PREJUDICE AND PRIDE
Canadian Intellectuals Confront the United States, 1891–1945

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DAMIEN-CLAUDE BÉLANGER

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Introduction

'The average Canadian attitude towards the United States and all things American cannot be permanently based upon pride and prejudice, or, to use one word, ignorance,' warned Douglas Bush (1896–1983) in 1929.[1] Bush, who would spend most of his career teaching English at Harvard University, was part of a new and, some believed, irreverent generation of thinkers who came of age during the Great War and dominated English Canadian discourse during the 1920s and 1930s. Rejecting the imperialism that had largely permeated Canadian thought before the First World War, these intellectuals sought to affirm the inherently American nature of Canadian society and to draw the nation out of Britain's orbit. This implied a redefinition of the Canadian experience and a rapprochement between Canada and its neighbour to the south.

There was nothing exceptionally novel in the outlook of this continentalist cohort. Many of its arguments had been plainly stated a generation before by the bête noire of Canadian imperialists, Goldwin Smith (1823–1910). Indeed, when it comes to the United States and the issue of Canadian-American relations, Canadian thought and writing has been characterized by a great deal of continuity: the broad ideas and sensibilities that emerged in the late eighteenth century are still with us today. This is scarcely surprising, since the various questions surrounding the Canadian-American relationship are existential for Canada. From the time of the American Revolution, Canada's writers and intellectuals have pondered the extent to which Canadian and American society differ. They have also argued over just how close Canada's relationship with the United States should be. These issues have generated a torrent of prose. Most Canadian intellectuals have published some

material related to the United States and Canadian-American relations and a number of Canada's most significant works, including Goldwin Smith's *Canada and the Canadian Question* (1891), Edmond de Nevers' *L'Avenir du peuple canadien-français* (1896), and George Grant's *Lament for a Nation* (1965), have dealt in some way with the 'American question.'

This prose has, in turn, generated a good deal of scholarly interest. By and large, scholars have focused their attention on anti-American sentiment in Canada.[2] The general consensus surrounding this writing is fairly straightforward: anti-Americanism is viewed as a facet of Canadian nationalism and an expression of the nation's struggle to maintain its sovereignty and distinctiveness.[3] Carl Berger's writing is typical of this perspective. In *The Sense of Power* (1970), he argues that imperialism was a form of Canadian nationalism and that a vigorous critique of the American republic was a key ingredient of that nationalism. Indeed, he writes, 'what lay behind this Canadian critique of the United States was not malevolence but nationalism.'[4]

Most of the scholars who have examined anti-Americanism have regarded it as essentially harmful to both the Canadian mind and the Canadian-American relationship. J.L. Granatstein is fairly representative of this attitude. 'With all its hatred, bias, and deliberately contrived fearmongering, anti-Americanism … never was and never could become the basis of any rational national identity,' he writes in *Yankee Go Home?* (1996). Granatstein's monograph is the most comprehensive study of Canadian anti-Americanism published to date. It links anti-Americanism to nationalism, but also points out its more instrumental side: 'anti-Americanism was almost always employed as a tool by Canadian political and economic élites bent on preserving or enhancing their power. It was largely the Tory way of keeping pro-British attitudes uppermost in the Canadian psyche.'[5]

By and large, the anti-American tradition has not generated a significant historical debate in English-speaking Canada. In contrast, as a political ideal, the continentalist tradition has led to some debate.[6] The prevalent attitude within English Canada's intellectual and academic community is to dismiss continentalism as an anti-nationalist and indeed menacing doctrine. By the 1960s, writes Reginald C. Stuart, 'continentalism acquired a musty, quaint, anachronistic, even sinister quality to those who now asserted that Canada was rather too much like, and too peaceful toward, the American neighbor.'[7] The handful of the scholars who have seriously studied the continentalist impulse have sought

to counter this impression. Continentalist intellectuals, they argue, have traditionally sought to harness American wealth and power to strengthen the Canadian nation. Indeed, in the continentalist perspective, closer Canadian-American relations were viewed, notes Allan Smith, as 'perfectly compatible with – and would indeed serve – Canadian survival.'[8] Continentalism, therefore, was not an anti-nationalist doctrine.

In Quebec, the scholarship surrounding late nineteenth and early twentieth century intellectual attitudes towards the United States has often sought to understand the dichotomy between elite and popular attitudes regarding America.[9] It is widely assumed that anti-Americanism was rampant among the province's elite, while the rest of the population held a more positive view of the United States. Like in English Canadian scholarship, anti-American rhetoric in Quebec is assumed to be an expression of nationalism.

More recent work on the intellectual history of Quebec-U.S. relations has been centred on the concept of *américanité*. According to Yvan Lamonde, who initiated the historical profession to the concept in the 1980s, Quebec's history has been marked by a long struggle between those who embraced the province's *américanité* and those who rejected it. *Américanité* refers to Quebec's fundamentally American nature, to its Americanness, and should not, insists Lamonde, be confused with Americanization. From the mid-nineteenth century until after the Second World War, the bulk of Quebec's intellectuals would reject the province's *américanité*. 'The faithfulness of these elites to a largely imaginary past,' writes Gérard Bouchard, whose recent work has also explored Quebec's *américanité*, 'served as an action plan for future generations, with the memory of their origins being substituted for the excitement of the North American dream.'[10] As a result, the bulk of Quebec's elite was out of step with both the populace and the continent's wider ethos of rupture and renewal.[11]

The present book differs from previous research in three significant ways. To begin with, it examines and compares the intellectual discourse of both English and French Canada.[12] Earlier work on the subject has tended to focus on a single language group. Next, this study is more concerned with Canadian intellectuals as thinkers on the left, the right, and the centre than as nationalists or non-nationalists.[13] Most significantly, however, it argues that late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century intellectual discourse regarding American life and the Canadian-American relationship was not simply an expression of

nationalism or a reaction to United States foreign or commercial policy. Rather, it was primarily the expression of wider attitudes concerning modernity.[14]

Modernity is a complex concept whose multiple dimensions are difficult to circumscribe. Above all, it entails the erosion of traditional values and practices and the rise of mass society. Modernity is expressed on three basic levels. At the technical level, it is tied to industrialization and the technological advances of the industrial era. The emergence of industrial society, the proletariat, and mass production are fundamental to the modern ethos, as are large-scale urbanization, mechanization, and mass communications. These technological advances were undoubtedly the most tangible expressions of modernity. Indeed, during the period under study, the industrial metropolis, the automobile, and the radio were all powerful symbols of a new age. The technological aspects of modernity marginalize traditional modes of production.

