÉTAT FÉDÉRAL QUI DÉTERMINERAIT AINSI LES PRATIQUES CULTURELLES DES CANADIENS. OR, LA RÉALITÉ EST CERTAINEMENT PLUS COMPLEXE, SURTOUT DANS UN PAYS MARQUÉ PAR UNE LIGNE DE PARTAGE LINGUISTIQUE ASSEZ NETTE. AU LIEU DE SERVIR L'IDENTITÉ CANADIENNE PUREMENT HYPOTHÉTIQUE SOUHAITÉE PAR LES THÉORICIENS D'UN CANADA UNI ET HOMOGENE, LA RADIO ET LA TÉLÉVISION POURRAIENT PLUTÔT AVOIR CONTRIBUÉ À RAFFERMIR DES IDENTITÉS IRRÉDUCTIBLES. À TRAVERS L'HISTOIRE, LES INTERVENTIONS GOUVERNEMENTALES ET LEUR IMPACT SUR LES LOIS DU MARCHÉ CONSTITUENT LES FORCES LES PLUS ÉVIDENTES ET LES MIEUX DOCUMENTÉES. MAIS LES PUBLICS CANADIENS ET LEURS CULTURES RESPECTIVES POURRAIENT AVOIR ÉTÉ TOUT AUSSI ACTIFS DANS LE DÉVELOPPEMENT, OU L'ÉCHEC, D'UNE PROGRAMMATION CANADIENNE ESSENTIELLE À L'IDENTITÉ COLLECTIVE.

UN MARCHÉ LIBRE, 1920-1932

Le début du XXe siècle constitue au Canada une période de transition dans le cadre d'une industrialisation amorcée tardivement et dont la mise en place des conditions internes (ressources, énergie, main-d'oeuvre) et externes (capital, technologie, marché) échappe aux Canadiens, ce qui suscite la crainte de l'impérialisme américain sur le plan économique, mais aussi culturel. Alors que se forme l'État canadien dont l'autonomie ne sera reconnue qu'avec le Traité de Westminster (1931), le gouvernement fédéral commence à élargir ses champs d'activité et met de l'avant un projet centralisateur: la création d'une identité canadienne par opposition à la culture populaire américaine et à d'autres formes d'identités nationales.

Le foisonnement des stations privées depuis près d'une décennie amène la création de la première Commission royale d'enquête sur la radiodiffusion (la Commission Aird) en 1929. D'emblée, cette dernière penche pour le modèle interventionniste britannique, c'est-à-dire la participation des fonds publics à une programmation canadienne produite et contrôlée par une société d'État, seule en mesure de contrer la commercialisation des ondes et l'hégémonie d'une culture populaire à l'américaine qui contreviendraient à la construction identitaire (*nation building*) du Canada. Il s'agit de l'axiome sur lequel se fondent tous les artisans de l'intervention gouvernemen-

Au Canada, la radiodiffusion fut constamment partagée entre deux conceptions: un moyen politique et culturel consacré à l'éclosion d'une identité nationale ou un instrument de profit asservi à des fins commerciales.

tales. Dans la même foulée s'inscrit un puissant lobby nationaliste pan-canadien, la *Ligue canadienne de la radiodiffusion*: «The Question is the State or the United States?» affirmait Graham Spry, son porte-parole devenu ensuite une figure emblématique de la nationalisation des ondes, devant le Comité spécial de la Chambre des Communes sur la radiodiffusion créé spécialement en 1932. Au centre de ce discours se situe le

danger américain qu'il faut appréhender à plus d'un degré: impérialisme économique d'une part, mais pénétration de valeurs américaines de l'autre.

Il est vrai que la proximité du géant américain place le Canada dans une situation précaire. À preuve, dès les années 1920 les stations commerciales canadiennes les plus importantes en terme de puissance technique et de rayonnement, CFRB et CKGW (Toronto) et CFCF et CKAC (Montréal), sont affiliées aux réseaux américains NBC ou CBS. Or, le «problème» canadien revêt une signification différente lorsque la langue de

communication est prise en compte: la station CKAC – très majoritairement francophone – ne diffuse des émissions américaines que dans une petite proportion de sa programmation au contraire de ses homologues de langue anglaise (Filion 1993). Car les émissions américaines eurent très tôt la sympathie et même la préférence du public canadien-anglais (Peers 1969: 20).

Alors que la radiodiffusion canadienne en était à sa première phase de développement, de sérieux indices suggèrent que l'américanisation des ondes canadiennes fut utilisée par le discours officiel à des fins partisans. La radio devint rapidement l'objet d'une lutte politique marquée par le conflit entre la centralisation et la régionalisation, d'une lutte économique opposant le secteur public (en voie de création) au secteur privé, et, enfin, d'une lutte idéologique menée par une élite intel-



lectuelle contre la culture populaire. Camouflés dans le discours, ces éléments reviennent dans la suite de l'histoire.

L'ÈRE DE LA NATIONALISATION, 1932-1958

La Loi sur la radiodiffusion de 1932 inaugure une nouvelle ère caractérisée par la mainmise théorique de l'État fédéral: un réseau « national » est constitué pour chacun des deux médias – la télévision apparaîtra en 1952 – dans chacune des deux langues, donnant ainsi la chance aux Canadiens anglais et aux Canadiens français d'affirmer chacun leur originalité. Mais les autorités persistent à occulter certaines réalités qui mettraient en péril le principe de l'unité nationale et la constitution d'une identité canadienne unique.

En principe, la loi de 1932 devait consacrer la *canadianisation* des ondes par l'intermédiaire d'une corporation publique, la Commission canadienne de la radiodiffusion qui deviendra en 1936 la Société Radio-Canada/Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, chargée à la fois d'établir un service national et de contrôler l'ensemble des stations. Toutefois confrontée au formidable défi que représentent l'immensité du Canada et son sous-développement démographique, la société d'État ne put se priver du recours à l'entreprise privée, aux productions étrangères et à la réclame publicitaire (Filion 1997). La loi interdit néanmoins la création de réseaux privés de même qu'elle impose à toutes les stations privées de s'affilier à la SRC/CBC, deux mesures qui resteront en vigueur jusqu'en 1958.

La logique économique continentale veut que les diffuseurs privés importent des émissions étrangères, ce que ne manque pas de déplorer le rapport de la Commission royale d'enquête sur l'avancement des arts, lettres et sciences (la Commission Massey) en 1951 et celui de la Commission royale d'enquête sur la radio et la télévision (la Commission Fowler) en 1957. Selon ce discours, le postulat est simple: seul un service national peut créer une identité canadienne. Pourtant, l'échec du bilinguisme a conduit dès 1938 à la séparation des réseaux radiophoniques français et anglais, portant ainsi un dur coup au projet d'unité nationale en permettant au Québec francophone de se doter d'un système distinct dans son organisation et dans sa programmation. Des données colligées pour le compte de la Commission Massey le démontrent: l'importation d'émissions de radio est beaucoup plus faible au réseau français qu'au réseau national anglais. Cette distinction affecte également les stations privées, même celles encore affiliées aux réseaux américains en vertu de dérogations spéciales. La radio n'apparaît donc pas marquée par une forte corrélation entre le mode de propriété et l'américanisation (Filion 1994: 130-153).

Le même phénomène émerge de la télévision. En septembre 1952, les stations de télévision CBFT-Montréal et CBLT-Toronto étaient mises en opération. Elles allaient devenir respectivement les station-mères du réseau français et du réseau anglais dès 1954. Car, après quelques essais infructueux de bilinguisme, la dualité canadienne était encore une fois reconnue dans les faits et le réseau français de télévision confiné pour l'essentiel au Québec. Doit-on remettre en question l'argument supposant qu'il n'existait point de salut pour le

Canada sans le service national de radiodiffusion? Sa présence a certainement diminué l'impact des forces du marché continentales, mais les différences les plus substantielles à l'endroit de l'importation des émissions américaines se situent plutôt entre stations francophones et stations anglophones, fussent-elles publiques ou privées. Les chiffres fournis à la Commission Fowler sont très éloquentes à cet égard:

Part des émissions américaines diffusées par la télévision canadienne (1956)

STATIONS	PRIVÉES	PUBLIQUES
de langue anglaise	54,2%	51,6%
de langue française	13,1%	2,3%

Source: Dallas Smythe (1957)

Il devient donc étriqué de parler d'une contribution nécessairement plus considérable du secteur public à la création d'une identité nationale, puisque l'américanisation des ondes canadiennes de langue anglaise semble bien amorcée. Du reste, ce phénomène avait été prévu dès la discussion sur l'adoption de normes techniques européennes qui auraient fermé le Canada aux importations américaines: «[...] these possible alternatives are out of question; Canada must adopt completely and exclusively American standards for obvious economic reasons and to secure the paramount advantage of using American programs on Canadian stations as soon as television networks are available» affirmait justement Alphonse Ouimet – futur président de la SRC/CBC – qui ajoutait: «Television in Canada should be as typically Canadian as we can make it, but no more so than we can afford» (Ouimet 1948). Ainsi la CBC retiendra-t-elle le gros de son auditoire avec des émissions américaines telles que *The Perry Como Show*, *Father Knows Best*, *The All Star Theatre*, *The Ed Sullivan Show* et *Dragnet*. Au contraire, les émissions les plus regardées au réseau français proviennent toujours du Québec, en particulier les télé-feuilletons parmi lesquels *La famille Plouffe* atteint constamment des sommets d'écoute. Austin Weir, qui a bien connu la situation de l'intérieur, pouvait donc affirmer: «French-language viewers had a clearer insight into the basic purposes and a deeper appreciation of the accomplishments of the CBC than English-language Canadians» (1965: 288). Ce phénomène est-il encore perceptible après 1958 alors que foisonnent les réseaux privés?

LIBÉRALISATION ET CONCURRENCE DEPUIS 1958

La participation accrue de l'industrie privée devenait inévitable avec la demande populaire pour la télévision. La loi canadienne sur la radiodiffusion de 1958, et ensuite celle de 1968, autorisent la constitution de réseaux privés de radio et de télévision qui deviendront ouvertement des concurrentes de la SRC/CBC. Bien qu'on parle encore de *système unique*, cette expression devient galvaudée, sinon pour signifier que le secteur dit « public » – il s'agit en fait d'une radiodiffusion d'État (Raboy 1996) – et le secteur privé sont en principe contrôlés par un seul organisme, le Bureau des gouverneurs de la

radiodiffusion qui deviendra en 1968 le Conseil de la radiodiffusion et des télécommunications canadiennes (CRTC). Ce dernier doit veiller à ce que toutes les composantes du système contribuent à l'atteinte des objectifs (dont le contenu canadien et l'unité nationale) assignés légalement, bien que vaguement, à la radiodiffusion canadienne.

Pour faire contrepoids à l'expansion du secteur privé, des règlements ont été imposés par les organismes de contrôle successifs, notamment en ce qui a trait aux quotas de programmes étrangers. Sans entrer dans les détails de cette réglementation complexe et changeante, on peut dire qu'elle a toujours échoué à contrer l'américanisation. Conséquemment, la concurrence entre le secteur public et le secteur privé est constamment déplorée et le CRTC taxé de laxisme. Dans cette logique, l'échec de la canadi-anisation provient des autorités qui, par complaisance avec le milieu des affaires, reculent devant une réglementation musclée qui mettrait définitivement un frein à la pénétration des produits culturels américains. En 1965, le rapport du Comité consultatif sur la radiodiffusion canadienne, présidé par Robert Fowler, critiquait l'inefficacité du règlement sur

Comité d'étude de la politique culturelle fédérale (le Comité Applebaum-Hébert). Aucun de ces comités ne faisait grand cas des diversités régionales ou du caractère distinct du Québec francophone. Toutefois, en 1986, dans son rapport très étoffé, le Groupe de travail sur la politique de la radiodiffusion, présidé conjointement par Gerald Caplan et par Florian Sauvageau, déplorait la déréglementation dans laquelle s'engageait le CRTC mais affirmait par ailleurs que le système de radiodiffusion canadien constituerait un échec sans la présence du Canada français où l'emprise américaine est beaucoup moins forte.

Notons que depuis 1991, la loi canadienne sur la radiodiffusion remplace le concept d'unité nationale par celui de souveraineté culturelle, qui n'est guère plus précis et toujours aussi difficile à atteindre. Car l'intervention de l'organisme de réglementation est limitée par les réalités économiques qui rendent la diffusion d'émissions américaines plus rentable, par les critiques que soulève toute tentative de contrôle étatique, et par la perméabilité des frontières en ce qui a trait aux produits culturels. À l'instar de Richard Collins (1990), on peut remettre en question l'argument voulant

CONCLUSION

Leonard Brockington, président de la SRC/CBC, déclarait en 1938: «Sincere objections are voiced to the broadcasting of so-called American commercial programmes. [...] We belong, willy nilly, to the North American continent and to the American civilisation» (Société Radio-Canada 1938: 5-6). Ce point de vue d'un partage de la culture américaine apparaît irrecevable pour l'ensemble des Canadiens. Pourtant équipés d'une structure médiatique comparable, le Canada français et le Canada anglais connaissent des résultats fort différents en matière de promotion d'un contenu canadien (Nielsen 1994), tant au niveau de sa diffusion qu'à celui de sa réception.

Depuis longtemps, le discours nationaliste canadien réduit la situation fort complexe de la radiodiffusion canadienne à un problème de voisinage sans tenir compte des divergences quant aux conditions politiques, économiques, sociales et culturelles. Le projet qui en est résulté visait à doter le Canada d'une personnalité distincte, et la stratégie retenue correspondait aux visées centralisatrices de l'État canadien en gestation. Dans cette perspective, une grande partie du contenu de la radio et de la télévision serait le résultat d'une pratique de «dumping» américain sur le marché canadien incapable de résister à un système de production aussi puissant. Cette interprétation implique que l'auditoire consomme les produits culturels sans pouvoir influencer le processus de quelque façon que ce soit. En fait, c'est tout récemment que des chercheurs ont commencé à associer le succès des produits américains non pas uniquement à des considérations financières et à des lacunes réglementaires, mais aussi à la structure même du marché canadien. Ce phénomène nous oblige à reconsidérer le postulat officiel selon lequel le cadre juridique des médias détermine l'identité collective et donc à faire la part entre le rêve d'une radiodiffusion vraiment canadienne et la réalité des pratiques culturelles des Canadiens.

Michel Filion est Professeur d'histoire à l'Université du Québec à Hull

Dans l'espace canadien, il n'y a qu'au Québec francophone que les émissions dites «canadiennes» jouissent année après année d'une ferveur exceptionnelle auprès de l'auditoire aussi bien dans le créneau du divertissement que de l'information.

la teneur canadienne de la programmation et l'apparente indifférence des stations privées à l'endroit des objectifs nationaux contenus dans la loi sur la radio-diffusion; l'avènement de la télévision privée au Canada, au lieu d'offrir une véritable diversité au public canadien, avait plutôt augmenté la diffusion d'émissions de divertissement populaire, en grande partie d'origine américaine. Ce sont sensiblement les mêmes conclusions auxquelles sont arrivés en 1969 le Comité spécial du Sénat sur les moyens de communication de masse (le Comité Davey), en 1979 le Comité consultatif des télécommunications et de la souveraineté canadienne (le Comité Clyne) et, en 1982, le

que l'auditoire consomme toute la production canadienne offerte et qu'il suffirait d'augmenter ou de faire respecter les quotas pour résoudre le problème du contenu canadien. Nos recherches démontrent plutôt que le recours aux émissions américaines depuis les origines de la radiodiffusion exprime une réalité culturelle bien ancrée dans la société canadienne et peut-être irréversible (Filion 1996). Dans l'espace canadien, il n'y a qu'au Québec francophone que les émissions dites «canadiennes» jouissent année après année d'une ferveur exceptionnelle auprès de l'auditoire aussi bien dans le créneau du divertissement que de l'information.

CANADIAN CONTENT at 32

By Richard Sutherland

WHY DO WE STILL NEED CANADIAN CONTENT REGULATIONS? IS CANADIAN CULTURE NOT WELL-ESTABLISHED ENOUGH THAT IT CAN NOW STAND ON ITS OWN WITHOUT THE INTERVENTION OF REGULATION? OR IF IT CAN'T STAND ON ITS OWN, IS IT THEN WORTH SUPPORTING? THESE QUESTIONS COULD BE, AND ARE IN FACT, ASKED IN REGARD TO VIRTUALLY ALL CANADIAN CULTURAL POLICY. IN THE CASE OF CANADIAN CONTENT ON RADIO, THESE QUESTIONS HAVE ALL COME UP OVER ITS LONG HISTORY, DESPITE THE SENSE THAT IT HAS BEEN A SUCCESSFUL POLICY.

Maintaining Canadian presence on our airwaves has been a concern of the government dating back to the earliest days of broadcasting. Historically, there have been two basic approaches to address this objective. One involves building cultural infrastructure (such as the CBC) or offering funding or incentives for the creation of Canadian culture. The other is regulatory, to impose requirements or restrictions on those who trade in cultural products. The best known instrument in the latter category is Canadian Content regulations, requirements for broadcasters to devote a proportion of their airtime to Canadian programming.

“Cancon” on radio is now over 30 years old. Introduced in 1971 by the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) and enforced by the same agency, it is one of Canada's best known cultural policies. It is also widely regarded as one of the most successful. It has exposed Canadians to the wealth of musical talent in this country, ensuring a Canadian presence on the radio. It has also been pointed to as a major impetus for the growth of our domestic recording industry over the last three decades (it is in tribute to the policy's architect, Pierre Juneau, that the Canadian music industry's awards, the Junos were so named). These were, in fact, the two major policy objectives of Canadian Content when it was introduced in early 1971. Why has this policy been so durable over this period of time and required so few adjustments when policies for many other cultural industries have expired or been radically altered?

WHAT IS IT?

Perhaps at least one reason for the success of the radio Cancon is its simplicity. Unlike the television Canadian content system, which requires an intimate acquaintance with production accounting in order to be applied, the radio regulations are extremely straightforward. Canadian content in music recordings is determined using the MAPL system, which was developed by Stan Klees of the music industry trade magazine RPM. MAPL stands for Music, Artist, Production, Lyrics and these are defined as the four elements defining the Canadian content of a sound recording. Music refers to the nationality of the composer of the music; Artist refers to the nationality of the primary performer; Production refers to location where the selection was recorded; and Lyrics refers to the nationality of the writer of the song's lyrics. To be Canadian content a selection must be Canadian in at least two of these categories. (“The MAPL System” CRTC Information Sheet)

This makes the system easy for radio broadcasters and record producers to understand and to apply. In comparison, the issue of defining what is

Canadian in a television production has been much more contentious and problematic. As a result broadcaster compliance has been more difficult to achieve and the goal of stimulating the film and television production industry has been more elusive. This may speak to the relative simplicity of both radio programming and of record production (as well as the fact that the Cancon requirements for television are higher), as much as that of the MAPL system. However, the fact remains that the radio regulation has escaped the many frustrations and adjustments that have bedeviled its television counterpart over the years.

In fact, there have been almost no changes to the policy other than to raise periodically – from 20% to 30% on FM in 1991 and overall from 30% to its current level of 35% in 1998. This is a percentage of overall airtime but is to be distributed evenly over the broadcast day. The level is 50% on the CBC, 20% for some border broadcasters or those with formats where there is an acknowledged scarcity of Canadian content, (for instance, 7% for ethnic broadcasters). (“Canadian Content for Radio and Television,” CRTC Information Sheet R1-05-01). That the last increase occurred in 1998 would seem to speak to a continued commitment to the policy.

The one adjustment to how Canadian musical content is assessed occurred in 1991/92 as a result of a furor over the Bryan Adams song “Everything I Do (I Do it For You)” which didn't qualify as Canadian content, much to the indignation of the artist. To address this, the way the categories were calculated was adjusted so that if Canadians were 50% responsible for lyrics or for music they could be awarded half a point. It is worth noting that if the song had been credited differently in the first place (for instance, crediting Adams entirely with the music and Lange with

the lyrics) it would have met the existing criteria. It was this that provided much of the rationale for changing them. It is also interesting that the question hadn't really come up earlier but no doubt the extraordinary international success of both the artist and the song along with the attendant publicity played a major role in bringing about this change.

The simplicity of the MAPL system has also been preserved in the requirements for music videos. In addition to the song qualifying as Canadian, the video director or the production company must be Canadian, or the production facilities must be located in Canada. Again, this speaks to its usefulness as a way of defining Canadian content in music.

WHAT IS IT FOR?

As we said, Canadian content on the radio is supposed to accomplish two separate objectives. The first objective is to ensure that there is a Canadian presence on radio airwaves: to make sure that Canadian listeners hear a reasonable amount of Canadian music when they listen to the radio.

In carrying out the first objective, the government has hoped also to accomplish a second goal: “To strengthen the Canadian music industry, including both the creative and production components” (“The MAPL System” CRTC Information Sheet. Retrieved from http://www.crtc.gc.ca/eng/INFO_SHT/R1.htm). This raises what is, perhaps, the most interesting aspect of Canadian Content Policy, the fact that it is used as a policy instrument not only for regulating the broadcast industry but for assisting the sound recording industry. This (to the cynical, at least) might also provide some rationale for the policy's longevity. Costs for administering the CRTC notwithstanding, the policy involves no

The fact remains that the radio regulation has escaped the many frustrations and adjustments that have bedeviled its television counterpart over the years.

direct monetary support for the recording industry on the part of the government.

If, as the CRTC puts it, "Canadian content is the cornerstone of the Broadcasting Act ("Canadian Content," CRTC Information Sheet. Retrieved from http://www.crtc.gc.ca/eng/INFO_SHT/b306.htm), it is also the cornerstone of the federal government's policies for the sound recording industry. In fact, it was, for the first fifteen years of its existence, virtually the only instrument of federal policy for the sound recording industry in Canada (Will Straw. 1996. "Sound Recording" In Michael Dorland (ed.) *The Cultural Industries in Canada*. Toronto: Lorimer). This is not only a measure of how closely the radio and music industries are related, but

It is true that the recording industry in Canada has grown and prospered over the decades since Canadian Content was introduced. Undoubtedly, the regulations have been a benefit but opinion is divided on the actual importance of these regulations in this growth and prosperity.

it is also an indication of how this relationship was regarded by government. In basic terms, it was assumed that radio airplay was virtually sufficient in itself for the stimulation the production of recorded music. Essentially, it was viewed as free advertising for record companies. Indeed this was, to an extent, a reflection of the prevailing music industry view at the time, when radio promotion, and perhaps a concert tour, constituted almost the whole of the marketing plan for a record.

It is true that the recording industry in Canada has grown and prospered over the decades since Canadian Content was introduced. Undoubtedly, the regulations have been a benefit but

As many broadcasters have said, their business is not to sell records but to sell advertising.

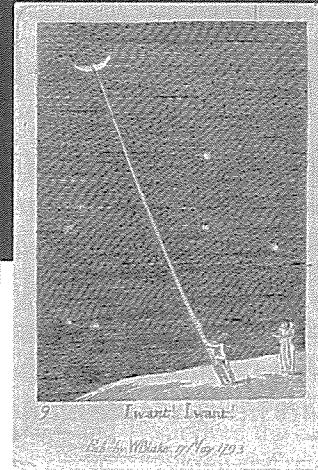
opinion is divided on the actual importance of these regulations in this growth and prosperity. Many would point to the development of distribution networks through the major labels which coincided with Cancon's introduction here as a much more important factor (Will Straw. 1993. "The English-Canadian Recording Industry Since 1970" In Tony Bennett, Simon Frith, Larry Grossbert, John Shepherd and Graeme Turner (eds.) *Rock and Popular Music: Politics, Policies, Institutions*. London: Routledge).

Since the 1970s radio's dominance as a promotional tool for music has also declined somewhat. There are a number of reasons for this. On the music industry side, the advent of music videos, a growing sophistication on the part of record companies in marketing at retail, as well as more use of paid advertising across a number of media have reduced its reliance on radio.

Changing programming practices on the part of radio broadcasters are even more important in this decline. As many

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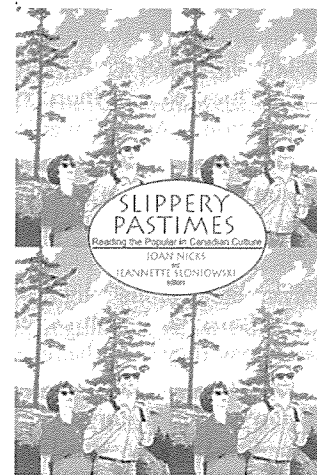


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broadcasters have said, their business is not to sell records but to sell advertising. Over the years radio has developed more “oldies”, “classic” and “gold” formats, playing older, well known selections by established artists. This may attract listeners but it does little to sell records. Playlists have been shortened, programming centralized and the result is that getting a song by a

At face value, the first objective of Canadian content, ensuring a Canadian presence on radio, is the easiest to assess. Given that broadcasters do seem to play Cancon at the levels required by the CRTC it would seem clear that, yes, the policy does ensure that Canadian musicians and musical works are heard on the nation's radio stations.

new artist played on radio is more difficult than ever. And it is new artists who benefit most from radio promotion. It is in part these broadcasting practices that have spurred more varied creative approaches to marketing on the part of the music industry.

