

Anonymity compares sadly with the confident expectation of good will that the earlier report exudes.



Cameron, David. (1996). *Taking Stock: Canadian Studies in the Nineties*. Montreal: Association for Canadian Studies (Pp. xvii, 238). Price: \$20.00.

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Some twenty-five years ago a controversy erupted in Canadian higher education: were Canadian universities and other post-secondary institutions threatened by the arrival of large numbers of foreign scholars to staff the rapidly expanding institutions? Given that there had always been foreign-born and educated faculty in Canadian universities, why did this become an issue, and why did it occur at this particular juncture?

A number of circumstances contributed to the tensions of those times. Higher education was straining to cope with the demands placed upon it. Large numbers of mature students, returning from active service, inundated the campuses after the war. Women began to attend in larger numbers. Better educated young people were apparently needed in expanding corporate and government sectors. The burgeoning birth rate seemed to prefigure expanding demand for higher education. The question was how to provide for that demand.

The answer involved three principal issues: how to conceive of the appropriate academic structures and orientations, how to provide staffing, and how to build necessary infrastructure. As for the last, greater participation by governments was the obvious way to secure new physical plant and operating budgets. But the first required a much deeper searching of the academic soul. Universities were small by today's standards and some were attached to various church denominations. Requirements regarding faculty teaching and scholarship were

variable. Scholarly societies and research funding were not well developed. What, exactly, was the new Canadian university to become? And what shape would a new system of higher education assume?

The Massey Commission, the most important among several of the period, reporting in 1951, addressed the wider issues relating to the arts, sciences and higher education. It provided, Cameron notes, a strengthened national view of Canada. At a time when existing institutions were planning for growth, when some were transformed into thoroughly secular places and new ones were founded, all had to consider how they were related to others. Parts started to coalesce into a whole. While provincially-based, a national system of public higher education, with comparable (and good) standards, came into existence.

During the turmoil of the late 1960s, the time of most growth, foreign faculty arrived in significantly large numbers, most notably from the United Kingdom and the United States. British and American scholars had earlier been present in Canadian universities, the British being the more prominent. It was the strong American presence that was different this time, made obvious in a number of ways. Some individuals introduced, as the 'normal' subject matter, concerns that some Canadian observers regarded as purely American, and large numbers of American texts were prominently placed on reading lists.

All this did not pass unnoticed, and it represented a new experience in Canadian higher education. Young faculty agitated for an appraisal of the impact of these developments and urged action to correct them. For example, activist faculty at Simon Fraser University made their point by advising students in registration lines as to courses carrying Canadian content, creating an impact that was felt throughout the curricula of relevant departments. More generally, a literature began to emerge: Grant's *Technology and Empire* and *Lament for a Nation* appealed to those worried about the fate of the nation in view of the overwhelming ability of the United States to impose itself, and the seeming willingness of Canadians to 'go along' with the 'rationalizations' this suggested; Matthews and Steele's *The Struggle for Canadian Universities* brought these concerns right into the institutions of higher education. The rise of

'left-nationalism', most pointedly expressed in the Waffle movement within the NDP, brought a political activism to the general discussion.

This gives some indication of the mood when the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada appointed Professor Thomas Symons to chair an enquiry into "the state of teaching and research in various fields of study relating to Canada at Canadian universities" (Cameron, p. 22). The impact of the first parts of Symons' report, *To Know Ourselves*, published in 1975, was profound. The report became a touchstone in discussions of Canadian content and approaches in curricula, and an important point of reference in the growth of Canadian Studies. Further, with government involvement, Canadian Studies was promoted abroad, and large numbers of foreign academics now make Canada a scholarly specialty. After some two decades it seemed time to assess the state of affairs, and the Department of the Secretary of State, now Canadian Heritage, commissioned the present study by Professor Cameron.