At the philosophical and intellectual level, modernity is tied to a strong faith in science and technology and in the illimitable progress of society. Unlike traditionalism, which is a theocentric doctrine, modernity is anthropocentric. It seeks to affirm the central place of man in the universe and does not view material considerations as inevitably subordinate to spiritual ones. Modernity is not necessarily an atheistic sensibility, but it is invariably tied to some form of secularism. 'Hunched over the present while at the same time constantly focusing on what will overtake it, on its own negation,' writes Alexis Nouss, 'modernity has nothing to learn from the past.'[15] The modern ethos is obsessed with change and newness. As a result, it invariably leads to a penchant for rupture and, in some cases, to outright revolutionism. Politically, it can lean towards either democracy or totalitarianism, but in both instances it will invariably corrode the power of traditional elites, particularly that of the clergy.

Lastly, at the cultural level, modernity is tied to mass culture and mass consumption. Its rise signals the erosion of both traditional and elite culture and the rise of urban leisure. Culture becomes a commodity that is sold or broadcast to the masses. Modernity also progressively emancipates art and literature from traditional notions of æsthetics, propriety, and utility. The notion that art can exist for its own sake is an expression of the modern ethos. Modernity is a powerful and revolutionary force. It spawns new social groups and new forms of expression. In doing so, it produces a cultural and status revolution that overwhelms tradition and erodes established social relations and customs.

Along with Great Britain, the United States played a key role in the conceptual universe of the Canadian intellectual. Both nations were generally represented as antithetical archetypes: Britain embodied tradition and conservative values, while the United States came to symbolize modernity and the liberal ethos.[16] America represented both the promise and the dangers of the mass age. 'The United States is dealing with some of those great social and economic problems which, if not altogether peculiar to the great democracy of the West, seem to be more acute there than elsewhere,' wrote James Cappon (1855–1939) in 1912. Born in Scotland, Cappon had immigrated to Canada in 1888 to teach English at Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario. Regarding the United States, he worried, as did most Canadian imperialists, that 'the problems which are theirs to-day may be ours to-morrow.'[17] Indeed, America has long presented a vision of the future, albeit a blurred one, to the intellectuals of the world.[18]

In the Dominion of Canada, as elsewhere in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, democracy, urban and industrial society, mass culture, and secularism – in a word, modernity – became increasingly identified with the United States. Consequently, resistance to modernity was expressed, in part, through anti-American rhetoric, while faith in the mass age was expressed, again in part, through continentalism. The dialectic between these two sensibilities was a struggle involving two different understandings of Canada, one of which was fundamentally antimodern.

The tension between continentalist and anti-American sentiment emerged during the crucible of Canadian discourse – the American Revolution – when rebel and loyalist elements struggled for the very soul of the Province of Quebec. By the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Canadian hostility to the United States and continental integration was expressed in two conservative discourses: English Canadian imperialism and French Canadian nationalism. Despite their fundamental divergence on the national question, both imperialists and *nationalistes* shared an essentially antimodern outlook, and anti-Americanism was their logical point of convergence. Continentalism was expressed in liberal and socialist discourse. Liberals and socialists tended to diverge on issues related to freedom, equality, and property, but they generally agreed on the opportunities that continental integration would bring to Canada.

Anti-Americanism was largely present in the discourse of English and French Canadian intellectuals from the early 1890s to the Great

War. By the 1920s, however, continentalism became increasingly common in the work of English Canadian intellectuals. Clearly, the era of Andrew Macphail (1864–1938), Stephen Leacock (1869–1944), and the conservative *University Magazine* had come to an end, and the era of Frank Underhill (1885–1971), F.R. Scott (1899–1985), and the left-of-centre *Canadian Forum* had begun. Though several English Canadian thinkers continued to denounce the United States, an emerging generation of progressive intellectuals embraced modernity and continentalism. In French Canada, the process was quite different. The anti-Americanism that had dominated the prewar generation of intellectuals was renewed and reinforced in the 1920s and 1930s as a new cohort of conservative thinkers led by abbé Lionel Groulx (1878–1967) stiffened the resistance to modernity and America that had characterized many of their precursors. French Canadian continentalism, by contrast, grew increasingly marginal.

English and French Canadian intellectuals shared common preoccupations with respect to the United States. However, the tone and emphasis of their commentary often differed. In English Canada, where political institutions and the imperial bond were viewed as the mainstays of Canadian distinctiveness, writing on the United States tended to deal primarily with political and diplomatic issues. In Quebec, where political institutions were not generally viewed as vital elements of national distinctiveness, social and cultural affairs dominated writing on the United States. Anti-American rhetoric tended to be more radical in French Canada, but it was also less prevalent in French Canadian discourse than in English Canadian writing.