It was, in fact, the realization on the part of broadcasters, as well as the music industry that airplay by itself isn't enough that led to the establishment of many of the funding programs that are now in place for the music industry. The establishment of FACTOR (Foundation to Assist Canadian Talent on Record) by the Canadian Association of Broadcasters and the Canadian Independent Record Production Association in 1986 came about in part because radio stations claimed they were having difficulty meeting their Cancon quotas – there just wasn't enough “quality” Canadian material out there.

By pooling the Canadian Talent Development monies the broadcasters had to pay, they (and the recording industry) reasoned that it could be more effectively put to use to provide loans to Canadian record companies to produce more recordings by more Canadian artists. As a result FACTOR was created as a jointly overseen effort by both record companies and broadcasters, as was its Quebec counterpart MusicAction. The Federal Government's Sound Recording Development Program (SRDP) in 1988 added to the monies broadcasters paid into these foundations. In this way Cancon spurred the development of the next set of programs for the recording industry. FACTOR and MusicAction are still overseen jointly by broadcasters and recording industry and are still seen by broadcasters in large part as a means to provide them with more material to meet Canadian content requirements.

The Radio Starmaker Fund, a more recent joint initiative by broadcasters and the recording industry, carries on this tradition of developing talent that will make more and more attractive programming for radio. Broadcasters participate in these programs in part because they have to spend the money anyway but there is also the acknowledgement that, given their Cancon requirements, they will derive a benefit from a greater supply of Canadian recordings, especially if those recordings

are made by higher profile artists, by stars (www.radiostar-makerfund.com).

DOES IT WORK?

At face value, the first objective of Canadian content, ensuring a Canadian presence on radio, is the easiest to assess. Given that broadcasters do seem to play Cancon at the levels required by the CRTC it would seem clear that, yes, the policy does ensure that Canadian musicians and musical works are heard on the nation's radio stations. The only difficulties here have arisen over the distribution of Canadian material through the broadcast day. This has been an issue at times and eventually led the CRTC to stipulate that the levels apply to primetime programming (which for radio is the morning and afternoon drive times), not just the entire day. Prior to this the tendency had been to “ghettoize” Cancon, playing it at off-peak times and, thus, reaching fewer listeners than would otherwise be the case.

Nevertheless, in this objective Cancon for radio has been successful in terms of ensuring that Canadian musicians and songwriters get a share of the airwaves in this country. Much more so than its television counterpart, which still seems to struggle with this goal. If there is any lingering issue in this

Cancon's role in stimulating production of Canadian recordings is more difficult to assess. As we said above, the influence of airplay on record sales, while undoubtedly very important, is not a sufficient guarantee of success. Nor is it always necessary.

respect, it is the view that broadcasters tend to focus too much on those established Canadian artists with international reputations who don't actually need the extra exposure, rather than on exposing new talent. But this is really another issue altogether and could as easily be applied to non-Canadian artists.

Cancon's role in stimulating production of Canadian recordings is more difficult to assess. As we said above, the influence of airplay on record sales, while undoubtedly very important, is not a sufficient guarantee of success. Nor is it always necessary. Some genres such as Rap and Dance sell large numbers of records in this country while receiving little or no radio airplay. Moreover, the numbers for Canadian recordings themselves show a gap between the ostensible amount of airplay and the level of sales. While Canadian recordings take up 35% of programming, their share of the market in Canada is well below this number at about 14.5% (Contact. 2000. Toronto: David Farrell & Associates).

All of which is to say that while Canadian content on radio remains a very important part of the government's sound recording policy it is not, on its own, enough. Would the sales of Canadian recordings be even lower without the airplay they do receive? Very possibly. Increasing the sales of Canadian recordings may depend on a number of coordinated policies

alongside Canadian content, just as the marketing of records involves a number of coordinated promotional efforts, with airplay being just one of them.

But aside from its intrinsic impact on record sales, Cancon has also played a crucial role in leveraging subsequent programs to support the music industry such as FACTOR/MusicAction and the SRDP. Cancon is often the rationale for broadcasters' involvement and this in turn provides the structure for the government's funding.

WHY DO WE STILL NEED IT?

Broadcasting and the music industry have changed a great deal since the introduction of these regulations many years ago, which raises the question of whether Cancon is still necessary. As we asked at the beginning of the article, isn't Canadian music now established enough that broadcasters would play Canadian artists even without a requirement to do so? Sadly, the indications are that they would not. Broadcasters still appear to see Canadian content as an onerous requirement, have a tendency to treat the 35% as a ceiling, not a floor and to play Canadian music as seldom as they can possibly manage (Larry LeBlanc, "Canadian songs fight for airplay" in *Billboard*, 2/3/96, Vol. 108 Issue 5, p55, 3/5p, 2bw). Canadian broadcasters look to their leading American counterparts for indications on what should make up their playlists. The other influence on radio playlists is also, what is

If we wish to preserve the Canadian presence on radio it appears that Canadian content requirements will have to continue for the time being, pending a wholesale change of attitude on the part of broadcasters.

selling at retail and, as the figures show, the Canadian proportion of record sales is well below that of the Cancon requirement. So, at the very least, if we wish to preserve the Canadian presence on radio it appears that Canadian content requirements will have to continue for the time being, pending a wholesale change of attitude on the part of broadcasters.

From the point of view of the recording industry, Canadian content continues to provide an important business advantage. Radio airplay, though diminished in its importance, remains arguably one of the primary influences on record buyers ("Major Influences on Music Purchase Decisions" CIRPA Website, www.MusicBusinessCanada.com, accessed May 7, 2002). Alongside retail promotion, ad campaigns and live appearances, it remains a crucial component of most record marketing campaigns.

There is also another aspect to airplay: it is increasingly a direct source of revenue for the industry. Broadcasters have always had to pay publishers and songwriters for playing their music. Since Phase II of Copyright Reform in 1997 they have also had to pay the performers and record companies for this use of their music. Given the fact that copyright is the fastest growing part of the music industry's revenues and may eventually outpace record sales as the largest source of its revenues, Cancon may well become a way of ensuring that the industry will receive revenues from airplay – a much more direct benefit than the promotional value.

This reflects a new way of thinking about radio - not as the way that music is promoted to consumers but simply as another way in which music is used by another industry to accomplish its aims, in this case that of selling advertising. In a sense it also reverses the original thinking behind Canadian content as a benefit to the recording industry. There is an

acknowledgement that however much benefit the industry derives from airplay, radio is far more dependent on the music industry to provide the bulk of its programming.

The relevance of Canadian content on radio might also be questioned, especially in light of the CRTC's decision not to regulate content on the Internet.

Given the enormous role in cultural industries foreseen for this new medium, one might question the long-term commitment of the Commission to Canadian content in principle. Older, less exciting media, such as radio might become irrelevant as the Internet becomes an increasingly important source of music for consumers. Whatever the merits of this vision of the future, it will be some time before the Internet becomes as ubiquitous as radio and even then there is no guarantee that it will displace it in terms of its importance for music. Radio, although nearly a century old in this country, has already survived the considerable impact of television and remains an extremely viable medium; consumer penetration is virtually 100%, advertising revenues are in excess of \$1 billion (Canadian Content, CRTC Information Sheet b306). It is still, without a doubt, the most widely-used music medium in Canada.

Broadcasting also remains a very different kind of medium from the Internet and this too should dictate the kinds of policy brought to bear upon it. The decentralized, open nature of the Internet does not lend itself well to Canadian content quotas. Where new media have proved amenable to this kind of regulation, it has been imposed (for instance on Shaw's and Cogeco's digital audio cable services). In essence, regulation must take into account the nature of the medium and Cancon's success is, perhaps, a reflection of this.

In the end it is also true that radio, unlike the Internet, is a highly centralized medium, controlled by a limited number of players utilizing a limited public resource: the broadcast spectrum. In exchange for this we make demands on them to reinforce and strengthen our national identity, an identity in which cultural expression such as music forms an important if unquantifiable part. As Brian Chater of the Canadian Independent Record Production Association puts it, "With the license goes a very considerable obligation to fulfill, which is to play Canadian music. It's a contract with the Canadian public."

Richard Sutherland is a sessional instructor at the University of Calgary and will begin his doctoral studies at McGill University in September 2002.



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COMMUNICATION IN PRINT:

The Current State of Canada's Book and Magazine Industries

By Rowland Lorimer

THERE IS A GREAT DEAL TO CELEBRATE IN CANADIAN WRITING AND PUBLISHING. THE CANADIAN LITERARY COMMUNITY HAS NEVER BEEN THIS VIBRANT, NATIONALLY OR INTERNATIONALLY. ALMOST MONTHLY, ANOTHER EXCITING WRITER EMERGES FROM THE SEEMING INEXHAUSTIBLE SUPPLY OF INSIGHTFUL AND SKILLED AUTHORS WHO ALMOST IMMEDIATELY ARE EMBRACED BY CANADIAN-OWNED AND CANADIAN-BASED PUBLISHERS, CANADIAN READERS, AND FOREIGN PUBLISHERS. RIGHTS TO PUBLISH ESTABLISHED AUTHORS IN OTHER LANGUAGES ARE SNAPPED UP, AS ARE MOVIE RIGHTS. IN THE MAGAZINE INDUSTRY, EACH YEAR, ALONGSIDE ESTABLISHED SUCCESSES AND INVIGORATING RE-LAUNCHES, NEW AND EXCITING MAGAZINE TITLES EMERGE AND THEIR STAFF FIND INVENTIVE WAYS OF REACHING AN AUDIENCE. OUTSIDE CANADA, CANADIANS SUCH AS BONNIE FULLER AND TYLER BRULÉ MAKE THEIR MARK ON *GLAMOUR AND WALLPAPER*.

These are exciting times in the publishing and writing world. But they are also tense times. The reason for the tension is that both sectors are living in a highly competitive environment and in these days of media convergence and globalization, as well as aggressive industrial reorganization, almost any industry can be drastically transformed in a matter of a few years. Change is afoot in both areas of publishing.

Take the world of books as a beginning. For as long as there have been bookstores in Canada, bookselling has been a local affair. Many times, the love and respect that various people had for books impelled them to nurture that love and to share it with their community by setting up bookstores. As they added knowledge of their customers to their, sometimes encyclopedic, knowledge of books, the wise bookseller could be counted on to suggest a title suited to the taste of his or her customer. Of course, other bookstores more oriented to simply stocking and selling books existed too. Jack Cole ran one such store on Yonge St. in Toronto. In the 1970's Mr. Cole did Canadians a great favour by building a national chain of bookstores in Canada's emerging suburban malls. Other chains, such as Smithbooks, and Classics, were also established. They brought more readers to books, some of whom felt slightly uncomfortable in the shop of a highly literate bookseller.

Perhaps it was Canada's vastness, perhaps too much competition, or perhaps the wide ranging tastes of Canadian readers. Whatever the factors, after some initial success in the marketplace these bookstore chains ran into difficulty generating normal levels of profit. Classics closed. Smithbooks was sold to a non-bookstore conglomerate based in Winnipeg (Federated Industries). Coles loped along with a mix of book and non-book items. The independent booksellers, at first fearful of the chains, for the most part, managed to survive in their non-mall shops. Retail bookselling was split about 50/50 between the chains and the independents.

Then came Larry Stevenson with his MBA-approach, his love of the big box, and his combative style based, it appeared, on his training in the armed

forces. Stevenson saw in bookstores what Max Aitken (Lord Beaverbrook) saw in cement – an unorganized indus-

Many independent booksellers went out of business. By 2000, hardly any general independent bookstores existed in Toronto. Some left without a fight. Others, such as Duthie Books in Vancouver, fought and lost, downsizing from 10 stores to one store.

try that could be transformed through the creation of a clearly dominant position. Stevenson's first success was to persuade Canada's Competition Bureau that he should be allowed to purchase both Coles and Smithbooks and to combine them into a single national chain. Given the uncertain future of both enterprises, and the desire of both to sell, Stevenson did not meet a great deal of resistance from either the bureaucrats or the publishing industry. With this approval in hand, a plan to build a set of big box bookstores to be called Chapters, and by signing up the influential former premier of Ontario, David Peterson, as Chairman of the Board, Stevenson was able to attract public investment on what seemed like a sure-fire way of making money. He attracted investment based on a plan to bring a wide range of books at low prices to the consumer by taking advantage of the economies of scale of a national chain. The icing on the cake was the big box concept that created the illusion if not the reality of a sufficiently large enough store to present unlimited selection.

Once granted approximately 50 percent of the market, at least for English Canada, Stevenson set out increasing market share. His tactics were two-fold. The first was discounts: thirty percent off bestsellers combined with a wide selection of bargain books, known to the industry as remainders. In addition, Chapters republished titles under its own imprint (Prospero Books) to create yet another type of bargain. Stevenson's other tactic was to be an in-your-face competitor, quite an unusual stance for the genteel world of book-

selling. Consistently he chose locations close-by already established and usually successful and respected bookstores,

offering a greater range of titles, lower prices, and the freedom to browse to one's heart's content. Stevenson also took advantage of industry practices that had been put into place as aids to getting books to readers. Browsed items were returned to the publisher for credit. Bills were paid no earlier than necessary, a minimum of 90 days which stretched to 120 days and beyond. Publishers found themselves having to purchase prominent display space (customarily, books that were selling well and books that were important for their content were given privileged high-selling space). Faced with a seemingly inefficient distribution system, Stevenson established his own wholesaler, Pegasus, in an effort to obtain a few more percentage points off the price of the book. Publishers who complained about the business practices of Chapters found their orders cut back, although few were willing to either complain or admit to what appeared to be retaliatory action. Other companies, notably companies operated by publishers who were designated industry spokespeople, were treated well.

Many independent booksellers went out of business. By 2000, hardly any general independent bookstores existed in Toronto. Some left without a fight. Others, such as Duthie Books in Vancouver, fought and lost, downsizing from 10 stores to one store. One private study suggested that in the large cities, Chapters accounted for up to 70 percent of bookstore sales. Other booksellers who survived were distant enough from a Chapters store not to have to compete directly. Some, such as McNally

Robinson of Winnipeg and Bole Books of Victoria, BC, found deep pockets and built themselves into big box equivalents to Chapters stores. Still others such as Different Drummer of Hamilton, the first store to experience

Canadian publishing to collapse, the value of Chapters in an integration with, for example, the US chain Barnes and Noble, would have been considerable, as would have the rewards for Larry Stevenson were he to have sold his hold-

unsuccesfully trying to serve as a conduit for the establishment of the US book chain, Borders, in Canada). She also served a term as President of Cott, the generic soft drink company. Again, the lack of choice for all involved persuaded the Competition Bureau to approve the deal. The condition it put on the purchase – that a number of stores be put up for sale – was a vain attempt not to let ownership concentration increase beyond the point it had reached. After trying, for some time, to sell a number of stores identified by the Competition Bureau, in an attempt to maintain competition, no serious buyers emerged and Reisman was left free to rationalize her chain as she saw fit. Working with the advice of the publishers, the Competition Bureau found a way to establish a rudimentary regulatory framework for Indigo/Chapters to discourage the firm from exploiting its monopsonistic position. So far, it appears to be working. Perhaps with Reisman as the monopsonist – she and her husband are probably worth more than the entire Canadian-owned publishing sector and are presumably not out to destroy Canadian writing and

Of course, one might argue that had Chapters maintained its direction, the publishing industry might have been completely reorganized and modernized itself and, in fighting back, become rid itself of inefficiencies and out-dated practices. But Chapters did not maintain its direction.

hard-by competition from a Chapters store, were inventive and strong competitors and beat back the competition by Chapters.

By the time the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage looked into the book market, in late February of 2000, Stevenson's Chapters had such a clearly commanding position that it was effectively a monopsony: a single buyer with sufficient power to put any publisher out of business should it wish to do so. And while the Committee saw fit not to recommend the break-up of Chapters, possibly because its financial health was already precarious, it was clear that the structure of book retailing in the country was threatening the existence of the Canadian publishing industry. Moreover, it was also clear that public subsidies to publishers were effectively flowing through the hands of publishers into the hands of the well paid executives of Chapters by virtue of its demands on its suppliers. In an industry in which five percent of revenue is seen as a healthy profit, and where the average wage is less than \$40,000, it was quite a shock to learn of the millions of dollars that were paid out to senior Chapters personnel.

While one might think it counter-productive to destroy one's suppliers, for Chapters it was not. The chain could have easily obtained 'product' in the form of mainstream titles published by foreign conglomerates in all genres, except for one shortcoming, a profound lack of Canadian content. Moreover, as the single, in-place national chain, were

ings. I use Barnes and Noble as an example because Stevenson hired Barnes and Noble executives to help him get off the ground and the design and organization of Chapters looked to be a direct application of the design and operation of Barnes and Noble in the US. Had Canadian publishing collapsed, so Canadian writing would have gone with it. And the decimation or disappearance of both of those would have knocked a very large hole in Canada's literary heritage.

Like Nortel and Cisco Systems, Chapters overbuilt the infrastructure. But while in telecommunications the overbuilders suffered, because of the antiquated structure of the book industry it was and is the publishers, not Chapters who suffered.

Of course, one might argue that had Chapters maintained its direction, the publishing industry might have been completely reorganized and modernized itself and, in fighting back, become rid itself of inefficiencies and out-dated practices. But Chapters did not maintain its direction.

In 2001, Stevenson lost control of Chapters and the ownership of book retailing was concentrated even further. He walked away with several million in his pocket. Heather Reisman and her very successful and wealthy corporate takeover-and-turnaround-artist husband, Gerald Swartz, purchased Chapters in a hostile takeover. Reisman is the founder of Indigo Books (after

publishing, but to act more as cultural patrons and contribute ideas and knowledge – Canadian publishing will at least survive, if not thrive.

There are two important closing points to make before turning to magazine publishing. While the business practices of Chapters under the leadership of Larry Stevenson were the centre of attention of the industry and the media, what seems most important is understanding the power to create major cultural damage that the combination of the big box format, a monopsonistic position, and a healthy pool of capital represents. Big box stores specialize in known mainstream products. They do nothing for the realm of ideas,

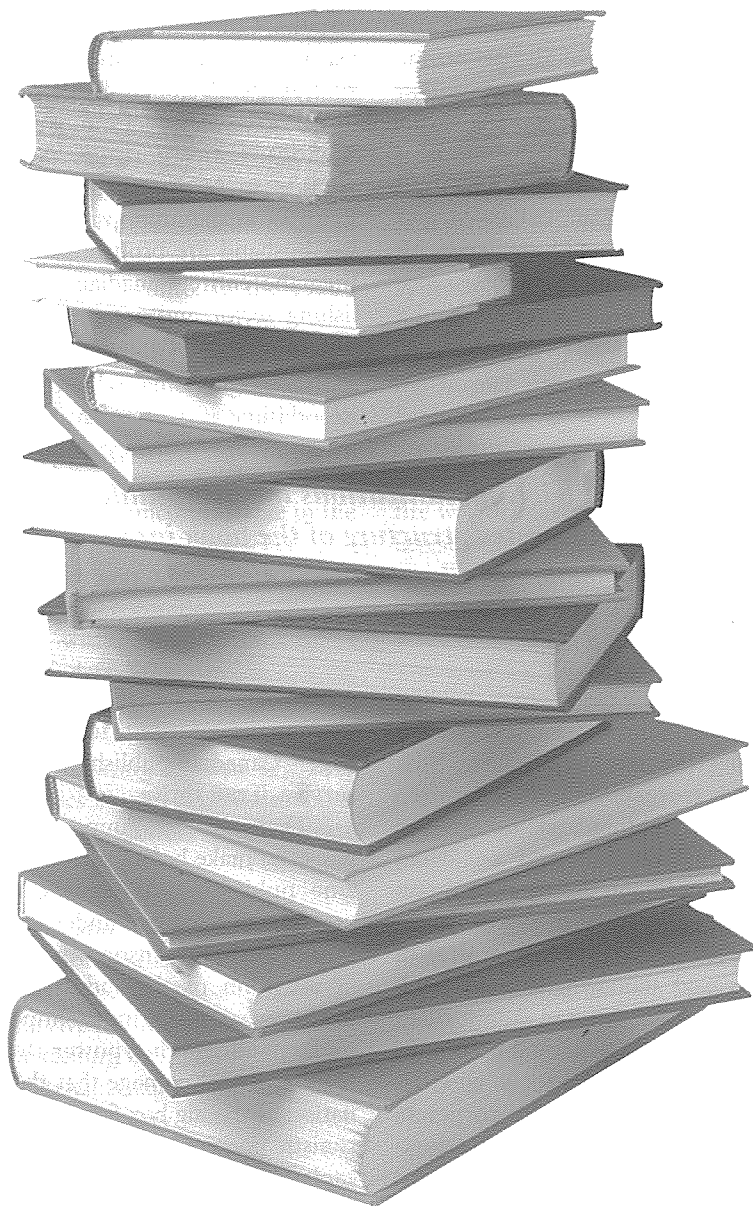
the development of knowledge, and literature. In the book world, they thrive on celebrity, established authors, established genres, and useful titles (cook-books and guide books). Big box bookstores can generously carry copies of every living Canadian writer. But for the consumer to find writers and books that would appeal to them, promising new writers, explorations of brand new ideas, and challenging perspectives without the help of informed staff, or without a commitment to an organization that leads people to such titles, is next to impossible. Monopsony means that

small decisions are large decisions. One decision of a young buyer fresh out of university who has been immersed in the basics of title categories and reading markets who "cannot see" how a title will work, may mean that a title disappears forever. This is hardly a good model for freedom of expression and the encouragement of plurality. Ready access to capital in an industry of low profit margins translates into excessive vulnerability of other players and an inability to compete.

The other significant closing point to make is that in building Chapters,

Larry Stevenson increased the size of the pipeline that took Canadian books to consumers. All those big boxes needed to be filled with books from which readers could select. Like Nortel and Cisco Systems, Chapters overbuilt the infrastructure. But while in telecommunications the overbuilders suffered, because of the antiquated structure of the book industry it was and is the publishers, not Chapters, who suffered. Nothing stood in the way of Chapters keeping books for 90 days, returning them to the publisher, and requesting a fresh shipment, thus forever putting off paying for stock until it was sold. The publishers had no choice but to supply the retailer. To do otherwise would lose them sales. To supply the market, publishers needed more copies of books. Thus, they increased their print runs. But when the dust settled, the size of the market had not increased significantly yet the publishers had been printing greater numbers of copies of each title. In short, printing costs were rising, display costs were being implemented, and discounts to Chapters were increasing, while sales were remaining fairly constant.

In the spring and summer of 2001 this all came to a head. Chapters returned massive numbers of copies to the publishers and their distributors. And again, facing the clout of Chapters, publishers were effectively powerless even as Chapters failed to abide by the conditions of sale set on returns (their condition, the time period that had elapsed since they had been initially shipped, and so on). This backflow is still working itself through the industry more than one year later. It is causing Heather Reisman some headaches in maintaining Chapters profitability as she tries to shut down surplus and under-performing stores. As this article was being written, a major distributor for Canadian publishers, General Distribution Services (GDS), the chosen distributor for the majority of small, especially small literary, publishers, filed for bankruptcy protection, owing over \$40 million to its creditors including the many publishers it served. The company had staved off this move about 6 months earlier by obtaining a loan guarantee from the federal government. In 2001, granting agencies helped the publishers



by moving forward the distribution of grants. As GDS collapses, it will take some publishers with it, even if the government steps in to assist. Already, ECW Press, which publishes about 40 books per year with annual sales of approximately \$2.5 million has put itself up for sale. And what destabilizes publishers cuts off opportunities for Canadian authors and Canadian readers.

MAGAZINES

The vulnerability of Canadian writing and publishing to business dynamics is not confined to the book industry. Canadian magazines have their own trials that are brought about by the aggressiveness of US media conglomerates with the inexorable march of free trade ideology.

Since 1965, the Canadian magazine industry has grown on the foundation of two policies. One is found in Section 19 of the Income Tax Act. This section of the act allows businesses to deduct advertising aimed at the Canadian market as a business expense only when the advertising vehicle is owned and controlled by Canadians. The actual level of ownership used to be 75 percent. Now it is 51 percent. This rule has made it necessary for foreign-owned media such as radio stations, television stations, newspapers and magazines to charge about half the normal advertising rate to compete with their Canadian competitors. A second mechanism, Customs Tariff 9958, prevented the importation of magazines in which US-oriented ads had been stripped out and replaced with Canadian ads. Tariff 9958 allowed for magazines to carry up to five percent of ads directed at Canadians.

These two policies worked well until 1993, when Time Warner obtained a ruling from Canada Customs that it could beam its editorial content by satellite to a printing plant in Canada, sell ads for a "Canadian edition" of its magazine, and technically not be a split run. Time Warner was still subject to the provisions of Section 19 of the Income Tax Act, but at least it could re-use its editorial content. The clearly unhappy Canadian magazine industry demanded an inquiry and got one in the form of the Task Force on the Magazine

Industry, set up in 1993 and chaired by Patrick O'Callahan. After reviewing the industry, the task force recommended that an 80-per-cent excise be placed on advertising space sold by foreign magazines to advertisers who were directing their advertising to Canadian audiences. The government looked favourably on this and, ill-advisedly, brought forward Bill C-103, to apply the 80-per-cent excise tax on all foreign publications.