The first six chapters of *Taking Stock* sketch the necessary historical background, the need for a self-consciously Canadian approach to understanding, the rise of Canadian Studies and its "present condition" in universities and colleges. The remainder of the volume appraises the situation regarding organizations, government involvement, archives and print and non-print technologies. A summary and recommendations chapter ends the report. Much of the material was collected in the early 1990s from extensive surveys sent to institutions of higher education across the country. Variable returns make for tentative – albeit thoughtful – observations. Cautious data-handling and reflections on extensive interviews provide reassurance of reliability. Perhaps not everyone will be happy with the emphases and interpretations (after all not everyone could be interviewed) and personal reactions will inevitably be varied, as shown in the winter 1995/96 issue of the *Journal of Canadian Studies* and the Spring 1996 issue of the *ACS Bulletin*. But the coverage is the more impressive when one realizes the effort to survey the vastly different but relevant areas and the author's immersion in and commitment to the field.

Canadian Studies may be summarized as healthy in established disciplines, where the term Canadian studies better applies. (Canadian studies is simply the study of things Canadian in any disciplinary context whereas

Canadian Studies is the formally recognized field of enquiry.) To an unknown degree this may be the result of increased research support, Canadianization of the faculty by watchdog measures in hiring and the taking out of citizenship by foreign faculty who have also taken up Canadian-based research interests. And Canadian Studies is remarkably healthy outside Canada, the result of active support by the federal government.

But Cameron avers that Canadian Studies is less than dynamic in Canada itself, albeit with some encouraging signs. There might well be, as Cameron notes in a too simple distinction, strong and weak centres in universities. And colleges may have gone away from formal programs. But is Canadian Studies in Canada so hapless? The field as a whole has become stronger and more self-aware through its annual conferences and publications, occasional publications including the Cameron report itself, association memberships and subscriptions to appropriate journals. Links between foreign interests and Canadian internal interests are being debated through the International Council for Canadian Studies. Student interest is high, shows good potential, and some post-graduate studies are being developed. Two new chairs of Canadian Studies, at the Universities of British Columbia and Waterloo, along with the Institute for the Study of Canada at McGill, have recently been established. Further, as Cameron documents, major resources such as archives, museums, galleries and libraries have been prominently developed within the last generation. In many ways, things have never looked so promising and the inevitable setbacks in various universities should not detract from recognizing the overall progress. Much encouragement should be taken from what Cameron documents.

Indeed, formal programs and centres, and Canadian Studies degrees, now exist across the country. The field is intentionally interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary. As Cameron notes, it is aimed at synthesis rather than analysis. In an enlarged and diversified system of higher education, it is a voice calling for a coherent scholarly view of Canada. With governments having recognized its importance, the field can lay claim to an applied aspect. And with the country in a long-term crisis of identity and governance, it would seem more justified than ever. University administrations that have difficulty in seeing the need to demand more of their

Canadian Studies faculty and centres, and in providing the requisite resources, must imagine the criticism they will deserve if Rome burns and they are judged to have played Nero.

And the future? Among the recommendations that caught the eye of this reviewer are general suggestions for continued vigilance in curriculum development and hiring, and for relations between francophone and anglophone communities. For Canadian Studies programs emphasis should be placed upon enrollment expansion, documentation to create a national 'track record,' collaboration among programs and distance education.

The basic point of view of the report is pan-Canadian, in keeping with the way Canadian Studies has evolved to this point. The report may thus be the closing document of the founding era of Canadian Studies, rather than a manifesto for a new era. It is an important study. Now is the time for young and ambitious faculty in universities and colleges, dissatisfied with the old structures that were put into place in response to conditions of higher learning that may no longer apply, to use this report and the experience of Canadian Studies to date as stepping stones to a new understanding of Canada.



BOOKNOTES

Buchanan, Anne L., & Herubel, Jean-Pierre V.M. (1995). *The Doctor of Philosophy Degree: A Selective Annotated Bibliography*. Westport CT: Greenwood Press.

Chapters in this reference volume consist of references to the history of the Ph.D. and research associated with it. A brief account of the degree's evolution in terms of intellectual and structural characteristics and various manifestations is also included. Intended for academic policy makers, this book supports consideration of the relationship between research and teaching, the role of the Ph.D. within formal academic training, and possibilities for modification.