The period under study begins in 1891 – a significant year in the intellectual history of Canadian-American relations. One of the most momentous federal elections in Canadian history – and Sir John A. Macdonald's last – was held in March of that year. The election pitted an ailing Macdonald and his National Policy against a youthful Wilfrid Laurier and his promises of unrestricted reciprocity with the United States. The old chieftain prevailed. The campaign revolved around anti-Americanism and, in a pattern that would be repeated time and again in Canadian politics, anti-American rhetoric was used by the Conservatives to attack their Liberal opponents.[19] The Tories had successfully portrayed the election not as a contest between free trade and protectionism, but as a mortal struggle pitting the forces of loyalty against those of treason. The campaign galvanized English Canadian imperialists. In effect, the

challenge posed by the advocates of unrestricted reciprocity, commercial union, and annexation in the late 1880s and early 1890s had given Canadian imperialism its raison d'être.

The 1891 election also produced one of the most important Canadian works of non-fiction: Goldwin Smith's best-selling *Canada and the Canadian Question*. Its publication stands out as one of the key moments in Canadian intellectual history. In a sense, *Canada and the Canadian Question* was English Canada's Durham Report. The irreverent essay argued that the Dominion of Canada was a geographic, ethnic, economic, and political absurdity whose ultimate destiny lay in political union with the United States. Smith had rejected almost every principle held by nineteenth-century Canadian imperialists, and much in the same way that the indignation generated by Lord Durham's infamous report sparked an intellectual and literary explosion in French Canada, *Canada and the Canadian Question* generated a similar torrent of nation-affirming prose in English Canada. According to Carl Berger, Smith's book 'is supremely important in Canadian nationalist thought because he asked the question which all Canadian nationalists have since tried to answer: what positive values does the country embody and represent that justifies her existence?'[20]

Canada and the Canadian Question had actually been written as a campaign document for the Liberal party – Smith endorsed reciprocity – but failed in this purpose since it was not off the press until April 1891.[21] Rabidly anti-Catholic and francophobic, the book was the product of a deeply pessimistic time. Less than twenty-five years after the British North America Act was passed, Canada was suffering from a profound malaise. The enthusiasm generated by Confederation had been battered by economic depression and washed away by a torrent of ethnic, religious, and sectional strife. To make matters worse, emigration to the United States was undermining Canada's population growth, and annexationism, that unmistakable sign of national despair, reared its ugly head for one final encore. Clearly, some Canadians shared Smith's profound defeatism. As the nation lurched from recession to recession, it became clear that the National Policy had not delivered on its promises of prosperity.

There was, however, some light at the end of the tunnel. A few years after Smith's indictment of Canada, the nation was enjoying rapid economic expansion and a period of unbridled optimism under the stewardship of Sir Wilfrid Laurier and his 'sunny ways.' The next decades would witness the birth of a new independent, urban, and in-

dustrial Canada. By the late 1890s, Canada had shaken off a decade of pessimism and discord and had begun to grow as never before. 'The poor relation has come into her fortune,' wrote British observer J.A. Hobson at the turn of the century.[22] Between 1901 and 1945, emigration ebbed, immigration soared, and Canada's population nearly tripled. In addition, rapid, though at times intermittent, industrial growth brought the nation's urbanization rate from 35 to 59 per cent. Industrial expansion also fuelled the rise of consumerism which, in turn, helped to homogenize North American lifestyles.

The Dominion of Canada emerged from the Great War a nation transformed. Canadian independence had been consecrated at Vimy and Versailles and the nation was taking its first steps on the world stage. Continental integration was proceeding apace: American investments in Canada grew rapidly as Britain's decline in the years after the First World War pushed Canada into the arms of the United States, and American mass culture displaced British popular culture in Canada.[23] 'Like all the great empires before it,' writes Stephen Brooks, 'America had begun to export its culture – its values, lifestyles, dreams, and self-image – through what were then the new media of film and mass advertising,' and had proven her mastery of the mass age.[24] By the end of the Second World War, the United States was fully poised to assume its new role as a global superpower. All the pieces were now in place: America had become a military, economic, and cultural powerhouse. America's symbolic significance would shift accordingly. In post–Second World War Canada, anti-American rhetoric would become increasingly identified with the left and would gradually cease to express a distaste for modernity.

This study explores the intellectual history of Canadian-American relations through an extensive corpus of fiction and non-fiction. It does not focus on specific events like, for instance, the Spanish-American War or the New Deal. Instead, the study offers a thematic examination of Canadian viewpoints on a variety of issues ranging from American forms of freedom to cross-border migration. This thematic method avoids some of the pitfalls of more biographical or event-based methods of intellectual history, which often neglect the internal dynamics of discourse and the continuity of ideas over time.[25] Major quotations are included in the text to illustrate the nature and evolution of Canadian commentary. Quotes were generally selected for inclusion based on their representativeness, though many quotations were also included

to illustrate atypical discourse. To facilitate comprehension, French-language quotes have been translated into English. The original quotes can be found in the endnotes.

The intellectuals whose work is examined in these pages were essentially cultural figures – most intellectuals in late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century Canada could be found in the academic community, in journalism, or in the ranks of the clergy – who became involved in sociopolitical debate without directly entering the world of partisan politics.[26] Indeed, as S.E.D. Shortt notes, 'rather than actively participating in politics, they preferred to confine themselves to critical observations in academic journals or membership in quasi-clandestine organizations, a tradition beginning with the Canada Firsters, carried on by the Round Table Groups, and culminating in the League for Social Reconstruction.'[27] Many of the radicals involved in the League, in particular Frank Underhill, F.R. Scott, Edgar McInnis (1899–1973), and King Gordon (1900–1989), are good examples of the *intellectuel engagé* whose action lies somewhere between the cultural and political spheres. This grey zone is the realm of the intellectual.

For the purposes of this study, intellectuals were considered Canadian if they were born in Canada and received the greater part of their education there, or if they immigrated and settled permanently in the Dominion. As a result, work by expatriate intellectuals who showed a sustained interest in Canadian affairs throughout their careers was examined. Indeed, exiled authors like John Bartlet Brebner (1895–1957) or Edmond de Nevers (1862–1906) were full participants in the development of Canadian discourse and played a key role in disseminating American ideas north of the border.