In 1996, the US challenged this legislation, magazine postal subsidies, and

Marchi and Heritage Minister Sheila Copps announced that a bargain had been struck. The deal was this: US magazines now have the right to create and sell split runs in Canada. These split runs are allowed to have 18 per cent of their ad space devoted to advertising directed solely at Canadians (phased in over three years). Should US magazine owners want to increase their access to Canadian advertisers, then they would be required to get permission from the Department of Canadian Heritage, set

As the Canadian and US economies integrate increasingly, and as the very critical advertising industry organizes continentally and bases itself in New York, split-run magazines become just one manifestation of the competitive advantage enjoyed by US businesses that, on the foundation of a large and solid home market, can expand into Canada.

Tariff Code 9958's provision against the importation of split-runs within the World Trade Organization. The WTO, both initially and after appeal, ruled in favour of the US. Determined to protect Canadian magazines, the Canadian government responded with alternative measures. In place of postal subsidies, the Department of Canadian Heritage now provides postal grants to qualifying Canadian-owned and -controlled magazines. Secondly, in 1998 the government brought forward Bill C-55, which became the Foreign Publishers Advertising Services Act (passed into law in 1999) and would allow only Canadian magazines to provide advertising space to those seeking to reach Canadian consumers.

The reaction of the US to Bill C-55 was immediate. Knowing that they were unlikely to win if they protested Bill C-55 within WTO, the US lobbied hard and, when that failed, threatened massive retaliation, far beyond the financial restriction that US magazine firms would have to live with; in short, a trade war. Though Bill C-55 cleared the House of Commons in March 1999 and went on to the Senate for consideration, on 26 May, 1999, Trade Minister Sergio

up an office in Canada, and increase their Canadian editorial content (supposedly to at least 50 per cent). In contrast with the past, Canadian advertisers will now be able to deduct their advertising costs in split-runs of any magazine as business expenses.

What did the Canadian magazine industry get in this deal? Ministers Marchi and Copps claimed that it represented a victory for Canada: they had achieved recognition from the US of Canada's 'right in trade to protect our culture'. The fact that this is exactly what the cultural exemption in NAFTA was supposed to do was not mentioned. The ministers, in December, 1999, also set up the Canada Magazine Fund with an annual budget of \$50-million to assist the Canadian magazine industry with their anticipated loss of \$98 million per year in ad revenue (Canadian Magazine Publishing Industry, various press releases).

The predicted inundation of split runs into Canada has not materialized, as some industry members, such as the retired President of Reader's Digest Canada, Ralph Hancox, predicted they would not (on the basis that the economies of split runs don't recom-

mend themselves to many magazines). After nearly three years, a few magazines are exploring the possibilities, but the issue does not end there.

As the Canadian and US economies integrate increasingly, and as the very critical advertising industry organizes continentally and bases itself in New York, split-run magazines become just one manifestation of the competitive advantage enjoyed by US businesses that, on the foundation of a large and solid home market, can expand into Canada. Large businesses such as automobile manufacturers, electronics manufacturers, liquor distillers, the tobacco industry, the clothing industry, appliances, and leisure goods and services industries purchase access to audiences that are likely purchasers of the goods and services they sell. In the same way that they will sign with an advertising agency that can serve their North American, if not world-wide needs (likely based in New York), so the agency they sign with will place ads in publications it knows (that are also, probably, based in New York). In such an environment, magazines such as *Maclean's*, *Canadian Geographic*, *Chatelaine*, *Flare*, *Saturday Night*, *Elm Street*, and *R.O.B. Magazine* are all small potatoes. Reaching further, to the small communities of interest that are served by Canada's 2000 or so small magazines, is too expensive to be bothered with.

In short, while the magazine industry is not under immediate threat by a great number of split runs, it will, almost certainly, be challenged over the longer term by the integration of the US and Canadian

ty exploitation practices of the book trade. In overview, these involve the buying and selling of territorial, language-based, and otherwise divided copyright or exclusive distribution rights among firms from country to country. The position of Canadian firms is bolstered by a federal government stricture (the Baie Comeau Agreement) against foreign acquisition of book businesses including publishers, wholesalers, distribution agencies, and bookstores. The foundation of distribution which, in the past five to ten years, has been expanded by Canadian publishers into aggressive buying and selling of rights, has contributed significantly to the ability of firms to develop and publish Canadian authors and their works. Were US firms, who themselves acquire rights from British and other overseas publishers, to insist on serving the Canadian market from the US (by refusing to sell Canadian territorial copyright {which many already do to some extent} or Canadian distribution rights) then a certain amount of wind would be let out of the sails of the Canadian publishing industry as a financially viable enterprise.

Concern over the gutting of cultural policy by international trading rules extends beyond books and magazines into all cultural sectors. At the behest of the Department of Canadian Heritage and the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, a group of cultural industry representatives called the Cultural Industries Sectoral Advisory Group on International Trade (SAGIT) met to discuss and develop an overall cultural strategy document. One result

was a 1999 report entitled *Canadian Culture in a Global World: New Strategies for Culture and Trade* (see www.infoex-

port.gc.ca/trade-culture). (More recently, in 2001 and 2002, a person active for many years in culture has been hired and is currently drafting a cultural policy for Canada.) The SAGIT report brings forward two main recommendations. The first is for the government to continue to use the strategy of exempting culture in international trade negoti-

ations. This is really their fallback position in case their second, new, and more radical recommendation fails. That second recommendation is to negotiate 'a new international instrument that would specifically address cultural diversity, and acknowledge the legitimate role of domestic cultural policies in ensuring cultural diversity.' Since 1999, the Heritage minister, Sheila Copps, has been attempting to build international momentum for such an initiative. Whether the international community will receive this policy initiative with sufficient favour to make it an effective initiative has yet to be seen. Certainly, the US will argue that it opens the door to government control as well as to interference by governments in the marketplace.

The heartening element in looking at the Canadian book and magazine industries is that, in spite of these potential hazardous shoals, both sectors appear to be navigating full steam ahead. Canadian book authors, especially authors of fiction, have a commanding presence on the national and world stages. The 2000 magazine titles serve every taste and community and while certain titles lack lustre, many do not. In a related area, the online publishing of scholarly journals, Canada is a leading player in the provision of free online access to scientific content and, within a year or two, an arrangement may be in place where all Canadian social science and humanities journals may be freely available online, at least to Canadians.

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Concern over the gutting of cultural policy by international trading rules extends beyond books and magazines into all cultural sectors.

economies, the advertising sector, the likely North American organization of distribution of titles to newsstands, and the capture of the advertising business of transnational firms by transnational magazine companies.

The international trade issue for the book sector is the possible collapse of the territorial-based intellectual proper-

THE DAILY NEWSPAPER INDUSTRY UNDER THE MICROSCOPE: Monopolies, Concentration, Conglomeration and Convergence

BY Enn Raudsepp

"WE HAVE THE IMPRESSION THAT THE AMERICAN PEOPLE DO NOT REALIZE WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO THEM. THEY ARE NOT AWARE THAT THE COMMUNICATIONS REVOLUTION HAS OCCURRED. THEY DO NOT APPRECIATE THE TREMENDOUS POWER WHICH THE NEW INSTRUMENTS AND THE NEW ORGANIZATION OF THE PRESS PLACE IN THE HANDS OF A FEW MEN. THEY HAVE NOT YET UNDERSTOOD HOW FAR THE PERFORMANCE OF THE PRESS FALLS SHORT OF THE REQUIREMENTS OF A FREE SOCIETY IN THE WORLD TODAY."

*- U.S. COMMISSION ON
FREEDOM OF THE PRESS, 1947*

The first inquiry to systematically study how well the 20th Century public was served by its providers of news and information clearly was not impressed. Agreeing with the thrust of much of the criticism of the preceding four decades, it noted that media had become big business and that in the process, access, diversity and quality of information had been seriously eroded, calling into question the very existence of the free marketplace of ideas.

Several public commissions of inquiry have subsequently confirmed that diagnosis, including a special Senate committee and a royal commission in Canada, but corrective measures have yet to be taken. Recently, a spate of billion-dollar takeovers, such as CanWest Global's purchase of the major Southam newspapers, has led to new calls for study and possibly action.

In Canada, the dynamics of the modern media market were set in

motion in 1869 when Montreal Star founders George Lanigan and Hugh Graham caught on to the fact that newspapers, while ostensibly selling news to readers, in fact were in the business of selling readers to advertisers.

That financial formula has been driving the mass media industry ever since. What we pay for our daily newspaper, for example, represents roughly 20% of the paper's revenues, with advertising providing the overwhelming bulk of its income.

Because advertisers prefer to insert their ads in the papers with the largest circulations, they inevitably end up determining the fate of newspapers. The leading papers grow even fatter with ads; the less favored ones wither away.

The essential point is that the economics of the newspaper business now virtually dictate that only one newspaper can survive in all but the largest markets. Only eight English-language markets in Canada support more than one daily newspaper, and in a couple of these, one chain owns both papers. In the United States, where there are about 1,500 daily newspapers, only 50 markets have more than one paper.

The sad fact is that the dynamics of the newspaper industry as now constituted work against excellence.

Unfortunately, this kind of built-in movement to monopoly is irreversible unless a new, non-advertising-based system for financing media can be developed.

At the same time, there has been a great increase in concentration of ownership. From the pre-World War One period, when 138 publishers ran 138 dailies in Canada, we have reached a situation where the largest chain currently has 34% of the national readership, five media companies cover 83% of the national circulation, and the five remaining independent owners account for less than 2%.

Daily newspapers that are strongly rooted in their communities have always been major contributors to establishing the public agenda and providing a forum for vigorous public debate. Under monopolization and concentrated own-

ership, that role has steadily diminished, and the voices that are left tend to represent an increasingly homogenous perspective on social, economic and political affairs – that of the business class. Other voices, obviously, are not totally stilled, but their ability to claim public

What we know of the world ... still comes to us largely through the mediation of our daily newspaper journalists.

attention is compromised greatly. Individuals on soapboxes in the town square are easily drowned out by the barrage of amplifiers and speakers that the corporations have set up.

This does matter, for despite the existence of 200-plus television channels and a seemingly inexhaustible supply of internet sites, newspapers remain the most important source of news and information. Newspapers are the largest employers of journalists and cover the widest range of issues and in the most depth.

Broadcast outlets may be quicker off the mark on breaking news, but their daily output tends towards a quick fix of

headline news. And the internet, as a news source, can best be characterized as a kind of repeater station for newspapers. What we know of the world, in other words, still comes to us largely through the mediation of our daily newspaper journalists.

Chain ownership does not necessarily have to lead to a poor quality product, but the track record of chain-owned newspapers is not comforting. As Davey's and Kent's documentation so amply demonstrates, most have padded their bottom lines by skimping on the costs of news coverage.

There is an economic reason for this. Because basic overhead, printing and newsprint are usually fixed costs, the owners' room to manoeuvre is found primarily in the area of news coverage. They can reduce the number of journalists, close down bureaus, cut

back on reporters' expenses (eg. trips to the scenes of events) – and paper over the cracks with much cheaper wire copy. The result is a dearth of the most effective form of journalism, the reporter-initiated story. Today, the majority of our news comes from easily-covered,

stage-managed events such as speeches, meetings, press conferences and photo-opportunities, leading to a mind-numbing sameness in many of the nation's news reports.

The sad fact is that the dynamics of the newspaper industry as now constituted work against excellence. As Tom Kent so presciently pointed out, "a newspaper property is worth more to a company that does not care about the newspaper's role in society than it is worth to someone who does care."

For example, the Southam chain at the time of the Kent Commission was spending more than the national average on editorial coverage, and consequently was considered ripe for takeover since a purchaser could easily reduce editorial expenses to enhance profits. That, in fact, is exactly what happened with takeovers, first by Hollinger and then CanWest Global.

The result, in the colourful language of the Davey Committee, is that newspapers in the 20th century are ripping off their communities, taking much more out than they are putting in.

That's how FP, Thomson and Hollinger, in their day the largest chains in Canada, operated, and the same economic imperatives dictate the policies of the new corporate behemoths: CanWest Global, Quebecor, Bell Globemedia, Rogers Communications and Torstar.

These companies grow by using the momentum and leverage of size to make ever bigger acquisitions. Southam, the first Canadian newspaper chain painstakingly acquired its papers one by one over the course of a century. Today, whole chains are swallowed up overnight, and the costs of these acquisitions create monstrous debt loads that they try to work off by cost cutting.

In addition to monopolies and concentration of ownership, a third issue – conglomeration – had emerged by the time of the Kent Commission.

Thomson, which had just swallowed the FP chain to become the largest media company in Canada, also had sizeable interests in oil, retail, travel, trucking, and insurance. In New Brunswick, the Irving papers are a minor part of the parent company's diversified interests in the petroleum, forestry, and shipping industries.

The concern of the Kent Commission was that, in becoming just another "profit centre" in a vast corporate structure, media would end up in a tangle of conflicts of interest that would erode even further the diminishing level of confidence the public had in their news sources.

Now, a fourth area of concern has arisen – convergence. At the time of the Kent Commission, cross-media ownership was a future possibility to warn the public against, rather than a serious problem, except perhaps in New Brunswick where the Irvings had invested in radio and television and in the case of Southam, which owned a 30% share in a radio and TV company in Western Canada.

The principle, which had been widely accepted within both the broadcast and newspaper industries, was that cross-media ownership would be an unacceptable restriction on diversity of viewpoints.

Because the industries employed different technologies and personnel with significantly different skills, there weren't that many savings to come by anyway – except in using some of the same content, and that was not a big enough incentive to offset the expected criticisms.

Convergence, so far, remains a pipe dream. For now, its only impact on the public is negative through further reductions in the diversity of our sources of news and information.

The digitalization of the media changed that situation dramatically. All of a sudden, synergy was a buzz word, and visions of substantial savings began to dance in owners' heads. Because all media could use digitally encoded

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material, a single journalist could package news for press, radio, television and the internet.

In the United States, meanwhile, under Reagan's presidency, the long-existing restrictions on cross-media ownership were relaxed. A spate of mergers ensued in which media companies tried to marry every conceivable

own on the world markets, they had to be substantially bigger and converged, entirely overlooking that Canada protects its media from foreign takeovers.

Convergence, so far, remains a pipe dream. For now, its only impact on the public is negative through further reductions in the diversity of our sources of news and information. And because the new conglomerates have generally paid far too much for their unproven acquisitions, they are all staggering under immense debt loads which most are trying to pay off by further reducing their editorial expenses.

AOL Time Warner, for example, set a rather dubious record with first quarter losses of \$54.2 billion this year.

As noted, these kinds of problems started to become evident some 100 years ago and at least seven major public inquiries have made remarkably similar

form of carrier and content in the race to tap the synergies of convergence, with AOL Time Warner leading the pack.

The dam was broken, and Canadian companies also began jockeying for position, arguing that in order to hold their

diagnoses about the dangers of M-triple C media. Yet nothing has been able to stop the inexorable march towards increased levels of monopoly, concentration, conglomeration and convergence.

Why?

A major part of the answer, of course, has to do with our society's inherent suspicion of big brother government. For most of the 500 years since Gutenberg, the press has fought a running battle to get rid of licensing, censorship, intimidation, punitive laws and taxes, restrictions on access to information and all the other stratagems

constitutions and charters of rights the safeguards that guarantee our basic freedoms, including freedom of the media.

In 1947, however, the U.S. Commission on Freedom of the Press still reflected some of that deeply-rooted suspicion of government regulation and hoped that moral suasion and voluntary compliance by media owners would solve the problem; though they foresaw that government arbitration might one day be necessary:

"In the judgment of the commission everyone concerned with freedom of the press and with the future of democracy

emanating from media corporate headquarters, the most far-reaching contribution of the Kent Commission was to demonstrate how the government could play an effective role in guaranteeing press freedom without itself infringing on press freedom.

The principle it established points out that the free marketplace of ideas is not congruent with the capitalist free market. In fact, the big mistake we have made in the past is to accept that these two very different things are one and the same. By separating the two concepts, it is possible to distinguish between business practices that lead to monopoly, concentration, conglomeration and convergence, and media content, which suffers as a result.

The antidote, it would seem, is to allow, within carefully defined limits, the regulation of the business practices of the media, which, to a certain extent we have done before and continue to do, for example, in protecting our media against foreign takeovers. Thus, if a social consensus were to emerge that it would be against the public interest for companies to own more than a certain percentage of the total national circulation, or to own both print and broadcast outlets in the same community, the government would be empowered to adopt such regulations.

But, under no circumstances, it has to be emphasized, would the government be permitted to tell owners what they can say in their media outlets. Content must be inviolable.

It's a simple enough principle to understand, and it is difficult to see why it would lead to any abuses. Certainly, trusting the government today is less risky than trusting big business.

So it seems we have two choices. We can continue to allow the inevitable drift to a business big brother – or we can try to develop a national consensus about the quality of the news and information we expect from our media and then take steps to ensure that we get it.

The right place to start would be a new commission of inquiry into these matters. Now.

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The press, the multiplier of mind and the oxygen of democracy, was the natural opponent of arbitrary measures and policies. It inevitably grew into the watchdog that keeps an eye on government abuses ... But the conditions and contexts of that role have changed.

employed by authoritarian governments to preserve their power over the people.

The press, the multiplier of mind and the oxygen of democracy, was the natural opponent of arbitrary measures and policies. It inevitably grew into the watchdog that keeps an eye on government abuses. That became one of its most important functions and it remains that to this day. But the conditions and contexts of that role have changed.

The kind of monopolies, concentration, conglomeration and convergence we have been referring to are not particular to the newspaper or media industry. These things are rife in all corporate sectors and part of what has come to be known as globalization – the corporatization of the world by big business, a situation epitomized by the fact that most of the largest economies in the world no longer belong to nations, but to transnational corporations. These companies increasingly are the press lords of our times.

The corporate sector, in other words, has become the locus of power in the contemporary world and in the process has lost its credibility to be a watchdog over abuses of power.

Democratic governments, such as ours, on the other hand, have moved emphatically from authoritarian to libertarian principles, and have entrenched in

should put forth every effort to make the press accountable, for, if it does not become so of its own motion, the power of the government will be used, as a last resort, to force it to be so."

Almost every commission of inquiry since then, in fact, has desperately wanted to believe in that self-correction is better than outside correction, but despite their earnest rhetoric and admonitions, the media have carried on consolidating and "rationalizing" the industry to their advantage. By 1981, when the Kent Commission issued its report, it was clear to the commissioners that voluntary compliance and the establishment of press councils, codes of ethics, ombudsmen and better training for journalists, could not provide an effective counter balance to the power of profits.

In 1970, the Davey Senate Committee had painted a dismal picture of corporate rip-offs in Canadian news media but had refrained from calling for concrete action. Ten years later, the Kent Commission, faced with a massively deteriorating situation, had no compunction in doing so – and made a number of detailed recommendations – none of which was ever implemented. (Which is why another inquiry is necessary.)

Despite the predictable cries of slippery slopes and creeping socialism

LES COMMUNICATIONS MOBILES :

un changement de paradigme en perspective ?

BY Magda Fusaro

IL S'AGIT PRESQUE D'UN LIEU COMMUN QUE DE CONSTATER À QUEL POINT LES TECHNOLOGIES SANS FIL ONT ENVAHI LE CHAMP DES COMMUNICATIONS PROFESSIONNELLES ET PERSONNELLES. POURTANT, SI DE NOMBREUSES ÉTUDES TENTENT DE CERNER L'ÉVOLUTION DES TECHNOLOGIES SANS FIL, PEU DE RECHERCHES METTENT L'EMPHASE SUR LES ENJEUX TECHNIQUES, ÉCONOMIQUES ET SOCIAUX QUE REPRÉSENTENT LES SYSTÈMES MOBILES. CETTE APPELLATION EST D'AILLEURS PRÉFÉRÉE À L'EXPRESSION « COMMUNICATIONS SANS FIL » PUISQUE LES MOBILES, OU LES SYSTÈMES MOBILES, RÉFÈRENT AUX APPELLATIONS INTERNATIONALES DE L'UNION INTERNATIONALE DES TÉLÉCOMMUNICATIONS (IUT). AU CANADA, L'APPELLATION DE « COMMUNICATIONS SANS FIL » A LONGTEMPS ÉTÉ UTILISÉE. TOUTEFOIS, LES « SANS FIL » DÉSIGNENT ÉGALEMENT LES APPAREILS DONT LE COMBINÉ EST SANS FIL, C'EST-À-DIRE LES TERMINAUX TÉLÉPHONIQUE DOMESTIQUES. AINSI, LE TERME « SANS FIL » SERA UTILISÉ UNIQUEMENT DANS LES ANALYSES DES TECHNOLOGIES, DES NORMES ET DES PLATES-FORMES CHOISIES POUR CONSTRUIRE DES RÉSEAUX DES TÉLÉCOMMUNICATIONS MOBILES.



Bien que le téléphone se soit inséré dans les pratiques sociales et quotidiennes, l'apparition et le développement des systèmes mobiles provoquent encore et toujours le même phénomène de curiosité. D'abord considérés comme des outils de communication de luxe destinés à une catégorie d'utilisateurs privilégiés, analysés ensuite sous l'angle du gadget ou du signe extérieur de richesse (et tout ce qui se rapporte aux notions de prestige et de statut social), les mobiles se sont graduellement imposés dans l'univers des télécommunications canadiennes. Mais de quels mobiles s'agit-il? Le caractère mobile est-il le critère déterminant de la téléphonie dite mobile? Ou bien, la mobilité n'est-elle pas induite principalement par l'usager?

UNE VUE D'ENSEMBLE

L'année 2000 a marqué un tournant important pour les différentes générations de mobiles à travers le monde. Depuis 1993, le secteur des télécommunications et des communications en général évolue dans un cadre de plus en plus déréglementé. Le contexte politique illustré par une approche néo-libérale, le contexte international ancré dans la recherche de la mondialisation et le contexte juridique, défini par les organismes gouvernementaux, montrent que la libéralisation des télécommunications mobiles est plus que jamais à l'ordre du jour. Ainsi, au plan international, c'est l'Accord général sur le commerce des

sur les mobiles à un point tel, que tout à chacun utilise désormais son « portable » pour tout et n'importe quoi. Au 31 décembre 2001, le taux de pénétration du mobile en France est d'environ 60 %, se classant pourtant loin derrière l'Italie qui culmine avec 80 % d'individus possédant un téléphone mobile. Le Canada fait figure de parent pauvre avec ses 30 % à la fin de l'an 2000, acquis au cours des 15 dernières années. Et ce n'est pas la venue des services de communications personnelles, les SCP, en 1996, qui a contribué au changement. Les SCP ont certes favorisé l'accès du grand public aux mobiles, mais les résultats attendus par les grandes entreprises de télécommunications se font toujours attendre. Les systèmes mobiles ont connu au

En 1999, le marché des télécommunications mobiles totalisait 197 milliards de dollars américains, soit une augmentation de 33 % par rapport à 1998 et de 58 % par rapport à 1997.

services qui a ouvert le bal de la déréglementation ou de la re-réglementation. Mené dans le cadre des négociations de l'Organisation mondiale du commerce, cet accord a abouti le 15 février 1997 à la signature d'un traité entrant en vigueur à partir du 1er janvier 1998. Les négociations de l'OMC avaient deux principaux objectifs : favoriser la concurrence dans la prestation de services de télécommunication et mettre sur pied un cadre transparent et prévisible pour le commerce et les investissements dans les services de télécommunications (Industrie Canada, 1997, p. 65).

En 1999, le marché des télécommunications mobiles totalisait 197 milliards de dollars américains, soit une augmentation de 33 % par rapport à 1998 et de 58 % par rapport à 1997. Alors qu'en 1993, le secteur des mobiles ne représentait que 7 % du chiffre d'affaires total des télécommunications, en 1999, cette part était de 28,8 % et plus important encore, dans plusieurs pays de l'OCDE, la part du mobile égalera bientôt celle du fixe. (OCDE, 2001, p. 52). D'ailleurs, nombreux sont les pays où le nombre de lignes sans fil a dépassé le nombre de lignes fixes. L'Europe, en particulier, a connu une véritable ruée

cours des dernières années une croissance moyenne de l'ordre de 20 % due aux améliorations techniques (la numérisation et la cellularisation, ont véritablement lancé la course à la mobilité) et, surtout, à la volonté des opérateurs et des manufacturiers comme Nortel d'occuper ces nouveaux marchés. Pourtant, ce ne sont pas uniquement les acteurs issus de la téléphonie qui se trouvent en position de force sur ce marché puisque des entreprises appartenant aux secteurs de la câblodistribution (Rogers AT&T) et dans une moindre mesure aux satellites (Iridium Canada) investissent les marchés de la mobilité.

La diversité du marché des systèmes mobiles (le radiotéléphone, les téléphones cellulaires, les téléavertisseurs, les services de communications personnelles et les exemples de téléphonie satellitaire), la multiplication des intervenants sur ces marchés et les profits espérés de ce secteur d'activité conduisent à un questionnement sur la place que les systèmes mobiles occupent dans les communications professionnelles et personnelles des usagers. Au-delà de cette interrogation, c'est aussi la question d'un changement de paradigme communicationnel qui est

posée. En d'autres termes, il s'agit de considérer dans quelle mesure les mobiles changent nos modes de communication.

DU PUBLIC AU PRIVÉ OU DU PROFESSIONNEL AU PERSONNEL

Si l'utilisation des mobiles semble se généraliser au grand public, il reste que l'on se demande encore pour qui sont les mobiles et pour quoi faire ? C'est pour répondre à cette vaste question que nous essayons de distinguer les applications professionnelles des systèmes mobiles des usages sociaux personnels. Au Canada, les systèmes mobiles ont connu une croissance importante au cours des années 1990 avec le développement des services de communications personnelles, plus connus sous le nom de téléphones cellulaires numériques. Avec un taux de pénétration de 30 % à la fin de l'année 2000, le Canada arrive loin derrière les pays scandinaves et européens dont les taux de d'utilisation sont au-dessus des 60 % (OCDE, 2001, p. 75). De quoi faire rêver bien des industriels canadiens qui, de la même façon, souhaitent imposer le téléphone mobile et remplacer ainsi le téléphone filaire.

Pourtant, contrairement à l'opinion générale, les systèmes mobiles ne se résument pas seulement aux téléphones cellulaires qui ne représentent que la pointe de l'iceberg de cette offre commerciale. Ils sont loin de faire l'unanimité et ne constituent qu'un exemple de la richesse de l'offre des systèmes mobiles. En effet, l'appellation de systèmes mobiles désigne autant la téléphonie cellulaire que les applications micro-ondes ou encore le géo-positionnement. Diverses technologies, diverses désignations, divers usages aussi, qui tous découlent d'un ancêtre commun : la télégraphie sans fil inventée par Marconi au début du siècle.

Que ce soit les phénomènes de restructuration professionnelle-personnelle, de culture mobile ou encore d'impact dans les relations de travail, les systèmes mobiles contribuent à modifier en profondeur autant le savoir-faire que le savoir-être des usagers. C'est pourquoi l'adoption, l'utilisation, puis la généralisation des mobiles représentent peut-être les balbutiements de changements

sociétaux importants. Si les mobiles ont connu un tel succès au cours des années 1990, c'est qu'ils répondaient peut-être à des besoins latents, peu ou pas exprimés par les usagers.

Mais à l'inverse, certains diront que les besoins ont été créés de toutes pièces par l'offre des entreprises qui ont réussi à imposer, puis à légitimer, l'utilisation des mobiles quel que soit le lieu, le moment ou la situation dans laquelle

venants se sont laissés convaincre par un phénomène que personne n'aurait pu prévoir alors : le besoin d'être accessible en tout temps et en tout lieu, comme si la capacité de l'être humain et ses besoins de communication avaient connu une autre étape d'évolution. Est-il attribuable au seul besoin de communication ? S'agit-il d'une politique de l'offre volontariste ? Est-ce qu'il s'agit d'un changement profond du mode de

ticulier, dans la mesure où la complexification de l'offre permet de rejoindre des publics cibles ignorés jusqu'au milieu des années 1990. Mais le succès des téléphones cellulaires ne tient peut-être pas uniquement au prix, à la maniabilité ou à la couverture géographique.

La pagette, longtemps considérée comme le téléphone du pauvre en raison du faible coût d'acquisition du terminal et des services proposés, semble déjouer les pronostics les plus pessimistes qui prévoyaient sa disparition avec l'arrivée et la généralisation des téléphones cellulaires, puis des SCP. Alors que l'on attendait une disparition progressive du pager, il convient de reconnaître, qu'au moins à court terme, il y a de la place pour les deux technologies qui paraissent se compléter efficacement. Cette affirmation est encore valable, car les téléavertisseurs ne sont pas voués à disparaître. En réalité, l'arrivée des services de communications personnelles a relancé ce marché comme si la venue d'un nouveau produit rejaillissait sur tous les autres segments existants de l'industrie. En outre, les téléavertisseurs ont fait une percée majeure dans le marché des consommateurs, surtout auprès des jeunes. À la fin de l'année 2000, on comptait 1,8 million de téléavertisseurs au Canada, soit une pénétration de 6%. En 1991, les experts observaient une complémentarité entre le téléavertisseur et le cellulaire. Dix ans plus tard, cette complémentarité est encore d'actualité puisque l'utilisation des cellulaires numériques n'a pas éliminé le recours aux téléavertisseurs. Bien que réservé initialement à un usage professionnel, le téléavertisseur a commencé à envahir le marché résidentiel touchant en particulier les 18 - 34 ans. Au cours des années 1997-1998 une tendance a vu le jour, fortement poussée par les principaux opérateurs, soit l'utilisation des téléavertisseurs par des groupes de jeunes dont l'âge oscille entre 14 et 18 ans. Afin d'inciter ces groupes sociaux à utiliser une pagette, les entreprises ont prescrit des usages centrés autour de la notion de la sécurité en milieu urbain. Le téléavertisseur n'est pas délaissé par les usagers traditionnels, mais il se cherche un second souffle que les opérateurs nationaux et des entreprises de plus petite taille essayent de

En 2002, les mobiles sont encore principalement utilisés à des fins professionnelles. Le virage entre les deux types d'utilisation, du professionnel vers le privé, s'enracine durant l'année 1997 lorsque les entreprises de télécommunications changent de stratégie commerciale ...

les individus se trouvent. En ce sens, la prescription des usages sociaux est réelle et s'appuie sur une série de situations préconçues par les entreprises de télécommunications.

Toutefois, dans bien des cas, surtout en ce qui concerne les cellulaires comme FIDO de l'entreprise Microcell, les utilisations qui en ont été faites ont dépassé les prévisions des marketeurs. De la même façon, de nombreuses industries utilisaient dès les années 1970 des flottes d'appareils mobiles. La numérisation des systèmes, la généralisation des produits et services mobiles et enfin l'introduction de la concurrence sur les marchés de la mobilité ont accéléré le mouvement vers l'utilisation des mobiles. Ainsi, l'entrée dans le troisième millénaire marque également l'entrée dans l'ère de la mobilité. Pourtant au début des années 1980, une firme de consultation prédisait aux dirigeants d'ATT de l'époque que le service cellulaire ne trouverait jamais de marché et qu'il était donc inutile d'investir dans ce domaine. Vingt ans plus tard, ces prédictions erronées font toujours sourire les principaux acteurs de l'industrie qui, sans remettre les fondements de l'étude en cause, se demandent encore ce qui peut expliquer un tel revirement de situation.

Si tout le gotha industriel préconise un taux de pénétration d'environ 40% en l'an 2005 pour les systèmes mobiles, c'est qu'en vingt ans ces mêmes inter-

vie dont les mobiles représentent la pointe de l'iceberg ? Il est toujours difficile de dissocier chacun de ces facteurs puisque c'est probablement une conjonction des trois raisons qui explique la pénétration des technologies sans fil. Il ne s'agit vraisemblablement pas d'une seule raison, mais au contraire d'un ensemble de facteurs exogènes qui ont poussé les ventes des mobiles. En 2000, même si la demande n'est pas encore aussi forte que les entreprises de télécommunications le souhaitent, il est indéniable que les produits et les services dérivés des mobiles se sont multipliés.

En 2002, les mobiles sont encore principalement utilisés à des fins professionnelles. Le virage entre les deux types d'utilisation, du professionnel vers le privé, s'enracine durant l'année 1997 lorsque les entreprises de télécommunications changent de stratégie commerciale en offrant des produits et des tarifs davantage tournés vers le marché grand public. De fait, c'est peut-être le dynamisme conjugué de ces deux marchés qui pousse les téléphones cellulaires vers des applications résidentielles. D'ailleurs, depuis son introduction, le téléphone cellulaire n'a cessé de faire des émules alors que les précédentes applications la télégraphie sans fil, les réseaux de radiocommunications, les canaux banalisés, voire les radios bidirectionnelles n'ont pas réussi à percer massivement le marché professionnel et encore moins le marché grand public. Seuls les téléavertisseurs représentent un cas par-

créer en jouant la carte de la nouveauté comme la couleur et l'aspect très convivial des nouveaux modèles.

LES CARACTÉRISTIQUES DES MOBILES

Aux considérations d'ordre commercial et stratégique sont opposées les caractéristiques des mobiles définies par les usagers. Un des principaux objectifs de l'industrie est de favoriser l'intégration de différentes applications comme la voix, l'envoi de courts messages textuels et la navigation sur Internet sur un même téléphone. Toutefois, si la volonté des entreprises de télécommunications est de simplifier la vie des usagers, dans les faits, la complexification de l'offre commerciale et la multiplication des systèmes mobiles contribuent à freiner l'achat des produits et services mobiles.

De l'avis général, les études et les sondages effectués à l'interne montrent que les usagers sont à la recherche d'un appareil qui fonctionne de façon conviviale, et ce, peu importe les bandes de fréquences utilisées, le choix d'une norme ou d'une plate-forme, ou l'ap-

de véritables frontières entre l'activité professionnelle et la vie privée. Mais à cet acte de foi en faveur des applications mobiles s'opposent des considérations d'ordre personnel et parfois psychologique qui remettent en cause l'indispensable besoin d'être équipé d'un téléphone mobile.

En ce qui concerne les services, le degré de complexité de certaines manipulations comme l'envoi d'un message textuel fait en sorte que le mobile est dédié à des applications vocales uniquement. C'est pourquoi certains observateurs prétendent que la navigation sur Internet à partir de téléphones mobiles ne rejoindra pas le grand public à court terme. Envoyer un courriel, naviguer sur Internet et recevoir des télécopies doit devenir une opération aussi simple que celle d'allumer ou d'éteindre son mobile. La simplicité d'usage encourage les différents publics à expérimenter de nouveaux services.

Par ailleurs, l'offre des produits et services mobiles sert de tremplin au développement de nouveaux usages sociaux. En effet, les services qui ont le plus de succès auprès des usagers ne sont pas forcément ceux qui ont été mis de

— soit sous la poussée de l'opérateur (c'est notamment le cas de l'accès au courrier électronique), soit à la demande des clients (comme l'identification de l'appelant) —, les clients seront plus susceptibles d'avoir recours aux services disponibles. D'ailleurs, les besoins des usagers sont très souvent associés aux considérations sociales et professionnelles. L'utilisation d'un mobile n'est pas perçue comme un nouveau besoin, mais davantage comme une nouvelle façon de travailler. Le besoin de communiquer n'est donc pas nouveau, mais la multiplication des messages et des médias utilisés pour communiquer est une nouvelle façon de procéder. Différents thèmes comme la nécessité de communiquer, l'accessibilité et la sécurité sont tributaires de l'évolution du style de vie et ils contribuent à imposer les systèmes mobiles tout en créant de nouveaux modes de communication.

L'évolution des systèmes mobiles semble se nourrir de deux tendances apparemment contradictoires : améliorer la qualité de vie des individus et augmenter leur efficacité. Dans un cas, les mobiles contribuent à rendre les usagers plus « libres » et dans l'autre les mobiles établissent une nouvelle forme de contrôle sur les utilisateurs. Il s'agit donc d'établir une frontière entre les activités personnelles et professionnelles, tout en sachant utiliser les avantages procurés par les systèmes mobiles, sans devenir dépendant de cette technologie. En d'autres mots, les usagers doivent déterminer pour quelles raisons conscientes ou inconscientes, et pour quelles formes de communication, ils utiliseront un mobile. Un changement de paradigme s'impose-t-il ? Les avenues de réflexion sont ouvertes dans la mesure où les mobiles n'ont pas fondamentalement changé notre rapport à la communication. En revanche, ils introduisent des ruptures majeures comme la localisation en mouvement, la nature des messages envoyés et la dépendance aux mobiles qu'il faudra apprendre à gérer.

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Dans un cas, les mobiles contribuent à rendre les usagers plus « libres » et dans l'autre les mobiles établissent une nouvelle forme de contrôle sur les utilisateurs.

partenance à une entreprise. De la même façon, si les manufacturiers et les entreprises de télécommunications proposent une offre de services enrichie, les chiffres obtenus montrent que les téléphones cellulaires sont encore majoritairement utilisés pour des applications vocales. Pourquoi dès lors offrir toujours plus de fonctionnalités, toujours plus de services, lorsque l'utilisateur ne recherche pas nécessairement le produit dernier cri ? Les deux principales raisons mises de l'avant sont l'augmentation du niveau de vie et l'augmentation de la productivité. De là à dire que l'utilisation des systèmes mobiles est désormais nécessaire, il n'y a qu'un pas que les représentants des entreprises franchissent sans établir

l'avant par les promoteurs comme le renvoi d'appel ou l'appel en attente. Les plans tarifaires, qui proposent des services de « commodité personnelle » comme le dépannage routier, l'appel au 911 et les week-ends gratuits obtiennent une plus grande audience auprès des clients. En d'autres termes, les usagers affinent l'offre des services disponibles en spécifiant leurs attentes lors des enquêtes marketing effectuées par les entreprises de télécommunications. Or l'exposition aux nouveaux services crée à plus ou moins long terme leur utilisation. Si, dans un premier temps, les usagers réagissent en ignorant les services offerts ; dans un second temps, c'est-à-dire quand le besoin se matérialisera

CANADIAN DEMOCRACY HARD-WIRED?

Connecting Government and Citizens in the Digital Age

BY Graham Longford

TECHNOLOGY HAS LONG BEEN AT THE CENTRE OF MYTHOLOGIES OF NATION-BUILDING AND NATIONHOOD IN CANADA, FROM RAILROADS AND ELECTRICITY GRIDS TO CANDUS AND PUBLIC BROADCASTING. COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES, IN PARTICULAR, HAVE FEATURED PROMINENTLY IN WHAT MAURICE CHARLAND CALLS THE CANADIAN RHETORIC OF "TECHNOLOGICAL NATIONALISM," IN WHICH TECHNOLOGICAL PROWESS (THINK CPR, CBC AND HYDRO QUEBEC) SERVES AS BOTH SYMBOLIC SOURCE OF NATIONAL IDENTIFICATION AND PHYSICAL MEANS OF BINDING GEOGRAPHICALLY DISPERSED POPULATIONS TO THE NATION AND EACH OTHER.

The mid-nineties witnessed a surge in techno-nationalist rhetoric in Canada as excitement began to build about new information and communication technologies (ICTs) such as the Internet. Inspired by equal amounts of bravado and anxiety, the federal government launched a series of initiatives and policies designed to ensure Canada's presence on the so-called

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Information Highway and resist the centrifugal forces increasingly exerted on Canada by the globalization of production and culture. Best known of these, perhaps, is its Canada On-Line strategy, designed to ensure that Canadians have access to the Information Highway and to a steady stream of on-line Canadian content. One of the more recent manifestations of this policy agenda, the National Broadband Task Force (NBTF), examined the potential benefits of universal access to high-speed Internet service for all Canadians, and drew explicitly on the rhetoric of techno-nationalism. The Task Force's final report, released in June 2001, bore the title, *The New National Dream*, recalling the early days of the CPR. These and other policy making initiatives involving new ICTs are, along with their prospects for success, the subject of a number of the articles in this magazine.

A recent set of initiatives which has received far less attention than more high profile projects like the broadband initiative is the federal government's own increasing use of digital technology to connect with citizens, otherwise

known as *e-government*. In its 1999 Throne Speech, the federal government announced the Government On-Line (GOL) project, committing itself to offering citizens on-line access to all key government information and services by 2004. Consistent with other initiatives designed to strengthen Canadian nationhood through new ICTs, GOL is intended to "reinvent" government and the public service by making both more open, transparent and "citizen-centred," thereby revitalizing citizen-government relations and the practice of democracy in Canada. In the face of dramatic declines in voter turnout, political efficacy, and faith in government over the last decade or two, a phenomenon by no means unique to Canada, it is small wonder that the federal government has turned to new ICTs to attempt to stem this ebb tide of legitimacy. The question addressed in this article, however, is whether initiatives like GOL will succeed in renewing and reinvigorating citizen-government relations and the general quantity and quality of political participation in Canada.

While the federal government may pour as much as three to four billion dollars into GOL over the next few years, there is little research to support the more sanguine expectations for its impact on the character of citizen-government relations and democracy in Canada. In fact, some existing research on *e-government*, *e-democracy* and computer-mediated-communication (CMC) suggests that each confronts us with as many new challenges as they overcome old ones. Furthermore, the nature of citizen-government relations

E-government advocates expect that by placing more and more services on-line, enabling citizens to access them faster and more conveniently, governments can overcome the perceived "service deficit" plaguing the public sector.

and the quality of Canadian democracy has as much to do with government policies and activities off-line. In this respect, federal government policies affecting service quality and democratic openness are contradictory at best.

While rushing to put information and services on-line, I will argue, we have witnessed a host of *off-line* "denial of service attacks" on the part of the federal government in a variety of areas from health care to freedom of information. Such attacks, in my view, pose as great a threat to our sense of national belonging and citizenship. All the more reason, therefore, to step back from the recent hype about *e-government* in order to offer more sober reflections on the democratic promise and pitfalls of mediating citizen-government relations across the digital networks of cyberspace.

GOVERNMENT ON-LINE

The federal government launched its GOL initiative in 1999, with the goal of making the Government of Canada the most connected government in the world to its citizens, and to make on-line transactions the most common form of citizen-government interaction by 2004. In fact, while touted as heralding a revolutionary transformation in government and public administration, aggressive use of ICTs to reform service delivery was well under way in the decade prior to GOL, as a result of budgetary pressures, culminating in the replacement of 5,000 front-line public servants at Human Resources Development Canada with several thousand electronic self-serve kiosks in the mid-nineties. Since then, the use of new ICTs also been defended in terms of their ability to bring government and citizens closer together by increasing the accessibility and convenience of government information and services. *E-government*

advocates expect that by placing more and more services on-line, enabling citizens to access them faster and more conveniently, governments can overcome the perceived "service deficit" plaguing the public sector. Furthermore, as digital

technology lowers the “cost” of information acquisition, so the logic goes, citizens will be empowered to hold governments more accountable and to monitor and participate in political debate and decision making more effectively. Together, the benefits of e-government are portrayed as offering a powerful antidote to the civic malaise that has gripped countries like Canada over the last couple of decades, driving down voter turnout and other forms of political engagement.

On the face of it, the question of whether or not GOL can improve the quality of public services and significantly alter the informational balance of power between government and citizens demands an answer in the affirmative. Some recent figures are compelling. On the service side, the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency (CCRA) offers a service called Netfile, through which taxpayers can file income tax returns over the Internet. Already over one and a half million Canadians avail themselves of the service. The Canada Site, a federally-maintained Internet portal giving access to over 450 federal Web sites and hundreds of thousands of pages of information on government programs and services, received 468 million hits in 2000, an increase of 97% over the previous year. Individual departments have reported similar success. The Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, for example, maintains a Trade Agreements and Negotiations Web site which received over one million hits per month in the weeks leading up to and following the Seattle meeting of the WTO. Even activists conceded that the site provided a useful resource. More recently, the federally-mandated Commission on the Future of Health Care in Canada launched a Web site containing a variety of materials related to the Commission’s work and public hearings. Since its initial launch in September 2001, the site has received as many as 1.5 million hits per month and has been visited by approximately 60,000 unique visitors monthly. These and other achievements help explain Canada’s top ranking among twenty-two countries recently surveyed for the “maturity” of their e-

government services. The questions remains, however, whether such measures will revitalize citizen-government relations and reinvigorate public debate in Canada. There has been no shortage of superlatives and hype attached to e-government. Therefore, I propose in this article to sound a note of caution, to suggest why e-government may fail to ignite a revolutionary transformation in citizen-government relations and the practice of democracy in Canada. There is reason to believe, in fact, that it may well exacerbate existing democratic public service deficits.

SERVICE DELIVERY: E-COMMERCE AND VIRTUAL PUBLIC SERVICE

E-government advocates argue that placing government services online will help close the “service gap” in the public sector by emulating the private sector model of customer service. By offering citizens access to faster, cheaper and more convenient service over the Internet, government can reinvent itself as “citizen-centred,” thus perhaps reversing a decades-long decline in public satisfaction with and trust in the public service. While it is too soon to assess the impact of e-government initiatives on such attitudes, there is evidence of improved service delivery, at least of a kind.

When narrowly defined in terms of e-commerce criteria of service delivery, such as speed, convenience and reduced

while, ICT-related enhancements to its service delivery network have cut waiting and processing times and reduced over and underpayments to benefit recipients. However, enthusiasm for e-government service delivery reform needs to be tempered with a recognition of the pitfalls associated with online service delivery, and of the many ways in which public services have declined over the last decade in substantive and qualitative terms.

Firstly, while touted as offering significant cost-savings through automation, major ICT projects in the public and private sector have a dismal record of delays, cost overruns and outright failure. On average, a mere 16 per cent are completed on time and on budget. The larger and more complex the project, the greater the likelihood of failure. Therefore, a few spectacular, expensive and well-publicized failures, such as the recent MFP software licensing scandal at the City of Toronto or the Anderson IT consulting mess at Ontario’s Ministry of Community and Social Services, have the capacity to outweigh whatever gains accrue to the reputation of the public service as a result of incremental improvements in waiting times, for example.

Secondly, as e-government becomes a reality, the country’s telecommunications infrastructure will become the new public service infrastructure, with millions of Canadians increasingly reliant upon it for government services, information, benefits and, eventually per-

With one third of municipalities, mostly in rural and remote areas, lacking access to even basic dial-up Internet service, and three quarters of Canada’s municipalities representing twenty-five per cent of the population having little prospect of obtaining high-speed access, a significant risk of digital disenfranchisement will emerge as governments go on-line.

waiting and processing times, a number of federal e-government initiatives have been highly successful. At CCRA, for example, Netfile users receive their income tax refund in as little as two weeks from the date of filing, down from six to eight weeks under the old paper-based system. At HRDC, mean-

haps, education and health care. Herein lies the potential problem: the country’s liberalized telecommunications market provides differential access to network connections and bandwidth across the system, with numerous poorly served areas and segments of the population. With one third of municipalities, mostly

in rural and remote areas, lacking access to even basic dial-up Internet service, and three quarters of Canada's municipalities representing twenty-five per cent of the population having little prospect of obtaining high-speed access, a significant risk of digital disenfranchisement

Recent events in Ontario, where public opinion has swung heavily against privatizing public utilities such as hydro and water treatment, are also suggestive, signaling perhaps the public's growing understanding of the limits of the e-commerce model.

will emerge as governments go on-line. Superimpose other digital divides based on income, education and literacy and we have a recipe for the disenfranchisement of millions of "unplugged" citizens, many of whom tend to be more reliant on public services than fellow citizens with Internet access. The prospects for avoiding this danger were significantly diminished when the federal Liberals chose more or less to ignore the NBTf report's recommendations for a public-private partnership to ensure universal broadband access.

Finally, while initiatives in electronic service delivery may well have led to "e-commerce" type improvements in terms of convenience, waiting and processing times, there is no doubt that many of those who are dependent on public services offered by federal and provincial governments suffered a series of *off-line* "denial of service" attacks, so to speak, as a result of cutbacks and restructuring in the 1990s affecting everything from social assistance benefits to environmental monitoring. There appears to be a tension, here, between the rhetoric of e-government and the reality of restructuring in the public sector. HRDC provides a perfect example of this tension between the "citizen-centred" rhetoric of on-line service delivery and the reality of substantive cuts to

many services off-line. While implementing major new technological enhancements to its service delivery network in the mid-nineties, the department introduced changes to the *Unemployment Insurance Act* in 1996 which tightened eligibility requirements and reduced the level and duration of benefits while simultaneously increasing premiums. So much for "citizen-centred" service!

Events at HRDC, and elsewhere, suggest that the e-commerce model of service delivery, and the implicit model of the "citizen-as-consumer" attached to it, is in the process of eclipsing the older model of citizenship in Canada, that based on substantive entitlements. Given the realities of the global economy, the federal government's embrace of the former is understandable. One wonders, however, about the long term consequences for citizen ties to government, and to each other, as this e-commerce model of citizenship becomes dominant. Recent events in Ontario, where public opinion has swung heavily against privatizing public utilities such as hydro and water treatment, are also suggestive, signaling perhaps the public's growing understanding of the limits of the e-commerce model. Restoring confidence in Canada's much-maligned public services, therefore, may require more than simply automating routine transactions such as renewing driver's licenses and hunting permits, to include a renewed emphasis on more qualitative and substantive dimensions like fairness, due process and the public interest.

GOVERNMENT ON-LINE AND THE PRACTICE OF DEMOCRACY

A second species of claims made on behalf of e-government concerns its potential impact on the quality of democracy in Canada. By putting government information on-line and offering additional on-line channels for communication between government and citizens, so the argument goes, government will become more open and transparent and citizens will be better equipped to hold government accountable and to contribute to policy deliberations and decision making. Again, how-

ever, while the statistics and examples with respect to government Web sites mentioned above are impressive, there may be less to the argument than at first appears. Along with some of the technical limitations associated with on-line information, we need to pay attention to potential off-line threats to the ecology of information in the public sphere.

TOO MUCH INFORMATION?