The present study rests on a corpus of over 500 texts written by Canadian intellectuals between 1891 and 1945. Texts were selected for inclusion in the study's corpus if they contained a substantive discussion of American life or Canada's relationship with the United States. Not surprisingly, given that the 'American question' has played a key role in Canadian discourse since the late eighteenth century, several of the most influential Canadian books published between 1891 and 1945 can be found in this study's corpus. Works of fiction account for roughly 5 per cent of the corpus.

The study's corpus was intended to be comprehensive, not exhaustive. It contains work written by most of the era's prominent intellectuals and offers a cross-section of late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century Canadian discourse. In all, work by over 250 authors was

analysed. French-language texts represent a little less than a third of the corpus. Women authors account for about 2 per cent of the study's corpus. To a large extent, this underrepresentation is a reflection of women's relative exclusion from the professions most closely associated with intellectual discourse in late nineteenth and early twentieth century Canada.

Articles gleaned from journals make up roughly three-quarters of the corpus. The bulk of these texts was located through an examination of the era's periodical literature. Detailed scrutiny of this literature was confined to a selection of over one hundred of Canada's leading English- and French-language political, religious, literary, business, labour, legal, military, student, university, learned, and scholarly journals published no more than once a month between 1891 and 1945. Efforts were made to include journals that were both regionally and ideologically representative of the diversity of the Canadian mind. However, due to the sheer volume of material, articles in daily, weekly, and bi-monthly publications were excluded from the study. A few American and British periodicals, including the *North American Review* and the *Round Table*, were also scrutinized.

In an effort to grasp the various contexts that surround a given text, biographical information on the various intellectuals whose work is examined in these pages was collected and analysed. That said, this is not a prosopographical study. Rather, the group approach was primarily employed to uncover intellectual generations, their principal characteristics, and the key events that shaped their evolution. Generations are important to the study of intellectual history. Indeed, as historian Jean-François Sirinelli has noted, 'the effects of age in intellectual circles are … numerous and significant' and can affect discourse as profoundly as the left-right cleavage. Intellectual generations are not homogeneous groups, but the events that shape a generation's consciousness during its formative years will deeply affect its outlook on the world. Every generation, writes Sirinelli, 'brings *genetic baggage* from its gestation and a *common memory*, at the same time both innate and acquired, from the first years of its existence, which mark it for life.'[28] The Great War, for instance, deeply affected the outlook of the generation of English Canadian intellectuals born roughly between 1880 and 1900. As we shall see, their penchant for continentalism was largely an expression of their profound disillusionment with imperialism and Europe.

My work rests on the assumption that ideas have consequences; that they can be powerful and autonomous historical forces, but that they

can also serve as pragmatic tools or instruments for socioeconomic and political control.[29] The attitude of Canadian intellectuals towards the United States has affected the relationship between the two nations. Several key observers, most notably O.D. Skelton (1878–1941) and Hugh L. Keenleyside (1898–1992), would eventually help shape Canadian policy towards the United States from inside the Department of External Affairs, while others would influence the course of Canadian-American relations through their essays, lectures, and sermons. For instance, in the 1880s and 1890s, Erastus Wiman's (1834–1904) tireless promotion of a Canadian-American customs union helped convince many North Americans that continental integration was both feasible and desirable. His numerous articles and pamphlets nourished the wider social discourse regarding reciprocity and no doubt encouraged the Liberal party in its late-nineteenth century campaign to liberalize Canadian-American trade. That this campaign was unsuccessful is beside the point. Wiman's ideas – and those of other Canadian intellectuals – are important to the study of Canadian-American relations because they helped shape larger attitudes towards the United States and continental integration.

The present study is divided into three parts. The first chapter, Canadian-American Relations: An Intellectual History, amounts to an *entrée en matière*. It defines and dissects Canadian continentalism and anti-Americanism, and traces their general evolution. The foreign sources of Canadian commentary are also discussed. The next four chapters explore how Canada's intellectuals have viewed the various aspects of American society, from its philosophical bases to its practical workings. American politics and government are discussed, as are religion and culture, race and gender, and various issues related to order and industrial capitalism. Finally, the last four chapters examine how Canadian intellectuals have applied their reading of American history and society to the field of Canadian-American relations and to the politics of Canadian identity. The spectres of annexation and Americanization, as well as American foreign policy and Canadian-American trade, unionism, and migration are also discussed.

1 Canadian-American Relations: An Intellectual History

Though it has been argued that early Canadian views of America 'were lacking in both understanding and information,'[1] this was certainly not the case by the turn of the twentieth century. Many Canadian intellectuals studied, worked, and travelled in the United States, and American newspapers, magazines, literature, and eventually, radio and film combined to make Canadians keenly aware of events and trends in the United States. Canadian interest in American affairs and in the Canadian-American relationship ebbed and flowed during the period under study, but it never ceased to occupy a prominent place in Canadian discourse. This was largely because, as George Grant (1918–1988) noted, 'to think of the U.S. is to think of ourselves – almost.'[2] This chapter examines the two opposing sensibilities, anti-Americanism and continentalism, that emerge from Canadian writing on the United States and continental integration. Both sensibilities were often inspired by the same writers, but they expressed very different world views. The same could be said of English and French Canadian commentary: while the two shared wider concerns regarding the United States and the modern ethos, the manner in which these ideas were developed and expressed often significantly differed.

Most Canadian intellectuals showed some interest in the 'American question.' Commentary on American affairs and on Canadian-American relations nonetheless remained more prevalent in English Canadian discourse. Generally speaking, English Canadian intellectuals were better informed of American affairs than were their French Canadian counterparts. Indeed, by the late nineteenth century, English Canadian society was awash in American ideas and culture. English Canadians read American books and magazines, studied with American readers,

and enjoyed American mass entertainment. Their exposure to American news, writes Allan Smith, 'played a particularly important role in the creation of a continental frame of reference. The fact that they were so fully provided with knowledge of public controversies in the United States transformed those controversies into matters which seemed less newsworthy items from a foreign country and more vital matters which penetrated into the heart of Canada.' The pervasiveness of American ideas and culture in English Canada was not fully reproduced in Quebec. The United States certainly loomed large in Quebec, but the province was partially insulated from American ideas by its distinct language and culture.[3]

Moreover, in spite of Quebec's geographic contiguity with the United States and its large Franco-American diaspora, much of the readily available information on the republic was the work of French authors. Very little American history was taught in the province's classical colleges and universities. Eurocentric and preoccupied with antiquity, the whole structure of classical education did not lend itself to the study of American affairs. This situation troubled A.D. DeCelles (1843–1925): 'Is it not remarkable to see educated Canadians, well informed about the doings of the Greeks and the Egyptians, the causes of the rise and fall of the Romans, the annals of Europe, who are scarcely or not at all informed about the United States? Here, we must admit, is an anomaly that should not exist, since no country in the world has as much influence as the American Confederation on our interests and our economic situation.'[4] An admirer of American institutions, DeCelles sought to remedy this situation by publishing *Les États-Unis. Origine, institutions, développement* (1896), French Canada's first full-length study of American history and government. His book was widely read and received a prize from the French Académie des sciences morales et politiques. Re-issued in 1913 and 1925, with additional new sections, its success inspired Sylva Clapin (1853–1928) to write a similar but more generally accessible *Histoire des États-Unis* (1900) for use in French Canadian and Franco-American schools. However, despite the best efforts of DeCelles and Clapin, Quebec's intellectuals remained underinformed when it came to American affairs. And the situation did not improve with time. A generation after DeCelles criticized Quebec's classical colleges for neglecting the United States, American studies remained underdeveloped in Quebec and the province's intellectuals continued to look to France for analysis of American affairs.

During the period considered here, the average Canadian observer

of the United States was a middle-class man born sometime between 1860 and 1900. Two intellectual generations dominate this study. The first, born between the late 1850s and the late 1870s, was profoundly affected by the wave of imperialism that washed over the British Empire during the second half of Queen Victoria's reign. It was most active in the early twentieth century. The second generation, born roughly between 1880 and 1900, was deeply scarred by the Great War. It reached its peak of influence during the 1930s and 1940s.

For Canada's intellectuals, interest in American affairs increased in proportion to contact with the United States. Many of Canada's most persistent observers of American life had studied or worked in the United States. A handful of prominent Canadian intellectuals, including Jules-Paul Tardivel (1851–1905) and John Castell Hopkins (1864–1923), were born in the United States. Others, like George M. Wrong (1860–1948), R.G. Trotter (1888–1951), Jean-Charles Harvey (1891–1967), and Harry Bernard (1898–1979), spent part of their childhood there. Not surprisingly, expatriate intellectuals proved to be among the most prolific observers of the United States. Indeed, writers like abbé Henri d'Arles (1870–1930), who was attached to the Roman Catholic diocese of Manchester, New Hampshire, for almost two decades, or John Bartlet Brebner, who spent most of his career teaching history at New York's Columbia University, could offer a unique perspective on American life to Canadians.

Many key observers experienced American society through its universities. Indeed, though higher education grew rapidly in late nineteenth and early twentieth century Canada, graduate studies remained underdeveloped in Canada until well into the 1960s. As a result, a significant number of the intellectuals whose work is examined in these pages completed their studies abroad, often in American universities. Stephen Leacock, O.D. Skelton, and Harold Innis (1894–1952), for instance, all earned doctoral degrees from the University of Chicago, while James T. Shotwell (1874–1965) received his Ph.D. from Columbia University.

Moreover, as Canada's economic and intellectual development perennially lagged behind that of the United States, a number of intellectuals left Canada to find work south of the border. American universities proved to be particularly fertile ground for Canadian scholars in search of employment and good wages. Queen's University graduate William Bennett Munro (1875–1957), for instance, headed Harvard's Bureau of Municipal Research in the 1920s, while P.E. Corbett (1892–1983), who

served as McGill University's Dean of Law in the 1930s, left Canada and joined the faculty of Yale University in 1942. The world of American journalism also proved particularly enticing to Canadian intellectuals. Sara Jeannette Duncan (1861–1922), one of the most prominent women authors of her generation, got her start at the Washington *Post*, while John MacCormac (1890–1958) made a name for himself at the *New York Times*.

The 'brain drain' was particularly acute among English Canadian thinkers, whose upward mobility in America was not generally hampered by the 'foreign' label. In his memoirs, Arthur Lower (1889–1988), who studied and taught history at Harvard University, reflected on this reality: 'In that first week [at Harvard], I also went to a reception for foreign students. The gentleman receiving me said, "You do not seem like a foreigner." I replied that I did not know whether I was or not, since I was a Canadian. "Oh, Canadians are not foreigners," he said. No one ever treated me as one.'[5]

The French Canadian experience in America was different. Emigrants from Quebec had long suffered the stigma of the 'Chinese of the Eastern States' epithet that the Chief of the Massachusetts Bureau of Statistics of Labor, Carroll D. Wright, had heaped on them in 1881. Nonetheless, many French Canadian intellectuals followed the hundreds of thousands of their compatriots who emigrated to the United States in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. And though latent nativism and linguistic barriers effectively excluded most of them from mainstream American intellectual life, many found work in the lively world of Franco-American journalism. In fact, the emigrant press served as a training ground for several of French Canada's most prominent journalists, including the enfant terrible of French Canadian journalism, Olivar Asselin (1874–1937), who began his career at the age of eighteen writing articles for the *Protecteur canadien* of Fall River, Massachusetts. Others, like Catholic clergymen Édouard Hamon (1841–1904) and Antonio Huot (1877–1929), served God in various American dioceses.