Firstly, there are serious technical challenges to the effective use of on-line information by citizens. Web search engines, for example, return far too many hits, often unfiltered and in random order. An unscientific but nonetheless revealing test of the Canada Site by this author demonstrates the problem. The following list shows the number of hits returned on key word searches for a number of current issues: climate

By saving us a trip to the library or government bookstore, GOL certainly makes accessing information more convenient, for those with Internet access, but it has not signaled a fundamental shift in government attitudes or practices with respect to disseminating politically sensitive or embarrassing information.

change (29,000); free trade (58,000); and security (99,000). In other words, looking for government information on-line is not unlike searching the Library of Parliament without a catalogue, after a bomb has been detonated. Under the circumstances, where its utility to citizens is concerned, too much information combined with limited searchability is just as bad as no information at all. Granted, some attempts by the architects of GOL have been made to increase the user friendliness of the Canada Site. Here citizens are presented with numerous "service gateways" organized around various "life events" such as birth, edu-

cation, employment and unemployment, disability, and starting a business. By speeding users to existing services, however, this approach contains a built in bias towards the *status quo*. What it fails to address are the needs of citizens who are interested in evaluating, interrogating and contesting these same programs and services in terms of their *adequacy* or *effectiveness*. The degree of political sophistication and information literacy demanded of citizens seeking information related to the latter exceeds that of all but a minority of Canadian citizens at present.

The technical challenge of organizing, cataloguing and making more user-friendly the vast amounts of on-line government information suggests that the problem facing citizens is one of *too much information*. This is misleading, however. While improvements to the usability of on-line information are clearly needed, they will have a limited impact on the overall success of GOL from the citizen perspective because they fail to touch upon or alter the basic information dissemination philosophy and practices of the federal government off-line.

ENCLOSING THE INFORMATION COMMONS

Set against the larger backdrop of government information dissemination as a whole, which includes deeply entrenched habits of secrecy and cost recovery policies which discourage citizens from seeking information, the impact of GOL may be diminished. By saving us a trip to the library or government bookstore, GOL certainly makes accessing information more convenient, for those with Internet access, but it has not signaled a fundamental shift in government attitudes or practices with respect to disseminating politically sensitive or embarrassing information. Indeed, the federal government has embraced numerous policy and administrative initiatives in the 1990s which have actually *eroded* the informational rights of citizens, steadily depleting the "information commons" supporting civic engagement in Canada.

Firstly, for at least a decade the fed-

eral government has increasingly commercialized and commodified its considerable information resources and data collection capabilities. Since the late 1980s, for example, Statistics Canada routinely charges citizens fees for accessing a variety of information "products," despite that fact these have already been paid for with tax dollars. The commodification of government information in this manner raises barriers to the availability of information, and while seldom covering the true costs of its production, has the effect of dampening demand for it.

Secondly, both the federal government and its provincial counterparts have adopted a less forthcoming approach to access to information requests in the 1990s. Increasing administration fees have led to a decline in the number of requests received nationwide. In Ontario, for example, fee increases for standard requests led to a 50% drop in the number received between 1995 and 1997. Cuts to departmental budgets for administering access to information requests have also had a negative impact on access to information by increasing processing times and delays. The incidence of outright denials of requests has increased as well.

Finally, recent public sector restructuring initiatives, including privatization, devolution and outsourcing, have had disturbing implications for the informational rights of citizens and the transparency and accountability of government. Many newly created corporations, agencies, and outsourcing arrangements, such as the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, NAV Canada and the Canada Pension Plan Investment Board, have been placed beyond the reach of the federal *Access to Information Act*, despite no change in the salience of the activities carried out under them to the public interest. By creating a more fragmented and confusing system of accountability and governance, in general, such initiatives have increased what Alastair Roberts calls the "organizational opacity" of government. Together with the above-mentioned practices of commodification and freedom of information, such

administrative and policy trends have had a corrosive impact on the informational rights of Canadian citizens and are at least as if not more indicative of the government's current approach to information dissemination than the rhetoric of GOL suggests.

The implications of e-government for privacy rights and government use of personal information is also worth mentioning here. E-government advocates suggest that networked computers will dramatically improve government's ability to share and exploit information across functional and jurisdictional "silos" in order to better coordinate and fashion public policies. It will also enable it to use personal information for the purposes of data-matching and surveillance. Already CCRA maintains agreements with over 300 organizations to share data on Canadian taxpayers, including an agreement with HRDC to match all CCRA Traveler Declaration cards to EI claimant files, in order to combat EI fraud. Combined with the erosion of citizen information rights detailed above, then, e-government has the potential to foster disturbing asymmetries of information between government and citizens. If the latter come to equate e-government with increasing invasions of privacy or denials of benefits or services, such as license plate renewals (as occurred in Ontario a few years ago), as a result of some unrelated activity, they are more likely to become suspicious rather than kindly disposed toward government.

VOTING ALONE: E-CITIZENS OR E-CONSUMERS?

Finally, advocates of e-government suggest that the availability of on-line government information and new channels for communication between government and citizens will stimulate more political participation and democratic dialogue within Canada, thereby revitalizing the nation's public sphere. While it is early days for reaching any definitive conclusions regarding this assertion, however, a few early warnings signs signal the need for caution here.

Firstly, no Canadian studies exist to demonstrate that the availability of on-

line information stimulates increased political engagement. While Canadians appear to have embraced government Web sites, they are far more likely to be seeking information on employment opportunities, health matters and recreation than they are to be engaging in policy deliberations. Furthermore, a

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recent American study by Bruce Bimber showed that using on-line information sources correlated with no increase in political participation, other than making on-line campaign donations. Robert Putnam, author of the much debated *Bowling Alone*, found that those citizens who relied most heavily on on-line sources of news and public affairs information were less politically engaged than those who relied on traditional print media.

Some indication of the potential for GOL to stimulate a renewal of citizen/government relations is also suggested by recent attempts to stimulate voter turnout by the prospect of on-line voting. Some have suggested that on-line voting will increase political participation by making voting easier and more convenient. There is little to suggest, however, that Canadians avoid participating in elections because it is too difficult for them to do so. In fact, the sharpest decline in voter turnout in recent years occurred just as the process was made more rather than less accessible. Declining turnout, particularly among youth in Canada, has more to do with low interest and low efficacy, as a result of the electoral and party systems, than it does with problems of access. The alienating effects of the former cannot be ameliorated simply by using tech-

nology to make a system already perceived as fundamentally flawed merely more accessible.

In addition, a growing body of research suggests that on-line participation by so-called e-citizens may be qualitatively different from off-line forms of civic engagement and participation. The personalization features of the Internet provided by various filters and customization tools have the potential to lead to the "cyberbalkanization" of the on-line public sphere into increasingly insulated groups of like-minded "interest-based communities" who increasingly know and care more and more about less and less. This research points to the potentially damaging effects of the Internet on social cohesion, and contrasts it with the socially integrative effects of more deliberative styles and forums of face-to-face political communication. Research on virtual communities and the quality of computer-mediated-communication (CMC) appears to support his concern. While the Internet

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has proven a powerful means of gathering and sharing information, it is a predominantly individualistic and expressive medium which facilitates talking over listening, deliberation and the give-and-take of face-to-face communication; leading, as Putnam suggests, "not to deliberation, but to din." Concern such as this is also supported by research on face-to-face forms of civic participation. The fact of co-presence absent from on-line forms of discussion is at least more likely to orient participants to a public good transcending their own individual interests.

As such, the implications of the Internet for the quality of political engagement appear consistent with a more general and worrying trend observed by Putnam, among others, toward increasingly individualized, privatized and expressive acts of grievance articulation at the expense of forms of activity involving the aggregation of

interests and cooperative forms of addressing grievances. In terms of the effect of a program like the Government of Canada's GOL, with its emphasis on convenience and customization to personal tastes and informational needs, the likelihood is one of this trend being reinforced. Experiments in deliberative polling and on-line consultations are on-going, such as the Commission on the Future of Health Care in Canada's on-line Consultation Workbook. However, insufficient research has been carried out on these or other aspects of the Government of Canada's on-line presence to know whether it will promote genuine deliberation and meaningful participation or facilitate the further balkanization and decline of the public sphere in Canada.

CONCLUSION

There is little question that the current degree of political malaise in Canada is disturbing. An April 2002 Leger

Marketing survey of citizen attitudes toward government found that almost 70% of respondents believed the federal government was at least somewhat corrupt, and fully one quarter agreed with the statement that our current system of government was not democratic. Small wonder, then, that schemes like GOL are being taken up by government, despite little proof of a salutary effect on political engagement and legitimacy. Without denying some potential benefits in this respect, however, it is important for governments and citizens alike to carefully weigh them against the potentially negative consequences for citizenship and democracy attached to the e-government agenda. Rather than bringing us closer together as members of the Canadian political community, it may well drive us further apart.

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REVISITING THE COMMON ROOTS

of Communication Studies and Canadian Studies

PAR Marco Adria

COMMUNICATION STUDIES IN CANADA AND CANADIAN STUDIES ARE COACTIVE ENDEAVOURS. THEY ARE BOTH INTERDISCIPLINARY AREAS OF STUDY SEEKING TO ACCOUNT FOR CANADA'S DEVELOPMENT AS A NATION AND ALSO ITS RELATIONSHIP – ACTUAL AND POTENTIAL – TO THE REST OF THE WORLD. TO DEVELOP THEIR EXPLANATIONS AND PREDICTIONS, THEY DRAW ON DIVERSE METHODS AND APPROACHES IN BOTH THE SOCIAL SCIENCES AND THE HUMANITIES. AND THEY BOTH SEEK TO SHARE EXPERTISE AND TO POOL INTERESTS WITH COGNATE AREAS – OCCASIONALLY IN ALLIANCE WITH ONE ANOTHER.

The advent of radio and television gave rise to the communications scholarship of Harold Adams Innis and Herbert Marshall McLuhan. Insights on media and communications developed by Innis and McLuhan – parallel in some respects, contradictory in others – continue to stimulate new knowledge in both Communication Studies and Canadian Studies. Their work remains a lens through which many non-Canadian scholars view Canadian culture and identity.

More recently, the advent of new media and the Internet has provided an occasion to reflect on the symbiotic relationship of the two areas. The need for such a dialogue is particularly urgent in connection to the issue of the relative autonomy of the Canadian nation-state. An open border with the U.S. and a common currency in North America are now being seriously discussed as a means of extending the practical benefits of expanded trade with the U.S. Canadians are engaged in another stage of the ongoing discussion about the appropriate degree to which Canada can act independently and about the measures that may be justified in extending or restricting that independence. Identity is associated with autonomy because without a distinctive identity, the cultural and social forces for independent action are reduced.

In this article, I consider the potential meaning of public involvement in expanding access to the Internet in the context of two contrasting perspectives on the Canadian identity – those of Maurice Charland of Concordia University and Bruce Powe of York University. There are other voices, of course, but these two reflect rather clearly a duality of visions along various dimensions: francophone and anglophone, the historical and the social, materialist and idealist. Together, the two perspectives provide an illustration of the key issues of the interests and actions of the state in promoting the use of technology, the importation of that technology, and the problematic of national autonomy.

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The federal government's Community Access Program (CAP) is one of the many current efforts in Canada to, in the program's words, "make Canadians the most Internet-connected people in the world." CAP has supported some 10,000 public access computer terminals, mainly by providing one-time funding to libraries and schools to purchase equipment. As a consequence of the program, it is now possible to gain access to the Internet in many public places in Canada. The provincial governments have developed their own programs of this kind. In Alberta, for example, the SuperNet is to be developed by an alliance of public and private organiza-

tions. It will extend broadband services (the “big pipe” of Internet access) to rural and remote areas of the province. All government offices, hospitals, libraries, and schools in Alberta will have access to the SuperNet, with access by homes and businesses to be organized by private providers. The stated goal of this project, along with similar initiatives across Canada, is to become “the most wired jurisdiction.” The image is created of a multitude of horizontal ties between and among individuals and groups in Canada.

The first of the two perspectives on the role of public involvement in access to communications technologies is that of Maurice Charland. Charland introduced the term technological nationalism in his article of that name in 1986 in the *Canadian Journal of Political and Social Theory* (10, 1-2: 196-220). Charland argued that anglophone Canadian nationalism had been given full expression in Pierre Berton’s *The National Dream*. He began his article with a description of the opening sequence of the CBC television treatment of Berton’s history of the CPR, in which a native Canadian is confronted by a steam locomotive:

This television image of a railroad as the “national dream” heroically spanning the wilderness to fashion a state reveals in a condensed narrative the manifold relations between technology and a Canada which can imagine. Here, we are encouraged to see technology as constitutive of Canada, and as a manifestation of Canada’s ethos (p. 196).

For Charland, the nationalism revealed in *The National Dream* was a set of ideas by which the Canadian state sought to “legitimate itself by constituting a nation in its own image” (p. 197). Beginning with the Canadian Pacific Railway, and later with the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, Canada has existed by space-binding technologies. Charland agreed with Pierre Berton’s view that the CPR had been a “national dream,” an instance of Canada imagining itself into existence. However, he

suggested that an optimistic view of a technologically mediated Canada overlooked the material reality that Canada was economically subject to the U.S. – and in fact had been fashioned for just that purpose. Charland cited the observation by Innis that communications technologies, like transportation technologies, tended to strengthen and

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extend empires.

Several decades after the last spike in the CPR had been driven, the Canadian government began using the same transportation rhetoric that had made the creation of the CPR possible, to conceive of a national radio service that would strengthen Canadian social unity. The nation of the CPR, Charland noted, was economic, while the nation of radio was cultural and ideological. Yet the concept of the CPR as a common carrier did not transpose fully into the broadcasting paradigm of radio and television. This discontinuity was the source of what was to become a series of interlocked contradictions in the rhetoric of anglophone Canadian nationalism. Charland argued that, in any case, the technological nationalism reflected in the rhetoric of the CPR and a national radio and television service was futile, because it could not invoke a common culture as its subject:

Technological nationalism promises a liberal state in which technology would be a neutral medium for the development of a polis. This vision of a nation is bankrupt, however, because it provides no substance or commonality for the polis except communication itself. As a con-

sequence, technological nationalism’s (anglophone) Canada has no defense against the power and seduction of the American [sic] cultural industry or, indeed, of the technological experience (p. 198).

For Charland, the rhetoric of technological nationalism had not created a nation, as its proponents claimed, but an absent nation. At the end of his article, Charland lamented the “dark sun of alienation” represented by the national dream of a technologically mediated nation.

Charland was writing several years before the Internet became popularly associated with significant changes in social structures and practices. The examples of the federal government’s Community Access Program and the Alberta SuperNet illustrate another stage of technological nationalism. At each stage, the rhetoric of binding space has been used to describe a Canada of new connections and enhanced communication. The rhetoric of the CPR suggested that by binding space, Canada’s constitution as a federation would be consummated. Political will would be expressed in the “demonstration effect” of a large-scale construction project. Similarly, the space-binding rhetoric of radio called forth a national, politically unified consciousness. Radio was to be a mode of socializing citizens. National unity would be accomplished through what Charland calls the “ideal of communication.” This ideal has been reflected more recently in the space-binding rhetoric of the Internet. A network of national connections is described, within which the concept of the nation is bound up.

Bruce Powe has written very differently about communications and the Canadian identity. He refers to the technologically mediated nation, not as a “dark sun,” as Charland would have it, but as “a tremendous Canada of light,” the title of his 1993 book. The contrast in images is quite clear. While Charland, in the tradition of Innis, sees in Canadian communication the outlines of political economy, Powe considers electronic communication to be a psy-

chic phenomenon, parallel with music and spirituality, more in sympathy with McLuhan's perspective. For Charland, technologies of communication are significant for their structuring rhetoric; for Powe, they are converging symbols of new dialogues and novel connections. Powe suggests that the true significance of new media cannot be appreciated until the old media (the written word, dreams, sound recordings, paranormal activities) are considered at the same time. In this view, new and old media reveal in comparison more similarities than differences. The development of new media is continuous with that of old media in its potential support for a flexible conception of citizenship.

Powe suggests that in the communication state, his name for the other side of the absent nation, citizenship is constantly changing. The communication state is not a self-validating rhetoric but a continuously emerging web of connections within which citizenship is defined, in a dialectical relationship to U.S. culture and history:

A digital simulation in a computer works through a pattern of light, a pattern of shadows. One could make an imaginative leap: every person also reflects and emanates their own light and shadows, a free-floating side to their personality and a tragic, murderous, power-hungry dimension. We project our darkness and light into the world. The Canadian shadow appears to us in the shape of the United States and the constantly looming prospect of assimilation. We play in a pattern of light to their burdened, darker history (119-20).

Powe is relatively optimistic about the capacity of wide access to technology as the basis for deepening patterns of democratization. In that, he is in the company of other communications theorists such as Mark Poster and Derrick DeKerckhove. He develops the liberal theme that the Canadian federation may avoid patterns of political domination by emphasizing the process, instead of the substance or content, of communication.

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Charland and Powe address a question that should remain central for Canadianists and communicationists alike: What is the relationship of the Canadian identity to the new connections of the Internet and the state's role in promoting these connections? I believe that some middle ground between Charland's absent nation and Powe's communication state should be explored as our conception of citizenship changes in the era of the Internet, as it undoubtedly will.

Canada, like other federations, can be regarded as an extended effort to reach political and cultural under-

Charland and Powe address a question that should remain central for Canadianists and communicationists alike: What is the relationship of the Canadian identity to the new connections of the Internet and the state's role in promoting these connections?

standing among individuals and groups. That effort is constituted by our communications practices and channels – the “system” by which we interact. The system of communication in Canada is expanding quickly and taking on new aspects of complexity almost daily. We are seeing horizontal ties of interaction develop with the expansion of access to the Internet, along with the associated rhetoric of a more engaged citizenry. These ties will link individuals and groups in voluntary associations, economic activities, and ultimately in the creation of new symbols and narratives of Canadian identity.

The challenge will be to develop new vertical ties of citizenship – a dialogue between citizens and their governments. These vertical ties may have the capacity to allow the communication state to become a legitimate conception of the Canadian identity. But they are not bound to do so. Fragmentation may well occur within the confederal and regional framework of Canadian politics. Communications theorist Jürgen Habermas suggests that it is possible that the “systemic processes” of a wired world will lead, not to the global village of McLuhan and Powe, but to something quite different:

it is unclear whether an expanding consciousness, that depends on higher order intersubjectivities in an ever wider universe of shared meanings, will be able to span the extending systems, or whether instead the systemic processes, having taken a life of their own, will rather lead to the fragmentation of a multiplicity of global villages unrelated to each other (in G. Balakrishnan, ed., Mapping the Nation [Verso, 1996], p. 292).

In providing wide access to the Internet, governments seek cohesive

national and regional economies. Social legitimation must be part of this process of integration if we are to avoid seeing our new forms of mediated communication lead to new forms of alienation. The study of communications in Canada, as an integral thematic area in alliance with Canadian Studies, can allow us to generate new knowledge about how to ensure substantive progress in the Canadian project of reaching mutual understanding.

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COMMUNITY NETWORKING

in Canada: A Status Report

BY Leslie Regan Shade

THE EARLY TO MID-1990S GAVE RISE TO A PLETHORA OF COMMUNITY-BASED COMPUTER NETWORKS (COMMUNITY NETS) ACROSS NORTH AMERICA, IN BOTH URBAN AND RURAL COMMUNITIES. PROPONENTS OF COMMUNITY NETS ADVOCATED THIS NEW FORM OF COMMUNICATIONS FOR EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, AND ENHANCEMENT OF CIVIC PARTICIPATION, AND THEY WORKED TO MAKE IT READILY AVAILABLE TO ALL CITIZENS, FREE OF CHARGE. COMMUNITY NETWORKING REPRESENTS ONE OF THE MORE DYNAMIC EXPERIMENTS IN USING ICTS (INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES) TO STRENGTHEN LOCAL, GEOGRAPHICALLY-BASED COMMUNITIES. WHILE THERE ARE MANY FORMS OF COMMUNITY NETWORKING, THEY HAVE IN COMMON THE BROAD IDEALS OF PROMOTING SOCIAL EXCLUSION AND EQUITY BY ENHANCING THE INFORMATIONAL RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO PEOPLE LIVING IN COMPACT TERRITORIES – CITIES, RURAL TOWNS, AND NEIGHBOURHOODS.

In Canada, at their high point between 1995-96, there were 35 operating community nets with between 250,000 and 600,000 members. In 2002, however, many of the original community nets were defunct; several were still alive, but struggling to survive, and the federal government was continuing their own brand of community nets under the guise of the Community Access Program (CAP). Domestic Internet penetration in Canada reached 51%, according to 2000 figures culled by Statistics Canada, and the Internet was fully entrenched as a commercial model, so for many, there was no real need to have a free service to the Internet as community nets provided. However, as I will argue here, given the increasing concentration of the commercial media in Canada, the rhetoric of place-destroying globalization, and a neoliberal agenda, the original tenets of community nets are now needed more than ever.

This article will thus provide a brief history of Canadian community nets and their goals – and trace how some of their original vision has changed because of technological developments, diffusion, and trends in

In Canada, the widespread creation of community networks thus became a powerful model to many for enabling citizens to support and sustain community (geographically-based and “virtual” community), participate in the public sphere, exercise democratic imperatives, and reinforce national identity.

public policy. Then I will examine a burgeoning field of studies – that of Community Informatics – which looks at how various communities, social groups, voluntary agencies, and governments are using ICTs to enrich their local place-based communities, and provide both a viable non-commercial alternative to mainstream media and a sustainable public space for citizens.

COMMUNITY NETWORKS – THE ORIGIN STORY

The community nets that sprung up in the pre-Web early 1990s were certainly not the first manifestation of

computer-mediated-communication adopted for local needs. In the 1970s several trials of Videotex were initiated, notably in North America and Britain. Videotex was an information delivery system for the home, typically a menu-driven system designed for display on television sets, with content consisting of news, weather, and local information and services (bus schedules, entertainment events). The Communications Research Centre, the research arm of the federal Department of Communications, developed Canada’s contribution to videotex with approximately \$9M in funding. Telidon was widely touted in policy circles as a key player in boosting both Canadian content and in positioning Canada as a leader in technological innovation, but, as with other videotex systems, it failed miserably in the market, because of lack of content, poor interface design, and high costs.

Conceptual pronouncements of wired cities in the 1970s are also illustrative of the naïve optimism that swarmed around early projects. Interactive cable trials emphasized delivering consumer information to the home, and only later did they encompass concerns over pro-

vision of basic telecommunications services, the significance of telecommunications for the economic prosperity of individuals and nations, and the furtherance of national interests and cultural values.

One such successful endeavour was Community Memory, the world’s first public computerized bulletin board system, based in Berkeley, California. Running out of the community centre Resource One, it was described as “a kind of electronic bulletin board, an information flea market. You can put your notices into the Community Memory, and you can look through the memory for the notice you want”. Although a precursor

to bulletin board services (BBSs), Community Memory was unique in its adherence to both promoting local content, and in its physical placement in an open, community access point. A similar model was set up in Vancouver in the early 1970s, which also shared the goals of community sharing and enhancement.

In the mid 1980s Tom Grundner

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conceived the Cleveland Free-Net in Ohio, which had its start through the Department of Family Medicine, Case Western Reserve University as a resource for medical information. He later expanded the idea to encompass diverse community content, and developed the National Public Telecomputing Network (NPTN) to actively help organizations develop Free-Nets in other U.S. cities. David Sutherland, then head of Communications and Computing at Carleton University, and two professors in Journalism and Mass Communication, Jay Weston and George Frajkor, adapted the free-net concept and developed the National Capital FreeNet (NCF), which was considered to be one of the first successful Canadian models of community networking. It was established in 1992 as a non-commercial, co-operative, community project with the active participation of volunteers, Carleton University, and private industry (which donated modems and the communications equipment for connecting the FreeNet to the local public library). At its height, the NCF consisted of a diversity of vital community information. Over 250 information providers posted information on a multiplicity of topics (including health, social services, education, recreation, federal and local government, and women’s issues). Special interest groups were eclectic, including those devoted to computers, media, arts, teaching, sports, dogs, librarians,

home beer- and wine-making, astronomy, and mental health.

In the summer of 1993 Carleton and the NCF sponsored the first International Community Networking Conference, which brought together

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academics, policymakers, and community activists. One of the central themes of the conference was the insistence that community nets serve as a free and open service for community members. At that time the Internet was still the preserve of universities, research centres, and high-tech corporations, and it was only just beginning to diffuse its way into popular consciousness. For many, community nets represented the only way to connect to the Internet, as ISPs (Internet Service Providers) were still in a nascent state.

In Canada, the widespread creation of community networks thus became a powerful model to many for enabling citizens to support and sustain community (geographically-based and "virtual" community), participate in the public sphere, exercise democratic imperatives, and reinforce national identity. Community networking activists John Stevenson and Greg Searle, in their presentation to the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) convergence hearings in 1995, epitomized this sentiment when they wrote that: "We believe that community networking represents a grassroots effort by Canadians to create a truly citizen-based Information Highway, one which reflects what people want from this new technology: a place to think, learn, and communicate with their neighbours and an emerging knowledge-based world."

Community networks emphasized local needs, universal access, and social change. As a community owned and controlled service, community nets emphasized the posting of local resources, services, culture and people.

Community nets were also concerned with ensuring universal access to the network for free or with a very nominal cost to all members of the community. Schools, libraries, community information and recreational cen-

tres, and shopping malls often served as public access points. Proponents of community nets also believed that they could contribute to community development, and strengthen and revitalize communities through positive and interactive communication between residents and local institutions.

Telecommunities Canada (TC), an umbrella organization for all community nets in Canada, was founded in August 1994, with the mandate to lobby for charitable status for community nets, assist groups on local liability policies, develop an on-line literacy program for the public, and organize and promote annual national conferences. In 1998, despite the easy availability of ISPs and widespread use of the Internet in libraries, workplaces, and homes, there were almost 60 community networks operating in Canada, although this definition of community nets included CAP sites, which will be discussed below.

FROM INFORMATION HIGHWAYS TO SMART COMMUNITIES

Federal government policy-making surrounding what was then called the "information highway" was conducted through the Information Highway Advisory Council (IHAC), which issued a series of reports from 1995-97 in support of the government's information infrastructure strategy. This consisted of 1) creating jobs through innovation and investment; 2) reinforcing Canadian sovereignty and cultural identity; and 3) ensuring universal access at a reasonable cost. IHAC committee members reflected corporate and technology

interests, with little to no representation by the public interest community. This techno-economic imperative championed a competitive and market-led perspective, in contrast to the socio-technical tradition that considers the needs of a broadly-defined society: citizens and civil society, the non-commercial sector, the market, and the government.

The CRTC also recognized the value of community nets by recognizing their role in supporting Canadian content, network literacy and universal access. However, the federal initiatives that evolved to connect Canadians to ICTs did not capitalize on the growing experience of Canadian community nets; instead these initiatives concentrated on the easier-to-implement but much less empowering "access to information" model represented by the Industry Canada's Community Access Program (CAP).

Although IHAC's final report recommended the creation of a "National Access Strategy" by the end of 1997, this never materialized. Instead, emboldened by the promise of dot.com ventures, the government switched gears and pushed for a national strategy on e-commerce. Rhetoric changed to creating opportunities in a "knowledge-based economy". Canada's "national access strategy" thus coalesced around Industry Canada's Connecting Canadians agenda.

The Connecting Canadians agenda consists of an array of ICT based programs for Canadian communities and international projects. They range from connecting the Internet to public access points, through SchoolNet (schools), libraries (LibraryNet), community centres (Community Access Program), and "Smart Communities". The needs of the voluntary sector are emphasized (VolNet) as well as youth (Skill.net and the Student Connection Program). E-Commerce initiatives are highlighted, as is the Government Online project. NetCorps International attempts to reach the needs of developing countries, by sending young Canadians abroad to help connect the Internet in communities in Africa and Latin America.

Public Internet access projects are the focus of Industry Canada's

Community Access Program (CAP) and Human Resources Development Canada's Community Learning Networks (CLN) program, a part of their Office of Learning Technologies. The CAP program provides funding for non-commercial organizations (libraries, schools, community centre,

The "stove-pipe" approach to computer networking pursued by Industry Canada's "Connecting Canadians" agenda was focused, not on connecting communities as a whole, but on connecting individual sectors of communities.

community nets, and municipal and territorial funding) for Internet connectivity. Funding, up to \$30,000, requires partnerships and allows for the purchase of computers, an ISP and training. CLNs are community access centres, sponsored by the Government, that give citizens access to the Internet and World Wide Web. These community centres are public spaces that foster and create community values and technological literacy, offering a safe space for those without computer access at home to learn new skills congruent with the information age.

Some community networks have found ways to fit into the "Connecting Canadians" agenda. Community networks in Ottawa, Vancouver, and Halifax have a role in delivering the VolNet program in their region. Ottawa's National Capital Freenet has a big piece of Ottawa's winning bid for a "Smart Communities" project, while various networks have also participated in the rural and urban CAP projects.

The "stove-pipe" approach to computer networking pursued by Industry Canada's "Connecting Canadians" agenda was focused, not on connecting communities as a whole, but on connecting individual sectors of communities. For instance, the library community, among the original supporters of community networks, was encouraged to concentrate

on creating networks of libraries through LibraryNet, schools were connected through SchoolNet, and voluntary agencies were connected through VolNet. The Community Access Project (CAP) provided one-time grants to set up information access sites, but no assistance to help them move beyond access to enable communication and content building.

From the e-commerce agenda, the federal government switched to broadband deployment in light of the "New Economy". In the Fall of 2000, the National Broadband Task Force (NBTF) was established by the former Minister of Industry Canada, Brian Tobin. Its mandate was to examine "the best approaches to make high-speed broadband Internet services available to businesses and residents in all Canadian communities by the year 2004", and its three rationales included: 1) ensuring Canadian competitiveness in a global economy, 2) addressing the digital divide, and 3) creating "opportunities for all Canadians."

Presciently, David Johnston, ex-head of Canada's Information Highway Advisory Council (IHAC), was named to lead the 35-member task force, which included 22 members with clear corporate connections to the telecom and communications industry. Only five members were clearly identified with broad public interest issues such as universal access and privacy. As with IHAC, where deliberations took place "behind closed doors", the NBTF deliberations were closed to the public – although submissions could be made and were posted on-line at the NBTF website. However, only 34 submissions were made, with most of them championing the deployment of broadband services, particularly for remote and rural communities.

The NBTF's report was released in June 2001, with the Task Force recommending the deployment of a national broadband network at a cost of between \$1.85 billion to \$4.5 billion. Connecting rural and remote communities and aboriginal settlements was emphasized, with priority given to providing service to health facilities, libraries, schools and other public

institutions. Surprisingly, media coverage was lukewarm in its reception (perhaps a reaction to recent dot.com slumps), criticizing both the necessity for and cost of deploying broadband. Instead, more attention was paid to NBTF recommendations to review foreign investment rules, with the view towards easing federal regulatory measures in order to ensure participation in the project.

The 2001 budget, much to the dismay of Tobin and other champions, bypassed the broadband proposal, instead allocating only \$110 million for a scaled-down "innovation agenda," with funds being directed to help build a kind of super-Internet for schools, universities and medical researchers.

Despite this, broadband deployment for "Smart Communities" has been promoted at the federal and municipal level, with strong partnerships between local businesses and the tech sector. Smart Communities are predicated on an economic model – alliances and partnerships which promote innovative ways "to extract new economic and social value from electronic networks and the public Internet", says Industry Canada. "Innovation" here can be for e-government activities, service delivery to the public, business and economic development, tourism development, access to community information, learning, training and education, the preservation of cultural heritage, arts development, and bridging the digital divide. A premise is that "Smart Communities" will lead to "Smart Citizens" and perhaps even "Smart Democracy". The rhetoric is suffused with optimistic potential, but it must be remembered that the model here is probably more technology-driven than community-driven.

COMMUNITY CONTENT, COLLABORATION AND COOPERATION ARE KEY

Ottawa's NCF has joined the Smart Capital project through their "Thin Client" that provides members with access to various office automation and web-authoring software

through NCF's modem pool and server infrastructure. This allows NCF members with modest computers to have access to some of the latest Windows-based applications. The partnership also enables NCF member to send and retrieve e-mail from any Internet terminal, creating, in a sense, a portable, community-based network, an alternative to other free e-mail programs such as Microsoft's Hotmail or Yahoo's email.

Many community nets across Canada have been developing enabling tools, processes and structures. The key here is the development of dynamic community-based content, which is not available on commercial portals. For instance, the Chebucto community network in Nova Scotia operates a web-camera on the top of the highest building in Halifax. Originally used to feature the Tall Ships coming into the Halifax harbour, it is presently offering a view of the city's Victorian era gardens where a number of "old forest trees" are being cut to halt the spread of disease. People are able to view the park with the web-cam and also participate in a discussion forum. Some services developed in Saskatchewan include an e-commerce promotion in the form of an electronic community storefront; a virtual reference service where librarians respond to online queries from all over Saskatchewan, Canada and beyond; and a project that cooperates with medical services to provide or facilitate remote access to specialists. Halinet, a community entry tool that allows community groups to build their own databases. Current databases include heritage collections of books, deeds, documents, photographs, memoirs, videos, maps, and other items; newspaper features about the community from the turn of the century; and a collection of documents on Great Lakes history. It also has an online volunteer centre that allows people to select volunteer opportunities according to their age, community, interests, and availability. A special search feature has been provided to enable secondary school students to find relevant opportunities to satisfy their mandatory volunteer requirements for Ontario high school graduation. Volunteers are able to contact the agency or agencies involved electronically through the Web interface.

The national organization, Telecommunities Canada (TC), has been developing a number of tools and services for the use of all community network members, including open source software that enables community networks and their users to customize their opening menus. This "portal" software allows users to always have a page of their favourite

The initial exuberance and idealism which first nurtured community nets has turned into pragmatism, as some systems that were free (or donation-driven) have begun charging nominal fees, based on the level of services received.

destinations in front of them. Channels may be either "active" with continuously updated weather or news headlines or, "passive" with collections of links. Users can also

create channels and publish them for the use of the general community. TC has also developed a WebMail service that allows holders of Canadian community-based e-mail services to access their home mailboxes from any location. This service is advertising-free and authenticated (i.e., not anonymous). They also provide streaming video services that provide an opportunity for community nets to present

Many community nets across Canada have been developing enabling tools, processes and structures. The key here is the development of dynamic community-based content, which is not available on commercial portals.

the activities of their citizens to the rest of the country and to the world, both live and in stored archival form. Using this service, a local Junior A hockey team was the first in Saskatchewan to broadcast games in video over the Web in real time. And, finally, TC is developing a "Network of Networks" project that will create a national community networking database. There is, as yet, no comprehensive national listing of all community networks, community access sites, and other similar network access initiatives in Canada. As a start to this initiative, a recent project with the Office of Learning Technologies has created a directory of and links to online learning opportunities offered through community networks including online courses.

COMMUNITY INFORMATICS

As a new multidisciplinary field of academic study, community informatics is concerned with the study of the enabling uses of ICTs in communities – how ICTs can help achieve a community's social, economic, cultural, or political goals. Community informatics brings together the perspectives of a variety of stakeholders – community activists and groups, policymakers, users/citizens, artists, and a range of academics working across disciplines (communication studies, cultural studies, information studies, sociology, political science, urban studies and geography, and Canadian studies). Michael Gurstein has been one of the pioneers of this new field, and he cites six areas that encompass a community informatics approach: access facilities, service design, telecentre or community access centre design, design of the community system, online service delivery, and online support. Applications of community informatics include community Internet access, community information, online civic participation, online community service delivery, community economic development, education/training/learning networks, community and regional training, and telework.

A rich literature has developed in community informatics, which covers a broad range of issues, focusing on case studies in North America, Europe, Latin America, and developing countries. These issues, broadly speaking, include:

- Access – how are access needs met in particular communities? Are community nets able to bridge the digital divide? (Access here defined as both access to the technical and the social infrastructure)
- Community economic development - how are community nets contributing to this?
- Social cohesion – are community nets contributing to social inclusion? What has been the effect of community participation?
- Development – are telecentres and other public access facilities meeting the needs of those in developing countries?
- Learning – how are community nets being used or contributing to digital literacy?

THE NEXT FIVE YEARS: TOWARDS “GLOCALIZATION”?

Despite many difficulties (fiscal, dependency on volunteers who can easily burn out, a need to constantly create viable community content), Canadian community nets are still alive. The initial exuberance and idealism which first nurtured community nets has turned into pragmatism, as some systems that were free (or donation-driven) have begun charging nominal fees, based on the level of services received. Partnerships with the private sector are also an integral part of the new model.

Canadian community nets have also aligned themselves with international efforts and projects in community networking. TC and other community nets have maintained contacts with international associations, including the European Association of Community Networks. In October of this year, Montreal will host the Global CN 2002—the Third Global Summit on Community Networking in the Digital Era (see <http://www.globalcn2002.ca/index.html>). The conference is sponsored by the GlobalCN Partnership, an international coalition of community networks, which was founded in Barcelona in November 2000 following the first international meeting of community networks, which brought together 450 delegates from all continents, representatives from various governments, international institutions such as the Council of Europe and the UN, and private telecom corporations. The featured agenda focuses on the future of community networking, civic empowerment and broadband; Smart Communities and digital cities; Internet rights and policies; and multiculturalism and multilingualism on the Internet.

This conference will also serve as a preparatory conference leading to The World Summit on the Information Society, to be held in Geneva, December 10-12, 2003 (see <http://www.itu.int/wsis/>). This initiative, led by the United Nations and the ITU (International Telecommunication Union), will bring together governments, civil society groups and NGOs, the private sector, and community activists to address a broad range of Information Society themes, and adopt a Declaration of Principles and Action Plan, addressing a gamut of issues related to the Information Society, including access and equity, information as a common good, community economic development, and rights and responsibilities for the digital citizen. One of the groups involved is

Communication Rights in the Information Society (CRIS) an initiative of the Platform for Communication Rights, whose members include international organizations (including GlobalCN) and individuals committed to the promotion of communication rights and the Right to Communicate as a means to enhance human rights and the social, economic and cultural lives of people and communities (see <http://www.comunica.org/cris/>).

It is inspiring that Canadian community nets are working with international groups concerned with the broader global societal goals of information as a public good and communication rights for all citizens. However, more advocacy and work in Canada needs to happen, particularly given that Canada has one of the most highly concentrated commercial media systems in the world. Two suggestions will be made here. One, public policymaking on ICTs has left out the public – unlike the days of Graham Spry and the Canadian Radio League, it involves blue ribbon panels and policymakers who are often too divorced from their constituency. This

It is inspiring that Canadian community nets are working with international groups concerned with the broader global societal goals of information as a public good and communication rights for all citizens. However, more advocacy and work in Canada needs to happen...

needs to change. Canada needs an open, inclusive, participatory, and far-reaching consultative process. Two, while the CAP and CLN programs have complex and often contradictory objectives, they all declare the aim of bringing Canadians closer together in some fashion – whether for cultural enrichment or economic development. Although several hundred million dollars have been spent in these programs in support of some 10,000 community ICT initiatives, so far there has been remarkably little evaluation of these programs to determine what has been achieved, what difficulties have been encountered, what effect these programs have had on community networking practices, and what policies or programs are now appropriate in light of contemporary ICT developments. Academic work that engages community participants, policymakers, and the private sector needs to happen – and there is a viable field of community informatics that can inform this process.

Many argue that the health of a nation depends on the strength and vitality of its cultural industries, and, although community networking has not secured the same credibility as the broadcasting, publishing, and film industries, it has proved to be a very responsive and viable “local culture” and can play an important role in the development, organization and dissemination of content that matters to the community.

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WOULD WE CREATE a CBC if none existed?

BY Colin Hoskins, Stuart McFadyen and Adam Finn

This paper is an abbreviated version of Colin Hoskins, Stuart McFadyen and Adam Finn, "Refocusing the CBC", Canadian Journal of Communication, Volume 26 (2001), pp 17-30.

EXAMINATION OF THE CBC TYPICALLY BEGINS WITH THE EXISTING ROLE AND STRUCTURE OF THE CBC AND CONSIDERS HOW THIS SHOULD BE CHANGED. OUR APPROACH IN THIS PAPER IS MORE RADICAL. WE ASK WHETHER WE WOULD WISH TO INVENT A CBC IF NONE EXISTED. IF INTRODUCED, WHAT WOULD THE PUBLIC BROADCASTER LOOK LIKE? HOW WOULD IT COMPARE TO CBC'S CURRENT OPERATIONS AND WHAT WOULD BE ITS FOCUS? OUR EXAMINATION OF THESE QUESTIONS WILL CONCENTRATE ON CBC ENGLISH TELEVISION.

Before answering these questions we provide background by examining what economists understand by the term “externalities”. An *externality* is a benefit or cost arising from an economic transaction that falls on a third party. In terms of television programming, externalities can be thought of as side effects, good in the case of benefits or bad in the case of costs, of viewing. It is commonly believed that people are influenced, for good or for bad, by what they watch on television. This is an external benefit or cost because it is not enjoyed or borne by the parties to the economic transaction, namely the program producer, distributor, broadcaster, and advertisers or, for pay-TV, the viewer. Hence, for example, the parties to a transaction involving a violent show will ignore any ill-effects of that violence on society. A competitive broadcasting market will provide too many violent shows.

But programs also have the capacity to provide external benefits. For example, news, current affairs, and documentary programming may promote a better-informed public. Some domestic drama may reinforce a sense of national identity and awareness of Canadian themes and values. Some children’s programming may be educational in a broad sense.

Market failure exists if insufficient programs with external benefits are exhibited.

WOULD THERE BE MARKET FAILURE WITHOUT A CBC?

The key to whether we would wish to create a CBC is whether there would be market failure in its absence. Would the programming mix be deficient?

The easiest approach to answering this question is to look at the programming that is being offered by CBC now

and imagine the programming mix without CBC. While considering what programming would be lost if CBC were shut down we must bear in mind that in some

While considering what programming would be lost if CBC were shut down we must bear in mind that in some areas, after an adjustment period, the private sector could be expected to expand and partially or wholly fill the void.

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CBC shows a much higher percentage of Canadian programming than private broadcasters. CBC English Television is 81% Canadian on an all day

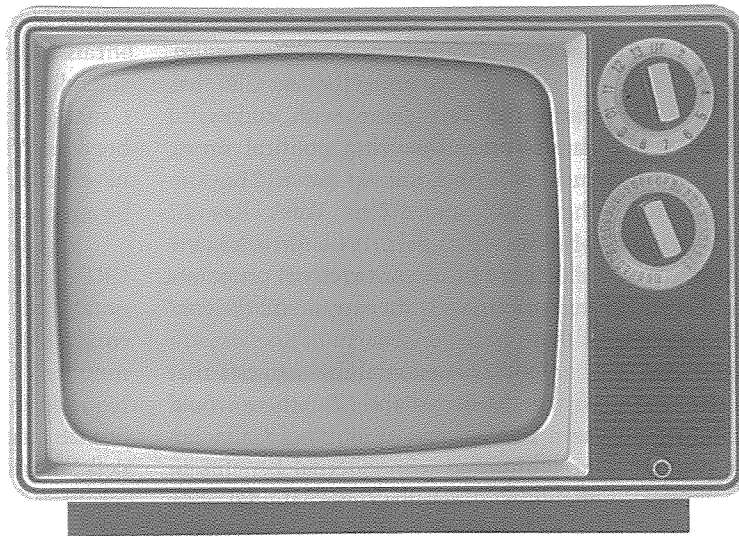
different genres of Canadian programming. The approximate number of hours per week (Fall 1998) that the CBC devotes to each genre is given, in

parentheses after the sub-heading, to indicate the importance of the genre in CBC’s schedule.

Sports (15 hours) The Mandate Review Committee (1996, p. 67) complained that sports programming comprised 25% of CBC’s prime-time schedule and 37% of its prime-time audience. Much of this program is professional sports and during the National Hockey League play-offs CBC becomes almost another sports channel. It can be argued that hockey provides external benefits as it is an interest shared by many Canadians. However, there would be little if any diminution in the amount of hockey and other professional sports available on television if the CBC were to shut-down. This program-

ming attracts large audiences and the private sector would find it profitable to pick up properties dropped by the CBC.

National/international news and current affairs (37 hours) This has been an area of strength for the CBC and most would consider it the most authoritative television news service in the country. It has more reporters and foreign bureaus than the private networks and consequently relies less on feed from foreign (mainly US) broadcasters than Canadian broadcasters. It thus provides a greater Canadian perspective on international news. Its selection of news



basis, and 91% during prime time. In contrast, the Canadian content of private broadcasters is around the 50% level required by the CRTC. Global’s 2000-2001 schedule was comprised entirely of US shows during the 8:00 p.m. – 10:00 p.m. peak period. It is thus safe to assume there would be less Canadian programming in the Canadian broadcasting system without CBC. As it is largely Canadian programming that has the potential to provide positive externalities, this is of concern. But where would the reductions take place? To consider this we examine the

items tends to be more informational and less sensational. It is difficult to imagine the private networks expanding their coverage to fill the void if there were no CBC.

Local News (7 hours) Television news is the most popular source of news in Canada (Gallup Poll, February 13, 1997) but the CBC's audience share for local news is down from 28% at beginning of 1990s to 13% now. In many

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major markets, such as Toronto, Vancouver, Calgary and Edmonton, the CBC trails its private competitors badly. Losing CBC local TV news would hardly be noticed in major centres.

Children's (27 hours) CBC's children's programming has scarcely been exemplary and the Mandate Review Committee (1996, p. 71) complained that CBC has subtly reduced its emphasis on children's programming and replaced some after-school children's programming with old US series. Nevertheless it does offer some broadly educational children's programming, including drama like "Anne of Green Gables", and the private sector could not be expected to expand in this area in the absence of CBC.

Drama (20 hours) While, in terms of a comparison with some other public service broadcasters such as the BBC, CBC does not exhibit much Canadian drama, it nevertheless out-performs the private broadcasters in this area. From the perspective of a private broadcaster, Canadian drama is the least attractive genre of programming as the licence fee

that has to be paid is far in excess of the advertising revenue generated. If there were no CBC, no compensating increase in Canadian drama from the private broadcasters could be expected.

Documentary (5 hours) An increasing number of documentaries are now appearing on specialty channels like Discovery Channel, History Channel, The Learning Channel, Vision and The Women's Network. But the small audiences for specialty channels can only support low licence fee programs, not high budget distinctively-Canadian documentaries. During the 2000-2001 season CBC aired "A People's History", a thirty-hour, \$25 million production that achieved good ratings. If there were no CBC it would be high budget programs like this directed at the Canadian market that would be lost. Also, private broadcasters, more than PSBs, generally steer away from documentaries on controversial topics in order not to antagonize advertisers.

Comedy/variety (7 hours) CBC has pioneered this genre with successful shows, often involving political satire, such as "The Royal Air Farce", "Boys in the Hall", and "This Week has 22 Minutes". Again, private broadcasters reluctance to air controversial programs makes it unlikely they would fill the void if there were no CBC.

Our discussion above suggests that in the absence of the CBC there would be a sub-optimal amount of Canadian programming with external benefits in the areas of national/international news and current affairs, broadly educational children's programming, drama, big budget or controversial documentaries, and comedy/variety.

It is more cost effective to produce a one-hour television program for a national audience than the set of programs needed to fill one hour for local or regional audiences.

But would there be alternative ways of correcting for this market failure? Two approaches, which are already used

and could be expanded, are subsidies to program production and regulation.

Subsidies for independent productions resulting in external benefits are suitable for programming like drama, children's programming, or documentaries that are undertaken on a project basis. (The project being a one-off program or a series of a specified number of episodes, where the project can be assessed on the basis of the treatment and scripts before shooting begins.) However, this approach is not suitable for news programming which is immediate and continuing and where program content cannot be assessed in advance. In addition, there are administrative difficulties inherent in a subsidy program as illustrated by the allegations against Cinar. More fundamentally, directing subsidies to projects on the basis of a points system for Canadian inputs rather than on the basis of the output – the nature of the program itself – raises the question of what is being subsidized: inputs or distinctively Canadian programs delivering external benefits. While we believe such subsidies have a role, we do not consider they can be a replacement for a CBC.

Regulation of broadcasting by the CRTC takes several forms. Perhaps most notable are Canadian content rules and conditions, such as a stipulation of the number of hours of Canadian drama required in a season, set out at time of licence renewal. For regulation to fill the deficiencies in the programming mix resulting from the absence of a CBC, it would have to be able to force private broadcasters to show programming (or more programming) that provides external benefits. With the new delivery systems (DBS and the Internet as well as cable), broadcasting and narrowcasting is becoming increasingly competitive and profit margins are decreasing. The old trade-off, show more (loss-making) programs that we (the CRTC) would like and we will protect you from new competition, is losing credibility. A system of regulation focused on the level of Canadian-based inputs is ill suited to inducing private broadcasters to provide programming with external benefits. For example, a condition of say thirteen hours of Canadian drama could be met

by a police series that meets the input requirement necessary to qualify as Canadian but where the output (the program itself) is made to appear as American as possible in order to boost chances of a sale to a US network. Far from being a substitute for a CBC, regulation will become less and less effective in an Internet era where the CRTC cannot control distribution. This then becomes an argument that public broadcasting will be needed more than ever.

WOULD THERE BE GOVERNMENT FAILURE IF A CBC WERE CREATED?

In a world of scarcity, creating a CBC can be justified only if the benefits exceed the costs. Thus the mere fact that the programming mix would be deficient without a CBC is not a sufficient condition for saying one should be created. Benefits are easy to exaggerate and

If a CBC were created in the year 2002 it would not build a 1950s style over-the-air transmission structure. Delivery would be by satellite-to-cable, DBS, and via the Internet.

difficult to measure, although attempts are being made to estimate the value of the CBC using contingent valuation and choice experiment survey approaches (Finn, McFadyen, and Hoskins, 2000.). If a CBC were created where the costs of intervention are greater than the benefits, then we have “government failure” – the resources used are greater than those wasted through uncorrected market failure. Government failure may occur because it is too costly to set up and operate a CBC and/or the intervention itself may be imperfect and do little to correct the market failure.

There is one program type where we feel safe, on cost grounds, in arguing that the benefits are less than the costs. This program type is local news for a local/regional audience. It is more cost effective to produce a one-hour televi-

sion program for a national audience than the set of programs needed to fill one hour for local or regional audiences.

IF A CBC WERE TO BE CREATED NOW, HOW WOULD IT LOOK?

What would its mandate be?

The CBC would be given a mandate to exhibit, on a national basis, distinctive programming consistent with provision of external benefits. This programming would complement that provided by the private sector. The mandate would not require that CBC be all things to all people.

What programming would it exhibit?

It would provide distinctive national/international news and current affairs, drama, children’s, variety/comedy, and documentaries. This programming would be Canadian in nature, not just in terms of production inputs.