The Canadian fascination with the United States grew steadily during the period under study. Writing on America responded to a variety of stimuli, both domestic and foreign. Canadian commentary was primarily a reflection of national concerns, but American events and policy affected its intensity. Canadian interest in American affairs and Canadian-American relations increased during the reciprocity elections of 1891 and 1911. Later, the Great Depression, the New Deal, and the King-Roosevelt reciprocity agreement produced a fair amount of dis-

cussion in 1929–31 and in 1935–36, while American neutrality and the outbreak of the Second World War, the fall of France, the Ogdensburg and Hyde Park agreements, which significantly increased Canadian-American wartime defence and economic cooperation, and the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor brought Canadian commentary to a fever pitch in the years 1939–42. The fall of France was indirectly responsible for the burst of interest in American affairs and in Canadian-American relations that occurred in 1940 and 1941. As the British Empire faced the Axis powers alone, Canada's sense of vulnerability reached its highest levels since the 1860s, and Canadians increasingly turned to the United States for protection and leadership. As a result, Canadian intellectuals produced more commentary on American affairs in 1940–41 than at any other point during the period studied here.

Canadian independence and Canada's entry into the League of Nations generated a great deal of writing on international relations in general, and on Canadian-American relations in particular, during the interwar years. International affairs literally fascinated the English Canadian intellectuals born in the 1880s and 1890s. They had come of age with the Dominion and were anxious to see it assume its rightful place in the concert of nations. The Canadian Institute of International Affairs, which was founded in 1928, helped nurture their interest in international relations by sponsoring a number of conferences and studies that explored Canada's place in the world.

English Canadian intellectuals showed greater interest in American affairs and a more pronounced tendency to view American issues as though they were their own than did their French Canadian counterparts. Nevertheless, Quebec's interest in America grew rapidly after the First World War. As in English Canada, French Canadian interest in American affairs peaked in 1941, which André Laurendeau (1912–1968) hailed as the year of Quebec's belated discovery of America.[6]

While French Canadian intellectuals, on the whole, showed less sustained interest in the United States than did their English Canadian counterparts, they did, however, produce several of Canada's full-length examinations of American life. It is indeed Edmond de Nevers, not Goldwin Smith, who stands out as the most sophisticated Canadian observer of his era. Born Edmond Boisvert in Baie-du-Febvre, Canada East, de Nevers was educated at the Séminaire de Nicolet. Called to the bar in 1883, he appears to have taken a job as a provincial inspector of asylums rather than practise law. Shortly thereafter, he adopted the pseudonym Edmond de Nevers. In 1888, he left Canada for Germany.

Brilliant and multilingual, he travelled extensively throughout Europe during the next several years and worked at the Agence Havas in Paris as a translator and writer. In 1895, he returned to North America, going first to Rhode Island, where his family had previously emigrated, then to Quebec City, where he had numerous friends and relatives. The following year he was back in Europe, but he returned to Quebec in 1900, stricken with locomotor ataxia. He spent the next couple of years working as a publicist for the provincial Department of Colonization and Mines. Debilitated by his illness, he returned to Rhode Island sometime in late 1902 or early 1903 to die among his family.[7] In many ways, de Nevers was Canada's answer to Alexis de Tocqueville. Like the author of *De la démocratie en Amérique*, de Nevers was a liberal with marked conservative tendencies who devoted several years of his life to analysing American society, which he admired, though certainly not unquestioningly. He published his monumental *L'âme américaine* in 1900 and translated Matthew Arnold's 1888 essays on *Civilization in the United States* into French. In 1900, French literary critic Ferdinand Brunetière published a forty-page review of *L'âme américaine* in the prestigious *Revue des deux mondes*. He believed that the two-volume essay was 'one of the most interesting that had been published on America for a long time.'[8]

Despite sharing common preoccupations regarding the United States, English and French Canadian commentary differed in several respects. English Canadian discourse on America tended to centre on political and diplomatic affairs. As Louis Balthazar has pointed out, 'Canadian-American relations, even in a political light, have been on the whole the almost exclusive domain of English Canadians.'[9] Writing on Canadian-American diplomatic relations was largely the domain of English-speaking Canadians. Conversely, French Canadian intellectuals were inclined to concentrate on social issues – religion, education, and culture – which English Canadian intellectuals were less likely to examine, and they showed far less interest in American political affairs and in Canadian-American diplomacy. Quebec's intellectuals did, however, devote a great deal of energy to Canadian-American economic, demographic, and cultural relations. To be sure, while it was at best a minor theme in English Canadian writing, emigration loomed large in the French Canadian psyche. Economic affairs were of great interest in both English and French Canada, though issues related to trade were not as important in French Canadian discourse. Indeed, while reciprocity served as the flashpoint for the 'American question' in English Canada,

this issue was far less contentious in Quebec. Interwar American investment, by contrast, does not appear to have generated a debate as intense in English Canada as it did in Quebec.

A great deal of Canadian commentary on America can be found in texts on emigration and the Loyalist experience. For many English Canadian intellectuals, the Loyalists acted as a springboard for discussing the merits of the American Revolution and the foundations of American politics and government. However, interest in the Loyalist tradition was tied to the vitality of English Canadian imperialism, and both declined after the Great War.[10] For its part, Quebec frequently viewed the continent through the eyes of its diaspora and, to a lesser extent, through the experience of various other Roman Catholic groups. Emigration and Franco-America generated a great deal of commentary in Quebec, which, in turn, often led to an examination of the merits of American society. Roughly one-fifth of the French Canadian texts selected for inclusion in this study deal directly with emigration, Franco-America, or Louisiana, making diaspora-related issues the most significant topic discussed in French Canadian commentary on the United States. Interest in emigration and Franco-American affairs declined rapidly after 1930, when the United States severely curtailed immigration from Canada.