The CBC would produce its own news and current affairs programming. Bureaus would be established across the country supplying local/regional stories for national delivery. Foreign bureaus would be established to provide a Canadian perspective on international news.

Drama, children’s, variety/comedy and documentaries, providing external benefits would be commissioned from independent producers located throughout the country. It would be particularly important to provide controversial, big-budget, or very Canadian-specific programming not attractive to private broadcasters or specialty channels.

How would CBC signals be delivered to households?

If a CBC were created in the year 2002 it would not build a 1950s style over-the-air transmission structure. Delivery would be by satellite-to-cable, DBS, and via the Internet. Of the 10.9 million Canadian households in Canada, cable is available to 10.6 million Canadian households (over 97%) of which about 75% actually subscribe to,

at the least, the basic tier (Statistics Canada, 2000). Add in subscribers to ExpressVu and Star Choice and about 90% receive CBC via cable or satellite. If cable or DBS subscription becomes necessary to view CBC, current non-subscribers who value CBC can be expected to begin subscribing to one of these services. There is no reason why free access to CBC signals is a right; as it is, households have to purchase a television receiver to view CBC.

How would CBC be funded?

The CBC would be commercial free. A partial reliance on advertising revenue inevitably results in some programming decisions reflecting commercial imperatives rather than public service goals. It is thus no surprise that McKinsey & Company (1999, p. 29), in a survey of twenty public service broadcasters, found that the higher the proportion of ad funding, the less distinctive the programming.

CONCLUSION

Given competing claims on government funds, particularly for healthcare, we suspect a demand for funding to create a CBC (if none currently existed) would have difficulty being heard. A good argument can be made, however, that the contribution a radically different CBC could make is becoming increasingly important in a digital environment where regulation is fast becoming ineffective, if not impossible.

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ANTI-AMERICANISM and the Canadian Mass Media

BY Mary Vipond

IT IS DIFFICULT TO DISCUSS THE CANADIAN-AMERICAN RELATIONSHIP THESE DAYS, AND PARTICULARLY DIFFICULT TO DO SO CRITICALLY. IN THE MONTHS SINCE SEPTEMBER 11, WE HAVE BEEN FORCED TO REFLECT UPON THE FACT THAT WE TOO ARE RESIDENTS OF A NORTH AMERICAN CONTINENT NOT VIOLATED BY DIRECT ATTACK FROM ELSEWHERE FOR CENTURIES. ON SEPTEMBER 11, CANADIANS, LIKE AMERICANS, EXPERIENCED A SENSE OF VIOLATION, THE LOSS OF THE INNOCENCE OF FORTRESS NORTH AMERICA. WHILE THERE HAS BEEN AN EXPLOSION OF DEBATE AMONG CANADIANS ABOUT WHERE WE FIT INTO AMERICAN PLANS FOR AN EXTENDED WAR ON TERRORISM, IT HAS OFTEN BEEN EMOTIONAL, REACTIVE AND AMBIVALENT.

Two fundamentals underlie this debate. First, our relationship with the United States remains a major concern of Canadians, as it has been since the first English-speaking Canadians, the Loyalists, left there and headed here. Secondly, our connections with the US continue to be complexly intertwined with another of our major preoccupations, our seemingly perpetual search for a “Canadian identity.” For the most part, English-speaking Canadians have

We continue to wrestle with the questions: which is greater – our similarity or our difference? Should we continue to emphasize those things that make us different? Indeed can we continue to do so?

historically attempted to define themselves not as “anti-American” but as “non-American.” But the distinction, especially in the last few months, has not always been clear, or always heard.

A sustained study of the history of Canadian attitudes towards the United States reveals much variety, depending on factors such as class, occupation, region, age, ethnicity and language. Our attitudes have also changed over time. Over the years, there have been waves of anti-Americanism and pro-Americanism that have been strong enough to affect government policies and therefore to have had permanent impacts of various kinds. The pendulum has swung back and forth – in certain periods there was much anti-American rhetoric, much concern about the power and might of the US invading Canada in various ways; in other periods the issue more or less dropped off the agenda.

But I think that these waves of pro and anti-Americanism have been what the Annales school of historians call rather dismissively *événements* – mere political comings and goings. Underneath the surface, at the level of structures and conjunctures, the tide has been moving inexorably in one direction – toward a greater and greater similarity between our two countries, socially, intellectually, politically, economically and culturally. As the events of recent

months have shown us, our geographical position as part of a shared continent is basic to the relationship. So too are various historical developments, including a similar pattern of European settlement imposed on Aboriginal inhabitants, a common desire to exploit the resources of the continent, a shared liberal democratic heritage from our European forebears and substantial continuing immigration. Compared to these fundamental similarities, which have grown more and more intense as modern communications have increased our linkages and as the United States has grown in power and influence everywhere in the world, the little waves of pro- and anti-Americanism seem almost superficial.

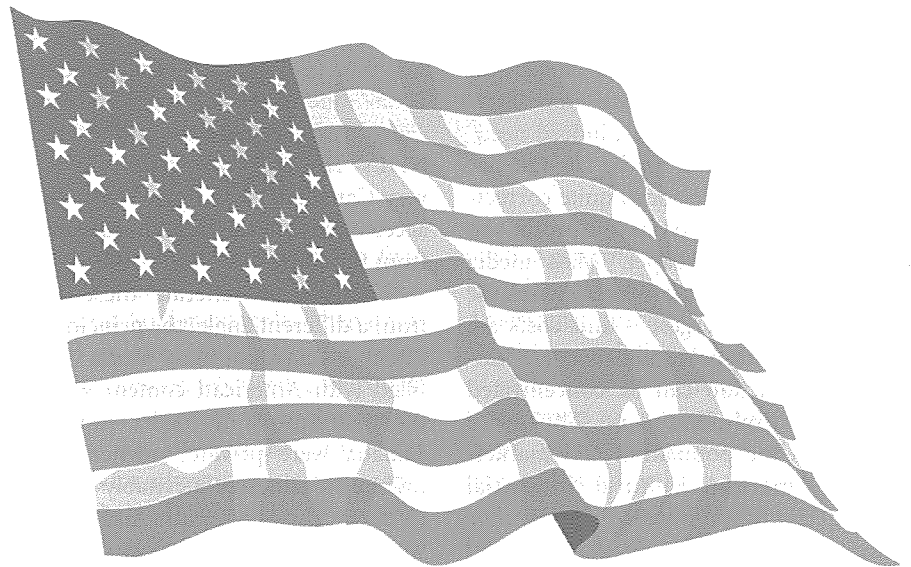
BUT – and this is the big but – we are a separate polity, we do have a different history, we do see the world differently and have different responsibilities in it, we do have a different social mix, and certainly a different (and less advantageous) climate and geography. And so we continue to wrestle with the ques-

dominant part of modern life during the last century. There is no doubt that the cultural industries have been a vehicle for the “Americanization” of

One would not be far wrong in coming to the deterministic conclusion that American ascendancy over continental popular culture was inevitable.

Canadian society especially in the last fifty years, but they have also been a site of contestation and resistance of considerable importance.

Culture, broadly defined by the sociologists and anthropologists, is the glue that holds a society together. It includes the knowledge, belief systems, art, morals, laws, customs and habits that characterize any given society. “Culture” is our common language, our common way of seeing the world; it is



tions: which is greater – our similarity or our difference? Should we continue to emphasize those things that make us different? Indeed can we continue to do so?

I would like here to address these issues with respect to the aspect of Canadian/American interaction with which I am most familiar, that of culture, and more specifically, that of the cultural industries that became such a

what forms or constructs our identity. But this culture is dependent upon communication among the members of a society. It is through communications of various sorts that they share and pass on their knowledge, beliefs, laws, customs and so on. Cultural identity is constructed by discourse. Moreover, communication is absolutely central to the formation and preservation of the modern

nation state. As scholars as diverse as Karl Deutsch and Benedict Anderson have argued, the nation state is an imagined community held together by a shared concept of a national identity created by communication. And at this point, much of our communication happens via the mass media. As Gene Youngblood put it: “The media for most people most of the time specify what’s real and what’s not (existence), what’s important and what’s not (priorities), what’s good and what’s bad (values) and what’s related to what else and how (relations).”

What has been the significance of the simultaneous rise of popular culture “mediated” in the form of cultural-industrial products like newspapers, magazines, records, radio, film, TV and the Internet in both Canada and the United States? This is not the place to go through much of this history, but let me make a few pertinent points.

First, while there has been media flow in both directions, by far the most significant has been the flow from the United States into Canada. There are several reasons for this. To start with, while mass media constitute culture, they are also (except for a handful of public enterprises, of which more later) businesses seeking profits, indeed needing them to survive. As the late Quebec publisher Pierre Péladeau quite correctly put it: “If you don’t have a profit, you don’t have a newspaper.” Mass media enterprises are most profitable when the local market is largest – unit costs are decreased, transportation costs are lessened, production can be concentrated more effectively, and so on. Thus, with ten times the population and marketplace, American cultural industrial products always have a comparative advantage over the Canadian. Add to that other less easily calculated factors – the creation of the new American nation one hundred years earlier than the Canadian; the dynamic popular culture of the United States, attributable in no small part to a certain mix of immigrants at a certain moment in early 20th century cities; the language duality in Canada that divides the cultural marketplace; the general social similarities between the two nations – and the domination of the whole North American

cultural market by the United States is not surprising. These factors are so fundamental and so powerful that one would not be far wrong in coming to the deterministic conclusion that American ascendancy over continental popular culture was inevitable. And indeed, similar factors have led American mass media culture to flourish in much of the world; other countries struggle mightily to prevent what they call “Canadianization” from befalling them.

Secondly, and this is too often forgotten, this Americanization of Canada’s popular culture has been happening much longer than most of us realize, in fact since the phenomenon of a mass-mediated culture was born. By the end of the 19th century, most of the popular middle-class magazines circulating in Canada were American; by the end of the 1920s we effectively had no indigenous film industry and our screens were almost completely filled with American movies. By that decade as well in a newer industry, radio, the musical content was largely American records and an untold but large number of Canadians listened directly to American programs on privately-owned commercial radio stations, both Canadian and American. Today nine of the top ten TV shows in Canada are American and even the NHL’s “Hockey Night in Canada” is not very Canadian these days. The pace has accelerated, but the trend lines were laid from the start.

Thirdly, to reiterate these points from a different angle, the principal reason that Canadian mass media became filled with American content was that the distributors of media content in Canada were privately-owned profit-oriented businesses inevitably attracted to cheap content inputs. And that private ownership in turn was a consequence of our deeply-held (and shared) belief that free speech is essential to the functioning of democratic societies, and that “free” speech means “not controlled by the government.” Thus the media must be in private hands, and governments should not interfere in their operation or content.

Once again there is a big BUT to this analysis, however. One great exception to the private-ownership pattern in Canada was the decision taken in the

early 1930s to set up a public broadcasting organization owned by the federal government. This action – the creation of a state-owned national media institution – was unprecedented in North America and was obviously the product of a number of strong forces. One factor was certainly the recommendation of the Aird Royal Commission on Radio Broadcasting in 1929 which concluded that radio was inevitably a monopoly, and that given the poverty of most Canadian private radio broadcasters at the time, it must be a government-owned monopoly. Aird, a banker, was typical of an older generation of Canadian businessmen, a mercantile capitalist whose economic interests were rooted in a conception of Canada as an east-west trading nation, and who therefore, although certainly no fan of government ownership, believed the state did have a role to play in facilitating Canadian “defensive expansionism.” A second force was certainly lobbying – in this case not only the well-known lobbying of the Canadian Radio League, a loose coalition of many cultural, religious and social organizations of a

Canada’s first public broadcaster, a bold new step that has not in fact been replicated on this continent, was certainly the product of a concern that Canadians needed to carve out their own space for the powerful new medium of radio in order to avoid being overwhelmed by American broadcasting.

nationalist bent, but also of newspaper editor Charles Bowman, another member of the Aird Commission, and one who had been for some years alarmed at the obliteration of the Canadian movie industry. A third was clearly political. Conservative Prime Minister R.B. Bennett was convinced that politicians – and especially Prime Ministers – could make very effective use of a medium that could create an audience that stretched from sea to sea.

But another reason, less well known, deserves mention as well. It is not often noted that the main task of the first public broadcaster, the CRBC (the predecessor to the CBC), was to set up a national network. It established only a

Many Canadians, being good North Americans, question whether the state should be meddling in the free exchange of speech and ideas; many also object to being taxed to support cultural institutions when commercial alternatives financed by advertising are available.

handful of its own stations and expended most of its energy, time and money on running the national network – again an exercise in defensive expansionism in the sense that it was a preventive measure to keep the American networks from embracing the whole continent. Moreover, the national network comprised mainly affiliated stations, private stations that continued to exist as profit-making entities and were paid to carry CRBC programs. Not only did they receive cash for putting on the CRBC's programs a few hours each night, but they received the programs free, the Commission picking up the costs of wireline transmission as well. Thus, as I have argued elsewhere, the CRBC in fact subsidized the continued existence of a number of private broadcasting enterprises that might otherwise have gone bankrupt in the Depression. Canada's first public broadcaster, a bold new step that has not in fact been replicated on this continent, was certainly the product of a concern that Canadians needed to carve out their own space for the powerful new medium of radio in order to avoid being overwhelmed by American broadcasting. But it was also a major compromise that from the beginning necessitated that the public broadcaster share the field with the previously-established private enterprises. The present sorry state of the CBC as a significant public institution can be traced, in part, to that historic compromise.

And so it has been with most media. Different governments have cared sometimes more and sometimes less about how to ensure that our mass media remain Canadian in some real sense. Some, in fact many, of the governmental attempts to subsidize, quota-ize or otherwise aid Canadian cultural industries have been misconceived and ineffective. Mostly they have aided the industry –

governments – have felt about state intervention in the cultural industries has been the willingness of successive regulators to allow the concentration of many of our media in very few hands. They may be Canadian hands, but they too are here to make profits, so they continue to deluge us with American content. But it should not be forgotten that our politicians believe they are respond-



the business bottom line – rather than the development of Canadian culture – the content. So, for example, when it was decided in the 1960s that Canadian magazines desperately needed help, outright grants were seen to be dangerous, so the aid was given in the form of tax incentives for advertisers, a measure that initially helped subsidize those who advertised in *Time* and *Reader's Digest*. Similarly, postal rate subsidies for magazines did not distinguish by nation of production, only point of mailing. Again, despite the fact that quotas on movie screens have been successfully used in a number of countries to protect domestic products, the idea has never flown in Canada, in part because of lobbying from the film distributors and theatre owners (and, of course, from Jack Valenti!). Another consequence of the ambivalence Canadians – and their

ing to a genuine concern among the voters. Many Canadians, being good North Americans, question whether the state should be meddling in the free exchange of speech and ideas; many also object to being taxed to support cultural institutions when commercial alternatives financed by advertising are available.

And so, gradually and inexorably, our media have in fact become more Americanized, and so have we. The debate about our relationship to the United States now occurs within the context not only of Fortress North America but of CNN. There is not much room left any more for Canadian voices to discuss what it means to be “non-American.”

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SELLING US AN HORIZON of Insignificance

BY Tracy Summerville

THERE SEEMS TO BE A GROWING TREND IN TELEVISION COMMERCIALS WHEREBY ADVERTISERS ARE ATTEMPTING TO SELL THEIR PRODUCTS BY CLAIMING THAT THEY ARE FAMILY. BRAND LOYALTY HAS GONE BEYOND GOOD SERVICE AND A GOOD PRODUCT; IT SEEMS NOW THAT WE CAN RELY ON COMPANIES TO HELP US WHEN WE ARE LONELY OR WHEN WE NEED A RIDE FROM THE HOSPITAL. THIS TREND IS DISTURBING NOT JUST BECAUSE IT REPRESENTS A COMMODIFICATION OF THE FAMILY BUT BECAUSE IT MIGHT REPRESENT A GROWING TREND TO ATOMISM AND A DECLINE IN CIVIC ENGAGEMENT.

In his book, *The Moral Basis of a Backward Society*, Edward Banfield noted that the “backwardness” of a single village in southern Italy was to be explained by “the inability of villagers to act together for their common good or, indeed, for any end transcending the immediate material interest of the nuclear family.” He describes the inability to act together in any concerted way beyond the nuclear family as “amoral familism.” Banfield argues that characteristics of amoral familism may appear in other societies and that only those exhibiting all the characteristics of amoral familism should be described this way. Yet Banfield’s characterization of the society without civic virtue may help us to describe the malaise of contemporary society and the growing trend for advertisers to fill the void by selling us “the family.”

This paper will argue that the “malaise of modernity,” as described by Charles Taylor, is exemplified by the commodification of the family and the rise of “amoral familism.” Further it will

The three elements of the modern identity have become entwined or rather institutionalized in the structures of economic and political life. The three primary “goods” are themselves the structure in which capitalism can thrive.

suggest that advertisers are filling the void left by the “neutral liberal state.” In keeping with the scholarship on civic engagement by authors such as Robert Putnam, this piece will show that the narrow horizon offered by “the family” is insufficient and insignificant for the development of civic engagement.

“THE MALAISE OF MODERNITY”

Charles Taylor describes the malaise of modernity this way. The modern identity requires liberty, nature and efficacy. Our modern identity has been framed around these three primary “goods.” Liberty is the capacity to express autonomous ways of being. This conception of liberty is the antithesis to

the idea that man’s place on earth is preordained by a cosmological order. It is, in fact, the separation of man from nature and the capacity to reason that gives agency to autonomous ways of being, including the choice to be governed through structures designed by one’s own consent. In the modern conception of identity, nature is then the recognition of what the self needs to attain authenticity. Liberty provides the freedom to self-actualize but what is in one’s nature provides the inspiration. Efficacy might be described as the capacity to legitimately self-express and to receive acknowledgement, tacit or implicit, for one’s self-expression.

The modern identity developed in a very particular setting. It arose in (and through) the industrial revolution and the birth of modern capitalism. The three elements of the modern identity have become entwined or rather institutionalized in the structures of economic and political life. The three primary “goods” are themselves the structure in which capitalism can thrive. The Protestant work ethic turns these characteristics into an ethos of the good life. But as secular individuals we are “producers, in the broadest sense, we belong to a whole interconnected society of labour and technology which has immense efficacy in transforming nature and produces more astonishing wonders every day ... We can think of it as partly ours, as a confirmation of ourselves” (Taylor 74).

Of course neither work nor citizenship really give the sense of fulfillment that authenticity requires and so Taylor says we look back to the Romantic conception of nature to find some of the less reasoned, more “passioned” elements of our human nature in which to find real fulfillment. It is, in fact, in our recreation time that we explore our substantive natures.

The malaise of contemporary times arises when our liberty, our nature and our efficacy become entangled in a paradox of their own invention. Liberty becomes anomie, nature becomes recreation “alized” and efficacy turns to alienation and ineffectuality. Taylor describes a series of features of contemporary society which tend to undermine our confidence in it as moderns (Taylor 77): alienation at

work, lack of control over priorities, the fetishization of commodities.

It is easy to characterize “alienation at work” with a description of an individual on a factory assembly line putting the same component into the same slot over and over all day long. A kind of description like this one, Taylor says, treads on Marx’s domain but Taylor makes an important clarification. He points out that contemporary workers under capitalism enjoy “profoundly modified” working conditions compared to their early industrial counterparts. And those “modified” working conditions speak to our need for liberty and efficacy. It is not just that the conditions of employment have improved but the power to control the direction of one’s work day and to participate in a creative manner have given rise to a greater sense of control that many individuals have over their work experience.

There is a sense, even with this move to “modify” the workplace experience that this too suffers from “hypertrophy” of its own success. There is a profound cultural shift that is taking place in society that is saying that despite the new found freedom in the workplace, there is a deep need to find something other than work to fulfill our quest for authenticity. While technology was supposed to help free us from the stationary life and drudgery of the workplace setting, the office could now follow us wherever we wanted to go. For

There is a profound cultural shift that is taking place in society that is saying that despite the new found freedom in the workplace, there is a deep need to find something other than work to fulfill our quest for authenticity.

a while television advertising spoke to this. We saw individuals driving rugged SUVs up the side of mountains in order to find a quiet place to sit back with their laptop. For a while this kind of “freedom” was enough but recently there has been a growing shift that makes technology the enemy of “freedom.”

"THE SPIRITUAL WALKABOUT"

There has been, it seems, a profound response to this need to find something other than work that will make living worthwhile. Peter Emberley, in his new book, *Divine Hunger*:

What is driving this need for spiritual reawaking? Taylor would argue that modern liberalism has created a sense of anomie and alienation, not only from self but also from other.

Canadians on Spiritual Walkabout, argues Canadians, while claiming the need for a spiritual experience are unwilling to commit to a particular religion because the "institutionalized" aspects of religion are, in fact, counter to liberty, efficacy and nature (the modern liberal identity). The modern identity Taylor describes is part of the great tradition of Western liberal thought in which institutions are created by one's own consent and will. "Institutionalized religions," particularly Western religions, are too steeped in tradition, too connected to a hierarchy of spiritual experience where "the church" plays the role of intermediary, to give the individual the feeling that their experience will be unique and "liberating." Robert Putnam argues that the Church creates vertical relationships, "linking unequal agents in asymmetric relations of hierarchy and dependence" (Putnam, *Making Democracy Work*, 173). It makes sense then that Emberley's study shows that Canadians are being drawn to Eastern religions because they cut out the middle man in the spiritual relationship.

Emberley points to the phenomenal success of *The Celestine Prophecy: An Adventure* (Emberley, 153). Others have been successful too. Oprah Winfrey's television show, web site and magazine have managed to commodify and sell back to a lonely society the fad of the spiritual walkabout. The television show acts as a forum for "public therapy." The central theme of all shows is about the need to find one's inner peace. The magazine offers pull out bookmarks with enlightening sayings about improving oneself, and one's relationships and the world in general. But more than this, the phenomenon of Oprah is the creation of a kind of television family without the

kinship ties. It is in fact nationalism as described by Benedict Anderson, a sense of connection with people one will never come to know (*Imagined Communities*, 6). It is an imagined community but instead of being created out of civics by and with the state, it is being

packaged and sold by a television production company.

What is driving this need for spiritual reawaking? Taylor would argue that modern liberalism has created a sense of anomie and alienation, not only from self but also from other. Putnam too would point to the decline of civic engagement that stems from a loss of participation in activities that brings

The paradox is that individuals are looking for a sense of completeness in absence of something greater than themselves while at the same time rejecting anything greater than themselves.

individuals together in "horizontal" relationships. His idea is that we need to participate in clubs and sports and choral groups etc. in order to interact with individuals of like interest but also to create community ties that are necessary for positive civic engagement.

SO WHAT IS AN HORIZON OF SIGNIFICANCE?

It is interesting to note that both Taylor and Putnam use the term "horizon" in their argument, Taylor in the phrase "horizon of meaning / significance" and Putnam in the "horizon-tal" relationships. This is not surprising, although it took an astute colleague to point this out to me, since both of their arguments rely on similar ideas. Taylor's idea of an horizon of significance appears in a number of his works including, *Sources of the Self*, *The Ethics of Authenticity* and his essay, "Alternative Futures." It has been summarized this way:

[a]ccording to Taylor, the rise of individualism grew out of an ideal of authenticity which can

*be traced back to Rousseau and Herder and which originally embodied the ideal of a higher life, premised on the possibility of a distinction between what we actually desire and what we ought to desire. But over time...this evaluative element disappeared and the ideal of authenticity was corrupted: the notion of an external standard which we should strive to live up to was replaced by the self-confirming, vacuous idea of choice as a good in itself (David McCabe, "Taylor's significant horizons." *Commonweal*, February 12, 1993:19-21).*

Taylor's argument is that choice will be vacuous unless one has some measure against which a choice is made; something which actually gives the choice meaning. This can exist in what

Taylor calls a "dialogical" society. In such a society, civic discourse begins with a "presumption of equal worth" of ideas or cultural practices and through dialogue one is to be able to assess the ideas or practices.

The horizon of significance is created in and amongst the individuals living in a society where civic virtue and liberty are connected. And this leads us to what Putnam is saying when he describes horizontal relationships (David McCabe, "Taylor's significant horizons." *Commonweal*, February 12, 1993:21).

AN HORIZON OF SIGNIFICANCE: INSTRUMENTAL OR SUBSTANTIVE

In Putnam's study, *Making Democracy Work*, he argues that civic engagement in Northern Italy is significantly increased because individuals are connected in a real community. He describes a web of "horizontal relationships" that create a sense of belonging in which individuals make choices about the way they act based on a kind of a

rational assessment of their moral obligations to the individuals with whom they “play.” Putnam uses tradition models of game theory (the tragedy of the commons, the public good, the logic of collective action and the prisoner’s dilemma) to help the reader understand the dilemma of rational choice: “defecting” is a more rational choice than acting for the greater good. So Putnam argues that,

success in overcoming dilemmas of collective action and the self-defeating opportunism that they spawn depends on the broader social context within which any particular game is played. Voluntary cooperation is easier in a community that has inherited a substantial stock of social capital in the form of norms of reciprocity and networks of civic engagement (Putnam, 167).

In other words, a rational decision to act for the public good is more likely if the individual feels that there will be substantial punishment, even if only in the form of social ostracism. Putnam then goes on to show that the horizontal social networks help to create an atmosphere in which civic responsibility is fostered.

Without in any way detracting from Putnam’s findings, there may be a better way to explain the context in which decisions about providing for the public good are made. The problem is the starting point or the analogy that is used to help us understand the decision making process for acting for the common good. Putnam is talking about individuals who make decisions to act in the public good because there is an intuit trust that is developed between individuals about “expectations” for behaviour. He uses the example of raking leaves. We do this, he argues, not just because we want a green lawn but because there is a social expectation that we will not let our leaves blow onto someone else’s lawn for them to clean up. There is also a social expectation that we should keep neatly trimmed and raked lawns because this enhances the beauty of the neighbourhood. There is a moral element here in the expectation of a public “good.” In the case of the prisoner’s dilemma, which is the main example that Putnam uses to explain rational choice, two individuals have



committed a crime and they are now counting on one another to cooperate to generate an outcome favourable to both. But this example is morally baseless and completely lacks a sense of community that can provide an “horizon of significance;” that is a moral base upon which decisions about action are made.

One might argue that individuals choose to act egoistically or altruistically but both of these ways of acting assert the

of the decline of the horizontal networks in which we become accustomed to the norms, social behaviours and, I will go so far as to say morals, of our community.

A sense of anomie and individualism, the rejection of vertical networks (like the Church) and horizontal networks (like bowling clubs and choral groups) means that we pursue our authenticity in solitary pursuits, like the “spiritual walkabouts” that were dis-

It is becoming more and more commonplace that companies are trying to fill the void that is left by the modern malaise

individual as the agent. In other words, I act for my own good or I act for the greater good because it makes me feel good or creates an instrumental or utilitarian outcome; i.e. that you will conduct business with me. But this is not what Putnam means. I think he wants to say that one acts because there is a moral expectation to do so; the individual is situated in a “network” but the network is not just instrumental it is substantive. The significant horizon is not of individual creation (which is normally an expectation of modern liberalism); it is the moral base that exists as a result of the expectations of the community.

The point of all of this is that civic engagement increases when individuals know what is expected of them within the community. Putnam, of course, argues that we are less engaged in these community activities than in the past and the decline of civic engagement is a result

cussed earlier. But the paradox is that individuals are looking for a sense of completeness in absence of something greater than themselves while at the same time rejecting anything greater than themselves.

This trend corresponds to the rise of neo-liberalism wherein the state is less inclined to promote civic engagement. The rise of the right-wing around the world and in Canada has created an atmosphere in which the welfare state is anathema to liberty. In this context the contemporary state needs to be seen as “downsizing,” as not pandering to welfare recipients, as cutting taxes. The “institution” that is the state no longer has any mandate to create some kind of “horizon of significance.” Some may argue that liberal states never had that mandate but there are two arguments against this. First, the post World War I ideology of reform liberalism certainly

did shift greater responsibility onto the state to provide, at least in part, a kinder, gentler capitalism. Second, in the case of Canada, the Red-Tory conservative tradition contributed to a context in which the state could and did attempt to provide (what one could again call) a kinder, gentler and most importantly, substantive community. But this is no longer true. And it is in this context that the disturbing trend in television advertising is taking place.

SELLING US AN HORIZON OF INSIGNIFICANCE

It is becoming more and more commonplace that companies are trying to fill the void that is left by the modern malaise. Although I think there are numerous examples of this, I will focus on two trends: one is that companies are trying to respond to the feeling of anomie by commodifying the family. Second, many advertisers are picking up on the trend of the “spiritual walkabout” and they are commodifying the “solitary” journey toward self-actualization. What I will argue over this last section of the paper is that this is worrisome because neither of these situations promotes civic engagement: the relationship between consumers and producers is merely instrumental.

In the first case, we have seen the commodification of the family illustrated in the advertising campaigns of the Saturn Car Company. Their marketing strategy seems to market their dealers even before their product. One of their advertisements tells the story of a woman who breaks her arm and calls her Saturn dealer to come and get her from the hospital. The woman nurses her aching arm while leaning against a window in which we see reflected the pouring rain. The tag line was something to the effect that she could not think of anyone better to call than her Saturn dealer because “he’s family.” Tim Hortons has picked up on this trend also. An elderly woman climbs a steep, rural road. She does this everyday in order to see the girls at the store who are “family.” In fact their web site boasts,

The Tim Hortons chain is part of people’s lives and lifestyles. To our customers, Tim Hortons is

their neighborhood meeting place – a home away from home (<http://www.timhortons.com/english/english.html>).

The point is that what is drawing these individuals together is that they all purchased the same type of automobile or the same brand of coffee and donuts. One might grant that there might be more camaraderie created at a local restaurant than at the local car dealership but the issue is that in both cases the companies are not really selling their

One might grant that there might be more camaraderie created at a local restaurant than at the local car dealership but the issue is that in both cases the companies are not really selling their product they are selling us the idea that they are family.

product they are selling us the idea that they are family. The elderly woman went to Tim Hortons to see the sales staff not to meet a group of her own friends.

Family might be an institution that we still trust: it has both elements of a “vertical relationship” and a “horizontal relationship.” In fact, Taylor implicitly says that the modern family is a source of horizontal relationships. He says,

...the version of the modern identity predominant in our society is one that aims towards a mobile subject who loosens the ties of larger communities and finds himself on his own in the nuclear family. But this gives a tremendously heightened significance to the nuclear family, which is now the main locus of strong, lasting, defining relations, and it has given family life and the emotions of family love a uniquely important place in the modern conception of natural fulfillment... (Charles Taylor, “Alternative Futures,” 82).

But those horizontal relationships are not sufficient to create a dialogue beyond the narrow scope of the ties of

kinship. They are not plural enough. The family does not provide a significant base upon which to build civic engagement or social capital. And again, Taylor points to this when he says that the horizontal demands of the family put great stress on marriage because both of the partners are trying to self-actualize and when either of the partners feels constrained by the relationship i.e. when their liberty is constrained, the relationship can “[feel like] a prison rather than a locus of identity.” The issue of amoral familism is that the individuals: “maximize the material, short-run advantage of the nuclear family; [and] assume that all others will do likewise” (Banfield, 85). This connects with the second trend in advertising and that is that advertisers support the individual journey toward self-actualization.

Advertisers have picked up on the notion, as described earlier, that technology can be the enemy of liberty: individuals are throwing cell phones off mountains or just shutting them off as testimony to freedom. Richard Reeves (“We Bowl Alone, But Work Together” *New Statesman* Vol. 130 Issue 4531: 23) has argued that Putnam does not take into account the workplace as a place that creates important horizontal networks. But even if Putnam missed this, it seems that now individuals are rebelling against the workplace. They are choosing to “shut off” the work connection in order to look for something more fulfilling.

What we come to is that there are neither the significant horizontal networks nor the state driven ideology of reform liberalism to create a context for civic engagement. Neo-liberalism wins when advertisers try to fill the gap left by the malaise of modernity with a purely instrumental kind of relationship. What they are selling us is an horizon of insignificance.

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DELIGHTING IN Multicultural Communication

BY Alexandre Sévigny

AS CANADIANS, WE LIVE IN A FREE AND AFFLUENT SOCIETY BLESSED WITH WEALTH AND THE SOLIDARITY OF ITS CITIZENS. WE ARE DIVERSE, WE ARE PEACEFUL AND WE HAVE, FOR THE MOST PART, A TENDENCY TO ESPOUSE THE IDEALS OF JUSTICE AND EQUALITY. HOWEVER, ALL IS NOT PERFECT IN OUR SOCIETY. WE ARE OFTEN FRAUGHT WITH AN ANXIETY BROUGHT UPON US BY AN ECONOMIC SYSTEM WHICH ENCOURAGES PRECARIOUSNESS AND A SENSE OF INSECURITY. WE ARE TOLD OF THE INSUFFICIENCY OF OUR PRODUCTIVITY AND THAT THE VERY FACT THAT WE FEEL INSECURE IS A SIGN OF OUR HAVING BEEN CODDLED AND PAMPERED. IN FACT, THE STEADY MOVEMENT TOWARDS A MORE MATERIALLY-DIVIDED SOCIETY ORIENTED TOWARDS THE INDIVIDUAL QUITE OFTEN LEAVES US WITH A SENSE OF EXCLUSION, ALIENATION OR ANXIETY BRED OF INSECURITIES REGARDING OUR IDENTITY. THIS HAVING BEEN SAID, WE SHOULD BE PROUD OF OUR SPECIFICITY, A SPECIFICITY WHICH HAS PERMITTED US TO CREATE OUTLETS FOR OUR IMAGINATION, OASES THAT OUR QUIETLY EGALITARIAN AND PRAGMATIC DEMOCRACY HAS ENGENERED WHICH PERMIT US THE INTELLECTUAL BREATHING ROOM NECESSARY FOR A REASONED SALVE OF THESE WORRIES. ONE SUCH SPACE IS THE NETWORK OF MULTICULTURAL COMMUNICATIONS OUTLETS THAT ARE AVAILABLE TO PERMIT US TO DELIGHT IN OUR DIVERSITY AND IN *OURSELVES*.

What does it mean to delight? To delight in something is to enjoy it without fear of reprisal, without having to meet others' expectations and requirements. To delight is to be free. To delight is to observe and share without judgement or reserve because one feels safe and that one can trust one's interlocutors. It is not a complicated experience because it describes a simple human desire: to revel in one's surroundings, to feel at peace to enjoy, discover and share. Where can we find this experience in a society that is dominated by an overwhelming sense of urgency, speed and anxiety? Where is the place one can go to escape the cacophony of everyday feelings of domination and busyness and feel free?

To many of us who grew up in the culturally diverse suburbs of Toronto, multiculturalism seemed a natural development, a joyful outgrowth of the desire for freedom bubbling through the veil of xenophobia. So convinced were

The policy of multiculturalism was perhaps still a novelty for our parents and their contemporaries, but it was all we knew. We participated in a sort of guileless joyful sharing that we didn't know represented a new way of doing things.

we of this truth that we felt it to be completely natural, the only way to be. The policy of multiculturalism was perhaps still a novelty for our parents and their contemporaries, but it was all we knew. We participated in a sort of guileless joyful sharing that we didn't know represented a new way of doing things. It is only when I am exposed to the official cultural situation which preceded the cultural experience of my family that I am reminded that hybridity and transculturalism was not always the norm.

One of the joys of growing up of mixed heritage (French-Canadian and Macedonian, in my case) in a city – Toronto – that defines itself by its very hybridity was being able to glimpse into other cultures and feel that we were all participating in the same discursive universe. Toronto's multicultural media and multicultural festivals formed for us a metagrammar for our Torontonians culture which allowed us to participate in its complicated cultural networks at any level that we wanted. Indeed, one can think of Toronto as a complicated multi-dimensional network where nodes can be connected in myriad constellations (although I am certain that my colleagues in computational linguistics and artificial intelligence would say that many more dimensions are necessary to capture relationships of such complexity) where we were able to travel from node to node without fretting or giving it a second thought. We were a group of friends that came from 15 different backgrounds, spoke at least 25 languages among us and navigated in the waters of cultural hybridity as though all of those cultures belonged to us, as if we were everything at once. We ate each other's foods, listened to each other's music and watched each other's television. On weekends, our multi-ethnic group of

friends would spend afternoons at each other's houses, feasting on whatever ethnic delectable the host house had to offer. Strains of ethnic music would waft in from the radio and from the television. Copies of non-anglophone news-

papers would litter coffee tables, so much so, that seeing newsprint in Arabic, Russian, Macedonian, Italian, Farsi, Urdu, Portugese, Chinese or Korean was commonplace to us.

This world was made available to us because of Toronto's multicultural communications infrastructure. I remember it was small, it was inadequate, it was crammed into the early morning and on the weekend, but it existed and it bound us together, made us sophisticated, hybridized us, and inoculated us against many of the tribulations and fights that we heard happening around us. God knows, there was racism. There were certainly racial comments, but quite often they were uttered in the mould of

We became transcultural hybrids, and in so doing joined a new entity, a sort of conceptual blend (in the sense of Mark Turner or Gilles Fauconnier's use of the term), called Canadian culture in which we were comfortable and felt a sense of belonging.

sophisticated familiarity, the mould of those who have a secret knowledge and confidence about race that meant that we knew something that those who would teach us manners didn't have a clue about. We knew the score on interculturalism because we were surrounded by it. Our own hybridity was the organic product of contact and the anarchy of the school yard, the chaos of the youngster's world. When we heard of people legislating concepts of difference we were bemused because *we were difference*. I am white, I am Catholic, I am a man, and yet the types and features which categorize me as a hegemon are alien to me. I feel no kinship with the stereotype of the "white man". In fact, I would say that there is no white man left in my generation of kids that grew up in the multicultural 'burbs in Toronto. I

have a sneaking suspicion that such classificatory abstractions are in fact notational conveniences of the bureaucratic and the bureaucratically-minded that have been appropriated and expanded by those who would use them to their own benefit. I hope that in the future, the classificatory system for racial, ethno-cultural and sexual victimization will find itself in the dustbin of history beside its close cousin, phrenology.

It was in this free arena for the exchange of ideas, mores and motivations that we forged our Canadian identity. We became transcultural hybrids, and in so doing joined a new entity, a sort of conceptual blend (in the sense of Mark Turner or Gilles Fauconnier's use of the term), called Canadian culture in which we were comfortable and felt a sense of belonging. What is required for the development of a Canadian identity truly based on equality and justice is a free and open forum where all concepts can be aired, enjoyed and shared. The expansion of public-access programming and multicultural programming that focusses on the ideas and things that can be shared, and not the creation of a balkanized airwaves is the direction

which ought to be taken. This sharing, this unalienated diversity, this overcoming of the dichotomy of the other and the self, is an instance of what might be termed blended particularism. As humans, if we think in terms of meanings and mappings between meanings (or meaning spaces), why should our appreciation of culture and ethnicity be otherwise? Why should we define our cultural appartenance in a sortal hierarchy where the arcs connecting the nodes in the graph are labelled and weighted? For this is what the exhaustive labelling that happens in society amounts to – a taxonomy, fit for describing humans as animals, but woefully insufficient for describing human existence in society.

Multicultural communication in Toronto provided this space for us. As is the case with most immigrants, my

mother's family arrived from what is now the Republic of Macedonia after a brief hiatus in Cairo, Egypt. In many conversations during the wonderful Slavass (parties that are organized on the day of the family's Saint-protector) and

Music transmitted over the radio and the internet formed a sonic space which allowed immigrants to forget cares and focus on a space that is theirs, in which they are free and equal, not burdened by material desires.

the warm weekly family gatherings we enjoyed, I gained an intimate perspective on what gave these people an identity and a sense of self. I was given an insight into the complex practice of cultural redefinition and adaptation, the moment of contact and the cognitive workspace that multicultural communications provided for them. The Macedonian radio programme, television journal and the various print publications which were produced locally formed a cognitive workspace which allowed people to escape not only from the corset of a majority culture which often baffled them, but also from the system of economic organization which was veiled by that majority culture. Now, when I speak of majority culture, I am not speaking of the Anglo-Saxon culture which was practised in the homes of our neighbours of Northern European extraction; I am referring, rather, to the popular culture of the media, a beast quite distinct in its shallow focus on image, one-dimensional solutions to complex interpersonal problems, and an image of body and soul that matched no one that I could recognize, regardless of their cultural or ethnic background. Multicultural communications provided a respite which gave these newcomers the confidence to deal with the majority culture and feel as though there was something which its deadening commercial embrace couldn't touch.

Music transmitted over the radio and the internet formed a sonic space which allowed immigrants to forget cares and focus on a space that is theirs, in which they are free and equal, not burdened by material desires. It is, in fact a formless place which transcends desire because in that thought-space, the

rules of society are entirely changed. They are psychological, esthetic, forming a sort of utopia within which people can dream and travel, dance and laugh. It is a space which is hermetical to those around them, whatever their ethnicity

may be. Pressures are reduced because there is no one to impinge on the personal world of the listener. I find it a startling irony that when driving on the highway, surrounded by the fruits of industry, surrounded by others driven by time and purpose, one can feel free in one's sonic space. In fact, it is ironic that this freedom is not an illusion but an extension of the cognitive workspace I mentioned earlier, a place separate from the discourses which judge, challenge and oppress. In fact, that the choice of music played on the station is market-driven already distinguishes it from the choice of music offered via multicultural media, because, quite often those media chose music based on esthetic, folkloric, or political (not always very salubriously political) parameters. Eventually, as the demographics of our country change and the cultural hybridization that we are currently experiencing becomes more and more engrained and definitive, the market-

There are conservative elements who would retard this progress towards universalization, interconnection and blending, elements who would reduce the possibility of hybridization, or who would take advantage of the freedom and relative lack of regulation of Canadian multicultural communication to import battles from their homelands, to spread zizania and hatred among the Canadian people...

driven radio stations will offer content that will more resemble what is currently offered over multicultural radio. However, there will be a difference. The message and the signification of the music will change, just as knowledge that is generated from corporations is a different commodity than knowledge generated by universities. It becomes

classified, categorized, organized and packaged. Something that most home-grown locally-produced Canadian Multicultural content is not. Again, I should emphasize that watching Deutsch-Welle or Al-Jazeera does not qualify as Canadian multicultural communication for me. I define it as multicultural ideas produced by Canadians, *about Canada*, but from the myriad perspectives of our myriad cultures. I think that an excellent example of this sort of multicultural communication is the beautiful synthetic vision that aboriginal communications networks have of self and interaction with the multi-variant Other.

I remember the conversations that I listened to in the overheated living rooms of my family, the air harking back to Cairo's sandy warmth. These were conversations that centered around remembering, constructing a reality that would be a bridge, to join the alterity of the new situation in which they found themselves and the warmth of the past familiar, all the while trying to avoid falling into the icy waters of identity-chaos. They found in each other oases and encouragement. They were conversations that existed outside of the self and revelled in descriptions of the Other. This constant interplay between self and other and the innate sense of togetherness that they felt as immigrants with other immigrants led to much investigation of the variety of multicultural options available to be observed,

tried and enjoyed. Canadian culture was a metagrammar which permitted the creation of a new self-defining and quite organically-constructed cultural lexicon which obeyed the universal principles of cognitive organization such as justice, art, colour, emotion, vision, etc. but permitted the generation of an infinite quantity of permutations, possibilities

which could lead us to a deeper level of mutual understanding and harmony provided they are not beaten back by those who fear this change.

Quite often those who fear this change come from within multicultural groups themselves. There are conservative elements who would retard this progress towards universalization, interconnection and blending, elements who would reduce the possibility of hybridization, or who would take advantage of the freedom and relative lack of regulation of Canadian multicultural communication to import battles from their homelands, to spread zizania and hatred among the Canadian people, to spread and promote an ideology here rather than open up to the possibilities of hybridization that this country offers. To try and preserve the “old country culture” is a fallacy, for often that culture is an artefact, fossilized upon entry into Canada, no longer even particularly connected to the old country. A solution seems obvious: use Canada’s multicultural communications infrastructure to educate the people belonging to that group in the evolving ways of the old country. But this is a strange shibboleth: it in fact constitutes a sort of colonization of the immigrant by his or her past, making them all prisoners of history, victims of their parents’ attachments and connections to their country of origins. In fact, multicultural Canadian communications should predominantly be a forum for pragmatic sharing of ideas and norms amongst *Canadians*. As such, the blended concept of the hyphenated Canadian must be distinct from the concept described by the first half of the hyphenated identity. The actual political and social situation of the source country ought to be irrelevant in this cognitive thought-space because the ties of culture that bind individuals to their place of origin and to their home cannot be captured in language of social or political thought. It is a deep emotional and esthetic connection, a sort of metaphysical thing that has roots in the person’s inner life; its realities can only be expressed in the person’s inner language.

The sense of delight that one has in enjoying a quiet moment, the loss of a sense of time that one experiences when

one watches the waves of Lake Ontario lapping upon the rocks at Ashbridges Bay, surrounded by one’s friends, surrounded by humanity under the sun. Senses dulled by the warmth of the afternoon sun, one can listen to the gentle symphony of different languages looking at the same scene and yet conceptualising it differently. Enjoying peace and prosperity and enriching the national fabric by expressing esthetic nuances and sharing them in the common language (English) so that it is enriched and grows. The blending of these different cognitive spaces forms a coherent one which is unique, peaceable and just, and which represents us in our variety and in our unity. This is the journey which multicultural communica-

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tion leads us upon. It is exciting and ever-evolving. It is comforting and not alienating. It is the ideal of Western civilization in its highest expression, for as Terence said: “Nothing human is alien to me”. I think that Canada, because of an infrastructure that was put up by several visionary people in the 70s, has an extraordinary advantage in this search for harmony. For we have already discovered, in our mental spaces, defined and blended in delighting in one another, that it is not a competition but a state of being and a state of mind. One that is not alien to us.

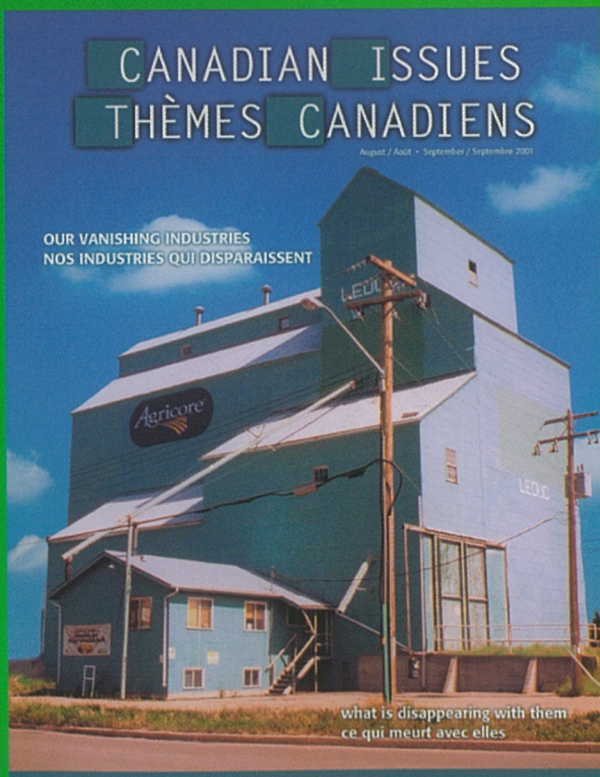
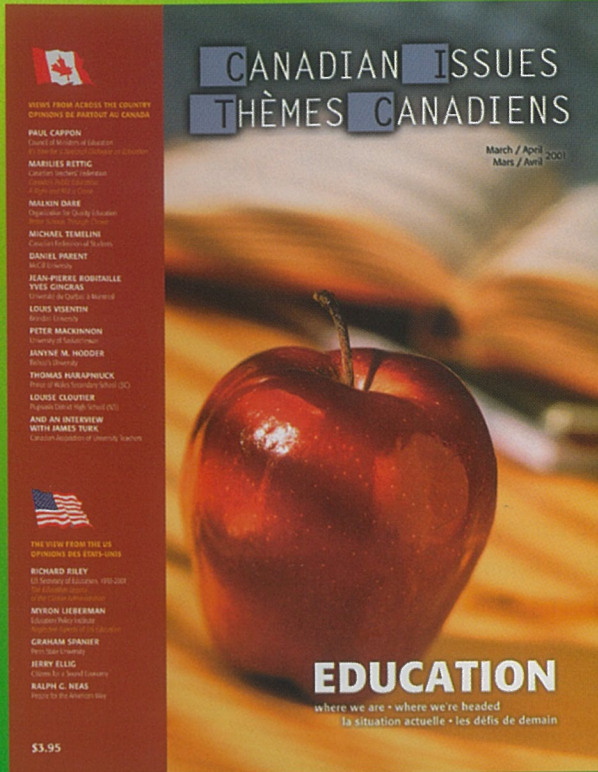
I have often wondered if a country, like Canada, which guarantees the fundamental liberties of the individual and permits and values the expression and practice of a great diversity of cultural

traits might not be the perfect observatory for the sort of cultural paradigm shift which would permit us to move closer to a somewhat extended notion of blended particularism: one that evolves past simplistic systems for the classification of human beings such as race, gender and class and towards a more synthetic, experiential understanding of the value of the human being, member of the human race. Multicultural communications have permitted the first baby steps towards the sort of necessary voluntary intercultural hybridization and exploration that may eventually lead to a sort of collective cognitive tipping point, a moment at which we will awaken from the nightmare of neo-liberal capitalism, the nation state, the culture of materialism and judgement, and towards a more enlightened, ecologically-oriented, peace-loving, culture of knowledge and culture of understanding. This may seem like a pipe-dream, a pacifist fantasy bred of a privileged lifestyle in a great metropolis, surrounded by the intellectual and the genial, but it is not. The nineteenth century distinction of the individual and universal is blurring and the experience of blended particularity is coming to the fore.

However, this does not mean that the task is complete. We must strive to further democratize access to media, to further enrich *Canadian multicultural* content as opposed to colonial multicultural content that comes to us from elsewhere. For just as the English Canadian component of the media suffers from a sometimes suffocating American presence, so too can our multicultural channels be used by other nations to influence Canadians, to spread hatred, to divide us and weaken our resolute commitment to justice, liberty, equality and peace. Our multicultural programming must be made in Canada by Canadians. When we forge this new infrastructure, when we make communications in Canada truly reflective of lived experience, not only will we assure our future prosperity, peace and solidarity, but we will live our commonalities and grow out of our past.

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