Canadian intellectuals, particularly those who were most critical of the United States, tended to homogonize the American experience. Regional, class, and ethnic differences in the United States were not particularly well assessed in Canadian commentary. In this sense, Canadian commentary was very similar to European writing on America, which also tended to represent the United States homogeneously. Unlike European commentary, however, Canadian writing on the United States rarely took the form of the travel narrative. The European observer usually saw America through a transatlantic haze or from the perspective of a traveller, while the Canadian observer merely peered over a fence, glanced at his neighbour, and jotted down his impressions.[11]

The themes and arguments used to debate the 'American question' were more or less constant during the period examined here. As Ramsay Cook has noted, 'George Grant succeeds Robinson and Principal Grant as the spokesman for "British" Canada, while Professor Underhill is the successor of Goldwin Smith as the spokesman for "American" Canada.' Their arguments regarding the United States and continental integration, however, remained largely unchanged.[12] Canadian commentary was indeed repetitive and, as we shall see, somewhat derivative. Some scholars bemoan this fact. They argue that

Canada, as a North American nation, should have produced some of the more perceptive analyses of American civilization; instead, they claim, it generated among the most unoriginal work ever written about the United States.[13] There is some truth to these assertions. But the importance of Canadian interpretations of American life is lost when they are compared with European analyses. Canadian commentary is not significant because it offers any particular insight into the American experience; it is worthy of study because it provides a great deal of insight into the Canadian mind. Besides, the American commentary of Edmond de Nevers, Jules-Paul Tardivel, or Goldwin Smith easily ranks with that of Georges Duhamel or Charles Dickens. Their work has undoubtedly attracted scant attention in the United States and Europe, but this is largely the reflection of a wider ignorance of Canadian thought and writing.

In Canada, resistance to American domination has taken a number of forms since the War of 1812: the National Policy, Defence Scheme No. 1, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, Canadian content regulations, the Foreign Investment Review Agency, and the National Energy Program, to name only a few. And from Confederation to the present day, cultural and economic protectionism has generally found its most vocal supporters among Canada's intellectual elite. Indeed, though the nation's intellectual culture has changed fundamentally since the late nineteenth century, anti-American sentiment continues to play a key role in Canadian thought. This apparent continuity masks a fundamental inversion in the underpinnings of anti-American rhetoric in Canada: largely a left-wing idea today, anti-Americanism was primarily a right-wing doctrine until the 1960s.

Anti-Americanism has historically implied a reasonably systematic hostility to American society, not merely a punctual criticism of American policy or life. Moreover, anti-American thinkers were generally opposed to continental integration and they rejected the notion that Canada was above all an 'American' nation. It should be noted, however, that the anti-American ethos was neither uniformly unsympathetic nor wholly uninformed; certainly, it was not entirely the product of bitterness and traditional animosity.[14] Prominent anti-American thinkers could indeed, on occasion, wax sentimental about Anglo-Saxon unity or the Dominion of Canada's critical role as the linchpin of Anglo-American relations. And while anti-American rhetoric frequently involved inaccurate representations and irrational delusions, irrationality was not intrinsic to anti-Americanism. Canadian critics could,

at times, prove surprisingly insightful and accurate in their assessment of American society.

Anti-Americanism was fundamentally different from the other major negative faiths, anti-Semitism and anticommunism, because it lacked their unconditional nature.[15] Indeed, as Charles F. Doran and James P. Sewell note, Canadian hostility to the United States tended 'to dissolve when brought directly into contact with the individual American.'[16] Anti-American sentiment rarely prevented Canadian conservatives from befriending Americans, from adopting American practices, from contributing to American periodicals, or from studying, working, lecturing, or vacationing in the United States. Speaking before the Young Men's Liberal Club of Toronto in 1891, Goldwin Smith offered an amusing anecdote to this effect: 'The other day I was myself reviled in the most unmeasured language for my supposed American proclivities. Soon afterwards I heard that my assailant had accepted a call as a minister to the other side of the line.'[17]

Though American actions and policy have historically intensified or lessened Canadian hostility, especially among the masses, they have never proved fundamentally causal to elite anti-Americanism. This was particularly true after Confederation. Certainly, American expansionism did threaten Canada before the Great War, but it had been a mitigated menace since the 1871 Treaty of Washington. Besides, American forcefulness never upset all Canadian thinkers – there has always been a group of continentalist intellectuals willing to forgive America for even its most serious misdeeds. Instead, anti-Americanism expressed a series of ideas – anti-Americanism is not an ideology – that were integral to the conservative ethos.

The premises upon which anti-American discourse rested were indeed those of conservative nationalism. These were relatively straightforward in English Canada. Imperialists insisted that an unbroken bond existed between Canada and Great Britain. They viewed Canadian society as fundamentally different from American society and argued that Canadian nationhood was intrinsically precarious. French Canadian nationalism rested on comparable premises. The continuity between French Canada and pre-revolutionary France was affirmed. So too was the extent to which French Canadian society was fundamentally different from American (and English Canadian) society. French Canadian nationalists also viewed their nation as a vulnerable and fundamentally precarious entity and, like imperialists, they had a tendency to downplay the regional, cultural, and social diversity of their nation.[18]

By and large, American society before the Second World War presented a greater affront to traditionalists than it did to Marxists.[19] This is why Canadian anti-Americanism was expressed most fully in the discourse of the nation's dominant conservative families: imperialism[20] and French Canadian nationalism.[21] Certainly, anti-Americanism has historically made for strange bedfellows, but more to the point, as Sylvie Lacombe has shown, French Canadian nationalism and English Canadian imperialism were not antithetical ideologies.[22] Despite their fundamental divergence on the national question, they both possessed an essentially antimodern outlook, and anti-Americanism was their logical point of convergence.

Imperialists and *nationalistes* shared a number of overarching conservative values. These included a firm belief in communitarianism, elitism, and a transcendent order; an appreciation of organic, evolutionary change; a profound devotion to tradition, continuity, and order; and a deep conviction that freedom, order, and private property were closely linked.[23] It is worth noting, however, that Canadian conservatives were rarely satisfied with the status quo. As a result, they produced some of the most sweeping critiques of modern industrial society to be published in Canada. Conservatism itself would not have existed without the challenge of modernity; only the erosion of traditional values and customs forces reflection on the value of tradition.

That said, the average English Canadian critic of American society was both more fixated and more temperate than his French Canadian counterpart. This apparent paradox was the result of two basic factors: English Canada's more moderate conservative intellectual tradition and the traditional focus of its nationalism. French Canadian nationalism was, on the whole, more conservative than imperialism. English Canadian conservatism was essentially British and Protestant in inspiration; Quebec's right, on the other hand, was fundamentally Catholic and bore the influence of France's far less temperate conservative tradition.[24] These factors combined to ensure that French Canadian intellectuals would offer a stiffer resistance to modernity and the United States. Unlike many Protestant denominations, Catholicism stood fast against modernism as the twentieth century began. The English Canadian critique of America also lacked the fundamental pietism that was the hallmark of conservative French Canadian commentary.

English Canada's ethnocultural proximity to its southern neighbour has historically made the United States the main focus of its nationalism, of its efforts at survival. Quebec's distinctiveness from the United

States has long been more readily apparent than English Canada's and, during the period under study, English Canadian conservatives were more fixated on America than were their French Canadian counterparts. Nevertheless, the intellectual's rapport with modernity was closely tied to the construction of identity and nationalism in both English and French Canada, and imperialists and *nationalistes* both were similarly driven to construct a national identity on traditional (and therefore anti-American) precepts.

Modernity renewed the intellectual's function. The expansion of public and higher education, urbanization, the growth of journalism and the press, the development of a network of public libraries, and most importantly, the expansion of literacy that occurred in the late nineteenth century, all contributed to the emergence of the modern Canadian intellectual.[25] Yet most Canadian thinkers around 1900 were resolutely antimodern, and a moderate traditionalism born of Canada's basically temperate political and intellectual culture formed the core of their thought. In the United States, the antimodern impulse expressed itself, among other things, through orientalism, medievalism, and the exaltation of martial virtues.[26] These values could be found in Canadian thought, but Canadian antimodernism found its principal outlet in anti-American rhetoric.

But why lash out at the United States? Because America, like the former Soviet Union, is more than a nation; historically, it has embodied both a way of life and an ideological system with pretensions to universality.[27] The American Republic is built on specific conceptions of liberty, equality, individualism, and secularism, and has come to epitomize an implicitly liberal version of modernity. Moreover, America was a revolutionary nation built on an ethos of rupture, and it had been quick to embrace the mass age and its social, cultural, and technological transformations. Revealingly, the Canadian critique of the United States centred on a rejection of republicanism, egalitarianism, individualism, secularism, mass culture, materialism, and large-scale industrialization. America was a nation where continuity, order, and deference had vanished; it was, as George Grant asserted in *Lament for a Nation*, 'the heart of modernity.'[28]

The dynamism of American society has often been viewed as a threat by conservative elites intent on the preservation of traditional values, institutions, and social relationships.[29] Accordingly, anti-American rhetoric was tied to a wider denunciation of the status revolution that followed the rise of modernity.[30] Industrialization eroded premodern

social relations, and new groups assumed some of the power and prestige that traditional elites, especially the clergy and the liberal professions, had wielded. A new and grandiosely wealthy industrial bourgeoisie had emerged and was stamping out traditional notions of status and deference. The growing power and size of the proletariat was also a source of anxiety for conservative intellectuals. Many worried that capitalist exploitation would push the proletariat to revolution. Like a number of American progressives, Canadian conservatives were nostalgic for an era when society was characterized, writes Richard Hofstadter, by 'a rather broad diffusion of wealth, status, and power,' and where 'the man of moderate means, especially in the many small communities, could command much deference and exert much influence.'[31]

Intellectual concerns about the ill-effects of the status revolution were tied to more general middle-class anxieties that invariably follow rapid social change. These apprehensions were not confined to the Dominion of Canada; they could be found throughout Western Europe and the United States. 'In both Europe and America, the antimodern impulse was rooted in what can aptly be called a crisis of cultural authority,' writes Jackson Lears.[32] The power and prestige of intellectuals has always rested on their role as arbiters of culture. As a result, many Canadian thinkers felt dispossessed by mass, or as they saw it, American culture, which was completely out of their control. That said, antimodernism and its principal Canadian expression, anti-Americanism, were also the result of a sincere effort to impose moral meaning on a rapidly changing society, and it would be a mistake to reduce this impulse to a simple quest for social control.

English Canadian imperialism experienced its golden age during the years that separated the 1891 and 1911 reciprocity elections. Imperialist anti-Americanism reached its zenith during the latter federal election, when inflammatory rhetoric was successfully used by the Conservative party to scuttle a reciprocity agreement that promised to revolutionize Canada's economy. The imperialist movement, which had close ties to the Conservative party, was a loose collection of individuals that gravitated around a number of associations, including the Imperial Federation League and, later, the Round Table groups. A few dozen intellectuals constituted the vanguard of the imperialist movement, which could, in turn, count on hundreds of thousands of sympathizers in Canada at the turn of the twentieth century. Most of these intellectuals were Canadian-born, but the imperialist movement itself found its greatest appeal among Canada's large population of British immi-